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(54) Play frame

(57) A play frame comprises an internal frame structure (5,6) and an outer fabric covering (10), wherein the outer fabric covering (10) is made from one part of a two-part releasable fabric attachment system. Preferably, the attachment system is a hook and loop fabric attachment system. The play frame is preferably inflatable.

The play frame may comprise either a single unit or be formed from a plurality of separate components, each component comprising an internal structure and an outer fabric covering (10). The outer fabric covering

(10) is made from one part of a two-part releasable fabric attachment system, and the separate components are releasably attachable to one another by means of one or more interconnecting pads formed from the other part of the two-part releasable fabric attachment system.

Preferably, the play frame further comprises at least one small toy (20) or decorative item at least a part of which is made from the other part of the two-part releasable fabric attachment system from that of the outer covering of the play frame. This enables the small toy or decoration to be releasably attached to the play frame.

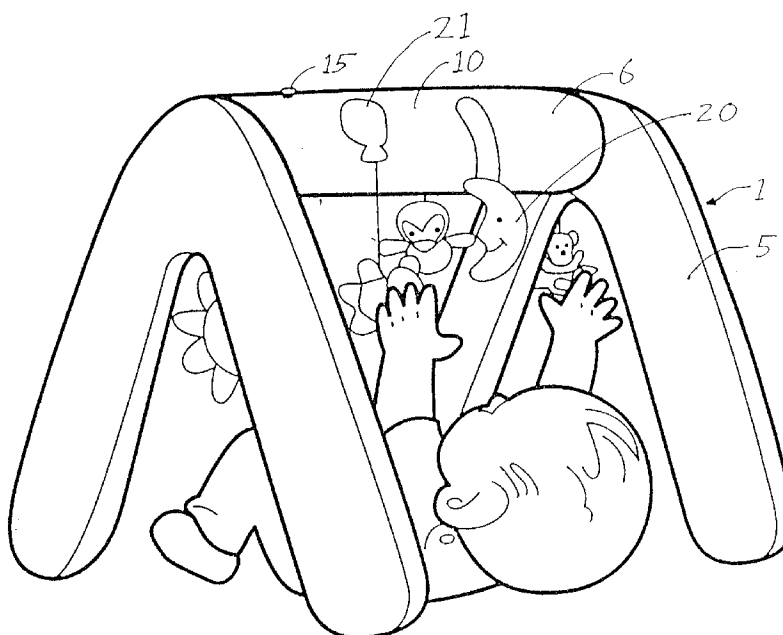


Figure 1

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Description

The present invention relates to a play frame and in particular to a soft, fabric covered child's play frame to which small toys and decorative items may be attached.

According to a first aspect of the present invention, there is provided a play frame comprising an internal frame structure and an outer fabric covering, wherein the outer fabric covering is made from one part of a two-part releasable fabric attachment system.

Preferably the whole of the outer fabric covering is made from one part of a two-part releasable fabric attachment system.

Preferably, the two-part, releasable fabric attachment system is a hook and loop fabric attachment system, such as, for example, the Velcro® system.

The outer fabric covering is preferably made from a fabric which forms the loop part of a hook and loop fabric attachment system. Preferably, the outer fabric covering is made from tricot fabric. A suitable type of tricot fabric is the commercially available fabric sold under the trade mark Nylex. This material is soft, durable and readily available, relatively inexpensively.

Preferably the play frame is inflatable and the internal frame structure is formed from an inflatable, airtight vesicle or inner tube. Preferably the internal frame structure is formed from vinyl and includes a valve for assisting in the inflation of the play frame. Making the play frame inflatable has the advantage of greatly increasing the ease with which the play frame may be transported and stored while providing a soft yet substantially rigid play frame suitable for use with babies and small children.

In one embodiment of the present invention, the play frame is formed from a plurality of separate components, each component comprising an internal structure and an outer fabric covering, wherein the outer fabric covering is made from one part of a two-part releasable fabric attachment system and wherein the separate components are releasably attachable to one another by means of one or more interconnecting pads formed from the other part of the two-part releasable fabric attachment system. The use of separate components in this way enables a large number of diverse structures to be formed from a small number of separate components.

