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parenting for high potential

Toys & Games for Gifted Kids

For years, there was a tradition at the National Association for Gifted Children to recruit gifted tween and tiny toy testers to select which just-released toys and games most appealed to them. The annual *Toys & Games Review* was published in *Parenting for High Potential*, NAGC's award-winning magazine, just prior to holiday shopping season.

During this time of uncertainty, as families look for ways to stay connected and entertained, NAGC has opened the archives and dusted off the more recent toy lists from the past decade. We combed through toys and games from 2010-2015 that gifted children selected as "winners," along with those recommended in "Tabletop Games in a Digital World" by

Dr. Carolyn Ragatz and Zach Ragatz (*Parenting for High Potential*, March 2018).

We've updated pricing, urls, and availability—and have only included toys and games still on the market today. If your family is looking for new diversions, take a moment to browse this list. You'll have the comfort in knowing that everything here comes recommended by other gifted children, tweens, and teens.

(Note: As of April 15, 2020, the toys and games on this list were verified as available either directly from the manufacturer, big box retailers, or Amazon. Family-owned toy and game stores in local communities may carry some of these titles as well.)

Toys & Games By Age

We've sorted and color-coded each toy and game into one of three age groups: 3+, 6+, and 10+ years. The type of information provided about each entry may vary, depending on how the review was conducted that year. For example, some age recommendations are made by manufacturer; others are made by toy testers.

Age-range categories are only intended as an informal guideline. Ultimately, parents and caregivers should decide which toys and games (regardless of category) are best suited for their own children's maturity, skills, and interests.

AGES 3+

AGES 6+

AGES 10+

5 SECOND RULE®

Manufacturer: **Patch Products**; Mfr. Recommended Age: **10+**; Number of players: **3 or more**; Website: www.playmonster.com; MSRP: **\$16.99**

"People who like to blurt out will love this game, because they can do that and not get in trouble!" In five seconds, a player must name three things from the category on the drawn card. If not successful, the next player takes over but cannot repeat the previous answers. It's fast-paced fun, yet challenging! (2011)

7 WONDERS

Manufacturer: **Repos Production**; Ages: **10+**; Number of players: **4-5**; Website: rprod.com; MSRP: **\$49.99**

As leaders of one of the 7 great cities of the Ancient World, players gather resources, develop commercial routes, and affirm military supremacy in this intricate strategy game that encourages critical thinking and coordination. (2018)

ABOVE AND BELOW

Manufacturer: **Red Raven**; Ages: **10+**; Number of players: **3**; Website: redravengames.com; MSRP: **\$49.99**

A mashup of town-building and storytelling, players compete to build the best village—both above and below ground. This game is a fun, imaginative way for students to coordinate and work together. (2018)

BUILD-A-ROBOT

Manufacturer: **Plan Toys**; Mfr. Recommended Age: **3+**; Number of players: **1 or more**; Website: usa.plantoys.com; MSRP: **\$35**

Children can build this simple, sturdy, wooden robot and choose from four different shaped heads showing different emotions. (2011)

DABBLE

Manufacturer: **INI**; Mfr. Recommended Age: **10+**; Website: www.dabblegame.com; MSRP: **\$24.95**

With a limited number of letters and even less time, players are called upon to use exactly 20 letter tiles to make between two- and six-letter words. Also available as a mobile app and Facebook game. (2013)

DADO CUBES/SQUARES

Manufacturer: **Fat Brain Toy Co.**; Mfr. Recommended Age: **3+**; Number of players: **1 or more**; Website: www.fatbraintoy.com; MSRP: **\$28.95**

These brightly colored, notched planks can be used to create different structures and objects again and again. (2011)

DO YOU KNOW SHAKESPEARE?

Manufacturer: **SimplyFun**; Mfr. Recommended Age: **12+**; Testers' Recommended Age: **12+**; Website: www.simplyfun.com; MSRP: **\$38.00**

This trivia game helps develop knowledge of Shakespeare's literary works, and combines risk-reward analysis with exciting fun. (2015)

DOMINION

Manufacturer: **Rio Grande Games**; Ages: **10+**; Number of players: **2-4**; Website: riograndegames.com; MSRP: **\$44.95**

Players are monarchs, racing to acquire unclaimed land to build a dominion. It's a fast game that encourages efficient, fun competition. (2018)

DUNGEONS & DRAGONS

Manufacturer: **Wizards of the Coast**; Ages: **10+**; Number of players: **4-8**; Website: dnd.wizards.com; MSRP: **\$19.99 and up**.

