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## Entertaining Youngsters With Classic Toys–Play Doh

By **Robert Benson**

With video games dominating and transforming the landscape of our pre–teen children with a new virtual world for them to play in, it is refreshing to know that there are still classic toys available for our younger children to enjoy. Let's look at one of these special toys:

There is a classic toy, invented by two brothers in 1955, that still captures the imaginations of our pre–school children and youngsters alike. That toy, or product is: Play Doh.

Originally a wallpaper cleaner invented by brothers Noah W. McVicker and Joseph S. McVicker, Play Doh was introduced to schools in the Cincinnati area in 1955 because McVicker's sister–in–law asked if it was a safe alternative to modeling clay. Play Doh was an instant hit and soon the McVicker brothers formed Rainbow Crafts Company to produce and sell their product. Additionally, the brothers showcased their "modeling clay" at a National Education Convention and the word spread to the big department stores, Macy's and Marshall Field's. Soon after, Play Doh was a national hit.

Advertising played a crucial role in the success of Play Doh. Captain Kangaroo, a very popular educator of young children at the time, endorsed Play Doh. So did Miss Frances from the Ding Dong School, another popular children's television show. In 1960, a character named Play–Doh–Pete, a young boy with a beret was introduced to the advertising campaign. Additionally, the Fun Factory Accessory Playset was added to the product line, which allowed children to squeeze the material into interesting shapes and molds, furthering sales and development of the product.

In 1980 Play Doh expanded its palette to include eight colors, some that glowed in the dark and even some that were scented. It is estimated that more than two billion cans of Play Doh have been sold since 1956 and the total amount of Play Doh manufactured since then would weigh more than 700

million pounds.

The ingredients for Play Doh, to this day, remain a closely guarded secret. But it is primarily made up of a mixture of water, wheat flour, deodorized kerosene (or some other petroleum distillate—to provide the smooth texture), salt, a drying agent such as borax (which deters mold), an alum–based hardening agent, colorings and perfume.

Kids all over the world still enjoy Play Doh (it is sold in more than 6000 stores and over 75 countries worldwide) and children can even celebrate National Play Doh Day on September 18th. Some products never go out of style and Play Doh will always have young minds to enlighten and entertain.

Robert Benson operates

<http://www.ezshoppinghere.com>

a website devoted to helping shoppers find

unique gift ideas in unique places with over 400 stores to choose from. Find all your classic toys and more articles about toys at the website.

## **Smart Children And Smart Toys**

**By Jessica Davis**

Play would always be attached with the term "toys". Toys are the source of fun for children kids and even adults too. If used well, they could be aids in achieving learning and fun both at the same time. What could smart toys do? How could smart parents use these toys for the development of their children?

There are very helpful points that could help out in making your child even smarter:

- \* Each child has his or her own preference of toys. Let your child express him by deciding on what toys is fun for him or her. With this, it will be easy for the child to think creatively and use the toys.
- \* Childhood is a time to build bonds of friendship among peers. Interaction toys would be of great help as children get along with their peers. Toys like sport game toys would allow them to meet and socialize with children of the same age.
- \* Toys could boost the self–confidence of a child. There are these toys which when used could promote the reliance to one's self by a child or children. These come through construction toys. When a child builds it, he also builds the faith in his skill that this building may not be destroyed.
- \* Thinking independently is thinking smart for children. As they play using toys that will enhance their thinking and logic skills such as puzzles and mazes would be of great help in polishing one's head.

\* A bit similar with interaction toys are relationship toys– these help the communication skills of children. We know how important communication is, therefore, these set of toys would really be smart. These are really aid a child to meet people talk and listen and in the end, build links.

Toys are made not merely to be played with without purpose but we must see to it they learn and bring out the smart young people from them through smart choices of toys. Toys are here not to be used as early symbols of violence.

Jessica Davis is a freelance writer for the Baby Times. She writes a regular column which is published every Thursday. Her latest 'favorite pick' is

<http://www.babygeniusproductions.com/>

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