



## PLAY AND EARLY LEARNING

Have you ever closely observed play activities of small children? What are the peculiarities you have noticed? Do you know the importance of these simple play activities in the entire life of a human being? In previous lessons, you learnt about the significance of early childhood education leading to sound and holistic development of children. Children like to explore, discover and play and if they get the best environment, it will ensure proper cognitive, socio-emotional and physical development.

During early childhood, every activity of children is attractive. The onlooker is surprised even when the baby experiences joy in just moving arms and legs and repeating with gurgling sounds. These are the beginnings of play and are most valuable for the lives of children everywhere. Communities create infant toys such as rattles, mobiles or hang bells within the child's movement sphere to enhance interest and creating connections with the physical environment. Self-propelling acts become infant play and are essential for the overall development of the child.

As the child grows, the nature of play evolves and includes response to people, objects and willful acts of experimenting and exploring. The child may pull something, throw an object or push a block like a train. It is in such acts that children display their thoughts and imagination. Through play, the child experiences different emotions and learns about the world around.

Play is universal and all of us agree that play in early childhood is children's path to uncovering, discovering and learning about the secrets of the physical social world. During childhood, new skills are developed or learned through different play activities.

In this lesson, you will learn the importance of play in the early childhood years in the early learning of children and how it will boost their further development.



**LEARNING OUTCOMES**

After studying this lesson, you will be able to:

- discuss what is play;
- explain the importance of play;
- distinguish between the different types of play;
- explain how play develops;
- identify suitable equipment and material for indoor and outdoor play; and
- identify developmentally appropriate play based activities across domains.

**11.1 DEFINING PLAY**

Children’s play can be defined in many ways but we can say that it is a creative process in which a child uses the mind and body free from externally imposed goals. It is often said that play is a child’s chosen act or engagement with objects, peers or just with themselves. Play provides opportunity to explore, experiment and experience in non-threatening ways. Play, as described by Piaget, consists of responses repeated purely for functional pleasure. As children grow, play has rules and regulations, which are imposed by the players for their own convenience. On the other hand, Froebel considered play as highly serious and of deep significance, not something trivial.

Following are some definitions of play:

<i>Joyful, spontaneous, and creative activity in which man finds his fullest expression.</i>	<b>Ross</b>
<i>Instinctive practice, without serious intent of activities that will later be essential to life.</i>	<b>Gross</b>
<i>A free, self contained activity that has an inherent goal, that is initiated, and directed by intrinsic motivation, and that provides satisfaction from the activity of playing itself.</i>	<b>Stern</b>
<i>Resembles the unending activity of the flowing stream or the growing tree. Play is the work of the child.</i>	<b>Montessori</b>
<i>Any activity that is directed towards an end other than enjoyment cannot be rightly called play.</i>	<b>Hurlock</b>



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## 11.2 IMPORTANCE OF PLAY

Play is natural for children as it facilitates their growth and development. While playing, children exercise their limbs, they learn new words and most important play becomes joyous when there are other children. The presence of other children enhances the social value of play. During play, children get the opportunity to interact with peers, which strengthens social relations. Children learn how to work, how to obey others and how to be disciplined. Emotional development is the result of play.

When children play together, they exchange ideas, discuss, argue, share their thoughts and feelings. All these are essential for their language development. It increases their power of reasoning, imagination and thinking. They also learn good habits and values from each other. Children learn about characteristics and properties of objects, people and animals through play that is helpful for their social, emotional and cognitive development. Play is the natural method of teaching children. It is a medium through which they get immediate consequences of their activities.

Play is a universal phenomena on. It benefits children in their all-round development and growth. The most important values of play are:

### (i) Physical value

Play has a vital role in the physical development of children. During play different parts of the body are activated. It also serves as an outlet for surplus energy. If the energy is not spent properly, children can become irritable and nervous. More than that, it helps proper coordination of muscles, purposeful movement of arms and legs which determine the general appearance of the body.

### (ii) Social value

Play helps children develop friendly relationships and learn cooperation. Children get maximum social contact during play and thus learn social manners, behaviour and ways to solve problems with friends.

### (iii) Cognitive value

Play provides children the opportunity to observe, concentrate and experiment, develop problem solving skills, vocabulary, expression, imagination and creativity.

