Nov. 28, 1950 F. MONACO 2,532,116

INFANT'S TEETHING TOY

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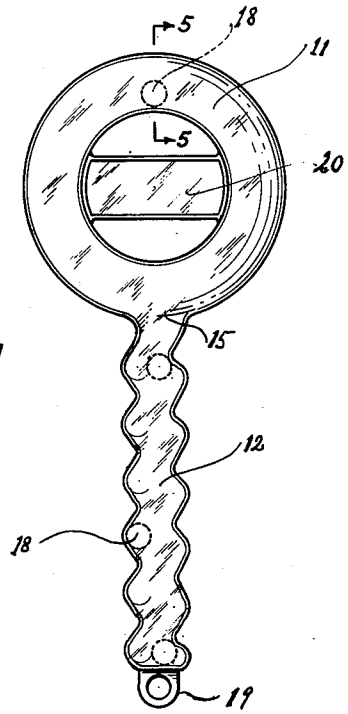


FIG. 1

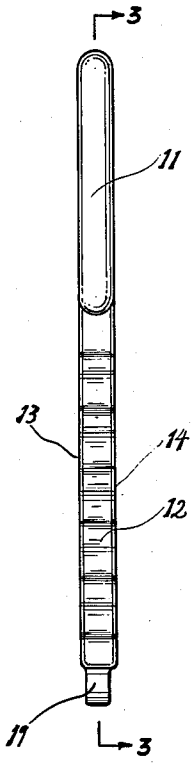


FIG. 2

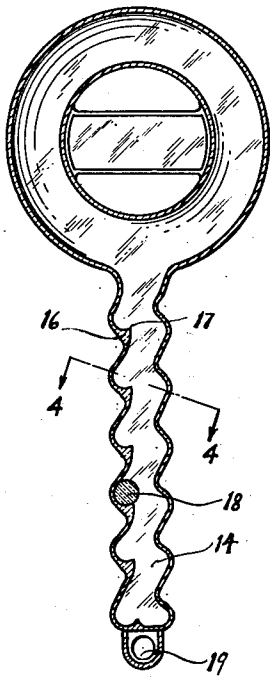


FIG. 3

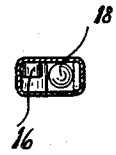


FIG. 4

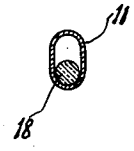


FIG. 5

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INFANT'S TEETHING TOY

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1 Claim. (Cl. 46—175)

The present invention relates to infants' toys and particularly to teething toys such as teething rings with movement and sound producing devices thereon.

It is well known that infants or children, at an age when their teeth are forming and when they are usually in need of teething rings or other devices to enhance the growth of the teeth or facilitate the penetration thereof through the tender gums, are already well able to perceive and understand sounds and movements of more complicated nature than during previous months of their lives. Since the infant at that age does not understand the beneficial treatment effected by the application of a teething ring or the like, he tires soon of its use and will normally abandon it after a short while and either demand food or begin to chew or bite his hands and thumbs. The latter however are soft and will in no way add to the necessary hardening of the gums or speed up the desired penetration of the teeth or shorten the period of suffering and pain caused thereby.

It has therefore been found necessary to combine the use of a teething ring or similar device with a source of entertainment which will cause the infant to maintain sufficient interest in the teething device to induce him to keep using it for a longer time so as to obtain its benefit. Application of color or jingle-bells in a teething instrument have been tried, but even their attraction wears out within relatively short time. Since the infant however is already prepared mentally to follow not only sequences of more complicated sounds but also of more complicated movement, the combination of teething rings with devices of a toy nature has been found practicable. Especially this is true for a toy which requires a certain simple efficiency and intelligence of operation that will, through the changing and repeated movements caused by the infant's handling thereof, keep his interest awake and induce him to try changes therewith over and over again, thus assuring a prolonged use of the ring.

It is therefore an object of this invention to provide a teething ring in combination with a toy which will produce sound when handled by the child and will also provide a movement effect to keep the infant's interest alive.

Another object of the invention is to provide in a teething ring means wherein beads or balls can move about producing an entertaining sound and at the same time be operable and movable through changes in position caused by the infant's use of the ring.

Another object of the invention is to provide, in a teething device of the nature described, ball catch means and channels wherein small balls or other objects may repeatedly be caught or detached so that the infant's operating skill and coordination instinct will be awakened, beside the gum treatment and the entertainment afforded therewith.

