

1971

EC71-2209 Child Care for Physically Limited Mothers

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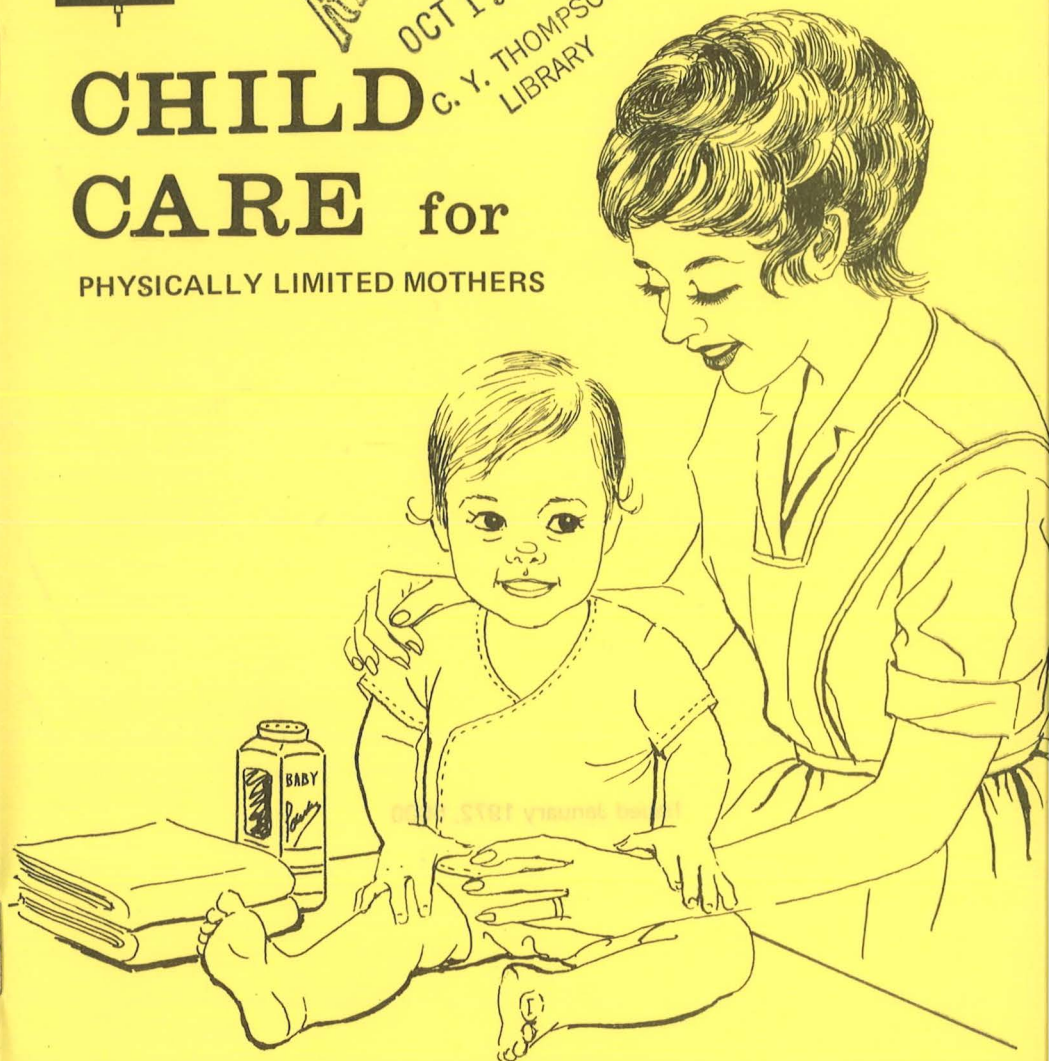
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EC 71-2209

For Physically
Limited Homemakers

CHILD CARE for

PHYSICALLY LIMITED MOTHERS



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Extension Service, University of Nebraska College of Agriculture
Cooperating with the U.S. Department of Agriculture
and the College of Home Economics
E. F. Frolik, Dean J. L. Adams, Director

CHILD CARE for physically limited mothers

By Valerie C. Kehm
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Table with center chair for child. Used for feeding and child play area.

All mothers have uncertainties about dealing with their children. For mothers with physical limitations the uncertainties increase.

