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TIE

Press Release
For immediate release

Play as key to child development as formal education

The 'Value of Play' highlighted at International Toy Fair

Brussels, 13 February 2004 -- Play is as central to a child's physical and social development as any part of their formal education according to the Toy Industries of Europe (TIE) during its seminar entitled, "The Value of Play". A compelling body of research presented by Professor Jeffrey Goldstein from the Department of Social & Organizational Psychology at the University of Utrecht, was unveiled during the International Toy Fair in Nuremberg, 5-10 February.

When children play, they develop neural pathways in the brain according to Professor Goldstein. Children can test their abilities through play and through this learn complex lessons. As a result, children who have been allowed and encouraged to play stand the best chance of becoming healthy, happy and productive members of society.

Play is an effective teaching strategy both in school and out. According to Goldstein, a review of more than 40 studies concludes that play enhances early development by at least 33%. Toys and play are an intrinsic part of child development, helping them to acquire a variety of skills for life, such as motor-coordination, social skills and the use of imagination.

As parents and educators become increasingly alarmed about the physical and psychological well-being of children, emphasising the value of play is even more crucial. According to Goldstein's research, young animals living in an environment with a surplus of food do not develop obesity, they simply play more. Where obesity is a problem, play may be a solution. Professor Goldstein also pointed to early research which suggests that active play may reduce impulsivity thereby helping children with attention deficit and hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

Professor Goldstein concluded by saying that play is of fundamental importance to children, but it is not always recognised and fully appreciated by adults and society. Playing is fun and contributes to children's happiness, but it is also vital to their health and well-being. This is why TIE continues to actively promote the value of play in the physical, psychological and social development of children.

Thomas Eichorn, Vice-Chairman of TIE said, "This seminar has reminded us of the vital role toy manufacturers play in child development. It is clear that play helps children develop their coordination and motor neurone skills as well as socially desirable qualities such as sharing, cooperating, and interacting with others. We think that these are important messages for those beyond our industry – educators, parents and even legislators need to recognise and appreciate the value of play."

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About TIE
TIE is an action group that promotes the value of toys and play in the psychological, physical and social development of children. It is the representative voice of the toy industry to EU stakeholders. TIE fully supports the European Union objective to complete the single market..

Professor Jeffrey Goldstein's biography
Jeffrey Goldstein was professor of psychology at Temple University (Philadelphia) and visiting professor at the University of London, and is now with the Department of Social and Organizational Psychology at the University of Utrecht, The Netherlands. He is author or editor of 16 books including *The Psychology of Humor, Sports, Games, and Play, Aggression and Crimes of Violence* (Oxford University Press), which won the Best Book award from the International Society for Research on Aggression, 1988, *Toys, Play and Child Development*, and *Why We Watch: The Attractions of Violent Entertainment*, which he edited with support from the Harry Frank Guggenheim Foundation. Two books will be published in 2004, *The Handbook of Computer Game Studies* (MIT Press), and *Toys, Games and Media*.

Goldstein is a fellow of both the American Psychological Association and the American Psychological Society. As a consultant on children and media, Prof. Goldstein summarizes scholarly research for clients around the world. He is chairman of the National Toy Council (London) and serves on the Academic Advisory Board of the Entertainment Software Rating Board (New York), The Netherlands Institute for the Classification of Audiovisual Media, and the PEGI European rating board. He sits on the Editorial Board of *Humor: International Journal of Humor Research*, *International Journal of Early Childhood Education*, and *International Journal of Advertising & Marketing to Children*. Prof. Goldstein is the 2001 winner of the BRIO Prize awarded annually "to a distinguished academic toy researcher or recognized organization working for the benefit and development of children and young people."

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