

Drift & Row aims to improve the value of play

Posted on Thursday, Jul 11, 2019

Flashing lights, bright colors and loud noises... When you walk down the aisle of a toy store, that's what you will see and hear.

Highly stimulating toys currently dominate the market. While these products are great entertainment for children, they generally don't aim to improve language development or learning. A Wisconsin business is working to change this — one toy at a time.

Drift & Row LLC is a Milwaukee-based startup focused on designing and creating handmade toys that support language and learning in children. It was founded in 2018 by owner Brenna Davis, a speech language pathologist.

“The meaning of ‘Drift & Row’ is a reminder about what play should be. ‘Drift,’ meaning freedom and unstructured time. ‘Row,’ meaning children need to work and fail in order for it to be play,” Davis said.

After working to support children and parents in her professional career, Davis saw a need for toys parents could buy to support social skills and education.

“As a speech language pathologist, I was struggling with this disconnect as to good work happening in my therapy room and schools, and what was being translated into the home,” Davis said.

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