

Tips to make toy selection easier and more satisfying

With Christmas approaching, many adults begin thinking about buying toys for the children in their lives. Here are some helpful tips to make toy selection easier and more satisfying for adults and children alike.

Choose toys that reflect what the child is really interested in, says Jeanne Brown, Wayne County Cooperative Extension specialist in human development. Sometimes adults select

toys that they think the child should be interested in, or toys that appealed to them at that age.

"Listen to the child express his or her views about playthings. A little girl who informs you that dolls are dumb isn't going to be thrilled if she gets one for Christmas," Brown explains.

IN THE SAME VEIN, be sensitive to children's readiness to give up particu-

lar toys. During the late elementary years, children may begin to lose interest in their toys. Parents shouldn't feel the children are being ungrateful or rejecting what the parent has done for them. "The child is just doing what he/she should be doing — growing up," Brown says.

"Store the teenager's favorite toys away carefully and they will be enjoyed again later when the child becomes an adult. Whether they have children to give the toys to or not, your grown children will appreciate having the memories preserved for them."

Parents sometimes have problems dealing with requests for toys that are hard to acquire, such as the Cabbage Patch dolls, or too expensive for the parents' budget. A child's desire for a certain item may have been driven to a fever pitch by TV advertising or peer group pressure.

WHEN THE TOY IS NOT available or you can't afford it, Brown suggests the first thing to do is to sympathize with the child. Say something like, "I know you want this toy very much, but we (Santa Claus) can't afford it. Tell the child more than once that he/she will not be receiving this toy so that false hopes aren't held right up until the time gifts are opened.

Second, help the child look through catalogs and newspaper ads at toys that are within the family's price range.

Parents can take this opportunity for a good life teaching experience. Go through ads and watch television commercials carefully. Explain how cameras and special props can make toys look better than they are. Next go to a toy store and ask to see a particular toy. Most stores will unwrap one toy or

have a sample you can examine, Brown says.

PARENTS SHOULD HELP the child think through such considerations as: Is this toy build well and will it last? Do we have space to set up this toy in our house? Is this a toy or hobby that you will be interested in for a long time? Does the toy do only one thing, or does it have many possibilities?

"Even four or five-year olds can learn about toy selection," Brown adds. Although parents have the final decision about toy purchase, Brown recom-

mends that each child should be allowed to occasionally have a toy he/she truly desperately wants that the parents know is a mistake. Not only will the children have the thrill of owning something they really wanted, but they will then experience the consequences of an unwise choice.

The toy may break because it was poorly made or the child may quickly lose interest in it, perhaps because it was not as wonderful as the ads made it appear or because the possibilities for using it were limited.

Blood donors needed through the holidays

The American Red Cross is asking the community to give area residents some good news this holiday season: the gift of blood on one of the Save-A-Life Sundays, Dec. 23 and Dec. 30, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

An estimated 21,000 donations will be needed during the holiday season by the patients in 75 hospitals in the five-county area of Wayne, Oakland, Macomb, Washtenaw and St. Clair.

During the holiday period until Jan. 8 blood donations slow down. Holiday festivities, vacations and the rush of the season usually take a heavy toll on collections at community and colleges blood drives. High schools and businesses are closed during this time of the year along with some businesses and industry which creates an additional strain on the blood supply.

"The only guarantee that blood will be available for the area hospital patients during the holiday season and at

any other time of the year is the continued donor support of our volunteer Blood Services program," said A. William Shafer, director of Red Cross Blood Services, Southeastern Michigan Region.

"Nearly 7,000 blood donations are needed each week to maintain a sufficient blood supply. And this doesn't stop during the holidays."

Blood can be donated by most healthy people ages 17-65 who weigh at least 110 pounds. The entire process including donation and refreshments takes less than an hour. Donations may be given every eight weeks and up to five times in 12 months.

"If a donor plans to give blood on one of the Save-A-Life Sundays, call 494-2800 to make an appointment," added Shafer. Donors can also call to make an appointment to give blood at their nearest regional donor center at any time during the holiday season.

Communi-Call keeps homebound in touch

"It's great company — like having a friend in the house."

That's what Fred Hines says about Communi-Call unit, the voice-to-voice communication system available from St. Mary Hospital of Livonia. Recently Hines suffered a compound fracture that will keep him confined to his home for several months. He is able to get around on crutches, but the going is slow.

"I really dreaded being alone and worried about falling. Now if I'm having an 'anxiety attack' anywhere in the house I just touch my transmitter and, in a few seconds, the friendly voice is saying, 'Hi, Fred! How are you today?'"

The transmitter Hines wears on a cord around his neck activates the communicator in his living room which puts him in touch with a 24-hour support center. The center has immediate access to his medical records plus emergency instructions and names and numbers of persons to call if help is needed.