Preferably the one or more interconnecting pads are made from a fabric which forms the hook part of a hook and loop fabric attachment system such as Velcro®.

According to a second aspect of the present invention, there is provided a component of a play frame, the component comprising an internal frame structure and an outer fabric covering, wherein the outer fabric covering is made from one part of a two-part releasable fabric attachment system. Preferably the component is inflatable.

In both aspects of the present invention, there may

be further provided at least one small toy or decoration for attachment to the outer covering, at least a part of the small toy or decoration being formed from the other part of the two-part releasable fabric attachment system from that of the outer covering. This enables the small toy or decoration to be fitted to any part of the play frame.

In order that the present invention may be better understood, embodiments thereof will now be described by way of example only with reference to the accompanying drawings in which:

Figure 1 is a perspective view of a play frame according to a first embodiment of the present invention when in use;

Figure 2 is an enlarged perspective view of a part of the play frame of Figure 1 illustrating how small toys may be releasably attached to the play frame; Figure 3 is a perspective view of a play frame according to a second embodiment of the present invention;

Figure 4 is a perspective view of the play frame of Figure 3 in an alternative position; and

Figure 5 is a perspective view of the play frame of Figures 3 and 4 in another alternative position.

The play frame 1 of Figure 1 comprises a single unit made up of two pairs of legs 5 and a central bar 6 joining the two pairs of legs 5 together. The entire frame is covered in an outer fabric covering 10. The outer fabric covering 10 is formed from a tricot fabric such that it forms the loop part of a loop and hook releasable fabric attachment system. A suitable tricot fabric is sold under the name Nylex.

Underneath the outer fabric covering 10 there is an inflatable airtight vesicle, which when inflated provides rigidity for the play frame 1 as a whole. The airtight vesicle may be made from vinyl and may be inflated and preferably also deflated when desired via the valve 15.

A number of small toys 20 or other decorative items may be attached to the outer covering 10 of the play frame 1 by providing that a part 21 of the toy 20 is made from the hook part of a hook and loop fabric attachment system which is compatible with the loop part fabric of the outer covering 10. A suitable such material is the hooked fabric of the Velcro® system.

As shown in Figure 2, it is clear that the hooked part 21 of a toy 20 may be attached to any part of the outer covering 10. Furthermore, the hook and loop fabric attachment system is releasable so the toys 20 may be released, reattached, removed and replaced at will.

Figures 3, 4 and 5 show a second play frame which is formed from two separate components 30 each of which is similar in its construction to the play frame of Figure 1 described above.

In order to releasably attach the components to one another, there are provided small pads 31 formed from hooked fabric (such that both outer surfaces are hooked) which may be releasably attached to any part

of the outer covering 10 of the components to join any part of one component to any part of another (where geometrically possible). When two components are joined together the pads 31 will generally be hidden from view.

Although not shown in the drawings, it will be apparent to a reader of this document that more than two components could be used to construct a play frame according to the present invention. Furthermore, alternative releasable fabric attachment systems could be used instead of the hook and loop systems described.

It is a preferred feature of the present invention that the whole of the outer fabric covering is made from one part of a two-part releasable fabric attachment system, since this provides for ease of manufacture, enhanced aesthetics of the finished product and maximum versatility. Nonetheless, it will be readily apparent to a reader that the majority of the technical advantages of the present invention will be present in a play frame in which only a part or parts of the outer covering are made, or in which a part or parts of the outer covering are not made, from one part of a two-part releasable fabric attachment system, and it is intended that the present invention should cover such arrangements.

