

Editorial | Cubu, Disruptus, Arazzles

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I think any kid would back me up when I make the claim that the best part about summer vacation is having no school. As a youngster, the summer meant the beach, sports, barbecues, and playing outside all day, which made it my favorite time of year. However, summer can also mean reading, keeping up with topics, and building on concepts that were learned months before. That list isn't always a kid's favorite cup of tea, but something that they all love is toys and games.

The door in the educational category for toys is now wide open, especially with schools under extra pressure because of Common Core standards. There are quite a few games to keep kids' noggins churning while having fun, which is one of the best ways to keep them engaged and interested while school is out. Some examples of such are these new games from Funnybone Toys:

Cubu plays on visual illusions to confuse players as they try to follow number and color sequences. This game forces players to use both sides of their brain at the same time, which stimulates the mind in a way that you wouldn't expect. The challenge lies in keeping up with the number, color, and position of boxes on the cards, while the key hurdle is identifying the pattern and seeing what cards you have in your hand to make your next move. The game lasts until someone reaches 100 points and is declared the winner. The instructions also offer a speed round of Cubu and alternate ways to play the game.



Disruptus uses disruptive thinking to help users innovate by encouraging different ideas and approaches. Disruptive thinking is the concept of looking at an object or idea to come up with an entirely different way to achieve the same goal. This kind of thinking has been used to create ideas and objects that we use every day, including smartphones and digital music. The game comes with 100 cards with different objects on them. Using the die, players will roll one of six options: Create 2, where players use two cards to create a new idea or object; Improve, where you add or change one element of the image to make it better;

Transform, which uses the object or idea on the card for a different purpose; Disrupt, where you use disruptive thinking; and a Judge's Choice or Player's Choice of what to do. You can play without the die so younger children can have fun playing this game, too. Or, you can use the cards and make up your own rules and find countless ways to innovate and explore new options.

Arazzles lets players explore geometric configurations through abstract building. Each set features cards with one of five different patterns of slots that allow abstract building and design opportunities. The cards have a different color on each side, which is one of five metallic colors. Each card also has a hole in the middle (the size of a plastic straw) to connect the cards in a different way. The best part about this game is that you choose how you want to construct—you can connect the cards in endless unique ways that foster creativity. Even if what you are building falls down or flips over, it doesn't mean that there is a flaw in your design. On the contrary, you've just made a whole new construction! You can also try to go back to that old design and see what caused it to tip over, play memory games, and try to recreate everyday objects with these cards.



Even from a young age, my parents always made sure that I had a balance of work and play (mainly to make sure I didn't go brain-dead by the end of the summer), but sometimes, a simple summer reading assignment isn't enough. For that reason, these types of toys and games are essential for companies to make, and for specialty and mass retail stores to have in stock. They keep kids using their brains until September rolls around again, but even more importantly, they are fun to play with!