



PLAY IN THE LIVES OF CHILDREN

LEVEL 4

Lesson 1



OBJECTIVES

Explain what is play

Critically analyse the theories about play (Classical and Contemporary theory)

Elaborate why the Role of play in the development of young children

Discuss the different types of play.

Describe the stage of Play

Explain the different characteristics of play

What is play?

Play is a critical element in early childhood development that provides the best opportunities for ensuring the holistic development of the young child.

Children play activities for exploration, imagination and decision making. Through play, children learn the connection with others and to share, negotiate and resolve conflict as well as learn self-advocacy skills. Play also teaches children leadership.

Theories of Play

Main Theories of Play are:

- ❖ Classical theories and,
- ❖ Contemporary/modern theories

Classical theories

The classical theories of play explain why play exists and the purposes of play. There are four classical theories :

- Surplus Energy Theory
- Recreation / Relaxation Theory
- Recapitulation Theory
- Practice Theory

Modern/Contemporary Theories

The well known contemporary theories are:

- ❖ Psychodynamic Theory and,
- ❖ Cognitive Theories

Psychodynamic Theory

Sigmund Freud (1961) states play allows children to express and get rid of fears and anxieties. Play as a form of therapy, enables children to get rid of negative feelings associated with traumatic events. Through play, children switch roles and take the roles of active adults. For example, the child may pretend to punish her doll, after having been punished by his or her parent(s). In so doing, the child vents out any form of anger, frustration or sadness.

Theories of Play

Cognitive Theories

Cognitive theories include those of Piaget, Vygotsky, Bruner and Singer.

a) Piaget's Theory (1961)

Piaget proposed a theory portraying the cognitive development of children whereby children engage in the type of play that corresponds to their level of cognitive development.

Age	Cognitive Stage	Type of Play
0-2 yrs	Sensorimotor	Practice Play
2-7 yrs	Preoperational	Symbolic Play
7-11 yrs	Concrete operational	Games with rules

Theories of Play

b) Vygotsky's Theory (1896-1934)

To Vygotsky, the three domains of development namely social, emotional and cognitive development are interrelated and plays an important role in fostering the holistic development of the child.

c) Bruner's Theory (1972)

Through play, children can experiment with new types of activities and behaviours which they can use to solve real life problems.

d) Singer's Theory (1973)

According to Singer (1973, 1990), play enables the child to control the incoming stimulations both from within and from the external world. He views imaginative play as children's efforts to use their physical and mental abilities to organise their experiences.

The role of play in child growth and development

Play is an arena where children learn new skills and practice old ones, both physical and social. It's especially important to keep emphasizing play in light of the endangerment of play when children end up spending their days indoors in front of screens instead of playing indoors and outside. And it isn't just quiet play that counts.

Children gain power through playing. They play with themselves, other people, and objects. Playing is a primary way that toddlers learn and what they learn grows more and more impressive as the research gets increasingly sophisticated.

The role of play in child growth and development

Through play children challenge themselves to new levels of mastery.

They gain competence in all areas of development—increasing language, social skills, and physical skills, for example.

Briana not only practices such important skills as eye-hand coordination but also at times uses her whole body to improve balance and co-ordination.

Play provides for cognitive development in ways that educational toys don't necessarily address. Cognitive development is tied in with physical and social interactions in the preschool years as children are constructing a view of the world and discovering concepts.

The role of play in child growth and development

At problem solving, which involves mental, physical, and social skills. While playing, children can try on pretend solutions and experience how those solutions work. If they make mistakes, those mistakes don't hurt them as they would in real life. They can reverse power roles and be the adult for a change, telling other children what to do. They can even tell adults what to do, if the adults are willing to play along.

Children at play are active explorers of the environment as they create their own experience and grow to understand it. In this way they participate in their own development.

Through play children challenge themselves to new levels of mastery. They gain competence in all areas of development—increasing language, social skills, and physical skills, for example.

