

A parent's holiday shopping list to **INSPIRE** your wannabe astronaut or aerospace engineer

December 6 2018, by Kelsey Schnieders Lefever



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Are you shopping for a child who dreams of being an astronaut or

visiting outer space?

This year's Engineering Gift Guide from Purdue University's INSPIRE Research Institute for Pre-College Engineering features a variety of space-related toys, games, and activities that will capture their imaginations while teaching them lessons in engineering.

The annual gift guide boasts 140 toys, books and games this year for children as young as 1 year old up to 18-year-olds in categories ranging from building and circuits to logic and puzzles.

"These gifts may stimulate kids' interest in the space field," said Elizabeth Gajdzik, assistant director of INSPIRE. "A toy, [game](#) or book is a great way to provide kids with a fun learning experience that may stick with them for the rest of their lives. And who knows, the first person to set foot on Mars may very well be in elementary school right now."

Some of the gifts relating to space are:

- Magformers Sky Track. magformers.com. \$99.99
- Robotics: Smart Machines Rovers and Vehicles. Thamesandkosmos.com. \$134.95.
- Asteroid Escape. Smartgamesusa.com. \$14.99.
- "Catstronauts: Mission Moon, Race to Mars, Space Station Situation, and Robot Rescue." Written and illustrated by Drew Brockington. Hachettebookgroup.com. \$7.99 paperback/\$16.99 hardcover.
- "Curiosity: The Story of a Mars Rover." Written and illustrated by Markus Motum. Candlewick.com. \$22.99 hardcover.
- "Rubber Band Engineer: Build Slingshot Powered Rockets, Rubber Band Rifles and Unconventional Catapults." Written by Lance Akiyama. Quartoknows.com. \$17.95 paperback.

- Launchers, Lobbers, and Rockets Engineer. Written by Lance Akiyama. Quartoknows.com. \$22.99 paperback.
- Mechanics Gravity Motor. Geomagworld.com. \$59.99.
- Mechanics Gravity Up and Down Circuit. Geomagworld.com. \$119.99.
- Timberkits Bi-Plane. Timberkits.com. \$39.95.
- "Elara, STEM Girl." Written by Leela Ayyar. Mascotbooks.com. \$8.99.

Toys, games and books included in the guide go through an extensive review process. From the engineering aspect, at least three faculty, staff or students conducted evaluations of each toy. Students with INSPIRE have an engineering background and are trained on how to review the submissions.

Those reviews are then used to develop ratings and descriptions of how the gifts promote engineering thinking and design, which are included on the INSPIRE's [gift](#) guide website.

Events for parents and children to review the toys and games were held throughout August and September at Lafayette's science center, Imagination Station, as well as the West Lafayette and Klondike Branch public libraries.

More information: The gift guide is available online at [engineering.purdue.edu/INSPIRE ... EngineeringGiftGuide](http://engineering.purdue.edu/INSPIRE...EngineeringGiftGuide)

Provided by Purdue University

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