Players tell a story together, guiding heroes through quests for treasure, battles with deadly foes, daring rescues, and courtly intrigue. (2018)

FOLKMANIS® PUPPETS

Manufacturer: **Folkmanis®**; Website: www.folkmanis.com; MSRP: **\$33.99**

Folkmanis puppets are excellent snuggle companions with friendly and whimsical characteristics. (2011, 2014)

GEEK OUT! POP CULTURE PARTY

Manufacturer: **Playroom Entertainment**; Mfr. Recommended Age: **10+**; Testers' Recommended Age: **10+**; Website: www.playroomentertainment.com; MSRP: **\$15.99**

Geek Out! Pop Culture Party is a wild game that reveals which player is the most knowledgeable about favorite pop culture subjects, TV, movies, music, and literature. Players draw cards asking them to list things that fall under a certain category, and try to bluff their way through. (2014)

GET 4 & SCORE

Manufacturer: **Simply Fun**; Mfr. Recommended Age: **8+**; Testers' Recommended Age: **7+**; Website: www.simplyfun.com; MSRP: **\$32.00**

This race-against-the-clock word game facilitates vocabulary building, improves memory recall, and grows with learning. (2014)

HEXBUG NANO®

Manufacturer: **Innovation First International**; Mfr. Recommended Age: **3+**; Website: www.hexbug.com/nano; MSRP: **\$49.99**

HexBugs scuttle along on vibrating legs in all sorts of habitats to race against each other. (2011)

HIGH TAIL IT!

Manufacturer: **Simply Fun**; Mfr. Recommended Age: **10+**; Testers' Recommended Age: **6-9**; Website: www.simplyfun.com; MSRP: **\$34.00**

Hop around the board and be the first player to complete the journey with all five kangaroos and win the game! (2014)

IQ-BLOX

Manufacturer: **Smart Toys and Games, Inc.**; Mfr. Recommended Age: **6-10**; Testers' Recommended Age: **6+**; Website: www.smartgamesusa.com; MSRP: **\$9.99**

IQ-Blox offers 120 challenges to fit on a rectangular game board, with ring-and-ball shapes and four white walls. (2015)

JEEPERS PEEPERS™

Manufacturer: **Super Duper® Publications**; Mfr. Recommended Age: **Grades K-5**; Number of players: **2+**; Website: www.superduperinc.com; MSRP: **\$34.95**

The first player puts on a pair of goofy glasses that hold a card only others can see and tries to guess what's on the card by asking the other players a series of "yes" or "no" questions. (2011)

KANODLE EXTREME

Manufacturer: **Educational Insights**; Mfr. Recommended Age: **8+**; Testers' Recommended Age: **6-13**; Website: www.educationalinsights.com; MSRP: **\$14.99**

Kanoodle Extreme offers more than 300 different 2D and 3D puzzles to challenge your brain. (2015)

KILTER

Manufacturer: **SimplyFun**; Mfr. Recommended Age: **8+**; Website: www.simplyfun.com; MSRP: **\$36.00**

Upon pulling the "game board" out of the box, one finds two pieces of wood joined together much like a seesaw: Competitors must stack various sized/weighted blocks on the elevated lever of their choice, using the laws of physics. (2013)

L-SIXTEEN

Manufacturer: **Kadon Enterprises, Inc.**; Mfr. Recommended Age: **6+**; Testers' Recommended Age: **7+**; Website: www.gamepuzzles.com; MSRP: **\$65.00**

The goal is to create shapes, color designs, or continuous paths by using 16 L-shaped tetromino tiles with holes and placing them in an 8-by-8-inch array on a framed tray. (2014)

LASER MAZE

Manufacturer: **ThinkFun**; Mfr. Recommended Age: **8+**;
Website: www.thinkfun.com; MSRP: **\$32.99**

A one-player logic game, Laser Maze builds sequential reasoning and planning skills using mirrors and targets on a puzzle grid to reach a goal. To begin, the player draws 1 of 60 cards, and is then challenged to bend, reflect, and split a real laser beam to complete the maze. (2013)

LAST LETTER

Manufacturer: **ThinkFun**; Mfr. Recommended Age: **8+**; Testers' Recommended Age: **8+**; Website: www.thinkfun.com; MSRP: **\$13.99**

Players yell out words from the illustrated card that starts with the last letter of the word previously called. (2014)

