

It's the Business of Play . . .

By Dorothy Burnett

Toys Will Teach Your Children

WITHIN comparatively recent years parents have come to look upon the child's play and his toys with the respect to which they, as stimulators of healthy mental and physical growth, are entitled. Heretofore, children had toys, it is true, but they evolved from necessity, not wisdom. The child had to do something, said the parent, so he was given a rattle, a ball, a doll and a wagon, without much thought as to their respective uses.

Having arrived at a recognition of the benefits that could be derived from the wise choice of toys, we move on to the next stage, which is a critical one. We begin to look at all toys from the point of view of whether or not they cater to the development of the child's senses, promote the activities that his growing body demands, or encourage him to imitate adult activities and attitudes of sportsmanship. A toy, if it is a good one, must fall into one of these classes.

Many parents are inclined to look upon early childhood as an empty interlude in a child's life, during which he does nothing but play until he is old enough to learn.

PRESENT day educationalists and psychologists give us an entirely different interpretation of play and a new conception of playthings. They tell us that a child begins to learn almost the moment he is born. He continues to learn every wide awake moment of his childhood. Thus this early period, instead of being a wasted interlude, is the learning period itself.

To help the child in his efforts to understand each new experience, modern educators furnish him with toys selected with the following facts in mind: First, that a child's play consists largely of attempts to reproduce for himself each new experience. Second, that a child should have play materials that he can "make with" or "do with." Third, that in reproducing what he sees around him with his play materials, the child is educating himself.

Let us take a familiar everyday situation and see how this works out: Five-year-old Bobbie is taken out by Uncle Jim for his first boat ride. It is new, strange and bewildering to Bobbie because he has never been in a boat before.

Next morning Bobbie comes down to breakfast with the announcement that he is going to make a motor boat. He takes an empty biscuit box, ties on a wooden head for an anchor and presto—he has a boat.

In doing this he has shown a normal child's response to new activities. Educators suggest, therefore, that among the best play materials for children are unassembled units from which the child can construct his own playthings, since making and doing hold for the child immense interest and educational value.

Educators do not say, however, that all toys need to be educational or that parents should buy only unassembled units. Nor do they suggest that we measure everything children do in terms of what they learn. Those who approach playthings scientifically tell us that if we supply our children with simple and

It is often because a child is not permitted sufficient broad and varied physical activities that he becomes annoying or destructive indoors. Billy bounces up and down on the bed springs. Margaret makes a slide of the living room arm chair.

There are now on the market particularly worth while forms of outdoor and indoor exercise equipment which are helps to well-rounded development.

Indoor gymnasiums, kiddie cars, velocipedes, scooters, roller skates, slides, seesaws, wheel barrows and coasters are suggested for the child.

We should provide children with material for dramatic and imitative play so



Wouldn't These Delight Them?

suitable equipment and let them alone, we are doing the best possible thing for them.

But what constitutes such equipment? In the first place, there is no one particular toy for any age. A child needs a balanced diet of activities for his mental and spiritual development, just as he needs a balanced diet for his physical nurture.

that they can recreate their environment and imitate adult activities. Educators suggest a variety of materials from dolls and tiny furniture to housekeeping toys such as laundry sets, dishes, dust pans and stoves.

In order not to limit the child's imitation to activities of the domestic world, parents should provide equipment dealing

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The Business of Play

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with industry and transportation, such as trucks, cranes, boats and trains.

The climax of absurdity in playthings is the toy that does all the work while the child does nothing. This does not

mean that all mechanical toys are banned. Consider, for instance, the electric train.

A child old enough to run this may use it as a basis of very constructive play. But the younger child will find more real enjoyment in a set of brightly painted wooden trains.

Educators stress the importance of supplying children of all ages with such raw materials as modeling clay, paints, crayons, scissors, tools, erector sets and art and craft material.

Blocks stand at the head of the list of desirable materials for young children; not tiny blocks, but, if possible, big, solid, wooden blocks.

In choosing other forms of constructive material, educators urge us to be sure they are suited to the child's age and capacity.

In buying games and puzzles, especially for the older child, the toy departments offer all kinds of interesting material. Most of the boxed games are suitable if correctly chosen on the basis of age and capacity. For little children, animal rubber stamp sets are interesting, so are jig-saw puzzles, provided they have large parts and are fairly easy yet not too simple for the child to put together.

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Cheese Is a Change

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cheeses are used chiefly for sandwiches and salads.

In many cases in using cheese in our menus we find it necessary to soften the cheese. This must be done at a low temperature. When it is heated at a high temperature the fat and protein separate. The fat goes to the top and the cheese becomes tough, gummy and indigestible due to the evaporation of water. To avoid this the cheese should be cut up in small pieces so that it will heat quickly. Cheese and milk blend at a comparatively low temperature (42 degrees). This is the temperature at which the fat melts, and if heated to a higher temperature it will decompose.

Iowa State Is Hostess

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Iowa, chairman of publicity; and Ella Gertrude McMullen, Iowa State College, chairman of membership.

The remainder of the afternoon was taken up with talks by some of the Iowa State Home Economics faculty on the opportunities in their respective fields, and by round table discussions of the high school and college club problems.

A tea, held in the Institutional Tea Room, closed the convention late in the afternoon.