A play structure is provided. Such play structure includes at least two wall members joined together at predetermined ends thereof. Such wall members are manufactured from a first predetermined material and have a first predetermined size and a first predetermined shape. At least one of at least one door, at least one window and a combination thereof are operably disposed in at least one of such wall members.
PLAY STRUCTURE, KIT, AND METHOD

CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION

[0001] This patent application is related to and claims priority from U.S. Provisional Patent Application Ser. No. 60/967,322 filed Sep. 4, 2007.

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0002] The present invention relates, in general, to play structures and, more particularly, this invention relates to a customizable play structure, such as a playhouse, for children, a kit including a play structure and decorations for such play structure, and a method of decorating a play structure.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0003] Prior to the conception and development of the present invention, playhouses, as are generally well known in the prior art, have consisted of structures made of plastic, wood, or metal, and of tent-like playhouses. Such structures leave little to the imagination and are often bulky, heavy, expensive, difficult to store, complex to assemble and disassemble, and leave no room for customization and personalization according to a child’s likes, interests, and personality.

[0004] Specifically of interest to the present invention are the following: Davidson, U.S. Pat. No. 6,108,982, discloses a collapsible, folding play structure including wall members which are integrally connected to each other and roof members which are integrally connected to the wall members. Two end roof members lend support to two side roof members which connect to end roof members with tabs. The two side roof members join at the top of the roof with interlocking tabs. The play structure may be folded and stored by folding the roof members outward to the corresponding wall members. The roof and wall members are then folded flat and again folded together to form a flat compact storage state for reuse.

[0005] Koncke, U.S. Pat. No. 5,752,470, discloses a portable collapsible structure which may be used for small free standing buildings and for emergency housing in times of disasters. The collapsible structure has walls and a roof, and is meant to have the feel of a home. The system can also be used for permanent housing, depending on building codes and types of materials used.

[0006] Payne, U.S. Pat. No. 4,964,249, discloses a foldable children’s playhouse having a box beam integral with one or two roof panels. The box beam has a U-shaped cross section, with the integral panels being foldable along a line extending longitudinally at the open end of the box beam. Wall portions of the playhouse fold such that they fit into a container formed from the roof of the structure.

[0007] Reed, U.S. Pat. No. 4,807,808, discloses an interlocking multi-piece shipping container with removable sides which has a secondary utilization of a storage box, pet house or children’s playhouse.

[0008] Walker, U.S. Pat. No. 4,212,130, discloses a modular playhouse comprising a plurality of sections derived from two related modular units which are provided in a kit and may be combined to form a playhouse and which may be reassembled in various ways.

[0009] Nelson, U.S. Pat. No. 4,190,978, discloses a collapsible playhouse made from two halves of sheet material, such as corrugated cardboard, secured together. Material is applied at the edges to make them smooth and prevent cuts from being inflicted on the user. The applied material also strengthens the edge areas. It appears that such two halves are meant to be mirror images of each other.

[0010] None of the prior art provides a play structure that enables a child to customize his or her playhouse. Therefore there exists a need for a device which is simple, easy to assemble, and which may be customized or personalized to suit the particular interests, tastes, style, and likes of a particular child or group of children. Moreover, there is a need for a play structure which can be personalized easily by a child who is interested in a particular profession, characterization, persona, and wherein such child has limited artistic abilities.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0011] The present invention provides a play structure. Such play structure includes at least two wall members joined together at predetermined ends thereof. Such wall members are manufactured from a first predetermined material and have a first predetermined size and a first predetermined shape. At least one of at least one door, at least one window and a combination thereof are operably disposed in at least one of such wall members.

[0012] According to another embodiment, a play structure kit is provided which includes a playhouse member manufactured from a first predetermined material having a first predetermined size, and a first predetermined shape and decorating means for decorating such playhouse member in a predetermined manner.