### (iv) Moral value

Children learn what is right and what is wrong, how to respect elders and how to behave with peers from the same age group, friends and playmates.

### (v) Therapeutic value

Play helps children give way to pent up emotions. Shy children learn to enjoy themselves with others, while aggressive ones can learn to wait patiently for their turn. Over-competitive children can learn to accept losses, while those

with a sense of insecurity can gain self-respect and respect for others through play.

### (vi) Recreational value

Play activities bring enjoyment and relaxation. It keeps children emotionally satisfied and prevents boredom.

### (vii) Educational value

Children learn a lot during play. Through the use of toys they learn about colours, sizes, shapes and textures.

You must have noted that the significance of play is manifold as children gather vast information and knowledge by their own efforts. The experiences build children's relation with their surroundings besides inculcating desire and motivation for learning and knowing about what is around.

Modern research affective neuroscience has uncovered important links between playing and neurogenesis in the brain. It stresses that children learn best through an integrated approach combining physical, emotional, cognitive, and social aspects. Scientists like Sergio Pellis conclude that the experiences we receive from play change the connections of neurons at the front end of our brain.

## 11.3 TYPES OF PLAY

There are different opinions by different psychologists about the different nature of play and how it helps children to develop skills and interest in learning.

Piaget (1945-1962) explains the levels of play as:

- *Practice Play*: It matches with the sensorimotor stage (0-2 years). Physical senses play a major role during play. Play at the stage may consist of repeated body movements, putting object in the mouth, blowing spit bubbles.
- *Symbolic Play*: It starts when the child is able to use the objects as a symbol of something (2-7 years). A representational system develops during the period. Children will engage in make believe games and fantasy role play.
- *Games with Rules*: This level starts when a child is ready to accept the complexity and rules imposed during the game (7-11 years). Play becomes more structured. Rules are developed and play now takes on a social aspect.

Smilansky (1968) divided play skills into four stages:

- *Functional Play*: It is the first stage in which children play with objects. Physical movements and motor skills are also included in this stage.
- *Constructive Play*: At this stage, children use objects to construct something. It involves sensorimotor activities where children use their creativity. Children begin to understand their surroundings and begin to initiate what they see.



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**Fig. 11.1 Children involved in Constructive Play**

- *Dramatic Play*: Children start using imagination to make something from some objects.
- *Games with Rules*: Children participate in competition type games. It allows children to understand the idea of rules, accept rules and play by the rules.

Parten (1929), had also studied play from its value for inculcating social skills. Parten stated that children's play changed as they developed, going through six distinct stages that generally, but not always, corresponded to children's ages:

- *Unoccupied play* : Children do not seem to be engaged or actively playing with others at all. This is play among newborns and infants and may be seen in children in new spaces, between the ages of 0 and 2 years and is important for later exploration and development.
- *Solitary play* : Children often play alone, with toys different from those of others, and are uninterested or unaware of others. This stage of play is most commonly seen in young toddlers. However, it benefits children of all ages. Solitary play teaches children to be by themselves in a productive manner.
- *Onlooker play* : Onlooker play is when a child observes others playing but does not join the play. They may engage in social interactions to learn more about the game or play that is going on. This is common in children between the ages of two-and-a-half and three-and-a-half years, but can take place at any age.
- *Parallel play* : This also occurs between ages of two-and-a-half and three-and-a-half years when children play side-by-side, not engaging with each other. They may play with similar toys and mimic one another. It seems there is very little contact between them, however they actually learn quite a lot from one another.

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- *Associative play* : By the age of three or four years, children begin to play together, but do not focus on a common goal. Children will be more interested in playing with other children around rather than with individual toys. **Children may exchange toys or actively talk with or engage one another, but no rules of play are being set. They learn that cooperation and problem solving are essential.**
- *Cooperative play* : Cooperative play is where play finally becomes organized into groups and teamwork is seen. Children are now interested in who they play with and what the activity is. They now can accept a leader, as well as other assigned roles, and play to accomplish group goals or specific tasks. Through this, children learn organizational skills as well as social maturity.



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### INTEXT QUESTIONS 11.1

I) Match Column A with Column B.

