



Children's
TECHNOLOGY
REVIEW EXCHANGE

May 2019

**Decoding the WHO
Guidelines (p. 4)**

Active Play is the Key



LittleClickers (p. 3)

Cathedrals

On the cover: One of the updated illustrations from Hungry Caterpillar Play School from StoryToys

Children's Technology Review
May 2019

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* Denotes "Editor's
Choice."

"Children under five must spend less time sitting watching screens, restrained in prams and seats, get better quality sleep and have more time for active play if they are to grow up healthy." World Health Organization, <http://bit.ly/2V2C2JT>

"We need to think about introducing a moment of silence where children can start the day pausing and thinking, 'Why am I created? Why am I here? And what am I going to do?'" <https://nyti.ms/2lQbLS2> Yisroel Goldstein

W.H.O. RELEASES REPORT ON MEDIA USE

The World Health Organization released a report last week that many see as another condemnation of screen time. Not so fast. See page 4.

LITTLECLICKERS: THE CATHEDRAL

Why did people in Europe make all those ultra fancy stone cathedrals 600 years ago? To show off. If you like to play with blocks, you probably already know a lot about how a cathedral is put together, and why many are still standing. Learn more on page 3, or at www.littleclickers.com/cathedral

HOW PRESCHOOL CAN SAVE LIVES, AND REDUCE OUR "ACTIVE SHOOTER" PROBLEM

Being a teacher lets you shape the future, and early childhood educators get a double dose. You get to work with future presidents, doctors, lawyers and mass murderers. That's why when a preschool teacher the mug shot of a mass killer in the news, we also see preschool-age child, grown up as a troubled adult. What can be done? As Yisroel Goldstein, the Rabbi who had nearly been a shooting victim said "how does a 19-year-old have the audacity, the sickness, the hatred to come here to our house of worship and do what he did?" The answer is complex. Growing up as a human is hard business, that can be marked by five "stages of strain" that can eventually manifest into catastrophe (see Mass Murder at School and Cumulative Strain: A Sequential Model by Jack Levin and Eric Madfis <http://bitly.com/2vCRL32>).

The bad news is that mass shooting have increased, and the next one will happen within the next 30 days according to the statistics in this Washington Post article <https://wapo.st/2PMCCWs>. Innocent, random people will be the next victims. But it's not too late for the next generation, because the future active shooters haven't grown up yet. Besides making automatic weapons less easy to possess, it's time to revive "no child left behind" way of thinking, to help schools, libraries intervene in the lives of desperate students who are emotionally on the fringe, to avoid the conditions of acute strain (Levin) that are known to lead to catastrophe. The best weapon against active shooters is a self-esteem and social support system, and that starts in preschool.

ABC TO BROADCAST SHOWN ON SCREEN TIME

Tonight at 8 PM EST, the ABC News will present a two hour segment on screen time, technology and social media. What may not be obvious is that the segment was created with the assistance of the Institute of Digital Media and Child Development (<http://www.childrenandscreens.com>) a group known for anti-screen bias, founded and funded by Pamela Hurst-Della Pietra.

ANKI ROBOTICS TO CLOSE

We were sad to learn from CTR Contributor Scott Traylor that the maker of the KAPi Award Winning Cozmo robot is going out of business. Making educational robots is certainly not for wimps. <http://kidscreen.com/2019/05/01/cozmo-maker-anki-closes-its-doors/>



Children's Technology Review May 2019

Volume 27, No. 5 Issue 232

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ONE YEAR SUBSCRIPTIONS are regularly \$60 for 12 monthly issues, 52 weekly issues plus online database access. Weekly issues are sent at 8:30 AM on Wednesdays EST. Site subscriptions are available. Contact *Children's Technology Review*™, 126 Main Street, Flemington, NJ 08822 or call 908-284-0404. Visit www.childrenstech.com to learn more.

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PUBLISHER INFORMATION *Children's Technology Review*™ (ISSN 1555-242X) is published monthly (12 issues) by Active Learning Associates, Inc. Send address changes or new subscriptions to *Children's Technology Review*™, 126 Main Street, Flemington, NJ 08822 or circulation@childrenstech.com. **Use of this publication for any commercial publishing activity without prior written permission is strictly prohibited.** Readers are subject to the TERMS OF USE found at <http://childrenstech.com/disclaimer>

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5 (or so) sites & 10 videos

Cathedrals

Read this column online, with links, at www.littleclickers.com/cathedrals



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Do you like to build with blocks? If so, you would like how cathedrals are made. Imagine if your blocks were made of stone, and a king asked you to make the most beautiful cathedral in the world. What would it look like?

