

TAES specialist says toys for kids should involve their imagination

By Kim File
Reporter

When choosing playthings for young children, it is important to ask if the toy will invite action on the child's part rather than just generating a performance for the youngster to watch, a Texas Agricultural Extension Service family sciences specialist says.

Battery operated toys — including storytelling stuffed animals like Teddy Ruxpin — may not be the best gifts for young children, Dr. Sarah L. Anderson, TAES specialist, says.

In fact, toys that "don't do anything" are preferable because they contribute more to a child's development than playthings that automatically move and make noise, Anderson says.

"It's best if a child can actually do something — not just sit and watch a toy," she says. "Young children from about the age of three or four like

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This is one reason the inanimate Cabbage Patch doll was so successful, says Anderson.

Young children are able to interact with the doll by using their imaginations to make it come alive, she says. Even babies were able to relate to this doll by dragging it around and chewing on it, Anderson says.

"The Cabbage Patch dolls, besides being ugly, really didn't do anything — they just laid there and they didn't cry or wet," Anderson says.

"But what's important is that the children were able to pretend with them."

On the other hand, automated toys or "high-tech toys" usually tend to limit a child's involvement, she says. When a child engages in play with these toys he becomes more of an observer than a doer and this limits a child's productivity in imagination, Anderson says.

One example is Teddy Ruxpin, a teddy bear with a cassette player concealed inside its body. The bear tells stories as they are taped from

the cassette. This toy doesn't encourage verbal growth because it does all the talking, she says.

It would be better if the youngster could talk for the bear and then talk back to the bear as himself, Anderson says.

Not only does the child have a greater chance of becoming bored with a toy of this kind, but the costs of high-tech toys of this type seem to be steadily increasing, she adds.

To further a youngsters' developmental growth, Anderson recommends some old stand-bys such as erector sets, building blocks and paints that children can use for years.

"We want to encourage original thinking so children can find solutions to problems rather than having things set for them," she says. "You get to the point in life where there isn't someone to give a solution — you have to be able to find it."

And she adds, "Books are always a wonderful gift for children of any age, even infants."

PUC officials recommend rate increase

AUSTIN (AP) — Public Utility Commission examiners have recommended an \$86.7 million rate increase for Gulf States Utilities.

The 437-page examiners' report was forwarded to the three-member PUC on Monday. The panel will rule on the case on Jan. 6.

The Beaumont-based utility wants a \$144 million increase.

The examiners' report recommended that GSU be forbidden from passing along to customers \$247 million in costs associated with construction of the River Bend nuclear plant in St. Francisville, La.

GSU's rates were increased by \$99.9 million on April 7 as a result of the company's request for an emergency rate hike. The \$86.7 million recommendation includes that increase.

When the case started more than a year ago, homeowners were paying \$68.46 per month for 1,000 kilowatts. The recommended increase would bring that bill to \$78.41.

"It doesn't look like a very good day for consumers in Southeast Texas who need to get that economy going," Geoffrey Gay, the state lawyer who represents consumers in PUC cases, said.

GSU serves 555,000 customers in Texas and Louisiana.

Police chief: Officers fired for behavior, not shooting

DALLAS (AP) — Dallas Police Chief Billy Prince maintained that his department was sound Tuesday, hours after two officers involved in the wounding of an unarmed 16-year-old were fired.

"We don't have a crumbling police department," Prince said. "I have never hesitated to take disciplinary action against officers accused of misconduct."

Officers Eva DeChoudens and Larry Pope, both 24, were fired after an expedited internal investigation into the teen's shooting. Officials said the officers were not fired because of the shooting, but because of other improper actions.

Allegations probed included falsifying documents, falsifying reports, failure to arrest an alleged felon and conducting an illegal search. DeChoudens also was accused of using greater force than necessary, officials said.

"I'm tired of a few officers continuing to ignore our rules and regulations," Prince said. "There are officers who try to go a little too far in their actions and it's unacceptable."

Reserve officer M.L. Edwards was relieved of his duties in connection with the wounding of the teen-age girl, who remained hospitalized Tuesday.

The police department's deadly force policy has long been the center

of controversy, and the teen-ager's shooting prompted another round of angry outbursts from black leaders.