<i>Column A</i>	<i>Column B</i>
(a) Practice play	(i) Representational system develops
(b) Dramatic play	(ii) First stage of Smilansky's play
(c) Symbolic play	(iii) Children use imagination
(d) Functional play	(iv) Major role of senses during play

II) State whether the following statements are true or false:

- A six month old infant is in the pram in a park and watches children going up and down the slide. He is enjoying onlooker play.
- Two year old children creating towers with building blocks. It is an example of constructive play.

## 11.4 HOW PLAY DEVELOPS

As described by different scholars play varies with age. Piaget described play sequence at different ages. Other the or is its have also discussed play sequences at different levels. Play changes according to the biological, social, emotional and intellectual competencies. An infant's capacities allow for play through use of the body. Biological maturity allows mobility and manipulation, which lead to exploration, and self-initiated acts providing social adaptability, building of abilities and learning about capacities. Eventually, children acquire emotional maturity and increasing intellectual perception.

We often see children take a stick and jump and chant "Tug-bug-tug-bug", pretending to be a horse Such activities convey recall of an earlier experience, joy in performing, imagining themselves on horse and ability to adapt and recreate.



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There are certain patterns and sequence in play behaviour that children display as they grow.

### Play in First Two Years

Sensorimotor play, play with objects, symbolic and social play with adults are the main types of infant play. Play at this age is rooted in the movement of the body and discovering the possibilities with movement of hands and feet.

Sensorimotor play occurs when there is repetition of sensory or motor activity. Children do so for their happiness. As they approach one year of age, their interest moves to the surroundings as they can move on their own and become familiar with others.

Play with an object starts at four to five months because, by this time, children has acquired eye-hand coordination and can grasp things around .

Symbolic play starts after the first year. The process of substituting one object for the other is very common. For example, using a wooden piece as a telephone receiver.

In the second year, object play reaches maturity. Differentiating objects according to their size and shape is a noticeable change during these year. Social play with adults starts after the age of one and a half year. Playing with peer groups and other family members continues for the next few years.

### Ages 2 to 5

During this period, all play becomes more purposeful. The size of the group for social play increases and the play becomes challenging with cooperation and compromise. Play and play mates become more selective, and selection is done according to their interest on the basis of age and gender.

Parallel play and solitary play are two special varieties of play observed in children after two years of age. Solitary play means playing alone and parallel play means independent play in the same play and in the same group. Amount of time spent for make-believe play (symbolic) increases at this period. Dramatic play is the feature of this age group. In dramatic play, children play the role of a shopkeeper or a family member.

### Ages 5 to 12

At this age, children enter elementary school. The play pattern becomes more systematic and regulated. The strength of make believe play reduces gradually and play becomes logical and rule dominated. They start to play competitive and serious games with rules like basketball and football . The number of participants (at least two) and their behaviour are controlled by some strict rules and group norms.



Thus, play and the purpose of play are different from age to age. As per the development of different skills, the nature of play may change.



### INTEXT QUESTIONS 11.2

Fill in the blanks:

- (a) Play with objects starts at ..... age because children acquire eye-hand coordination for grasping objects.
- (b) The process of substituting one object for the other happens during the .....
- (c) Play and purpose of play is different from.....to .....
- (d) 5-12 year old children understand rules and thus prefer games like ..... and .....

## 11.5 SETTING UP AN ENVIRONMENT CONDUCIVE FOR PLAY AND EARLY LEARNING

Till now, we have been discussing the importance of play in children’s learning. Play also implies opportunities, materials and objects for children to engage, participate and express. **Environments be attractive and accessible, which will compel children to engage and lead to play and learning. Absence of sensory material and just empty spaces will not be rich in promoting play.** Absence of appeal and engagement will be obstacles and suppress children’s natural curiosity and orientation for healthy learning aptitude.

If we understand children’s patterns of play we can provide an environment rich in play. Arrangement of play materials and other equipment directly or indirectly influences children’s activity and play behaviour. Open and spacious places allow children free movement, whereas crowded and congested spaces create restrictions for children’s movements.

It is important to organize play materials wisely such that children have easy access to see materials and be able to make choices. Such processes facilitate among children constructive and creative play. Presence of adults to interact or sometimes show a trick helps to channelise the behaviour of children in a more acceptable way. Mere display of play equipment on shelves may lead to frustration and other undesirable or destructive behavior among children. A well organised placement of things would avoid undesirable behavior and make children happy, creative, constructive, imaginative and explorative.

