Classic Toys Under Pressure:

How Tariffs Threaten an American Toy Company Behind Generations of Childhood Memories

For decades, toys like Care Bears, Tonka Trucks, and Lincoln Logs have been part of American childhood.

Basic Fun is the American company that helps bring many of these beloved toys to new generations of families. The company designs, markets, and distributes toys sold in major retailers across the United States, focusing on classic brands that parents remember from their own childhood and now share with their children.

But now, the company faces a growing challenge.

Recent tariffs on imported goods have significantly increased the cost of bringing those toys to market—putting pressure on American toy companies that rely on global manufacturing to produce safe, affordable products.

“These are toys that families have loved for generations,” CEO Jay Foreman explained. “Our goal has always been to keep those toys accessible to kids and parents across the country.”

Toys That Span Generations

Some of the toys Basic Fun brings to market have been part of American childhood for more than a century.

Tonka trucks, first introduced in the 1940s, became famous for their rugged steel construction and their ability to survive years of rough backyard play. Generations of children have pushed bright yellow Tonka dump trucks through sandboxes, dirt piles, and construction sites in backyards across the country.

Lincoln Logs date back even further. The building toy was invented in 1916 by John Lloyd Wright, the son of famed architect Frank Lloyd Wright. Inspired by the interlocking beams used in his father’s architectural designs, Wright created a toy construction set that allowed children to build miniature log cabins and frontier-style structures—introducing generations of kids to creativity and engineering through play.

Care Bears, first introduced in the 1980s, quickly became a cultural phenomenon. The colorful characters—with names like Cheer Bear and Grumpy Bear—appeared in toys, television shows, and movies, becoming a favorite of children and a nostalgic memory for parents who grew up with them.

Together, these brands have become part of the shared language of childhood—passed from one generation to the next.

Why Toy Manufacturing Is Global

While Basic Fun is an American company, modern toy manufacturing is a global industry.

Producing toys safely requires specialized factories, rigorous safety testing, and complex supply chains that have developed internationally over many decades. As a result, many American toy companies rely on manufacturing partners overseas to produce their products.

Once manufactured, the toys are imported into the United States and distributed through American logistics networks to retailers nationwide.

For companies like Basic Fun, importing toys is not outsourcing—it is simply how the toy industry operates.

Families expect toys that are safe, durable, and affordable, and the global supply chain helps make that possible.

The Tariff Impact

The new tariffs are already creating significant challenges for companies like Basic Fun:

• **Import costs have increased:** Tariffs raise the cost of bringing toys into the United States.
• **Prices become harder to control:** Higher import costs can translate into higher prices for retailers and consumers.
• **Innovation slows:** Resources that could go toward developing new toys and expanding classic brands must instead cover tariff costs.

And because tariffs must be paid when products arrive at U.S. ports, the costs fall directly on American companies importing the goods—not on foreign manufacturers.

For toy companies operating in a competitive industry where prices must remain affordable for families, those added costs create real pressure.

A Business Built on Childhood Memories

Despite these challenges, Basic Fun remains focused on the mission that has defined its business: bringing classic toys to families across the United States.

For many parents, the toys Basic Fun produces are more than products—they are memories of childhood.

From pushing a Tonka truck through the dirt to building a miniature log cabin with Lincoln Logs, these toys have long been part of the everyday moments that make childhood special.

“Great toys create memories—and that’s not something you can tariff away,” said Jay Foreman. At the end of the day, these toys are not just products on a store shelf. They are the moments parents remember and the memories children are just beginning to make.

Basic Fun! at a Glance

Headquarters: Florida

Brands:

- Care Bears
- Tonka Trucks
- Lincoln Logs
- Lite-Brite
- Fisher-Price
- Pound Puppies
- Stretch Armstrong

What the company does:

- Designs and markets toys sold through major U.S. retailers
- Focuses on classic toy brands with decades of history
- Brings nostalgic toys to new generations of children

Industry reality:

- Toy manufacturing is largely global due to specialized factories and safety requirements
- Importing finished toys is standard practice across the industry
- Estimated less than 10% of toys sold in the United States are manufactured domestically.

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