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# Toy Making in the Home

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# Toy Making in the Home

By MARGARET ERICKSON

"The gingham dog and the calico cat,  
Side by side at the table sat"—

But it isn't always a gingham dog and a calico cat. It might be a little brown beaver board dog and a bright colored little cork cat, depending entirely upon the ingenuity and the tastes of the children.

Toy making in the home is a simple and economical process. Children like to have toys of many kinds and this is impossible in many of our homes if all the toys must be bought. It is possible, however, when the children can make their own toys very easily. This is helpful, not only from the expense standpoint, but from the fact that imagination and skill in manipulation are both developed.

You will probably wonder how a child can make a toy that will be substantial enough to play with. All one needs is a piece of beaver board, a coping saw, a few wire brads and a dab of paint and a very fascinating toy can be made.

The pattern is first traced on the beaver board and then it is cut out with the coping saw. (This coping saw is safe to use and easy to guide.) The edges are then filed smooth with sandpaper and the parts painted with water colors. When the paint is dry, the toy is put together with wire brads and is ready to participate in any event the child wishes it to.

These toys can be made with or without movable joints. If one desires a toy that will stand up, two bodies are made and pieces of beaver board the size of a nickel are placed between the two bodies and between the parts of the bodies where joints are wanted. This makes the toy wider and it will stand up readily. Any kind of an animal can be made from beaver board. But it isn't only animals—it might be a wagon or a bench or even a clothes hanger with a kewpie curl for the hook.

Beaver board is not the only material that is used in toy making. Cardboard is used in the same line of work, but is not as satisfactory. An entirely different type of toy is the cork toy. You'd be surprised to see some of the things that old corks can be made into. A very clever little horse—or shall I say pony—can be made by glueing two corks together and adding a string tail, toothpick legs and a paper head. Of course, the like ends of the corks must be together. The body of the horse may be painted any color with an opaque paint. Likewise, submarines, battleships, boats and even canoes can be made by cutting corks in half. They must be cut evenly so they will float. I have in mind a little blue ship made of corks. The railing around the deck was made of pins; a cabin of paper was put in and there was even a tiny American flag hoisted on the end of a toothpick flagpole. Combinations of beaver board and cork may be used. I remember seeing a merry-go-round which was made of beaver board and had little cork horses to ride on.

Clay modeling is perhaps known to every kindergarten pupil. The clay is inexpensive and clever little things can be made. Stories, such as the "Three Bears", can be illustrated by the children. How they would enjoy making the big bowl, the middle sized bowl and the little bowl and the bear family! This clay is easily

painted when dry. Attractive usable things can be made.

The children like to play "dress up". They are ever so many different kinds of people during the day! When they give their little "plays" they always need costumes. Newspapers are ideal for this, as the children can tear around all they please—especially if they are giving this little "play" in the haymow with pin admission. Nurses' costumes, peasant costumes, hued skirts and just everything can be made. Several comic sections basted together make a lovely Indian shawl, while the brown section of the Sunday paper cut in slits and pinned on a paper band could grace any Hula maiden in the circus.

Speaking of circuses reminds me of a circus wagon made from a holly box. There were little milk bottle tops for wheels and a red paper roof and bars. A little yellow cork tiger was the animal in the cage. Match boxes may also be used for wagons, furniture and even pianos. Oatmeal boxes with labels removed, painted and placed together make romantic old Spanish castles that any doll would love to be princess in.

Toys can be made of almost anything, it seems. The kiddies love them and why not let them make their own? They get so much more pleasure out of creating them themselves. All they need is the encouragement of their parents.

Many children, at Christmas time especially, come to their parents and tell about some poor little boys and girls in the hospital or orphan asylum who have no toys. That time is a wonderful opportunity to let your child do service for others. Let him make toys to bring to the hospital or asylum. It will not only aid in developing skill, but will also help in the building of character.

## Harriet Wallace at Edgewood

Harriet Wallace '24 has moved from Mondamin to Edgewood, Iowa, where she will be an instructor in Home Economics.

Doris Preston '24, is teaching English and Mathematics in the high school at Winfield, Iowa.

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