

Paper-4

**Early Childhood
Curriculum:
Principles and
Priorities**

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UNIT-1: CHILDREN LEARNING PROCESS

1.0. Introduction

Early childhood period is very crucial and critical period in the holistic development of the child. During these stages the growth and development of the child takes place very fast compared to other stages of development. The child learns very fast as soon as he is born. Jean Piaget, a psychologist studied the cognitive development of children from birth and formulated important theories. Children learn very fast whatever they observe, they imitate, experiment, practice and master the skill. Maturation and learning work together.

There are many processes of learning like through, imitation, experimentation, activity based learning, learning by doing, observation and cooperative learning. In all these methods proper planning, programming and implementation by teachers is very important for good qualitative learning.

1.1 Objectives

- The student teacher understands the concept of learning
- To understand that how the past experiences enhances the learning process
- Develops knowledge about different methods of learning
- develops awareness about the support of parents, teachers and society in enhancing the learning process.

1.2 Learning : concept, process

1.2.1 Concept: The new born is an active organism who is genetically endowed at birth with biological intelligence, capable of adaptively interacting with the environment. The maturation of structural and functional changes within the body systems together with the effect of cumulative experience facilitates developmental progress. In the process of development, learning takes place. Learning can take place in a formal situation or in an informal situation. Learning in formal situation takes place in the teaching learning process where the child is given utmost

importance. According to Crow and Crow, learning is acquisition of knowledge, habits, skills and attitudes that helps to change the behaviour. Learning includes new learning, modification of acquired knowledge, relearning and changing the out dated knowledge.

Learning is knowledge got by study, by experience or by teaching. Learning situations are most natural and common in life and every one of us learn one thing or the other although we may not be aware about it. A baby starts learning immediately after birth ,for example sucking mother's milk ,crying to express that I am hungry, smiling towards family members to show that I am recognizing my people. While approaching a burning match stick the child gets burnt his fingers and he withdraws. Another time, when he faces a burning matchstick, he immediately draws himself away not only the burning match stick but also from any burning object. When this happens we say that the child has learned that any thing which is burning should not be touched by hands. In this way the child learns by direct or indirect way.

1.2.2 Process of Learning: Learning is a process and not the product. According to Jean Piaget three steps are involved in learning process which is also referred to as cognitive development .Here the child gathers the knowledge from the external sources and experiences and learning takes place.

Assimilation - It is a process of gathering information from the external sources and putting it in the mind with the existing knowledge. For example, the child knows how to suck the nipple in order to drink milk. So with the sucking knowledge the child starts sucking own fingers, piece of blanket or even toys also.

Accommodation -The child starts accepting the learned knowledge by removing the old knowledge or modifying the old information. For example, the child learned the skill of sucking milk, if the food is given with spoon at the age of 6 months, first the child starts sucking the food but afterwards with practice starts closing the lips and eating the food properly.

Adaptation -Adaptation means finally using the learned knowledge from above stages permanently in day today life. Adaptation = Assimilation +Adaptation

1.3 Child as an active learner in constructing knowledge, use of past experiences and knowledge to understand new situations and develop new concepts.

Early childhood period is the fastest period of growth and development. During this period particularly the brain develops rapidly compare to other parts of the body. During this period the child is very curious, imitating type, continuously questions, egocentric and repetitive .

1.3.1 Child as an active learner in constructing knowledge - During early childhood stage, child likes to explore the environment surrounding him, experiment it, and apply the acquired knowledge in his life. At this age the child is very curious, inquisitive and always wants to do everything on his own. Through these exploration the child participate in each and every activity and during active participation acquisition of knowledge takes place.

Children at early age learn through concrete (real objects).For example, in order to learn about vegetables concept the child quickly learns by seeing, smelling, touching and tasting the real vegetables instead through the abstract pictures of the vegetables .

The teacher should provide stimulating environment for active learning like

- learning through concrete (real)objects
- Readiness activities
- Story telling
- Conversation
- Role play and dramatization
- Art activities
- Dance and music
- Puppet show
- Field trip
- Planning of individual and group activities

Through active learning the child participates in learning process as this method of learning is based on child's intelligence (I.Q.)level, the child learns according to his pace of learning ,it considers child's interest and aptitude and thus finally active learning is child centred method of knowledge development .

1.3.2 Use of past experiences and knowledge to understand new situation and develop new concepts.

Learning is a continuous process that starts immediately after birth and continues till death. Children learn at rapid pace in their early years. Learning also includes relearning, modification of learning and discarding the waste learned information. As discussed in the beginning of the chapter learning takes place by assimilation, the child gathers information from the surrounding and stores the gathered information with the existing information in his mind. Here child observes his parents and store the information in the mind about how the parents behave. Next ,the child starts imitating his parents like cleaning the house, wearing father's shoes, cooking in the kitchen .According to Jean Piaget child learns through 4 stages.

- 1) Sensory motor stage - from birth to 2 years .During this stage child learns through senses and motor activities. For example first child learns sucking of milk, then child puts every thing in his mouth and bang things in order to learn.
- 2) Pre operational stage- from 2-7 years In this stage child develops language and learns new concepts through learning by doing, play way method, questioning, repeatation and imitation.

The other 2 methods are applicable for late childhood and adolescence stage.

So during the above 2 stages the child uses the acquired knowledge to develop the new concepts. According to Dr.Vinita Kaul, a concept is a mental construction or picture of objects, people or places..For example, through the learned concept of colour, the child will be able to identify, classify or categories different coloured objects. The child through his

existing knowledge gathers the new knowledge (assimilation), then learns about the new concept from the surrounding (accommodate)and then finally uses the learned concept in day to day life (adaptation).

For example-the child at the age of 2years sees dog and cat and learns that these are animals.

At the age of 3 years the child learns about other animals as cow, buffalo, sheep. Next after 5 years the child can differentiate between pet, domestic and wild animals. Through stimulating experiences the child uses the old knowledge and use it for the development of new concepts. The following concepts the child learns during early years

Concept of colours

Concept of vegetables

Concept of fruits

Concept of animals

Concept of shapes etc

1.4 Multi Pronged process of learning -Education in India today has been entangled in the web of input norms and regulations, driven by the idea of uniformity and standardization .While policies to this effect have been successful in achieving near perfect enrolment rates, the learning outcomes are very inferior. There is little space for children to explore and experiment. Children centric and child led models of learning which were followed in age old Gurukul system have been replaced by formal learning models where more focus is there on rote learning without bothering about the needs of the children, I.Q. levels, interest ,aptitude and pace of learning of the children. There exists a wide gap between what children get and what they need. This gap is filled by alternative methods of education that employ different pedagogy, alternative learning environments and experimentative methods to focus on holistic development of the children.

RTE, Right of children to Free and Compulsory Education Act 2009 suggested alternative methods of learning that will enhance qualitative learning. Also the latest New Education Policy 2019 suggested innovations

in learning models, curriculum and pedagogy. Every parent must have right to choose an education they feel is compatible with their child's needs, interest, aptitude and I.Q. level..

