

Our Favorite Things

BOREDOM

BUSTER

AWARDS

15 great toys and
more to cure the
summertime blues



Blast Bubbles (Almost) Into Space

There's no NASA training needed to fly the foam-tipped **Gazillion Bubble Rocket**. Just pour some of the included bubble solution into the base, set the 12-inch-high

Active Toy

spacecraft in place, and stomp on the launcher. You'll send the rocket soaring — with an iridescent, sudsy vapor trail floating behind it.

Ages 6 and up

Funrise, \$17

— FAYE S. WOLFE



A Slick Ride for a Summer Day

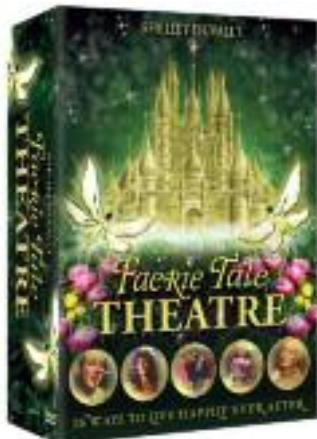
Move over the Popsicles and make room in your freezer! The all-weather **Slicer** sled runs on snow, of course, but it also speeds down a grassy hill. How? With the help of special ice molds, each about the size of a small pizza, that

Active Toy you fill with water, freeze, and attach to the bottom of the plastic sled. The melting ice will send your kids flying. Pretty cool for a hot day. **Ages 6 and up**
Ice Meister, \$80; icesled.com — LISA STOWE



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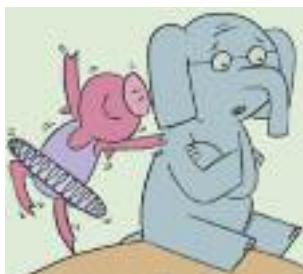
Funny Stories for Beginning Readers



Fairy Tales That Never Get Old

Shelley Duvall's **Faerie Tale Theatre** — the 1980s series of smartly adapted children's stories — is living happily ever after on DVD. The 26 recently rereleased episodes distill classic tales, such as "Aladdin and His Wonderful Lamp," into simple story lines for

What to Rent young viewers. Parents will get a kick out of spotting celebrities, including James Earl Jones and Robin Williams. **Ages 4 to 8 Koch Vision, \$15 each, \$100 for the boxed set** — DANNY HEITMAN



The Elephant and Piggie series — featuring the Laurel and Hardy of easy-reader books — now boasts nine rip-roaring titles, including the recently released *Elephants Cannot*

Page-turners *Dance! Mo Willems's* dying-to-be-read-aloud, often-exclamatory text ("AAAAAGGHH!") and uncluttered illustrations make the antics of the cautious pachyderm and free-spirited swine play like an afternoon with the funniest of friends. **Ages 4 to 8 Hyperion, \$9 each** — ALICIA POTTER

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Make Your Own Snow — in August!

If the weather outside is frightful(ly hot), chill out with the **Make Your Own Snowman World** kit. Simply add water

Great for a Group to the nontoxic polymer mixes, and the cubes, balls, and powder absorb the liquid and expand, making bigger cubes and balls and piles of powder.

Using their homemade faux snow, kids can create a winter wonderland of miniature creatures and igloos. Best of all, everything in the kit can be used again and again. Just let the sculptures dry out and the polymers "melt" back to their original size. **Ages 4 and up DuneCraft, \$10** — BETH HONEYMAN

