

## Homemade Toys Offer Developmental And Safe Solution To Recall Crisis

### *Parents as Teachers offers Homemade Toys as part of Curriculum*

St. Louis ([PRWEB](#)) November 17, 2007 -- Massive recalls have pulled millions of toys off shelves and from American homes this year causing many concerned parents to wonder whether any toy is safe for their children. As part of its regular service to families of young children, Parents as Teachers, one of the nation's largest early childhood parent education programs, brings families it serves a variety of activities and instructions for making toys from materials in the home. These homemade toys and play activities not only promote development in young children, but they also encourage non-violent, inclusive play; stimulate the child's creativity and are safe and age-appropriate.

"Play is an important part of child's development and they will use toys and objects in their play," says Jane Kostlec, early childhood specialist at Parents as Teachers National Center. "These don't have to be purchased toys, many are found in the home."

The homemade toys suggested by Parents as Teachers parent educators are safe and inexpensive. They are developmentally sound and encourage parent/child interaction, an important aspect many manufactured toys don't offer. Many of today's toys are derived from movies or television and promote play according to the show's plot and the characters' behavior. "This kind of play can become boring for children because it lacks a child's own experiences and does not promote creativity," notes Kostlec.

Parents as Teachers offers instructions for making toys from items around the house for children from infancy to preschool. Here is a simple toy that promotes a 1-year-old's small muscle skills and problem solving:

#### **Chips in a Can**

- a) Give the child a container filled with chips and a can with a slot in the lid.
- b) Show the child how the chips fit in the slot when the slot is parallel to his body.
- c) When all the chips are in the can, empty them out and turn the can so the slot is now perpendicular to the child's body.
- d) Encourage the child to put the chips back in the can.

Although it sounds simple, this toy draws on a 1-year-old's problem solving abilities as the slot changes positions. This activity also allows parents to offer step-by-step instructions which helps increase a child's vocabulary.

Another simple game suitable for 3- or 4-year-olds encourages eye-hand coordination, and allows children to make predictions.

#### **Bowling**

- a) Set up six pins (use two-liter soda bottles, paper towel rolls, potato chip containers or lightweight plastic cups). Add up to 12 pins as the child's skill increases.
- b) Take turns bowling using different balls that range in size and weight (ping pong ball, jacks ball, whiffle ball).

This simple, inexpensive game encourages preschoolers to use logic as they attempt to figure out which ball will knock down the most pins.



For more parenting tips and information on how to find a Parents as Teachers program near you, visit [www.ParentsAsTeachers.org](http://www.ParentsAsTeachers.org)

#### About Parents as Teachers National Center

Based in St. Louis, Parents as Teachers National Center is the resource base and backbone of Parents as Teachers, a parent education and early childhood development program serving parents throughout pregnancy until their child enters kindergarten, usually age 5. The nonprofit National Center oversees approximately 3,000 programs offering Parents as Teachers services nationwide as well as in several other countries. For more information about Parents as Teachers, visit [www.ParentsAsTeachers.org](http://www.ParentsAsTeachers.org)

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