

These Shoes Are Made for **TALKING**



MOM INVENTS BABY SHOE WITH CHALKBOARD SOLES
THAT YOU CAN WRITE ON **BY EDITH G. TOLCHIN**

BOY, throw a first-time granny loose and she'll find—and often buy—the newest and coolest baby inventions! This granny is no exception.

Chalkboard Shoes by Baby Says, created by Angela Yeakim of Columbia, Maryland, come in moccasins, sneakers, and feature some exciting kit options.

Edith G. Tolchin (EGT): How did your invention come about?

Angela Yeakim (AY): I'm married and have two sweet daughters. This is my first invention, and the idea came to me when my youngest was an infant.

My older daughter wanted to play and thought her baby sister was too boring! So, while she drew something on her mini chalkboard and placed it on the baby's feet I thought, wouldn't it be fun to have a chalkboard sole on her baby shoes to write fun messages? This way, the older sibling can interact with her new sister in a safe way and they can start bonding.

I created a prototype with materials in the house. My older daughter had a blast!

I started with fabric chalk paint on the bottom of a pair of her shoes, but that just wasn't smooth. Then the "peel and stick" chalkboard didn't stick well at all. After I started working with chalkboard fabric, I realized this was it.

EGT: So tell us how your final product works.

AY: Baby Chalkboard Shoes have a soft, chalkboard-like outer sole. You can write on the surface with our safe, non-toxic, water-based chalk markers. They don't smear once dry (unlike regular chalk that smears everywhere), so it doesn't leave a mess.

Take as many photos as you'd like and share these new memories with friends and family. Once you are ready for a new message or design, simply wipe off with liquid dish soap and water, which then leaves you with a clean slate. These Baby Chalkboard Shoes kits are a great gift for new parents because they can be personalized over and over again.

They are a unique item that is sure to spark new conversations, especially when you let your baby's feet do all the talking. It's great for pregnancy announcements, gender reveals, baby announcements, holidays, milestone



"I tried hard to find a United States-based manufacturer but was stunned to find out that 99 percent of all baby shoes are actually made in factories overseas." —ANGELA YEAKIM



photography, sporting events ... the possibilities are truly endless. It's a fantastic way to get the entire family involved for some fun times!

EGT: What are the components? Fabrics? Sizes and age ranges?

AY: The baby shoes come in two styles: moccasins (PU leather) and sneakers (canvas). Each style comes in four colors.

Each style/color combo comes in four sizes: 0-3 months (Size 0); 3-6 months (Size 1); 6-9 months (Size 2) and 9-12 months (Size 3).

EGT: Where are you manufacturing? If overseas, please share any obstacles you found.

AY: We had this first run made in China. I tried hard to find a United States-based manufacturer but was stunned to find out that 99 percent of all baby shoes are actually made in factories overseas.

I didn't believe this at first, so I contacted the local SBDC (Small Business Development Center). They connected me with someone who was in the shoe industry for decades. He was quick to assure me that unless I have my own factory, I had to go overseas.

I was hoping I could find *something* in the States so I might visit the factory and talk to the folks in person, so the process might be smoother and more timely. However, that wasn't the case.

In dealing with the factory in China, there were language barriers, and a lot of time was lost with the back-and-forth until they got the product just right. Each time they tweaked the sample, it took three weeks to create it and another month to arrive. The shipment also got delayed because of a super typhoon in that area (of course it would!).

It took almost 3 years to get the product in the U.S. and ready to be sold. It was definitely a labor of love!

EGT: Because this is a children's product, what type of Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act (CPSIA) testing and certifications are you doing for your production runs?

AY: We had the baby shoes and markers go through all required tests to ensure they are safe for babies from lead and choking hazards. Because I had two little ones at home, I wanted to ensure that what I was creating for other parents was something I would definitely use on my children.

Parents can be assured that the liquid chalk markers are safe, non-toxic and water based. The shoes are also free from any components that could be deemed unsafe for babies.

EGT: Are you selling strictly from your website, or other retail outlets?

Baby Chalkboard Shoes have a soft, chalkboard-like outer sole. You can write on the surface with safe, non-toxic, water-based chalk markers that do not smear when dry.

AY: Primarily from BabySays.com, but I'm also running sales on BradsDeals.com, Jane.com, Zulily, Amazon. I have also sold to Bump Boxes, The Market @ Macy's and am in the process of filling out paperwork to sell with other retailers. COVID-19 really slowed down brick-and-mortar stores, so I am trying to focus on customers who are shopping online.

EGT: Please share your experience with patents.

AY: I had a provisional patent application and am working on getting a patent application approved.

EGT: Are you planning to add new products?

AY: Absolutely! I'd like to add other baby shoe styles, and onesies with a chalkboard surface. I'd also like to team with Build-a-Bear and have matching shoes for bear and baby. In fact, our Size 3 baby shoes fit many of these bears, so you can use the baby shoes after your baby has grown out of them.

EGT: What advice, if any, can you provide to readers who might be interested in developing an invention?

AY: Don't be your biggest obstacle. I tend to get in my own way! Just let go of all the "what ifs" and dive right in.