1. Why did people build cathedrals? To show off. At the Durham World Heritage Site you learn how the construction of a monumental cathedral helped to impress visitors. It also gave the town a place to bury important people, and pay respect to a religion. Learn more at <http://bitly.com/2vvXAzi>

2. What does Gothic mean? It's another way to say "fancy." The word originated from the Goths, a German tribe in Europe, who celebrated ornate, decorative design. Telltale signs of Gothic construction include statues, high ceilings, stained glass and pointed arches. Read more at <http://bitly.com/2vFMnft>

3. What kind of stone are most cathedrals made of? Mostly limestone, which is easy to cut and carve, and can stand up to the weather. Most limestone was cut from ancient seabeds. Marble and other gemstones were used on the inside floor and for decorations. Read more at <http://bitly.com/2PFfromm>

4. Because cathedrals are made of stone, they are fireproof, right? No. Wooden timbers are also often part of the construction, especially in the area above the dome. These huge wooden beams can burn quickly, which is why a terrible fire started in the Notre-Dame cathedral. See the results of the fire, at <https://nyti.ms/2PJf8kL>

5. Can cathedrals be digitized? Yes. A USA professor named Andrew Tallon used drones and lasers to make digital maps of the Notre Dame cathedral before the fire. Sadly he Dr. Tallon died last fall, making his work an important legacy to him, as it is used by the future builders who will try to restore the famous cathedral. Read more at <http://bitly.com/2PHoxsY>

APPLICATION

Can you build a model cathedral? You can with this \$55 block set <https://amzn.to/2PHmLrO> or take a class from Thomas Davies Clay, who makes Cathedral Models. See his site at <http://www.cathedralquest.com/index.html>



Cathedrals on YouTube

Want more? Here's a video playlist

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLcBVHzUUEKwkWT64ZEufXIZC8vZvXkM8T>



World Health Organization's Guidelines on Play and Sleep: Froebel, Montessori and Piaget Would Concur

Link to the report summary —> <http://bit.ly/2V2C2JT>

Download the entire report as a free PDF —> <https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/311664>

Last week the WHO (World Health Organization) released a set of guidelines for physical activity, sedentary behavior and sleep for children under 5 years-of-age.

Many saw this report as another condemnation of using screens with young children. Not so fast.

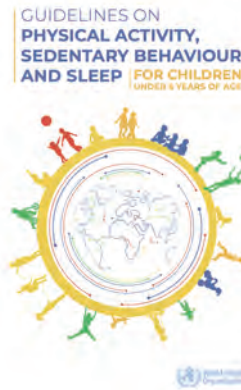
A closer reading of the document reveals that it is really an edict on the importance of active learning in the early years. Students of child development understand that this important message is hardly new. In fact, it is nicely grounded in child development theory. Here are the recommendations:

“Quality sedentary time spent in interactive non-screen-based activities with a caregiver, such as reading, storytelling, singing and puzzles, is very important for child development.

- Infants (less than 1 year) should not be restrained for more than 1 hour at a time (e.g., in prams/strollers, high chairs, or strapped on a caregiver's back). Screen time is not recommended. When sedentary, engaging in reading and storytelling with a caregiver is encouraged.
- Children 1–2 years of age should not be restrained for more than 1 hour at a time (e.g., in prams/strollers, high chairs, or strapped on a caregiver's back) or sit for extended periods of time. For 1-year olds, sedentary screen time (such as watching TV or videos, playing computer games) is not recommended. For those aged 2 years, sedentary screen time should be no more than 1 hour; less is better. When sedentary, engaging in reading and storytelling with a caregiver is encouraged.
- Children 3–4 years of age should not be restrained for more than 1 hour at a time (e.g., in prams/strollers) or sit for extended periods of time. Sedentary screen time should be no more than 1 hour; less is better. When sedentary, engaging in reading and storytelling with a caregiver is encouraged.”

The WHO labeled these guidelines as “strong recommendations, with very low quality evidence.” That means there's little or no research to back up these ideas. But they are not new. Child Psychologist Jean Piaget helped educators understand that children construct knowledge through active exploration of their world. He called these early stages of growth “concrete operations” for a reason. Maria Montessori understood the liberating power of freedom of movement, and discouraged the use of learning settings which minimized child control.

