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Get'em active! Rompin', stompin', skippin', jumpin'!

Local toy retailers equipped to get kids active!

Kids need physical exercise. Toys promoting active play are the surest way for them to get it.

Based on current research, children are three to four times less active than 40 years ago. The reasons for this are numerous. Technology is often cited as the culprit, but declining physical education programs can also be blamed. And what about the fact that many children are transported to and from school each day? This has eliminated the walk to school that was always an opportunity for spontaneous exercise and play.

That's why, when it's time to get outdoors again, independent toy store retailers pay particular attention to stocking items that can be safely used for 'rompin', stompin', skippin' and jumpin', for getting kids active.

"Kids are pretty stuck on technology and sitting in front of computers and TVs," said Patti Taggart, owner of Tag Along Toys and President of Neighbourhood Toy Stores of Canada (NETS).

"I don't think we can change that or that we want to eliminate this entirely. But we still owe it to our kids to make sure they get out and get active, particularly during the spring and summer months when this is easiest to do so."

"Our member stores spend the winter at various toy shows, looking at what is new and carefully selecting the most amazing items for active play," explained Taggart.

"Add the all-time faves to these and we can really help parents make sure their kids exercise, through play, on a regular basis."

"Judging by how quickly we can sell out of certain items, I think parents really appreciate the effort independent specialty toy stores make to encourage active play," she added.

Below are some favourite 'active play' picks selected by NETS retailers. To check out the complete selection you can find local retailers at www.neighbourhoodtoystores.ca and on Facebook at www.facebook.com/NeighbourhoodToyStores. All stores select their product independently and offer a tremendous range and variety of 'active play' toys for all ages. Prices are in Canadian dollars and may vary per retailer location. All suggested age ranges etc. should be confirmed upon purchase.

Neighbourhood Toy Stores of Canada (NETS) is a network of independent, specialty toy stores that provide a source of quality toys and games in large and small communities throughout Canada. These are the 'un-box' stores whose owners believe a child with 'too many toys' may have a lot of the 'wrong' toys; that a 'good' toy is one that provides children with endless hours of play; that useful recommendations can only be based on product knowledge; that customer service is not 'old-fashioned'. These are the 'little' stores that make a 'big' difference to parents and their communities.

For further information go to neighbourhoodtoystores.ca; facebook.com/NeighbourhoodToyStores and @NETS_TOYS on Twitter.

Looking for just that thing for spring? Here are suggestions from 'Neighbourhood Toy Stores of Canada'

TAG ALONG TOYS, OTTAWA, ON

Monkey Business Sports' Bungee Jumper

The pogo stick has been a classic children's toy for several generations. Monkey Business Sports' Bungee Jumper, celebrating its 12th birthday this year, brings the springy and hoppy fun of "pogoing" to younger children who have not yet developed the motor skills and balance to use a traditional pogo stick. The high-rebound foam gives the feeling of soaring into the sky, while the stretchy tubing and soft handle keep the base securely fixed to the user's feet.



Since the Bungee Jumper does not utilize a metal structure or spring mechanism, it is extremely safe and portable. The Bungee Jumper gets kids up and moving with its intuitive design. Most children almost instinctively know how to use it, making this product a favorite birthday and holiday purchase, year-in and year-out.

- Supports up to 250 pounds
- Practice skate/snowboard tricks
- Non-marking, slip-resistant bottom
- Ideal for indoor/outdoor play

Suggested Retail: \$23.99

Age: 5+

Supplier: Monkey Business Sports

Little Kid Backpacks

The Zoo Pack is the little kid backpack where "fun meets function!" Whimsical details and durable materials make this the perfect on-the-go pack for kids on-the-go!

Suggested Retail: \$20.00

Supplier: Zoo Packs



Sunny Patch Grub Scouts Sprinkler

Be prepared for watery fun when you attach this durable, whimsical sprinkler to your garden hose. An entire troop of Grub Scouts have popped up to work on their Entertainment Merit Badge!

Dimensions: 5.5" x 7.75" x 8" Assembled

Adult supervision required.

Age: 3+

Suggested Retail: \$19.99

Supplier: Melissa & Doug



SkyRocket

Watch any yard become a launch pad with the original Monkey Business Sports SkyRocket, the standard in safe, hand-launched, high-altitude foam rocketry. With a rigid interior shaft embedded in foam, topped off with a flexible, energy-absorbing nose cone, these rockets can easily fly from end zone to end zone.

- Flies over 300 feet high
- Sturdy construction is durable and safe.

Age: Ages 8 +

Suggested Retail: \$15.99

Supplier: Monkey Business Sports



Adjustable Skipping Ropes

Adjust skipping rope length, with the clasps at the handles, to fit to any child's size. Rope rotates in handles to prevent tangling.

Age: 5+

Suggested Retail: \$7.99 - \$14.99 depending on length

Supplier: Playwell Enterprises



Castle Buckets & Scoops

Use bucket to make castle sand molds.

Bucket size 7" diameter; 7" high

Age: Infant – 99 yrs

Suggested Retail: Buckets \$4.99;

Scoops \$2.99

Supplier: Playwell Enterprises



Wheely Bug

They are very safe and user-friendly for children at the cusp of walking to post toddler. The bright and friendly designs are an instant attraction to both girls and boys alike. They go backwards, forwards, sideways, and round and round. Wheely Bugs promote gross motor skills from which all higher learning evolves. The bodies are padded and covered with a tough layer of polyurethane leatheroid that can be easily wiped clean. The base is made from plantation grown Poplar plywood and has safe ergonomic rounded contours. The "feelers" which wobble and delight are made with stainless steel spring and have an internal limiter cord to prevent pull out. The handle is aluminum so it won't rust.

