

Mom Inventor: Aviva Weiss

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I wanted to welcome Aviva who has created a fantastic site for parents to get their children fun and functional toys. She's got everything that a child will need, especially those with special needs. But the story on how she got there is even more amazing, plus she's just about to open a brand new site and after taking a sneak peek I must say it looks like a lot of fun.

Have you ever been inspired to create something but just didn't or haven't done it? So was she and look where she's at now. Follow the interview, who knows maybe you'll become the next success.

What is your name and how many children do you have? Any babies, if so what ages?

Name: Aviva Weiss. I have four children, ages 7, 5, 3, 1

What is it you created and why?

Working with my husband and partner, Haskel, I created *Fun and Function LLC*, in 2005 to address the needs of families with special needs children. Our company manufacturers and markets a wide range of creative, eye-catching child-conscious and cost-sensitive products including toys, games, apparel and equipment, that encourage children of all abilities to exercise their bodies and minds and hone skills essential to their development and progress. Many of the products additionally address the challenges of children with special needs, providing them with necessary therapies without the typical stigma of special needs accommodations.

How did you create it? (ie, what inspired you)

I was inspired to create Fun and Function when I learned my own daughter was challenged with sensory processing disorder, and I was unable to find aesthetic, affordable versions of the products she needed for therapy. I began designing my own products, and realized many other parents like me were in need of an affordable, attractive alternative to the often clinical-looking materials typically available.

What is your schedule like now?

I work around the schedule of my children. I send them off in the morning and start at 9:30 a.m. Then I'm home with the kids at 4 p.m. and back at work at 8 p.m.

What was your schedule like while you were making your product?

Same as it is now give and take some days. I like to be with my children when they are home, but some days were (and are!) crazy busy...

What did you do to MAKE this happen?

Just kept my eyes on the goal with lots of motivation, persistence and support from family. I try to stay positive...and I truly believe in the mission of my business.

I hear stories sometimes that there may have been struggles to get the product noticed or on shelves. Did this happen? Could you share your experience with us?

This is an ongoing experience/struggle. There are so many "things" out there that it takes lots of hard work to get heard over all the "white noise". Believe it or not, folks are often reluctant to take in products that are beneficial for kids with special needs– they don't know how their customers will relate to the product and are hesitant to get involved with something new. With lots of persistence and understanding that people need to be educated in order to be aware the importance of our products for ALL children, we are making headway.



How is your product different from others like it?

Kids with special needs deserve cool products too — without having to stand out or look different. Our products promote growth and development and focus on INCLUSION. They are beneficial for typically developing children AND for children with disabilities. For example, our Magical Apparel(TM) just won the prestigious iParenting Media Award! Magical Apparel is a line of dressup clothes that encourage children to develop their fine motor skill and learn to dress independently. They are also great for children with Sensory Processing Disorder and Autism as they have built in “hidden” pockets that hold weight. The weight functions as a deep pressure “hug” and helps many children calm down and focus. So we create an incredibly educational and development friendly product for ALL children.

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What would you tell moms that are sitting at home with ideas in their head?

If you can follow through with your ideas — DO SOMETHING! Start by collecting market research. See if your idea is viable. Ask your friends and family. If you get real good feedback run with it (not just, “That’s a great idea!” but, “I like it because..., I would buy it because...”). It is fun hard work . Yes, fun and hard at the same time.

What advice do you have for moms that just got a product out there? (tips for them on promotions, marketing, etc)

If you believe in your product, don’t give up. Keep calling and following up. Stay positive. Use as many online channels as possible (website, email, blog, twitter) . Persistence and motivation.

Any tips?

Don’t forget about the most important people — your family. Kids grow up so fast. Make sure to create quality downtime that is locked in no matter how busy your schedule.

What would you like to say at this time?

Our main website is www.funandfunction.com. We are also now launching a new site, ByKidsOnly.com (www.bykidsonly.com), where kids can help create the apparel we sell by contributing their thoughts on design, features, materials, functionality and other characteristics.

IMG: FunandFunction.com