

Play Preferences of Preschool Children at Home and School

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Abstract: *Play is a natural medium of learning, all children play regardless of age or delay. Children get information through play activities about objects and people, practice new skills, create situations they can deal with and control, gain confidence in their own abilities and learn to solve problems. Play is essential to the development of a normal, well adjusted personality. Play is necessary in child's life thus the present study was undertaken" To study the Play preferences of preschool children in settings of school and home" Sample consist of 60 children from 3 classes of Laboratory Nursery school, Sri Venkateswara University, Tirupati. An observation schedule was prepared by investigator, in order to note the play preferences of preschool children. Results revealed from the study were significant association was observed between the age and gender of children in relation with play preferences during indoor and outdoor activities. As the age increases, child prefer for group play rather than solitary play. Boys were found more constructive and exploratory whereas girls were more creative and constructive. Children who were sharing toys with siblings at home preferred group play rather than solitary play in school.*

Keywords: Play preferences, Preschool play, play at Home, Importance of Play, Types of Play

1. Introduction

Play is any activity done for the enjoyment it gives. Enjoyment of the activity is the essential element of all play. Play is an activity in which a person is engaged when he is free to do what he wants to do. It satisfies the individual urge for freedom of action. It is an expression of the creative activities of the child. It is marked by freedom and joy. Play cultivates human values in children. It is very necessary for the growth and maturation of the physical and mental power of the child.

Gary (1988) described play as being pleasurable and enjoyable; it has no extrinsic goal but has an intrinsic goal of enjoying the process rather than the end product. Second it is voluntary and spontaneous. Third it includes active involvement. Finally it seems to relate to cognitive and social phenomena, such as creativity, problem solving, language development and the development of social roles. Play is a natural medium of learning, all children play regardless of age or delay. Children get information through play activities about objects and people, practice new skills, create situations they can deal with and control, gain confidence in their own abilities and learn to solve problems. Play is essential to the development of a normal, well adjusted personality. It gives the child a chance to develop physically, emotionally, mentally, socially and morally in a way that no other single type of activity can do.

Play is the best way to help the child adjust to the society in which he lives. Play offers an outlet for the child to express his natural instincts and emotions. According to Piaget (1962) there are three types of play. They are 1. Sensori motor play, 2. Symbolic play, 3. Games with rules. Sensori motor play is an early form of play characteristic of infancy until about age two years this is also called "practice play" because children repeat actions over and over without any reference to any recognizable outcome (Butter, Gotts and Quinsen Berry, 1978).

In dramatic play, children use dolls, books, dishes and other materials for social role play, but they play alone or beside others. When they do begin to play out roles with another child, it is called socio-dramatic play. Increasingly the child gains pleasure from interacting with his peers. Equipment is one of the factors that influence a child choice of play activity. It is very much needed to stimulate an interest in play and to have a variety of play experiences.

Need for the Study

Play is necessary to develop in childhood healthy habits and to build up basic skills necessary for personal adjustment to develop emotional maturity by guiding the child to express, understand, accept and control his feelings, emotions and to encourage aesthetic appreciation.

2. Objectives of the Present Study

- To find out the play preferences of preschool children in the nursery school with reference to their age and sex.
- To find out the play pattern of children in the school.
- To find out the play pattern of children in the home.
- To find out the equipment provided to the children at home.
- To know the association between parents participation in children's play

3. Methodology

The present study was conducted in Sri Venkateswara University Laboratory Nursery School, which is attached to dept of Home science, The Laboratory nursery school was established for benefit of preschool children residing in Tirupati. The school consists of three classes. Junior nursery, senior Nursery, Preprimary. The children studied in three classes were included in the sample.

Table 1: Distribution of the sample according to gender and class

Sl.No	Clases	Boys	Girls	Total
1	Junior Nursery	12	5	17
2	Senior Nursery	6	9	15
3	Preprimary	14	14	28
Total		32	28	60

An observation schedule was prepared by investigator, in order to note the play preferences of preschool children. It consists of two parts Part-A contains 12 outdoor equipments and Part-B consists of 13 indoor equipments. Questionnaire was used to collect information from parents which includes.

- General information about children and parents
- Information regarding play preferences of child at home.
- Information regarding parent’s participation while children are playing.

Children were observed an hour while playing to assess play preferences. In order to collect information from parent’s investigator made a home visits and collected data. Chi-square test was applied to check the association of different variables with play preferences of children.