It's obvious that children need to sit less and play more. But some of the guidelines could be better defined. What exactly is “play,” and should “screen time” be associated with being confined in a children's straight jacket (aka a car seat)? It's easy to say “let children move around” but not in a moving car during a cross country



“Children under five must spend less time sitting watching screens, or restrained in prams (strollers) and seats, get better quality sleep and have more time for active play if they are to grow up healthy”

trip to see Grandma.

I like list the authors and advisors, who, not surprisingly are strong in medical training. I also like the research focus which considers the credible research evidence behind these recommendations. Every one of the recommendations is labeled as a “strong recommendations with very low quality evidence.” My guess as a researcher is that the foundation pillars of the recommendations are too shaky. “Screen time” is a fuzzy variable full of confounds — and the human child and family is highly variable across cultures, and this can weaken research.

Another word in the report that I was happy to see is “watching” and “sedentary” as in “sedentary screen time.” But — as with many of these types of idealistic white papers, the cluster of mostly medical authors could have done a better job being specific with these loaded words, so that the news media would not misinterpret the conclusions as a condemnation of screen time.

RESEARCH GAPS

Attention doctoral students. The report states that there is a continuing need for high-quality studies, in particular that:

1. examine the entire 24-hour day and physical activity, sedentary behaviors and sleep duration in young children;
2. establish standardized procedures and objective measurement to enable comparison between studies;
3. study a broader range of health indicators, including additional indicators of motor, cognitive and psychosocial development and the long-term effects of early interventions;
4. provide a cost-effectiveness analysis of interventions to improve physical activity, sedentary behaviors and sleep duration in young children;
5. examine the impact of screen-based activities compared with interactive sedentary activities such as storytelling on health indicators;
6. explore the developmentally appropriate dose and intensity of physical activity in young children;
7. examine the relationship between sleep duration and motor development, growth and harms or injuries;
8. consider confounders such as diet;
9. consider the particular needs of children with disabilities and how guidelines can be adapted to meet their needs
10. examine the key factors that enable dissemination, adaptation, activation, implementation and uptake of the guidelines.

References: WHO guidelines on physical activity, sedentary behaviors and sleep for children under 5 years of age. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2019.



Feature Reviews and New Releases

MAY 2019

Here's an alphabetical listing of both the feature reviews (with ratings) and the new and future releases. "Entry Date" refers to the date we first learned of the product.

Adventure Academy

Imagine an MMOG (Massively Multiplayer Online Game) like Club Penguin on a school campus, and you get the idea behind Adventure Academy. After you enter your credit card information (required, even for the one week "free" preview) you create an account and up to three avatars, for up to three children who can be at different challenge levels. You can then freely explore; chatting via short typed messages with the other real-time avatars. The social part is very fun. Our evening testing session was full of real kids walking around, eager to chat, or be friends.

There are challenges to complete, coins to earn and stuff to purchase in school store. The challenges include meeting the professors for science, math, social studies and reading, and playing the "games" which are really mostly some form of multiple-choice quiz. You can also earn coins by watching a lot of short videos and flipping through narrated, non-interactive ebooks. The music videos were excellent, but the ebook library varied in quality -- most having limited features and no interactivity other than the page flips. Some of the games leveled poorly. Others are poorly designed, confusing children for the wrong reasons. All content is derived directly from a generic school curriculum, which makes some of the time in this academy feel like busy work (e.g., you can quickly flip through a book just to earn credit, or start a video and get up to leave). But you have to finish the book or video to earn the coins even if you already know the answers. As you level up, you earn coins and purchase more clothing, swag and dance moves; following a tried-and-true formula. Other weaknesses include a lack of sound in parts of the iOS version, some clunky transitions (the screen goes black when entering a new area), and the avatars overlap when they collide. The iOS version that we reviewed suffered from clumsy navigation (see the video for the specifics). Note that a solid internet connection is required, because in order to move around between each area because the content is loaded as you go. In other words, Adventure Academy can't be played offline.

Features include the ability to save progress for up to three children automatically. At one point during our testing we lost our Internet connection and had to start over -- but no work was lost. We reviewed Adventure Academy on the first day of public use. Currently content covers 3rd through 6th grades. New content for older children is planned. At this point, middle schoolers may find that the animated theme feels a bit young. We'll hope for gradual improvement as this ambitious project matures.