THE MAGIC LABYRINTH

Manufacturer: **Playroom Entertainment**®; Mfr. Recommended Age: **6+**; Number of players: **2-4**; Website: www.playrooment.com; MSRP: **\$29.99**

Build a maze by placing blocking walls within the game box, then covering the maze with the game board and discovering ways to navigate your magnetized piece across the board, picking up as many objects as you can without bumping into the walls hidden beneath. (2011)

MIRROR MANSION

Manufacturer: **Simply Fun**; Mfr. Recommended Age: **6+**; Number of players: **2-4**;
Website: www.simplyfun.com; MSRP: **\$38.00**

Using mirrors and the science of reflection, players explore Mirror Mansion looking for hidden treasures. (2011)

NUMBER CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITY SET

Manufacturer: **Learning Resources**; Mfr. Recommended Age: **4+**; Testers' Recommended Age: **3-5**; Website: www.learningresources.com; MSRP: **\$24.99**

Players construct numbers with tiles and practice mathematical skills while sequencing numbers. (2014)

OZOBOT

Manufacturer: **Ozobot**; Mfr. Recommended Age: **7+**; Testers' Recommended Age: **7-13**; Website: www.ozobot.com; MSRP: **\$49.99**

Users enjoy designing and controlling different paths using the provided map, player-designed maps, or their own mobile devices. (2015)

QUADRILLION

Manufacturer: **Smart Toys and Games, Inc.**; Mfr. Recommended Age: **7+**; Testers' Recommended Age: **8+**; Website: www.smartgames.eu/us; MSRP: **\$19.99**

Quadrillion is a fun solitaire game for anyone who likes to solve packing problems. After snapping together four magnetic grids to make a personal game board, players need to fit all the puzzle pieces on the grid. (2014)

THE REEL SCRIPT

Manufacturer: **SimplyFun**; Mfr. Recommended Age: **8+**; Testers' Recommended Age: **7+**; Website: www.simplyfun.com; MSRP: **\$36.00**

The Reel Script is a game that exercises a student's love for creative writing and movies. Players bid on script lines in order to build a script and pitch it to the group. Players vote on the best script, with one player winning the round to collect points. (2015)

RIDDLE CUBE

Manufacturer: **Educational Insights**; Mfr. Recommended Age: **8+**; Testers' Recommended Age: **7+**; Website: www.educationalinsights.com; MSRP: **\$21.99**

Players must move quickly in order to match their shape to a challenge card; the first person to match the challenge wins the card. (2015)

SAY WHAT YOU MEME

Manufacturer: **Playroom Entertainment**; Mfr. Recommended Age: **8+**; Testers' Recommended Age: **10+**; Website: www.playroomentertainment.com; MSRP: **\$15.99**

Say What You Meme is a hilarious game where players create their own memes and choose the funniest. (2014)

CATAN

Manufacturer: **CATAN**; Ages: **9+**; Number of players: **4**;
Website: catan.com; MSRP: **\$49.00**

Players try to be the dominant force on the island of Catan by building settlements, cities, and roads using resources like wood and grain. (2018)

SMART FELLOW

Manufacturer: **HABA**; Mfr. Recommended Age: **2-6**; Website: www.habausa.com; MSRP: **\$40.00**

With three degrees of difficulty, players strengthen brains and motor skills by replicating structures that match images on cards. Players also have the freedom to create whatever their imaginations can conjure. (2013)

STAR REALMS

Manufacturer: **Star Realms**; Mfr. Recommended Age: **12+**; Testers' Recommended Age: **10+**; Website: www.starrealms.com; MSRP: **\$15.00**

Star Realms is a space-themed combat card game, with the goal of dominating other players through two options for play: physical cards and board, or a downloadable online version. (2015)

STINKY PIG

Manufacturer: **Patch Products, LLC**; Mfr. Recommended Age: **6+**; Testers' Recommended Age: **6-8**; Website: www.patchproducts.com; MSRP: **\$11.99**

Stinky Pig is a fast, exciting, "hot potato" style game with a twist. Players roll the dice to see which way to pass the singing pig, but you don't want to be the one holding him when he "toots!" (2015)

STRATEGO

Manufacturer: **Play Monster**; Mfr. Recommended Age: **8+**; Testers' Recommended Age: **8+**; Website: www.patchproducts.com; MSRP: **\$29.99**

This updated version of Stratego is still enticing, exciting, and loads of fun for players of all ages looking for a challenge. For single- and multi-player online versions and apps, go to www.stratego.com or www.youdagames.com. (2015)

