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PLUSH PALS BOOST EMOTIONAL QUOTIENT (EQ) BEFORE BAD DREAMS OR BULLIES OVERWHELM

*Want To Raise A Confident Kid? Worriers Will Soon Have Fewer Fears
When Wanda, Biff And Fellow Cuddly Creatures Join The Household*

Springfield, MA (June 15, 2016) – Early childhood should be a time of innocence and fearlessness. But anxious moments tend to pop up. And not just in those scary fairy tales! The barking dog down the street or a vaccine shot to the arm can leave kids in tears. Wouldn't it be great if there were a toy that could lessen those fears? There is! Say hello to the Worry Eaters who are ready to boost a child's emotional well-being. With names like Wanda and Biff, these cuddly creatures will be embraced day or night.

“As a mom with a child with anxiety, I was actually really excited to learn of Worry Eaters. I think it's great that there is a “toy” out there that can help children with their fears!” blogged *Having Fun Saving & Cooking*. “Parents can help kids learn to manage stress and tackle everyday problems with ease using Worry Eaters as a tool to identify worries, clarify misunderstandings or misconceptions, resolve conflicts and build self-esteem, while promoting the development of healthy coping skills.”

Just this week Misty Nelson, self-described mompreneur and blogger of *Frosted Events* shared with her readers, “My son is afraid of ghosts. Sometimes when we are getting ready for bed he will say there's a ghost in his room and asks for us to get it out. We brought our new Worry Eater friend Wanda onboard to help do some “ghost busting.” So now when Brady says he thinks he hears a ghost we pull out a piece of paper and let him draw on it and feed the “ghost” to Wanda. It helps relax him and reassure him that the problem can be solved.”

Worry Eaters, priced at \$15.99 (S) and \$22.99 (L), sport big eyes and a wide zippered mouth that begs for a scrap of paper with a child-size worry written down. Each character has a hang tag that explains to children to jot their concern on paper -- or draw it if too young to write -- and toss it into the plush's zippered mouth. What happens next has generated applause from parents, therapists, the toy industry and especially the children who befriend a Worry Eater!



With names like Betti, Flint, Frula and Enno, the Worry Eater holds onto the worry, giving the child some time to “take a break” from carrying the weight of that concern. Meanwhile their parents can be assured that they now have a cuddly, kid-friendly tool to help them talk with their children about those worries. What a healthy way to deal with stress and worry!

According to parental website KidsHealth.org, “having fears or anxieties about certain things can also be helpful because it makes kids behave in a safe way. For example, a kid with a fear of fire would avoid

playing with matches.” As experienced with the blogger’s son, preschoolers have anxiety about things that aren’t based in reality, such as fears of monsters and ghosts. “As kids grow, one fear may disappear or replace another. For example, a child who couldn’t sleep with the light off at age 5 may enjoy a ghost story at a slumber party years later.”



That sort of strong emotional quotient (EQ) is as important as academic intelligence (IQ) in raising a healthy child. According to *Psychology Today*, emotional intelligence is “the ability to identify and manage your own emotions and the emotions of others” including “harnessing emotions and applying them to tasks like thinking and problems solving; to regulate your own emotions, and the ability to cheer up or calm down another person.”

Kids will encounter bullies at the bus stop and anxieties about tomorrow’s math test. But having a nurturing childhood pal like Worry Eater can boost a child’s ability to self regulate their feelings. Today’s student becomes tomorrow’s college coed and then a company employee. A high EQ is actually a key component to success as an adult. So says the business magazine *Fast Company* in their article, *Why Emotionally Intelligent People Are More Successful*.

“Everyone wants to work with people who are easy to get along with, supportive, likeable, and can be trusted,” begins the magazine article. “We want to be beside people that do not get upset easily and can keep their composure when things do not work out according to plan.” Perhaps more important, “People who self-regulate have the ability to wait until their emotions pass, allowing them to respond from a place of reason, rather than simply reacting to feelings. The signs of someone who is good at self-regulation are reflection, thoughtfulness, comfort with ambiguity, change, and not having all the answers.”

Once kids venture out to school, sports and scouts, EQ challenges will pop up. Feeling confident will help children as encounter these challenges that come with life. Children who are able to stop, take a breath and make a good choice are what parents hope to instill along with good manners and studying. As the digital world moves at a dizzying pace, youngsters are being pushed to respond to situations quickly. Their heart and their mind should be in sync with EQ and IQ working in tandem.

Moms and early childhood experts agree! “I have been incorporating Worry Eaters in my child life practice for the past year and couldn’t be more amazed by the positive impact it has on children’s emotional needs,” wrote blogger *Child Life Mommy*, aka Shani Thornton, MS, CCLS. “With the help of Worry Eaters, children have a therapeutic release from their anxieties and fears. There is a visible ease in their affect and tone once they draw out their fears and shove them in the Worry Eater’s mouth. Kids have told me they feel ‘safe’ or ‘better’ with a smile on their face. Parents have also taken note ... and have purchased them for their home and child’s classroom.”



Friend-in-need confidants like Worry Eaters can start a child on the best path to success. Isn't that worth a hug? Twelve different toy industry evaluators thought so and awarded Worry Eaters their highest honors.

This month it's the National Lekotek Center awarding its AblePlay™ ranking for products that children of all abilities can enjoy. Worry Eaters rated 5 stars (out of 5) for building strong social/emotional developmental skills!

Worry Eaters • Ages 3+ • \$15.99 (Small) & \$22.99 (Large)

- *2016 Toy Of The Year Finalist -- Best Specialty Toy Of The Year*
- *2016 AblePlay Seal of Approval*
- *Parents Magazine Best Toys*
- *Creative Child Awards Plush of the Year*
- *The National Parenting Center's Seal of Approval*
- *Mom's Choice Award - Gold*
- *Mr. Dad's Seal of Approval*
- *NAPPA Gold Award (National Parenting Publications Awards)*
- *National Association of Gifted Children's Recommended Toy Seal*
- *PAL Award*
- *Dr. Toy 100 Best Picks*
- *2015 Top Holiday Toys – The Toy Insider*

All Worry Eaters are washable -- either by hand or on the machine's gentle cycle -- and made with quality soft plush material. Look for Worry Eaters in retail stores and online at <http://www.haywiregroup.com/worry-eaters/shop/>.

ABOUT HAYWIRE GROUP

The award-winning game maker likes to remind itself that □from time-to-time things do tend to go a bit haywire...but it's all fun and games in the end. Since 2005 the New England company has set out to create a line of games designed to get people out of their comfort zones and have fun while doing it.

But as they readily admit, *improving the lives of kids* is what really drives them. Haywire is a big supporter of children and families in foster care at the Center for Human Development in Springfield, MA. CHD provides opportunities for foster children -- in music, dance, art, sports, summer camps and extra-curricular education -- not typically paid for through the State. Haywire hopes to offer a positive influence that will remain with them throughout their lives. Visit the company's website, www.haywiregroup.com, for all their products.