Ethics: We rated Adventure Academy with the Fred Rogers Ethics Rubric, which helped us spot some issues:

* The full price is confusing and not provided at the start of the purchase process.

* Once in the world, brands are mixed with educational content (e.g., Adventure Academy branded T-shirts are sold in the shop).

• The free trial is combined with an auto-renewal mechanism that requires reading fine print to understand. You have to be able to find the parent section in order to cancel.

Details: Age of Learning, Inc., www.ABCmouse.com. Price: \$10/month or \$120/year. Ages: 8-13. Platform: iPad, Android, iPhone, Windows, Mac OSX.

Teaches/Purpose: reading skills, comprehension, math, science, social studies. Rating (1 to 5 stars): 3.9 stars. Entry date: 5/1/2019. [buckleit]



Rubric used **Fred Rogers**

Ethical	6	} 78.33 %
Honest	8	
Empowering	8	
Child Paced	8	
Supportive of Inter-Personal	9	
Well Crafted	8	



AR Makr

Now this is cool... simply map out a flat area around you, and start placing items. You can make freeform sketches and see them mapped onto 3D shapes, or choose from collections of clip art. Work can be saved as a still image. You can also add basic animations to objects using a control on the bottom right of the scene view. It will show the last placed object or the last object you tapped. The control lets you select an animation to apply to the active object. There is no sound. We have no idea why this app is free.

Details: Line Break, <http://linebreak.io/>. Price: \$free. Ages: 9-up. Platform: iPad, iPhone. Teaches/Purpose: creativity, spatial relations, AR. Rating (1 to 5 stars): 4.4 stars. Entry date: 4/2/2019. []



Ease of Use	9	88 %	
Educational	9		
Entertaining	8		
Design Features	8		
Good Value	10		

Barbie Fashionistas Wheelchair and Prosthetic Limb

During the 2019 Toy Fair in New York, Mattel told us that the 2019 Barbie Fashionistas line of dolls will be "more inclusive for children with disabilities." Mattel worked with UCLA and a young disability activist named Jordan Reeves who was born without a left forearm to create a doll with a prosthetic leg. Another doll set will include a sturdy, realistic (we examined one) wheelchair that is scaled to fit standard Barbie dolls. The new toys are an attempt to expand the definition of beauty, and make the Barbie brand more inclusive and inviting to the general population. We like the concept. The wheelchair includes a ramp that fits existing Barbie playsets. Release date June 2019. <https://barbie.mattel.com/shop>

Details: Mattel, Inc., www.mattel.com. Price: \$call. Ages: 6-up. Platform: . Teaches/Purpose: prosthetic limbs, disabilities, inclusion. Entry date: 4/17/2019.



Construction Simulator 3

Are you looking for a serious construction machined simulation experience? Made in Germany, this real-time, highly detailed machine operation simulation is one of the best we've reviewed. But it takes a while to learn. Your job is to complete each challenge as you develop your skills -- changing machine modes, camera views and steering controls. Sometimes you have to do two things at once, and it is possible for things to go wrong. Fortunately, you can reset your vehicle and start over. After make an avatar and account, you start on 70 missions, spread over a nearly 4 square mile area. Content includes 50 licensed building machines and vehicles from brands including Caterpillar, Liebherr, Case, Bobcat, and Bell. Machines include the E55 compact excavator, the T590 compact track loader, the 150 EC-B 8 rotating tower crane and the Liebherr LB28 rotary drilling rig with a detailed cockpit. Testers noted that the game is hard to learn, but liked the realism and choice of machines. It's important to learn how to reset your machine early in the game, because it is possible to get stuck. Learn more at <http://www.construction-simulator.com/> Made in Germany.

Details: astragon Entertainment GmbH, <http://www.astragon-entertainment.de/en/>. Price: \$3.99 plus IAP of up to \$23. Ages: 8-up. Platform: . Teaches/Purpose: . Rating (1 to 5 stars): 4.5 stars. Entry date: 4/16/2019. []



Ease of Use	7	90 %	
Educational	9		
Entertaining	9		
Design Features	10		
Good Value	10		



Family Traits

Four classification games effectively introduce the concept of hereditary traits, despite a confusing design, no sound and crude graphics. Your job is to construct a family tree by dragging and dropping parents, grandparents or children into the correct spot. If you get ten problems correct, you are shown some balloons. Attributes include color, teeth and noses, making this a pretty simple introduction to the concept. The idea is to help children learn how various traits can be found in families. There are one or two player modes. We spotted no ethnic or gender bias. This app would work well in the classroom with an introduction.

