

# Genius in the Fold

MAN'S SAFE, SPACE-SAVING TOYS ARE THE CULMINATION OF A SERIES OF INVENTIONS **BY EDITH G. TOLCHIN**



POPIN Toys' easy foldable design make them ideal for smaller homes and rooms.

**P** EOPLE read my *Inventors Digest* stories from all over the world. Ori Mishkal recently contacted me from Israel and was excited to share his new product—and inventing experience—with readers.

All parents are safety savvy nowadays, with the ease in researching new products for their children. Here is a new line of space-saving toys that pop up in a matter of seconds and provide hours of safe stimulation for creative young minds.

**Edith G. Tolchin (EGT):** Please tell us about your background.

**Ori Mishkal (OM):** I'm the CEO and founder of POPIN™ Toys, an experienced industrial designer, and a graduate from Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design in Israel, specializing in the field of folded products. I'm busy designing, manufacturing, bringing products to market and lecturing about cardboard.

**EGT:** How did POPIN Toys come about?

**OM:** I have always loved folding stuff and the art of pop-up books. After seeing my family struggling to maintain their living spaces free from their children's toys mainly because of large play structures like play kitchens and playhouses, I knew right there that if I could just make these playsets foldable, it would help my sisters a lot—and probably others with the same dilemma. So, I founded POPIN to address this need.

There are four sets in the initial POPIN lineup: the Pirate Ship Activity Table, Play Kitchen, Mushroom Playhouse and First Step Car.

Each POPIN toy is designed with StrongFold™ technology. Its folding method is based on traditional origami and pop-up artwork. The toys are made for children 2 to 6. Each toy nurtures a different developmental skill, tested by pediatricians and hundreds of children.

The kitchen demonstrates the primary need in nutrition and caring, allowing kids to role-play their grown-up counterparts. In addition, it allows them



**“After seeing my family struggling to maintain their living spaces free from their children’s toys mainly because of large play structures ... I founded POPIN to address this need.” —ORI MISHKAL**



to develop their symbolic play skills and creativity. POPIN’s car stimulates the child’s sense of exploration and gross motor skills, supporting all movement, from crawling and climbing to standing, from first steps and beyond.

POPIN Mushroom Playhouse allows the child to create an area where he or she is in charge. This autonomy enables the child to strengthen self-worth in a constructive and fun manner. POPIN’s pirate ship is great for a nice, calm time, for activities that involve concentration like drawing and so on. The pirate ship has two seats, so when the child is ready, he or she can invite a friend to join. It’s always important to create a trigger for communication.

**EGT: Is this your first invention?**

**OM:** I have invented many foldable products. My work is also my hobby—foldable plastic chairs, a foldable camera bag, cardboard models for kids’ science classes, and a cardboard package that converts to a toy playground and more.

**EGT: What is unique about POPIN Toys, and why are they different from other cardboard-type toys?**

**OM:** POPIN has developed an award-winning, foldable, in-home playground that allows large play structures to fit easily into small apartments. StrongFold™, POPIN’s unique folding technology, allows cardboard play structures to carry heavy loads and fold into a flat, easy-to-store unit within seconds.

Several companies tried to find solutions for the toy storage problem and created foldable structures, some of them made of cardboard. The main benefit of POPIN compared to theirs is, first of all, it’s durable and rigid. Our products hold up to 50 kg, while competition is much more fragile. Second, our toys open and fold in 20 seconds—no assembly needed—from play mode to storage mode in mere seconds. Competition takes 15 minutes’ construction on average.

Finally, we have very low environmental impact. All POPIN playsets are made of 100 percent recycled

cardboard and can be fully recycled at the end of their use.

**EGT: Where are you manufacturing?**

**OM:** We are currently manufacturing in a factory in China. It is a regular packing and boxing factory, so we quite stand out there.

**EGT: Please tell us about your experience with safety standards for children 12 and younger, testing and certifications such as the (USA) Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act.**

**OM:** POPIN toys are approved by the Standards Institute of Israel and the European standard for toy safety. The products are also in the process of passing the ASTM F963 standard of the American Standards Institute.

Other than that, POPIN has been tested by pediatricians and hundreds of children, designed by their notes, for them to be safe and satisfied.

**EGT: How are the toys packaged and shipped?**

**OM:** POPIN’s toys are foldable and packed in slim packages. They can be shipped to customers easily and with low cost.

