

the relationship between play and Learning in Young Children

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Introduction

Play activities are essential for early childhood development. Early childhood teachers who know developmental theories are in a better position to utilize play as a framework for assessment and instruction. The teachers will also understand the significance of play in motor, physical, cognitive, emotional, and social domains of development (Shute, 2015). Therefore, it is important for early childhood teachers to have adequate knowledge of play to incorporate play into the learning process and assist children who have a hard time playing, such as those with physical disabilities. Child Play is an essential component of children's lives since it assists them in mastering certain skills and gaining more knowledge about their environment. There are six stages of play. The first stage is the unoccupied play. This stage takes place in infants and newborns at the age of one to 2 years. The child does not play actively with others but engages in random movements in a stationary position. Solitary play is the second stage.

Children play with toys alone and do not interact with others. The third stage, known as onlooker play, is when a child does not join others in play but only observes and is common in children aged 2½ to 3½ years (Essa, 2012). The next stage is called parallel play, during which children lack group involvement but play side-by-side. They often mimic each other and play with similar toys. The associative play, which begins at the age of 3½ years, is the next stage in which children play with others. The Children in this stage form small groups and borrow play materials amongst themselves. The final stage, which takes place at the age of 4½ years, is known as cooperative play. Children play in groups and demonstrate a division of labor aimed at achieving a common goal. The paper aims to illustrate the relationship between play and learning in young children. The papers revolve around influence of cultural description to children play, Current case study on children development, how lack of outdoor play ground influence children development, Authentic Exemplar Activity, and recommendation.

Cultural Description

There is an intricate link between culture and play, and the outcomes of play depend on historical, cultural, technological, and economic factors. For example, past generation and contemporary children prefer to play outdoors and indoors, respectively. However, both male and female children in the two generations prefer toys and play activities that are sex-stereotype. According to recent

research, in individualistic cultures, children engage in competitive activities and spend their time alone. Moreover, these children engage in exclusionary activities, smaller groups, and individual achievement, whereas children from collective and collaborative cultures engage in larger group and inclusion activities. Lastly, children from individualistic cultures are more concern with aspects that are competitive than children from collective and collaborative cultures (Thomas, 2015).

Framework of Play

Freud formulated the psychoanalytic theory, which relates to children's play. Children use play as a platform to reveal their unconscious conflicts and unfulfilled wishes, according to Freud. Moral, emotional, and cognitive aspects of life in children are built through play (Frosh, 2012). Furthermore, tensions in children are reduced when they engage in play. The two roles of play contribute to the personality of children. Children engage in play activities such as storytelling and narration, enabling them to communicate symbolically. Non-verbal and verbal means of communication are examples of the commonly utilized means of communication during children's play activities. Both Patrick and Lazarus devised the relaxation theory. The theory explains the importance of play in children. For instance, when children engage in new tasks, they get fatigued; thus, play acts as a releasing inhibition mode for fatigue. The energy lost during a child's cognition activities is replenished during play. Normal stresses of life and the need to relax are the main reason why people engage in play according to relaxation theory. Play is a core element in children's parenting and should never be neglected (Pellegrini, 2009).

Current Research Summary

The behavior and development of the infant highly depend on the role of the family. Infants from divorced families often undergo traumatic experiences. According to Da Figueiredo & Dias's (2012) article, there is a disparity in the behavior of children from married parents and separated (divorced) parents. The originality of this hypothesis is based on the perception of the teachers and parents. During the study, the samples of thirty and thirty-two children from single and separated parents, respectively, were obtained. The age range for the children was six to nine years. The evaluation of children's behavior by the parents was through the use of the Child Behavior Checklist, whereas the teacher's perception of the behavior of children was based on the Teacher Report Form. The result indicated that children from married parents have fewer behavioral problems compared to children from single parents. Moreover, according to the results from the mothers, children from single parents have a lot of behavioral complications. Therefore, children with more negative behaviors are from single parents, according to parents' and teachers' results. However, the perspective of the child should be incorporated during the study. Although divorce is an integral part of the child's behavior, the welfare and family role has greatly influenced the child's behavior. Neither the assumption nor the prediction should be a determinant of the child's behavior since each child has unique characteristics (da Figueiredo, C. R. S., & Dias, F. V., 2012).