4.Results and Discussion

The results of the study discussed under different sub heads

Table 2: Patterns of children play in school with reference to age and sex

Sl.No	Class	Patterns of Play in School				Total	
		Solitary play		Group play		No	%
		No	%	No	%		
1	Junior Nursery						
	Boys	9	15%	2	3%	11	18%
	Girls	3	5%	3	5%	6	10%
2	Senior Nursery						
	Boys	3	5%	4	7%	7	12%
	Girls	4	7%	5	15%	9	15%
3	Pre-Primary						
	Boys	6	10%	8	13%	14	23%
	Girls	6	10%	7	12%	13	22%
	Total	31	52%	29	48%	60	100%

It is evident from above table that children from junior nursery 15 percent of boys prefer solitary play and only 3per cent were prefer group play, whereas 5 per cent of girls prefer for solitary and group play. Whereas children belongs to senior nursery almost equal number of children preferred both solitary and group play. Coming to pre primary children both the boys and girls prefere group play than solitary play. The reason for high preference of junior nursery children to the solitary play might be their age,the new school environment, practice of playing alone at home and fear of others. The familiarity with other children by the senior and pre primary and the influence of peer, encouragement or stimulation from the parents would be responsible for their group play.

Table 3: Pattern of play preferences in school in association with the type of play at home

Sl. No	Type of play at Home	Pattern of play in school				Total	
		Play alone		Play in group		No	%
		No	%	No	%		
1	Plays alone	11	18	6	10	17	28
2	Play with siblings	7	12	9	15	16	27
3	Play with neighbors’	4	7	10	17	14	23
4	Play with elders	7	12	6	10	13	22
Total		29	48	31	52	60	100

X2 = 4.307NS

The above table shows that association of the type of play at home with the pattern of play in school. 18 percent of the children, playing alone at home participated more in solitary play than in group play(10%). Children playing withsiblings at home preferred less solitary play than group play. Majority of the children who plays with neighbours at home preferred group play rather than solitary play. Children playing with elders at home preferred solitary play more than group play. There was no significant association between the type of play at home and the pattern of play in school. The practice of the children playing alone at home and the motivation of the parents towards solitary play due to over protection might be responsible for the children to participate in solitary play in school. The presence of siblings at home and the habit of playing with them make the children prefer group play in school. Rolfe *etal* (1991) studied that preschoolers with early childhood programmes experience showed more behavior during inside play than the subjects without experience.

Table 4: Type of play materials available for preschool children at home

Sl.No	Type of Play material	No	Percentage
1	Ordinary	21	35
2	Sophisticated	14	23
3	Both Combination	25	42

Above table gives us clear picture about the play materials provided by the parents. The ordinary type included the dolls, toy models, cycle, bats and balls, rocking horses etc.Materials like electronic vehicles, videogames, concept learning kits etc.comes under the sophisticated type.About 35 percent of the parents provided ordinary play materials where as 23 percent parents provided sophisticated play materials to their children. The majority 42 percent of the parents provided both type of play materials to their children. The probable reasons for the differences in the type of play materials provided by parents to the preschool children could be their educational level and income of the family, influence of the neighbours, availability of the play materials and their interest. Children’s desire and parent’s awareness of different play materials might also count to an extent.

Table 5: Association of parent’s involvement in the children’s play at home and pattern of play in the school

Sl. No	Parents involvement in play	Patterns of play				Total	
		Play		Play in Group		No	%
		No	%	No	%		
1	Always	10	17	11	18	21	35
2	Some times	16	27	13	22	29	48
3	Never	3	5	7	12	10	17
Total		29	48	31	52	60	100

X2 = 1.893 NS

From the above table it is clear that 18 percent of children whose parents involved with them in play always and 12 percent of children whose parents left with toys participated in group play. Whereas 27 percent of the children with parents sometimes participate in solitary play. There was less difference found in the participation of children with parental involvement always in solitary play and group play.

There was no significant association between the type of play at home and the pattern of play in school. The practice of children playing alone at home and the motivation of the parents towards solitary play due to over protection might be responsible for the children to participate in solitary play in school. The enjoyment of the children achieved during the play with their neighbors could be a factor of their participation in group play in school.

5. Conclusions

There was a significant association observed between the age and gender of children in relation with play preferences during indoor and outdoor activities. As the age increases, children prefer for group play rather than solitary play. Boys were found more constructive and exploratory whereas girls were more creative and constructive. Children who were sharing toys with siblings at home preferred group play rather than solitary play.

6. Implications of the Study

- This study can be useful for preschool educators to know about the preschool children.
- This study can also be useful for parents to know the play preferences of their children and parents can provide adequate play materials to their children.

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