You may wonder if you have the ability to perform the necessary tasks, to meet emergencies and to find the best ways to guide the growth and development of your children.

But having a physical limitation does not mean you are handicapped as a mother. You can give your children the best things in life—an abundance of love and warmth, guidance, trust and care. In addition you may have the advantage of being at home with your children during the day. This gives you time to spend with them, sharing in their play,

guiding them as they grow and meet new adventures in life, and taking care of them.

Experience may show you that some child care tasks, such as carrying your child when you have poor balance, require too much strength or may be unsafe for you to manage alone. These tasks provide some of the ways other members of your family can share in the care of a small child. Think about how to divide the work and recognize the tasks that your husband, son or daughter can do.

Like any mother, you will find some days especially hectic and tiring. They will be less so if you develop a cooperative spirit and trust between you and your child. A youngster learns very early how to work with you—leaning against you as you carry him in infancy, bringing his clothes for help with dressing, and sharing family chores still later.

It is important for physically limited mothers to take care of their children right from the beginning. Both mother and child then become accustomed to a special way of caring and helping and gradually develop a cooperative relationship to make things easier. Earlier than you may expect, children learn to climb into your lap to be dressed if you can't lift anything heavy. Your child will soon know you can't run after him when he plays outside and will learn to cooperate with your ground rules.

You may find some jobs tiring, like baths, feeding, dressing, and

diaper changes. Together these jobs require lots of time and energy. Planning ahead and reorganizing jobs can make them less tiring, less time consuming, and more pleasant for you and your children.

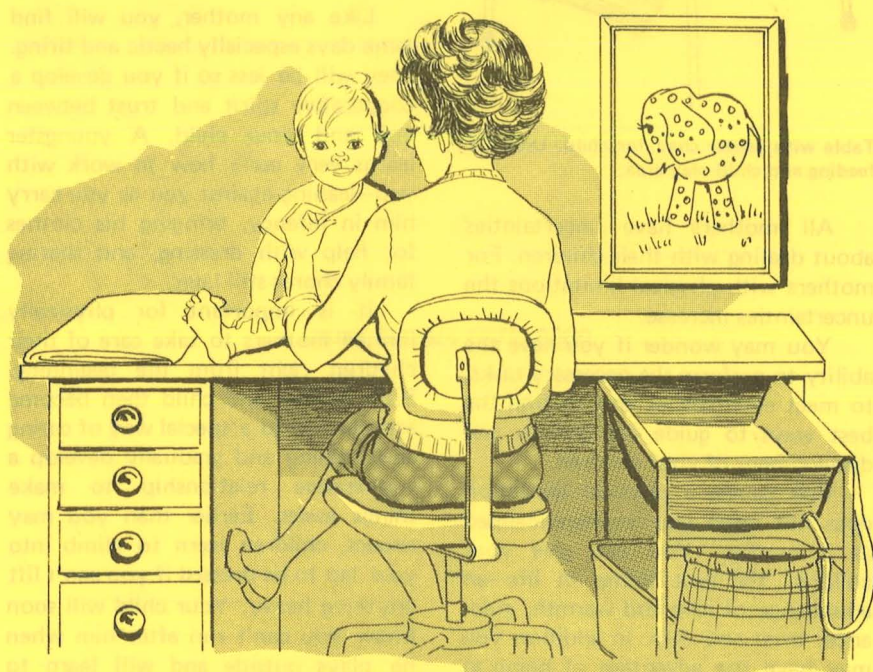
Because of possible limits in mobility, energy, reach, bending, etc., choose equipment you can easily manage alone. Place it where you can perform the tasks of child care with the greatest ease and convenience. Remember that how a friend or neighbor has equipment placed and rooms located may not be the best arrangement for you. Each arrangement should be designed for your particular abilities and disabilities.

In general, bathing, dressing and **diapering** of an infant can be done in

the same area. A bathinette or plastic tub on a table should be close to a water source, and bathing supplies and some clothing stored nearby. A table or bathinette with a fold-down top can be used for diapering. Keep this close to the dresser or shelves where the diapers, powder and pins are stored.

In addition to equipment arrangement that cuts down on unnecessary walking or wheeling the wheelchair, work areas should be at a height that is easy to reach and avoids strain in reaching or bending.

If you are in a wheelchair have a low table that can be easily reached. An opening underneath, similar to that in a desk, lets you work in a forward position. This means much



Mother in chair with a lowered dressing area.

