

# Purdue engineer: Toys can help develop STEM skills in children

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One of the hot topics on social media this holiday season is finding gifts that can help children, especially girls, develop science- and engineering-related skills.

Beth Holloway, director of the Women in Engineering Program at Purdue University, says [toys](#) that help children figure out how to turn their [ideas](#) into reality - toys that let them design and build something, for instance - are a great first step in inspiring them to consider a STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) career.

"Toys like that will help children realize that they can make an impact on the world through their ideas," she says.

As for girls in particular, Holloway says they should have a range of toys and experiences.

"Parents need to provide girls with toys that indulge their feminine side but also those that allow them to feel the sense of accomplishment that comes from designing and building something," she says. "Those accomplishments will encourage them to continue to stretch their imaginations."

Holloway says research shows that girls tend to become interested in what they are confident that they are good at doing. STEM-inspired toys can help foster that confidence in designing and building while reinforcing their existing interests.

For ideas on STEM-related toys, Holloway suggests the websites [www.modernparentsmessykids.com ... ing-stem-skills.html](http://www.modernparentsmessykids.com...ing-stem-skills.html) and [www.amightygirl.com/holiday-guide](http://www.amightygirl.com/holiday-guide)

Provided by Purdue University

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