Multi pronged process of learning includes different methods of learning which will help the child to learn by different methods which will help the child to develop holistically through interesting methods of learning. Through multi pronged process of learning, the teacher provides more stimulating environment for better learning. It is scientifically proven that children learn effectively through organized environment and stimulating atmosphere. The multi pronged process includes the following methods.

1.4.1 Learning by conditioning - It is a behavioral process whereby a response that is the outcome of learning process becomes more frequent in a given environment as a result of reinforcement as a reward for better learning. Reinforcement or rewarding the learning of the child helps the child to get motivated to learn again and again and develops interest in learning. Reinforcement is of 2 types. Positive reinforcement is a positive reward such as praise, smile, prize etc. It is used to improve positive learning.

Negative reinforcement is a negative reinforcement such as scolding the child, denying the child to do the favorite activity to weaken or unlearn the undesirable learning.

For example the 5years child when successfully recite the poem which the teacher recited 1) the reward or reinforcement for reciting rhyme is clapping hands by teacher.

1. Or the teacher reinforces or rewards the child by saying very good, well recited
2. Or by giving star or token gift to the child
3. Rewarding the child by hugging

The conditioning learning is discovered by Skinner which is known as Operant Conditioning .The steps involved in this method are given below

1. Programmed learning instruction-The subject matter is broken down into different small units and each day the child learns small units.

For ex.-Types of animal lesson

1st day- Which are the animals we see in the neighborhood

2nd- pet animals

3rd- domestic animals

4th day-wild animals

5th day- care of animals

2. Providing stimulating learning environment - Stimulating environment includes concrete (real) learning material, play way /activity based method, using puppets, music and dance and support and guidance from teacher.

1. Shaping learning -This step is very import in strengthening the learning process. Here the child actively participate in learning process instead of sitting in one place. For example- child sings, dances, recites, draws and colours and plays.
2. Reinforcement -Rewarding the child for positive learning and positive behaviour and imposes punishment for undesirable learning and negative behaviour. But the teacher should not physically beat the children.

1.4.2 Learning by Experimentation: During early years the children are very inquisitive, curious, likes to ask questions, imitators and likes to experiment with the objects surrounding them. For example, the child plays with the new toy hardly for couple of days but after that breaks the toy to know about the different parts of the toy and even tries to assemble different parts of the toy again.

Carl Rogers invented Experimentation method which is highly suitable for children during early years. Experimentation method refers to the style of learning in which the child directly learns through the environment including people like community helpers, animals (types of animals), vegetables, fruits, market place, neighborhood etc. It is learning by doing

and through activities. This method promotes personal exploration of feelings and positive behaviour changes through learning.

During learning by experimentation the child starts involving all his senses during learning process by seeing, smelling, handling, hearing, manipulating the objects and developing the new product.

Advantages of experimentation

1. Positive qualitative learning takes place.
2. The child develops confidence and competence through active participation.
3. Manipulates and develops new product that enhances creativity, imagination and exploration capacity.
4. Develops ego, authority, autonomy and satisfaction.
5. Motivates the child for further learning.
6. Learning is a fun for the child and teacher.

1.4.3 Learning by Observation -observation learning is the process of learning where the child observes people, objects surrounding him and later repeats the same behaviour like elders. This method is also known as shaping or modeling.

Learning by observation involves four processes-

1. Attention- the child observes the people surrounding him.
2. Retention-the child stores the knowledge about how people talk, walk, eat, dresses etc.
3. Production-the child starts behaving and acting like elders.
4. Motivation-The child starts learning further from surrounding the more complex skills.

Example of learning by observation

1) An infant learns to make and understand facial expressions.

1. The child learns to chew.
2. After seeing that the elder sister is punished for taking cookies without eating food, the child first eats food and then asks for cookies.
3. The child learns to walk.

4. The child learns to talk same language which parents speak.
5. A child learns how to play a game while observing others.
6. A child shows that she has learned the basic steps of cooking a meal by doing so at a play kitchen in her classroom.
7. The child learns demonstration skills related to rhyme, stories, conversation, art activity and games by observing teacher.

Throughout life the person learns through observation.

1.4.4 Learning by Imitation-From six months onwards the baby imitates the simple things he is asked to do like clapping or putting doll or toy to sleep. Later he imitates what his mother does like cleaning, washing, cooking etc .He loves to get into his father's shoes and even tries to wear father's clothes. Child likes to put on grandparents reading glasses and pretend to read like parents. All this is learning and the child should be allowed to do whatever activities the child wants to do.

The child likes to explore books, things surrounding him, .turn over the toy basket and tries to put the toys back. A lot of learning is taking place by imitation. Children mostly imitate their parents, family members, teachers and friends and adopt their learning styles. Children are mirror images of their parents, so the positive as well as negative learning is imitated from parents by the child. So parents should be very much cautious about their behaviour with family members.

1.5 Social basis of learning:

1.5.1 Concept of Zone of Proximal Development: The zone of proximal development refers to the difference between what a learner can do with help and what he can do by himself. Lev Vygotsky ,a Soviet psychologist developed a concept of zone of Proximal Development .It is referred as ZPD which is described as the distance between the actual learning by the child without parents and teacher's support and the learning under the support of parents and teachers or with other class room children. It has two features. They are;

1) Subjectivity: This term describes the process of two children working on a particular task with different understanding and eventually come down to a common understanding. For example, 5years children start sorting out different vegetables, one child keeps different colour vegetables and another child start sorting out green leafy vegetables. Lastly they come to conclusion that all are vegetables but leafy vegetables are only green in colour.

2) Scaffolding: The teacher teaches through examples, teaching aids step by step and allow the children to ask questions so that the doubts will be cleared and children's active participation improves the quality of learning.

How children learn through ZPD:

1. Children construct their own knowledge .
2. Children are part and parcel of society and thus they learn through socio-cultural inter action.
3. The total Holistic development depends on interaction of people and thus the society always provide children the learning atmosphere, different learning tools and support system in the form of teachers to enhance learning process.
4. Learning leads to holistic development .
5. Language development takes place through social participation. Learning is best achieved through socially interactive process.
6. Teachers in ZPD acts like facilitator and guide to enhance learning.
7. Here learning is an experience based process of inquiring, discovering, exploring and doing.

1.5.2 Learning with the help of adults and peers:

Lev Vygotsky's Social Constructivist theory combines the social environment and learning. This theory states that social interaction leads to continuous changes in children's thoughts and behaviour that can vary depending on culture of the society.

Basically Vygotsky suggested that learning takes place due the interaction between children ,adults and peers. The three socio-cultural tools through which children learn are,

1)Imitative Learning :the children imitates their parents, family members, teacher and peer group members and acquire learning. For example, language development through how elders talk that includes mother tongue, regional language or foreign language , eating habits, socio-cultural behaviour that is the child mixes with social members, playing games with peer group members etc

1. **Instructed Learning:** It includes learning various concepts and strategies under the guidance of teacher which are unknown to the child. For example, the child learns under the guidance of teacher various stories, rhymes, conversation, readiness activities, art activities, life skills, good manners and games.
2. **Collaborative learning:** Here the child learns in groups. Teacher makes group of 3-5 children and they learn through collaboration. For example, 3-5 children participate in dramatization and learn the story or any concept in group.

