



# CST CHATTER BOX

## TOYS AS TOOLS FOR LEARNING

Everyone knows that toys are the necessary instruments that kids need to grow and develop to their optimum. Unfortunately, like any other object in this world, not all toys are created equal. As consumers, we must be very meticulous in our choices of playthings as our kids are quite dependent on our judgment.



[WWW.verywell.com](http://WWW.verywell.com) has come up with a list of the world's top 10 educational toys that your kids will love. These playthings are guaranteed to be so useful that parents who are also teaching in grade school can use these tools as learning instruments for the teaching of their students.

**Snap Circuits Jr. SC-100 Electronics Discovery Kit by Elenco.** This is ideal for enhancing kids' fascination for science and technology concepts. Also a great teaching tool in school.

**Smart Globe Discovery by Oregon Scientific.** We love the highly interactive learning activities that come with the globe. It's great for enhancing general knowledge as well as expanding kids' vocabulary.

**Gears! Gears! Gears! by Learning Resources.** It's perfect for encouraging children's creativity and imagination. It's also great for reinforcing color recognition and enhancing manual dexterity and visual motor coordination.

**My First Mind Blowing Science Kit by Scientific Explorer.** It spurs creativity and imagination among kids. Great for augmenting science classes, too.

**Write and Learn Creative Center by VTech.** It's a very innovative way of training children how to hold writing instruments and how to use these tools to write. Great for expanding vocabulary and language and communication skills.

**Brain Quest Smart Game by University Games.** It is a very fun way to encourage love of general information as well as helps strengthen the cognitive abilities of children. Also ideal in enhancing kids' competitive spirit.

**Original Butterfly Garden by Insect Lore.** There is nothing better than letting your kids watch how things grow in real life. The Butterfly Garden serves this purpose beautifully.

**Mathlink Cubes-100 by Learning Resources.** It is ideal for helping young children master number concepts while at the same time strengthening their visual motor coordination and spatial intelligence.

**Genius Kit by Osmo.** This is excellent for developing the problem solving skills of children as well as of kids of any age. It's also an invaluable teaching material for schools.

**Rock On! Geology Game with Rock and Mineral Collection Kit by iLaugh-nLearn.** This is superb for encouraging kids' fascination for earth sciences particularly metallurgy and geology. It's also an ideal game for enhancing social interaction with other kids.

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#### Special points of interest:

- ☉ Focus on Fitness
- ☉ Community Resources
- ☉ Cyberbullying
- ☉ Down's Syndrome Awareness

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# LET'S GET MOVING

Physical exercise and fitness activities improve mental health and academic performance! Regular exercise may have a positive impact on how children feel, reducing depression, stress, and anxiety. Exercise also can help children sleep better, and help with being able to pay attention and remember things. While in school, students participate in Physical Education classes and Recess. They also can participate in classroom movement activities. Check out [www.teachhub.com/use-fitness-breaks-keep-your-students-alert](http://www.teachhub.com/use-fitness-breaks-keep-your-students-alert).

Here are some ideas in addition to exercise times in school:

- walk to and from school
- use the equipment at your local playground
- walk around town or through the park
- use the stairs rather than the elevator
- select an exercise program to follow along on your television
- do chores inside or outside your home like raking, shoveling, sweeping, and more
- get involved in recreational sports in your area
- ride bikes and scooters
- use Wii sports games
- kick a ball around in your yard
- play tag with friends and family



How about making a pledge that children you know will increase activity time and reduce television or video game time this year!

Reference: Some information related to this article is from the Cornerstone Day School publication, Trends, October 2016, The Benefits of Physical Exercise On Mental Health In Children And Youth.

## More Community Resources!

**Parents have expressed interest on events and activities focused on special needs children that are taking place in the area. We hope the following will interest you and/or your child!**

**Free Parenting Classes:** Family Intervention Services and Morris County Family Success Center present a group for parents of 5-12 year olds in Spanish. Parents can learn new parenting ideas, meet other parents, and receive support and encouragement. It takes place on Tuesdays (6 week program) January 17, 24, 31, February 7, 14, 21 at 6-8 PM At 73 Bassett HWY, Dover, NJ. Contact Johanna Hernandez at 973-908-7093.

**Moms of Special Needs Children Support Group** will take place once a month in West Orange,



from 7:30-9:30. The group will offer support and guidance, an opportunity to network with other mothers, ways to advocate for your child, and services and resources available in the community. It will be facilitated by Jewish Family Service of MetroWest. Contact 973-929-3129.

**Mayo Performing Arts Center: The Rainbow Fish.** On Wednesday, February 8 at 4 PM, a sensory friendly performance will be held for children 4-10. This event has been designed to create a suppor-

tive, welcoming experience for children on the autism spectrum. The performance features modulated sound and light levels and a relaxed environment where the audience is free to talk, vocalize, and leave and re-enter the seating area.