TAPPLE

Manufacturer: **USAopoly**; Mfr. Recommended Age: **8+**; Website: www.theopgames.com; MSRP: **\$19.99**

Tapple asks players to name things that fit into a particular category, as determined by a card drawn at the beginning of each round. Once the timer is set, the first player has 10 seconds to give a single word answer that fits within the topic, press down the letter key in a special electronic device that corresponds to the first letter of that word, and restart the timer. The next player must then think of a word for the topic that starts with a different letter, press down the starting letter, and restart the timer. (2013)

TELESTRATIONS

Manufacturer: **USAopoly**; Mfr. Recommended Age: **13+ (Middle School)**; Website: www.theopgames.com; MSRP: **\$29.99**

Telestrations is like playing a game of "Telephone" with sketched drawings. Equipped with dry erase markers, boards, and card deck, 4 to 8 players are asked to draw a secret word that gets passed from player to player. (2013)

TERRAFORMING MARS

Manufacturer: **Stronghold Games**; Ages: **12+**; Number of players: **3-4, or solo**; Website: www.fryxgames.se; MSRP: **\$69.95**

Players work together to advance humanity throughout the solar system in a game that engages children interested in the cosmos and future technology. (2018)

THREE LITTLE PIGGIES

Manufacturer: **Smart Toys and Games, Inc.**; Mfr. Recommended Age: **3+**; Testers' Recommended Age: **3-5**; Website: www.smartgamesusa.com; MSRP: **\$24.99**

Three Little Piggies is a 3D brain-teaser that helps small hands build spatial awareness through a well-known story. Children solve 48 challenges to help the pigs build houses, play outside, and stay safe from the wolf. (2015)

TICKET TO RIDE

Manufacturer: **Days of Wonder**; Ages: **8+**; Number of players: **3-5**; Website: www.daysofwonder.com; MSRP: **\$44.99**

Players collect cards of various types of train cars to claim railway routes with the aim of building long routes. With elegantly simple, yet strategic, gameplay, this game takes just 15 minutes to learn. (2018)

T.I.M.E. STORIES

Manufacturer: **Varioux**; Ages: **13+**; Number of players: **4**; Website: www.spacecowboys.fr; MSRP: **\$49.99**

A narrative game, T.I.M.E. asks players to take on characters to help the T.I.M.E. Agency protect humanity via trials and puzzles. (2018)

TUMBLE TRAX MAGNETIC MARBLE RUN

Manufacturer: **Learning Resources**; Mfr. Recommended Age: **5+**; Testers' Recommended Age: **3-10**; Website: www.learningresources.com; MSRP: **\$24.99**

Tumble Trax Magnetic Marble Run provides fun in the classroom or at home with magnetic foam pieces, four marbles, activity cards, and a variety of challenges to create an exciting marble trail. (2015)

WORRY EATERS

Manufacturer: **Haywire Group**; Mfr. Recommended Age: **All Ages**; Testers' Recommended Age: **6-13**; Website: www.sorgenfresser.com; MSRP: **\$15.99**

Worry Eaters are cuddly creatures that come in a variety of shapes, sizes, and colors to stash and manage your child's worries! Players "feed" their worries to the Worry Eater, and are then better able to discuss and manage their feelings. (2015)

YOWZA!

Manufacturer: **Patch Products, LLC**; Mfr. Recommended Age: **7+**; Testers' Recommended Age: **6-10**; Website: www.patchproducts.com; MSRP: **\$9.99**

In this fast-paced game, players shout onomatopoeia words while discarding their cards; but if their discard matches the word just shouted, they pick must up the pile. (2015)

ZIP-IT

Manufacturer: **BananaGrams**; Mfr. Recommended Age: **7+**; Number of players: **2**; Website: www.bananagrams.com; MSRP: **\$29.99**

Zip-It is like a fast-paced Scrabble game mixed with a crossword puzzle—all efficiently put together in a travel pouch so you can play without pencil, paper, or gameboard. It's a perfect way to fill waiting time! (2011)

Special thanks to Graham Reid for vetting and compiling the 2020 Toys & Games for Gifted Kids list.

The mission of the National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC) is to support those who enhance the growth and development of gifted and talented children through education, advocacy, community building, and research.

Well-informed parents make a difference. Membership in NAGC is the best way for you to improve the future for gifted learners, especially your own! Visit www.nagc.org to find out more.

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