

Beyond the HOLIDAYS

The Toy Industry's Year-Round Evolution Shines at the 119th New York Toy Show

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The energy was electric at the **119th Annual New York Toy Show**, one of the oldest and most influential trade events in the U.S. toy industry. Drawing **17,803 attendees** and featuring **850 vendors**, the show continues to be a powerhouse for ideas, innovation, and trends—fueling a **\$42 billion** retail market in the U.S. alone.

While the fourth quarter remains important, the toy category has evolved dramatically. **Toys are now a year-round business**, with products made not just for kids but also for a growing demographic known as **"Kidults"**—adults who are proudly purchasing for themselves.

From nostalgia-driven games to high-design inflatables and AI-enhanced play, the lines between age groups and seasons continue to blur.

Here are key takeaways and top trends from this year's show—valuable insights for gift shops, children's retailers, and stores catering to pop culture and collectible lovers.

Top Classifications Worth Watching

Swim Inflatables & Outdoor Games

Valued at \$4.3 billion, this category continues to heat up with products for both summer and winter. Think oversized pool floaters, backyard games, and even snow sliders for winter fun.

LEGO & Building Sets

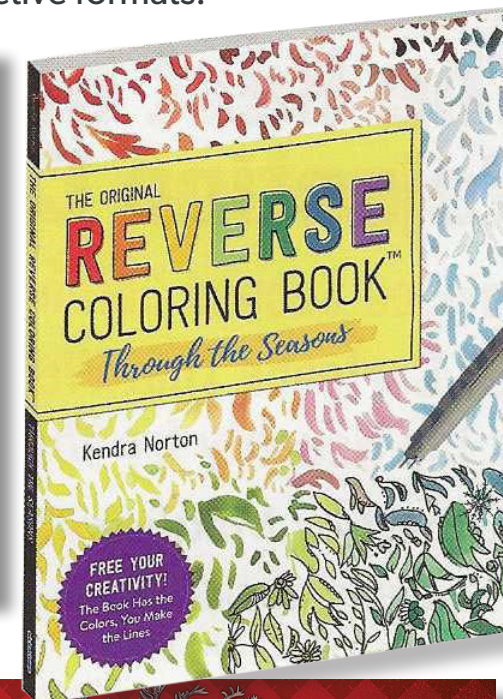
This \$3.7 billion category remains a staple, expanding into licensed sets, varying sizes and price points, and even building kits for adult collectors.

Arts & Crafts

Now a \$1.2 billion segment, arts and crafts kits are more accessible and creative than ever. From potholder looms and bracelet makers to drawing pads with printed backgrounds, these products support creativity and quiet play.

Games & Puzzles

Classics continue to thrive, with this \$3.5 billion category seeing growth in both family board games and new interactive formats.



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Trends Defining the Modern Toy Market

Toys for Every Season and Celebration

From Taylor Swift and Dolly Parton-themed gifts to Valentine's Day plush, Halloween puzzles, and holiday collectibles—seasonal toys are now part of every gifting calendar.

Creative Corner

Hands-on DIY kits remain in high demand. Kids (and parents) love projects like sketchbooks with printed scenes, beginner knitting sets, and all-inclusive art kits.

Let's Play Outside

Inflatables are bolder than ever—sharks, Minions, Vikings-themed floaters, and winter snow sliders all bring energy to outdoor play.

MESH & STEAM

Parents are looking for toys that do more. MESH (Mental, Emotional, and Social Health) and STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, Math) toys combine fun with skill-building, learning, and stress relief. Slime products, fidget tools, and sensory kits lead this category.

Collectibles and "TikTok Toys"

Small collectible figures, plush characters, and trading cards continue to dominate—especially those that spark trends on TikTok and build community among collectors.

NEWTALGIA: Retro Meets AI

A whopping 73% of adults say they buy games for themselves. Updated classics, reimagined puzzles, and AI-enhanced play (like chess boards that move pieces automatically) offer cross-generational appeal and family fun.



Toys: Not Just for Christmas Anymore!

If there's one clear takeaway from the New York Toy Show, it's this: toys are no longer just for kids—or for December. They're part of every season, every occasion, and every age group. From backyard summer fun to collectible keepsakes and stress-busting fidget tools, toys are becoming an essential part of everyday gifting.

Have a Happy Summer! Here's to playing more, all year long.