**Randolph YMCA Kaleidoscope:** the YMCA's Special Needs Kaleidoscope Program offers children ages 5-17 the opportunity to become more confident in the water through the teaching of basic swimming skills by trained volunteers. Classes occur on Saturdays from 12:30-1:30. Classes start on January 7, 2017. For more information, contact Deb Popek, Program Coordinator at 973 366 1120 x13 or [deb-bie@randolphymca.org](mailto:deb-bie@randolphymca.org).

# Cyberbullying: Teaching Kids to Think Before They Hit Send

Cyberbullying is bullying through email, instant message, in a chat room, on a website through digital messages or images sent to a cellular phone or personal digital assistant (PDA). Similar to traditional bullying, it involves a negative action which is often repeated and is an imbalance of power.

How is cyberbullying different from bullying? Some factors are anonymity, accessibility, disinhibition, bystanders, and victims not telling due to punitive fears such as retaliation or loss of their phone. Victims may skip school, experience in-person bullying, receive poor grades, have lower self-esteem, and have more health problems. Kids who bully others can also engage in violent and other risky behaviors into adulthood

such as getting into fights, vandalizing property, and dropping out of school.

It is important to assess kids' use of technology and establish some universal precautions. Parents and teachers can utilize the worksheet in this article: <http://www.edsocialmedia.com/2012/12/15-questions-to-ask-your-students-about-social-media-worksheet>.

It is also important to red flag behaviors that may indicate possible risk. Such behaviors may be depressive symptoms, self-harm, strained parental relationships, history of maltreatment, etc. For victims, interventions such as increasing self-esteem, education and support to parents, and family counseling

may be needed. For perpetrators, education and empathy work, counseling focusing on impulse control and anger management skills and appropriate expression of feelings, insight-oriented treatment to examine underlying issues that led to bullying behaviors, and family counseling may be needed.

Morris County is offering a Cyber Bullying and Sexting Education Program. Parent and youth will be required to attend two 1 1/2 hour sessions together. It will be taught by a LCSW and former sex crimes and child endangerment detective. Referrals can be made to Youth Services Coordinator, Jessica Mondino at 973-285-6850.

For more information, visit <http://cyberbullying.org>.

## Disability Spotlight

### What is Downs Syndrome?

People with Down Syndrome have an extra, critical portion of chromosome 21 present in all or some of their cells. This additional genetic material alters the course of development and causes the characteristics associated with Down syndrome. The cause of the extra full or partial chromosome is still unknown. Maternal age is the only factor that has been linked to an increased chance of having a baby with Down syndrome. There is no definitive scientific research that indicates that Down syndrome is caused by environmental factors or the parents' activities before or during pregnancy. The additional partial or full copy of the 21st chromosome which causes Down syndrome can originate from either the father or the mother.

### What is the likelihood of having a child with Down Syndrome?

Down syndrome occurs in people of all races and economic levels, though older women have an increased chance of having a child with Down syndrome. A 35 year old woman has about a one in 350 chance of conceiving a child with Down syndrome, and this chance increases gradually to 1 in 100 by age 40. At age 45 the incidence becomes approximately 1 in 30.

### When is Down Syndrome diagnosed?

Down Syndrome can be diagnosed prenatally through testing or at birth by the presence of certain physical traits. Traits include low muscle tone, a single deep crease across the palm of the hand, a slightly flattened facial profile and an upward slant to the eyes. When these features are present, a chromosomal test is also administered to confirm the diagnosis.



## Shared Services Child Study Team

Wharton Borough Schools  
973-361-3010

Mine Hill Township School (CAS)  
973-366-0590

Rockaway Borough Schools  
973-625-8601



The Shared Services Child Study Team has made it a goal to increase communication and Special Education knowledge with parents as well as teachers and administration within the three school districts. As part of this goal, you will now be receiving newsletters from the team three times a year filled with information on special education practices/law, community resources, special needs tips, etc. We hope you find this helpful!

Leslie Mozulay, LDTC

Stephanie Dzikowski, LDTC

Stacy McCoy, School Psychologist

Brooke Hanenberg, School Psychologist

Armi Clancy, School Social Worker

## Get to Know Your CST

This school year Brooke Hanenberg re-joined the shared services Child Study Team and is based in Wharton. While away, she and her husband welcomed a baby boy who is now one year old!

Brooke received her training and certification in School Psychology from Seton Hall University. As a School Psychologist, Brooke case manages classified students and



seeks to find ways to improve their social-emotional functioning. In her free time, Brooke enjoys spending time with her family and reading.

**Brooke Hanenberg, School Psychologist, with her son**