

KID-POWERED TOYS



WORK & LIFESTYLE

Kids today often associate batteries with fun, thanks to the legions of battery-powered toys out there. The unfortunate result is not just a waste of power and an environmental hazard but also a danger to health, as thousands of kids each year end up swallowing the tiny devices. Michigan-based Zen Design Group aims to change all that with a new line of toys that's powered by kids' own energy instead. Launched last fall, [SEE Toys](#) (short for "safety, ecology, economy") are electronic toys that never need batteries. Instead, they feature a hand crank that provides 15 minutes of fun in exchange for 60 seconds of cranking. Each toy makes its own, themed sounds to encourage kids to keep powering up—the Dynacar, for instance, makes engine sounds when its crank turns, while the Dynatiger makes a purring sound—and super-bright, colour-changing LEDs light up the action. Also included in the line are the Dynadolphin, the Dynashark and the Dynafly, a buzzing, giggling electronic bug that won Creative Child Magazine's Seal of Excellence Award last August. Pricing on the toys ranges from USD 14.99 to USD 19.99. While it would be a stretch to call these plastic toys eco-friendly, there's no doubt the eco trend is building momentum (see [trendwatching.com's May briefing](#) for more on that), and bringing that green focus to kids' toys as well makes good sense. Besides the obvious environmental benefits, green products also tend to bring greenbacks for their makers—or the currency of their choice! 😊 Spotted by: Bill McMahon

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