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How STEM toys are shaping the future of our next generation...

As the first generation of digital natives, the kids of today are fully immersed in technology, at home, at school and in their playtime. They are developing in an age where coding is mainstream, touchscreens are everywhere and they can access new content all the time. These differences in the way that kids are learning mean that their interests, toys and hobbies are distinctly different to that of their parents. The excitement surrounding gaming, vlogging and streaming mean that kids are leading the way when it comes to designing our future.

Across the world, STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Maths) subjects rank highly in the top 10 favourite subjects of kids aged 6-12. Maths ranked as the global favourite, with 1 in 5 kids choosing it as their preferred class in school. In correlation with this, the number of kids saying they play with STEM toys has grown exponentially over the last year. In Australia, the popularity of these toys amongst kids aged 3-12 has increased by +44%.

Not only is this a significant change but the majority of this growth has been driven by girls. In some countries, more girls than boys chose these toys; Germany (58% girls) & France (54% girls). In most countries surveyed, the gender split of kids picking STEM toys as their favourite is fairly equal. In light of the 'Girls in STEM' movement, it is crucial for toys and games to be inclusive and engaging for all kids. In 2018, Mattel's Barbie launched an engineer doll and since this, other brands have introduced more representative toys.

Toys and content consumption are key factors that shape the development of kids everywhere. Science and technology-based careers are rising in popularity amongst kids, with 6 of the top 10 career aspirations of kids globally being STEM-focused. The Insights Family's award-winning data portal shows that kids who play with STEM toys are almost twice as likely to want to pursue a future in IT/Computing and game design, highlighting the importance of play in shaping the dreams of the next generation.

It's clear how much parents believe toys & play can have a positive development impact on their children. As education has been disrupted in many countries by the pandemic, toys serve as an engaging medium for kids to develop soft skills outside of the classroom. Globally, 1 in 5 parents of kids aged 6-12 say that it is important for the toys they buy their kids to have some educational value, suggesting that they are willing to pay more for toys that help their kids learn. Furthermore, 62% of parents globally agree that STEM subjects are the most important subjects for kids to learn today.



At any given time, many kids have access to multiple screens and devices providing different sources of information. Although digital hobbies are increasing in popularity, with video games ranking as the #1 pastime amongst kids in Australia, the rise of STEM toys asserts the value of offline play. With 68% of parents in Australia reporting they are concerned about their kids spending too much time online, STEM toys have an opportunity to counterbalance digital time and be preferred by parents.

Parents and kids alike are beginning to focus on keeping a healthy mind, as well as a healthy body. Families are spending their money not only on entertainment but also on experiences that will give them some emotional support in a time of stress and uncertainty. STEM toys can position and emphasize their credentials in this space.

To find out what other trends will be popular this year, The Insights Family launched their Future Forecast 2022 report. For the first time, the company is exploring not only kids and parents, but family ecosystems trends, based on Kids Insights™ and Parents Insights™ data. The report contains 10 predictions and trends which will impact advertising, content, licensing, marketing, product and retail strategies for brand owners.

*To download the full complimentary Future Forecast 2022 report, please visit:
<https://try.theinsightsfamily.com/futureforecast>*

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YEAR-ON-YEAR

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