

Gifts to Help a Child . . .

Learn Through Play

by Mary Ellen Muckenhirn, H. Ed. 3



*What can match a child's
delight at Christmas?*

If you haven't children of your own, you're probably some toddler's favorite aunt or adopted aunt—and wondering what would please him most for Christmas.

Why not try your hand at making these gifts? Students in a child development course at Iowa State create toys as part of their course work and have devised some sure-fire children charmers.

Take a block of wood and attach various types of door closings (knobs, padlocks, hooks, latches) to the wood. The child can have fun operating them and become proficient, at the same time, in opening and closing doors.

An ordinary clown face can help the child dress himself more easily. Have a zipper mouth, button eyes, snap-on nose, a buckle on the hat, and a shoe-lace bow tie; and notice how much less you hear, "Help button me up."

To give the child a concept of shapes of objects, make circular, triangular and rectangular holes in the cover of any can. Give the child blocks of wood of the same shapes which he can drop into the can only by using the appropriate holes in the cover.

Clock puzzles are a suggestion for helping to develop the sense of time.

Two favorite activities of the young person are pretending and making noise. To take care of the first, there's nothing better than a box of old clothes for dressing up. (It's a good excuse for you to buy some new hats and shoes when a youngster inherits your worn-out accessories!)

A rhythm band will provide some controlled noise-making.

1. A drum can be made by covering the top of a shortening can (minus lid) with a piece of rubber from an inner tube.

2. Broom handles, sawed into short pieces, make good rhythm sticks.

3. Sandpaper-covered wood blocks add a little "jazz" to the percussion section.

4. Pan lids (neighbors permitting) are good cymbals.

5. A small metal container filled with unpopped corn serves as another instrument and requires only the insertion of a short stick in the lid so that it can be handled more easily.

6. Bells complete the combo.

"Wisely chosen toys are ones that stimulate activity in the child himself. Good play ma-

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terials are those with which the child can do something," says Ethel Kawin in *Wise Choice of Toys*. "Materials which lend themselves to a variety of uses help the child develop greater resourcefulness, greater skill and a richer imagination. They help develop the child himself!"

Good toys are durable, well-finished, non-inflammable, safe (no dangerous points or sharp edges) and can be easily cleaned. They serve as an outlet for the child's creative ability.

If you still find a child saying, "What can I do?" remember there are utensils, macaroni, plastic containers, flour and water in your kitchen; spools and buttons in your sewing box; and wallpaper books and Christmas cards in the attic.

For further information, consult these leaflets. "Play Is the Business of Children," Equitable Life Insurance Society of the U.S., Box 572, Gen. P.O., N.Y. 1, N.Y., 1958.

"Toys for All Children," American Toy Institute, 200 Fifth Ave., N.Y. 10, N.Y., 1959.

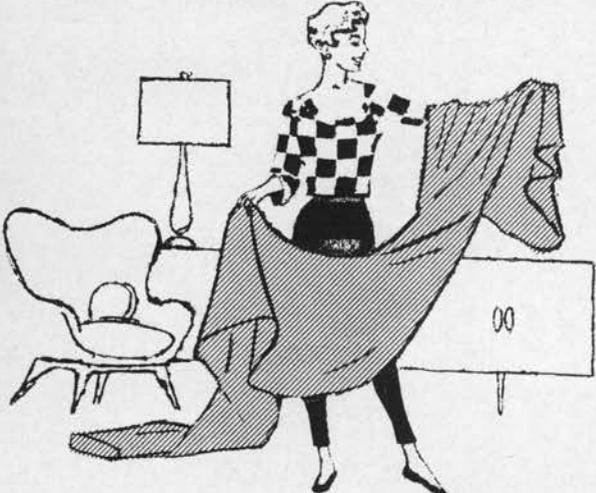


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