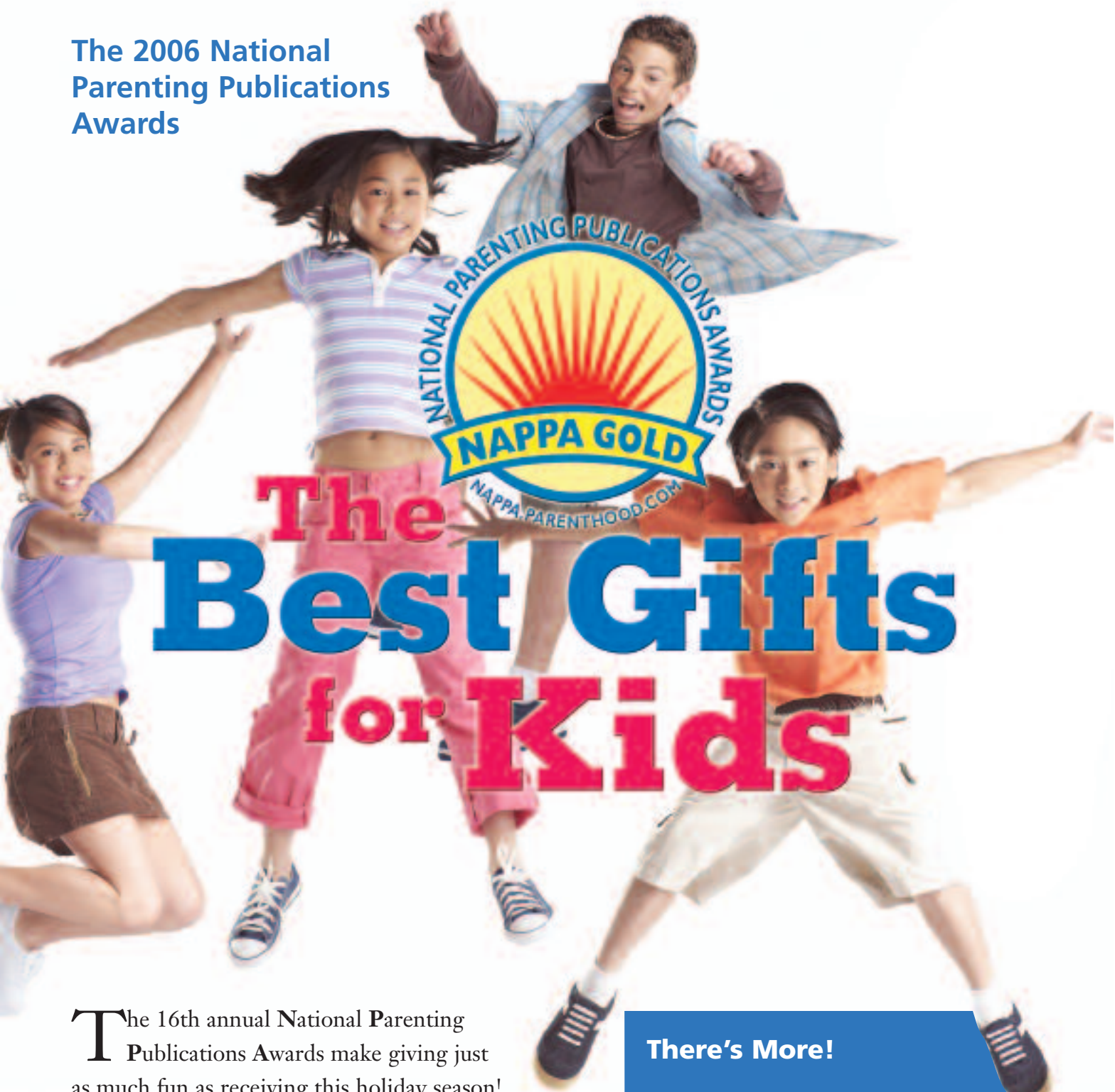


The 2006 National Parenting Publications Awards



The 16th annual National Parenting Publications Awards make giving just as much fun as receiving this holiday season!

NAPPA judges have stringently evaluated nearly 900 toys, DVDs, CDs, books, videogames and more to select the most appealing and engaging products – at prices that will fit just about any budget. NAPPA winners are arranged by product type and age-appropriateness, so it's easy to find the perfect gifts for all of the children in your life. Read on to find gifts that are sure to be remembered!

There's More!

In addition to the Gold Award winners highlighted here, you'll find more must-try products among the **NAPPA Honors winners** featured on the Web. You can even download a handy, printer-friendly and emailable **Holiday Shopping List**. You'll find it all at www.NAPPA.Parenthood.com.



