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COLORBOOK PLAYHOUSE

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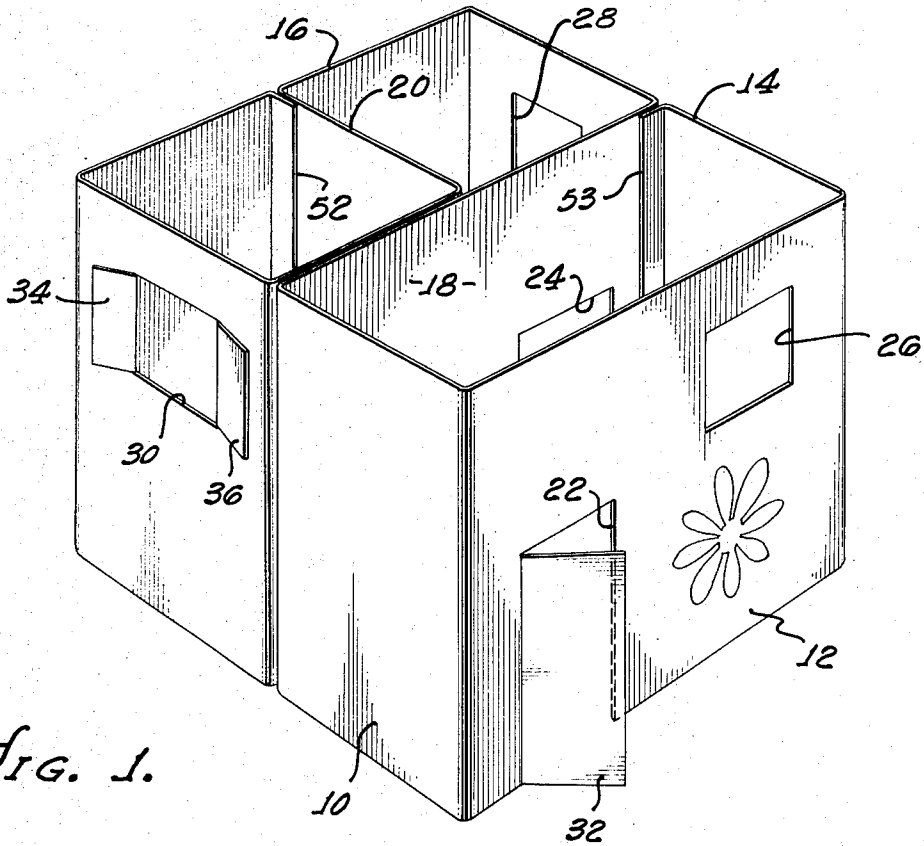


FIG. 1.

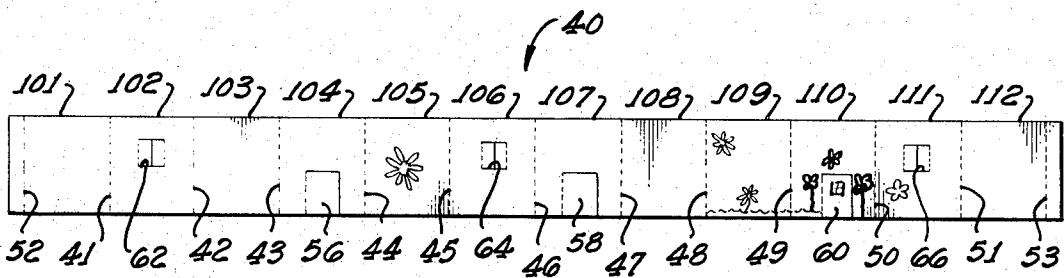


FIG. 2.

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**COLORBOOK PLAYHOUSE**

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10 Claims

**ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE**

A blank and a playhouse formed therefrom having twelve rigid sections secured together by fold creases, the sections being disposed in relatively parallel and perpendicular planes to define a playhouse having four outside walls of two sections in length, one inside wall of one section in length and one inside wall of two sections in length, said sections having selectively openable doors and windows accentuated by colorable art work thereon and including colorable art work to give the impression of flowers and the like adjacent said house is disclosed. The playhouse may be made of reinforced cardboard, hinged plywood or composition panels, plastic, etc.

**BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION**

**Field of the invention**

This invention relates to amusement devices in the form of building structures for children and, more particularly, to children's playhouses.

**Description of the prior art**

Collapsible or foldable building structures for use by children have been known and popular for many decades. Wiplitzhauser, U.S. Pat. No. 1,092,321, for example, has described a toy tent which has two sloping walls with front and rear closing panels. More recently, O'Brien, U.S. Pat. No. 3,231,942, has illustrated a children's playhouse having one room which is capable of being folded. Both of these structures, however, suffer from the disadvantage of having only one room therein and, as is well known, children delight in their play in running from room to room. While certain very fundamental principles have applicability with respect to houses of all sizes, i.e., from doll houses, models, to playhouses, and to structures suitable for housing people, see Nelson, U.S. Pat. No. 3,346,998; however, the structures of this type are usually limited to forming one room houses, regardless of size and are, as Nelson illustrates, often extremely complex and consequently expensive and difficult to fabricate.

Generally speaking, however, the problems in constructing a house suitable for children to play in are grossly different from either the problems involved in the construction of doll houses, and similar size structures, and in the construction of full size dwellings. In the one case, complexity is no particular detrimental and strength is no critical requirement. This is illustrated, for example, by Williams, Pat. No. 1,241,594, by Friedel, Pat. No. 1,742,905, by Makrianes, Pat. No. 2,441,076, and by Bland, Pat. No. 2,608,026.

In the construction of full size dwellings, simplicity or complexity may be a factor, depending upon the desired cost of the house, but structurally these are unimportant considerations. Strength, of course, is a prime consideration in the construction of full size dwelling houses but lightness and portability is of no consequence at all.

In the construction of playhouses suitable for use by children, however, considerations of strength as well as simplicity and portability as well as durability are important considerations. Only limited experience available from the doll house art and the dwelling house art are applicable in considering a desirable design and construction for children's playhouses. It is, therefore, a principal object of this invention to provide a children's playhouse having optimum simplicity, portability, storability, rigidity, ruggedness, utility, and which will give maximum enjoyment in use.

**SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION**

The blank of this invention and the playhouse formed therefrom comprises, in its preferred embodiment, a single elongate substantially rigid sheet material which has a width greater than about two feet to permit use by children as a playhouse, and a width less than about one-fifth the length to permit disposition of the elongate material as a playhouse. The surface of the material is preferably treated or coated so as to be suitable for being colored on by children. The sheet material is divided by a plurality of fold creases extending thereacross to define at least ten, and preferably twelve, rigid sections of approximately equal dimension, measured longitudinally of the sheet material. Means comprising either art work or cuts, or both, are provided on at least two of the sections for defining doorways and, preferably, additional such means are provided on at least one additional section to define windows. In the preferred embodiment, a combination of art work and cuts are used to define the doorways and windows, such as to form openable and closeable door and window portions.

The playhouse formed from the blank has four outside walls and at least one internal wall having a doorway therethrough. Preferably, two internal walls with doorways therethrough are provided thereby defining a three room house for use and play by children. More doors and windows may be provided as desired.

Art work is provided on the surface of the material in relation to the size thereof so as to give the impression of flowers, children, clowns, or other objects of beauty adjacent the house and, in the preferred embodiment to accentuate the doorways and windows.

Four particularly novel and advantageous configurations of the blank for defining the playhouse comprise an additional important facet of the invention.

The object of the invention, therefore, is to provide a playhouse which is improved in simplicity, utility, ruggedness, and portability.

A more specific object of the invention is to provide a foldable or collapsible playhouse having three distinct rooms therein and a blank for forming the same.

Another specific object of the invention is to provide a blank for forming a three room playhouse having windows and doors therein.

A still more specific object of the invention is to provide a blank for forming a three room playhouse having openable windows and doors.

Still another specific object of the invention is to provide a playhouse having colorful art work arranged in particular relation and with respect to the size of the material and the doorways and windows for accentuating the latter.

Still another specific object of the invention is to provide a playhouse having one of four highly efficient and particularly advantageous three room configurations and a blank for forming the same.