"I haven't had any emergencies and hope I never do. But it's comforting to talk to my friends at the center," he said. Hines calls into the support center

at least once each day.

IF THERE was an emergency the support center has all the information necessary to alert family, friends and doctor, call an ambulance or police or the local fire or police departments, or to notify St. Mary Hospital's emergency department.

Hines pays \$30 a month for the Communi-Call service. "It puts my mind so at ease," he says.

St. Mary Hospital has purchased several Communi-Call units.

"We recognized the potential use of this system, not only for those who are temporarily disabled like Hines, but also for the elderly and the infirm who are homebound, and people who have high-risk health problems," said Sister Mary Modesta, president of St. Mary Hospital.

The hospital welcomes contributions from community organizations, which are used toward the purchase of additional Communi-Call units or to subsidize the cost of leasing the unit for those unable to pay the monthly fee.

For further information concerning the Communi-Call program, call St. Mary Hospital Public Relations Department at 464-4800, Ext. 2556.

Registration begins at Y

Registration for winter classes at Northwest YWCA, 2590 Grand River, will begin Thursday, Jan. 3.

Classes will begin Tuesday, Jan. 15, with the exception of the swimming, which will begin Jan. 21.

Evening classes for adults include swimming, tennis, aerobic dance, physical fitness, prenatal exercise, karate, body conditioning, back exercise, jogging, yoga, ceramics and jazz dance.

Adult daytime classes include swimming, tennis, water color, joy of drawing, oil painting, macramé, ceramics,

physical fitness and aerobic dance.

Youth activities include arts and crafts, cooking, karate, gymnastics, tumbling, piano, tennis and swimming.

Preschool will include arts and crafts, parent-tot gym and tumbling.

For information on additional classes, call the branch, 537-8500.

YWCA memberships fees are \$45 for families, \$25 for adults, \$20 for senior citizens (62 and older) and \$12 for children. There is an additional fee for the classes.

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retirement memos

Margaret Miller

Recipes for yule cheer

When Christmas was rolling around last year, granddaughter Katie brought a recipe book home to her parents. (Grandma has a copy too.)

The children at the small day-care center she was attending had provided the recipe. Katie, for instance, recommended the following methodology for cooking ham:

"Get a ham from the store. Put pepper on it. Cook it 10 minutes real hot. Don't touch it. Can't eat it if it's hot. Let it cool off. Eat it!"

Katie and her friends are a whole year older now and probably they'd do a few revisions on their recipes. And I'm sure parents and grandparents all over are recollecting about now this year's version of children's recipes.

But still 'tis the season for sharing a few of those suggestions of Christmas 1983. Linda's Candy Canes, maybe: Sugar, a lot. Hamburger, a lot. French fries, five. Mix it all up, roll it together. See all the colors. Cook it in the oven and eat it.

Or Nate's Christmas cookies: Eggs.

Sugar. Salt. Pepper. Mix around. Pound it. Powder it. Put it on the stove. Cook it 10 minutes. Cook it more in the oven, three hours. Go to bed.

Tracy favored a different cookie recipe: Little letters. Sugar. Raisins. Salt. Flour. Water. Brown sugar. Mix with a spoon. Eat some of the raisins. Put a little yogurt on it. Cook it two minutes, at 70 degrees. Sprinkle salt and brown stuff and grey stuff. Put them on paper. Then you eat them.

Guess I don't really recommend use of these recipes. That might lead to early retirement. But they make fun reading, and I'll let them carry my wishes to all for the best of holiday seasons.

Margaret Miller was Suburban Life editor for Observer Newspapers for 16 years. She and her husband, Joe, are retired to Florida, where she writes Retirement Memos.



The recipe for Christmas Seal cookies comes from the American Lung Association of Southeastern Michigan to add to holiday bakers' collections.

Cookie recipe shared

Christmas Seal Cookies make a colorful, flavorful addition to a holiday cookie collection. The American Lung Association of Southeastern Michigan, "The Christmas Seal People," offers this recipe which features branded fruit and nuts in a chewy festive cookie.

2 1/2 cups mixed candied fruit
1 cup raisins
1/2 cup brandy or apple juice
2 eggs
1/2 cup brown sugar (light)
1/2 cup butter melted
1/2 tsp. baking soda

1/4 tsp. cinnamon
1/2 tsp. cloves
1/4 tsp. vanilla
1 1/2 cups flour
1 cup butter

Soak candied fruit and raisins in brandy for 12 hours. Beat eggs and sugar with a fork. Blend in butter, soda, spices and vanilla. Gently stir in the flour, nuts and candied fruit with remaining liquid. Drop by rounded teaspoons onto ungreased cookie sheets. Press a piece of candied fruit on top of each cookie. Bake in a pre-heated oven at 375 degrees for 12-15 minutes.

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