



I'M AN INVENTOR

Cassidy Crowley turned a bright idea into a success. Find out how you can too!

AS YOU READ

Think about skills that an inventor should have.

Have you ever had an idea so good that you couldn't wait to share it?

If you said yes, you have something in common with Cassidy Crowley. When she was 10, she had a big idea. She wanted to show it to the world.

Cassidy had invented a new baby spoon. Unlike a regular spoon, this one didn't have a handle that could hurt a baby. It could also be used as a teething toy. Cassidy called her invention the Baby Toon.

Cassidy went on the TV show *Shark Tank*. The stars on that show are **investors**. They decide if they like an idea enough to invest money in it. One of the stars decided to invest in

✓ WORDS TO KNOW

investors: people who give or lend money with the goal of getting more money back later

model: a thing built as an example of something to see how it will work or look



Cassidy's first model of her spoon

This is Cassidy in 2019 making sure the spoon's size is just right.

The spoon Cassidy made for the science fair

the Baby Toon. Cassidy was excited.

That was in 2019. Today, the Baby Toon is sold online. It can also be found in stores across the U.S. and Canada.

Cassidy lives in Honolulu, Hawaii. She thinks other kids can be inventors too. Here are her tips.

Tip #1: Find a problem.

The Baby Toon started as a science fair project in 2016. Cassidy's first-grade teacher asked her to identify a problem and come up with a solution.

Cassidy was inspired by her baby sister. Her name is Emily. She would often stick the handle of her plastic baby spoon in her mouth. Their mom worried that Emily might choke or get hurt.

Cassidy knew she had found a problem. Now she needed a solution.

Tip #2: Start small.

Cassidy did some research on baby spoons. Using what she learned, she drew what a safer spoon might look like. Next, she made a **model**. She used a plastic spoon, a bath toy, and tape.

"I just took stuff I had around me," Cassidy explains. "Nothing fancy."

Having a model helped Cassidy to improve her spoon. She could now hold it in her hands. Cassidy could tell that the shape wasn't quite right. She decided to create a spoon shaped like an elephant. She showed it at the science fair.

**PAUSE
AND
THINK**

Identify a problem in everyday life you would like to solve.



The name Baby Toon combines the words “toy” and “spoon.”

Tip #3: Ask for help.

Cassidy’s parents helped her from the start. Later, she decided to turn her science fair project into a **product** she could sell. This was when the family knew they needed help.

They found a design expert. He worked with Cassidy to improve her spoon even more. He suggested

✓ WORD TO KNOW

product: something that is made or grown

using a soft material called silicone. This was to make sure babies wouldn’t get injured. The expert also helped find a factory that could make the Baby Toon.

Tip #4: Never give up.

Cassidy worked on the Baby Toon for more than a year. She created and tested about 50 versions. The long process wasn’t always easy. But it was worth it.

“You’re going to hit challenges along the way,” Cassidy says. “You have to just believe in yourself.”

—by Jasmine Ting



WATCH A VIDEO



Cassidy (*right*) and her sister, Emily

A KID INVENTED THAT!

These inventions prove you're never too small to create something big.



TRAMPOLINE

In 1930, 16-year-old George Nissen went to the circus. He watched performers flip through the air and fall into a net below with a small bounce. Inspired by that, Nissen created the trampoline.

POPSICLES

Frank Epperson created these frozen treats by accident in 1905. The 11-year-old mixed flavored powder with water using a stick. He left his creation outside on a cold winter night, and it froze.



EARMUFFS

In 1873, Chester Greenwood wanted to keep his ears warm while ice-skating. The 15-year-old bent wires to loop around his ears. Then he asked his grandma to sew warm padding around them.



SNOWMOBILE

When he was 15, Joseph-Armand Bombardier wanted to find a way to travel on snowy roads. In 1935, he put a car engine on top of sleds. Then he attached a propeller. The engine spun the propeller, pushing the vehicle forward. It was the world's first snowmobile.



BRAILLE

Louis Braille was born in 1809. As a kid, he was blinded by an accident. When he was 12, he started working on a system that would enable people who are blind to read. Today, people still use braille.