Claims

1. A play frame comprising an internal frame structure and an outer fabric covering, wherein the outer fabric covering is made from one part of a two-part releasable fabric attachment system.
2. A play frame as claimed in claim 1 wherein the whole of the outer fabric covering is made from one part of a two-part releasable fabric attachment system.
3. A play frame as claimed in either one of the preceding claims wherein the play frame is inflatable.
4. A play frame as claimed in any one of the preceding claims wherein the internal frame structure comprises an inflatable airtight vesicle adapted to take on the desired shape of the play frame when inflated.
5. A play frame as claimed in claim 4 wherein the inflatable vesicle includes a valve which ordinarily acts as a one way valve preventing the escape of gas from within the vesicle, but which may be manipulated by a user to enable deflation of the play frame when desired.
6. A play frame as claimed in any one of the preceding claims wherein the two-part releasable fabric attachment system comprises a hook and loop system.
7. A play frame as claimed in any one of the preceding claims wherein the outer fabric covering is made from a tricot fabric adapted to act as the loop part of a hook and loop releasable fabric attachment system.
8. A play frame as claimed in any one of the preceding claims wherein the play frame is formed from a plurality of separate components, each component comprising an internal structure and an outer fabric covering, wherein the outer fabric covering is made from one part of a two-part releasable fabric attachment system and wherein the separate components are releasably attachable to one another by means of one or more interconnecting pads formed from the other part of the two-part releasable fabric attachment system.
9. A play frame as claimed in any one of the preceding claims further comprising at least one small toy or decorative item at least part of which is made from the other part of the two-part releasable fabric attachment system from which the outer fabric covering is made.
10. A component of a play frame, the component comprising an internal frame structure and an outer fabric covering, wherein the outer fabric covering is made from one part of a two-part releasable fabric attachment system.
11. A component as claimed in claim 10 wherein the component is inflatable.
12. A component as claimed in either one of claim 10 or claim 11 wherein the outer fabric covering is made from a tricot fabric adapted to act as the loop part of a hook and loop releasable fabric attachment system.