Age: Toddlers+

Suggested Retail: \$84.99 - \$99.99; small and large

Supplier: Prince Lionheart



Bublicious Balance Bike

Smart Gear wooden training bikes are often referred to as "run bikes" or "balance bikes", which are pedal free and without training wheels. First and foremost, they help a child develop the balance and motor skills necessary to later ride a 2 wheel bicycle with pedals. The bikes from Smart Gear are made from solid birch wood with real inflatable rubber tires, foam handle bar grips, cushioned leatherette seat and a unique carry handle incorporated in the bikes main body.



Age: 2+
Suggested Retail: \$119.99
Supplier: Smart Gear

Lite Hawk Helicopter

Built with the latest technology, including a 3D Gyro stabilizer, this mini-helicopter is easy to fly, even for the beginner. Capable of incredible omni-directional flight - ascending, descending, forward, backward, left turns, right turns, even 360° revolving with accurate localization. Includes a 3-channel IR remote controller and a lithium chargeable battery that allows a longer flying time. Helicopter re-charges through the remote controller. Features LED fuselage lighting and a CNC Metal Chassis. Breakaway blades enhances the safety of the helicopter. Full range of replaceable parts available to order. The package is re-usable. The back of the box serves as a landing pad.



Age: 8+
Supplier: Borgfeldt Canada
Suggested Retail: \$49.99

Click & Go Jet

The Click & Go Jet can be folded together compactly in just a few moves and snapped onto a belt clip to be taken along anywhere. The jet can be put together quickly and the fun can begin. Set also includes a figure.



Age: 3+
Suggested Retail: \$9.99
Supplier: Playmobil

KIDLINK, MONTREAL, PQ

The Pumponator!

Designed to make filling balloons with water as well as air so easy, the Original Balloon Pumping Station comes with 500 water balloons and strings for tying. Available in red, blue, purple or pink. Portable and lightweight, you can take it anywhere for a fun time.



Age: 8+
Suggested Retail: \$24.99

OWL'S HOLLOW, CHARLOTTETOWN, PEI

Fair Trade Pocket Disc

The Fair Trade Disc that can be used indoors as well as outside. Great for kids to learn as it won't hurt their hands like most plastic discs. Very colourful. You can fold them up and take them in your pocket where ever you go. Great for dogs as they won't hurt their teeth.

Age: 3+ or as soon as they can throw

Suggested Retail: \$9.99 small edition; \$14.99 to \$15.99
for Sports Edition (a little bit bigger in size)



**MONKEY MOUNTAIN TOYS & GAMES, OKOTOKS, AB; SCOOTER GIRL TOYS, TORONTO, ON;
TREASURE ISLAND TOYS, TORONTO ON**

Mini Kick Scooter

The Mini Kick for children 3 to 5 years of age is the ultimate first scooter. It's low to the ground and large enough for both feet making it easy for riders to hop on and off. When the scooting is over, its light weight, compact construction makes it easy to tote along. This is a design that puts the young rider in control as they enjoy the feeling of 'surfing the sidewalks'!

Age: 3-5 years

Suggested Retail: \$99.99

Supplier: Kickboard Canada



TOY CORNER, SARNIA, ON

Large Easy Flyer Kite

With simple assembly and no-hassle flying, this kite is the easiest to fly!

Age: 5 years+

Suggested Retail: \$29.99

Supplier: Le Gite du Cerf-Volant/Premier Kites



Jump Rocket

Jump on the launching pad to send the foam rocket up in the air.

Age: 4+

Suggested Retail: \$16.99-19.99

Supplier: Geospace/On the Right Track



PHOENIX ON BOWEN, BOWEN ISLAND, BC

Ogo Mini Sports Disk Set

Two soft centred discs with a hairy ball that can be hit from one to the other or played with alone. Large and soft enough for smaller hands.

Age: 3 - 5 and adult.
Suggested Retail: \$19.99
Supplier: PlaSmart



LOADZA TOYS, KELOWNA, BC

Turbospoke Bicycle Exhaust System

Makes your bike look and sound like a motorbike!!

Caution: This product is awesome!

Suggested Retail \$24.99
Supplier: Schylling



SCOOTER GIRL TOYS, TORONTO, ON

Alex Ready, Set, Stilts!

Fully adjustable stilts with soft grip handles.

Step 1: Learn to balance with big foot trainers.

Step 2: Replace the trainers with no-skid caps and step up to stilt walking.

Fits kids up to 110 lbs/50 kg.

Easy assembly; no tools required.

Age: 5+ (converts from a beginner wide base to an advanced base)
Suggested Retail: \$34.99
Supplier: Alex Toys



Maxi Kick Scooter

Kick gets kids moving like no other ride-ons. Easy to master, kids love the unique lean-to-steer mechanism, allowing them to safely cruise the sidewalks like never before.

Age: 6+
Suggested Retail: \$174.99
Supplier: Kickboard Canada



Mini OgoDisk

A hand trampoline for balls: throw, catch, bounce!

- Mini flies the farthest and its small target area increases difficulty.
- Bounce any ball -- for summer fun, try it in the pool with water balloons!



Each set includes one bright-blue and one OgoOrange disk with one OgoSoft ball. EVA foam ring. Nylon-spandex membrane center.

Age: 6+

Suggested Retail: \$24.99

Supplier: PlaSmart