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IMPORTANCE OF PLAY FOR CHILD'S DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT

The main aim of this paper is to provide the concept of importance of play in pre-school education. Play is more than just fun for children. It is how they learn, and how they work out who they are, how world works and where they fit into it. Children love to play, sometimes they might play by themselves and won't need so much hands on play form others. They might just want others to give an idea to them and let them know how their play and games are going. Through play, children develop skills, habits, attitude They'll use throughout their lives.

Keywords: play, children, child's development.

INTRODUCTION:

Children are the supreme form of wealth. They are divine trust of the family, society, community, state, nation and world. Children are the valuable human resources, whose development depend the future of the nation. Hence a special responsibility lies on the elders, to ensure that every child in world grows into a responsible adult, possessing a strong character and unique caliber and a deep knowledge of our culture.

The early years are the most impressionable and important period in a child's life. Greater changes in the destiny of mankind can be effected only through training the minds of little children. So, education provided to them should be received by them as a pleasure rather than a pain. If we want the humanity to have a future of an incredible kind, it is very much essential that the foundation of the pre-primary is organized properly.

Children are active and playful by nature. Their earliest experiences with their senses lead them to play, first by themselves and eventually with others. The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) has included play as a creation in its accreditation process for programs for young children. "They call it their work, when they are learning and playing with joy, then it is a positive experience. They develop a positive approach to learning." "The way a child learns what no one else can teach him." (Matterson, 1977) National Curriculum Framework has also stressed on play for educating young children. Children the world over, from those living with the most sophisticated families in big cities to those living in remote villages, spend much time 'just playing'. Nothing could be further from reality, however, for a great deal happens when children are 'just playing'. They are developing skills and habits and attitude that will stay with them throughout their lives.



As they play they learn to cope with frustration, to continue to try to improve, to share with others, to give vocal expression to their thoughts and imaginations. They actually ‘play for keeps’.

Although play is important for people of all ages, it is especially meaningful and important for young children. Actually play is their work, and they give a tremendous amount of energy and effort to it. If you doubt this, just watch for a few minutes as a 1-year old struggle to get a ring on a color cone or stand in the background as a 3-year old tries to fit a puzzle piece into the proper spot. There are at least six ways in which play is important for young children:

1. Language and Vocabulary development,
2. Gross and Fine motor development,
3. Social development,
4. Skill development,
5. Imagination and creativity,
6. Problem solving and Mathematics,

Learning occurs in all areas of development as young children play and the learning too is going on.

Play is an integral part of the life of any child. Play is a non serious and self contained activity engaged for the sheer satisfaction it brings to children. Play is considered the foundation for all learning for young children, and giving children the time and a few basic toys can provide them with a variety of valuable learning opportunities. In play situation children imitate, repeat, explore, experiment and as their memory capacity develop they are able to make judgments and categorize what they know. “Play is how children begin to understand and process their world. Children’s play unlocks their creativity and imagination, and develops reading, thinking and problem solving skills as well as further develops motor skills. It provides the base foundation for learning.”

LANGUAGE AND VOCABULARY DEVELOPMENT:

While playing with other children or adults language skills are inculcated. The children listen and learn the language they hear without even realizing. Children learn to use language to communicate meaning as well as picking up new words of the Language.

- ***Vehicles and Animals:*** Playing with cars ,trucks, and trains as well as animals provides for many new vocabulary words children learn the names of each, what they do, what they eat or where they are found. Additionally, children and adults can create all kinds of dramatic plays that the vehicles or animals might find themselves in, providing for further language and vocabulary development.
- ***Doll house and Dolls:*** Playing with a doll house or dolls allows children to enact what happens in their everyday life, using the words and phrases they hear. You are likely to hear your own words come out of their mouth as they recreate events that have happened, perhaps with an outcome more suited to their liking!



GROSS AND FINE MOTOR DEVELOPMENT:

Gross motor skills involve the large muscles of the legs and arms while Fine motor development is building the muscles of hand that are used for writing. Play can provide many opportunities to work on strengthening these muscles without child even being aware of it!

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT:

Play with other children is essential for the social development. At first adults are their most important playmates, but soon they become eager to interact with children of similar ages. And it is through such play that:

- They learn how to get along with others,
- Hitting may get them a desired toy, but lose an equally desired friend, whom the other children have, wants just as they do,
- Sharing and kindnesses bring more rewards than snatching and pushing.

SKILL DEVELOPMENT:

When, as very young infants, they reach for and do something with a rattle, they learn to coordinate movements of their hands with what their eyes see. Dr. Arnold Gesell, the great pediatrician wrote, 'The mind of man is hand-made.' By this emphasizing the importance to young children of having exciting objects to hold and listen to and feel. And, as young children struggle to create a desired effect with a toy, they discover that it isn't always easy. They realize that there is perhaps a problem to be solved and that they have to practice to acquire and improve the skills necessary to achieve their goal.

IMAGINATION AND CREATIVITY:

In our fast paced and high tech society, children have fewer and fewer opportunities to use and develop their creativity. Play is the crucible in which imagination and creativity can be cultivated and expressed. Children who are not given frequent opportunities to play may have a difficult time entertaining themselves as they simply do not know what to do without instruction. By providing opportunities for open ended play, children automatically get their creative juices flowing, and the possibilities are endless. The children who pretend to be a teacher, a mother, a fairy, a soldier, a firefighter, are demonstrating some knowledge of these roles and are working through their own ideas about all that they require. Dramatic Play provides a few items such as dishes and play food, empty food boxes and a cash register or stuffed animals and a doctor's kit, and child will be transported into a different place!



PROBLEM SOLVING AND MATHEMATICS:

Children can solve complex problems that arise as they play and learn a few mathematical principals as well. Blocks and puzzles are excellent “basics” to provide child with many opportunities to foster these important skills.

- **Blocks:** Playing with blocks provides for many problem solving events. Children also learn some basic math concepts with the various shapes and sizes of the blocks.
- **Puzzles:** While trying to make puzzle pieces fit, children are gaining important math and problem solving experience. Learning a bit about sizes (is the piece too big for that spot) and shapes (does the shape of the piece look the same as the hole) you can encourage this learning by engaging in conversations as children play. Children will also gain an important sense of accomplishment as their practice leads to a completed puzzle in the end.

CONCLUSION

It could be concluded that plays differs from work which is an actively towards on and in which the individual carry out the activity not because he wants the end result. Play satisfies the individual's urge for freedom of action. Play cultivates human values in children. Now it could firmly be said that children could learn a lot through play experiences provided at home and in pre-schools, especially during the early years of children's life. Hence to provide an encouraging environment where children will find the possibility of exploring, constructing, manipulating and imagining is a prime task of the elders.

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