

Play as frame work



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

This essay I will discuss the value of play in early childhood education. In looking at two theoretical viewpoints Piaget and Vygotsky I will show how both are helpful to understanding childhood development. I will also show Te Whaariki, the early childhood curriculum helps teachers in their role as educators.

When we see children play, we observe that they play physically with peers or adults or both at the same time. Children feel and express their emotions during play, through play and through their own ideas. Often when children play they act on experiences from the past, perhaps a birthday, or a growling or other events that have occurred.

During pretend play children can be in control of what happens in ways that they do not have in real life. This helps to give them confidence and a sense of mastery (Bruce & Meggitt, 1999). In Te Whaariki, Communication Strand, Goal 4, it state that a child will experience an environment where their play is valued. Children develop ??? An ability to be creative and expressive through a variety of activities, such as pretend play, and drama??? (Ministry of Education [MoE], 1996). Play is a natural process that uses physical, emotional and cognitive skills. Children choose what they want to do and use their imagination. For example, children might play at being, mum and dad, dog or superhero.

According to Piaget??™s theory, there are three stages of play that are involved in cognitive development. Firstly the sensorimotor stage combines the senses and movement. The pre-operational involves symbolic or pretend play. The third stage, called ??? concrete operations??™ involves being able

to play games with rules (Dockett & Fler, 2002). The Sensorimotor stage, occurs between zero to two years.

During this stage, the child interacts with the environment In infancy babies move accidentally and then intentionally. ??? Children take in information through mouthing, sucking, banging, smelling and looking at objects in the environment??? (Nixon & Gould, 1996, p. 7). For example, a child grasps a rattle in his hand, this can be compared to the older child who picks up and shakes a rattle to make noise. Pretend play for very young children is often solitary. The child can act out actions and roles of an adult and some familiar events.

For example to begin with, a child ??? feeds??™ a doll using a toy bottle. On the other hand, the older child feeds the baby using a wooden block in pretence that the block acts as the baby bottle. This level provides a good foundation as the child gets his/her own experience. The Preoperational stage occurs between the ages of two to seven years. The pre operational stage of development is about ??? Symbolic play, or pretend play. In pretend play, one thing is ??? treated as if it were something else??™ (fein, 1987). Children develop more skilled motor movements and used their imagination in other ways as well as pretend play. They easily move about in their environment and are more confident in their actions.

For example, there is running and jumping over obstacles on a playground as they pretend to be superhero??™s. The Concrete operational stage occurs between the ages of seven years to eleven years. Children develop interest in group games that have two or more sides and have rules. This is because

their thinking is becoming more logical. At this age, they begin to realize games like Simon Says, and rule games will not work unless they are followed by everyone. Te Whaariki is Exploration Strand, goal 2, suggests that ??? children experience an environment where they gain confidence in and control of their bodies??? (Ministry of Education, [MoE], 1996).

Children choose their own activities and find meaning in them. Vygotsky??™s (1978), viewed children??™s development as being influenced by older peers or adults. Children learn through observing or being helped to accomplish more in their pretend play or other activities. The gap between what they can do alone and what they will achieve with help was called the zone of proximal development by Vygotsky. For example children pretending to be a policemen they put helmets and jackets on, get on their bikes as fast as they can, saying ??? shshshshsh??? while pretending to look for some clue. They shout to their playmates, ??? Over here! Come over here! Found something. One or more of the children might have more ideas to add to the play knowing behavior common to policemen (Find some clue, call for friend to join).

Vygotsky??™s, view was that cognitive skills develop from social interaction.??? Play leads development. Piaget emphasised the role of play in children??™s development helping them to move from stage to stage. This contrasts with Vygotsky??™s view that play can lead development. (Dockett & Fler, 2002). Observe children??™s play. Through observation, adults assess children??™s development and learn about the uniqueness of each child. Teacher may find that child spends much time using table toys or that another changes area rapidly.

Keeping records of these behaviors can help teacher select activities and guide children's participation. (Nixon & Gould, 1996). Teachers should facilitate learning by creating a learning environment and offering learning experiences that are relevant and interesting to the children (Spodek & Saracho, 1994). Te Whaariki reminds teachers that it is important to make opportunities for children to experience challenges. These challenges differ for age groups and changing capabilities. Teaching strategies provide ideas to extend their thinking and reasoning.

Sometime a question or a word is all that necessary. For example, a teacher can comment on the colour, size, or shape of the objects being used. Provide opportunities for children to perform tasks for themselves and to make their own decision. Teachers should give children the time to follow through on a task or decision, even, if it doesn't work (Dunkin & Hanna, 2001). In the play partner's role the teachers should become another player. Teaching strategies can be to simply join the play, enjoying it for the child's ideas, and following how the child wants to develop the play. Following the children lead as teachers, may help the child's learning, but teacher's must remember that it is the child who actually does the learning. Children learn most when their curiosity is aroused.

Teachers encourage children's exploratory play most of all by providing them with experiences which are related to their present interest. (Dunkin & Hanna, 2001)Te Whaariki suggests that the teacher's role is need to know how to support and extend children's play without interrupting or dominating the activity. Intervention when it is unnecessary should be avoided. Daily programmes should provide resource and equipment which

encourage spontaneous play, activities, and practicing of skills for individuals or small groups. Materials and tools should be appropriate for the age group (Ministry of Education [MoE], 1996).

Since play often involves doing things physically, children's motor skills and their body awareness are also developed. For example, these skills develop as a child at play learns to reach, crawl, walk, run, climb, jump, throw, catch and balance. Cognitive developments is enhanced by play that encourages problem solving or demonstrates cause and effect. Children also gain knowledge about shapes, colours, sizes and other concepts through play. (Moore, 1987).

Children have a basic need to belong, to feel part of a group, and to learn how to live and work in groups. Children must have these social skills, and they must learn to follow directions, to cooperate, to take turns, to abide by the rules and to share. For example, children of all ages need to be socialized as contributing members of their respective cultures. Smilansky (1990) found out that through socioemotional activities children benefitted, more playing with peers.

They developed more empathy, and better control of their impulses. They also displayed better emotional and social adjustment, which is important to develop healthy relationships in group settings (Smilansky, 1990). Children come to an awareness of spiritual values through their pretend play, and the conversations in the family about how people behave, hurt and help each other, and how other people feel. For example, children like being helpful, forgiving, and fair and experience for themselves how that feels (Dunn,

2001). In conclusion this review indicates that children's early learning comes through self discovery an outcome of play. Play as a way to better understand its essential parts, the development role as a supporter of the play process.

Observe and provide on play, extending the activity, and actively participating with children's all the way. Reference List [Example] Bruce, T. & Meggitt, C. (1999). Child care & education. (2nd ed.).

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