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Learning is Child's Play

Color Lotto

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Parents who find time to play with their preschoolers often enjoy sharing the enthusiasm children have for discovering new information about the world around them. Until they are convinced otherwise, most children think learning is fun.

A parent can help children keep this outlook on life at the same time that they help to find ways to learn some important ideas children need to know. Equally important, when a parent and child play together they have a chance to get to know how each other thinks and feels. Every time they will have more to talk about and to share.

Parents should not wait until children can talk to begin communicating with them. Many parents begin talking with their children even before they really expect them to understand the meaning of the words they are using.

Frequently conversations center around the things parents and children see around them. Because color is an

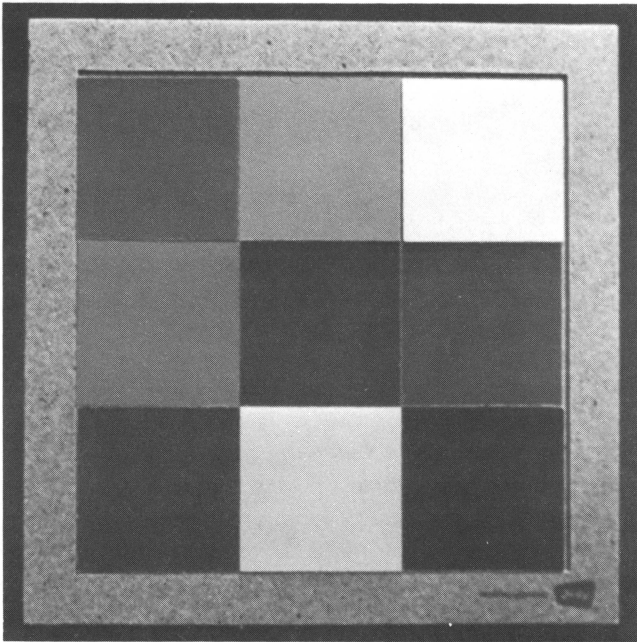
element that makes our world more interesting, children often learn some basic ideas about color from these conversations.

Many children can sort objects by color or point to objects of certain colors before they can talk. How old children are before they can do this will vary a great deal. Children who have older brothers and sisters, parents, or other adults who have talked with them and asked them questions about color will usually have a head start in acquiring this knowledge.

Description

There are many games that can be played with children to help them learn about color. *Color Lotto* has long been a favorite for playing various kinds of color games.

The *Color Lotto* board is a square wooden board divided into nine squares and each is a different color. There are



Color Lotto

also two sets of small matching colored squares, one to be used by the child and one by a partner. These boards can be purchased or made inexpensively by those who have a moderate amount of time and ability. Heavy cardboard or even colored construction paper can be used for the board and squares but masonite or one-fourth inch plywood would make a more durable toy.

You need an 11 x 11 inch board and 27 three-inch squares. A 1-inch frame should be placed on the board to keep the pieces from sliding off.

Use non-toxic paint. Paint three squares each with the following colors; red, yellow, blue, green, brown, white, orange, purple, and black.

One set of these squares is used on the board to serve as a pattern which children will try to match in some of the games. They can rearrange these in any way that they wish so they do not need to be glued down.

Purpose

These games will help children identify 9 basic colors by sight and name them. It will also help them learn to match a color from a sample of that color. With a little imagination children can dream up many different games to play with *Color Lotto*. To get you started thinking here are two lotto games you can play. Before you begin give

children a chance to examine the toy and to play with the squares in any way they wish.

Game I

This game will help children learn to match colors. Start the game by putting all the pieces in front of you. Select one square and say, "Find the square that is red, the same color as this square". If children make a mistake help them to see the difference by moving your square closer to theirs. You might say something like, "These two squares are not the same color. Try again."

If they are correct, let them know their choice was correct. You could say, "Yes, these two squares are the same color. Both are red". Then you can tell them to put the squares on their boards.

The children may lose interest after a few more squares. If they do, drop the game until another day. If they are still interested, continue the game until the board is full. Then, you can have them take off squares that are like the one you're holding.

After playing this game, children should be better able to understand what you mean by "the same as", "red", "yellow", and other color names used in the game. Also they may remember the names of these colors.

Game II

Put the lotto board and a set of squares in front of children and without showing them an example ask them to find a yellow square. If they make a mistake, you will need to pick up a yellow square and say, "Find a yellow square—the same color as this".

If they make a lot of mistakes this game is probably too hard for them. You will want to go back to the first game.

If they are able to find a color correctly ask them again what color the square is. When they say it correctly have them put it on the board.

As in Game I, once the board is filled ask them to take off a square of a certain color. Continue in this way until the squares are all removed or until they no longer are interested in the game.

Summary

In these activities use complete sentences to talk with your child about what is happening. Use the color names and the phrases "the same as" and "not the same as" frequently to help the child begin to get a feeling for their correct usage.