1.5.3 Cooperative Learning:

Cooperative learning is an instructional method in which children work together in small, heterogeneous groups to learn effectively, qualitatively which adds fun in learning process. The teacher acts like a guide and facilitator.

There are 5 essential components of cooperative learning.

1. Positive interdependence- children when they learn together with lots of cheer, fun and happiness that leads to good qualitative learning.
2. Promoting face to face interaction- The children in cooperative learning sit together, work together and learn under the guidance of the teacher.
3. Group processing - Children in a particular group work together without any dispute.

4. Social skills-Social skills like, coordination, cooperation, participation, sharing, waiting for other group members are very important in cooperative learning.
5. Individual and group accountability: children work together and learn together.

Example of cooperative learning , Market concept-5 children participate in market lesson in which 3 children work as shop keepers in selling the goods while to 2 children act as buyers to buy the products.

Advantages of cooperative learning

1. Children learn effectively in group.
2. Learning is a fun for children.
3. This method is effective in all ability levels.
4. Children learn by imitating from other group members.
5. This method helps to develop positive interaction among group members.
6. It has holistic approach, it helps to develop physically, mentally, socio-emotionally and aesthetically .

Thus cooperative learning is the best method of learning during early childhood period.

UNIT-2: CARE AND EARLY STIMULATION FOR CHILDREN UNDER THREE YEARS

4.0 Introduction

Early childhood years i.e. first six years of an individual life are critical since growth/development in this period takes place at its most rapid pace. The child acquires most of its personal and social habits before the age of six. Early years of the child are plastic and impressionable. It is during these years that the bases for later development are laid.

There is important new scientific evidence that suggests the first three years of life are much more important in the long-term development of young children than previously believed. Researchers now confirm that the way parents/care givers interact with the young children and the experiences they provide them have a big impact on the young child's emotional development, learning skills, and how they function later in life. Touching, holding, rocking, talking, listening and reading, or just playing with a child dramatically influences the youngster's brain development.

What does a child need in the first three years of life to achieve their potential?

- A child needs to feel safe
- All children need to know that they are special
- A child needs to feel confident about what to expect from their environment
- A child needs a balanced experience of freedom and limits
- A child needs to be exposed to a diverse environment filled with books, music and appropriate toys.

4.1 Objectives

At the end of the unit you will be able to ...

- Define, understand the meaning, need and importance of early stimulation.
- Understand the value of local /cultural practices

- Gain knowledge on different areas of development of under 3 children..
- Learn about the materials used for stimulation.
- Need and role of quality day care centres in the development of young children..

4.2 Meaning and importance of early stimulation for children below 3 years.

4.2.1 What is early stimulation?

Early stimulation includes varied activities that stimulate the whole child. **It includes the experiences and the environment created by the caregiver to facilitate the development of a child.**

Early stimulation is the set of media, techniques, and science-based activities and applied systematically and sequentially. It is used in children from birth to age 6, with the aim of optimizing their cognitive, physical, emotional and social, to avoid undesired states in development and help parents / care givers effectively and autonomy in the care and development the young children . In simple stimulation, is a series of exercises and a continuous dialogue between the child and those who care for the child.

Children from birth receive external stimuli to interact with others and their environment. When we stimulate our babies we are presenting different opportunities to explore, develop skills and abilities in a natural way and understand what is happening around them.

There are many skills for which learning experiences are necessary. A child who gets an opportunity to listen to language develops a better vocabulary and the same applies for socio – emotional and cognitive skills. Early stimulation attempts at providing learning experiences to the child so as to enhance the child's development. These learning experiences should be planned based on the maturational level of the child. Stimulation should involve the activity which demands a close interaction between the child and the care giver/teacher.

Let's remember that Early stimulation in healthy children from any point of view is neither a therapy nor a formal teaching method.

Why is early stimulation is important for children below 3 years ?

The early years, especially the first three years of life, are very important for building the child's brain. Everything she or he sees, touches, tastes, smells or hears helps to shape the brain for thinking, feeling, moving and learning. Each time the child uses one of the senses, a neural connection is made in the child's brain. New experiences repeated many times help make new connections, which shape the way the child thinks, feels, behaves and learns now and in the future/It is a time of rapid cognitive, linguistic, social, emotional and motor development.

To understand the importance of early stimulation in the development of the child , we need to know how the brain develops in early years and impact of early stimulation on brain development.

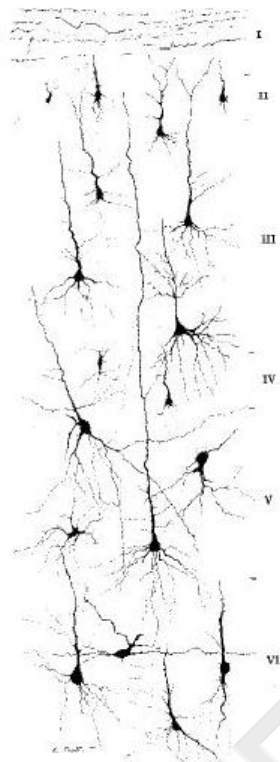
Brain Development in young children.

The latest technological and scientific development says that, it's not just genetics influencing brain development, but the environment as well. At birth, a baby's brain is incomplete, despite the fact that her brain contains billions of brain cells. If a baby's brain were fully developed in the womb, the baby's head would be too large to pass successfully through the birth canal. The first years of a baby's life are very important for developing the brain circuitry and architecture that will lay the foundations for future learning and behaviour.

- At birth, a baby's brain already has 100,000,000,000 cells. This is about the same number of stars in the Milky Way. Unlike the rest of a new baby's body, the brain is not complete at birth. In order to start working, the cells need to communicate with each other. As a baby starts to experience life, connections are made between cells - the more connections there are, the more the brain can do.
- A baby's brain develops so fast that by age two a child who is developing normally has the same number of connection as an adult. By age three, a child has TWICE as many brain connections as an adult.

'By the age of two, a child's brain contains twice as many synapses and consumes twice as much energy as the brain of a normal adult' (Nash, 1997, p. 1) and is 80% of an adult sized brain.

