

## Active Play Encourages Learning, Discovery

(NAPSA)—Parents today are well aware of how important it is to encourage children to be active and fit. And, of course, they're always conscious of promoting learning as well. Experts say those two areas of development aren't so different—they actually go hand in hand. "A child's cognitive development is integrally linked with movement," says Kathleen Alfano, Ph.D, Senior Director of Child Research at Fisher-Price. "In addition to developing the body, physical activity strengthens key areas of the brain, making it easier to learn." Here are some other benefits of active play:

**Self-confidence**—Physical play builds a sense of accomplishment and self-reliance. As your child develops the strength, balance and coordination needed to master physical skills, this leads to increased self-confidence.

**Active learning**—Children learn best when they're actively involved and able to control what's happening. When a toy responds to a child's input, the feedback is more likely to be remembered. That, in turn, encourages them to reason, understand and try other ways to get results.

**Success in school**—Finding toys that go at your child's pace is one key to raise an enthusiastic learner. When fun and play are associated with learning, children develop a lifelong aptitude for acquiring new skills. It's worth keeping in mind that physical, intellectual and emotional skills are equally important for a child's later success in school.

A great example of a toy that combines physical movement and active learning is the Laugh & Learn™ Smart Bounce & Spin Pony™ by Fisher-Price. This classic playground-themed ride gives toddlers a chance to bounce, spin and move, encouraging balance, coordination and both fine and gross motor skills. It also takes learning



**Parents can foster learning and understanding with infants and toddlers through toys that encourage active play.**

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to an engaging new level, letting the rider control lively animations, music and sounds on three levels. A wireless device connects the Smart Pony to a TV set. Parents select the appropriate level of play for their child's age (12 - 36 months), and toddlers saddle up to enjoy five different learning scenes with plenty of variety on each level.

Toddlers can enjoy bouncing up and down, spinning around and batting the roller ball on the handle bars. The more the child interacts, the more sound effects, sing-along songs and animations come to life, teaching letters, numbers, shapes, colors, opposites and more. Children can even enjoy fun music and sounds, along with bouncing and spinning, without a TV connection.

"The Laugh & Learn Smart Bounce & Spin Pony is innovative to the infant toy market," says industry expert Jim Silver, editor-in-chief of Toys and Family Entertainment. "It's a play format that has not been seen before. Moms want their children to be active while also learning. This enables a toddler to interact, think, learn and be active all at once."

For more helpful tips about active learning, visit [www.fisher-price.com](http://www.fisher-price.com).