



Living with Children the 3-to 5-year-olds

PLAY AND YOUR CHILD'S WORLD

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Why Children Need to Play

Play is children's work. It is their way of learning. Play activities help children grow in mind and body. Play develops children's muscles, teaches about the world around them and helps children learn to get along with others.

Kinds of Play

If you have ever watched children play, you know that they can make a game out of anything from helping you dust the house to eating their lunch. There are many kinds of play. Since play is one of the ways a

child learns, it is important that play activities teach. Some kinds of play that teach are:

- **Indoor Games.** Drawing, coloring and talking teach a child to use his imagination and add to his vocabulary. Rolling a ball teaches coordination.



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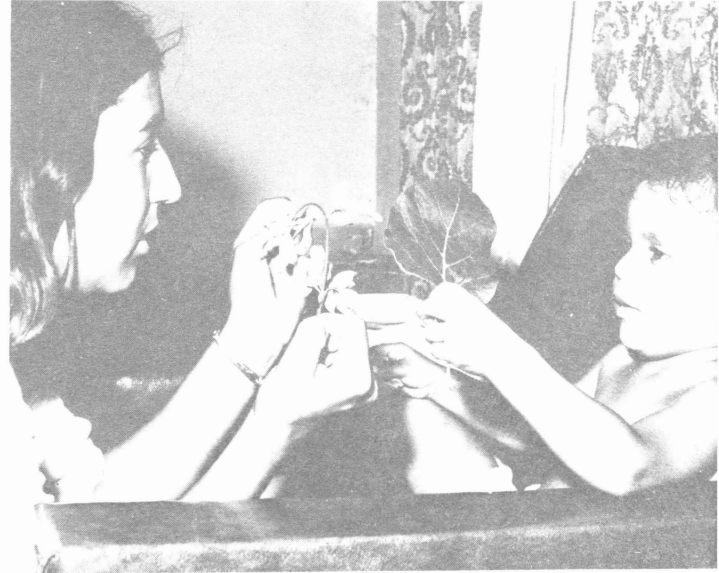
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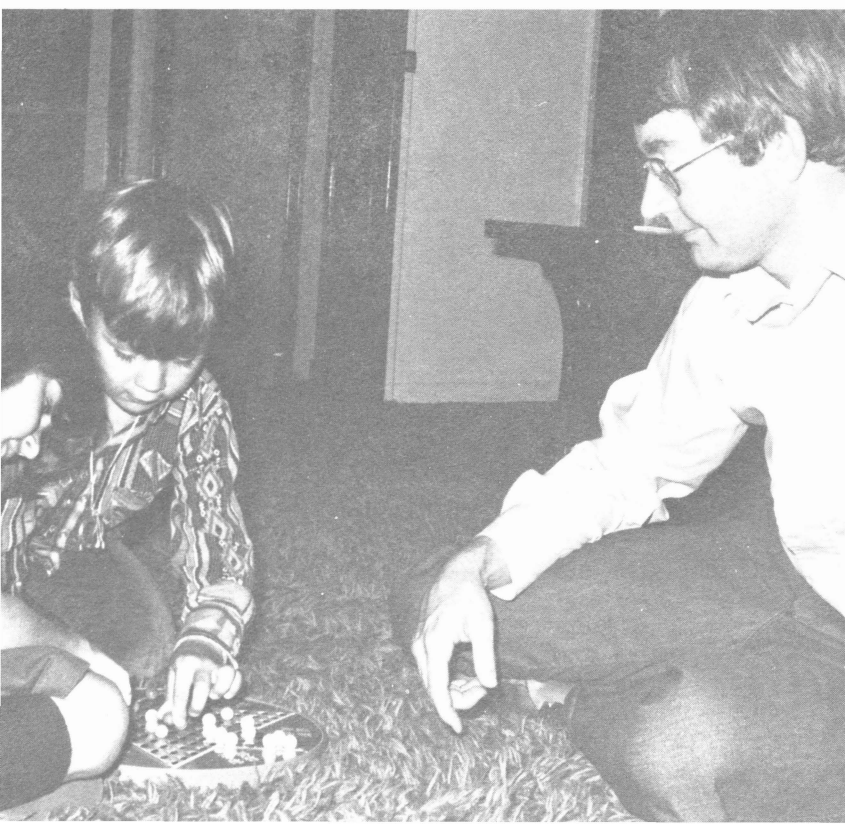
- **Outside Games.** Swinging and running teach large muscle control. "Little Sally Walker" and "Red Rooster" teach taking turns and getting along with other children.



- **Projects.** Growing small plants teaches about life and the world around the child. Tinker toys teach how to build something and to finish what is started. This stretches the mind and teaches patience.



- **Quiet Games.** Puzzles teach small muscle control and how to solve problems. Looking at books teaches how to be quiet and how to take care of things, and it helps to develop the mind.



Simple Toys to Make at Home

Children need toys that are safe and simple. Inexpensive playthings can be made at home. Some toys you might make for your children are:

- **Stuffed toys.** Sew or draw a funny face on a clean stuffed sock. Rag dolls can be made of scraps of double knit or other fabric. They can be stuffed with plastic bread bags or old, clean nylon hose. These toys wash easily.
- **Old clothes.** Save different kinds of clean old clothes for playing dress up and make believe.