The children living in the current world are highly exposed to technology. Technology offers entertainment and educational opportunities to children. However, technology may have an impact on developing infants, hence the need for consideration when exposing them to technology. Recent surveys show that 14 percent of infants with an age range of 6 to 23 months spent at least two hours a day watching media, and 28 % of children aged 3 to 4 years use tablet computers. Interactive media may have both physical and mental effects on children. Watching TV is sedentary since it replaces the time children spend on physical activity, which may pose health risks such as obesity. Viewing TV is also associated with irregular sleeping schedules among children. Viewing TV displaces time that children should spend in social interaction and may have a psychosocial effect on infants, which may progress later in adulthood. Research has found that the time children spend watching TV may have an impact on Cognitive development, such as future attainment in education, intelligence, and attention. Based on the above observations, exposure to children's technology and media can assist in infants' development if properly used. However, long-time exposure can have negative effects on childhood development (Haughton, C., Aiken, M., & Cheevers, C, 2015).

The school curriculum should incorporate a thoughtful plan for school activities since it is an integral aspect of the development of children. The availability of different school activities is essential because they assist students in developing socially as well as expressing their capabilities and knowledge. Therefore, school curriculum co-creators should consider this during curriculum implementation. Children's social development occurs during the middle childhood period. At this stage, children make a lot of friendships, thus the occurrence of social development. According to the results, children with socially competent relationships have a true relationship with teachers. Peers, teachers, and parents are taught behavior by children according to Albert Bandura's social theory. Children's social-metric status and pro-social development are connected to the parents' educational style. Peer relationships can result in either negative or positive social behavior. For instance, unaccepted social behaviors in children result from bad behavior relationships. The right social development in children relies highly on the family despite the influence of peers and the school environment. Social behavior development starts at home, but it can be nurtured, changed, or slightly adjusted when a child joins the school (Blazevic, 2016).

Challenges to Play

Lack or inadequate outdoor playing grounds has reduced learning among children. Social development in children aged three to four heavily relies on outdoor play. For instance, the self-confidence of girls increases when they engage in outdoor play; thus, the lack of outdoor playgrounds will limit social development and learning. Also, children who engage in indoor activities have fewer positive affirmations. Recent studies conducted on children playing outdoor and indoor games show that those who engage in outdoor play can cope with conflicts. Two strategies can be utilized in places with limited outdoor playing grounds. First, a freestanding piece is efficient in places with very minimal spaces. There are different sizes and shapes of free-standing pieces that are tailor-made to fit all ages of children. The custom pour-in-place rubber is another strategy used in places with no or

limited outdoor playgrounds. Various designs of the pour-in-place rubber are crafted. It can be used as a substitute for the outdoor playground for a year without repair. It is also convenient in places where the resources are limited.

Authentic Exemplar Activity

Kick the can: Kick the can game is a variation of hide and seeks as well as tag games. A can is placed at the center of the playing area, and A team of people or one person is designated as “it.” The “it” covers his or her eyes and counts up to a certain number while the other people run and hide. “It” will then uncover the eyes and try to find other players. If “it” tags anyone, he or she goes into a holding pen and is considered a captured player. The captured players become released when un-captured players kick the can. The game ends when all the non-it” is captured. The game requires at least three players and a metal can. The children will learn the skill of negotiation cooperation with others during the game since issues that require negotiation skills are prone to arise during the game. The children will learn conflict resolution and leadership skills. The game also encourages socialization among children because it requires at least three players. Also, the players become more creative since the player who is more creative in hiding is not captured easily. The parents will observe their children engaging in physical activity during the game and will be convinced that the game provides physical exercise.

Conclusion

It is evident that play is important in childhood development. Outdoor playing activities are particularly essential for children since they enhance creativity, problem-solving, social skills, and physical development among children. Children can be encouraged to engage in outdoor play through various methods. One can build a sandpit since it endlessly provides fun for young children. Kits for fool-proof sandpits are also available. Parents can also play with children to teach them to play. Parents should participate in playtime with their children to help them develop psychological, social, and cognitive skills. Both outdoor and indoor plays are vital for children’s development because they provide them with an opportunity to explore their new world. The parents should give their children adequate room for play.

Recommendation

Families will adequately receive the information when newsletters are used instead of observation or open house. The newsletters will make me continue being connected to my audience. Open house method is not effective since some parents may not find time to attend due to commitments. The newsletters will provide the families content that is interesting to them.

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