


Play is an important activity for children. It is through playing that children can develop their creativity and independence. Toys add more stimulation to the child's environment. Through learning to handle their toys, children gain greater self-confidence. This helps them to feel able to take greater control of their lives when they are older. But many children do not have the chance to develop through play. It may be because there is nowhere for them to play, or because their families cannot afford to buy toys for them, or both.


TOY LIBRARY IN TONGAAT

For the 12000 people living in Tongaat South this is one of their many problems. Tongaat South is the most densely populated area in Tongaat with many people living in flats. There is no place where mothers can safely leave their young children to play on their own. Added to this, the lack of day-care facilities means that mothers have to stay at home with their children. This means that both the mother and the child suffer in their own ways. The mothers have to stay at home to look after the children. This prevents them from going out to work. The children have neither an exciting environment, nor any toys to make their play more interesting and enjoyable.


Because of these problems, a small group of women decided to look into the need for day-care facilities in the area. These women held a survey to find out how many mothers in Tongaat South would make use of day-care facilities. The results of this survey showed that 50% of the mothers were willing to make use of creche facilities. They would then be able to find work to bring more, much needed, money into their families.




A half-day workshop was held so that the interested women in Tongaat South could come together and look at the possibility of starting a creche. They realised that a creche is a long-term project and that it had to be worked towards for the future.




A day-care committee and a fund-raising committee were established to work on organising the creche. The day-care committee saw the need to plan something which would be useful to the mothers and their children, while the fund raising committee was raising the money to get the creche off the ground.



So the idea of having a toy library was taken up. The toy library was established and has now been running for about one month. It is open for about 2 hours a day, twice a week, and the children loan toys for a week at a time, at a cost of 5 cents each. The toys being collected for this purpose will also be able to be used in the future creche.



A toy library can be very valuable in a community. It provides toys for children to play with. In play children can learn to co-operate and share with others.



The toy library also gives mothers some time free from having to give constant attention to their children. Possibly, in the future, mothers can come together to decide how best to use the potential which the toy library provides to help improve their present situation.