[0013] According to yet another embodiment, a method of decorating a play structure is provided. Such method includes the steps of providing a playhouse member manufactured from a first predetermined material and having a first predetermined size and a first predetermined shape, providing a plurality of at least one of stickers, static cling decals, and a combination thereof, each of such plurality of at least one of such stickers, such static cling decals, and such combination thereof depicting a different predetermined image, and placing at least a predetermined group of such plurality of such at least one of such stickers, such static cling decals, and such combination thereof on such playhouse member.

OBJECTS OF THE INVENTION

[0014] It is, therefore, one of the primary objects of the present invention to provide a play structure which is inexpensive and easy to manufacture.

[0015] Another object of the present invention is to provide a play structure which may be customized to suit the particular interests, likes, tastes, style, etc., of a particular child or group of children.

[0016] Still another object of the present invention is to provide a kit which includes a play structure, such as a playhouse and the like, and which includes ready to apply decorations such as stickers, wall coverings, roof coverings, static cling decals, and the like which may be applied to such play structure by at least one child.

[0017] Yet another object of the present invention is to provide a cardboard playhouse and a variety of adhesive type decorations which may be utilized to decorate such playhouse in a choice of styles, such as decorating such playhouse as a house, police station, fire station, veterinary hospital, store, lemonade stand, hospital, castle, barn, garage, school, clubhouse, restaurant, business, etc., as desired by a user.
[0018] An additional object of the present invention is to provide a kit containing a play structure having at least one of at least one perforated window, perforated door, and a combination thereof, and decorations for decorating such play structure.

[0019] Still another object of the present invention is to provide a kit which may be used for creating a play town or neighborhood.

[0020] In addition to the various objects and advantages of the present invention described with some degree of specificity above it should be obvious that additional objects and advantages of the present invention will become more readily apparent to those persons who are skilled in the relevant art from the following more detailed description of the invention, particularly, when such description is taken in conjunction with the attached drawing figures and with the appended claims.

**BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS**

[0021] FIG. 1 is a partial perspective view of the invention according to one embodiment of the invention in which the play structure includes two wall members.

[0022] FIG. 2 is a partial perspective view of the invention according to one embodiment of the invention in which the play structure includes three wall members.

[0023] FIG. 3 is a partial perspective view of the invention according to one embodiment of the invention in which the play structure includes four wall members and a roof.

[0024] FIG. 4 is a partial perspective view of the invention according to one embodiment of the invention in which the invention includes decorating means.

[0025] FIG. 5 is a partial perspective view of the invention according to one embodiment of the invention in which the invention includes decorating means.

[0026] FIG. 6 is a partial perspective view of the invention according to one embodiment of the invention in which a play structure kit is provided.

**BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF A PRESENTLY PREFERRED AND VARIOUS ALTERNATIVE EMBODIMENTS OF THE INVENTION**

[0027] Prior to proceeding to the more detailed description of the present invention it should be noted that, for the sake of clarity and understanding, identical components which have identical functions have been identified with identical reference numerals throughout the several views illustrated in the drawing figures.

[0028] Reference is now made, more particularly, to FIGS. 1-6.

[0029] The present invention provides a play structure, generally designated 10. Such play structure 10 includes at least two wall members 12 joined together at predetermined ends thereof. Such wall members 12 are manufactured from a first predetermined material and have a first predetermined size and a first predetermined shape. It is presently preferred that such first predetermined material is cardboard, wood, plastic, and a combination thereof. It is presently most preferred that such first predetermined material is cardboard.

[0030] At least one of at least one door 14, at least one window 16 and a combination thereof are operably disposed in at least one of such wall members 12.

[0031] It is presently preferred that such at least one door 14, such at least one window 16 and such combination thereof is formed integrally within at least one of a predetermined one of such wall members 12 and a plurality of such wall members 12 and perforated therethrough such that such at least one door 14, such at least one window 16 and such combination thereof is at least one of operable, closable, removable, and a combination thereof.