Benefits of play

Play enable children to:

- Discover
- Experiment
- Create
- Concentrate
- Express ideas
- Develop speech
- Develop muscles

Benefits of play

- Invent
- Learn new skills
- Learn how other people behave
- Role-play (pretend to be someone else)
- Share possessions
- Use the imagination
- Co-operate with others
- Show off (children like to let others know what they can do)
- Act protectively towards someone less powerful than themselves.

TYPES OF PLAY

Different types of play have different benefits for children These are:

- Discovery play: quite free form and is characterised by having minimal teacher guidance, fewer teacher explanations, solving problems with multiple solutions, use of hand-on materials minimal, repetition and memorization.



TYPES OF PLAY

Physical play: is the type of play that gets children moving from big movements like running and jumping to small movements like picking up a pencil or tying a knot.



TYPES OF PLAY

Creative play: known as imaginative play, is any type of play that allows children to use their imaginations and express themselves freely.



TYPES OF PLAY

Imaginative play: when a child uses their imagination to role-play scenarios they have seen, experienced or would like to experience



TYPES OF PLAY

Manipulative play: refers to activities where children move, order, turn or screw items to make them fit.



TYPES OF PLAY

Social play: refers to collaborative interactions of peers during play



TYPES OF PLAY

Guided play: learning experiences that combine the child-directed nature of free play with a focus on learning



STAGES OF PLAY

There are 6 stages of play during early childhood - all of which are important for all areas of development.

Unoccupied play – 0-3 months

Babies move their arms and legs with no purpose. They are learning to move and it is the beginning of play. Babies are observing their world.



Solitary play – 0-2 years

Children often play alone and appear to be uninterested in what others are doing. This is important because it teaches children how to entertain themselves.



STAGES OF PLAY



Onlooker play – 2 years

Children watching other children play from a distance. but do not join the play. They will often use language to find out more about the play. This is a common form of play at 2 years but can take place at any time.

STAGES OF PLAY



Parallel play – 2-3 years

Children play next to each other but with very little involvement with each other. They may have similar toys and copy each other. Social skills are being learnt by observation.

Parallel play starts in the toddler years and is characterized by side-by-side play with similar objects and toys, but seldom involves interaction among children

STAGES OF PLAY



Associate play – 2-3 years

- Children are more interested in playing with others than with toys.
- They may talk and engage with one another.
- They may trade toys.
- There are no rules.
- This kind of play develops problem solving/cooperation.

STAGES OF PLAY

- Associative play is most common in the toddler stage, where children engage in a similar activity but have very little organization or rules.
- All of these different types of interactions in play support children in the development of social skills such as respecting boundaries, turn-taking, sharing, and waiting. All of these skills are important in establishing healthy relationships

STAGES OF PLAY



Cooperative/social play – 4-6 years

- Children are interested in both the people and the activity.
- Groups are more formalised with a leader.
- Children may be assigned different roles.
- The play is organised around specific tasks and to accomplish goals developed by the group.

STAGES OF PLAY

- This kind of play brings together skills from all other stages.
- Necessary for social and group interaction.
- After 6, most play is divided in male/female groups.

STAGES OF PLAY

The 6 Stages of Play



Unoccupied Play 0-3 months

When baby is making movements with their arms, legs, hands, feet, etc. They are learning about and discovering how their body moves.



Solitary Play 0-2 years

When a child plays alone and are not interested in playing with others quite yet.



Spectator/Onlooker Behavior 2 years

When a child watches and observes other children playing but will not play with them.



STAGES OF PLAY

Parallel Play

2+
years

When a child plays alongside or near to others but does not play with them.



Associate Play

3-4
years

When a child starts to interact with others during play, but there is not much cooperation required.
For example, kids playing on the playground but doing different things.



Cooperative Play

4+
years

When a child plays with others and has interest in both the activity and other children involved in playing.



Why play in the development of young children?

Play is important because:

- We are biologically wired to play.
- It gives children the opportunity to practice skills they will need in the future.
- It encourages decision making skills.
- It teaches children how to work together.
- It teaches children how to resolve conflicts and advocate.
- It allows children to discuss what they enjoy.

Why play in the development of young children?

Play is so important that the United Nation Convention on the rights of the child states in article 31 that children have the right “to engage in play and recreational activities.”

References:

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