

# Parent- and kid-friendly gifts pass Mr. Dad test

**E**VERY YEAR I get hundreds of e-mails from men and women asking me to recommend products that can help dads strengthen their relationships with their children. That's what inspired me to start the Mr. Dad Seal of Approval.

You might remember the first Mr. Dad Seal of Approval, which I wrote right before last Father's Day. I'm not sure what happened to the five months since then, but it's holiday season, and we've just made our selections to help dads (and moms, too) choose gifts that will enhance their relationships with their children.

As before, the criteria were very strict. To earn the seal, a product or service has to:

- ▶ Help dads get or stay involved with their children
- ▶ Improve the quality of the time fathers and children spend together
- ▶ Improve father-child relationships
- ▶ Help dads be better parents

Using these criteria over the past couple of months, a team of evaluators and I evaluated

dozens of products. The competition was fierce, but we were finally able to select the products that did the best job of bringing dads and their children closer together.

Here, just in time for the holidays, are a few of my favorites. While not all of these gifts are specifically for dads, they still give him some wonderful ways to connect with his children. And believe me, there isn't a dad out there who'd rather have a tie or a pen holder or a set of golf balls instead of more time with the family.

▶ **Piano Wizard** is an amazingly simple family video game that can teach anybody to play the piano and read music. The graphics are engaging and, at the beginning levels, easy enough for a 3-year-old. It's so much fun that you may find yourself putting the kids to bed a little early so you can play by yourself.

▶ **Learning Cents Bank** is a great way for Dad to teach his children about money. It instructs kids how to divide their allowances into three cylinders: spending, saving and charity. There's even a Hebrew version with tzedakah (charity).

▶ **"All the Colors,"** a new CD of children's music by Ira Marlowe, has something we like a lot: smarts. Not only is the music original, fun and appealing but also has lyrics that don't underestimate the intelligence of their listeners.

▶ **Better Surf Diaper Bag/Backpack** may be the perfect diaper bag for dad. Not a flower

or lamb or a fluffy bunny to be found. Beside looking like a manly beach bag, it's got a detachable fanny pack, a good-size diaper changing pad, and a cell phone holder.

▶ **Journey to Fatherhood** interactive journaling software is one of the best gifts dad can give his child. Dad can start recording his thoughts about his partner's pregnancy and create a book about his child's birth.

The complete list of the Holiday 2006 Seal of Approval winners is available at [www.MrDad.com/seal](http://www.MrDad.com/seal)

Armin Brott's new DVD is called "Toolbox for New Dads." For information and other resources for fathers, visit [www.mrdad.com](http://www.mrdad.com) or e-mail [armin@mrdad.com](mailto:armin@mrdad.com).

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**Armin Brott**  
**ASK MR. DAD**

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