

Playthings®

APRIL 2006 THE BUSINESS OF PLAY

The Growing Years

Products that tend to the developmental stages of infants and toddlers nourish sales

By Tina Benitez

Tivo it! That's one option for parents looking for educational programming for their kids. The system, which allows viewers to record up to 80 hours of programming off the television, recently unveiled a new program that lets parents choose the most age-appropriate educational programming for their children via a ratings system.

Unfortunately, for consumers, it's not always as easy as using a remote control when it comes to choosing developmentally appropriate toys, especially for the youngest kids. All the more reason for retailers to have the right developmental products organized by age. And once that's done, there's more. Recommended ages on packaging is only the start. Content, quality and play value are all key factors when consumers—especially first-time parents—take their first tentative steps into a toy store in search of playthings that they hope will give their child a crucial head start in a society where, more and more, play time's sub-text is scholastic success. For the infant and juvenile product categories, offering a mix of creative, touch and feel, and tech-savvy products is bound to satisfy parents' demands for toys that are both entertaining and developmentally sound.



■ (Above) Moonlight Bears and Bunnies plush night lights, Kaloo, Paris; (below) The Brainy Baby ABCs