**How to design:** Children are curious, exploratory and imaginative. They like to touch, taste, smell, hear and see things for themselves. They are full of energy and have a short attention span. So, they must be kept busy with interesting activities such as playing games, listening to stories, drawing, painting, running, jumping,



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singing and exploring things in their own environment. Organising such activities will help in promoting all round development in children.

There are different ways and methods to decide the best arrangements of toys and equipment. Since the main purpose of play is the physical, mental, emotional, and social development children, placement of indoor and outdoor facilities should be appropriate to meet this purpose. Therefore, proper planning is needed for this. The points that one should keep in mind are:

- (i) Ease of supervision and guidance
- (ii) Attention to safety
- (iii) Maximum provision of space for free movement
- (iv) Cater to spheres of interest
- (v) Satisfy the needs of the group
- (vi) Satisfy the needs of the child
- (vii) Activities which are special should be arranged in a readily available place
- (viii) Similar activities may be kept at one place
- (ix) Shelves and furniture which are used for playing should be of appropriate size and height (*Gupta, Sen-.2013*).

How the environment is structured, creates an active learning climate to stimulate cognitive skills, opportunity for healthy and strong play experiences. Play serves to facilitate language development, reading and writing readiness, emotional maturity and social skills. The learning environment should be pleasurable, motivating, rewarding and free from frustrations and danger.

Opportunities for sharing promotes social growth while self-expression and communication enhance emotional skills.

The physical setting of the play equipment can be organized mainly in two ways: Inside the classrooms and outside the classrooms. This is known as indoor and outdoor arrangements.

**11.5.1: Indoor Arrangements:** There are a number of indoor equipment that could be kept in a playroom. All the materials should be arranged so that children can reach them on their own, and according to their use by both individual and groups of children. Enough space is also an essential factor of placing these. Some of them are mentioned here.

- (i) **Dolls Corner/Dramatic Area:** A corner where home related objects, a basket of old bags, sandals, scarves and other familiar objects will allow children to engage in role plays by themselves or in a group of five to six children. They will play out different roles at one time. They will also be handling



different home related equipment and their use will help in knowing their perceptions and their observations. Therefore, according to the nature of the task, a corner of the play room will be the best location for it. Sufficient material as per their needs, will promise more social interactions where they will learn to share, meet the desires of other children and express individual feelings.

- (ii) **Blocks or Construction Area:** As we know, blocks are used as construction toys for building things. There should be blocks of different sizes and weights. If more than one child is playing with the blocks, there are chances of intentional interference of others which will cause destruction of the structure created. Block play is a valuable learning tool. An area should be set aside for block play as such play develops imagination, creativity and social skills. Larger or heavy blocks should be arranged in lower shelves to avoid them from falling on the toes of children.

This type of play enhances gross and fine motor development. If space permits different types of toys, bikes, small cars, trucks, boats, jeeps, animals may also be placed with blocks. Combinations of this material will be productive, imaginative and creative.

- (iii) **Library, books and puzzle area:** Books are important in the playroom. The room will have to be lit properly to facilitate reading. Two or more children may read or discuss a book. A corner or some suitable space will be suitable for this purpose. A low, height- appropriate chair and table may be suitable for supporting books. A variety of books for different ages will encourage the children and create more interest in reading. There can also be a collection of simple puzzles.
- (iv) **Art Area:** One part of the room must be devoted for keeping materials for drawing, painting and other art activities. The space for it may be allocated near the wash basin or lavatory so that the children can get water for drawing or painting and wash their hands without disturbing others. If art materials are easily accessible for young children, it will not only save time of the adults but also help children to become independent.

A part from all these materials, manipulative toys for muscular coordination, science experimental instruments, a space for plants and musical instruments can also be arranged in the playroom to create a discovery corner and a music and movement corner. A playroom (indoor) should be arranged in such a way that children can move freely and materials should be easily accessible for all children irrespective of their age, gender and height.

