

Toy stores all wound up for the Xmas rush

SUTHENTIRA GOVENDER

SANTA is going to have to split his time between keeping his hi-tech toy factory ticking over and ensuring he has a healthy supply of the Princess Elsa dolls.

This year's Christmas wish lists include everything from Lego, Stikbots, Barbie, Furby, Disney's Frozen range, Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, the Sofia doll, zany games like Pie Face and the ultra popular Hatchimals, which sold out even before the festive hype.

Toys R Us said electronic and interactive toys, collectibles and franchise merchandise are must-haves this season. But classics such as dolls, cars, figurines and educational toys have also proven a firm favourite.

"Technology and gaming lead the trends, but toys inspired by popular animation blockbusters continue to propel the industry,"

said Toys R Us spokesman Nicole Annells.

The retail toy store released its top 15 toys list in October to allow parents to budget for Christmas purchases.

Included are the Sofia super-value doll, Disney's Tsum Tsum plush toys, Selfie Mic, Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtle figurines, Pie Face and Chatimals.

Tevin Kalako, customer assistant at Sandton City's Toy Kingdom said the store had done brisk business in the last two weeks.

"This is peak time for us. Among the favourites have been Hatchimals, which are sold out, Leapfrog tablets, Furby, which sells for R3 000, and Lego.

"Barbie and Frozen merchandise are on a par when it comes to popular choice."

Hatchimals allow children to nurture an egg to hatching stage before looking after the cuddly toy contained in the brightly

coloured eggs.

Chatimals repeat what children say to them.

Kalako said dolls that looked like newborn babies were also top sellers.

Parenting expert Nikki Bush, who released her annual Toy Talk list recently, said: "There

was nothing innovative in toys this year that we haven't seen before. Interestingly, number games and construction toys feature prominently.

"The more children play with numbers in the real sense, the more they will understand numbers in the abstract sense in the classroom," said Bush.

She encouraged parents to go for education games and family board games this Christmas.

They will "foster quality family time and convey to children the value of learning, turn-taking, winning and losing with grace, and having fun."

Bush also included the Cake Splat and Pie Face on her list.

"They are the silliest games of the year, because of their stress-relieving fun and the laughter they elicit."

The games involve a mechanical hand launching a cream pie into a player's face.

Barbie and Frozen are on a par when it comes to popular choice



PRACTISING PRINCESSES: Calvin Sookram takes a picture of his friends Denise Naidoo and Branson Govender shopping for Christmas gifts at Toys R Us in the Gateway shopping centre
Picture: JACKIE CLAUSEN

Christmas on steroids

FOR one German couple, putting up the Christmas decorations takes eight weeks.

With about 16 000 baubles having to be placed on more than 100 Christmas trees, Thomas and Susanne Jeromin's annual winter wonderland at their house in Rinteln, Germany, has become a seasonal labour of love.

"We started off with a normal Christmas tree in the living room, as you'd expect, and then we thought we could put one in the hallway, one in the kitchen and, over the past five years, it's exploded," said Thomas.

The couple began decorating their home in early October with lights, ornaments and decorations dotted throughout.

Their bedroom is the only festive-free zone. "It's our retreat for when we've had enough of Christmas," Susanne said. — Reuters