

News Release

For Immediate Release



March 20, 2023

Brand Collaboration for Accelerating Children’s Imagination and Creativity

Gakken New Block × PLARAIL

“Let’s Play With PLARAIL! Gakken New Block Diorama Set”

To be launched on Thursday, April 20, 2023

Simultaneous Release of “More fun! More Parts! Huge volume! PLARAIL BEST SELECTION SET”

Gakken Sta:Ful Co., Ltd.
TOMY Company, Ltd.

Gakken Sta:Ful Co., Ltd. (President & CEO: Takahiro Fukumoto; headquarters: Shinagawa-ku, Tokyo), a group company of Gakken Holdings Co., Ltd. (President, Representative Director: Hiroaki Miyahara; headquarters: Shinagawa-ku, Tokyo), and TOMY Company, Ltd. (Representative Director, President & COO: Kazuhiro Kojima; headquarters: Katsushika-ku, Tokyo) will launch a collaboration between two long-selling brands of each company: the educational toy Gakken New Block and the railroad toy PLARAIL. As a brand collaboration product, “Let’s Play With PLARAIL! Gakken New Block Diorama Set” (two types / SRP: JPY 4,950 / JPY 11,000 / tax included) will be released by Gakken Sta:Ful on Thursday, April 20, 2023.



“Let’s Play With PLARAIL! Gakken New Block Diorama Set” is a set product of Gakken New Block intended for playing together with PLARAIL (*PLARAIL trains, rails and scenery parts are not included in this product). By using Gakken New Block in the diorama (scenery) that spreads around PLARAIL, children can imagine an even bigger world. In addition to using station buildings and bridges to replicate a real city, children can use their imagination to create their own diorama, such as a world inhabited by dinosaurs or a world full of flowers.

Furthermore, play that combines “Let’s Play With PLARAIL! Gakken New Block Diorama Set” and “More fun! More Parts! Huge volume! PLARAIL BEST SELECTION SET” (SRP: JPY 6,050 / tax included), which is also scheduled for release by TOMY Company, Ltd. on Thursday, April 20, will create even greater enjoyment of the respective products. This project is based on the shared desire of both companies to provide children with opportunities to more freely express their creativity. The result is collaboration that allows for combined play with Gakken New Block, which is a popular educational toy brand that has been loved for many years, and the railroad toy PLARAIL.

Background of the Gakken New Block × PLARAIL Collaboration

Since Gakken New Block and PLARAIL have similar primary colors, we have observed children playing with both products together. We embarked on this collaboration based on our belief that we can elicit even greater freedom in children's creativity by carrying out product development that combines these two highly compatible products as toys that lead to the intellectual development of children.

During the development process, we received advice on commercialization from Professor Emeritus Yoichi Sakakihara of Ochanomizu University, who is a leading authority on child development. Based on this advice, we enhanced the synergistic effect by combining the two toys for play.

■ Yoichi Sakakihara (Professor Emeritus at Ochanomizu University)

The combination of two toys expands the range of play, while also stimulating children's imagination and creativity. The essence of play is for children to have fun freely. Unlike learning, there is no correct answer, and there is no goal such as completing a task. By experiencing such play, children develop necessary life skills. Gakken New Block and PLARAIL have the power to bring out the essence of play. Gakken New Block allows children to freely create structures by connecting blocks vertically and horizontally. When playing with PLARAIL, children lay railways with various layouts and operate trains. Combining two toys that offer the same degree of freedom but possess different characteristics will expand the range of play and stimulate children's imagination and creativity.

■ What is “Let's Play With PLARAIL! Gakken New Block Diorama Set”? (Sales agent: Gakken Sta:Ful)



“Let's Play With PLARAIL! Gakken New Block Diorama Set” is a set product of Gakken New Block intended for playing together with PLARAIL (*PLARAIL trains, rails and scenery parts are not included in this product). Children can create their own world by using Gakken New Block in the diorama (scenery) that spreads around PLARAIL.

The lineup consists of two products: “Let's Play With PLARAIL! Gakken New Block Diorama Starter Set” and “Let's Play With PLARAIL! Gakken New Block Diorama Deluxe Set.”

This collaboration package features the limited-time train “DOG EXPRESS” that is included in the “More fun! More Parts! Huge volume! PLARAIL BEST SELECTION SET,” which is scheduled to be released by TOMY Company, Ltd. on the same day.

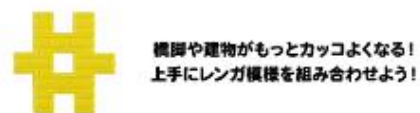
Both packages include special blocks to make playing with PLARAIL even more fun, and the bridge girder blocks can be used in place of the PLARAIL bridge piers. Brick blocks are perfect for building cool structures!

Collaboration Video: youtu.be/mq_Nk8Wtjksk

スペシャルブロック1 橋げたブロック



スペシャルブロック2 レンガブロック



Product Outline: Let's Play With PLARAIL! Gakken New Block Diorama Set



Product Name: Let's Play With PLARAIL! Gakken New Block Diorama Starter Set
 SRP: JPY 4,950 (tax included)
 Package Contents: 70 blocks of 15 types (including 4 bridge girder blocks, 6 brick blocks), instruction manual
 Package Size: W 350 × H 260 × D 100 mm
 *PLARAIL trains, rails and scenery parts are not included in this product.

