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FamilyFun



Best New Toys

19-page Guide to the
Toys Kids Love

Easy-to-make
Gifts & Ornaments

6 Creative Christmas
Cookies

How to Take Great
Holiday Photos



USA \$2.99 / CANADA \$3.49



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WINNER

Spray FX

MULTI TOYS CORPORATION, \$20

Spray FX could well be the least efficient way ever devised to get ink on paper, but we admit, as do our testers, that the results are pretty cool. The unit works with any standard fine-point marker; kids insert it into the spray handle, press a button, and voilà! A pulsing stream of air turns the marker into an airbrush. You won't be painting murals on a conversion van anytime soon with this, but the instructions do provide some neat tips for budding artists. *Requires four C batteries. Call 877-260-5056.*



Arts & Crafts

AGES 8 TO 9

Key Chain Popper

WILD PLANET TOYS, \$15

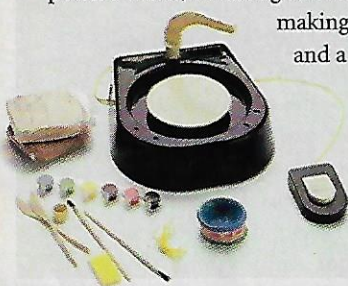
Not much skill — okay, none — is required to make these hip and sassy key-chain and necklace accessories. But not much time is required either, and since the parts are infinitely reusable, kids can make a new set of them every day to suit their moods. Simplicity rules the day. *Call 800-247-6570.*



Pottery Wheel

CURIOSITY KITS, \$40

If you're shopping for an impatient or heavy-handed kid, do both of you a favor and skip right to the next toy. When we first fired up this motorized potter's wheel, we thought it felt vastly underpowered. Not so. The truth is that making a fine pot takes not brute force but patience, finesse, and a lot of practice (it's a good thing this wheel comes with an AC adapter!). That said, the reaction of our testers suggests the right kind of kid will treasure this kit — and gain a solid introduction to the pleasures of ceramics. *Requires A/C adapter (included) or four D batteries. Call 800-584-KITS.*



Games

AGES 8 TO 9

WINNER

Apples to Apples Jr.

OUT OF THE BOX PUBLISHING, \$16

The great thing about this game, a kids' version of an award-winning adult party game, is the way it forces players into some heavy abstract reasoning. The goal is to match, as closely or humorously as possible, one of five cards in your hand (each listing the name of a person, place, thing, or event) with a descriptor card turned up randomly. If the descriptor reads "large," for example, and you're holding a card that says "whale," your choice is obvious. But what if the closest you've got is "soccer game" or "Christmas"? For thinking out of the box, we give Apples to Apples Jr. an A+. *Call 608-244-3575.*



Aura

CADACO, \$9

Looking for the ultimate slumber party game? We predict you'll choose Aura. An aura, as any student of the supernatural knows, is a colorful plasmic energy that surrounds us all, the color and intensity of which reflects our moods and personalities. Supposedly. At any rate, players of this game first write down a yes or no question they'd like answered, then take turns trying to win cards by correctly predicting a characteristic of the next card they are dealt. The winning psychic (the first player to gather 11 cards) uses her cards to reveal the answer to her question and the color of her aura. Time to dim the lights. . . . *Call 800-621-5426.*



CHOPSTIX

TDC GAMES, \$22

Cross the stacking game Jenga with a sushi platter, and you might end up with something close to CHOPSTIX. The goal is simple: using chopsticks, stack the little pagoda logs as high as you can (thank heavens the game includes a pair of Rookie Stix for those of us who've never gotten the hang of the real things). The loser, of course, is the one who turns the pagoda to rubble. *Call 800-292-7676.*

