

80s Toys

All that talk of California Raisins on my blog the other day got me to thinking about many of the toys I used to play with when I was a kid growing up in the 80's. I was a big fan of Fisher Price's Little People back then, and I generally liked playsets of any kind. The internet is a cool thing for many reasons, and it's fun for stirring up nostalgia now and then. I remembered this set of wind-up skill games they had in the 80s that were really small. After a few minutes of google searching, I found them: [T.H.I.N.G.S. by Milton Bradley](#) (Totally Hilarious Incredibly Neat Games of Skill – who remembers these?) . It's funny how most of these little toys look like just your everyday junk from China when you're an adult, but when I was a kid, I had the Sir-Ring-a-Lot game and wanted all the rest of the T.H.I.N.G.S.

I was also really into [Nerfuls](#) after sending away for one (visor guy) in exchange for cereal UPCs. These were little 3-piece figures – a body, a ball for the head, and a hat or hair. Some came with vehicles and the coolest parts were the stackable Nerfuls houses.

Legos were also really cool (still are!), and I'm thinking of getting my 5-year-old some of her own sets for Christmas this year.

Added link to [Weebles Mickey Mouse Clubhouse](#).

Blast From The Past

Being a child of the '80's, I definitely remember the California Raisins – they were 3D-ish Claymation figures of

singing and dancing raisins, mostly famous for their rendition of "I Heard It Through The Grapevine". Thinking about this as an adult has me wondering if this was a successful ad campaign. I guess successful is not quite the word I'm looking for... I mean, of course it was ultra-successful in a sense; everyone in the '80's knew about the California Raisins, but did they really make kids want to eat more raisins? Later they began to do commercials for Post's Raisin Bran (Post only chooses the plumpest, juiciest raisins!), so maybe they helped to sell more boxes of cereal.

In the '80's, the California Raisins were celebrities and they had their own line of products that ran the marketing gamut: lunch boxes, stuffed toys, tv specials, t-shirts, Happy Meal toys, you name it. This is precisely the reason why I came across a California Raisin figure the other day at the thrift store. I had stopped in to get myself a few more little Halloween figurines for my front hall shelves (had an empty shelf after finally packing away the figurines of the bears playing baseball after the Chicago Cubs were eliminated from MLB's post-season – that is ALL I'm going to say about THAT!), and at this particular thrift store, you get a free Happy Meal-type toy with every \$2 spent. My husband and I did just spend 5 hours gutting out the girls' room and donating most of their toys last week, but I couldn't resist picking out a toy for my favorite little shopping companion – my 3-year-old daughter Disney. So anyway, we were pressed for time, and I found the California Raisin, so I grabbed him and gave him to Disney, promising her we would watch a movie of her raisin dancing and singing on the computer when we got home. True to my word, I loaded up youtube and found some great clips of California Raisins, which went over really well with Disney. She giggled and covered her mouth, and then she put her raisin on the computer to "watch" the other dancing raisins. He's been a presence in our household since last week, and of course her little brother likes him too. He is small enough so that I can put him in our "emergency" car box (full of

toys, snacks, band-aids, etc) when the kids tire of him in the house (the raisin, not the little brother!). He even makes a great bathtub toy! So anyway, while resurrecting the California Raisins last week, I came across this cute little commercial that I hadn't thought about in the 20 years since it was made. Enjoy this blast from the past!