

Baby rattle wins award

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BRISTOL - The NogginStik Developmental Rattle has won a 2013 Parents' Choice Award.

"We are honored that the NogginStik has been awarded a Parents' Choice Award as a product that meets their high standards," said Marcia Haut, president of the Bristol-based SmartNoggin Inc., which developed the toy.

The rattle, which is the first toy SmartNoggin released, was developed to help infants reach their first milestones and to promote early interaction and bonding between parents and children. It comes with an illustrated parent guide that explains what skills are developed using the toy.

Like most rattles, NogginStik is easy to grasp and its rattle end contains beads for sound. What makes this rattle different from others is that it has a bright LED light, which movement activates, behind the friendly face on its head. Each time it is whacked, its light changes color from red to blue to green. This feature, along with the others, helps to capture the child's attention and increase focus.

This is not the first time the company has won an award for the toy.

It received Creative Child Magazine's 2012 Toy of the Year for the developmental baby toys category. That year, it also received the National Parenting Center Seal of Approval and was a National Parenting Publications Award gold winner.

But, Haut, a developmental therapist who spent 25 years working with special needs children, is most proud of the rating the NogginStik recently received from AblePlay, a website run by the National Lekotek Center, which reviews and rates play products for children with special needs. The toy received five stars in the cognitive category and four stars in the physical, sensory and communicative categories.

All this attention has helped the company to expand its reach. In the past year, the NogginStik has been picked up by nearly 300 stores across the nation, including one in Alaska, Haut said. Locally, it can be found

in Granger at Exploration

Toys in Heritage Square and

in Mishawaka at Lanser's The Natural Way on Edison Road and at Imagine That on Main Street. It also can be purchased online at www.SmartNogginToys.com.

"We hope that the NogginStik's message that a child's learning journey begins at birth and parents are

their child's most important teachers, continues to spread," said Haut, who hopes to expand the SmartNoggin toy line.

"We've begun development of two new toys," she said. "They are currently in the prototype stage."