

CANADIAN TOY TESTING COUNCIL – BEST BET AWARDS 2012
Presented by age



	<p>Northern Lights Soother Lamaze 0+ years ***Best Bet Award 2012*** This crib toy entertains or soothes baby with music, nature sounds and flashing lights. It can be customized by attaching an MP3 player, and the lights can be programmed to be constant or to flash to the beat of the music. The Canadian nature scene, with cute, friendly-looking animals (a moose and a bear, for example), is surrounded by padding. Our testers say the control panel allows ease of use in the dark, and they like the multiple options for sound and light. Requires three “AA” batteries.</p> 
	<p>Little People Zoo Talkers Animal Sounds Zoo Fisher-Price 18 months – 5 years ***Best Bet Award 2012*** This zoo play set includes Zack the zookeeper, a gorilla, a lion and a polar bear. When you place one of the animals in the hut, it makes the appropriate animal sound and says its name. Additional Zoo Talkers (animals) are available separately. A waterslide, a cave and a swing offer the child fun play time. Testers say that it has a great design and encourages play among several children of different ages. Requires three “AA” batteries.</p> 
	<p>Wheelies Play 'n Go Construction Site (Little People) Fisher-Price 1.5–3.5 years ***Best Bet Award 2012*** This Little People construction game has a yellow bulldozer with a driver, two mountain pieces, a removable sign with a gate, three colourful ramps, and a black boulder to engage youngsters in imaginative play. It's a sturdy, well-designed toy that doesn't take up much space, has lots of play value, and stores neatly away in one of the mountain pieces. Children can play with the pieces in a variety of ways and also incorporate it with other toys.</p>
	<p>Count & Scan Shopper LeapFrog 2+ years ***Best Bet Award 2012*** Young children learn their colours and learn how to count with this interactive grocery scanner and play food set. The toy includes nine brightly coloured food items, such as bananas, eggs and milk, a grocery list, a bright green grocery bag, and a cute personalized scanner (with eyes), which talks and sings and can scan anything! The pieces in the set can also be easily incorporated with other toys. Testers say it is a great role-playing game and learning tool. The bag facilitates storage and cleanup. NOTE: English only. Requires three “AAA” batteries.</p> 

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	<p>Remote Racer Smart Car VTech 2-5 years ***Best Bet Award 2012*** A remote-control car for preschoolers, this toy from VTech includes an educational function for learning shapes, colours, logic and memory. The headlights and tail lights double as turning signals to teach left and right. It's strong, sturdy and durable and easy for little ones to use. It has volume and speed control. Testers say it responds well to the remote control, teaches basics, and grows well with the child. The songs and voice are pleasant. NOTE: English only. Requires four "AA" batteries for the car and three "AAA" batteries for the remote.</p> 
	<p>Double Decker Roundhouse plus two trains Learning Curve 3+ years ***Best Bet Award 2012*** The Chuggington Double Decker Roundhouse train set is unique, with its two-story roundhouse, which can also be built as two separate roundhouses. A turntable that moves the trains and pops up to elevate them to the second floor adds play value. In addition to the roundhouses and turntable, the toy has a switch track piece and a clock tower. This set is an add-on for a starter wooden train set. Some children would like more track pieces. The set can be incorporated with other play.</p>
	<p>Over & Under Starter Set (with Clock) Learning Curve 3+ years ***Best Bet Award 2012*** This is a starter Chuggington set (from the television series) that includes 17 wooden track pieces, two train engines (Wilson and Koko), and a clock tower that stacks for over and under tunnel configurations. Sturdy and attractive, the toy is compatible with other train sets, and additional design ideas are featured online. The set in general can be incorporated into other play. Testers say the set has excellent play value.</p>
	<p>Richard Scarry's Busytown Busy, Busy Airport I Can Do That! Games 4+ years ***Best Bet Award 2012*** Fasten your seatbelts and prepare to fly around the world! Two to four people can play this as a board game, or a child can use it for imaginative play. With details such as a latte kiosk, an x-ray machine, security stops, baggage claim belt and a variety of shops, the Busytown Busy, Busy Airport has lots to keep young "travellers" engaged. Players can pilot their airplanes to the beach, the mountains, the city and more, collecting souvenirs to win the game. Testers say it's easy to learn and play, and it's a physically active game, keeping "wiggly" children engaged.</p>
	<p>KidiZoom Camera VTech 3-8 years ***Best Bet Award 2012*** A real camera designed for children, the KidiZoom camera with 4x digital zoom includes a user guide and a wrist strap. Easy-button operation allows young children to become instant photographers and movie directors. They can learn to shoot and edit their own creative photographs and videos (with sound), adding wacky effects as desired. The camera also includes three games. The camera can store 1000 photographs, and it also has a PC- and Mac-compatible connection. Testers like the results and say children can operate it with little direction. It's durable and kid-friendly, and it offers variety. Requires four "AA" batteries (included).</p> 