Birth to 2 Years--Synapses



Birth



Fig. 92. Drawings from Golgi-Cox preparations

2 years

Born with life time supply of neurons

Synapses form based on experiences

Mind is fine tuned to the world children inhabit

Birth
Years

Three Years

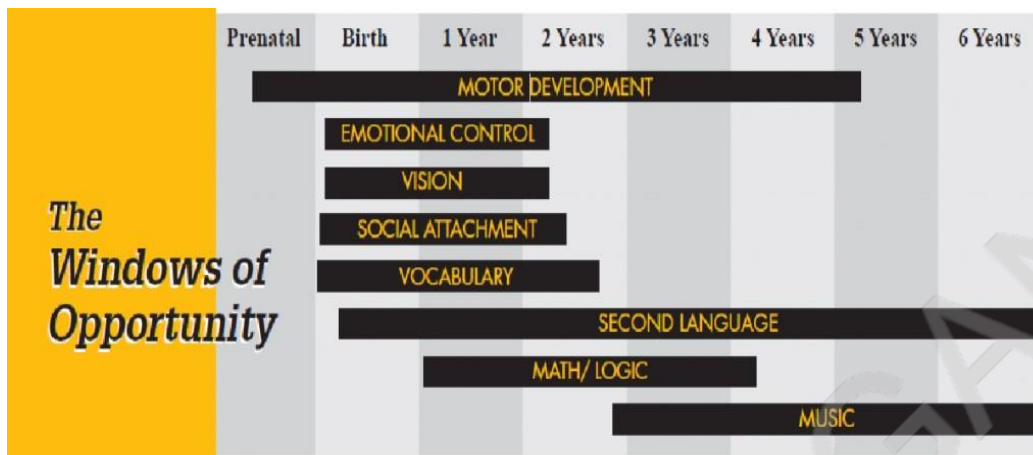
Fifteen

Technology, such as Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRIs), Computerized Tomography Scans (CT Scans) and Positive Emission Tomography (PET Scans), now offer the hard data indicating that experience and environment can change brain development. **Brain formation is dependent on brain activity, and because the developing brain is plastic, each and every early childhood experience stimulates, both positively and negatively, its neural connections.** Because the brain is highly efficient, it actually dumps neurons that are not being used while strengthening those that are used consistently. This process is called synaptic pruning, and makes it possible for your child to develop correctly. Though synaptic pruning extends through a normal lifetime, it is the most active during early childhood.

There are windows of opportunity when your child's brain is highly susceptible to environmental experiences. During the ages of 0 and 10, child's brains form trillions of connections, many of which will be discarded throughout the child's life, as the brain eliminates connections that are seldom or never used. Child will preserve only those connections that are reinforced through heightened experience. Further, those connections, not stimulated by mental and physical experiences, are discarded or pruned away. It is those mental and physical sensory experiences, by themselves that establish the critical windows of opportunity in child's evolving brain. When the child repeats an experience, it establishes a track in his/her brain and if that experience is repeated consistently, the synaptic lesson will not be reversed. **If these critical times for learning are missed, they may never be recovered.** Hence children should never miss these **windows of opportunity.**

What is Windows of Opportunity

Parents and caregivers can support these prime times of development, or 'windows of opportunity', by providing a range of experiences for infants that will strengthen their development. Vision, language, motor skills, maths, logic and music, feelings and emotions, all have 'windows of opportunity' – some last weeks, others last years.



The above graph clearly explains that, children's brains have optimal times of growth. During these times parts of the brain become much more active in response to what the senses absorb – growing and learning faster than at any other time in life.

The windows of opportunity are times when specific kinds of learning must take place for the child to develop to the fullest. Windows are open at birth for sensory connections: (sight, hearing, touching), for basic motor skills, for developing attachments, and for learning language. These windows close at different times. The window for sight, for example, closes early. At first, the baby does not see much detail, cannot focus both eyes on a single object, cannot coordinate eyes and hands, and does not have any distance judgment. By the time a child reaches their first birthday, they have developed most of their visual skills. Exp.Children who do not have the opportunity to see objects with details and varied textures, colours, patterns, and other attributes may have difficulty learning to read because they may have trouble visually with the details of letters: a 'b' looks just like a 'd', a 'c' looks just like an 'o', and so on. Making the most of these optimum learning times, the windows of opportunity, helps put children on the right track for learning.

These windows are only effective if there are effective environmental stimuli which the child can interact with. This means, to stimulate more language comprehension, you need to talk a lot with the child, especially during the language window. Or to help the child be more coordinated or active later in life, you should encourage him or her to run and play games, especially during the window to develop gross muscle coordination. To help your child become multilingual, you could teach him or her new language during the language window.

If you don't catch an all-important learning window, does that mean that you can just give up hope that the child will ever be a world-famous musician or physicist? Not necessarily. Remember that most of these windows just make it easier for a child to learn a certain ability. If you miss a window, it doesn't mean that the child can't learn a new skill, it just means that it will take more effort.

The following elements of a child's health are important in early brain development:

- **Nutrition** Breast-feeding or proper formula feeding provides the best nutrition and encourages positive mother-child interaction. A proper balanced diet plays a vital role in the growth and development throughout childhood.
- **Developmental Activities.** Direct face-to-face communication and reading between parents and their young child supports language development.
- **Early Identification of Developmental Problems.** This can lead to early intervention and referral to prevent or treat many developmental and medical problems.
- **Positive Environment.** Raising a child in a positive, loving environment has a huge impact on his or her development.

Hence the stimulating experiences are very important at this stage and we can say that..

Early stimulation.....

- ensures healthy development
- encourages children to play

- enhances growth in all domains of development
- develops social relationships and trust
- promotes environmental awareness

The positive early experience, such as good nutrition, safe and supportive environments, good care, stimulation and abundant learning opportunities interact with an individual's inherited characteristics (genetic endowment) and are crucial in enabling a child to reach his/her full development – or not!

Now as we understood that the experiences that children get in their early years have great impact on their overall development. Let's discuss how the local child care practices have an impact on the development of the child.

4.3 Understanding the value of local and cultural practices of care of infants.

India is one of the vast countries with extraordinary characteristics and diversity in terms of geographical, linguistic and socio cultural features. Different cultures have different practices, beliefs and values. They play an important role in care of young infants.

Now let's examine why should we understand the local/cultural practices and how does this help us as a teacher / care provider...

Everyone brings specific values, beliefs and assumptions about child learning and child development to their work with infants. Even 2 teachers who share same culture may not share same beliefs about what is best for young children. Conflicts can arise around these issues with colleagues/parents. Recognizing and acknowledging another person's point of view and coming to a shared solution is critical in providing high quality care to infants and toddlers.

It is helpful to understand and explore two particular areas when caring for infants and toddlers- self knowledge and knowledge of culturally informed teaching (Abt-Perkins & Rosen 2000)

Self knowledge is defined as a thorough understanding of one's own cultural roots and group affiliations before we as teachers can address the needs of young children. We must need become more aware of our own

cultural beliefs and practices. By looking into our own beliefs at our early relationships and childhood experiences, we can recognize the influence that these facts have on our role as care givers.

Knowledge of culturally informed teaching

Knowledge of culturally informed teaching comprises the information a caregiver needs to create a learning environment that welcomes children from diverse cultures. This environment includes not only the physical setup of the classroom but also a culturally sensitive pattern of care giver – child interactions and the use of approaches that engage and encourage the participation of children from variety of cultures. This observation helps in individualized learning experiences based on each child's needs.

Delpit (in Willis 2000, 6) notes, "the question is not necessarily how to create the perfect culturally matched learning situation for each ethnic group, but rather how to recognize when there is a problem for a particular child. " As we get to know different children, families and cultures we may find our care giving practices challenged in various ways

4.4 Importance of experiences for sensory –motor development, early language development and other domains.

Parent based stimulation is vital to ensure optimum growth and development in young children. Children learn through their own experiences, trial and error, repetition, imitation and identification. It is imperative that parents in the early stages and parents and teachers together in the later stages provide a broad array of stimulating experiences for the children to thrive and grow well. The caring stimulation that the child receives from parents not only provides a warm feeling but also has an impact on the brain both physically and biologically which determines the child's ability to respond to stimuli in later life. Although early stimulation often involves food, toys, household objects, and its most vital component is the caring adult. There should be a warm and continuous relationship between the child and the adult without which the activities would be meaningless. Parents are the primary teachers and through stimulation

programmes, an effort to be made to help parents to create a learning environment for their children.

