

"Buy Me!" Busters

Creative Ways to Reduce the Urge for the Latest Toy

- 1. Kids keep asking for more stuff that costs too much.**
—Give them a better alternative: Time playing with you and with each other! Set up "floor time" with them each day, to follow their agenda. Try to model your own consumption in a way that devotes less priority to the newest and fanciest brand-name products and services, and tell them why. Keep explaining why you can't or won't get the stuff they want, while acknowledging their desires.
- 2. Kids can sense if they get toys as substitutes for quality time with their parents.**
—Try to devote more unstructured time with them, responding to their feelings and activities.
- 3. Kids get lots of peer pressure to obtain the newest brand-name toys, etc.**
—Encourage them to develop their own sense of their own likes and dislikes, and a balanced view of what's good and bad about a particular brand-name toy, etc. Ask them to remember last year's fad, and how much it interests them now. Invite their toy-burdened friends to play without the fancy toys. Turn them on to nature and their own fine imaginations.
- 4. Kids have little sense of the cost or value of the toys that they want.**
—Give them a small allowance, and tell them that they can save up for the toys that they really want. Suggest that they observe whether other children continue to play with their latest toys. Include your children in family planning on how much money you will share, spend, and save. Encourage several families to pool toys in a library, for sharing and circulating.
- 5. Many kids spend too much time watching TV or playing computer or video games.**
—Give them better alternatives, by sharing your other interests, especially nature, with them, and by giving them unstructured time alone and together away from the TV, to build an active imagination and a positive attitude toward the real world.
- 6. Kids see an average of 35,000 commercials a year.**
—Help them to understand the difference between a commercial and a story, and give them lots of stories without commercials. Watch their TV programs with them often, and share opinions about what's good and bad about a program. Identify commercials when they come on the air, and show the children how a commercial tries to trick them into wanting the advertised toys.
- 7. Kids get passive, with the strong and repeated visual images fed to them on TV.**
—Model a creative imagination, and give them time, space, and encouragement to make up their own stories, with the simple props at hand in nature, in your classroom, or at home. Establish limits on the time they spend in front of the tube. Better yet, turn it off except on special occasions, or give it away! The whole family will be more alive and in touch with each other.
- 8. Kids don't take care of the toys that they have.**
—Help them to care for them properly, including putting them away. Reward their careful maintenance of toys. Use your and their imaginations to create together new toys from old, and from recycled materials. Imagination is the best toy.
- 9. The big corporations and their media keep pushing greed and passivity on kids.**
—Tell the corporations, the media, and your elected officials that you can't stand any more of this insidious exploitation of kids' innocent trust. If enough of us speak, they'll listen!
- 10. Check out some of the resources on the other side of this page. They'll help!**

What's YOUR idea? Share it with CEASE, info@peaceeducators.org