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	<p>Brilliant Creations Genius Junior VTech 4-7 years ***Best Bet Award 2012*** This cool-looking “genius” laptop with LCD colour screen offers plenty of activities for young children. These activities, in English and in French, reinforce curriculum concepts in creativity, phonics, math, science and logic across three levels. The laptop is portable, the screen has a protective cover to keep it scratch-free, and the working cursor mouse stays attached to the system. Testers say the volume and brightness controls are great added features, the animation and graphics are engaging, and progress can be mapped. Requires four “AA” batteries (included), but a 9V 300 mA adapter and rechargeable batteries can also be used (not included).</p> 
	<p>Leapster Explorer LeapFrog 4-9 years ***Best Bet Award 2012*** Introducing reading, mathematics, science, geography, music, health and problem-solving in a handheld video game, Leapster Explorer appeals to both preschoolers and children in the primary grades. Attractively designed, portable and easy to hold, the white and green console presents a variety of games with learn-at-your-own-pace programming. High-resolution graphics are an improvement over its predecessor, say testers, who complain only that children are reluctant to put the game away. Requires four “AA” batteries.</p> 
	<p>Littlest Pet Shop Magic Motion Tree House Hasbro Canada 4+ years ***Best Bet Award 2012*** The newest Littlest Pet Shop toy includes a tree house, acorns, a wagon, a bed and a new “walkable” pet chipmunk. Children can play with the set alone or combine it with other Littlest Pet Shop sets. The chipmunk is a hit. It can swing in a tree, nap in a hammock, play hide-and-seek in the tree trunk, ride the elevator to the second or third floor, or play on a slide. When it’s hungry, you can feed it acorns. Littlest Pet Shop fans love this attractive set, which stimulates imaginative play and develops dexterity. Requires two cell batteries.</p> 
	<p>Buck, Buck, Moose! Educational Insights 4+ years ***Best Bet Award 2012*** Have high-energy children who can’t sit still long enough to play a board game? This fun, quick, action card game is very entertaining, offers excellent play value, and encourages family time. The beautifully detailed cards come in an easy-to-open Velcro box. They’re a little awkward to shuffle, but they’re sturdy. The rules are straightforward and can be modified to create a matching or memory game. The game appeals to a range of ages. NOTE: The instructions are in English only.</p>

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	<p>uKloo Early Reader Treasure Hunt Game uKloo Kids Inc. 4+ years ***Best Bet Award 2012*** Our testers absolutely loved this unique, well-designed early reading game. Children read “clue cards,” with the help of a Picture Helper poster for challenging words, if necessary, to go on a treasure hunt for a surprise supplied by a parent. Three sets of cards cater to different reading levels. Cards are sturdy, there is a good variety of clues, play time is customizable, and playing stimulates word recognition. While setup requires parental assistance, children who tested this treasure hunt game couldn't get enough of it!</p>
	<p>Perplexus Rookie Perplexus, LLC (PlaSmart Inc) 5+ years ***Best Bet Award 2012*** Perplexus Rookie is a 15-centimetre maze puzzle that is “easy to play and hard to master,” according to testers. Attractive to a wide range of ages, the transparent plastic sphere challenges problem-solving and visual motor skills as children attempt to manoeuvre the small steel ball through an intricate labyrinth of 75 barriers. This toy encourages patience and practice! It includes a hard plastic stand to keep the ball in place to secure your success.</p>
	<p>Galapa Go! MJgames 5+ years ***Best Bet Award 2012*** This innovative family card game combines memory, quick thinking and identification skills, as well as fast reflexes. It's easily played by children of different ages, as it has a basic level and a more difficult level, but no one has an advantage. The game is compact, with 108 very small cards, and comes in a beautiful turquoise box. The object of the game is for players to collect the most animals on their island.</p>
	<p>Golden Gate Blue Orange Games 7+ years ***Best Bet Award 2012*** Looking for a card game with great play value? Golden Gate is an exciting game packaged in a nice, solid, compact yellow and red storage tin with a snug lid. It includes 20 “poker” chips, which have their own special place in the tin. The 36 cards have a beautiful design. Instructions are clear. The game is easy to set up, put away, store and carry around. Two to four people can play, with a higher number of players creating a whole new game, testers say. It's quick, fun and loved by all ages.</p>
	<p>Rock Fashion Studio SmartLab 7+ years ***Best Bet Award 2012*** The latest in SmartLab's Light Table Studio series rocks! This kit includes an LED light table, a 24-page inspirational book of attractive rock-star designs, a traceable acetate model that can be posed, 56 clothing and accessory “clings,” including rock-themed articles such as microphones and guitars, 10 coloured pencils, and sketching paper. Testers say this kit provides endless possibilities for the young fashionista and stimulates creativity and imagination, and the light table is easy to use. Requires three “AAA” batteries.</p> 