A specific disclosure hereof and the drawings to which reference is now made form additional and nonlimiting objects of the invention.

## BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DRAWINGS

In the drawing:

FIG. 1 is a perspective view showing the assembled playhouse of this invention.

FIG. 2 is an elevational view of the blank of this invention.

FIG. 3 is an enlarged section of the elevation shown in FIG. 2.

FIGS. 4, 5, 6 and 7 are top views illustrating the four preferred and highly efficient configurations of the three room playhouse of this invention.

## DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

The preferred embodiments of the invention will be described prior to discussing the reasons why such embodiments are particularly efficient and advantageous in the specific use for which this invention is designed.

FIG. 1 illustrates a playhouse assembled from the blank of this invention. Several facets of the playhouse are clearly observable from FIG. 1. For example, unlike the playhouses of the prior art, the playhouse of this invention comprises a three room house made up of four outside walls 10, 12, 14 and 16, an inside wall 18 approximately dividing the house into two equal portions and a second inside wall 20 further dividing the house into two additional rooms. Common observations of children at play illustrate the advantage of this configuration in that it provides a more realistic play situation for the children and permits them to move from room to room as well as inside and outside of the playhouse.

It will be noted that the playhouse also comprises art work which is arranged in relation to the size of the blank so as to give the illusion or impression, when the blank is assembled as a playhouse, of flowers, trees, shrubs, or other objects of beauty adjacent the house. The art work is in blank, i.e., outline form, and the surface of the material is coated or otherwise treated to permit easy coloring thereon. Children are, therefore, able to color in the art work as they desire, thereby giving an added measure of joy and development.

The playhouse is provided with at least two doorways, shown, for example, at 22 and 24, and preferably comprises one or more windows, as shown at 26, 28 and 30. The windows and doors may simply be cut out, as shown, for example, at 26 but in the preferred embodiment, the doorways and windows are so formed and defined by cuts and fold creases as to provide a door, such as at 32, and window closures such as at 34 and 36 which may be selectively opened and closed.

As illustrated in FIG. 1, the art work is preferably arranged adjacent that part of the blank which will become the bottom of the playhouse and in proximity to the windows and doors for giving the impression of objects of beauty adjacent the house, and, likewise, for emphasizing or accentuating the doors and windows. The emphasis or accentuation may result from the pattern showing the construction of the respective elements or by the relation of shrubs, plants, flowers, etc., thereto, or both. This important relationship is shown with greater particularity and detail in FIG. 3 of the drawing.

The blank art work on the surface of the material may be provided by drawing, printing, embossing, or similar methods. The art work defines what is referred to herein for convenience "objects of beauty." Such objects would include, as illustrated, trees, flowers, shrubs, grass, etc., and may include additional objects such as pictures of children, clowns, toys, or the like. On the interior walls, if desired, the art work may include furniture, paintings, fireplaces, and the like to give the impression of those furnishings and structures normally found inside a house. If desired, the surface may be left blank in portions to allow children's imagination to run free and let them draw and paint their original creations thereon.

Referring now to FIG. 2, the construction of the blank of this invention will be considered in somewhat great detail. As illustrated in FIG. 2, the blank, constructed to permit the formation of a playhouse therefrom, comprises an elongate substantially rigid sheet material having a width greater than about two feet and less than about one-fifth the length thereof. The surface of this elongate rigid sheet material, shown at 40 is preferably painted a light color, white, etc., or otherwise treated, so as to permit easy acceptance of crayons, water colors, oil colors, colored chalk, etc. The material may be of wood, composition board, plastic, etc. In certain cases, hinge means may be required between the panels. In the preferred embodiment, however, the material is of a reinforced substantially rigid double weight cardboard which is coated with a light coating to permit easy coloring thereon by children. The cardboard may desirably be treated for water resistance as well, although this is not essential to the invention. A plurality of fold creases 41 to 51 extend across the material in generally parallel approximately equally spaced disposition to define at least ten and, as shown, preferably twelve substantially rigid sections of approximately equal width as measured longitudinally of the sheet material. As indicated at 52 and 53, additional fold creases define, in the preferred embodiment, extensions on the respective ends of the sheet material which form means for permitting securement of the respective ends to intermediate portions of the sheet material in the assembled playhouse, as shown at 52 and 53 in FIG. 1. Other means of securement are possible and may be regarded as equivalent but the illustrated means has been found to be most efficient in terms of ease of fabrication and use. The end securing means 52 and 53 may be secured to the intermediate portions of the material, preferably adjacent fold creases, by any desired fastener. A preferred form of the fastener is best described as a large bobby pin fastener. A fastener generally of this type is illustrated and described by Simon, Pat. No. 663,134. These fasteners comprise spring wire, of comparatively large cross sectional size, bent to form a close U configuration so as to clamp the respective parts of the cardboard together.

