



THERE IS AN ADAGE which says that as long as there are children there will always be dolls. And it is also true that dolls are becoming more and more versatile. This one, for instance, is a 20 inch, drink-wet with a "mama" voice. She has a new pixie platinum blonde coiffure and her vinyl plastic body is fully jointed. She sells for \$5.95 and is most popular with the 2-6 age group.



FOR CHILDREN who crave action, Mr. Machine should turn the trick. Operated on the key-spring principle he walks and simultaneously a bell rings, arms swing, mouth opens and closes and a siren sounds. A plastic cover makes the gears visible. It retails for \$8.95.



A NEW CONCEPT in space achievement, toywise, is an astro base which operates a rocket firing scout car. Operating on four flashlight batteries, the base by remote control fires two rockets as far as eight feet. This 21-inch toy at \$14.95 is recommended for the 8-12 age group.

Problem Of Choosing Children's Toys Is Answered

Don't toy with Junior's Christmas fun. Instead of crossing your fingers and hoping for the best when selecting toys for the children on your shopping list, know what to look for before you visit those dazzling Toylands. You're less likely to be bothered and bewildered by the bewitching displays, more apt to enchant the kids with your gifts, if you keep certain facts in mind.

First, and most important, shopping for kids is just like shopping for adults in one major respect: if you bear in mind the recipient's personality and interests, likes and dislikes, your choice will be about right. Avoid buying the toy you cherished at age six—or the one you wanted but didn't get—unless you're pretty sure that the six-year-old on your list has the same longings. If you're buying toys for someone else's kids, ask that person's advice, if possible.

Parents shopping for toys should consider not only the child's feelings, but their own! This advice comes from W. T. Richardson, toy buyer who provides a wide selection of toys for nearly 1,700 stores. A mother who takes great pride in a spotlessly clean home

is not depriving her toddlers if she doesn't buy them finger paints. Actually, she's probably sparing them some little domestic dramas (or traumas). Similarly, a father who spends a lot of time, money and energy on his lawn needn't feel guilty about failing to install a garden swing. There are enough presents that will delight a child without inconveniencing his parents.

No matter what the child's age, achieve a balance in the gifts you give. Give some toys or games that can be played outdoors, others that can while away a rainy afternoon indoors; toys he can play with alone, plus games that require playmates, and—for the older child—word games or games about the worlds of business and politics that allow the whole family to participate. Give some toys that the child can really work with—blocks, paints, clay, or, for the older child, equipment for his hobbies and special interests.

Here again, if you're buying gifts for the children of friends, you might check to find out what the parents are buying. Should you give brothers and sisters one toy to be shared? Not unless you like the sounds of battle! Children get deeply and jealously attached to such items as dolls, stuffed animals, favorite books. On the other hand, home sports equipment (archery or ping pong sets, for example) or games for three or four players can be given jointly to all the children in a family. But if it's the parents who are giving the joint present, they should also give each child an individual gift, no matter how small and inexpensive.

Safety and durability are prime considerations for the toy buyer. When shopping for very young children, avoid the following toys with small parts that might

fall off and get swallowed, toys with sharp edges and animals or dolls that are not easily washable. (The average toddler leads a hand-to-mouth existence.) For an older child at the mechanical or scientific stage, buy electric toys only if they bear the UL label; this certifies that they have been safety-tested and approved by Underwriters' Laboratories. Whatever the age of the child, make quite sure that the toy works—and will continue to do so for a reasonable length of time—before you plunk down your cash.

Simple toys bore, advanced super-toys frustrate—how to steer a middle course between extremes? The individual child's development is a better guide than his chronological age, but divisions into age groups are helpful.

Under 18 months: blocks, simple take-apart toys, cloth picture books are good. For the very youngest, cuddly animals, squeaky bath-tub ducks, and the "cradle gyms," music boxes and mobiles that fasten onto the crib. The baby who's reached the crawling or toddling stage will like any toy light enough for him to push, pull or roll—or one of the little battery-powered trucks or cars that travel under their own power.