Many other objects of the invention will become apparent through the subsequent description of this invention wherein reference is being had to the accompanying drawing in which:

Fig. 1 is a frontal elevated view of the teething ring according to the invention.

Fig. 2 is a side view of the teething ring shown in Fig. 1, the undulated portion of its handle being indicated in perspective shades.

Fig. 3 is a longitudinal section through the teething ring as shown in Fig. 1, with an exemplifying ball therein, also shown in section, taken on the line 3—3 in Fig. 2.

Fig. 4 is a sectional view of the handle of the teething ring, taken in fragmentary manner on the line 4—4 in Fig. 3, showing the ball in full; and

Fig. 5 is a sectional fragmentary view of the actual ring portion with a ball located in this position, taken on line 5—5 in Fig. 1.

Referring now more particularly to the drawing, there is shown a casing consisting of a tubular member 11 of ring shape, or substantially annular configuration, having at one side a handle-like extension 12 integral therewith and of the same preferably transparent material as ring member 11. Handle 12 has its side walls 13 and 14 formed in an undulating shape so as to present complementary depressions in one wall corresponding with opposite wavy expansions on the other wall, thus providing a channel or conduit of snake like shape, communicating at 15 with the tubular interior of ring member 11. At the inside of one of the handle walls, as for example on wall 14 (Fig. 3), there are fixedly molded or otherwise provided ball catch ridges 16 having the shape of slightly concave, depressed steps projecting from wall 14 into said channel and located near or at the crest of each inwardly bulging wave of wall 14. Ridges 16 can extend transversely across the entire width of wall 14 or can terminate at the center thereof, thus being located at one side thereof only. Ridges 16 are arranged to have their sharp edges 17 turned slightly upwards, facing substantially in the direction of channel mouth 15.

It will be understood from this description, that, when a bead or ball 18 is permanently enclosed in the inside of the toy, this bead will have the tendency to roll about therein and, following by gravity the respective positions of the toy in the hands of an infant, will freely roll from within the ring through mouth 15 into the inside of the handle but will, according to the downward angle in which the handle is maintained, encounter obstacles by either the raised

wavelike depressions of one wall or by the catches provided on the other wall, whereby the wave-like portions on one wall have the tendency to direct and land the bead into the opposite catches. It will be clear that the infant, by his chewing movements and moving the toy in his hands, will cause the bead to roll, and on observing through the transparent walls each movement of the bead will also soon perceive that the rolling thereof is caused by the movement of his hands. If the handle is held straight downwards the bead will probably roll further down to any of the lower located catches or to the bottom of the channel. If arrested at one of the higher located catches the bead can, through suitable shaking or moving or raising of the handle so as to point in other directions, be caused to descend the channel step by step or enter into intermittent to and fro movements or return again into the inside of the teething ring. These movements will cause the ring to travel about and change positions in the mouth of the infant, who is absorbed by the entertainment given through the visible rolling and sounds of the bead knocking against the walls and catches and who will repeatedly try to place the bead in a desired position, thus keeping on to massage his gums beside deriving manual skill and improving his powers of observation. A suitable fastening loop or ring **19** is provided at the extremity of the handle in order to tie the toy to a carriage, the bed or crib of the child, or to embellish it by tying other toys, ribbons or flowers thereto. A connecting strip **20** preferably in horizontal position is provided to augment the entertainment inasmuch as it can be colored differently or have pictures or a name printed or painted thereon. The toy teething ring as described can preferably be made of plastic material so as to be washable and facilitate the molding operations in its manufacture.

Having thus described my invention, it is understood that the same is subject to many adaptations and modifications by those skilled in the art without departing from the scope and spirit of the invention disclosed in the above specification and defined in the appended claim:

I claim:

A teething ring comprising a transparent ring of tubular cross section, a transparent hollow handle extending downwardly from and in communication with said ring, a ball capable of rolling freely within said ring and said handle and contained therewithin, said handle having undulating walls forming a wavy channel, and steps projecting from at least one of said walls into said channel, said steps being disposed at respective wavecrests along at least one of said walls, said steps having their upper surface depressed in a concave manner so as to receive and maintain said ball when caught therein until said ball is detached therefrom by external force.

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