

Environmental effects on children's development and learning



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Physical development refers to a process that begins right from human infancy. The process lasts up to the late adolescent, where it focuses more on the fine and gross motor skills and the puberty. The process of physical development involves in the development of particular muscles, the body as well as physical coordination. Physical development occurs at the childhood stage; hence, it is a critical stage which enhances the development of the neurological brain as well as body coordination. This development enhances particular activities, for instance, crawling, writing, walking as well as grasping. Physical development enables children to realize their capabilities on what they can achieve, therefore allowing them to advance self-confidence, promote emotional and physical development. Physical development facilitates children to regulate their bodies. Although the sequence of development among the children is known, children exhibit different rates of development. The first stage of development among the children occurs at an infant stage (this happens in first weeks or months after a child is born), the second stage of a child development occurs between age of one to three years after a child is born (Toddler), the third stage is pre-schooler, it occurs when a child is between three to five years. The fourth stage is known as the school-aged child, which occurs between the ages of six to twelve years. This essay is going to be based on the provision of challenging and authentic outdoor environments for toddlers and pre-schoolers.

Environment plays a critical role in enhancing children development and learning. A challenging environment for children is that type of environment which enables children to practice activities outside the classroom (Leggett,

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2017). Safety and health are key factors to consider when developing a challenging environment for children development and learning. A challenging environment for children is the type of environment in which children can practice skills; it enhances children development. A challenging/authentic learning environment for children is that environment which safe and healthy. A challenging environment for toddlers needs to be healthy and safe. Materials and objects used by the children in the outdoor environment need to be safe as well as appropriate depending on the age of the children's using it (Murray, 2019). Outdoor environment of the children needs to have furniture's that are well secured to ensure that they don't fall on the children while practicing various activities. Children at the age of three years to five years involves in the development of bodies as well as the imaginations. Roleplay environments assist children in practicing varying roles. For instance, a particular part of the room can be converted to create a place for children to explore and play, such as post office, kitchen, vegetable, and fruit shops (Leggett, 2017). Toys and resources used by the children need to be suitable depending on their development stage. Outdoor for children up to twelve months offer the provision of fresh air, more practicing, and exploring their physical skills. Children in this up to twelve months have limited mobility; hence, they need to be offered with play mats which are soft as well as resources suitable for them to exercise freely. Children are more mobile between the age of twelve months and thirty six months; hence, they need to be provided with the ride, climbing frames and slides to enhance the development of physical skills. Educators need to encourage toddlers to take care of the environment around them, such as flowers and plants (McClain, 2016). Children should take part in vegetable <https://assignbuster.com/environmental-effects-on-childrens-development-and-learning/>

and fruit planting. Children who are between the age of thirty-six months and sixty months have refined skills and excellent body control; hence it is suitable to offer the resources such as running area, climbing resources balancing and jumping area. It is crucial to introduce toys (such as larger frames and scooters) that helps in balancing their body; this plays an essential role in the refinement of their skills (Cowan, 2016). Children at this stage should be encouraged to do investigation on how various objects functions. This will help in creating a challenging environment for the children as they grow and enhances their learning process as well as their development.

The National Quality Standard (NQS) as developed seven quality areas across all areas and has developed a quality area all on physical environment (ACECQA, 2017). This quality area is 3. 1 through to 3. 2. 3 and ensures that all outdoor environments are inclusive for all children and that the outdoor area supports exploration and play-based learning for the children (ACECQA, 2017). The Early Years Learning Framework For Australia (EYLF), makes strong statements in support of children learning outdoors

“ Outdoor learning spaces are a feature of Australia learning environment. They offer a vast array of possibilities not available indoors. Play spaces in natural environment include plants, trees, edible gardens, sand, rocks, mud and other elements from nature. These spaces invite open-ended interactions, spontaneity, risk-taking, exploration, discovery and connection with nature. Foster an appreciation of the natural environment, develop environmental awareness and provide a platform for ongoing environmental education” (DEEWR, 2009).

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Approaches to developing challenging environment include the forest schools, or Bush School as it is referred to in Australia. These are the type of schools in which the school day takes place in the forest or in the wood or any outdoor space which is suitable. While in the forest school, children can take part in life skills, for instance, social skills, learning personal as well as technical skills. This approach helps the children to break monotonous of classroom work (Sisson, 2017). The forest school (forest school movement) has a child-learning viewpoint, the forest school movement emphasis in all the dimensions of learning. The main goal of the forest school is to enhance learning experiences which are rich in nature, ecological literacy as well as teach about healthy living by linking and introducing toddlers to nature. This is a new and different approach. Children must get to know these things (interaction with nature) while they are still in the early stages of development (Cowan, 2016). These type of approach helps children to acquire new things which are rare to find among the children in the current society (connection to themselves and nature). The forest school has a significant impact on the children development; it gives them an opportunity with space and time to build up their skills, interests as well as enhancing their understanding by offering hands-on and practical experiences. While in the forest school, children gain independence to play, explore create, build, imagine as well as the use of senses to get to engage among themselves and experience or get to know outdoor environment (Sisson, 2017). Forest school curriculum ensures that are well planned, directed by forest school consultants who are well trained in the field. The curriculum of forest school ensures that the activities take place out of the classroom regardless of the weather conditions (Waite, 2017). The events occur in the creeks, forests, <https://assignbuster.com/environmental-effects-on-childrens-development-and-learning/>

mountains, and even in meadows. Some of the activities that children engage in while in the forest school include; the building of dens, make tools, singing (around the fire), engage in digging tunnels in mud, puzzles. While in the forest school, the participants are seen as; unique, valuable and equal, competent to discover and explore, eligible to face challenges and risks, authorized to cultivate a positive relationship with other people as well as among themselves, entitled to practice regular success. By taking part in the motivating, achievable, and engaging tasks as well as various activities in the forest environment, each of the children who participate acquires an opportunity. The opportunity attained from the forest school is that one can acquire intrinsic motivation, social skills, and balanced emotions. These play a critical role in ensuring that the child achieves personal potential. Some of the current research indicates that in contemporary society, children experience enormous academic pressure (Cowan, 2016).