18 months to 3 years: big building blocks, bigger and heavier push-pull toys, more complicated take-apart toys. A wagon or wheelbarrow to ride in; little boats, cars and animals to manipulate. Little girls are already crazy about dolls and doll furniture. Many children under three are ready for "creative" playthings such as paints, modeling clay, toy musical instruments—but be sure you select only those which rate high on quality and simplicity. A whole orchestra of cute little instruments that don't

really play will be far less fun than a xylophone with a full scale. 3 to 6 years: a doctor's or nurse's kit, an Indian or cowboy, or spaceman outfit will score with this age group, which loves dramatic play. They also love to imitate grownup activities with miniature cooking, housecleaning, or storekeeping equipment—and dolls with several changes of clothing, to mother. The simplest construction sets, puzzles and story books are O.K. now—and a blackboard and chalk will intrigue pre-schoolers. For outdoor play, a tricycle or a really big, sturdy truck; swings, slides and seesaws if you think the lawn can take it (don't install these on a paved concrete area).

6 to 9 years: abandon the cute miniatures—girls of this age want cake mixers that really mix, irons that heat, small sewing machines that can sew a fine seam. Their brothers are ready for electric trains, chemical or printing outfits, workbenches and tools. Word and number games, harder puzzles and construction sets are in order now. So are roller and ice skates, sleds, stilts, and that cherished gift—the first bicycle.

9 to 12 years: by this time, you may have a young hobbyist on your hands—and requests for Christmas gifts of stamps or coins. This age group can appreciate handcraft outfits, complicated model kits, sets for study of soils, rocks and chemicals. Board games of all kinds are popular—up to and including checkers, cribbage, and even, for the precocious few, chess. Boys of this age like athletic equipment. Girls want anything that makes them feel grown-up—printed stationery or a diary, a manicure set with all-most-colorless polish, bubble bath or talcum powder. They'll go for

gifts of pretty clothes at this age, or, indeed, at any age much past diapers. Boys, on the other hand, don't go much for clothing gifts until they're pretty close to the teens.

Beware of classifying gifts for any age group as strictly "masculine" or "feminine." A rag doll can be an object of devotion to a small boy—and many a twelve-year-old girl would rather have a chemistry set than a vanity set.

Here again, the rule is "know your child"—or find out the score

from someone who does know. Above all, don't worry about picking the right present. Armed with the common-sense rules listed above, you can probably spend less time choosing children's gifts than you ever did before—with more confidence that the "morn-after-the-night-before - Christmas feeling" will be a merry one indeed for both children and adults.

Before 1781, the planet Uranus was thought to be a star.



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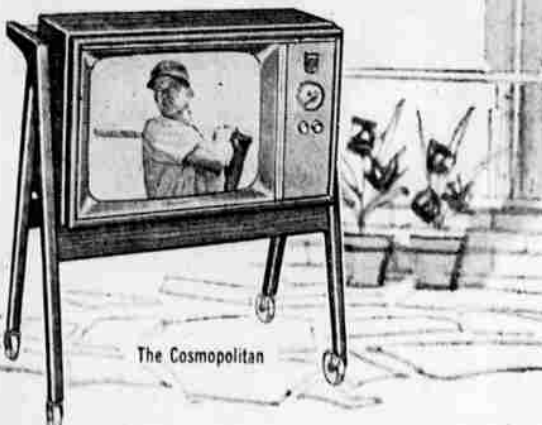
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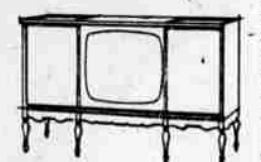
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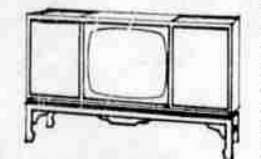


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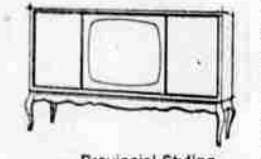
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