

All in the Family

Gift Ideas For Children

By Sarah Child



Toys for children are not really the ultimate in presents.

The best gift for a youngster is often the real thing, not a toymaker's imitation.

A gift for our daughter brought home by her father served to remind me of the fact all over again.

The gift he brought: a package of seeds, a tiny package of fertilizer, some little plastic flower pots and a miniature watering can.

Brightly boxed by the manufacturer, the do-it-yourself flower kit charmed our 5-year-old. And rightly so.

Yet, had we been imaginative enough we might have purchased the same things separately at a garden store, instead of a toy department, with the same effect.

Children love to imitate parents. The closer the toy resembles the parent's possession, the better they like it.

In some cases the replicas are cheaply made and yet cost more than the item in question.

In that case, it may be the smart thing to forget the toy and get a duplicate of whatever it is of Mom's or Dad's that the child is coveting.

Once we bought an electric alarm clock for a very young nephew just learning to tell time for the grand sum of \$2. Not only was he proud of his "adult" acquisition but the truth of the matter was that we would have been hard put to find a toy for \$2 of any lasting nature.

Obviously this practice won't always work. You can't give a youngster a duplicate of your lawnmower and no matter how much your little girl begs you for a live baby you'll find a doll is somewhat less work.

But there are any number of cases in which the theory can be put into practice.

One mother I know, disgusted by the price she was paying for



Salad usually isn't one of those things than can be made in advance, to cut down on last-minute preparations. But here is one that has to be finished three days ahead of time, with another than can be started early.

The first combines shredded cabbage and carrots with a wise choice of other vegetables. The mixture is chilled three days in a sweet and sour marinade made from a blend of corn oil, vinegar and light corn syrup. The final product is worth the three day wait. It keeps crisp and fresh in the refrigerator for several days.

The second recipe is a lettuce slaw. In it, real mayonnaise is blended with green pepper and other seasonings and the dressing is tossed with shredded crisp iceberg lettuce. The mixture is delicious mounded on thick tomato slices.

Spring Relish Salad

- 1 medium head cabbage, finely shredded
- 2 carrots, coarsely shredded
- 2 medium cucumbers, cut in chunks
- 2 small green peppers, chopped
- 1 medium onion, minced
- 1 cup vinegar

- 1 cup light corn syrup
- 1/2 cup corn oil
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon pepper
- Western iceberg lettuce

Lightly toss together cabbage, carrots, cucumbers, green pepper and onion in large bowl. Mix together the vinegar, corn syrup, corn oil, salt and pepper; pour over vegetables. Toss lightly until mixed. Cover tightly. Chill at least 3 days before serving, tossing salad once each day. Serve on lettuce wedges or rafts. Makes about 12 servings.

Lettuce Slaw

- 1/2 cup real mayonnaise
- 1/4 cup finely chopped green pepper
- 1 teaspoon minced onion
- 1 teaspoon lemon juice
- 1/2 teaspoon sugar
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- Dash pepper
- 4 cups shredded western iceberg lettuce (1 medium head)
- 6 thick tomato slices

Combine mayonnaise, green pepper, onion, lemon juice, sugar, salt and pepper. Just before serving, toss with shredded lettuce. Mound on thick tomato slices. Makes about 6 servings or 3 1/2 cups slaw.

COURIER / WOMEN

miniature baking sets in the toy departments, got a large box and filled it with one-layer cake mixes, assorted puddings and gelatins, and one each of muffin, cookie and brownie mixes. To that she added a set of measuring spoons and some foil cake pans plus a tiny flour sifter. Needless to say the daughter was enchanted. And the baked goods she produced were large enough and good

enough for the entire family to eat.

For a little boy consider the cost of a tack hammer and assorted nails from the hardware store plus a piece of scrap 2x4 versus the ersatz thing from the toy store.

A wallet from a five and ten that is pretty close in appearance to what father carries will probably cost less than the

brightly colored junior version found along side the toy trucks and model planes.

For a little girl there are adult powder puffs small enough to seem child-like and a 25 cent bottle of pink or colorless nail polish in a spillproof bottle will bring appreciative sighs.

Sometimes, of course, the whole concept can get out of hand. When your 2-year-old says he wants his own television set instead of his blue plastic picture box with the bent antennae, it may be time to re-evaluate your gift giving.

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