Now we will discuss how a baby develops from birth to age 3 and how the parent / care taker can provide stimulating activities that foster the development.

Infants below six months

The first year of a child's life is a period of rapid development. Being with others, seeing them around, interacting with them helps infant learn. The stimulating activities in this stage should focus particularly on development of sensory capacities and strengthening of motor skills.

After the first month, child is awake and active for reasonable time duration, thus one can plan activities for him/her. For example, at the age of three months child starts tracing sounds, so, a simple activity such as making sound with spoon and bowl is also stimulating. Hanging play materials in their line of vision helps in developing sensory skills related to sight. A five month old is interested in kicking and other large motor activities—providing toys near her feet, for example, promotes motor development. Around six months of age, caregiver should provide opportunities to squeeze pickup, press and hold things to promote fine motor development of children.

Six months to one-year-olds

During this time a child starts crawling. The child's needs for exploration must be catered to by providing experiences with riding and string toys, rolling and chasing balls, tossing bean bags, etc. Lullabies and songs should form a part of the daily routine. Story telling should begin at this stage to promote language.

1 to 3 year olds

One year olds are able to stand up and are beginning to walk. By two years, a child is mobile and experimenting all kinds of gross movements both with legs and hands. During the period of two to three years of age, they grow in physical independence in a major way. A leap is witnessed in a

child's ability to communication and a tremendous increase in vocabulary and its usage. In personal-social domain too, a child moves from a comparative passive 'receiving' role to an active assertive interaction pattern. A child's curiosity leads to development of her/his understanding of all that is, and that happens around.

Now let's discuss how and what kind of early experiences will stimulate the Sensory -Motor development in young children.

Sensory-Motor Experiences:

Sensory and motor interaction provides for the foundation for a child's growth, development and learning within the world around them. Sensory stimulation/feedback and motor go hand in hand. You cannot have one without the other. The motor system drives the sensory stimulation and sensory stimulation/feedback drives the brain. It is critical for these skills to improve and develop to aid in behaviour and academic learning. Often times, children struggling with learning or behaviour have inadequately developed sensory and motor systems. It is crucial to improve motor skills, sensory detection, and processing before any higher learning, behavioural or academic changes can truly happen.

Sensory Skills

Much like underdeveloped motor skill, the same applies when there are atypical sensory deficits — smell, touch, vision, hearing, and balance. No sensory function works in isolation. All the senses are dependent on other sensory functions, which are dependent on a baseline and acceptable level of development. Engaging our senses is a powerful way to engage our brain. The senses are:

Smell: Food, perfumes, toys and whatever else is around can help your infant to start to understand the world around them. Your baby or infant will learn that different things smell differently. This stimulation helps your baby grow and learn.

Touch: The sense of touch is the basis for the child's tactile development. The child learns through touch. Hence children should be exposed to a

variety of tactile experiences where the child can use his/her fingers and hands to explore the world around him.

Vision: In infants, vision begins with an interest in light. Initially they show preference to familiar faces and objects and later develop interest in what is new and different

Taste: By four months they are able to distinguish between different flavours such as sweet, salty, sour and bitter. Nutrition in early life is increasingly considered to be an important factor influencing later health. Food preferences are formed in infancy, are tracked into childhood and beyond, and complementary feeding practices are crucial to prevent obesity later in life.

Hearing: In order to talk and communicate, children first need to listen to the sounds. The baby is exposed to a variety of sounds including the human voice and within a few days and at one month they are able to discriminate among different kinds of sounds.

Balance and spatial perception: Spatial awareness is the ability to understand and interact with the environment around you. Whether it be avoiding obstacles when walking, reaching out to grab a pencil or determining left from right these are all examples of tasks that require spatial awareness. Developing the skills to express and understand spatial skills are the first step in understanding spatial ability and awareness such as math skills, visual perceptual skills, and body awareness.

Here are 5 activities to help encourage the development of spatial awareness:

1. Obstacle Courses: The ability to negotiate an obstacle course requires a significant amount of spatial awareness. Vary the courses grading them according to the child's ability to move over, under and around objects.

2. Build and Create: Use Legos, blocks, and puzzles. Try Tangam puzzles. Try this free visual spatial puzzle crossing paths. Research has shown that parents who participated in guided block play with their children had significantly higher proportions of spatial talk. Guided block

play consisted of playing with the blocks along with guided instructions for how to build different structures.

3. Practice completing patterns. You could try Follow the Path or patterns

4. Movement Games: Participate in any type of movement games where children have to move around obstacles or friends. The ability to move around stationary objects is quite different than around moving objects which are unpredictable.

5. Provide verbal descriptions. Offer many opportunities for children to hear descriptions of where they are or where objects are in relationship to each other. For example – “The pencil is on the right side of the desk” or “Let’s step over the log”. Play games that require children to follow directions .

Motor Skills:

In almost every case, children who have been assessed with a developmental deficit in one or more areas are the kids who struggle with learning or behavioral issues. Invariably, these kids are the ones with inadequately developed sensory and motor systems. We often see they are uncoordinated, clumsy, and awkward with their gait. Motor activities involve a number of different skills, including:

- Muscle tone, strength, and coordination
- Rhythm and timing
- Bilateral coordination
- Gross and fine-motor skills
- Eye-muscle balance and coordination
- Vestibular balance and posture

Suggested activities for Sensory Motor Play (under 3 year old children):

- Jumping-jumping on different surfaces such as a trampoline, on the ground, from floor to couch, on a bed, etc.
- Crab walk-letting their hands touch different surfaces (grass, road)

- Tummy time (for babies) allows gross motor for pushing up on their hands AND for the child to experience different textures on their hands (carpet, bedding, grass, etc)
- Playing catch with a variety of objects with different textures. Catch can be played with stuffed animals, oranges, balloons, clothes, etc.
- Nature walks/spotting-nature exploration for touching leaves, grass, dirt and spotting colors, flowers, etc. working on visual tracking and searching
- Sand boxes for play with digging and feeling the sand on their hands OR feet.
- Sensory boxes with rice or beans for the child to reach in and find objects hidden in the beans or rice or scooping with a spoon in the beans or rice for fine motor skills.
- Playing with play dough and hiding small beads or coins in the dough to have your child "find" while manipulating the dough for harnessing fine motor skills
- Playing with finger paints for exposure to new textures
- Playing with food color
- Blowing whistles, bubbles, pinwheels or having a cotton ball race with blowing
- Playing with flashlights for treasure hunting around the house for hidden objects" for visual awareness and visual tracking.
- Making shadow puppets for fine motor skills and exposure to visual changes with lights.
- Doing dot to dot puzzles or mazes to increase visual tracking skills.
- Putting on lotion to experience different sensations on the skin with varied scents.
- Go on a texture walk, collecting things that are smooth, things that are bumpy, things that are soft and so on.
- Play water balloon toss to increase coordination AND exposure to a different texture in play.