Toys

By Ellen Metrick

Play helps children develop skills they'll use throughout life and lets them escape from reality. When we think back to our own youth, we fondly remember toys that made us think or laugh, or sparked a special interest that we've carried into adulthood. This year's Gold Award winners are sure to be enjoyed by your children and, who knows, they might even trigger a lifelong passion.

For Infants & Toddlers

- **Ann B. Dextrous**, Discovery Channel Store, \$59.95, for newborns and up; www.shopping.discovery.com. This motor-skills development toy grows with a baby's abilities. Five "pods" challenge little ones to master new skills: twist/turn, push/pull, slide/flip, grasp and sort. Lights and sounds maintain interest and attention.
- **Laugh & Learn Baby Grand Piano**, Fisher-Price, \$44.99, for ages 9 months and up; www.fisher-price.com. Through musical play, children learn colors, numbers, pitch and tempo. Eight light-up keys, three modes and four activities expand the play.



- **NooBoo Symphonic Stacker**, Manhattan Toy, \$30, for ages 9 months and up; www.manhattantoy.com. A soft stacking toy with whimsical patterns, textures and sounds. As a child places a flower-shaped ring on the plush post, an animated sound is emitted.

- **Voyager Canopy Wagon**, Radio Flyer, \$99.99, for ages 18 months and up; www.radioflyer.com. This durable plastic wagon has rubber wheels for a comfortable, quiet ride. With the seats upright, two children can ride comfortably and safely with three-point seatbelts. The seats fold down to provide a flat cargo area. A removable canopy shields riders from the sun. *(Pictured at right.)*

For Preschoolers

- **Imaginext Mega T-Rex**, Fisher-Price, \$29.99; www.fisher-price.com. With glowing red



The NAPPA Judges

It's a tough job, but somebody has to do it! NAPPA judges are all experts in evaluating and writing about children's products. They have experience working with children, so they know what kids like. They recognize the qualities that make a product stand out from the crowd.

■ **Toys – Ellen Metrick** has more than 20 years' experience in the toy industry. As the toy specialist for the National Lekotek Center, a nonprofit that promotes accessible play for children of all abilities, Metrick helps manufacturers develop and evaluate high-quality toys. To learn more, visit www.Lekotek.org and www.AblePlay.org.

■ **DVDs – Ranny Levy** is the founder and president of the nonprofit Coalition for Quality Children's Media. A former educator, Levy developed the Junior Film Critics Program and the KIDS FIRST! Film and Video Festivals, held in cities across the country. She is the co-author of *The New York Times/KIDS FIRST Guide to the Best Children's Videos*. Learn more at www.KidsFirst.org.

■ **Music – John Wood** brings more than 30 years of expertise to his reviews of children's music, which appear in parenting magazines across the country. He has performed more than 8,000 shows with his children's group, J.P. Nightingale. For more information, check out www.Kidzmusic.com.

eyes, fierce roaring sounds and realistic head movements, this T-Rex transports kids back to prehistoric times.

- **Ryan's Room: Stable for Two**, Small World Toys, \$40; www.smallworldtoys.com. This high-quality wood stable comes with two horses, a feeding trough and a foldable fence – just enough props to inspire imagination!
- **Story Reader Video Plus**, Publications International, \$34.99; www.storyreader.com. This portable electronic storybook can be used independently or with a TV to read a story to your child. Educational games played using the attached remote advance with your child's abilities.

- **Tangoes Jr.**, Rex Games, \$24.99; www.tangoes.com. Promotes problem-solving, spatial awareness and pre-math skills. Kids create designs using magnetic shapes and image cards. A convenient pack-and-go unit.

- **ZipBin Barn**, Neat-Oh International, \$19.99; www.zipbin.com. This barn-shaped play box unzips to reveal a play

mat and three plastic farm animals. When play is done, just zip up the sides and store the pieces inside. Also award-worthy is the **ZipBin Mansion** (\$24.99).

For Ages 5 & Up

- **Classic Moonjar Moneybox**, Moonjar, \$24.95; www.moonjar.com. This bank's three compartments – Sharing, Spending and Saving – are a springboard to conversation and action with your child.

- **Play Foam**, Educational Insights, \$9.99; www.educationalinsights.com. The whole family will enjoy these colorful foam “beads,” which stick together and can be molded over and over without drying out. Best of all, they don't crumble or stick to surfaces or hands.

- **Speed Stacks StackPack**, Play Along, \$39.99; www.playalongtoys.com. Ready, set, stack! Beat the clock, your own record or a friend's time. Stacking these special plastic cups in precise ways improves hand-eye coordination and concentration.

- **The World Almanac for Kids Puzzler Deck Language Arts & Wordplay!**, Chronicle Books, \$9.95; www.chroniclebooks.com. This deck of cards entertains and challenges kids with simple questions on word and picture identification, directionality, rhyming, opposites, nouns, etc. Great for on-the-go fun. Other Puzzler Decks include **Math!** (ages 7-8), **U.S. History & Geography!** (ages 9-10) and **World History & Geography!** (ages 11-12).