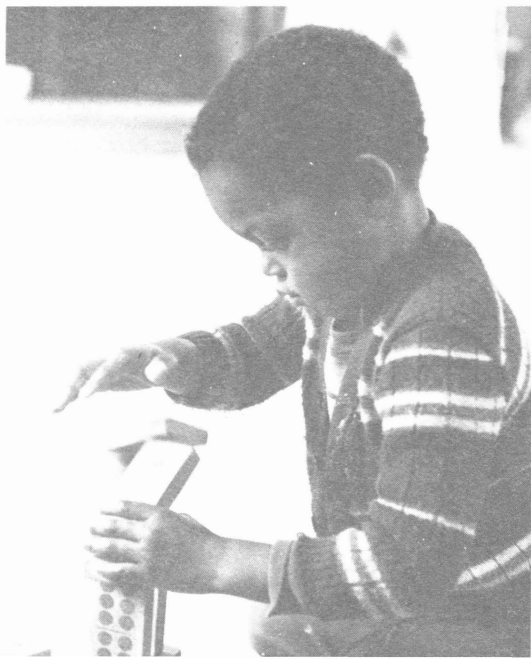


- **Outside toys.** Old tires make good swings when hung from trees. When tires are standing upright, they are fun for crawling and climbing. Empty cardboard boxes can be arranged into make believe caves and play houses. An old blanket stretched over chairs or a small table makes a good tent.

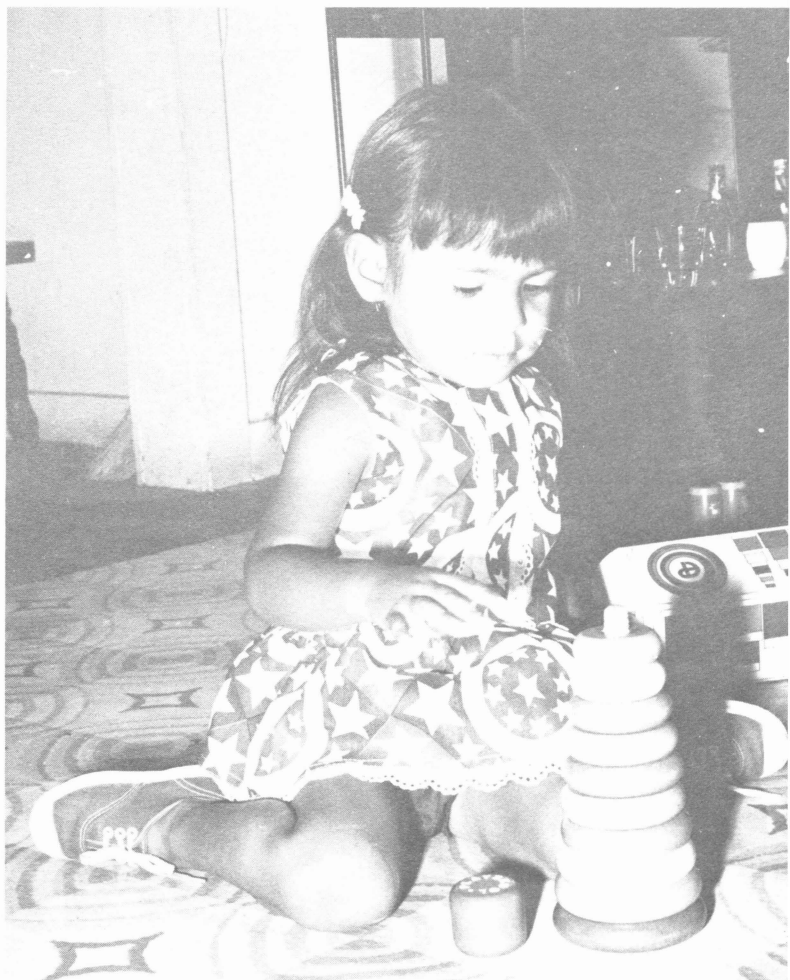


- **Stacking and nesting toys.** Boxes, cartons and cans of several sizes that fit one inside the other teach sizes and shapes.

Empty thread spools can be stacked like building blocks or strung on a shoe lace.



Brightly painted rings that can be stacked on a stick or pole provide hours of fun.



- **Toys for the senses.** Fill a paper sack with several items which the child can reach in and feel. Put a cotton ball, a sponge, a piece of sandpaper, a nail file and a hair roller in the touch bag.

Where to Play

Children need special play areas. These areas should be safe, free from danger and easily seen by the parent or caretaker. An area of the yard, away from the road or street, where there is room to run and play is good for outdoor play.

Sturdy trees for climbing, homemade sand boxes or sand piles and swings are real treats for children.

In the house, children should have out-of-the-way places where they can play. A back corner of a bedroom or porch is fine. The area can be as large or as small as your house allows. It is best to have children's toys stored in this same area. Toy storage areas should be child height so they can learn to get toys out and put them away with just a little help.

Many communities have play areas for children. Parks, school yards, community centers and vacant lots that have been cleared of all dangerous objects are all good play areas.

Danger zones for children include:

- Areas with heavy or fast traffic
- Areas where children cannot be seen easily
- Water (If water is more than 2 inches deep, an adult should be present.)
- Old refrigerators or freezers (Discarded appliances should have doors padlocked or removed for safety.)

Safe and happy play times help children learn about the world around them. Your child learns through play. You will want to watch carefully while he plays to be sure he learns the things he needs to know.



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