

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Susan J. Oliver
773.263.3030
soliver@interaccess.com



ASTRA CERTIFIES 28 NEW PLAY EXPERTS

RETAILERS, SALES REPS, AND MANUFACTURERS COMPLETE INTENSIVE TEN-HOUR CERTIFICATION PROGRAM IN CHICAGO



Chicago, IL (September 13, 2016) – The American Specialty Toy Retailing Association (ASTRA) announced today that twenty-eight specialty toy retailers, sales representatives, and manufacturers successfully earned the ASTRA *Certified Play Expert* credential during ASTRA’s first in-person certification workshop held September 10-11, 2016 in Chicago, IL.

“We’re thrilled to have certified this impressive group of play experts,” said Kimberly Mosley, President of ASTRA. “Play is essential to developing a healthy brain from birth through adulthood. ASTRA is proud to recognize this group of play experts who came to us with so much knowledge about toys and left pledging to be advocates and influence their communities on the power of play.”

Cindy L. Eckert, owner of Whimsicality, LLC, a specialty toy store in Flint, MI, earned the Certified Play Expert credential. “There really is a lot of science behind play,” she commented. “I would highly recommend the ASTRA CPE program to anyone interested in advocating for play. The comprehensive information presented confirmed the need for play for all ages. My completion of this program further supports Whimsicality in its effort to bring quality, educational toys to the Flint/Genesee County area.”

The CPE Workshop provides networking opportunities, dynamic discussions and hands-on activities to further support the message on the value of play. ASTRA also offers the option of becoming a Certified Play Expert through a convenient online course with ten modules (followed by tests to confirm the candidate’s learning) that can be completed at a pace that works best for the candidate. Information can be found at <https://academy.astratoy.org/>.

About the American Specialty Toy Retailing Association (ASTRA)

Founded in 1992, the American Specialty Toy Retailing Association (ASTRA) is an international not-for-profit trade organization that serves more than 1,800 independent retailers, manufacturers and sales representatives in the specialty toy industry. ASTRA is a community of dedicated professionals committed to providing children with healthy, quality play materials that have high play value and are designed with a focus on what the child can do, rather than what the toy can do. ASTRA members are leaders who, through their businesses, make a positive impact on the economy and culture of the communities they serve. For more information, visit www.astratoy.org/.

####