

BUILDING ACTION FIGURES

Model Kit Trends

(NAPSA)—Studies suggest young people today are returning to classic play patterns such as collecting and building. Increasingly, they are making a commitment to creativity with their own hands and imagination. The modeling kits of the 21st century, however, are very different from the trains and planes kits of yesteryear. They can provide new levels of entertainment and rewards beyond the initial challenge of building.

A good example of the 21st century model kit is Bandai America's Gundam action figure kits, among America's most popular imports from Japan. Building and construction replicas, such as K'NEX and Lego, and the updated Lincoln Logs and Tinkertoys have also contributed to this phenomenon.

Gundam was introduced in the U.S. in 1999 with an action figure model kit. The wildly successful kits

were joined by a Gundam Wing animated series on Cartoon Network.

Featuring parts that join together without glue, these action figure kits have been organized into ten skill categories. These provide increasing challenges according to size, height, number of pieces and customized decals that correspond to the builder's ability level—from novice to expert. Children can spend anywhere from 1 to 100 hours building and customizing these models, letting their imagination provide the ultimate challenge.



This Burning Gundam action figure can be assembled from a model kit.

The commitment pays off, since once built, the kits can be played with as fully articulated action figures with movable, bendable parts.

As with many traditional kits, these action figures are increasingly collectible.

You can find these kits at Toys 'R' Us and other popular stores.