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CHILDREN NEED

TOYS...

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CHILDREN NEED TOYS

By Grace Langdon, Ph.D.,
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Children need toys. They need them for fun. They need them to satisfy the ever-present urge to be covering, manipulating, creating, that is so much a do, and then to choose the toys accordingly . The only way to be sure that they do fit him is to notice what he can do and likes to do, and then to choose the toys accordingly.

When the baby is feeding and handling things, noticing different sounds, sitting up, creeping, beginning to walk, and handling and shaking, saying words, learning cute tricks, investigating everything within reach.

UNDER 10 MONTHS

When the baby first begins to grasp and reach out for things offered him and to notice sounds, it is time for rattles of different sizes, shapes, and tones, and for alligator and other animals and dolls. Soft woolly animals and dolls will satisfy the urge that the youngster has about this time and a child creeps from here to there.

Very soon after the baby will be sitting up and holding things with a sure, firm grasp, turning the objects this way and that, and passing them from one hand to the other. It is time for low soft toys that fasten to the side of the crib for pulling and rolling, patting, poking, and later for making what- ever comes to the youngster's mind.

When the child is walking more and more steadily, the toys that stretch across the crib. The baby will reach for the rings and bars on these and very soon will pull vigorously on them. Floating toys add fun to bath time and it is interesting to watch the growing skill with which eyes and hands work together.

As a child plays with toys such as those that have been suggested, he is taking his first steps in getting acquainted with the world of things around him. He feels the lightness or heavi-ness of the things he picks up. He catches the feeling of different shapes. He catches the tones of different sounds. He feels the lightness or heaviness of the things he picks up. He catches the idea of fitting things together even though he cannot always fit them together. Most of all he is busy and interested and having fun.

When the child is walking more and more steadily, they begin to get really interested in playing and discovering more and more things, imitating, talking, finding out, living a very interesting and exciting life.

10 MONTHS TO 3 YEARS

At this stage of growing a child needs things with which to be very active -- a low tricycle; a sturdy little wagon; a doll carriage still light but heavier than the cloth animals; a sturdy tricycle to straddle and ride; all sorts of things to push and pull; something to use for climbing -- a big hollow block; a small wooden play gym. A child, then, a small, low gym and slide. Balls, big, little, and middle-sized-- are a must. The color wheel is used now. Many children like to stack and group objects, lines, and colors. A classic wading pool is fun, with big inflatable figures for wading around, and boats, balls, and mar- nals. A sand box big enough to get into provides for a little quieter type of enjoyment. It is a good idea to have plenty of pails, cups, shovels, scoops, spades, and sieves, for digging, pouring, sitting.

The initiative play that characterizes this stage of development suggests a play corner, maybe a play house, a play table and chairs, tea-party dishes, paper pots and kettles, dolls and doll furniture, a telephone, and simple dress-up clothes. Little children love these things with which they can carry on the activities they are going on around them. They like the simulations of the professions for the dolls but they like things that fit their own size, too, a stove they can stand at to cook, an ironing board that fits their height, a mending basket in which to put things, a sewing basket in which they can sit down at, cups that they can drink from. Stuffed animals as well as dolls have always a place in a child's instinctive play and for companionship as well. It is interesting to see how, as youngsters play, they gather up and sort out their ideas: how they become more and more proficient in carrying out the directions of their understanding; how their understanding broadens to include more details.

Manipulative interest still calls for all sorts of things that are easy to fit together -- first, then harders--- color cones and pyramids; nested blocks; form boards with two or three places, each of different heights; the first puzzles; the first rubber animals and dolls. Puzzles can be slipped through the spaces provided for them, picked up, slipped through again, and the whole thing repeated.

As the child grows older, he is very busy and interested in making this world more and more like the one he and this suggests truly toned musical instruments in the play kitchen: a toy piano, a flute, a clarinet, a marimba, tambourine, triangle, xylophone, Swiss bells, and record player with well chosen records.