The shipping and storage advantages of POPIN’s folded playsets allow for high margins from selling directly to customers on online platforms. Many times, purchasing a great and fun playset for a child requires going to a specialty (brick and mortar) store. If the customer wants to purchase the playset on an online platform, the shipping costs significantly increase the price.

**EGT: What was your experience with patents?**

**OM:** With POPIN, each of the playsets is protected separately by a registered patent. Sub-structures and geometrical locks are also protected by a patent. Our cardboard playgrounds, in addition to their folding quality, remain lightweight themselves and easy to carry. So the method is fully innovative.

## INVENTOR SPOTLIGHT

The POPIN Mushroom Playhouse allows a child to create an area where he or she is in charge.

**EGT:** Please share your Kickstarter experience.

**OM:** In April 2019, we launched an international crowdfunding campaign on Kickstarter. Within five days, we surpassed our \$36,000 funding goal. This came after we had just secured \$350,000 on ExitValley. That was an amazing feeling! All the hard work of the past year got us recognition, and to see how well the market perceived us brings so much joy!

**EGT:** Where are you selling?

**OM:** We sell on our Amazon store in the U.S. (\$49 per toy) and on our website. After we established our online sales via Amazon in 2019, we will present our product in distinguished toy shows and look for regional distribution deals.

**EGT:** Do you plan to add to your product line?

**OM:** We have a lot of wonderful useful toys planned—among them a castle, a swing and a slide and all made of foldable cardboard, of course. And we are always happy to hear from parents as to what are their needs and what their children's dreams are. We'll try to fulfill them if possible.

**EGT:** Do you have any guidance for novice inventors who are interested in developing children's toys?

**OM:** Yes, my best advice would be to think as a child. Try to see the world through their eyes. Even though it's hard to do, it will have accelerated your imagination and creativity, which are extremely important in the field of toys. Keep the fun fantasy part during the work. 📦

Details: [popintoys.com](http://popintoys.com)

Books by **Edie Tolchin** ([egt@edietolchin.com](mailto:egt@edietolchin.com)) include "Fanny on Fire" ([fannyonfire.com](http://fannyonfire.com)) and "Secrets of Successful Inventing." She has written for *Inventors Digest* since 2000. Edie has owned EGT Global Trading since 1997, assisting inventors with product safety issues and China manufacturing.



## 2 Critical Steps to getting your NEW PRODUCT "out there"

### 1 GET IT MADE

Contact Edie Tolchin – "The Sourcing Lady" (SM) for sourcing, China manufacturing, product safety issues, packaging assistance, quality control, production testing, final shipment inspections, freight arrangements, import services and delivery to your door!

[www.EGTglobaltrading.com](http://www.EGTglobaltrading.com)

[EGT@egtglobaltrading.com](mailto:EGT@egtglobaltrading.com)

P.O. Box 5660 - Hillsborough, NJ 08844

845-321-2362

### 2 GET A WEBSITE!

Contact Ken Robinson – While your order is being manufactured, you need to start working on your WEB PRESENCE! Get people talking about your product on Social Media (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Google+), get good search engine placement (SEO)!

[www.widgetsontheweb.com](http://www.widgetsontheweb.com)

[kenrbnsn@widgetsontheweb.com](mailto:kenrbnsn@widgetsontheweb.com)

614 Van Liew Court - Hillsborough, NJ 08844

908-963-2447

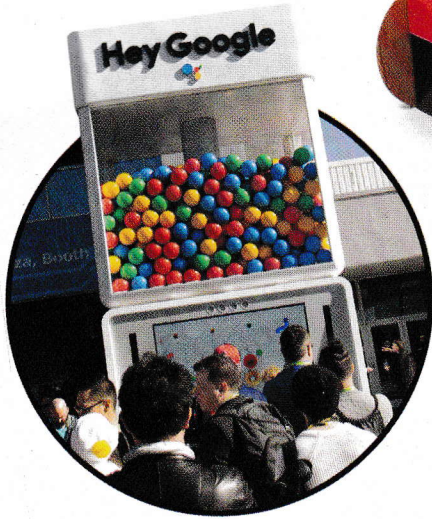
Get more BANG for your BUCK from two professionals with a combined total of over 60 years of experience!

