Fewer Toys Make Happier Holiday

Why is it that most children will cajole and beg for a toy seen on television or owned by a friend, and once it is his, will promptly ignore it?

Why does a large packing box provide hours of contented play for a child who has a toy chest and shelves chocked full of toys?

Why do most parents look about them in dismay a few days after Christmas when they see the toys so eagerly requested strewn about and disregarded as the youngsters resume their play with old favorites?

Some answers may be that toys are often purchased in haste and most children have more toys than they know what to do with.

What is a toy? It is a plaything that should delight a child. It should provide hours upon hours of fun. This fun may be creative, instructive, imaginative, energy expending, or relaxing; but it must be fun.

For some children, a game with complicated rules isn't fun. A puzzle with little pieces that go astray isn't fun. A stuffed animal that soon looks shabby and can't be washed isn't fun. But what is a parent to do?

Shop Carefully

There are several things you can do. Shop carefully and avoid buying poorly-made toys. Resist your children's entreaties for toys that you know will soon bore them.

This is perhaps the hardest to do and the Scrooge-like advice may seem out of keeping with the season. Yet in the long run, it will be the most effective means of assuring your children of the pleasures they can derive from the toys they do own.

Children at various ages require different stimulation from toys and most toy departments offer a wide variety of playthings for all ages. It is up to you to choose wisely.

Children enjoy doing the things grown-ups do. Little girls, even boys, love to putter with pots and pans. Regular muffin tins, cookie cutters, and small saucepans are relatively inexpensive and a child will derive a great deal of pleasure from serving food made in the real thing.

Boys like to hammer, saw, and nail things together. A sturdy workbench with regular-sized tools will provide hours of contented and creative play. Basic instructions on safety are a must, and some supervision in the beginning is essential.

A boy given such tools will assume the responsibility they require. He will consider his play man's work and enjoy it longer.

Holiday Hints

Fatigued feet, the Christmas shopper's lament takes its toll on the entire family. When Mrs. Santa Claus' feet ache she gets grouchy. A little pre-shopping planning can keep gift buying pleasurable right through the dinner hour.

Spend an at-home day preparing casserole dishes to freeze. Then on shopping days, select a meal to defrost, tear up salad makings and put them into a covered bowl, line up the go-withs for supper, and set the table before leaving.

This way, even if you are delayed and open the door to find a famished family, you can quickly get the meal on the table. If there are small children, leave a snack tray of carrots and celery to stave off fussing.

It also helps to bring a small gift, such as, a Christmas coloring book, to hold their attention until dinnertime.

Upon returning from shopping, pop the casserole into the oven and then use 15 minutes of the reheating time for a foot-bath.

Holiday groovin' should never change.

The best should never change.

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