



Pat Bordman

Toys are important tools in childhood development

Second in a five-part series

A toy is the gift of play, and play is the most important part of a child's waking hours. It is through play that scenes of daily living, the testing of basic manipulative skills, and the exploration of the world is accomplished.

Through toys, a child can express thoughts and ideas and work out the questions of relationship. Through play, events are organized, acted on and understood.

The play of a child from infancy to 2 years is at first spontaneous. It consists simply of making faces and funny noises or playing peek-a-boo. As he or she matures, a child's play changes and soon begins the practice of elementary skills like dump and fill or build and knock down.

Though the child may be in the room with other children during this stage, play is more side-by-side than a group activity.

By nursery school age, signs of greater sociability emerge. Not only are children playing in the same room but they are playing with the same toys at the same time.

Still they haven't quite organized this play. Though they may be using the same type of toy, one child will imagine one scenario while the other has quite a different picture in mind. Both will be enjoying each other's company and apparently not care that their play stories are different.

BOTH CHILDREN are trying out the scenes of daily living whether it is road builder, spaceman, fireman, secretary, or housekeeper. At this stage a child is better organized than his or her younger self.

A more capable individual is emerging, one who has a better sense of self in motor activities and isn't constantly worried about balance.

The child spends time refining skills learned during the first two years. Abilities are tested to the limits and the environment is explored with ever more complicated toys.

Parents must consider a child's abilities when buying toys. Needed for use with small muscles are toys like lacing cards, puzzles, blocks. Developing the larger muscles will be toys such as climbing apparatus, gardening equipment, riding toys. Eye/hand coordination is honed and utilized with scissors, workbench tools, paints, clay.

IMITATING the adult world is also a theme of this stage so house-keeping sets, cooking sets, construction sets, musical instruments, toy telephones are all welcome.

Most of all, toys at this stage and every stage are for fun. They are meant to enhance the time a child spends alone or with friends.

Patricia Bordman, a freelance writer and photographer, has taught elementary school and conducted workshops and lectures on education. She is a master's degree candidate at Oakland University specializing in early childhood.

Mrs. Bordman welcomes suggestions and comments. Write her c/o the Observer & Eccentric Newspaper, 36251 Schoolcraft Road, Livonia 48150.

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Connie L. Zorn



Ms. Zorn studied interior design and received her degree from Wayne State University, where she is currently working on a master's degree. She also attended Michigan State University. Using her nine

years of interior design experience, she helps create the 103 display rooms at Gorman's Troy as well as many distinctive interiors for her clientele. Ms. Zorn's services are available to you at our design studios.

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Hot off the press is Concern's new cookbook, "I Am Not a Vegetarian — Meatless Main Dishes for Meat-eaters." This cookbook, with illustrations by Jean Hart, is the answer to the many requests from readers for help in preparing meatless menus that even the most confirmed meat and potatoes eater would enjoy.

Included are more than 60 recipes with some 20 complete menu suggestions that will enable you to prepare nutritionally complete meals without using meat.

A guide, "Combining Proteins for a Meatless Diet," prepared by Fredelle L. Feak, nutritionist, is also included. To order "I Am Not a Vegetarian,"

consumer mailbag

send \$4.25 plus 60 cents for postage and 17 cents for tax to Concern Inc. Detroit, 1 Northfield Plaza, Troy 48098.

What does imitation mean on a food label?

Under an FDA regulation, the word imitation must be used on the label when the product is not as nutritious as the product which it resembles and for which it is a substitute.

Experts say the technology already exists to cut energy consumption in the U.S. by 30 to 40 percent. The problem is motivating people to conserve.

By giving your house an energy audit — a checkup that shows just where you are losing heat — you can cut costs and save energy. In most states, the major public utility companies already offer these audits. Detroit Edison and Michigan Consolidated Gas Co. are conducting a pilot program of 200 homes in Ann Arbor. By spring, the audits will be available in the tri-county area.

ECO-TIP

You can shorten cooking time and retain more vitamins if you defrost frozen vegetables before cooking. This method requires less water so the vitamins stay in the vegetables.

Consumer Mailbag answers your questions on consumer/environmental issues. Address letters to Concern Inc. Detroit, 1 Northfield Plaza, Troy 48098.

If you live in a one- to four-family house, you qualify for an audit; and when the Michigan program is approved, the fee will be \$10. Detroit Edison will offer a plan to payback the fee over 10 months.

Inspectors suggest alterations and tell you "pay back" time, or how long it will take for the energy adjustments to pay for themselves in the money you will save on heating bills. The Public Service Commission considers seven years or less to be a reasonable payback period.

volunteers

The Oakland County Volunteer Bureau, a program of the Volunteer Action Center of United Community Services, has weekly listings of volunteer opportunities. Further information about these and other volunteer needs at more than 200 agencies may be obtained by calling the bureau at 642-7272. Any non-profit organization needing volunteer assistance may also call the bureau.

CHILDREN'S VILLAGE VOLUNTEERS — Understanding individuals 21 years of age and older are needed as volunteers at Oakland County Children's Village in Pontiac. Volunteers will work three to four hours per week with young residents in a flexible program of activities to share their time and talents or can volunteer seven hours per day.

NURSES — Volunteer Registered Nurses and Licensed Practical Nurses are urgently needed to help Monday or Thursday evenings at Common Ground medical clinic in Birmingham. Nurses would work a minimum of two nights per month assisting the clinic physician in the examining room.

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