

You Won't Believe What These Dads Invented to Make Life Better for Their Kids

Necessity may be the mother of invention—but change the word "mother" to "father" here, because these amazing dads saw a need based on their life with kids and invented a solution to share with the world.

BY LAURA RICHARDS

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Ray Phillips and Alvin Uy—SoapSox: Turning the anxiety of bath time into calm, fun time



RAY PHILLIPS AND ALVIN UY/SOAPSOX

Phillips and Uy are the co-creators of SoapSox, a line of 2-in-1 plush animals that double as washcloths and bath time toys. Phillips and Uy, both fathers to two young boys, brought together their unique career backgrounds to create this brilliant product that finally lets kids bring their stuffed animals into the tub. Phillips, founder and CEO, worked as a Program Director at a residential treatment facility with children who have experienced trauma. He found that bathing was the most challenging time of the day because the children would argue, cry, and even hide just to avoid taking a bath. After repeated struggles with one particular child who could not part with his favorite stuffed animal to bathe, Phillips came up with the idea of modifying it to hold soap—and when the child was presented with the

prototype, he agreed to bathe. Phillips continued to use this strategy over the years with the children, realizing that no product like it existed on the market. Through his network of friends, he reached out to Uy, a former toy designer for Disney, Hasbro, and Mattel, to help him create this innovative product, and SoapSox was born. SoapSox sell for \$12.99–\$14.99 and have helped numerous kids turn anxiety over bath time into fun. Are you bathing your child too much or not enough?

Greg Durocher—Safe Ride 4 Kids: Making child car passenger products safer



GREG DUROCHER/SAFE RIDE 4 KIDS

Greg Durocher, a father of three, founded Safe Ride 4 Kids. He was a firefighter for 18 years, a paramedic for 10, and a Child Passenger Safety Technician (CPST) Instructor since 2001. Over the years, he was a first responder to dozens of tragic car crashes while on the job, many involving kids. He started to think, "Kids are the innocent victims of car crashes, and I want to do everything I can to help parents give them the best possible outcome." Durocher created Safe Ride 4 Kids because of this first responder experience. But then, during the pregnancy with their third child, Durocher and his wife Amie realized that three child restraints would not fit across the back seat of their vehicle and they would need to purchase a new car. That's when a fellow CPST reminded them of a travel vest that might work and be a less expensive solution than a new car. Durocher decided to bring this concept to the parent market, and now they are the number one distributor of the RideSafer® Travel Vest, which is an

alternative to a traditional booster seat and is a more portable version of the forward-facing, 5-point harness seat. (It retails for \$145-\$159). For more car safety information, check out nine car safety features to look out for.

Asaf Kehat and Ayal Lanternari—nanobébé: Bottles that moms can pump directly into that preserve breastmilk nutrients



AYAL-LANTERNARI AND ASAF KEHAT/NANOBEBE

Asaf Kehat and Ayal Lanternari have been best friends since age five. They grew up surfing together, joined the military together, and even became bio-medical engineers together. They were basically inseparable. Fast forward to marriage and kids, and both men became equally frustrated by the challenges they experienced when helping their wives pump breastmilk to feed their babies. This is how their company nanobébé began. Kehat and Lanternari created the first baby bottle designed to preserve essential breastmilk nutrients by enabling rapid heating and cooling through an innovative geometric bottle design—the perfect invention for two bio-medical engineer dads! Thanks to its unique geometry and increased surface area, the bottle cools quickly, reducing bacterial growth, and warms quickly at safe temperatures, so you can promptly feed your hungry baby without exposing breastmilk to nutrient-damaging temperatures. The nanobébé bottle retails for \$10.99 and warms up two to three times faster than standard bottles. And the included breast-pump adaptor means you can express breastmilk directly into the bottle, and then store it in the freezer or fridge. Kehat and Lanternari

achieved their goal of helping parents adhere to the highest standards of health and safety, without sacrificing convenience and style.

Andy Musliner—InRoad Toys: Roads for toy cars and trucks



ANDY MUSLINER/INROAD TOYS

As a dad of three boys, Andy Musliner was surrounded by toy cars and trucks. The only thing one of Musliner's sons wanted for Christmas was a "big box of cars," and that's exactly what he got. Dozens of them. But then the question arose: Where do you drive them all? "As a father, I naturally wanted to play with my sons, but I realized that for all of the toy cars, there were no toy roads anywhere," Musliner says. For the millions of toy cars on the market there were simply no toy roads. That led Musliner to create InRoad Toys and a 12-year journey to develop PlayTape, the perfect way to create instant roads for any vehicle, anytime, anywhere—now including trains. It was even a 2016 Toy of the Year Finalist. Musliner encourages other dads to invent products that fill a need like he did, but warns, "Be sure you are taking on your new venture at a pace that doesn't overshadow your most important job—raising your children. They are your legacy." PlayTape retails for \$14.99 and up. Train lovers, listen up: These are the most scenic train rides in America.

Jon Sumroy—mifold: A booster seat that fits in your glove box



JON SUMROY/MIFOLD

Jon Sumroy, the founder and creator of the mifold Grab-and-Go booster seat, says he got the idea for his product around 2002 during the endless carpool shuffle that occupies so much of suburban life. Jon lived in Englewood, NJ, at the time and was working at a tech startup. "I had three young children and they were all using car seats regularly, or they were carpooling to school in someone else's car without the right protection, and it really bothered me," he says. Sumroy thought a compact version that was safe, light, easy to carry or even put in a car's glovebox would be a great idea. Then, in 2012 a friend sent him a magazine article that said 50 percent of children don't have a car seat when they're carpooling. Sumroy says, "That old light bulb went off: Nobody had yet solved the problem." Sumroy spent countless evenings and weekends in his garage designing the first prototype himself, fashioning it out of canvas and straps. A year later, he launched mifold, now the most advanced, compact, and portable child car safety seat in the world. It's more than 10 times smaller than a regular booster and just as safe. It's intended for children between four and 12 years old who weigh between 40 and 100 pounds. Retailing for \$44.99, mifold is now used by the Bradley County Sheriff's Office in Tennessee in some of their patrol cars to transport kids in emergency situations.

Kelly Andrews—Fairhaven Health: Products for couples trying to conceive and beyond



KELLY ANDREWS/FAIRHAVEN HEALTH

Kelly Andrew created Fairhaven Health in 2000, when his wife was pregnant. "While we were fortunate to become pregnant on our honeymoon, so many of our friends and relatives were struggling to conceive," Andrews says. "Month after month, we would ride the emotional roller coaster with them, hoping that this would finally be the month, followed by the crushing disappointment of yet another negative pregnancy test." Through their friends, Andrews learned about things like basal body temperature charting, fertility monitors, ovulation tests, and of course pregnancy tests. He knew that the cheaper they were, and the earlier they could detect pregnancy, the better. Andrews and a former co-worker set out to create an online retailer dedicated to helping trying-to-conceive (TTC) couples more affordably. Initially they sold only two products—pregnancy tests and ovulation predictor kits. "The tests we carried were test strip format, considerably cheaper than the midstream tests sold in drugstores and supermarkets," Andrews says. "The pregnancy tests were designed to detect low levels of hCG, which is ideal for early pregnancy detection." Orders began rolling in the same day the website went live, and their company experienced exponential growth in those first several months. It became abundantly clear to Andrews—both from the increasing numbers of orders they received as well as from the heartfelt emails from couples— that'd they had tapped into something significant. By the time their son turned 1, Andrews' wife was able to stop working and stay home with him. The company now

sells numerous products for pregnancy and beyond. Before TTC, here are things you need to know before going off birth control.