For Ages 8 & Up

- **Fly Pentop Computer**, LeapFrog, \$99.99; www.leapfrog.com. This space-age pen has a built-in computer, speaker and camera. Using special paper, kids can play games, learn geography and improve their math and cognitive skills. To access the menu, just draw an “M” and circle it; the pen then states the menu options. Make a calculator by drawing a box with numbers 0-9 and math symbols, the Fly then recognizes it. You have to see it to believe it!

- **Go to Press! A Grammar Game**, Learning Resources, \$21.95; www.learningresources.com. Kids assume the guise of a newspaper reporter, using grammar and word skills to “proofread” and correct headlines in this board game.

- **Lego Mindstorms NXT**, LEGO Systems, \$249.99,

for ages 10 and up; www.LEGO.com. This sophisticated toy enables kids to build and program robots. Sensors pick up sound, touch and light, using ultrasound to gauge distance. The robot is programmed using the NXT brick – a 32-bit microprocessor that can be programmed using a PC or Mac. The programs can then be transferred to the robot, enabling it to be controlled remotely with a cell phone or PDA.

- **Lonpos 101 Pyramid and Rectangle Game**, Mic-O-Mic Americas, \$16.99; www.micamericas.com. This pocket-size puzzle game contains 12 pieces that can be placed in different configurations on the board to complete a rectangle. Advanced play uses the same pieces to solve three-dimensional puzzles. Thousands of variations!

- **Sudoku 5x5**, ThinkFun, \$9.99; www.thinkfun.com. This easy-to-use magnetic box game features 48 cards, three levels of difficulty and a 25-square grid. Following the partial pattern shown on a card, players place numbered discs in each square, without repeating the same digit in any given row or column.

Family Play

SO COOL!



DVDs

By Ranny Levy

With all the DVD releases now available for home viewing, these NAPPA Gold winners will help you ensure that the time your child spends in front of the TV is positive, engaging and educational.

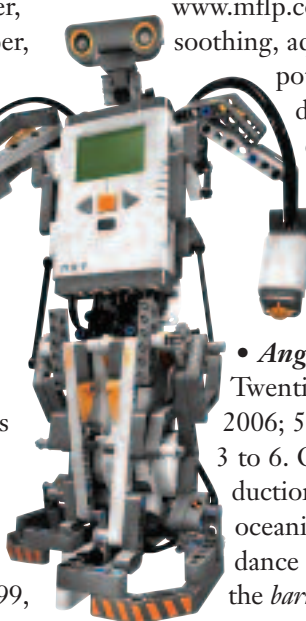
For Infants & Toddlers

- **Make a Wish Little Fish**, Swoon Pictures, 2005; 30 min.; \$12.98; www.mflp.com; for up to age 5. This soothing, aquatic journey has the potential to calm everybody down. Swirling colors and exquisite underwater images peacefully undulate to beautiful classical music.



For Preschoolers & Up

- **Angelina Ballerina: All Dancers on Deck**, Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment, 2006; 50 min.; \$15.98; www.foxhome.com; for ages 3 to 6. Our favorite dancing mouse gives an introduction to ballet, while embarking on a trans-oceanic adventure that will engage even non-dance fans. Angelina raises the *barre* to bust gender stereotypes.



- *Charlie and Lola: Volume One*, BBC Video, 2006; 84 min.; \$14.98; www.bbcamerica.com; for ages 2 to 7. Caring big brother Charlie helps his little sister Lola sort through the uncertainties of childhood in these six episodes.



- *Chicka Chicka 1-2-3... And More Stories about Counting*, Scholastic Entertainment, 2006; 30 min.; \$14.95; www.newvideo.com; for ages 2 to 6. Three beautifully animated stories with catchy sing-along tunes provide exceptional treatment of an important skill. This collection of book-based shorts is among the best in the field.

For Ages 5 & Up

- *Choose Your Own Adventure: The Abominable Snowman*, Lean Forward Media, 2006; 80 min.; \$19.98; www.goldhilenertainment.com; for ages 6 to 12. Lots of fun to do as a

Family Play

group, this interactive DVD helps viewers hone their decision-making skills by choosing which path to follow. Good animation, reinforces commendable behaviors.

- *The Man Who Walked Between the Towers ... and*

Card Sales Support Imagine Children's Museum



Imagine Children's Museum in Everett has released its sixth series of holiday cards featuring the artwork of talented children from the Puget Sound area. Ten different designs are available, and proceeds help pay for hands-on interactive exhibits, education enrichment programming and reduced admission for families in need.

Residents can purchase cards for themselves or their organization or share the holiday spirit with nursing home, assisted living or other "shut in" residents. The cost is \$10 for a package of 10 cards, with an extra charge for imprinting. Call 425-258-1006 or visit www.ImagineCM.org and click on "Holiday Cards 2006."