Means, such as cuts, art work, or both, define at least two doors, as illustrated for example at 56 and 58 in at least two individual sections of the material. In the preferred embodiment a third door 60, or if desired additional doors, are also likewise defined in separate panels.

In a similar manner, means on respective panels desirably define at least one window, 62 and preferably two or more additional windows shown at 64 and 66 in the material.

As previously indicated, the doors and windows are preferably defined by both art work and cuts and by fold creases to permit the doors and windows selectively to be opened and closed. These constructions are best shown in FIG. 3, which is an enlarged view of the panels defined by fold creases 43 and 44 and by fold creases 50 and 51. For example, the door 56 is defined by cuts 68 at the top and 70 at the side and by fold crease 72 at the other side. The door is likewise defined by the art work shown generally in FIG. 3. The window 66 is defined by a cut 76 at the top, a cut 78 at the bottom and a center cut 80 and by fold creases 82 and 84 to permit the windows to be opened in two sections.

A highly important feature of this invention in terms of effectiveness for the intended purpose, storability, ruggedness, and efficiency lies in the particular configuration in which the blank may be arranged to form a playhouse.

As shown in FIG. 2, the blank is preferably divided by fold creases to define 12 substantially rigid sections of equal width, measured longitudinally of the material, and as shown in FIG. 1, the sections are arranged and disposed in relatively parallel and perpendicular intersecting planes to define a playhouse having four outside walls,

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each of which is two sections in length, one interior wall which is two sections in length and one interior wall which is one section in length. There are four, and, to my knowledge, only four optimum configurations for a three room playhouse of the type involved in my invention. These configurations are shown in FIGS. 4 to 7. The respective rigid panels, designated in FIG. 2 as 101 to 112 may be arranged to form a three room playhouse in any of the configurations shown in FIG. 4 to FIG. 7. In FIG. 4, for example, the first four sections 101-104 define one room, the next sections 105-107 define a second room and the next six sections, 108-112 define the third and largest room. The outside walls are two sections in length, for example, section 110 and 111, one of the inside walls is two sections in length, sections 107 and 108, and one of the inside walls is only one section in length, section 104. This same general arrangement applies with essentially the same result in FIGS. 5, 6, and 7 which, from the foregoing and the drawings I believe to be self-explanatory.

The optimum design of the blank and of the playhouse to be formed therefrom involves several considerations of importance. First, since the playhouse is intended for use by children it must, of necessity, be comparatively rugged and durable. If the playhouse is to be convenient enough for use, it must be sufficiently collapsible and portable to permit easy handling and storage when not in use. The playhouse must be large enough for children to move easily about into and out of and therein. In this invention the surface of the playhouse must be such as easily to receive coloring material. These and other important criteria for the design of a successful children's playhouse are accomplished in this invention in the preferred embodiment by constructing the blank out of a heavy double weight reinforced cardboard. The cardboard may be treated with water repellent agents, coatings, etc., to make it more water resistant. In addition, the cardboard may be formed from fibers which are resin bonded to give them additional strength and water resistance. The essential features, however, are that the cardboard construction is relatively light, quite rigid, and quite durable in use. In addition, because cardboard is relatively inexpensive, the blank and playhouse of this invention can be constructed and sold at a relatively modest price.