**11.5.2: Some play materials and toys:** Design of space is enriched by the different kinds of materials that can be available for children. Children enjoy playing with old bottle caps, crushing newspaper, leaves, pebbles and a variety



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of objects. It is indeed a challenge to provide range of materials to meet the varying needs of children. Toys have been classified as:

1. Toys for physical movement and muscular development
2. Toys for constructive and creative play
3. Toys for dramatic action, imaginative and fantasy play

Toys and materials can have an age graded arrangement. The following chart will provide you an idea of the possible categorization:

<i>Birth to 2 years</i>	<i>2 years to 4 years</i>	<i>4 years to 6 years</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Climbing frames, swings</li> <li>- Sliding objects</li> <li>- Large balls</li> <li>- Run about and pull-along toys</li> <li>- Animals on wheels, wagons and trucks</li> <li>- Boxes with or without wheels</li> <li>- Carts, barrows, push- pull toys, rocking objects</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Old tyres</li> <li>Jumping pits</li> <li>Kitchen kits</li> <li>Blocks</li> <li>Picture books</li> <li>puzzles</li> <li>Drawing and painting</li> <li>Play material for reading and writing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Balance beams</li> <li>Water play</li> <li>Sweeping objects</li> <li>Materials for group games (cricket, catch )</li> <li>Swings like slides, merry-go round</li> </ul>

Adapted from (Maisnam, Premlata, & Bhargava, Amita. 2013).

**11.5.3: Outdoor Arrangements:** Outdoor play are a also needs to be divided for particular play activities. For example, there has to be concrete pathways for riding a tricycle; sand-pit area along with the play equipment; water-play area; jungle-gym area; slide and swing area and spacious green area for running. Outdoor area should be spacious and not limited. Certain play activities can be performed both indoors and outdoors.

The outdoor play equipment should be arranged to give more opportunities for large muscle activities like running, climbing, jumping, sliding, crawling, digging and swinging. In outdoor play area, some equipment like a jumping pit, swings and slides may be fixed permanently. These should be in adequate proportion and accessible to small children. Supervision is very essential for outdoor play activities. The position of certain equipment can be rearranged according to the seasonal changes like winter and summer as per the needs and convenience of the players.

**11.5.4: Group and individual play:** We have seen that children in the school yard or neighbourhood often play in groups. The group experience extends the values

of family life, democratic living and value of cooperation. Formation of playgroups in early childhood years is very significant. Usually, children want to form groups of the same age and gender. This type of group fosters leadership quality, sense of loyalty and social learning.

Play groups are formed on the basis of children's shared interests, backgrounds or activities. In preschool, children form groups simply as playmates. Duration of these groups change from time to time. Group members should give positive feedback and engage in low levels of conflict.

Groups can be formed in different sizes: Large group, medium group and small group.

**Large group:** Large group is formed for teaching, storytelling, music, dance and similar activities. The whole class is considered as a large group with children of a wide range of abilities. For example, circle-time activities are very suitable for a large group.

**Medium group:** Since the children are different from each other, their needs are also different. A larger group can be divided into two or three groups containing 10-12 children. The teacher can help the group which needs more guidance and supervision. The other groups could be made engaged for free play or some other outdoor activities that need less guidance and supervision.

If the classroom space is less, children may be divided into two or three groups and the activities may be done in rotation. For example, one group can play on outdoor equipment and theme based outdoor activity can be done with another group. Similarly, collage activity can be given in two or three groups.

**Small group:-** Small groups are formed when individual attention and guidance are needed,. This group contains less than six children. Children work in pairs or small groups of three to five children work together to complete a specific task. There should be separate areas to play for different groups and children from one group should not interfere in the activities of the other group. If needed, one can switch to another group.

Children undergo many developmental changes at every stage of their life. Play activities will also change according to that. As age increases, aimless play will become purposeful. Teachers and parents working with children should know about these changes and act accordingly. Each child develops physically, socially, emotionally and intellectually and these developments will be different for different children. Food, exercise, types of play and the environment are factors which affect the development of children. Therefore, it is the responsibility of teachers



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and administrators to give age appropriate exercises and play experiences to children.



## INTEXT QUESTIONS 11.3

State whether the following statements are true or false:

- (a) Arrangement of play materials and other equipment does not have any influence on children's activities.
- (b) Supervision is very essential for outdoor play activities.
- (c) Play activities that involve swinging, walking, running, jumping, sliding, etc. help in large muscle coordination.
- (d) Teachers and parents should know development changes during a child's life.