Adventurous play imposes a significant impact on the children. However, when the children are given an opportunity to play and to explore nature, they do it in all sorts of manner which sometimes may lead to risks. The play offers curriculum for communication, teaching thinking as well as physical skills which are very vital for the children. Plays seem to have a positive impact on the children's health; it helps in creating a conducive environment for the proper functioning of the immune system of the children. The adventurous play offers children an opportunity in gaining some skills of how to handle and manage risks. Climbing on the trees, playing in the bush offers the children with a chance on developing skills necessary to survive in the world, which is characterized by a considerable amount of danger and risks.

It is through the bruises and scrapes that children get while playing that enables them to gain competence and confidence. Some of the imaginary gem hunts help the children to have a sense of escapade and adventure, which helps them in the achievement of the real treasures in life. The central theme is that risks that children encounter while playing are of great importance and prepares them on how to handle real-life situations (Dorskocil, 2016). However, most of the parents are against these beliefs, most of the parents holds the notion that children are not supposed to be exposed on risky activities, and it is of great importance to uphold their safety. It is often difficult to assess the real risk and people tend to overemphasize on the risks which obtains high publicity. On regard to the adventurous play, children ought only to involve on those activities which their parents or the adults believe that they are less risky (Bates, 2015). These conflicts with the notion of the adventurous play where children should be given freedom to play without limitations from the parents of the teachers. The level at which risk is considered permissible to the children depends upon the personalities of the adults guiding the children (Learning, 2019). Some of the parents or even the teachers are more risk-averse, their children are more likely to benefit from various adventurous plays during their lives. It is of great importance for the parents or the teachers to acquaint themselves and realize what the real danger and risks are before giving warnings to the children. This will ensure that they don't tamper with their development process to maturity. However, it is advisable that educators instruct their children on how to handle sudden risks as well as teaching them the risks which they are not supposed to engage in depending on the age of the child.

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The adventurous play trains and prepares the child to advance physical literacy as well as make sound judgement. Risky play is another name for the adventurous play. Adventurous play is accompanied with challenges and thrills. Children who engage in the risky play are more prone to the physical injuries. Children are able to learn and adapt each time they are involved in minor accidents or the injuries resulting from risky play (Learning, 2019). Some of the advantages of the adventurous play (risky play) includes the following; it helps in fostering problem solving as well as independence, natural consequences (it offers the experience of the cause and effect), develops bodily control and coordination, boosts emotional resilience and coordination, it aids at fostering self-regulation, enables in the reduction of fears and stress and finally offer provision for the satisfaction of the natural need for thrill and challenge (Marija Kostic, 2016). Risky play is very crucial for children well-being. During the free play, children can coordinate themselves by choosing who to play with, make their own rules as well as develop problem-solving strategies for their problems. The adventurous play (risky play) helps in the minimization of various health problems among the kids such as; diabetes, anxiety, obesity as well as the depression. Children ought to be given an opportunity on the freedom to play (rules setting, self-regulation as well as the problem solving), exploration opportunity and high awareness.

Some of the advantages interconnected to outdoor environment for children include the following; outdoor environment enables the children to have more friends; it facilitates in the improvement of the learning attitude among the children. Outdoor learning helps the children to develop strong, active

imagination; children can be more creative as a result of interaction with the natural environment (Marija Kostic, 2016). The practice enables the children to become happier compared to those who conduct their learning process in the classroom. Children can acquire problem unravelling skills as a result of the several challenges that they experience while practicing outdoor learning. Children are likely involved in outdoor education to have less aggression. It helps in the reduction of obesity among those kids who engage in adventurous play. The practice fosters self-esteem as well as mental wellbeing.

Some of the disadvantages associated with the outdoor environment for the children include the following; Safety and the Health regulations- teachers are bound to follow given safety and health regulations always to ensure that children are in good health and are safe, this calls for extra effort from the teachers (Maynard & Waters, 2012). Extra paperwork, evaluation of the plans, forms, and consent are required; these add liability to the teachers. Adhering to curriculum requirements, some of the subjects found on the school curriculum (science and math) cannot be conducted outside the classroom (Maynard & Waters, 2012). Weather condition is another challenge to the outdoor environment for children and toddlers; sometimes, there is the instance of unfavorable weather conditions which may cause to postpone the outdoor activities. Natural Hazards, for instance, uneven ground or Bee's, it is the duty of the teachers to conduct a thorough assessment of the area planned for outdoor learning among the children to ensure that there are no such accidents during the process.

Environment plays a critical role in enhancing children's development and learning. A challenging environment for children is that type of environment which enables children to practice activities outside the classroom. Safety and health are key factors to consider when developing a challenging environment for children's development and learning. A challenging environment for children is the type of environment in which children can practice skills, it enhances children development.

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