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## 10 Top Science Toys for Kids

These gift ideas keep kids entertained while imparting lessons about the natural world

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To kids, everyday life is an experiment. The trick, says Claire Green, president of the [Parent's Choice Foundation](#), is finding toys that take advantage of their natural curiosity. The best ones will encourage the whole family to spend time together and spark discussions on biology, dinosaurs, and other kid-friendly fields. Here are the Parents' Choice top 10 picks for science toys, books, and magazines for kids for every price point:

**Discover Kids DNA Explorer Lab** (Discovery Channel Store), \$79.95, ages 9 and up. This kit comes with plant DNA, test tubes, and other equipment that let kids explore magnetism, density, and polarity in addition to basic DNA analysis concepts.

**Perfume Science** (Thames & Kosmos), \$59.95, ages 10 and up. Eight scented oils along with glass storage bottles and labels let kids conduct their own experiments. A 48-page instruction manual explains the sense of smell, history of perfumes, and where fragrances come from. Users can even invent their own formulas.

**EyeClops BioniCam** (Jakks Pacific Inc.), \$79.99, ages 8 and up. This "BioniCam" is much more than a microscope—Parents' Choice calls it an "eyeball on a stick." It lets kids zoom in on their own sweat, an ant, a penny, and other images. Photos taken with the camera can also be uploaded to a computer for even closer inspection.

**Green Science—Spinning Top Generator** (4M Industrial Development Limited), \$11.99, ages 8 and up. This science kit shows kids how electricity is generated through a coil of wire, LED light, and a magnetic spinning top. Parents' Choice calls it "an excellent representation of how electricity is generated at large power plants that supply electricity to our homes." It even contains an environmental lesson in how electricity need not come from burning fossil fuels.

**How Do Dinosaurs Get Well Soon?** (Scholastic Inc./Blue Sky Press), \$15.95, ages 2 and up. This funny book is designed to cheer up kids who are under the weather by depicting a dinosaur that hides from the doctor and spits pills into the sink.

**Dinosaur Holiday** (Museum Music), \$15.95, ages 4 and up. This CD was created by the American Museum of Natural History, which turned holiday songs into tunes that teach kids about dinosaurs. Songs include "Hey Duck Bills" (set to the tune of "Jingle Bells") and "Dino, Dino, Dino" (set to "I Had a Little Dreidel").

**Uncover a T-Rex** (Advantage Publisher's Group/Silver Dolphin Books), \$18.95, ages 8 and up. This book lets kids see what's inside dinosaurs, based on scientific theories about their inner workings and lifestyle. It includes facts about dinosaurs' diets, running abilities, and relation to birds.

**Inflatable Insects** (Learning Resources), \$34.95, ages 3 and up. These giant bugs—including a ladybug, dragonfly, and grasshopper—let kids build their new "pets" houses and cages. They also inspire kids to learn more about critters.

**Big Bad Booming Bugs** (Little Kids Inc.), \$19.99, ages 6 and up. This "electronic observation station" lets kids capture insects and then examine them closely. A magnifying lens and earphones let them get up close and personal. It also comes with information about ants, beetles, and grasshoppers.

**National Geographic Little Kids** (National Geographic Society), \$15 for one-year subscription, ages 3 to 6. This magazine features photos and easy-to-understand articles about animals, nature, and science.

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