When children are engaged with these kinds of activities, their senses get stimulated and the neural pathways get strengthened which helps in proper brain development in children. A child who does not experience these kinds of activities becomes difficult to reach his/her potential.

Importance of language development in young children.

The development of language is strongly interdependent with, and supports, child's brain development and cognitive development. Studies have shown that having a large vocabulary increases creativity and helps people to come up with new ideas. There are also numerous benefits to learning more than one language!

Talking, understanding others and knowing what to say are really important skills in life. Being able to communicate helps children make friends, learn and enjoy life to the full. The parent / adult care taker will be the child's first and most important teacher.

In other words, the development of language cannot be viewed in isolation, but is strongly connected to, and hugely important for child's overall development during the first years of life.

Promoting a learning friendly environment where the adult care taker reads age appropriate books and finds ways to play and have fun while teaching, will help accelerate child's language acquisition and start preparing him or her for school. It will also boost overall progress on other developmental milestones and help provide many more growth opportunities later in life.

Suggested activities for language development (under 3 year old children):...

- **Get the child's attention**

Face the child or sit down with them. Say his/her name before you start speaking. Talk about something you can both see in front of you. This helps them to learn what words mean.

- **Have fun together**

Use actions, sing, and make noises and funny faces. Don't be shy, being a bit silly helps get their attention and makes them laugh and can encourage language development.

- **Comments not questions**

Asking lots of questions can feel like it's a test. Make it a conversation. When you talk to the child comment on what he/she is doing and what is happening instead.

- **Give them time to think**

Children need more time than adults to think about what they've heard, and to decide what to say back. Give them time to respond, and look at them while you wait.

- **Use simple language**

Keep your sentences short. For example, "Food time now" or "Wow, you're building a tower".

- **Repeat what you say**

It's good to say the same thing over again. Babies and toddlers need to hear words and sentences lots of times to understand them and learn new words. This is key aspect of baby talk.

- **Make it easier for them to listen**

Turning the music, radio or TV off helps children focus on your words.

- **Build on what they say**

Adding one or two words to what they say helps the child onto the next stage of talking. So, if the child says "bus" you say "Yes, big bus".

- **Speak in child's home language**

It's important for children to learn their first words and sentences in their home language.

- **Make it easier for them to talk**

Dummies can get in the way of talking. Try to keep them just for sleep times. Take it out to talk.

- **Show them the right way**

Young children often make mistakes. Show them that you understand, rather than asking them to repeat words correctly. Say the word or sentence again correctly. If they say "Look at the dod", you can say "Yes, it's a dog".

- **Copy what they say**

Repeat back sounds, words and sentences. Whether its "la la" or "Oh, you liked the banana?", it shows you're interested and that sounds and words are important. This can help the child's speech development.

Importance of cognitive development in young children.

Cognitive Development. Cognitive development means how children think, explore and figure things out. It is the development of knowledge, skills, problem solving and dispositions, which help children to think about and understand the world around them. As a parent, it is important to foster your child's cognitive development as soon as he/she is born because doing so provides the foundation for the child's success in school and later in life. For example, research shows that children who can distinguish sounds at six months of age are better at acquiring the skills for learning to read at four and five years of age.

Suggested activities for cognitive development (under 3 year old children):

- Talking with the baby and naming commonly used objects.
- Letting the baby explore toys and move about.
- Singing and reading to the baby.
- Exposing the toddler to books and puzzles.
- Expanding on the child's interests in specific learning activities. For example, the toddler might show an early interest in plants, so you can take him/her on a trip to the farm to learn more about the different kinds of plants.
- Answering child's "why" question

Benefits of Early Childhood Development through Sensory Stimulation

This early childhood stimulation will give the child a developmental advantage over other children of the same age or level in more than 85% of cases. Such early-developed children ultimately do better in school, integrate better with peers, siblings and parents, they also tend to be happier and better adjusted overall according to numerous clinical studies . Teachers at the pre-school and primary school levels also note a higher level of social and educational integration among children who have had some type of early development stimulation

4.5 Suitable play materials for early stimulation

A misconception among adults, parents and teachers is that modern, expensive play resources are best for children's development. The materials used for stimulation need not be expensive. Play material for stimulation can be prepared by using the indigenous material available at hand.

Important aspects to be considered while selecting the material .

- Should be appropriate to the age of the child.
- Multi functional to the child's needs and interests which keep changing with the age.
- Easily available and cost effective.
- Inexpensive and easy to replace.
- Should be safe and not injurious to the child.
- Should be made from non toxic substances.
- Should be attractive and colorful.
- Should be easy and light to handle.
- Should not be so small that the child can swallow.

Age-appropriate resources:

Young children should be provided with age-appropriate play materials. This implies that toys should stimulate the fine and gross motor skills, as well as the social and cognitive development of the child. Toys should be challenging and motivating but compatible with the child's level of development to prevent over stimulation

Children like bright colours, interesting sounds and different textures. Objects from the natural and home environment, like fruits, kitchen utensils and fabrics often meet those criteria and are interesting play materials for young children. As such, all parents and teachers, regardless of income and resourcefulness, can provide their children with age-appropriate educational play materials.

safety of toys

Further, with young children it is important to take into account the safety of toys. In the first months children like to explore objects by sucking on them and when given the chance they will put objects and toys in their mouth. Therefore, adults should provide infants with rattles and toys that are not too small in size and do not have loose parts that can cause choking

Gender balanced resources

It is important that adults provide children with these type of toys and actively direct and encourage boys to these play areas. In summary, it is important to provide children with a variety of play resources, both girl-stereotyped and boy stereotyped resources as well as neutral resources, to elicit different types of play and give children a broad play experience

Culturally and contextually relevant resources It is important to pay attention to context and culture in the play environment of young children. Most play resources for young children are based on western models and do not take into account the cultural diversity and origins of children. Instead, a generalised perspective on toys and play environments is taken, which is reflected in the often universal design of early childhood centers.

Resources for children with disabilities

Play in typically developing children, and play in most children with developmental or intellectual disabilities, evolves in a similar sequence but at different rates (Cherney et al., 2003). Through listening, looking, smelling, tasting and feeling they are stimulated in their development and they gain

sense of their environment. Subsequently, play resources should be sensory appealing and motivating.

Play resources should be sensory appealing and motivating. Children with less severe mental and/or physical impairments often benefit from adaptive toys or ordinary toys that are modified to meet the children's needs (Hsieh, 2008). For example, non-slip materials could be attached to a toy to promote stability and to prevent the object from rolling out of reach; large puzzle pieces will enable children with motor delays to practice their motor skills. Children with specific disabilities, such as hearing or visual impairments have to be supplied with play materials that focus on and stimulate their other senses.

Play and learning resources can be sustainable in the sense that they are made of local, natural or recycled materials. For example, earth blocks, an eco-friendly alternative to Lego, are made of compressed coffee beans, tree bark, sawdust and even tea chaff. In addition, locally made toys can promote environmental awareness and sustainable values by actively involving children in the creation of new objects out of recyclable materials.