Have a great new idea? Do extensive research and see if it already exists. If it doesn't, roll up your sleeves and get to work. It's gonna be a wild ride! ☺

Details: BabySays.com

Books by **Edie Tolchin** (egt@edietolchin.com) include "Fanny on Fire" (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

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P.O. Box 5660 - Hillsborough, NJ 08844

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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)!

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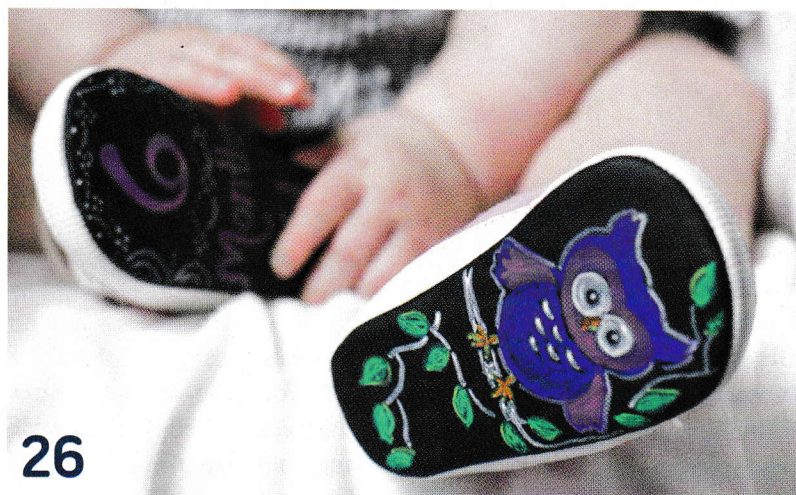
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Contents

April 2021 Volume 37 Issue 3



Features

- 30 World Connector**
Videoconferencing
Interpreting Platform

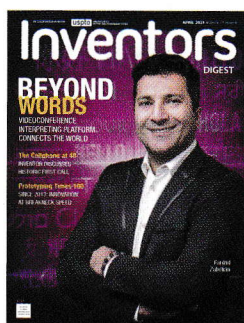
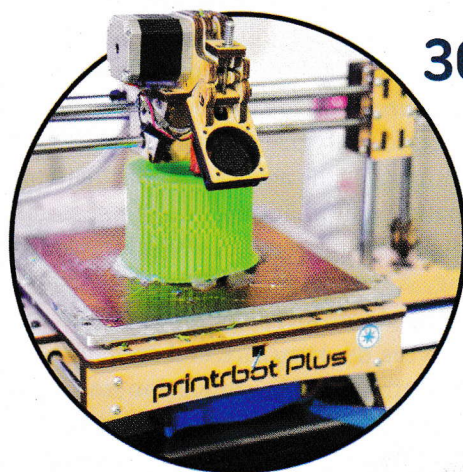
Inventor Spotlight

- 26 These Shoes Are Made for Talking**
Mom's Innovation for Kids

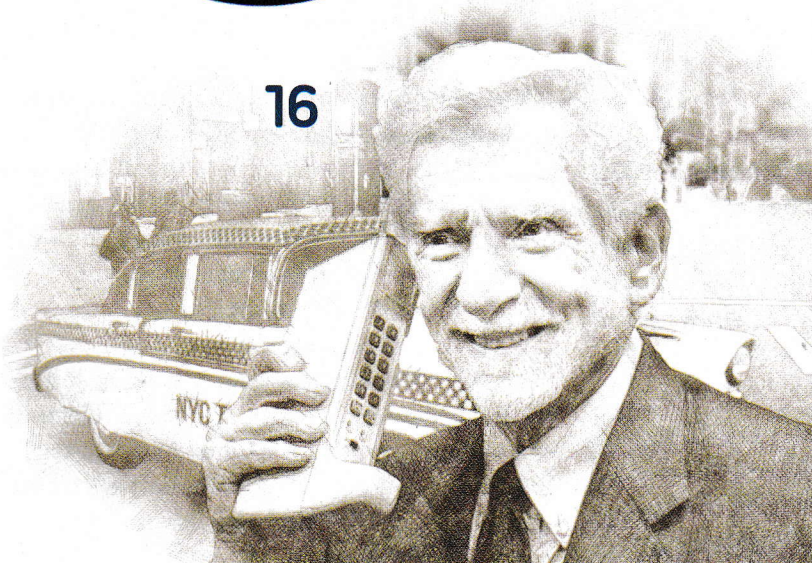


Departments

- 8 Your USPTO**
News, Upcoming Events
- 13 Everybody's Talking**
Conversation Pieces
- 14 Bright Ideas**
Innovation That Shines
- 16 Time Tested**
The First Cellphone Call
- 20 Lander Zone**
Inventors, Entrepreneurs
- 24 Social Hour**
Disruptive Podcast for Kids
- 36 Prototyping**
Celebrating 100
- 40 Launching Pad**
Hiring a Publicist
- 42 IP Market**
Cautious Hope
- 44 Eye on Washington**
Revisiting an IDEA
- 46 Inventiveness**
Focus on the Fun and Fascinating



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Fardad Zabetian,
founder of KUDO;
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