

## EDUCATION

# Beat the holiday STEM-pede!

Get great gifts that teach kids

BY LISA L. COLANGELO  
lisa.colangelo@amny.com

It's never too early to think about the holiday season, especially when it comes to the hottest kids toys.

Some of this year's most coveted toys are ones that can teach kids a thing or two about science, technology, engineering and math (STEM). These critical STEM skills can be honed by children of all ages, whether they want to use circuit boards to build a droid or teach a doll how to dance.

Here are some ideas. (P.S. You don't have to let the kids know they are learning while playing!)



THE TOY INSIDER

### Kurio Snap

This portable photo booth allows kids to snap, edit and share photos and videos. There is a built-in mic for young filmmakers to add their own narration. With a touch screen, kids can also add filters and sound effects to their work. Parents can use Wi-Fi and a USB port to save and share the first efforts of their young Steven Spielberg or Patty Jenkins. Ages 4 and up. \$69.99; toysrus.com



THE TOY INSIDER

### Dance Code Belle

Everyone's favorite bookworm Disney princess can now help kids with the basics of coding. By using block coding and connect-the-dots, kids can program dance sequences for Belle, who says 100 phrases. She also plays seven songs. Available Nov. 1, ages 5 and up, \$99.99; amazon.com

### YOUiverse Galactic Gel Candles

Kids can experiment to create colorful, glittery candles. The science lesson here is about mixing compounds and observing chemical reactions. The kit comes with lots of materials including four LED candles, colored sand, glue, confetti and glitter. Ages 6 and up, \$16.99; amazon.com



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### K'NEX Imagine Power and Play Motorized Building Set

What can't a kid build with this set? There are 529 pieces that can be constructed into 50 models that can move with a battery-powered motor. Instructions help kids create a chopper race car, carousel and spaceship. But the possibilities are endless. Here's a plus — if you break or lose a part, help is a phone call away. Ages 7 and up, \$44.99; knex.com



THE TOY INSIDER

### Droid Inventor Kit

This engaging kit by littleBits is not just for "Star Wars" aficionados. Kids can enjoy building their own droids using electronic blocks and a free Droid Inventor app. Their R2D2 can go on more than 16 missions. One allows kids to tap into their inner "force" and guide the droid by waving their hand. The droids can even draw and send secret messages. And the droids can be reconfigured over and over. Ages 8 and up, \$99.95; littlebits.com



THE TOY INSIDER

### Circuit Pinball Electronics

Lab Kids can create pinball themes by wiring electronic circuits to kick off lights and sound effects. The kit has more than 20 experiments and will make anyone a pinball wizard. Ages 8 and up, \$29.99-\$34.99; unclenilton.com