Product Name: Let's Play With PLARAIL! Gakken New Block Diorama Deluxe Set
 SRP: JPY 11,000 (tax included)
 Package Contents: 140 blocks of 19 types (including 8 bridge girder blocks, 14 brick blocks), instruction manual, packaged in plastic case
 Package Size: W 530 × H 225 × D 295 mm
 *PLARAIL trains, rails and scenery parts are not included in this product.

Sales Agent: Gakken Sta:Ful
 Launch Date in Japan: Thursday, April 20, 2023
 Recommended Age: 3 years and up
 Sales Channels: Toy stores, toy sections of department stores, mass retailers and electronics mass retailers in Japan and online stores, etc.
 *Pre-ordering on Amazon started on Monday, March 20.
 Copyright: © TOMY "PLARAIL" is a registered trademark of TOMY Company, Ltd.
 Product Website: newblock.jp/lp/diorama
 Product Video: Starter Set youtu.be/-fAwcUWbZBk, Deluxe Set youtu.be/HRnIBTKkNc0

What is "More fun! More Parts! Huge volume! PLARAIL BEST SELECTION SET"? (Sales agent: TOMY Company)



"More fun! More Parts! Huge volume! PLARAIL BEST SELECTION SET" is all-in-one set including a train, rails and scenery parts for playing immediately. The set is perfect for children who are just starting to play with PLARAIL. The train is an original new train, and the set also includes newly-developed rails (*Only one 3-car train is included in the set). There are 22 types of parts, including slopes, overpasses, stations, railroad crossings, and tunnels. Children can create more than seven types of layouts using this set alone. We planned this collaboration to nurture creativity and imagination by allowing children to design various layouts based on their free ideas and ingenuity.

The original new train is called "DOG EXPRESS" and is designed in the motif of a dog. DOG EXPRESS is a new limited express train for the fictitious railway company PLARAIL Railway. It was created in the image of a train that takes children to their favorite sightseeing spots. The package also features a newly-developed rail called "triangular point rail" that can be branched in three directions. This allows children to create a new layout unlike anything seen before. Moreover, the original scenery piece called "Dog Outing Station" is a cute station decorated with dog ears. A dog stationmaster is also included. This product is subject to limited production and will be manufactured until December 2023.

Product Name: **“More fun! More Parts! Huge volume! PLARAIL BEST SELECTION SET”**
SRP: JPY 6,050 (tax included)
Launch Date in Japan: Thursday, April 20, 2023
Recommended Age: 3 years and up
Dimensions: Approx. W 440 × D 310 × H 90 mm
Batteries Required: 1 × AA battery *Batteries are sold separately.
Sales Channels: Toy stores, toy sections of department stores/mass retailers in Japan, the specialty store for PLARAIL products “PLARAIL Shops,” online stores, TOMY Company’s official online store “Takara Tomy Mall” (takaratomymall.jp), etc.
Copyright: © TOMY “PLARAIL” is a registered trademark of TOMY Company, Ltd.
Sales Target: 100,000 units
Product Website: www.takaratomy.co.jp/products/plarail/tettei/set/bestselection2023/index.htm
Product Video: youtu.be/iQjK5nwV8JI



■ What is Gakken New Block?

Gakken New Block (Sales agent: Gakken Sta:Ful) is a classic Japanese block toy that was released in 1965 and will celebrate its 60th anniversary in 2025. It has been loved by three generations of children and is used in facilities such as kindergartens and nursery schools because of its high safety. The unique shape of the parts can be stacked not only vertically, but also horizontally and diagonally, thereby enabling endless combinations. Gakken New Block greatly nurtures creativity and three-dimensional cognition.



■ What is PLARAIL?

“PLARAIL” (Sales agent: TOMY Company) is a long-running series of railroad toys that was launched in 1959 and will mark its 64th anniversary in 2023. It is a brand loved across three generations. The prototype of “PLARAIL” is the “PLASTIC TRAIN AND RAIL SET” which was launched in 1959 as a toy made from plastic, a new material at that time when metal and wood-made toys were the mainstream.

The iconic blue rails were designed in a size allowing it to be played on the “chabudai” (a low, Japanese-style dining table), which families gathered around to have a pleasant time back then. This specification remains unchanged even 60 years after its sales launch and you can still enjoy playing by connecting the rails made at that time with the newest ones.

We will continue to develop PLARAIL as a brand that will teach children about their society, enhance their growth including creativity, and nurture communication of children and their parents under the familiar and attracting theme of “railway.” Up to present, a total of approximately 1,900 types and more than 182 million products have been sold in Japan (as of March 31, 2022).

For press inquiries, please contact:

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For product inquiries from consumers, please contact:

TOMY Customer Service (Japanese only) Tel: 0570-041031 (Navi-Dial)