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GROW YOUR PLAY EXPERTISE AT ASTRA'S MARKETPLACE & ACADEMY

EDUCATIONAL SESSIONS TO HELP RETAILERS "OWN" PLAY IN THEIR COMMUNITIES

Chicago, Illinois (February 24, 2016) – The American Specialty Toy Retailing Association (ASTRA) announced today that independent toy retailers registered for the full [ASTRA Marketplace & Academy](#) will have access to over 30 hours of professional education with five hours dedicated to families and healthy play. [Early bird registration rates](#), which include all educational programs at a discounted price, end on Monday, February 29, 2016.

“Specialty toy retailers are well positioned to ‘own’ play in their communities,” notes Kimberly Mosley, President of ASTRA. “Our Academy planning committee, which is comprised of ASTRA members, puts a high priority on sessions that help retailers use their play expertise to differentiate their stores from the competition. Our vision is that all specialty toy store owners are viewed by parents, educators, and the media as their area’s local play experts.”

Sessions about play and families include:

- *The Importance of Play: Facts Behind the Fun*
- *Modern Families: How Their Pain Points Can Lead to Your Next Billion Dollar Idea*
- *Robots, STEM, and Makerspaces - Oh My!*
- *Finding the Right Balance: The Role of Technology in Creative Play*
- *Shop Smarter: A Guide to Educating Your Customers*

In addition to sessions on play and families, other breakouts cover business operations, financial management, industry trends, channel relationships, and sales & marketing. ASTRA’s Marketplace & Academy will be held June 5-8, 2016 in Denver, Colorado. Visit www.astramarketplace.org to register.

About the American Specialty Toy Retailing Association (ASTRA)

With more than 1,700 members, the American Specialty Toy Retailing Association (ASTRA) is the largest association for companies in the specialty toy and children’s products arenas. ASTRA and its member companies promote the growth of the toy industry by delivering products that serve children’s best interests. For more information, visit www.astratoy.org.

Because community matters, ASTRA members thank you for shopping locally.

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