Another important consideration is that the playhouse must be relatively simple. Anyone familiar with children will immediately realize that if a playhouse becomes so complex as to require an undue amount of time and effort in assembling it, the children will simply find another diversion. Furthermore, since the playhouse is of necessity large enough to permit children to move with relative freedom, a complex configuration of the playhouse would result in an unduly heavy construction which would not be portable in any real sense. In this respect, the cardboard construction is particularly advantageous.

The configurations set forth hereinbefore are particularly stable, in part because of the interior wall configuration. Stability in use, of course, is an important consideration for a house which is expected to receive rough treatment from children.

The size of the playhouse which brings into play the several considerations not applicable to doll houses, which are smaller, or to dwelling houses which are larger, is subject to some variation. In general, however, it is necessary that the blank be at least two feet in width if it is to form a usable playhouse. Preferably, the blank is of the order of about three to four feet in width. The width of the blank is of no great importance, so long as it is greater than about two feet and it may be up to six feet in width, although such constructions become comparatively heavy even when made of cardboard. In a preferred embodiment, each of the rigid sections is approximately three feet square. That is, the elongated material is three feet wide and the fold creases define panels which are three feet in length, as measured longitudinally of the material. This size has been found to be suitable for use

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by children of a wide variety of ages and is conveniently folded at a fold crease hereinbefore designated and stored. It is easily assembled for use.

A generally equivalent construction to that disclosed would be the use of discrete panels secured together by hinge means; however, the advantages of the playhouse and the blank are not believed attainable through this approach. Similarly, while the preferred material is a rigid cardboard, plastics now available or to become available may be used in constructing a fully equivalent playhouse. In general, the plastics available at reasonable costs are not susceptible without special treatment to being colored on by children, however. A reasonable range of equivalents, therefore, is readily available to those skilled in the art of constructing the blank and playhouse of this invention. Accordingly, certain variations in construction and design is permitted within the spirit and scope of the claims which follow.

I claim:

1. A playhouse which comprises:

an elongate substantially rigid sheet material having a width greater than two feet and less than about one fifth the length thereof and having a surface suitable for being colored on by children, a plurality of fold creases extending across said material in generally parallel approximately equal spaced disposition defining at least ten substantially rigid sections of approximately equal dimension measured longitudinally of said sheet material, means on at least two of said sections defining doorways, and means for permitting securement of at least one end to an intermediate portion of said material, said material so disposed and arranged as to form a playhouse having four outside walls and at least one internal wall disposed inwardly of the outside walls.

2. The playhouse of claim 1 wherein said fold creases define at least twelve such rigid sections.

3. The playhouse of claim 2 wherein the material is so disposed and arranged as to form a playhouse having four outside walls and at least two internal walls.

4. The playhouse of claim 3 wherein said fold creases define twelve such rigid sections and wherein said sections are arranged and disposed in relatively parallel and perpendicular intersection planes to define a playhouse having four outside walls two sections in length, one interior wall two sections in length and one interior wall one section in length.

5. The playhouse of claim 1 further comprising blank art work on said material arranged in relation to the sides thereof and proximate said doorway so as to define patterns suitable for coloring by children, to give the impression of objects of beauty adjacent said house when the blank is so disposed, and to accentuate said doorway.

6. The playhouse of claim 5 further comprising means on at least one of said sections defining at least one window and blank art work on said material so disposed as to accentuate said window.

7. The playhouse of claim 6 wherein the means defining the doorways and windows comprises art work.

8. The playhouse of claim 6 wherein the means defining the doorways and windows comprises cuts in said material for permitting selective opening and closing of said doors and windows.

9. The playhouse of claim 8 so disposed and arranged as to form a playhouse having relatively parallel and perpendicular walls forming four outside walls and two inside walls.

10. The playhouse of claim 1 wherein the means defining said doorways and windows comprise the combination of cuts in said material and art work thereon, said cuts being so arranged as to define selectively openable doors and windows, the fold creases define twelve such sections, and said sections are arranged and disposed in relatively parallel and perpendicular intersecting planes

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to define a playhouse having four outside walls two sections in length, one interior wall two sections in length and one interior wall one section in length.

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U.S. Cl. X.R.

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52—105, 204, 234; 46—21