

# Pointers For Parents

## Dollhouses Deliver Skills For Children

(NAPSA)—For centuries, dollhouses have provided entertainment—and educational—opportunities for children and their families.

“Dollhouses present play patterns that enable children to use their imagination through role play, which is important for language development and social skills,” says Kathleen Alfano, Ph.D., senior director, Fisher-Price Child Research Center.

The dollhouse miniature tradition dates back to the 16th century, gaining popularity first among adults when “baby houses” became widely popular amongst the European elite.

After World War II, mass production of dollhouses kicked into high gear, and by the 1950s the typical dollhouse was a painted sheet of metal with plastic furniture. Since then, dollhouses have progressed with the times to incorporate contemporary styling and technology.

In 1969, Fisher-Price began making dream houses for the whole family with the introduction of the Play Family™ House. It was time for the Play Family™ to go on vacation in 1974, when the “A” Frame rustic home was introduced. In 1978, Fisher-Price introduced its first scaled dollhouse boasting three stories and five rooms with features including realistic wood and stone floors, simulated tiled kitchen and bathroom, as well as carpeted bedrooms.

The first bilingual dollhouse arrived in 2004. The best-selling Fisher-Price dollhouse ever, Dora’s Talking House featured adobe-style design and a family portrait, exposing Dora’s culture to children in conjunction with new,



**Playing with dollhouses can help children develop important language and social skills.**

fun features including bilingual phrases.

This season, the beloved character has taken up a new residence in the Dora Magical Welcome House. This unique dollhouse has an ingenious multiple-hinged construction to configure the house in many different layouts for many ways to play with Dora and her pals. Children will be letting their inner interior decorator out to play with new interactive accessories and furniture that snap into hot spots throughout the house, with lamps that magically light and radios that play hit tunes, a microwave that mimics the sound of popping corn, and more. Also featuring Dora’s family members and bilingual phrasing, Dora Magical Welcome House incorporates the multicultural experience.

“A Dora dollhouse allows girls to really connect with the friend they see on TV and experience a reflection of her culture,” notes Dr. Alfano.

While time has transformed these scaled miniature worlds, the entertainment and developmental value of this antique play pattern remains unchanged.