

TOYING WITH NEW IDEAS

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Kids' playtime can also be enjoyable with an increasing number of recycled educational toys that are available today. Aradhana Nagpal of Dhoop store in Mumbai says: "We keep a range of non-toxic toys made in lacquer from Chenapattna which are available during summer holidays. Spinning the tops and games from Chennai-based Kreedaa — where they research and recreate old Indian games — are also popular. We also have games like five stones and *gilli-danda*. I think more people are realizing today that children need 'together time' rather than just solitary computer surfing that are so common." Pune based Arvind Gupta, an ex-IITian, science popularizer and eco-toymaker, has long been working with turning trash into toys.

Household waste like discarded tetrapaks, cycle and tooth paste tubes, paper, battery cells, refills, film rolls, bottles and straws and artistic expression in his creations pictures of which are available on his website: www.arvindguptatoys.com.

He believes that children should be encouraged to make their own toys which will benefit dually—"one, break the stereotype that science is only about burettes, pipettes, fancy glass and plastic ware and two, they become active agents in cleaning the mess. And children learn to value things more."

‘What happens to earth affects its young citizens too — to that extent, global warming and climatic changes are crucial for children. They did not create this mess. But as citizens of the earth, they would need to imbibe eco-sensibilities. Every little act; every person and her action counts.’ ARVIND GUPTA
Eco-toymaker

