CHILDREN'S PLAY MAT

Inventor: Sherwin P. Brown, St. Paul, MN (US)

Correspondence Address:
NAWROCKI, ROONEY & SIVERTSON
SUITE 401, BROADWAY PLACE EAST
3433 BROADWAY STREET NORTHEAST
MINNEAPOLIS, MN 55408

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ABSTRACT

A child's play mat 10 having a plurality of play pads. Each play pad contains a game, toy or another such developmental tool, and is removable from the play mat 10. The mat 10 has sitting areas 20 adjacent the play pads to allow the child to access a predetermined play pad.
Fig. 2
CHILDREN’S PLAY MAT

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS


BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0002] 1. Field of the Invention

[0003] The present invention relates to a children’s play mat. More specifically, the present invention relates to a play mat that incorporates a plurality of selectively usable devices and games for enhancing the learning and development of children.

[0004] 2. Discussion of the Prior Art

[0005] The development of a child will commonly involve the use of games and toys as learning tools. A problem with such toys, games and tools is that a child will play with one toy for a few minutes and then move on to another toy. This can lead to clutter in the child’s home. Also, as a child ages, the child’s preferences for certain toys, games and tools will change.

[0006] It would be advantageous to provide a mechanism for assisting in the development of a child, wherein the mechanism provides the child with a plurality of choices of games, etc. that can be easily replaced with new games, etc. as the child’s development progresses. It would also be advantageous to provide such a mechanism that is easily contained so as to minimize clutter.

[0007] Many types of temporary surface attachment systems exist. This term refers to a system allows one body to be temporarily and firmly attached to another, and then easily removed.

[0008] One example of a temporary surface attachment system is the well known hook and loop attachment system. The trademark “Velcro” specifies the most commonly known hook and loop attachment system. Hook and loop attachment systems comprise a first surface having a plurality of loops and a second surface comprising a plurality of hooks bonding the first surface to the second surface when pressed together. The hooks elastically deflect to release the first surface from the second surface upon applying peeling force to the two surfaces.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0009] The present invention is a children’s play mat. The play mat offers a playing surface for a child. The play mat incorporates a plurality of play modules, pads, or stations that are selectively and removably attachable to the mat at predetermined locations or areas. Each play module or pad contains a game or toy or other developmental tool. The child will be able to remain on the play mat while playing one or several different games. As the child progresses in age and development, different games can be attached to the mat, to correspond with the interests and development of the child.

[0010] The play mat may be a flat, foldable material to provide a comfortable playing surface that is also easily portable and cleanable. It is contemplated that a central portion of the mat have a first play pad with an erasable drawing board to allow the child to draw thereon. It is further contemplated that each of the four corners of the play mat also have play pads selectively attached thereto. Such pads may include a talking station, where songs or spoken words are able to be played therefrom, a sound pad, where different sounds of animals or machines are executable, a color changing pad, where a display of colors is selectively displayed, and a moveable object pad, where objects such as animals, vehicles and figures are moveable about the pad.

[0011] Each play pad can have an adjacent space upon which the child may sit to access the corresponding play pad.

[0012] This invention thus comprises a play device having a mat having a plurality of spaced areas. A first surface of a temporary surface attachment system overlays each of the mat’s spaced areas.

[0013] At least two play modules each have an access surface and facing oppositely from the access surface, an attachment surface. A second surface of the temporary surface bonding system is attached to each attachment surface.

[0014] The users, typically a child and caregiver, can attach a play module of the type described to any of the spaced areas. When the child tires of a particular play module, others are readily available, and can be easily replaced as needed.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0015] FIG. 1 is a plan view of a preferred embodiment of the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

[0016] The figure shows an embodiment of the present invention. A play mat 10 is shown having a plurality of removable play pads or modules 30, 32, 34, 36, 38. Each play pad or module includes a self-contained game, toy or other such learning or developmental tool. The play pads 30, 32, 34, 36, 38 are selectively attachable to the play mat 10. The play pads 30, 32, 34, 36, 38 can be interchangeable such that they may be placed at any of a number of spaced modular areas 22 on the mat 10.

