

# iPads become child's play

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This product photo provided by Spin Master Ltd, shows the Appblaster. The \$19.99 AppBlaster, a plastic gun for kids over 8 years old. After slipping an iPhone or iPad touch on top of the AppBlaster, kids can shoot at aliens that pop up on the screen. (AP Photo/Spin Master Ltd, Tom Szuba)

(AP) -- Make room in the toy box for the iPad.

Crayola allows tots to doodle on the iPad using its iMarker just as they would a crayon on a coloring book. Tweens are able to belt out their favorite Miley Cyrus and Selena Gomez tunes on a Disney microphone that turns the tablet into a karaoke machine. And technology accessories company Griffin enables teens to fly its toy helicopter by using the [iPhone](#) as a remote control.

This holiday season, toy makers have turned Apple Inc.'s pricey tablet and smartphone into playthings for [kids](#). They figure in this weak economy, parents will be willing to splurge on toys for their children that utilize devices they already have - or want - themselves.

Tiffany Fessler of Gainesville, Ga., certainly was willing to do that even though when she initially bought her \$829 iPad she never imagined she'd be sharing it with her 20-month-old son. But whenever she sat down to check emails on the iPad, he'd climb into her lap wanting to use it.

So, Fessler decided to get him the \$29.99 Crayola iMarker, which transforms the iPad into a digital coloring book using a Crayola's free ColorStudio HD application that parents can download. Kids can draw and color using the iMarker, which has a soft tip so it doesn't scratch the tablet's glass screen.

"When you have a screaming toddler in a restaurant or any public area, you want to have something to calm him down with," says Fessler, 39. "This is just another way to keep him entertained."

That the iPad and iPhone have infiltrated the \$22 billion toy market this season is no surprise. Smartphones and tablets - particularly Apple products - are more popular than ever with people of all ages. This year, Apple is expected to double the number of iPhones sold to 90.6 million worldwide, according to research firm Gartner, while the number of iPads sold is expected to triple to 46.7 million.

And Apple products have a certain "cool factor" with kids that toy companies, which can make up to half of their revenue during the holidays, are hoping to tap into. In fact, the iPad and iPhone are among the most coveted electronics this holiday season among kids. About 44 percent of 6- to 12-year-olds want the iPad this year, according to a survey by research firm Nielsen. The iPod touch came in the No. 2 spot

with 30 percent, followed by the iPhone at 27 percent.

Not to mention, anyone who's a parent knows all too well that babies and older kids alike love to fiddle with or drool all over mommy's iPad.

Nearly 40 percent of 2-to 4-year-olds have used a smartphone, iPad or video iPod, according to a survey by nonprofit group Common Sense Media. That number rises to 52 percent for 5- to- 8 year olds. And even 10 percent of infants have used one of the devices before their first birthday.

"It's mostly something for kids to use in the car or at the doctor's office," says Chris Baynes, a toy analyst. "It's a way to get the kid to be quiet."

With that in mind, Crayola teamed up with Nashville, Tenn.-based Griffin Technology, which is mostly known for selling iPhone and iPad cases and car chargers, to make the iMarker and the ColorStudio HD app for kids. The iMarker, which is like a stylus that resembles a Crayola marker, is targeted at children ages three and up.

"Regardless of who they buy it for, once it is in the household, we know that kids use it," says Vicky Lozano, vice president of marketing at Crayola, which makes the iMarker.

Other toy makers also have gotten into the game:

- Griffin's \$49.99 remote-controlled toy helicopter is aimed at teens over 14. Called the "HELO TC," it flies using a device that plugs into an iPhone, iPad or iPod. A free app turns the touchscreen of the devices into a cockpit that controls the helicopter.

- Mattel Inc.'s Fisher-Price unit is selling "The Laugh and Learn Apptivity Case" aimed at babies for \$15. The case locks the iPhone into a colorful, easy to grab case that looks like a big round rattle. The case

stops babies from making unwanted calls and protects the iPhone from something else: drool. Parents can open up three free apps that play music, read words aloud and count numbers. The company plans to release an iPad version of the case this spring.

- Disney has three offerings. The "Disney Spotlight" microphone, which is \$69.99 or \$99.99 for a wireless version, plugs into the iPad and allows kids to sing along to Disney songs from shows such as "Hannah Montana" - or to their own music - and record their own music video. Disney's \$79.99 AppClix digital camera enables kids to upload their pictures to an iPad and a free app allows them add Mickey Mouse and Donald Duck into the photos. And Disney teamed up with Canadian toy maker Spin Master to create "Appmates," a toy car based on the characters from the company's "Cars 2" animated movie. One car sells for \$12.99 while a two-pack goes for \$19.99. Using a free app, kids can "drive" on different courses by moving the car across the iPad screen.

- Spin Master, which makes toys such as Air Hogs and Bakugan, started a new line this year of toys for the iPad and iPhone called "AppFininity." Its first toy in the line is the \$19.99 AppBlaster, a plastic gun for kids over age eight. After slipping an iPhone or [iPad](#) touch on top of the AppBlaster, kids can shoot at aliens that pop up on the screen.

Analysts say these toys are just the beginning of a new niche for toy makers. Indeed, most of the companies say they plan to roll out more products for smartphones and tablets - including some that use Google Inc.'s Android software- next year.

"I think it's going to be a growing segment," says Jim Silver, editor-in-chief at toy review website TimeToPlaymag.com. "Next year, there will be even more (products) than you can possibly imagine."

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