

By Lori Pankonin

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Isn't the concept of toys created for children's play time interesting? Look at the kitchen set, the ironing board with iron, the washer and dryer for instance. Obviously "play" time is intended for fun. As an adult, I'm grateful for a washer and dryer but certainly don't consider my time with them "fun."

I think back to Christmas when our daughter, Brooke, was three. What did she want from Santa? A vacuum. That was the only thing on her list. Now as she turns 27, the vacuum certainly isn't top on her list of things to enjoy. Unwrapping one as a gift today probably wouldn't bring the same expression of delight.

Daughter Celeste loved her baby doll from an early age. Sarah Robyn went most everywhere with us. Yes, when we packed suitcases, there was a bag for her as well. I recall having several Velcro diapers made for her so that little Mommy could perform the diaper changing duties again and again. Yes, "play" time included diaper changing.

Some companies even went as far as making dolls that would actually wet their pants or spit up. Such joyful situations, wouldn't you agree?

And shifting back to my childhood, I think of the hours we spent with an arm in a sling made from a tea towel. Or the towel would be wound around the hand or foot like a cast and we'd enjoy acting as if we were wounded.

I recall pretending that I was sitting in a doctor's office, waiting my turn to have the doctor see my sick children. Isn't that the very thing we'd just as soon avoid in reality?

And we'd roll out our gum and press it against our teeth, pretending we had braces. Strange, you say? Well there must have been something fun about it.

And then there were the farm sets, doctor kits, tool shops, cars, trucks. I guess it all comes down to dreaming of growing up and acting like an adult.

Then why is it that as we get older, the playtime acts become chores and work which we would just as soon avoid? When we're young, we want to be older. But when we're older, we long for some of our more youthful characteristics.

Our grandson went through a spell when he couldn't have enough guns. Despite the collection in his special gun rack, on the shelves, in the closet, under the bed, given a chance to pick out a toy, a gun it would be—or a sword.

Some parents forbid children from playing with guns or weapons, which I can understand but it is amazing what a natural interest young boys have in killing things. Just boys? That comment was stereotyping but Army sets and guns were never amongst my chosen collection.

Toys are great for the imagination. Nowadays, with computers and electronic capabilities, there's not quite as much left to the imagination. But it's still important to play.
Checkers anyone?