

To Target: Forget sorting by gender. Here's how you should label toys.

Dear Target,

I hear you're taking down signs that indicate which toys and bedding are for boys and girls. I never even noticed they were labeled—and I'm sure my children haven't either.



Our sons would walk through fire or save pocket change for months to get the Toy of Their Dreams. No pink sign or “girls” label is going to stand in their way of bringing home a cool Army tank or a stuffed Garfield.

So I'm not worried about your youngest customers. They're savvy shoppers. But the grown-ups could use some guidance. How about labeling those toys in ways that make it easy for the grandparents, aunts and uncles, and family friends to make their gift selections?



Try these:

- Toys to give if you want to be popular with the child and not the parents
- Toys to give if you want to be popular with the parents and not the child
- Toys that make the most annoying noises ever—including during the night
- Toys that are so messy they should come with a vacuum cleaner

- Toys that only work—or work best—with a downloaded app
- Toys guaranteed to cause conflicts among siblings
- Toys with boxes covered with pictures promoting more toys
- Toys that will be in the giveaway pile within six months
- Toys that are battery hogs
- Toys that only out-of-town aunts and uncles should give because they'll never have to listen to the 3-year-old on the drum set, etc.
- Toys that are sure to be confiscated within 24 hours
- Toys that only make sense if you buy 20 other toys and watch 45 episodes of the corresponding TV show
- Toys that look great but can't actually compete with a roll of scotch tape
- Toys you can easily assemble in the dark on Christmas Eve if you have a Ph.D. in engineering

Hey, if you happen to make all those signs pink, maybe our sons will skip right over the toy section and head straight for the vegetable aisle.

And while I'm dreaming, we'd really like one of those big red balls.



Signed,

A Mother Who Can Still Sing Songs from Battery-Powered Toys She Hid Four Years Ago