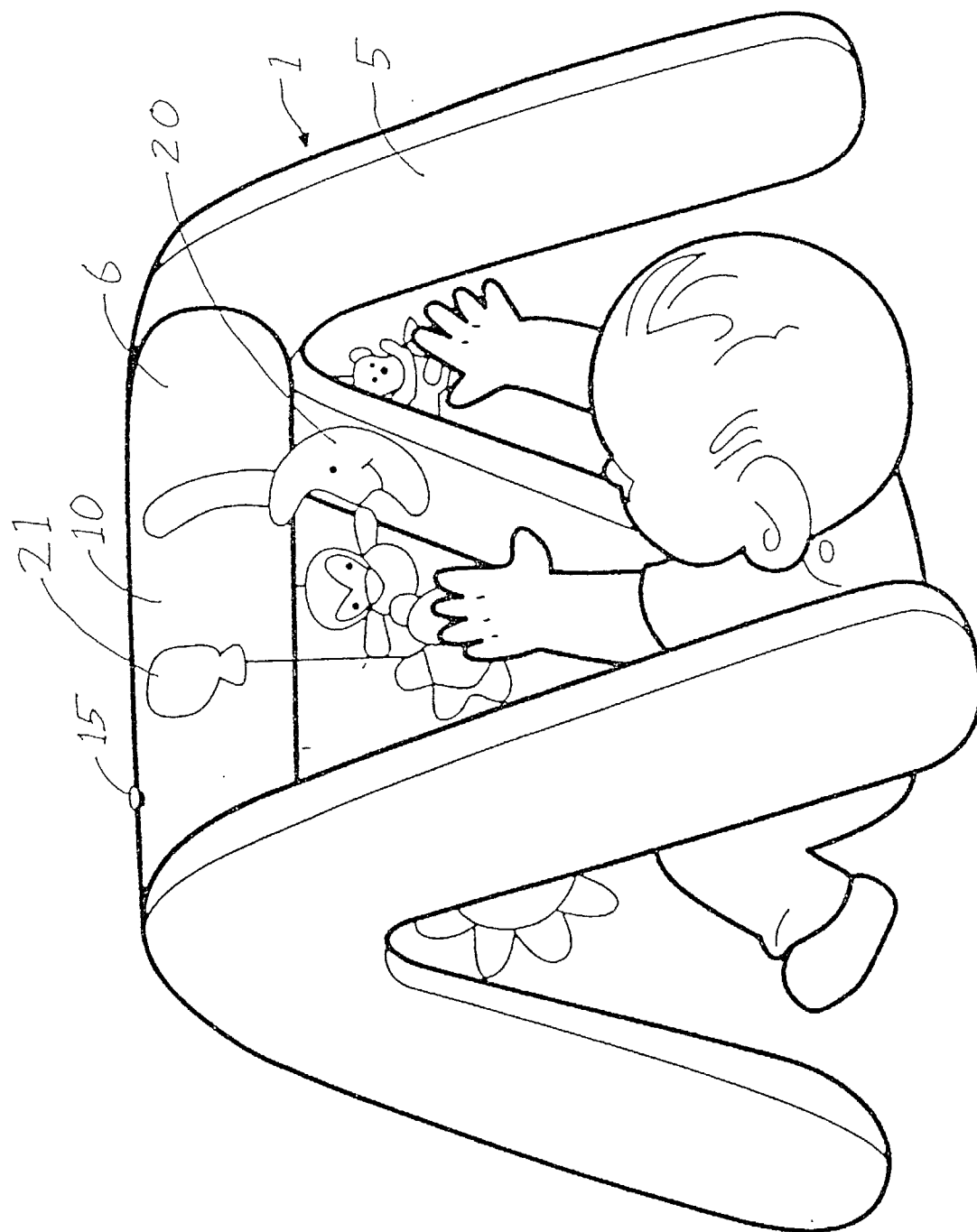


Figure 1

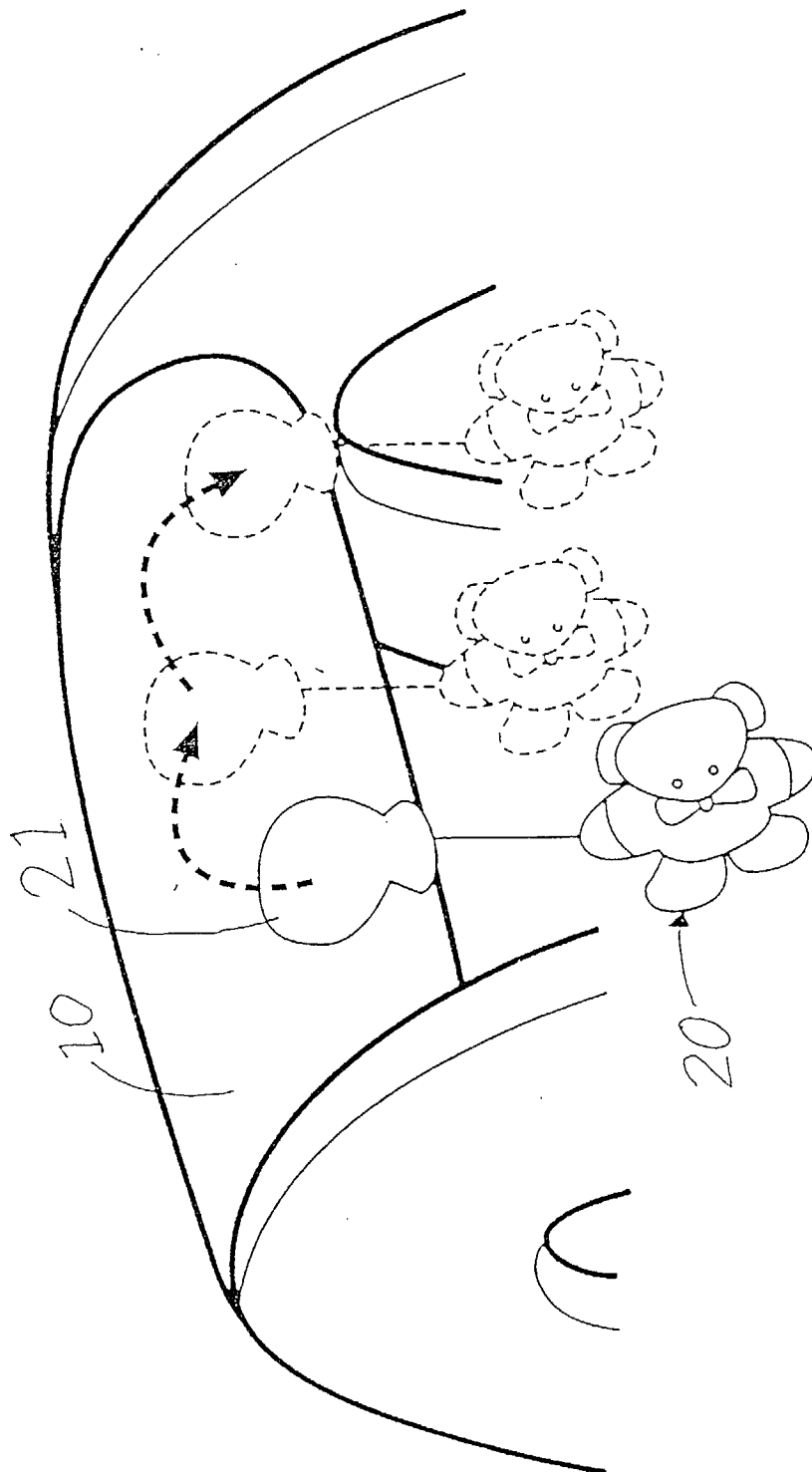


