



Pat Bordman

Putting their faces in cardboard spaces

This is the last of a five-part series on toys.

Who would ever gift wrap an empty box? Yet it is the one toy that is most often overlooked by gift givers.

A box is absolutely free, requires no batteries or other mechanical aids and is approached with enthusiasm by both boys and girls. It is appreciated by children young enough to crawl as well as those old enough to be adept bicycle riders.

When you give a box, you give the gift of creativity. Within a box fun and adventure begin. A box big enough for a child to crawl into is a space big enough for imagination to roam.

An empty box can be shared or used in privacy. It can be colored, painted, pasted on, glued to, stapled, cut up or left alone. It can be a spaceship to the moon or a cave man's dwelling.

It can be an airplane east or stagecoach west. It can be a condominium, teepee, voting booth, grocery store, fort or puppet stage. A box can be anything.

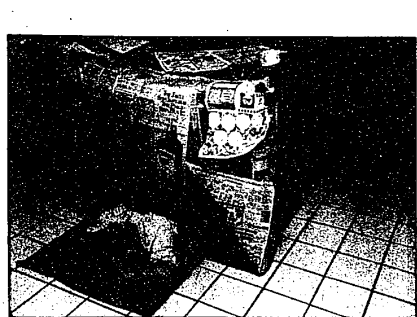
AN EMPTY BOX stimulates self-confidence by allowing inventiveness

to flourish. The child can discover fun from within.

When you give a box to a child you also give a message. You tell the child that you have confidence in his or her ability to be creative. You say to a child that you accept whatever he or she chooses to make of that empty container. You are encouraging thought development.

SUGGESTION: Though it is not necessary, you may wish to present a box of crayons, construction paper, scissors, tape, paints, glue, scraps of material and a flashlight to the child after the box has been explored. It is not necessary since many children will decorate with their minds and never want the real stuff.

Patricia Bordman, a free-lance writer and photographer, has a master's degree in early childhood education. She taught elementary school and has conducted workshops and lectures. Write her c/o The Observer & Eccentric Newspaper, 36251 Schoolcraft Road, Livonia 48150.



A cardboard box from any large appliance can test a child's imagination and provide temporary shelter from life in the fast lane.

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Get the red off your bumpers

Get out of the red by Dec. 30 or you won't be legal on New Year's Day.

That's the advice from Secretary of State Richard H. Austin, who reminds all motorists who still have 1980 red tabs that their vehicles must bear black and white license plate tabs on Jan. 1, 1981.

Under Michigan's new system of birthday registration, vehicle owners must renew their plates and tabs by their birthday.

Austin, however, reminded all motorists who still have 1980 red tabs that their vehicles must bear black and white license plate tabs by Dec. 31, because Dec. 31 is a state holiday.

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