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	<p>Interior Design Light Box Studio Set Fashion Angels 8+ years ***Best Bet Award 2012*** Children can design their own rooms with this toy light-box studio set. It includes 10 “tree-free” coloured pencils, films featuring more than 200 furniture and room decor designs, 50 interior design sketch sheets, texture rubbing plates, and a design guide to inspire budding designers. There are lots of design pieces and design ideas, say testers, and children like the results of their work. The set allows children to develop creativity and demonstrate originality in their designs. Requires three “AA” batteries.</p> 
	<p>Totally Gross! The Game of Science University Games 8+ years ***Best Bet Award 2012*** Looking for a board game for children who don't like board games? This is the one! It engages children in learning about all the sciences, from biology to chemistry to zoology. They learn amazing facts and conduct fun mini-lab experiments while travelling around the big bright game board answering queasy questions! Meanwhile, players keep score by stretching slime on the score line. While the game takes at least an hour to play, most testers enjoy reading the “gross” cards and question cards and playing independently with the bottle of slime.</p>
	<p>Alien Mothership Lego 8-14 years ***Best Bet Award 2012*** The Alien Mothership has landed! This 416-piece spectacular Lego UFO ship has cool “alien” colours of fluorescent green and blue amid the predominantly grey and black bricks. The alien figure has a see-through green brain and eerie black eyes, and the reporter figure can be transformed into an alien with an extra alien head set. The outer disks of the ship spin, and a “sound brick” makes cool alien sounds. The set also includes an abducting claw and arm – everything you need to start an alien invasion! Requires three LR 41 1.5V batteries.</p> 
	<p>Bounty Hunter Assault Gunship Lego 8–14 years ***Best Bet Award 2012*** This Lego set offers Star Wars fans a Clone Wars adventure. The gunship features laser cannons, a prison cell (for captured Jedi Knights) and a secret chamber. Four mini figures include the new Sugi Aurra Sing Embo and the IG-86 assassin droid bounty hunter. The set has 389 pieces in the set and clear instructions for building the ship, or a child can use the blocks to build something else. The cockpit has a removable gun rack, and the movable doors and compartments in this set all work well. The constructed toy is realistically styled after gunships in the Star Wars movies.</p>
	<p>Sketch It! Blue Orange Games 9+ years ***Best Bet Award 2012*** Up to six people can play this drawing game, which requires players to sketch a designated item on a card as quickly as possible, but with enough precision so others can guess what they have drawn. A deck of standard-sized cards, a pad of paper, six pencils, six counters and a large die come neatly packaged in a sturdy tin box. Sketch It! is a fun family game that provides lots of laughter for all ages, including adults. The game encourages cooperation, and testers could barely put it down.</p>

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 A spherical toy with a complex internal maze structure, primarily blue and white, with a small ball visible inside.	<p>Perplexus Epic Busy Life LLC 10+ years ***Best Bet Award 2012*** Perplexus Epic is the third and newest of the Perplexus toys, co-invented by a teacher and a sculptor. This 22-centimetre maze inside a sphere challenges players to manoeuvre a small steel ball through an intricate labyrinth of tracks and obstacles. Testers say the toy stimulates a child's fine motor skills, hand-eye coordination, and concentration, and it's fun to take on trips or to the doctor's office.</p>
 A board game box for "PathWords" and a blue plastic game grid with colorful puzzle pieces and a challenge card.	<p>PathWords ThinkFun 12+ years ***Best Bet Award 2012*** Exercise your brain! ThinkFun's new solitaire game of logic combines the best of Tetris and Word Search. Players slide a challenge card into the plastic game grid, which includes a storage compartment, and then cover the card with jewel-coloured puzzle pieces. The game includes 40 challenges, from beginner to expert level, and a booklet with hints and solutions. It appeals to word game lovers and puzzle fanatics of all ages. It's self-contained, portable, easy to play and yet inventive and challenging.</p>