Details: Studio Lassa, studiolassa.nl/. Price: \$1.99. Ages: 6-up. Platform: iPad, iPhone, Android. Teaches/Purpose: classification, sorting, logic, attributes, heredity, genetics. Rating (1 to 5 stars): 4 stars. Entry date: 4/23/2019. []



Rubric used **Fred Rogers**

Ethical	10		88.33 %
Honest	10		
Empowering	9		
Child Paced	8		
Supportive of Inter-Personal	9		
Well Crafted	7		

Hexbug CuddleBot

Innovation First (Vex) has continued to expand on the original Hexbug concept. As you might recall, these small button cell powered "bugs" are propelled forward by the vibration of a spinning counterweight. Silicon "legs" lean forward, so each tiny bounce creates a forward motion. This is a larger (mouse sized) Hexbug. There is no way to control the direction or speed. Two button cell LR44 batteries are included and required.

Details: Innovation First, Inc., www.hexbug.com. Price: \$8. Ages: 3-up. Platform: . Teaches/Purpose: robots. Entry date: 4/29/2019.



Hexbug Lil' Nature Babies

These small durable electronic figurines don't move, but they can emit noises when tapped. Each comes with with a playset that doubles as a nightlight, and a small eyehook lets you connect your toy to a backpack. The kits fit together, like a jigsaw puzzle to encourage collecting. There is a panda, wolf and squirrel. Powered by button cell batteries.

Details: Innovation First, Inc., www.hexbug.com. Price: \$14 each. Ages: 3-up. Platform: . Teaches/Purpose: animals. Entry date: 4/29/2019.





Hot Wheels TechMods

These fast, light cars double as game controllers. After you download the app (for Android or iOS) you sync the cars to your mobile device. You can then drive the cars using tank controls (and they are rather zippy) or use cars as motion sensitive controllers. The cars must first be synced to your device using bluetooth. They are easy to snap together. Learn more at https://www.indiegogo.com/projects/hot-wheels-techmods-the-gaming-rc-car/coming_soon

Details: Mattel, Inc., www.mattel.com . Price: \$call. Ages: 8-up. Platform: . Teaches/Purpose: spatial relations, logic. Entry date: 4/17/2019.



Hungry Caterpillar Play School

Update 5/1/2019. We've had a second look at the world to see if the activities are being updated. They are. The following review was written in September 2018.

Beautiful, well designed activities feature Eric Carle's Hungry Caterpillar art work, in this subscription model full of activities covering math, spelling, reading, writing, science, nature studies & creative arts. You get a lot of content at first, but watch out for the opt out subscription model. The app store reviews tell the story of plenty of surprised parents who forget to stop the seven day free trial, and end up paying for an entire year. Content is refreshed each month. As of Fall 2018 sections include Shapes and Colors, ABCs, 123s, Art (with paint or cut out collages, Eric Carle style); and a set of ebooks, songs and videos with featuring themes of nature, science & art.

Hungry Caterpillar Play School is a subscription service. <https://storytoys.com/terms-hcps/>

Details: Touch Press, www.touchpress.com. Price: \$50/year. Ages: 2-6. Platform: iPad, iPhone, Android. Teaches/Purpose: logic, memory, school readiness, reading. Rating (1 to 5 stars): 4.9 stars. Entry date: 4/14/2018. []



Ease of Use	10	98 %
Educational	10	
Entertaining	9	
Design Features	10	
Good Value	10	

Pango Paper Color

This is a cinematic touch-and-fill color mixing experience. There are three worlds, each with approximately 16 items to color. The 3D objects look like they are cut from paper, and the color palette lets you mix up to five colors. You start with a sheet of white paper that is unfolded. It can become a tree, a horse, a tractor or a balloon. Once it is colored, it automatically is multiplied. It's a powerful feeling to see your items shown many ways. Work can be saved. Content includes four base colors to mix, four worlds and up to 60 items to color. It is possible to interact with your finished scenery by tossing paper balls around the screen.