[0032] It is presently preferred that such play structure 10 further includes decorating means 18 operably connectable to at least one of such wall members 12, such at least one door 14, such at least one window 16 and such combination thereof in a predetermined manner.

[0033] It is presently preferred that such decorating means 18 includes at least one of stickers, static cling decals, and a combination thereof portraying predetermined images.

[0034] It is presently preferred that such decorating means 18 includes at least one wall covering member 22. It is presently preferred that such at least one wall covering member 22 depicts predetermined images including at least one of bricks, stones, wood, logs, people, greenery, animals, automobiles, signs, letters, numbers, symbols, and a combination thereof.

[0035] It is meant that such decorating means 22 be of such nature that a user 11 may customize and personalize his or her play structure. For example, such decorating means 22 may include a plurality of stickers, static cling decals, and the like from which a user 11 may selectively choose various images from to attach to his or her play structure 10.

[0036] It is presently most preferred that such play structure 10 includes at least four wall members 12 each having a first side 24 and a second side 26, each of such side ends being operably connected to another one of such side ends in such a way as to form an enclosed space surrounded by such four wall members 12.

[0037] It is presently preferred that such play structure 10 further includes a roof member 28 operably disposed thereon closely adjacent upper edges 32 of each of such four wall members 12.

[0038] It is presently preferred that at least one of such wall members 12, such roof 28, and a combination thereof further includes a plurality of perforations 34 disposed therethrough in a predetermined manner for outlining at least one of a predetermined shape and a plurality of predetermined shapes such that a user 11 may remove such at least one of such predetermined shape and such plurality of predetermined shapes from such wall members 12, such roof 28, and such combination thereof.

[0039] According to another embodiment, as illustrated in FIG. 6, a play structure kit, generally designated 20 is provided which includes a playhouse member 42 manufactured from a first predetermined material and having a first predetermined size and a first predetermined shape, and decorating means 44 for decorating such playhouse member 42 in a predetermined manner.

[0040] It is presently preferred that such first predetermined material is at least one of cardboard, wood, plastic, and a combination thereof. It is presently most preferred that such first predetermined material is cardboard.

[0041] It is presently preferred that such decorating means 44 includes at least one of a plurality of stickers 46, a plurality of cling type decorations 48, and a combination thereof, each of such plurality of stickers 46, such plurality of cling type decorations 48, and such combination thereof depicting a different predetermined image.

[0042] It is presently preferred that such playhouse member 42 is at least one of laminated and coated with a substance
attractive to cling type decorations having electrostatic properties and wherein such decorating means 44 includes a plurality of cling type decorations 48 having electrostatic properties, such plurality of cling type decorations 48 each depicting a predetermined image thereon and being for removably clinging to such playhouse member 42 via static electricity.

[0043] According to another embodiment such first predetermined material is attractive to cling type decorations having electrostatic properties and wherein such decorating means 44 includes a plurality of cling type decorations 48 having electrostatic properties, such plurality of cling type decorations 48 each depicting a predetermined image thereon and being for removably clinging to such playhouse member 42 via static electricity.

[0044] According to yet another embodiment, a method of decorating a play structure is provided. Such method includes the steps of providing a playhouse member manufactured from a first predetermined material and having a first predetermined size and a first predetermined shape, providing a plurality of at least one of stickers, static cling decals, and a combination thereof, each of such plurality of at least one of such stickers, such static cling decals, and such combination thereof depicting a different predetermined image, and placing at least a predetermined group of such plurality of such at least one of such stickers, such static cling decals, and such combination thereof on such playhouse member.

[0045] While a presently preferred and various alternative embodiments of the present invention have been described in sufficient detail above to enable a person skilled in the relevant art to make and use the same, it should be obvious that various other adaptations and modifications can be envisioned by those persons skilled in such art without departing from either the spirit of the invention or the scope of the appended claims.

