



Pointers For Parents

Survey Shows Parents And Children Benefit When Parents Provide Classic Toys For Playtime

(NAPSA)—Baby dolls and blocks provide parents with more opportunity to interact with children in their playtime.

A recent survey released by Zapf Creation, Europe's leading manufacturer of play and functional dolls, found that two-thirds of American mothers wish they could spend more time engaging in their child's playtime with them.

"I wish I could spend more time playing make believe with my girls," laments Staci Rogers, mother of two girls, ages four and six. "Sometimes I feel I'm too busy to give them what I think is most important—my time."

Time is just one of many things parents can do to enhance their child's play. Most mothers surveyed were happy with the amount of time their kids are spending playing on their own, but need some guidance in choosing the right tools for imaginative play.

"I like seeing parents participate in make believe play with their kids," says George Scarlett, a child development expert from Tufts University. "However, it is just as important that parents provide the proper tools that encourage and support the development of imagination. 'Props' like baby dolls or cars are great ways to support kids' play by giving them an opportunity to create imaginary worlds. Just as important is for parents to remember that when playing with their children, children should be leading the play and not following any parental direction or influence."



Role-play with classic play toys allows children to use their imagination and nurture their creativity.

"I'm overwhelmed when I look at all the toys on the market," said Betsey O'Brien, mother of two boys, ages five and seven. "I've found the latest high-tech gadgets only keep my boys' interest for a short time, and they keep going back to their tried-and-true trucks and blocks."

The survey found that kids are going back to classic toys for their imaginative play. Baby dolls such as Baby Annabell, New BABY born® and Love me CHOU CHOU by Zapf Creation are favorites among two- to four-year-old girls, and boys the same age favor cars and trucks. As kids reach ages five to eight, dolls and action figures are popular choices.

"With classic, basic toys, children use their imagination to create the story," said Scarlett. "Today's high-tech toys do the work for the child and often

stifle development."

"I see all of the lists the media put out with their picks for 'hot toys,' and my daughters see the commercials," said Rogers, "but I want to be smart about what I get them to play with so that they will enjoy their toys long after they are given to them."

The survey results and expert opinions suggest gift givers choose classic toys over the over-hyped toys that often end up sitting idle in the toy box, collecting dust shortly after their allure has worn off.

"Think about what your child is interested in," suggests Scarlett. "Then look for gifts that will help build on those interests and take role play in new and exciting directions."

For more information, visit www.zapf-creation.com.