The following are the indicative resources for early stimulation and play.

Development: Reflexes and actions

Resources Needed: Objects that stimulate the senses (e.g. rattlers, mobiles, play mat).

Local Resources Home-based: Sight: mobiles (constructed from local resources, such as coloured stones, feathers).

Hearing: Rattlers (Made from gourds filled with rice).

Taste and smell: Different types of food appropriate for young children (mashed fruits, vegetables).

Touch: Treasure basket filled with local and natural resources (e.g. Paper, wooden blocks, shells, spoons, fabrics).

Role of Adults: provision of play materials and safe environment. Stimulating and structuring play. Adults can easily construct simple toys for young children out of local and natural resources. Everyday household

objects can also serve as play materials. Adults can compose a treasure basket filled with interesting objects to explore.

Outcome: Stimulates young children's social and cognitive development as well as their physical development (e.g. grasping)

Development: symbolic representations and pretend play

Resources needed: Objects that stimulate children's imagination (e.g. fancy dresses, household and natural materials that can represent imaginary objects)

Local resources Home-based: Fabrics and cloths can serve as costumes, which enable the child to pretend that he/she is a certain character (e.g. doctor, princess, etc). Similarly, other resources and materials available in the environment can function as attributes in the pre-tend play (broom becomes a horse, a stick becomes a wand etc.)

Role of adults: No direct role, children will actively look for resources to use in pretend play. (these resources are often available in the local or natural environment; there is no need to buy ready-to-use fancy dresses or attributes).

Outcome: Pretend play stimulates children's social, cognitive, and physical development and is both an indoor as well as an outdoor activity.

Development: Guided participation: observation and imitation

Resources needed: Variety of objects and items

Local resources Home-based: Guided participation can be established with many activities and materials. Social activities that require joint attention are probably most suitable for learning. For example parents could involve their child in everyday household activities, like sorting the vegetables and gardening.

Role of adult: the adult plays an active role in the guided participation as the child observes and imitates the adult. At the same time, the adult assists the child to achieve certain actions. This is a type of social scaffolding, as it

enables the child to achieve an action that it would not be able to achieve on its own.

Outcomes : Puzzles, wooden blocks. These are gender-neutral toys that can be used for joint interaction (e.g. building a tower of wooden blocks together). These toys mostly stimulate children's cognitive and social development and are mostly used indoors.

Development: Locomotor skills (crawling , walking)

Resources needed : Resources that promote locomotion (e.g push and pull along, walkers, ride-on, skippy balls,etc.)

Local resources Home-Pbased: Push and pull alongs can easily be created using a toy with wheels and a stick

Role of adults : Assisting and stimulating children in locomotor actions. Providing children with resources that encourage locomotor actions.

Outcomes: Push and pull alongs can be used outdoors (indoors if there is enough space in the classroom). They are gender neutral and stimulate children's physical development (locomotor skills).

Development: Object control skills

Resources needed: Objects that allow the performance of actions (e.g. balls, shape sorters, building blocks etc.)

Local resources Home based: (Wooden) blocks of similar sizes or different sizes promote children's object control skills as well as their cognitive development

Role of adults: Providing resources and assisting and stimulating play.

Outcomes: A ball can be used for a variety of activities. Circle games involving the throwing or kicking of the ball foster children's physical development and enhance their object control skills. Balls can be used indoors and outdoors and stimulates children's physical development (object control skills)

Development : General Development

Resources needed: Motivating and safe toys that are compatible with the child's level of development (e.g. sensory stimulating resources without - sharp edges/small parts/dangerous materials).

Local resources home-based: Structured toys resemble real life persons' objects, or actions (e.g. dolls, dollhouses, kitchen or working tools, toy cars). Unstructured toys can be natural materials, such as sticks, pebbles and blocks.

Role of adults: Provision of toys and supervision. It is important that available play resources are matched to the children's age and development. Young preschool children benefit more from structured or realistic play resources, as it helps them to structure their play. Older preschool children achieve highest levels of symbolic play with unstructured (unrealistic) play materials, as these enable them to use their imagination.

Outcomes: This helps emotional outlet in accepted way in children and helps in emotional development

Development: Play in children with disabilities

Resources needed: Adaptive or modified toys, like toys with salient features that are easy to handle by children with mental or physical impairments.

Local resources Home-based: Ordinary toys can be adapted by placing strings to increase stability; non-slip materials can be added to prevent toys from rolling out of reach.

Role of adults: Providing adaptive or modified toys and assisting and actively stimulating play. In many cases, ordinary toys can be adapted in order for them to be suitable for children with disabilities.

Outcomes: Toys in which one feature is central and that require the child to use one specific set of problem solving skills to handle the learning material can be beneficial for children with (developmental) disabilities, for example, large knobs can be used in puzzle adaptations.

Development: Sustainable values

Resources needed: Recyclable items, like plastic and cardboard packages, natural items, such as sticks, sand, stones, or shells.

Local resources Home-based: Everyday objects can be used to create new toys. For example, plastic or cardboard paper packages, sticks or skewers, and paper rolls could be used to create toy vehicles. Similarly, sticks, chestnut, and dyed wool can be used to make cobwebs. These natural materials are gender neutral.

Role of adults: Providing recyclable and /or natural resources. Stimulating children to create new toys out of used materials, promoting the reuse of materials. Providing children with information about the environment and the need for sustainable use of resources.

Outcome: Helps in experimenting and exploration and creativity in children.

Development: Cultural Knowledge

Resources needed: Resources relevant to context and culture.

Local resources Home-based: Ethnic dolls, culture specific costumes, books and posters in local language. These resources are mostly used in doors and include neutral toys as well as gender stereo types toys.

Role of adults: Providing children contextually and culturally relevant play materials. Resources from the local or natural environment that are easily available .

Outcome: Helps in understanding and enjoying their culture.

4.6 Need for essential nature of a day care programme.

Day care may simply be defined as care in a centre that can provide children with nurturance and learning opportunities that complement and/or supplement those provided at home.

Research shows that only high quality daycare can deliver well-being and appropriate development to young children. As an increasing number of mothers are in the workforce and most children ages 3 and older now attend a child care facility on a regular basis, it has become critical that young

children from all backgrounds should have access to high-quality child care and early education.

Parents can best meet all the needs by providing a healthy, loving, safe, and emotionally balanced home environment. Youngsters raised by caring, attentive parents in predictable environments are better learners than those who experience less attention in less secure settings. But for various reasons if children are sent to a Day Care centre then what are the essential things that should be looked for in the centre. Let's see.

The most important thing is having a consistent child care provider with a small student/adult ratio to allow for personal attention. Remember, the person taking care of the child outside the home is helping to shape the experiences that allow the brain to develop. In addition, the focus of daycare should be on social and emotional development and health and safety issues, rather than teaching subjects and facts.

Adequate space, clean and stimulating environment for learning.

The daycare centre should have enough space for all children to participate in all activities and which is hygienically maintained.