Figure 2

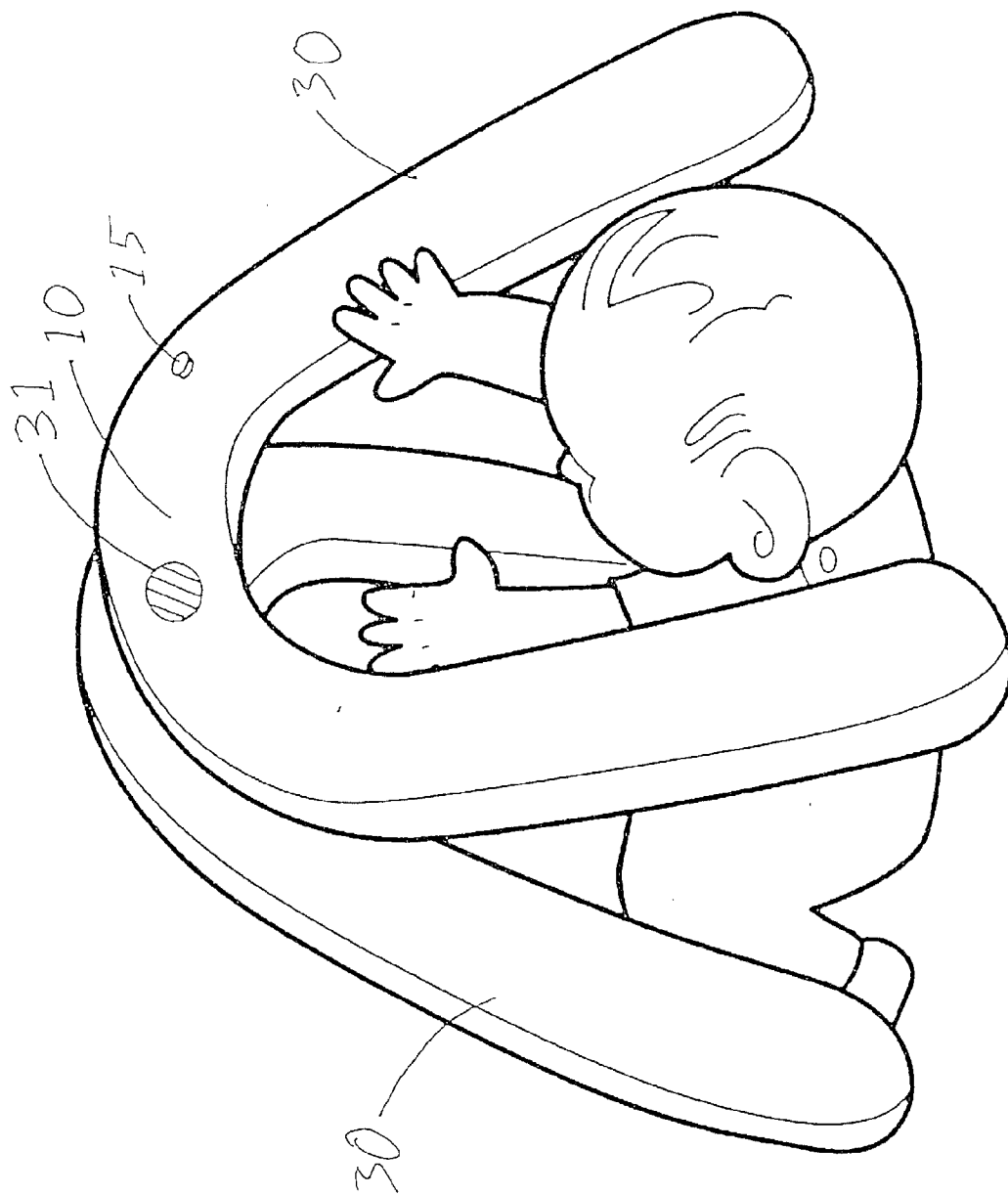


