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**Step2® Toys at the Top of the Holiday List**  
**Kid-Tested Research Shows Step2 Brand Toys Should Be Under Every Tree**

**STREETSBORO, Ohio, October 11, 2003** – No need to scour the earth for the right toys this holiday season. Parents need only look for stores that carry the Step2® brand. Step2 has all the toys kids love and parents want for this holiday season. While children love the excitement and imaginative play inspired by Step2 brand toys, parents appreciate their durability and value for the dollar.

The hottest toy for this season, by far, has to be the Five Alarm Fun Center™, which was named the #1 Toy of 2003 in the Family Fun Magazine T.O.Y. Awards. This open cab fire engine playhouse provides for active rescue role playing by toddlers, with a realistic emergency light, dashboard siren, clicker knobs and pretend CB radio. This same toy garnered the prestigious Oppenheim Toy Portfolio Platinum Award, the organization's highest honor given.

“Recognition by The FamilyFun Magazine Toy of the Year program is really quite significant,” says Tom Murdough, Step2 President and CEO. “According to the Wall Street Journal, this program has accurately predicted the hottest new toys for over ten years running, so we know we’re doing a lot of things right.”

Step2 toys have also earned a number of other prestigious awards, important because they indicate that the toys have performed well in extensive testing with children in real-world settings such as kindergartens, nursery schools and play centers. Judged for durability, role playing experience and genuine imaginative fun, Step2 products keep coming out on top.

If it's little girl squeals of delight you're looking for, the **Step2 LifeStyle Dream Kitchen™** will produce them. Parents appreciate this upscale kitchen designed to match today's home décors. Kids love the realistic electronic features: a microwave, oven, stovetop, phone and over-the-sink light. The stove's burners even make frying pan and boiling water sounds when skillets and pots are placed on them. Named the NBC “Today Show” Toy Test Winner, the LifeStyle Dream Kitchen has also received an Oppenheim Toy Portfolio Gold Award, a Parent's Choice Award, and a Canadian Toy Testing Council “3-Star” Rating.

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For parents in search of stationary outdoor toys that don't stand out like a sore thumb, the **Step2 Naturally Playful™ series** offers a wonderland of outdoor toys that stand out by blending in. Natural colors and woodland textures coordinate beautifully with today's residential surroundings and landscaping designs, and enhance role playing adventures for children. The Naturally Playful™ StoryBook Cottage includes an outdoor patio with rock wall seats, a secret crawl-thru fireplace and a cuckoo-style clock. The Naturally Playful™ Woodland Climber is a stone-and-wood-look climbing and sliding gym with an open bottom that can be filled with sand. Both toys have received the Oppenheim Toy Portfolio Gold Award.

Got a budding gardener in your home? **The Step2 Little Helper's Potting Bench** is an exciting workspace that nurtures little green thumbs. Children have plenty of room and all the accessories needed to undertake their own flower gardening projects, including flower seeds and pots, a watering can, gardening gloves and a trowel. A special bin under the grated work surface catches potting soil that gets dropped. The Little Helper's Potting Bench was named a finalist in the 2003 Family Fun Magazine T.O.Y. Awards.

“One of the goals we consistently achieve at Step2 is the creation of solutions to some age-old problems which come to our attention, quite often, directly from consumers,” says Allen Kannapell, Step2 Senior VP of Marketing . “A great example of this is what we've done with the **Step2 Neat & Tidy Cottage™.**”

While most stationery outdoor playhouses have open areas underneath, the Neat & Tidy Cottage features a molded in floor that keeps kids out of the dirt and dirt out of the house. No more muddy bottoms or soggy, dirty shoes. And, it's realistic looking wood and stone detailing make it another Step2 product that blends neatly into residential landscaping. The Neat & Tidy Cottage received top honors with a three-star rating from the Canadian Toy Testing Council.

You can learn more about these hot holiday toys and others made by the Step2 Company at [www.step2.com](http://www.step2.com).

The privately held Step2 Company, established in 1991 and headquartered in Ohio, is the second largest rotational molder in the world. Step2 is a multinational manufacturer and marketer of children's plastic play and furniture products with global distribution through select retailers in the United States, Canada, Mexico and more than 70 others countries.

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