

Toy of the Year FAQ – For the Industry, Retailers & Chains

1. Why is Toy of the Year needed if customers choose for themselves anyway?

Because it helps customers navigate a wide range of products and highlights toys with high play value, safety, and quality. The award makes the play category more understandable and credible, and supports consumers in making better choices.

2. What is the overall goal of Toy of the Year?

Toy of the Year is a shared industry initiative designed to:

- Create greater focus on the toy and baby products sector
- Support sales through a curated selection of high-quality products
- Help increase the industry's market share by sparking consumer interest in play
- Strengthen media outreach through a clear news angle and trusted mark of quality

3. Is this just a competition to create PR for the winners?

No. The purpose is to strengthen the entire toy market by highlighting quality, innovation, and the importance of play. The winners serve as examples that build interest and trust in toys as a category, benefiting the whole industry.

4. Is Toy of the Year a sales ranking?

No. It is not about the “best-selling toy.” The selection is based on jury evaluation and defined criteria – not sales figures or popularity.

5. How is the selection kept fair and credible?

Through clear criteria, a professional jury, and a transparent process. Both small and large companies are evaluated on the same basis, with the focus always on children's play, safety, and quality.

6. What requirements must a product meet in order to participate?

To participate in Toy of the Year, the product must:

- Meet all applicable safety and manufacturing standards.
- Be of high quality and offer strong play value, preferably with opportunities for development or combination with other toys/products.
- Ideally be a new launch or have generated renewed interest.
- Be available for purchase through actors within the toy and baby products industry.

7. What does retail concretely gain from Toy of the Year?

A curated selection with ready-made motivations that can be used in-store and online. It provides credible campaign themes, improves customer dialogue, and drives sales through quality.

8. Why should we promote the winners — doesn't it only benefit certain suppliers?

The winners create momentum for the entire category. When consumer interest in play and toys increases, traffic and purchasing across the full assortment also grow.

9. How is Toy of the Year connected to children's development and the value of play?

The criteria are based on play value, age relevance, safety, and developmental benefit. The award exists to recognise toys that truly make a difference in children's play — not just products with the highest visibility.

10. How can we best use Toy of the Year in-store and online?

- In shelf signage and e-commerce ("Toy of the Year winners/finalists")
- As part of seasonal campaigns ahead of Christmas/autumn and other key periods
- On social media with short "why it won" messaging
- Through staff recommendations to customers
- With QR links to criteria and motivations for added credibility

11. What do you want us as an industry to do?

To use Toy of the Year as a shared tool: communicate the winners, talk about the criteria, and work together to strengthen the value of play and the credibility of the toy category.

12. Why does Toy of the Year have several categories?

Because play is diverse and children's needs change across developmental stages. A baby product, a construction set, and a creative kit do not compete for the same type of play and cannot be judged fairly against one another. Categories ensure we compare similar products on equal terms, reflect the breadth of play, and make the award both credible and useful for retailers and consumers.

13. Why exactly five categories — why not more or fewer?

Five categories strike a balance between clarity and relevance.

- Too many categories risk diluting the impact: retailers and media cannot highlight everything, and consumers may perceive it as a long list rather than a trusted mark of quality.
- Too few categories would make the award less fair and less useful, as products that cannot be compared would end up in the same group.

With five broad and clear categories, we achieve both strong visibility and fair evaluation, while keeping the award easy to communicate and use in stores and e-commerce.

14. Which five categories are included, and why were they chosen?

The categories reflect children's development and today's play patterns, while enabling the jury to make fair comparisons between similar products.

15. Why have we removed the main category “Toy of the Year”?

To strengthen the purpose of the award: Toy of the Year should be a quality guide, not a single “super winner.” A main prize tends to favour certain types of products and makes others less visible, even if they are the best choice for their target group.

By giving all categories equal status, the award becomes more relevant for more children, more types of play, and more actors in the industry — creating greater overall impact in both retail and media.

Toy of the Year builds trust in play and helps enable increased sales across the category.