



Pat Bordman

Growing stages reflected in toys of budding beings

Fourth in a five-part series on toys.

Fortunately, the choice of toys need not be left entirely to serendipity. Children have basic needs within age groupings. Toys fit into four major categories. Simply match the child's needs with an appropriate toy from one of the categories and you'll not be far off. The choice of toy will depend in large measure on the age, maturity, and dexterity of the child.

Even the child 8 through 11 who seems to be outgrowing the toy store is still interested in dramatic play through the production of plays, manipulation of marionettes and hand puppets, or costumes.

Increased maturity and refinement of behavior allows the child to be an even better imitator. His or her self-acceptance and strengthened friendship circle lend themselves to dramatizations. Toys from the category of imitation and imagination are often prized at this stage.

BY MIDDLE elementary school years, children have mastered mechanics of reading and mathematics and can now turn their energies to problem solving, and the intricacies of codes, secret passwords, and mystery.

Social games and toys are therefore especially meaningful. Board games that require strategy and planning and where several children can take part are welcome.

The youngster at this stage is usually just beginning to develop an interest in hobbies and collections. The third category of toys, manipulative, includes supplemental items to encourage this activity. Scrapbooks, carpentry sets, jewelry making kits, chemistry sets, models, all provide an opportunity for the expression of ideas and trying out new and more complicated skills.

Perhaps the biggest characteristic of children 8-11 is their abundance of energy. They seem always ready to take chances with their bikes, forever moving, ready for action.

The final category of toys, action toys, is right up their alley. Any sporting equipment is prized. Balls, dart games, ping pong, roller skates, stilts, pogo sticks (yes, they still sell them), skates all aid physical development and contribute to well balanced fun.

Other suggestions: books and records, magic trick sets, printing press, weaving frame, racing cars, maps and globes, camera, lessons in a special area of interest.

Be wary of eye-popping gifts

When shopping for children's holiday gifts, beware of those that pose threats to eyes, cautions the National Society to Prevent Blindness.

More than 5,000 eye injuries were linked to toys last year and nearly two-thirds of these accidents were suffered by children under 15.

BB guns, darts and bows and arrows were responsible for another 1,100 eye injuries among youngsters in this age range.

"Ninety percent of all eye injuries are preventable," noted Virginia S. Boyce, executive director of the National Society. "Safety conscious adults can protect children from eye damage and in some cases loss of an eye — by picking toys and games carefully

and by teaching youngsters how to play wisely.

"Holiday gifts hopefully will bring children many hours of enjoyment and help expand their knowledge all year long, without jeopardizing their well-being," Mrs. Boyce added.

Playthings with projectiles have been proven dangerous to eyes and should be avoided, she warned.

Figures from a 1979 U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission survey of hospital emergency rooms indicate that children under 15 were the victims of:

- An estimated 184 eye injuries from slingshots or sling-propelled toys.
- Nearly 82 percent of the 136 eye injuries related to toy guns and other toy weapons with projectiles.

• 78 percent of the 1,273 eye injuries associated with gas, air or spring-operated guns.

Eye damage also can result from toys and games with less apparent hazards. Building sets, skateboard and battery-operated toys were a few of those responsible for eye injuries last year, primarily among children under 15.

In some cases, the child may be too young to handle a toy. Often, too, play gets rough and youngsters accidentally hurt themselves or playmates.

Most of these eye injuries happen when children are not supervised. It's important that parents show their children how to use their gifts properly, the society cautioned.

Does the child understand how to use

the toy? Does he or she take a "harmless" toy and make it dangerous (for example, by pulling rubber tips off darts)? Do older children keep their more complicated toys out of reach of younger brothers and sisters? When dangers are explained, does the child acknowledge and avoid them?

"Remember these playtime tips and safeguard your child's sight — during the holidays and through the year," Mrs. Boyce concluded.

The National Society to Prevent Blindness, established in 1908, is the oldest voluntary health agency nationally engaged in preventing blindness through community service programs, public and professional education and research.

The competition recognizes individuals whose programs creatively reflect the best of human values.

"Spirit of the Earth" is a 50-minute presentation of the prose and poetry of Native Americans that speaks of their culture, religion, history and character.

Show wins national award

The Rev. Clifford Rutkowski, chairman of the Communication Arts Department of St. Mary's College in Orchard Lake, was awarded a certificate of merit for one of the programs he hosted on his weekly radio show, "Merry-Go-Round."

The award was presented to him by UNDA, the National Association of Catholic Broadcasters and Allied Communicators. The award winning pro-

gram, "Spirit of the Earth: the Prose and Poetry of the American Indian," was produced by Judy Holmes.

The show competed with 577 entries nationally in the 15th Annual Gabriel Awards competition for public service programming for television and radio.

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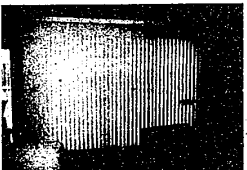
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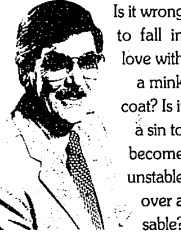
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