

Teacher says many toys don't educate

United Press International
WEST LAFAYETTE, Ind. — Many highly touted "educational" toys really don't educate, says a Purdue University professor.

"Parents shouldn't let themselves be swayed by the television gimmicks," said Loretta M. Hatfield, head teacher and assistant director of the Child Development Laboratories in the School of Consumer and Family Sciences.

"It's time to go back to the basic blocks, cardboard boxes and homemade puppets."

Hatfield said toys educate when they challenge children to think creatively, to reason, or to advance

their ability to solve problems.

Puzzles, peg boards and dominoes are good examples, she said.

A toy is frustrating, not educational, she said, if it is beyond the child's ability or developmental stage.

For example, a 16-piece puzzle would be beyond comprehension for a two- or three-year-old.

A puzzle map of the United States for a three-year-old child would only frustrate the child, whereas a four-piece puzzle would not challenge a five-year-old.

Super-expensive toys may not

give children anything to do, Hatfield said.

"The turn-on doll that walks, blinks, drinks, etc., at the push of a button doesn't stimulate the child's imagination or ability. I'm anti-battery-operated mechanical toys."

As examples of toys that are very educational, she named building blocks, Erector Sets and Tinker

Toys because they give children a chance to use their imagination and creativity.

"Parents should also select at least one toy or game the whole family will use or play together," she said. "It is an educational setting for the child, learning social skills at home."



Battalion photo by Larry Chandler

Love her to death

Judy Brown Chandler cringes as lovable friends give her very wet kisses.

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