

# Award-Winning Educational Products Now Available To Parents Online

(NAPSA)—When it comes to toys, there's the best—then there's the rest. Fortunately, finding the very best toys is easier than you might suspect.

Products winning the prestigious 2004 Directors Choice Award are now available for the first time on SmarterKids.com. The 15-year-old awards recognize excellence in products specifically designed for use in early childhood classrooms.

"Parents often see products in child care centers or schools that they would like to use in their own homes," says Megan Shaw, editor of *Earlychildhood NEWS*, sponsor of the awards. "This is an excellent way to reinforce the home-school connection and to involve parents more actively in their young children's early development," comments Shaw. Unfortunately, most of the products found in these settings are sold exclusively to early care and educational providers.

"We felt that it was important to offer these award-winning products to parents because they really value guidelines in product selection for young children. We were pleased to be able to offer our Director's Choice Award winners on SmarterKids.com."

The Directors' Choice Awards is unique in its independence from toy or product manufacturers. Products that receive the Directors' Choice Award are chosen by an independent panel of child development experts from across the country. These experts review and test early childhood and educational products, judging them on criteria such as quality, safety and durability and value.

"We have seen a dramatic increase over the past few years in parents' understanding of early childhood development and in their desire to participate in their children's development and education," Shaw continued. "We wanted to offer parents a way to identify and purchase products they can trust."

Products that received this year's Directors' Choice Award, and are available through an



**A variety of educational toys and games is now available for play outside the classroom.**

exclusive online partnership with SmarterKids.com, include:

- Gears! Gears! Gears! Safari Express™ Motorized Set—Children's favorites—animals and trains—in a 127-piece building set.

- LEGO® 3-Seat Playtable—Features colorful building areas, chairs, a built-in storage tray and 1200 LEGO bricks.

- LEGO® QUATRO™ Set—Construction bricks designed just for little builders.

- Kid K'NEX™ Creatures Set—With these big, soft, chunk pieces, children can transform their ideas into large models.

- El doble de amigos (Twice as Many Friends)—A joyous collection of songs from Latin America and the U.S. that invite kids to sing, dance and learn new words.

- Hamilton Digital Studio Exploration Kit—Cameras, guide book and activities help kids learn the basics of digital photography.

- Dramatic Dress Ups™ Community Helper Collection—Eight costumes allow kids to dress up as everyday heroes.

- To Be An Artist—Children around the world express themselves through art, be it music, dance, visual arts, or theater.

- Jack Rabbit—This super-soft, 21-inch puppet has moveable front legs and mouth, cute rabbit nose, and will jump into the hearts of all who pick him up.

For additional information on these and other educational products for children, including how to get them, visit the Web site at [www.Smarterkids.com](http://www.Smarterkids.com).