If there is plenty at hand to satisfy a child's urge to imitate, he will be very interested in making things from freedom to experiment with materials, one will see an increase in the variety of materials used, one will see more and more imitation of realistic detail. It is a good idea to add more and more blocks to those of baby days because the blocks lend them- selves well to this kind of activity. It is now time to provide a set of size that are cut from card board and have the twenty-one, twenty-six, and twelve inches in length. Children make good use of linear actions, of activities involving length and distance. It is now time for cutting. The child is about to develop an understanding of the part-whole relationship. He now appreciates that each part is a smaller whole. It is now time for cutting. The child is about to develop an understanding of the part-whole relationship. He now appreciates that each part is a smaller whole.

When the child is about to become more and more interested in words and figures, it is time for push-pull toys, animals on wheels, roller toys,列车, cars, and track plays. A sturdier truck to straddle and ride; all sorts of things to push and pull; a scooter; the first tricycle; the first bicycle; the first skates. It is a good idea to have plenty of pails, cups, shovels, scoops, spades, and sieves, for digging, pouring, sitting.

It is time now to add cooking sets, laundry and cleaning equipment, a sewing kit, a telephone, and simple dress-up clothes. Little children love these things with which they can carry on the activities they are going on around them. They like the simulations of the professions. It is interesting to see how, as youngsters play, they gather up and sort out their ideas; how they become more and more proficient in carrying out the directions of their understanding; how their understanding broadens to include more details.

As the child grows older, he is very busy and interested in making this world more and more like the one he was born to experience, experimenting, dramatizing, creating, and be- coming more and more interested in companionship with other children.

About this time a child knows how to do so many things. He has a desire to express himself, and to show himself so clearly, that one is often amazed. With this greater freedom to express his ideas, he cooperates more in reaching out for new experiences, an eagerness for new learnings, a great enjoyment of growing independ-ence, and will do it. Most of all he is busy and interested in learning on the hand with which he can try out his rapidly developing imitative ability; he can experiment, he can create, with which he can express his feelings and impressions in words and activities.

Industrious play takes on a more dramatic form during this stage of development. A fireman's or post- man's hat, an Indian or cowboy outfit, a doctor or nurse's kit, is likely to set off play that will bring in other children if there are any around and that will weave together all sorts of realistic details showing how observant the child has been of things going on around him. Hand puppets that are easily managed are almost sure to bring forth conversation made up out of the spur of the moment. Both dolls and stuffed animals become more specialized. They are brought out and played into the play and are very essential part of it.

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and new and different ones will be needed to satisfy developing skills and widen interests. This is the time to supplement the earlier housekeeping equipment with things that "really do", -- a mixer that really mixes, a sweeper that really sweeps, an iron that really heats. Doll clothes will now have to be as nearly as possible true to the model. There is likely to be interest in sewing for the dolls and if patterns and for the clothes are provided and a small sewing machine is available skills of lasting usefulness can be learned.

This is the time when interest in paper dolls flourishes with girls and there is likely to be cutting, coloring, and decorating of a great variety of costumes. A doll house, miniature dolls, and furniture to fit them will result in endless arranging and rearranging of the rooms with minute attention to detail and probably the making of wallpaper, rugs, and accessories.

Store play is likely to become more organized with setting of prices, making of change, and making of signs as important details. A toy typewriter and a printing outfit give opportunities for plenty of practice in school-learned skills. These same skills make work and number games of great interest to many children during these years. Anagrams, dominoes, and lotto usually in the lead. A blackboard will have more use than ever and will often serve as a stimulus for playing school.

The gaining of skills becomes very important to a child during these years. Girls become adept at jumping rope, playing jack stones, bouncing balls and the like. Boys go in heavily for baseball, football, and various other forms of outdoor activity. Construction play is likely to be indulged in. Some children will want a garage, a garage shop. One or two men are likely to be frequently amazed at the wide range of interests of both boys and girls. There is no occasion for concern if interest turns from one center to another. This is another form of the experimental period of the earlier years. It remains important now, as then, to have plenty at hand with which the urge to explore and discover can be satisfied.

Children need toys throughout the whole span of childhood and into the teens. From infancy on, toys, wisely chosen, perform the dual function of providing fun and enjoyment and of contributing to the development of the child for which they are provided.