[0017] The play mat 10 may be of a foldable material so that it can be folded into a small size and transported or stored in a small space much like a blanket. The play mat 10 has a plurality of sitting areas 20, adjacent the play pads 30, 32, 34, 36, 38. A child is able to position himself/herself on a sitting area 20 in order to access a predetermined play pad or module.

[0018] The play mat 10 can be of any variety of colors or combination of colors. The size of the play mat 10 may be such that only a single play pad is contained thereon, or such that multiple play pads are contained thereon.

[0019] In the embodiment of the figure, a first play pad 30 is shown in the center of the mat 10. This first play pad 30
is an erasable drawing board. A child is able to sit on adjacent sitting area 20 and draw on the first play pad 30.

[0020] The second play pad 32 is positioned at a corner 24 of the mat 10. The second play pad 32 is an audio pad, such that it allows a child to interact to sounds such as spoken words, stories, or songs. Pad 30 may be formed of a flexible material.

[0021] The third play pad 34 is positioned at another corner 24 of the mat 10. The third play pad 34 is a sound pad, such that it plays noises of animals, machines, or tools, and other recognizable sounds upon interaction with the child.

[0022] The fourth play pad 36 is a color pad, positioned at another corner 24 of the mat 10. The fourth play pad 36 can include an assortment of selectable color “buttons” that may be “pushed” to change the color of the pad or to match a combination of colors displayed on the pad 36, upon interaction by the child.

[0023] The fifth play pad 38 is a moveable object pad, positioned at another corner 24 of the mat 10. The moveable object pad 38 has recognizable figures, such as farm animals and people, that can be moveably positioned on the pad 38.

[0024] In the embodiment of FIG. 1, the pads 30, 32, 34, 36, 38 are removably attached to the mat 10 by Velcro. The erasable coloring pad is 2 feet by 2 feet in length and width, and the corner pads 32, 34, 36, 38 are 1.5 feet by 1 foot in length and width, respectively. There are sitting areas 20 adjacent each pad, such that all pads 30, 32, 34, 36, 38 are separated from each other by a sitting area 20 space.

[0025] It is contemplated that any variety of play pads can be accommodated to fit and/or replace those play pads described herein. Specifically, as the child develops and changes interests, different play pads may be substituted accordingly.

[0026] In use, different play pads can be positioned on any of the module areas 22. The mat 10 can be folded up for transportation either with or without removing the play pads therefrom.

[0027] The cross section of the system 10 in FIG. 2 shows the physical structure of a play module 32, et al. and mat 10. Module 32 has an attachment surface to which is attached the hook surface 44 of a temporary surface attachment system comprising a hook and loop system. The upwardly facing surface of module 32 comprises an access surface.

[0028] A loop surface 46 of the hook and loop system forms the module area 22 shown on the surface of mat 10. Pressing module 32 onto area 22 temporarily fastens module 32 onto mat 10 within area 22.

[0029] It is understood that the scope of the present invention is not limited to the embodiment described herein. Specifically, the size, shapes, and colors may be altered to accommodate more or fewer play modules or pads, module areas 22, and/or sitting areas 20. And a variety of different play pad functions and games and toys may be incorporated within the present invention, beyond those described herein.

1. A play device comprising:
   a) a mat having a plurality of spaced module areas;
   b) a first surface of a temporary surface bonding system overlying each of the mat’s module areas;
   c) at least two play modules, each having an access surface and facing oppositely from the access surface, an attachment surface; and
   d) a second surface of the temporary surface bonding system attached to each attachment surface.

2. The play device of claim 1, wherein the temporary surface bonding system comprises a first surface having a plurality of loops and a second surface comprising a plurality of hooks bonding the first surface to the second surface when pressed together and elastically deflecting to release the first surface from the second surface upon peeling force.

3. The play device of claim 2, wherein the temporary surface bonding system’s first surface is attached to each of the mat’s spaced areas.

4. The play device of claim 3, wherein the temporary surface bonding system’s second surface is attached to each of the play module’s attachment surface.

5. The play device of claim 4, wherein the mat is foldable.

6. The play device of claim 5, wherein least one of the play modules is flexible.