

Free critical thinking on play as an integral part of early learning

[Technology](#), [Development](#)



Introduction

Play refers to behavior that is liberally chosen, individually directed and fundamentally motivated (Essa, 2009). It is one of the methods through which young children get to know about themselves and the environment around them. Play is a very essential part of early learning. Children are usually born with instinctive talents, and need to be guided on learning novel things through exploration and imitation by play (Wood & Attfield, 2005). Consequently, there is more than just having fun when children play. Play is very important for young children's rational, emotional, and social development as they grow (Essa, 2009). The intent of this paper is to provide evidence on the importance of play in the early learning process of small children.

Play is an important component of the early learning process in small children. Initially, play facilitates the development of a range of skills in small children. Through play, small children get to know about themselves and their surroundings. As they continue growing, they turn out to be active and well mannered people who are sensitive to others around them. In this way, children develop concession, analytical and interpersonal skills (Essa, 2009). Apart from these, involvement in unstructured playful deeds assists children in nurturing their social, imaginative and communication skills and finally gets them ready for school (Essa, 2009). It also follows that play facilitates the development of excellent sensory and motor skills in children (Essa, 2009). When kids engage in outdoor activities, they are able to develop and synchronize their sensory and motor skills. Therefore, children get the ability to engage in lots of activities that help them to learn via touch, sight, and

sound (Essa, 2009).

It is imperative that children adopt proper language abilities in their early ages. This will enhance their learning process as they grow. Apparently, play has a great role in facilitating language development in young children.

Experts suggest that it is essential to foster verbal language skills in the early years of childhood instead of teaching word recognition and phonetics (Wood & Attfield, 2005). Playing activities which involve talking, singing and use of rhyming words therefore helps children to develop a liking for

language and a plain comprehension of what language is (Wood & Attfield, 2005). Consequently, this enhances their linguistic and vocabulary

development. Furthermore, pretend play activities assists children in

nurturing their reading skills (Wood & Attfield, 2005). This kind of play helps children to gain a good understanding of symbols. Once the children are able to understand symbols, they can relate letters to words and get to know that printed words represent thing they understand (Wood & Attfield, 2005).

Thirdly, play is important in the early learning ages of children as it enables them to gain the capacity to teach others (Talay-Ongan, 2005). This is a very

essential component as it develops a child's leadership traits, which are

necessary in his or her future life. As small kids play, they usually teach each other and get others engaged in what they are able to do best. In this sense,

play enables small children to take up leadership roles as they relate with

others. This is essential as children get to explore, learn to imagine, and

learn to get along with other children (Talay-Ongan, 2005). Such activities

also help the young children to develop a strong self esteem.

Furthermore, play is very significant in early learning because it enhances

emotional development in children. Play provides young children with a mode to express and deal with feelings (Wood & Attfield, 2005). Apart from expressing their feelings, they also gain knowledge of how to handle their feelings. Therefore, children through play activities learn of how to behave when angry, happy or worried (Wood & Attfield, 2005). Additionally, when children engage in pretend plays, they get to reason out aloud about issues stimulated with both pleasant and unpleasant feelings. For instance, a child can get angry because his pet is sick. Learning about how to cope with their emotions early in their childhood is very important for young children. It puts them at a good position to manage their feelings during various situations in future.

Lastly, play is an integral part of early learning because it not only facilitates physical and motor skills development, but also better intellectual development (Talay-Ongan, 2005). Good intellectual development is essential as it facilitates better learning process throughout a child's life. Consequently, when children engage in outdoor and physical activities, they get to know about associating, negotiating, sharing, and contributing in a group (Talay-Ongan, 2005). This enhances the psychological development in children. When this happens, children are able to gain early knowledge and skills in core subjects like math and science. When kids are exposed to a range of interesting objects, they start thinking about associations like bigger and smaller, more and less, longer and shorter, heavier and lighter, which gives them a better understanding in related fields in the future.

Describe two examples that utilize play as an instructional strategy

Instructional strategies are practices that teachers use to assist students to become independent, strategic learners (Carlson& Levin, 2012). Play can be used as a feasible instructional strategy to achieve the goal of procedural learning. First, a teacher can choose to use play in form of learning groups (Carlson& Levin, 2012). In this case, play can be used both in coming up with the groups and also assigning the group roles. When coming up with the learning groups, a teacher can use play techniques to pair up members of a certain group. For example, a teacher for instance can pair up students with the same colour of socks or shoes. After the groups have been formed, students can be assigned various roles, for instance a time keeper, a bell ringer and an instructor (Carlson& Levin, 2012). In this way, students use their various roles to best achieve their learning objectives. Another way of using play as an instructional strategy can be in the form of talking circles (Carlson& Levin, 2012). This happens when the issue in discussion has no specific right or wrong answer. The teacher instructs all the students to air out their views in turns, in rotating circles. This helps students in appreciating each other's views.

Conclusion

Parents and preschool teachers have a special responsibility to shape the minds of young kids by using plays as a method to impart fundamentals skills to them. Through play, kids are able to acquire a range of skills as well as build up their self esteem.

References

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