- small, multi-age classrooms
- experiential learning
- child-centered curriculum
- integrated music & art
- environmental science
- community service projects
- fun!

Kindergarten Open House
November 4th, 2006: 3-5pm
January 27, 2007: 3-5pm

Opportunity for Early Enrollment in November

(206) 522-0350
 located near Woodland Park Zoo
KapKaschool.org

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More Inspiring Tales, Scholastic Entertainment, 2006; 72 min.; \$14.95; www.newvideo.com; for ages 5 to 9. A breathtaking perspective on French aerialist Philippe Petit's 1974 high-wire journey between the twin towers of the World Trade Center. See the former towers' grandeur along with Petit's extraordinary feat. Three other shorts are included.

- *Veggie Tales: Sheerluck Holmes and the Golden Ruler*, Big Idea, 2006; 52 min.; \$14.99; www.bigidea.com; for ages 5 to 12. No one brings together silliness and Bible verse like these indefatigable vegetable characters do. The Bible references are subtle and the message of friendship is timeless.

For Ages 8 & Up

- *Dr. Dolittle 3*, Twentieth Century Fox Home Entertainment, 2006; 90 min.; \$21.58; www.foxhome.com; for ages 8 to 12. All young Maya Dolittle wants is to fit in. But her uncanny ability to talk to animals makes fitting-in unlikely. Yet she "saves the day" when the animals help her and her friends.

- *Spirit Bear: The Simon Jackson Story*, Echo Bridge Home Entertainment, 2006; 91 min.; \$24.99; www.echobridgehe.com; for ages 9 to 16. An inspiring real-life story of an awkward 15-year-old who rallies everyone – from classmates to Prince William and the Backstreet Boys – to create a preserve for a rare white bear.



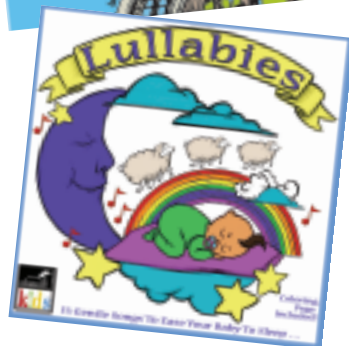
Music

By John Wood

We have a lot of exciting talent to share with you this year. There are familiar voices, bright new voices and instrumentalists galore! Music from around the world is especially well-represented, and it's a great way to expose kids to other cultures. So check out these NAPPA Gold winners and give a gift of music this year!

Lullabies

- *Lullabies: 15 Gentle Songs to Ease Your Baby to Sleep*, Various Artists, Casablanca Kids, 2006; \$5.99 CD; www.casablancakids.com. This potpourri of sleepy-time



tunes features a who's who of award-winning children's artists.

- *Quiet Time*, Raffi, Rounder Records, 2006; \$12.98 CD; www.rounder.com. The gentle balladeer is back with a soothing mixture of traditional and original songs.

- *Snooze Music*, Rick Scott, Grand PooBah Music, 2006; \$15 CD; www.rickscott.ca. Dulcimer magic, beautiful songs and terrific arrangements will strike a chord with all ages.

For Babies & Up

- *An Elephant Never Forgets*, Owen Duggan, OLDmusic Productions, 2005; \$16.98 CD; www.oldmusichome.com. You won't forget these cunningly creative songs, playfully performed by this tuneful Texan.

- *Folk Playground*, Various Artists, Putumayo World Music, 2006; \$14.98 CD; www.putumayo.com/playground.html.



This well-crafted collection features popular artists such as Dan Zanes, Elizabeth Mitchell, Laurie Berkner, Trout Fishing, Justin Roberts, Michelle Shocked and

Leon Redbone.

- *Smorgasbord*, Sharon, Lois & Bram, Casablanca Kids, 2006; \$5.99 CD; www.casablancakids.com. Re-released after 20 years, this CD is filled with fun and upbeat songs.

For Ages 4 & Up

- *CELLAboration! A Tribute to Ella Jenkins*, Various Artists, Smithsonian Folkways Recordings, 2004; \$11.98 CD; www.folkways.si.edu. This all-star tribute to the "First Lady of Children's Music" features Tom Chapin, John McCutcheon, Pete Seeger, Tom Paxton, Sweet Honey in the Rock and others.

- *The Giggling Dragon*, Dan Crow, Alls House Family Entertainment, 2005; \$15 CD; www.dancrow.com. This worldwide touring artist's songs about dragons, gnomes, pixies, trolls, giants, imagination and books are inventive, funny and finely constructed.

- *Meltdown!*, Justin Roberts, Carpet Square Records, 2006; \$15 CD; www.justinroberts.org. This CD will get the whole family laughing and singing. Clever and



