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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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AblePlay's "top 5 toys for children with disabilities" makes holiday shopping a sure thing

AblePlay™ (www.ableplay.org) is a one-of-a-kind website with free, independent ratings and expert advice on toys for children with disabilities

CHICAGO, IL (August 22, 2006) – Don't all parents want to avoid the overwhelming task of searching through thousands of toys in pursuit of the perfect match for their child? An innovative resource at www.ableplay.org is available to help ensure success (and convenience) for millions of parents, grandparents and others who have one simple wish – to see a big smile on the face of the special child for whom they're purchasing that ideal toy.

"The challenge to select the 'perfect' plaything is even greater when choosing toys for kids with disabilities," says Diana Nielander, director of National Lekotek Center, a Chicago-based nonprofit that is a division of Anixter Center. Lekotek uses interactive play experiences, and the learning that results, to promote the inclusion of children with special needs into family and community life. Lekotek recently introduced AblePlay to assist consumers in selecting the best toys for kids with disabilities.

Expert AblePlay evaluators have degrees in special education, early childhood education or related therapeutic specialties. Every toy on the AblePlay website features a rating seal that provides an at-a-glance understanding of a toy's appropriateness for children with physical, sensory, communicative and/or cognitive disabilities. Through the website, consumers can purchase toys online directly from manufacturers after reading the comprehensive AblePlay product reviews.

AblePlay's Holiday 2006 Top 5 Toys for Children with Disabilities:

Dream Nouveau's Hop 'n Pop takes kids' natural fascination with bubble wrap and gives them a multi sensory experience that encourages fun while engaging their imaginations and bodies. Kids dance, play hopscotch or just jump around on the long plastic sheets filled with sealed air bubbles. They love hearing the "pops" which give their bodies great sensory input. Child development professionals are recommending it to families in large numbers. It provides a special benefit for kids with autism and/or sensory disorders; they often have the ability to learn better after having stimulus that engages their large muscle groups. The manufacturer designates this toy, available at www.ableplay.org for \$79.99, for children 18 months and older.

AblePlay - Top 5 Toys for Children with Disabilities
Add 1

Rokenbok's Capable Commander is a special controller for kids with special needs that replaces the traditional controller that is used to operate the vehicles. For many children with physical disabilities like cerebral palsy, the daunting task of holding and manipulating a standard remote control unit is frustrating if not impossible. However, with the Capable Commander, children use literal hand and arm movements to activate all functions of their vehicles. This set includes the special remote and a Rokenbok set with vehicles and building pieces. The manufacturer designates this toy, available at www.ableplay.org for \$199.98, for children eight years and older.

HaPe International's Bamboo Bialo is a game that captivates children of all abilities. Here's how it works: Kids toss colorful animal figures into one of a number of rings, which are shallow and have generous diameters, increasing their chance for reaching the target area. Players move around the board based on which rings their animals lands in. This engaging game of skill and chance enhances fine motor skills and hand-eye coordination while encouraging cooperative play. It can be especially good for children with learning disabilities who need to repeat the same process over again to learn the sequence and who need to go at their own pace. The manufacturer recommends this toy, available at www.ableplay.org for \$24.95, for children four years and older.

Kushies, Inc.'s Zolo Beanstax offers the ultimate in beanbag creativity, with a variety of possibilities of how to stack, build and combine various elements of the toy. The toy allows for three levels of play, ultimately inviting kids to build creatures with heads and facial features. By playing with these decidedly contemporary beanbags, kids develop coordination between their movement and mind, hand-eye coordination and problem solving - all while having fun and interacting with others. Beanstax may be especially good for children with physical disabilities who find greater success holding small, formable items. The manufacturer designates this toy, available at www.ableplay.org, for \$35.99, for children one year and older.

WABA Fun's Superstructs is a construction set comprised of 160 large, vibrant and durable interlocking pieces that includes rods, connectors, and panels. As children work towards creating a structure, they polish the sequencing skills that can help enhance logical thinking. Superstructs stimulates kids to develop creativity, eye-hand coordination skills and overall dexterity. While in building mode, problem-solving skills are honed as kids attempt to replicate one of the structures depicted in the colorful construction guide that accompanies the toy. This is especially helpful for visual spatial learners. The manufacturer recommends this toy, available at www.ableplay.org for \$29.95, for children three years and older.

National Lekotek Center: The National Lekotek Center provides direct services, support and information to children with special needs and their families in resource and play centers that are found worldwide. Lekotek is a division of Anixter Center, a not-for-profit organization in Chicago that assists individuals with disabilities to live and work successfully in the community. Anixter Center recently was named the 13th-largest charitable organization in Chicago by *Crain's Chicago Business*. People served by Lekotek include children with a range of disabilities such as Down syndrome, cerebral palsy, sight or hearing loss, mental retardation or chronic medical conditions, and their families. Lekotek, based in Chicago, Illinois, is the U.S. headquarters and the administrative and training center for the nationwide network of 34 Lekotek centers in seven states (Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Michigan, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Virginia).

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