The policy was the subject of a congressional hearing this summer, and earlier this month a state district judge slapped the city with sanctions after he found officials had not been cooperating in a lawsuit involving the 1986 accidental fatal shooting of an Addison police officer by a Dallas officer.

"This is as clear a case of discovery abuse as I've ever seen," Judge Joe Burnett said last week in the lawsuit brought by the widow of officer Ronald Cox.

The 16-year-old's shooting Nov. 27 was the third controversial action by officers in November. On Nov. 4 a cocaine-intoxicated man died after officers tried to restrain him with a neck hold and on Nov. 13 a 62-year-old man was fatally shot at his home when he allegedly pointed a gun at officers serving a search warrant for illicit alcoholic beverages.

Police spokesman Ed Spencer said four people have been killed so far this year in police gunfire and 14 others were wounded, compared with 28 shootings during the same period last year, including nine killings.

Police determined in the case of the wounded 16-year-old that, before the shooting, the officers involved illegally entered and

searched an apartment in the same complex where the shooting occurred, internal affairs Lt. Doug Kowalski said.

They then went to another apartment and told investigators that the shooting occurred after DeChoudens saw the 16-year-old, who had answered the door, reach to her waistband and produce a shiny object, Kowalski said. She was then shot in the leg.

In fact, Kowalski said, the officer neither observed the 16-year-old reach to her waistband nor did she reach for a shiny object.

DeChoudens also was among several officers investigated by the department's internal affairs division in connection with the alleged beating of a prisoner in August.

The report awaits final action by the department, Prince said, who acknowledged it was one of those reports that just took too long.

Former Mayoral candidate Jim Buerger said DeChoudens and three other officers made no attempt to intervene when a fourth officer allegedly beat a handcuffed burglary suspect.

DeChoudens also was suspended for five days Nov. 7, 1986, after she was found to have participated in an illegal search and arrest.

Justice defends his judgment in Texaco case

AUSTIN (AP) — Texas Supreme Court Justice William Kilgarlin on Tuesday fired back at Gov. Bill Clements for saying the court hurt the state business climate by not having a hearing on the \$11 billion judgment against Texaco.

"When I went to law school, I was told that you decided cases based on the law and on the facts," Kilgarlin told members of the Society of Professional Journalists.

"Now Gov. Clements has added a third element... I suppose based on what he has said, we are to decide cases on the law, the facts and how it affects the business economy in the state of Texas," Kilgarlin said.

Kilgarlin also criticized as slanted CBS "60 Minutes" television pro-

gram on the Texas judiciary. The program also was criticized by Pennzoil Chairman J. Hugh Liedtke but praised by Clements in separate appearances Tuesday.

Clements last week blasted the Supreme Court for deciding against hearing Texaco's appeal of its \$11 billion loss to Pennzoil.

The award, which was made by a Houston jury and upheld by a lower state appeals court, was made because of Texaco's alleged interference in Pennzoil's planned merger with Getty Oil.

The court found no reversible error in the lower courts' rulings in the case.

Texaco, which has filed for bankruptcy protection, has said it will ap-

peal to the U.S. Supreme Court. The Texas Supreme Court does not have the authority to adjust the size of a lower court award, Kilgarlin noted.

He said the court pondered the Texaco-Pennzoil case for four months.

"To say that we just refused to hear the case without study is a total misrepresentation of the facts," he said. "More study went in on that particular case by the Supreme Court (than) on any other application for writ of error that we've had since I've been on the court."

Connections exist between Texaco and "60 Minutes," Kilgarlin added.

As one example, he along with

Liedtke of Pennzoil noted that CBS chief executive officer Lawrence Tisch is involved with Texaco.

As a Getty board member, he voted in favor of the Pennzoil merger plan, then later voted for Texaco's plan to acquire Getty.

Kilgarlin said, "They ask us, 'Is justice for sale?' I'll paraphrase that. Was '60 Minutes' for sale?"

Roy Brunett, CBS News spokesman for "60 Minutes," said, "We stand by our story. We believe it was a valid, fair and accurate report."

"Mr. Tisch's connection in no way plays into the considerations of '60 Minutes' as to what stories we pursue, develop and, finally, broadcast. Mr. Tisch has no input whatsoever as to the decisions of '60 Minutes.' "

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