

Forget the iPad, let kids play in sand or with blocks

When it comes to finding toys to encourage a child's interest in science, sometimes simpler can be better and yet more sophisticated.

Creighton University professor of physics Dr. Gintaras Duda suggests looking at toys with a tactile, kinesthetic component that can help illustrate scientific principles while allowing a child to come up with new ways to play.

"If you can get kids to be creative, that's the main thing," Dr. Duda said. "Let them sort of figure out how these things work. It's great scientific learning. Yes, kids love to play with the iPad, but if you dump a bin of Legos out in front of them and let them go, you'll always be surprised at what they come up with."

Hands-on building blocks, tower sets, and a strangely behaving substance known as kinesthetic sand, which shares certain properties with regular sand but performs differently as it's being molded, have all captured children's attention and imagination.