Mother with laundry cart on wheels.

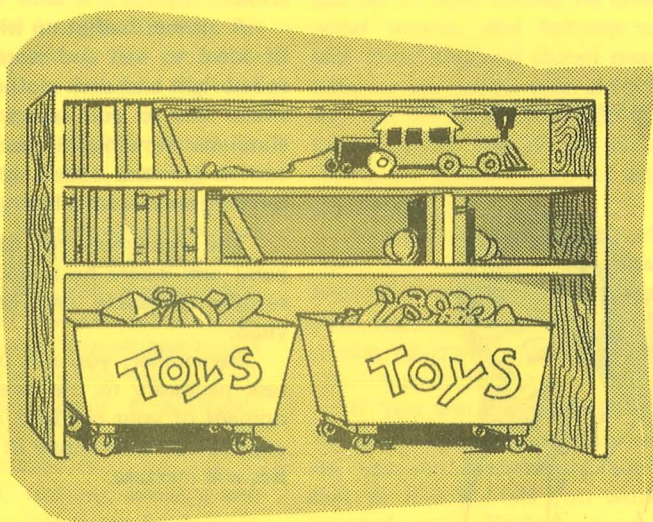


less strain in your back, shoulders and arms.

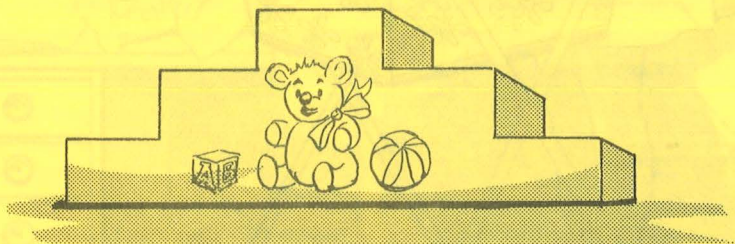
A clothes basket on wheels would be ideal to sort and store children's soiled light and dark clothes. You can wheel this to your laundry area and eliminate bending to reach into the basket for the soiled laundry and carrying an awkward heavy basket.

The area where you care for your baby and where he sleeps should be readily accessible and easily supervised.

Remember, you *can* perform the task necessary to the care and development of your children. As you gain experience, confidence in your abilities will increase.



Toy storage area in bookshelf arrangement with rollout toy storage boxes, storage on shelves at eye level so mother and child can reach toys easily.



Steps—can be used for child to sit on while mother ties shoes, etc. Also to be used as a play area for 2-3 year old child to aid in muscular development.

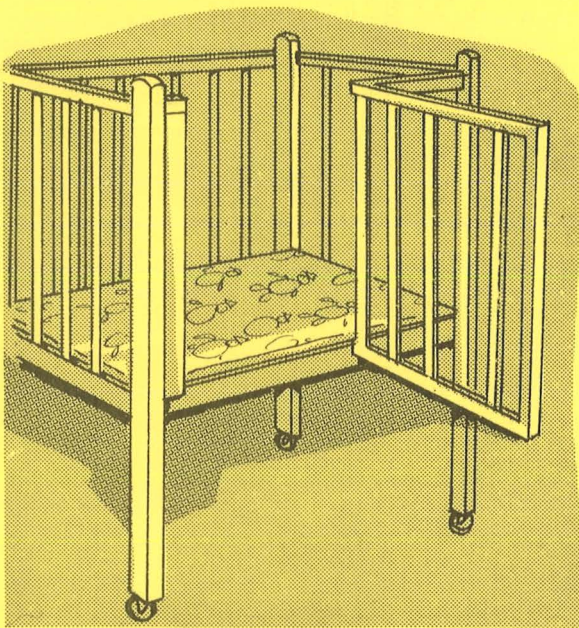
Some points to keep in mind are:

1. Store items used often within easy reach and at a height that does not cause strain in reaching or bending.
2. When selecting equipment, choose items you can easily manage alone.
3. Arrange equipment needed in

child care tasks to minimize unnecessary walking or wheeling of the wheelchair.

4. Delegate jobs that you cannot do to other family members. Let them participate in child care activities too.

5. Have the area where your child sleeps and plays readily accessible.



Raised playpen - no bending.

For information
contact the
National Heart Association

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