I claim:

1. A play structure comprising:
   a. at least two wall members joined together at predetermined ends thereof, said wall members being manufactured from a first predetermined material and having a first predetermined size and a first predetermined shape; and
   b. at least one of at least one door, at least one window and a combination thereof operably disposed in at least one of said wall members.

2. A play structure according to claim 1 wherein said at least one door, at least one window and said combination thereof are formed integrally within at least one of a predetermined one of said wall members and a plurality of said wall members and perforated therethrough such that said at least one door, at least one window and said combination thereof is at least one of openable, closable, removable, and a combination thereof.

3. A play structure according to claim 1 wherein said play structure further includes decorating means operably connectable to at least one of said wall member, said at least one door, said at least one window and said combination thereof in a predetermined manner.

4. A play structure according to claim 3 wherein said decorating means includes at least one of stickers, static cling decals, and a combination thereof portraying predetermined images.

5. A play structure according to claim 3 wherein said decorating means includes at least one wall covering member.

6. A play structure according to claim 5 wherein said at least one wall covering member depicts predetermined images including at least one of bricks, stones, wood, logs, people, greenery, animals, automobiles, signs, letters, numbers, symbols, and a combination thereof.

7. A play structure according to claim 1 wherein said play structure includes at least four wall members each having a first side end and a second side end, each of said side ends being operably connected to another one of said side ends in such a way as to form an enclosed space surrounded by said four wall members.

8. A play structure according to claim 7 wherein said play structure further includes a roof member operably disposed thereon closely adjacent upper edges of each of said four wall members.

9. A play structure according to claim 8 wherein at least one of said wall members, said roof, and a combination thereof further include a plurality of perforations disposed throughout in a predetermined manner for outlining at least one of a predetermined shape and a plurality of predetermined shapes such that a user may remove said at least one of said predetermined shape and said plurality of predetermined shapes from said wall members, said roof, and said combination thereof.

10. A play structure according to claim 1 wherein said first predetermined material is cardboard, wood, plastic, and a combination thereof.

11. A play structure according to claim 10 wherein said first predetermined material is cardboard.

12. A play structure kit comprising:
   a. a playhouse member manufactured from a first predetermined material and having a first predetermined size and a first predetermined shape; and
   b. decorating means for decorating said playhouse member in a predetermined manner.

13. A play structure kit according to claim 12 wherein said first predetermined material is at least one of cardboard, wood, plastic, and a combination thereof.

14. A play structure kit according to claim 13 wherein said first predetermined material is cardboard.

15. A play structure kit according to claim 12 wherein said decorating means includes at least one of a plurality of stickers, a plurality of cling type decorations, and a combination thereof, each of said plurality of stickers, said plurality of cling type decorations, and said combination thereof depicting a different predetermined image.

16. A play structure kit according to claim 12 wherein said playhouse member is at least one of laminated and coated with a substance attractive to cling type decorations having electrostatic properties and wherein said decorating means includes a plurality of cling type decorations having electrostatic properties, said plurality of cling type decorations each depicting a predetermined image thereon and being for removably clinging to said playhouse member via static electricity.

17. A play structure kit according to claim 12 wherein said first predetermined material is attractive to cling type decorations having electrostatic properties and wherein said decorating means includes a plurality of cling type decorations having electrostatic properties, said plurality of cling type decorations each depicting a predetermined image thereon and being for removably clinging to said playhouse member via static electricity.
18. A method of decorating a play structure comprising the steps of:
   a. providing a playhouse member manufactured from a first predetermined material and having a first predetermined size and a first predetermined shape;
   b. providing a plurality of at least one of stickers, static cling decals, and a combination thereof, each of said plurality of at least one of said stickers, said static cling decals, and said combination thereof depicting a different predetermined image; and
   c. placing at least a predetermined group of said plurality of said at least one of said stickers, said static cling decals, and said combination thereof on said playhouse member.