Details: Studio Pango, www.studio-pango.com. Price: \$2.99. Ages: 4-8. Platform: iPad, Android, Kindle. Teaches/Purpose: color mixing, spatial relations. Rating (1 to 5 stars): 4.7 stars. Entry date: 4/25/2019. []



Rubric used Fred Rogers

Ethical	10	98.33 %
Honest	10	
Empowering	10	
Child Paced	9	
Supportive of Inter-Personal	10	
Well Crafted	10	

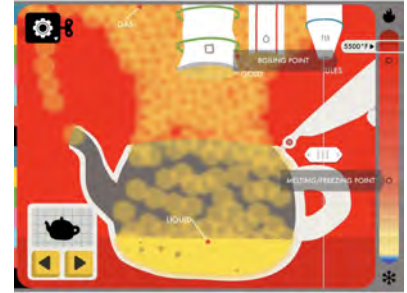


States of Matter

Put a science experiment on your iPad, allowing you to freely explore the effect of temperature on different materials. The app starts quickly and would work well in a classroom setting. To get started you tap on one of three nozzles (solid, liquid, gas) at the top of the screen to fill one of five types of containers. A temperature slider lets you cool or heat the material, so you can see when gold melts, or when oil turns into a smoky mess. A cross section slider provides a cross section of the molecules inside the material. There's not much content in this app, and not a lot to do, either. But the simulation is simple, very easy to use, and would be of interest to teachers. Materials include gold, ice, kernels of corn, bromine, and helium. A version of States of Matter will soon be part of Tinybop Schools with an added challenge mode. We did not test this feature.

States of Matter is No. 11 in Tinybop's Explorer's Library, a series of apps designed to introduce kids to big ideas. Other Explorer's Library apps include The Human Body, Plants, Simple Machines, The Earth, Weather, Homes, Skyscrapers, Space, Mammals, and Coral Reef.

Details: Tinybop, Inc., www.tinybop.com. Price: \$2.99. Ages: 7-up. Platform: . Teaches/Purpose: science, materials, states of matter, solid, liquid, gas. Rating (1 to 5 stars): 4.3 stars. Entry date: 4/7/2019. []



Rubric used **Fred Rogers**

Ethical	10	92 %	
Honest	10		
Empowering	7		
Child Paced	10		
Supportive of Inter-Personal Well Crafted	9		

TechDen

Lock your child's phone or tablet away, with this ambitiously designed parenting solution that promises device free "quality time." For just over \$200 you get the toaster-sized device with room for two devices as large as a standard-sized iPad. It is possible to plug in different cable types that can fit either iOS or Android devices. Actual screen time is managed by two apps -- one on the parent's phone to control when the device is available, and one on the child's phone. The child's app (called TechDenJr) offers a warning when time is up, and gives children a reward so you can reinforce device putting away behavior. Kids can track progress toward the goals and the rewards they want to ask for. If your child does not return his / her device within 5 minutes of time expiring, you get a notification on your (parent) device via the TechDen (Parent) app. TechDen requires a home internet connection and a compatible router. Made in Australia.

Details: TechDen, www.techden.com. Price: \$230. Ages: 4-up. Platform: . Teaches/Purpose: Parenting utility, screen time. Entry date: 4/10/2019.






Toca Life World: Waterfront Location

Here's another well designed content pack for Toca Life: World that includes three areas -- a seafood-themed restaurant (the Krill Grill); an aquarium and an underwater playspace. As with the other Toca Life titles it is easy to mix and match hundreds of items which can be moved between locations or used in short puppet-show productions that let you mix in your own narration. Note: Each level starts with some sort of addition puzzle which our testers found to be confusing.

Details: Toca Boca, <http://tocaboca.com/>. Price: \$3.99. Ages: 3-12. Platform: iPad, Android, Kindle. Teaches/Purpose: creativity, language. Rating (1 to 5 stars): 4.8 stars. Entry date: 4/16/2019. []



Ease of Use	9	96 %
Educational	9	
Entertaining	10	
Design Features	10	
Good Value	10	



Water Thief, The: A Child's Interactive Book of Fun &

This is a 38 page printed book about water conservation, with QR codes to help you find the water thief. Content covers evaporation and other properties of water. In the story a young boy named Marcus is confronted with "missing water" from his Grandfather. Is it the cows? The goats? Or the sneaky chickens? Children can use a phone or tablet to scan the QR Codes for additional content. Written in English only by Brent Ford and Lucy McCullough Hazlehurst; illustrated by Seokwon Kim.

Details: nVizn Ideas LLC, <http://www.nviznideas.com/>. Price: \$12. Ages: 6-up. Platform: . Teaches/Purpose: science, water, hydrology. Entry date: 4/24/2019.