## 11.6 PLAY-BASED ACTIVITIES FOR ALL DOMAINS

Since children learn, grow and develop through play, the activities which are organised for children should be based on play encompassing all domains of development. There are three divisions in the development domain. They are:

1. Cognitive and language domain
2. Affective (socio-emotional) domain
3. Psychomotor domain

**Activities for cognitive domain:** Children gather information about basic concepts like time, number, space, position, shape and sound. Activities for cognitive development comprise activities for proper use of senses, concept formation (concept of colour, shape, size, number, space, volume, length, weight, speed and time) and basic cognitive skills.

Games for listening, discriminating sounds, discriminating different surfaces (smooth and rough), distinguishing between good and bad smell, identifying different colours, dance and music, etc. can be arranged for stimulating the use of senses effectively and also for concept formation.

For basic cognitive skills, it is better to do activities like puzzles, story completion, picture completion, science experiments, memory games, stories, logical sequencing (thinking, reasoning and problem solving), making patterns, recalling of sequential activities, etc.



**Language development** can be fostered through reading and writing readiness activities, e.g., oral expression, listening skills and vocabulary as these are components of language. Reading and writing can be cultivated through use of pictures, picture books, magazines, newspapers, paper, pencils, slates, sand, crayons, paints and brushes.

Free conversation e.g., conversation using pictures and objects, telling stories, role play, creative drama, puppet play, doll play, etc are used for oral expression. Listening games, auditory discrimination, following directions by listening and stories are the best way to develop listening skills.

In brief, concepts must be taught to children in a specific sequence. Some activities suggested are the following:

1. Arranging objects according to size (big, small, long, short) and quantity (more, less)
2. Matching pictures
3. Observing plants, animals, clouds, rain, people working, day, night, etc.
4. Touching, feeling, tasting and smelling things

**Activities for affective domain:** Children develop interest, attitudes, appreciate beauty and internalize values. Some activities suggested are :

1. Dramatising stories
2. Singing songs
3. Reciting poems in rhythm
4. Dressing up dolls imaginatively
5. Speaking about something

Children imbibe social and emotional skills when they play in groups. They learn how to share, take turns and understand that each person has a special identity. While engaging in play, they also learn to recognize their limitations as they may 'have to wait their turn'. Such moments provide understanding emotions and regulation of feelings. It is important to know that many social and emotional capacities are acquired while engaging in group or individual activities.

Children also enjoy and learn social values in group celebrations and organized festivities. Group plays and games, cleaning the work place, celebrating birthdays of each child, being rewarded for good work are the suggested experiences for social and emotional development of children.

**Activities for psycho motor domain:** Children develop different skills through the activities given to them. Therefore, the tasks should be planned in such a way that these will inculcate accuracy, precision, concentration and develop fine and gross motor skills in children.



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Objects fostering pushing-pulling, throwing, catching, pedaling, crawling, jumping, stretching, walking, rocking, swinging, sliding, rolling, hopping and kicking are activities undertaken for the development of physical and large muscle coordination.

Also, some activities advised for fine motor development are stringing of wooden beads with large holes and different colours, free hand moving exercises, thread printing, leaf or vegetable printing, working with paper (tearing, cutting, collage making), making different shapes using clay and constructive play with sand and mud. In addition, free painting, drawing, cutting, pasting, folding and clay modeling also facilitate psychomotor development

All these activities should be planned on a regular basis and children must do all these in a playful way and in a happy environment.

### 11.6.1 Planning Play Activities Across themes

There are a variety of themes related to the environment of children like trees, animals, birds, flowers and insects. Various activities are planned and developed across themes.

Small children always like to play. We cannot impose any knowledge through any subject. Therefore, theme based play activities are the best way for this purpose. The theme must be planned according to the age and interest of children. The topic for the theme should have a close relation to the environment of the children. It will give an opportunity to promote their innate capacity to broaden ideas about which they are very familiar. They express their opinion from their first-hand or concrete experiences and experiences from sensory perception. It presents the possibility of an extremely useful and enjoyable preschool programmes essentially for meeting their developmental needs. The activities related to themes can be organized for a week or two such as:

- a) Child and her/his environment: Vegetables, animals, fruits, pollution, vehicles, sky, sun, moon, festivals etc.
- b) Child and people around her/his: Family members, neighbours, friends, school, community helpers, etc.