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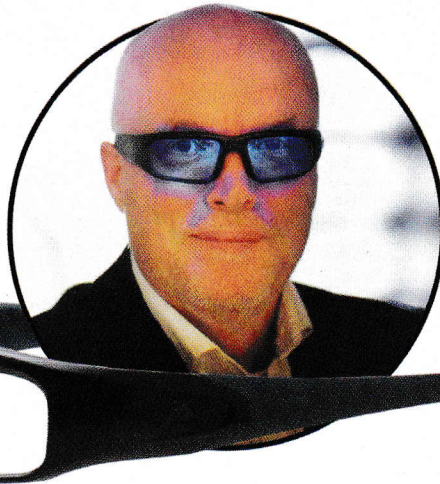
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Terry Thoren (left) and  
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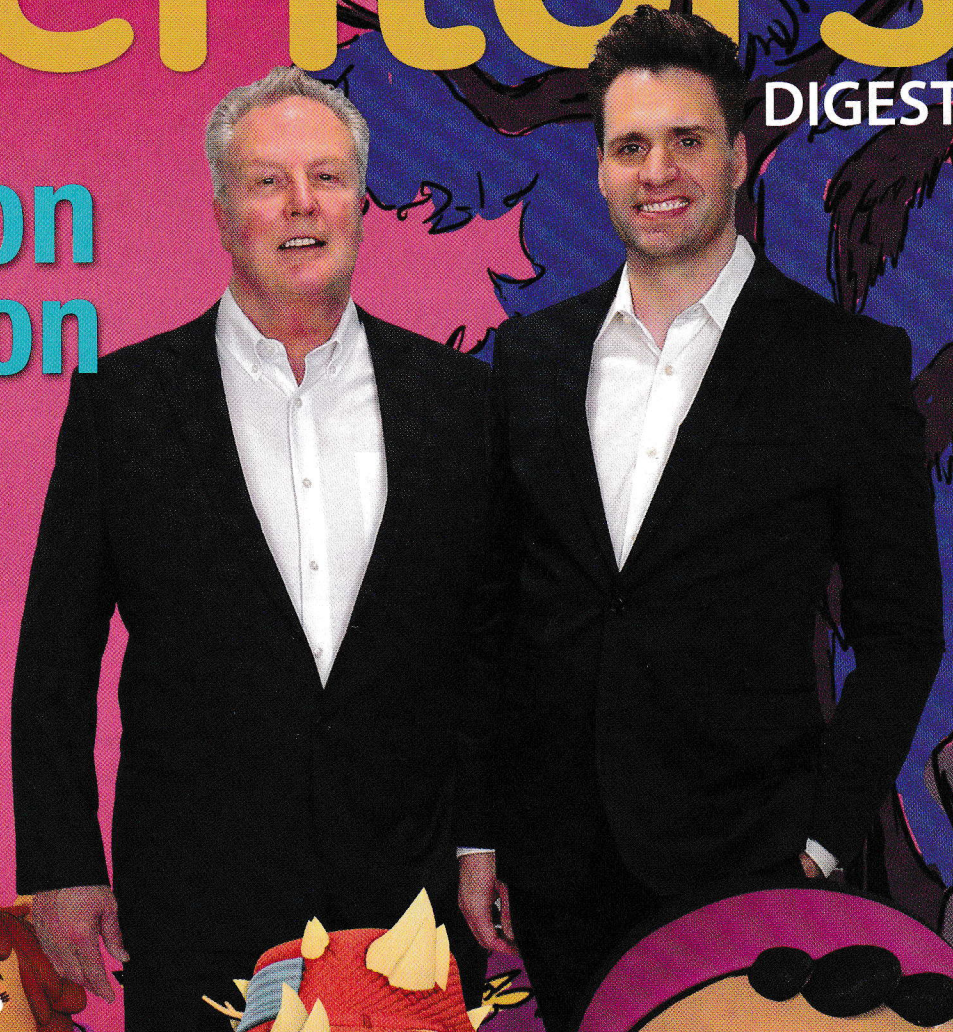
DIGEST

## Animation Inspiration

WONDER MEDIA CONNECTS  
WITH AT-RISK CHILDREN

Radio Flyer Wagon  
ICONIC TOY SPARKED  
BY IMMIGRANT'S GAMBLE

Best of 2019  
HIGHLIGHTING TOP  
INVENTOR AWARDS



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