Figure 3



Figure 4 -

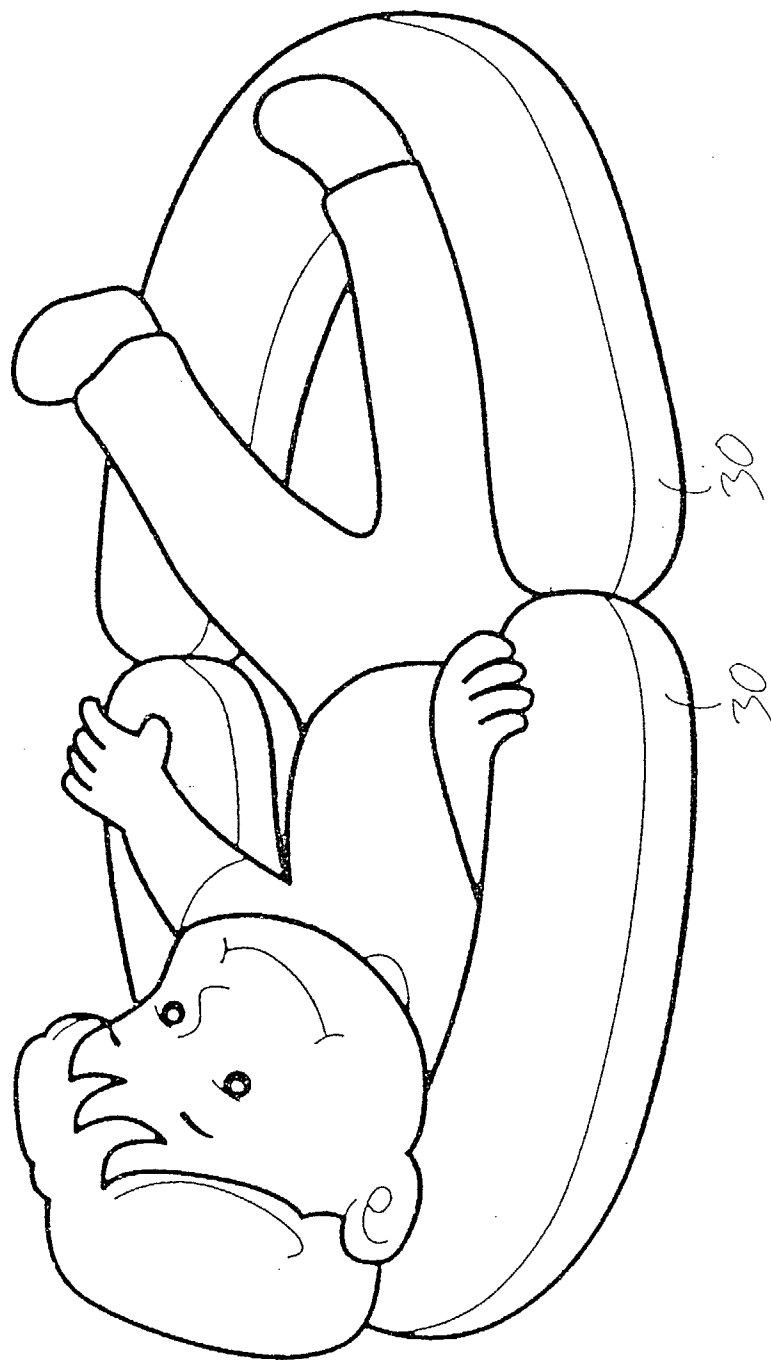


Figure 5