Topics/themes which provide concrete experiences to children could be :

1. Myself
2. Mother
3. Father
4. Food
5. Water



6. Clothes
7. Good habits
8. People who help me
9. Seasons



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#### INTEXT QUESTIONS 11.4

Fill in the blanks:

- (a) The theme must be planned according to the ..... and ..... of the children.
- (b) Arranging objects according to the size is an activity of ..... domain.
- (c) ..... is an example of an affective domain activity.
- (d) Activities promoting fine and gross motor skills belong to the..... domain.

### 11.7 ROLE OF TEACHERS AS FACILITATORS IN CHILDREN'S PLAY

In order to make play meaningful and purposive, the teacher should also be a part of the activities. Proper direction from teachers affects the quantity and quality of play.

**Teacher as an observer:** The teacher observes the activities of the children in the classroom as well as outside the classroom. S/he observes how children interact with each other, how they handle objects, whether they have any problem with their group, etc. The length of time children spend with play materials also is observed by the teacher. Clear and purposeful watching helps in planning innovative plays activities and improve the existing play situations.

**Teacher as a facilitator:** Mere play is not enough for children to develop. It is the role of the teacher to direct the play activities for learning. S/he has to create a climate and arrange the equipment according to their need and purpose. Here, the teacher acts as a facilitator and arranges toys to refine visual discrimination. Teachers should allow children to speak freely. S/he should encourage children to ask questions to invoke curiosity.

**Teacher as a reviewer:** After every activity the teacher has to determine how the particular type of play met the needs of each individual child. The teacher has to make sure that the purpose of play i.e., for cognitive, social, physical growth etc. has taken place during the play. Teachers should be able to communicate with parents, administrators, etc. about the changes and improvements. The play



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environment, facilities and activities must be assessed on the basis of curriculum goals.

**Teacher as an organiser:** As a teacher, the first and the most important duty is to organise and prepare a playful environment for children. The teacher should provide the materials and equipment for meaningful play activities. The class room and the outdoor area should be arranged in a safe, happy and healthy atmosphere. There is no doubt that the atmosphere should be interesting, challenging and motivating.



## WHAT YOU HAVE LEARNT

In this lesson, you have learnt that:

- Play is very important for learning skills during the early childhood period.
- Play has a very prominent role in the overall development of children. Hence, children should be allowed to engage in different play activities with developmentally appropriate play materials.
- Different philosophers and psychologists have proved the importance of play through their studies and experiments.
- Teachers, parents and administrators should try to provide age appropriate indoor and outdoor facilities at home and school.
- School readiness of children can be fostered only through play. It is the duty of the teachers to give proper guidance at proper places.
- Activities and play materials should be designed and arranged according to the developmental needs of children.
- Teachers play an imperative role in making play meaningful and purposeful. Teachers proper direction affects the quantity and quality of play.
- Thematic approach in devising play activities according to the age and interest of children provides first -hand concrete experiences.
- Since children learn, grow and develop through play, activities should be based on play to cover all domains of development namely, cognitive, affective and psychomotor.



### TERMINAL EXERCISE

1. Explain in detail the meaning and nature of play.
2. Describe the types of play in early years. Explain with examples.
3. How does play develop?
4. Design some activities for:
  - a) Gross motor development
  - b) Language development
  - c) Social development
  - d) Development of creativity and self - expression
5. What is meant by thematic approach in planning play activities?
6. Describe the qualities of a good preschool teacher in terms of organising meaningful and purposeful play activities.



### ANSWERS TO INTEXT QUESTIONS

#### 11.1

- I) (a) iv  
(b) iii  
(c) i  
(d) ii
- II) (a) True  
(b) True

#### 11.2

- (a) 4 to 5 months  
(b) first year



Notes



## Notes

- (c) age, age
- (d) football, basketball (any game with rules)

**11.3**

- (a) False
- (b) True
- (c) True
- (d) True

**11.4**

- (a) age, interest
- (b) cognitive
- (c) dramatising stories, poem recitation, doll dressing, etc.
- (d) psychomotor

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Notes