

# Pointers For Parents

## Making It Fun To Learn About The Solar System

(NAPSA)—According to experts, when learning is interactive and fun, children are much more inclined to retain knowledge and look forward to school.

One topic that continues to fascinate children from generation to generation is the solar system. Whether it's studying the stars, watching for a lunar eclipse or making a model of the planets for science class, young minds are often drawn to the wonders of the Milky Way. Plus, images sent back by the Hubble telescope and various space probes have given the current crop of kids an even greater appreciation of the cosmos.

One way to foster children's interest in the solar system is through toys, books and even Web sites that are appropriate for their age. One example is [www.nineplanets.org](http://www.nineplanets.org), which provides an overview of the history, mythology and current scientific knowledge of the planets, moons and other objects in our solar system. Another is <http://pds.jpl.nasa.gov/planets>, which shows a collection of many of the best images from NASA's planetary exploration program.

For more hands-on fun, there's a line of preschool-appropriate action figures from Fisher-Price called Planet Heroes. Each of the figures represents a planet and has a special talent or skill related to the key features of his or her planet. For example, Earth "Ace" is a brave boy genius who joins his friends in solar space with the help of his skateboard. "Digger," from Mars, the rocky planet, is built to blast and comes with a spinning drill. "Gustus," from Jupiter, spins 360 degrees when you press a button.

Each of the toys comes with special tools and/or vehicles to help in his or her adventures—even Pluto



**A new line of planetary heroes can help youngsters learn about the solar system.**

Shiver, who is working extra hard to pull his weight on the team to overcome his new classification of "dwarf planet." Of course, the plot would not be complete without the sinister forces of the villainous Black Hole "Professor Darkness," who has vowed to destroy the solar system and thwart the heroic deeds of the other planets. The figures each come with a collectible trading card with cool planet facts, and a special DVD introducing the characters and launching them into their first mission.

If your children want to read up on the planets and the solar system, there are a number of great books available, including "Stargazing with Jack Horkheimer: Cosmic Comics for the Sky Watcher" and "The Planets in Our Solar System" by Franklyn M. Branley. Take the time to look at the pictures with your kids and talk about what it might be like to be an astronaut and visit these places.

To learn more about the Planet Heroes line of educational toys and view the movie trailer, visit [www.fisher-price.com](http://www.fisher-price.com).