The other important aspect of a child care environment is it should be a stimulating environment which is conducive for joyful learning. For this, the environment should include the following:

- The number of quiet and active places in which children can play.
- The quality of the indoor and outdoor play spaces, and particularly the safety of the outdoor spaces.
- Whether the "sleeping space" for children allow them to nap peacefully

The other essentials include toys and games that are selected to meet a wide range of abilities and interests among the children. This is important to maximising the development of each child under their care.

Health and nutrition:

Health and nutrition of infants is very important. Day care has to provide healthy food, which is prepared hygienically and should be age appropriate. Day care providers need

to communicate with the parent regarding child's health , healthy food habits and about proper nutrition. The day care provider also needs to have knowledge on the immunization schedule and should check whether all children get administered the shots as per the schedule. Hence the daycare provider needs to have knowledge about the proper nutrition , health and immunization of young children

Physical safety - Safe and age appropriate environment

Babies and toddlers learn and grow by interacting with their environment constantly. This means that their environment needs to be both physically and emotionally safe and appropriate.

Great daycare centers' go above and beyond to ensure children's safety. This includes child proofing ,food safety practices, a well-kept and maintained play space with sets of toys (making sure no broken toys) and constant supervision.

A well child-proofed space will have:

- Covers on every outlet
- Cribs out of reach of windows
- Stairs blocked by a baby gate
- Clean toys in good condition (no broken toys)
- No small objects around that children could choke on (especially important in centers that cover multiple age groups)
- Potentially toxic substances (like medications and cleaning supplies) are secured

Safety, of course, is an important factor. As the children become older and begin to roll, crawl, and walk about, they need to be able to explore without fear of physical injury or harm. The daycare facility should be designed so that children can be supervised by both sight and sound at all times. Other safety basics, such as fire extinguishers and first aid kits, should be onsite and readily available for use if required.

Emotional security through love and affection, responsive care, positive social interaction ;

Children in the care centre will be emotionally secure when the care taker is.

Loving and Responsive

One who hugs, rocks, cuddles, seeks eye contact and enjoys the child...who responds to the baby's smiles and emerging skills and interests...who finds ways to expand upon children's play to help them learn new skills...who is sociable and interested in children. One who talks with the baby about what they do and see... a playful partner who introduces new ideas, objects and games...who supports children in building relationships with other children and adults.

Respects the child's individuality

One who understands and nurtures babies' development...who recognizes the baby's personal rhythms, style, strengths, and limitations...and tunes into these when planning the pace and time for eating, sleeping and playing...one who is comfortable accommodating to children's special needs or conditions.

Provides a stimulating and child-friendly environment

An area that is clean and safe so babies can explore their surroundings...filled with interesting and stimulating things to explore...set up to promote learning through free play...changed regularly to accommodate the needs of growing infants and toddlers...organized to have distinct eating and diapering areas and set up to be comfortable and practical for adults, allowing them to focus on the children.

Communication with parents for sharing child's experiences and mutual concerns, day Care centre routine:

Day care centres should have continuous and consistent contact with parents. Meetings with parents in the form of a workshop or group are useful as parents to learn from each other about childcare practices, behaviour issues and ways of disciplining children. Regular exchanges almost at a daily level have to be maintained between parents and caregivers

due to children's rapid rate of development. The milestones need to be tracked as well as enjoyed by both parents and care takers to keep abreast of changes and developmental delays, if any.

How to communicate with parents, what are the ways , let's look into it.

The home school connection plays a very important role in the development of young children. The caretaker, parent and the child, in this triangular connection each one is connected with each other. Hence the communication between each one is very important. As the children are very young and depend on both the parent and the care taker it is very important to have a flow of communication about the child between the parent and the care provider.

- This can happen very informally when parent goes to the centre to drop or pick up the child.
- When teacher specially arranges a meeting to discuss about the child or vice versa
- Care takers can send weekly newsletters /e newsletters with pictures of child involved in a activity and aren't also can share child's home activities which are extension of daycare activity.
- Technology also can be used for communication – phone calls ,emails, WhatsApp etc.

Communication between parent and the care provider in any form is very important in providing needed care for the young child.

A child in a daycare, cared by an adult who is not the parent, does not mean that his/her development is less-than-optimal development. In fact, it may be associated with enhanced development or even be a compensatory factor. However, in order to enhance development or serve a protective function, child care must be of sufficiently high quality. High-quality child care goes beyond being a safe place for children to include the provision of nurturing relationships and stimulating environments that organize and scaffold children's learning.

4.7 Summary

We have understood that how important is child's first three years of life for brain development and also understood the importance of stimulating environment, nourishment, and kind of stimulation they receive during these crucial early years.

By providing children with a wealth of positive experiences , parents , care givers and teachers set children up for success in their future years. Their success will contribute for a successful society.

Unit end questions:

1. Explain the importance of stimulation in early years of a child with examples.
2. Discuss in detail your local cultural activities which acts as stimulation for young children
3. Quality Day Care centres are need of the hour. Justify.

UNIT-3: PLAY AS A MEDIUM FOR LEARNING

Introduction:

Child begins to play from a very early stage. Baby observes around, moves hands and legs, observes and interacts with the things around them, whether by putting their fist or a toy in their mouth, touching any textured object, manipulating any material, curious to see, touch, listen to sound etc. All these spontaneous actions refer to that, they are **“Playing.”** The child explores environment and draws attention of others by babbling and cooing and that's how the interaction begins. Playtime helps baby to continuously master skills in all the areas of development and reinforce concepts that become important milestones at every stage of development.

The child continuously play and Play is the natural work of the child which is also the right of the child. No other activity offers such rich experiences for the development of the whole child except play.

Older children gain knowledge and skills while they play and they discover their own interests and passions. Child may find that they have a love for specific play activities such as jumping, observing others play, art activities or acting out an animal character etc. Playtime will encourage them to continue exploring their own interests and build skills which they use in their future.

It is role and responsibility of the adults/caretakers/teachers to make play as free or planned/structured with friendly and safe environment. Play is the heart of any preschool programme. All children need to participate in play (For ex. It is the building blocks) for establishing confidence, coping abilities, flexibility and positive interactions with others, develop observational skills, convergent and divergent thinking, learn by themselves about size, shapes, colours, patterns, similarities and dissimilarities etc and what not. Through play, child develops physical, cognitive, language and socio emotional skills and will be able to apply these skills as they grow into a young adult.

Objectives:

To enable the student teacher to

- Know and understand the need and importance of play in childhood stage in the different developmental areas.
- Develop knowledge and understanding about different theories and ideas about play.
- Appreciate influence of play as a medium for child's learning.
- Develop observational skills and knowledge on developmental pattern of play in the different stages of growth and development of the child.
- Plan and apply play as a central activity to develop thinking skills as well as different areas of developmental skills
- Create play environment by setting up learning corners for children to interact with peer group, play material/toys .
- Learn about the role played by play environment in the preschool /classroom in child's learning.
- Understand and direct parents/community in developing a positive thinking on role of play in child's learning and to get involved at home and in preschool in sharing their skills and experiences.

3.1 Definition of Play, Difference between play and work

3.1.1 Introduction

We observe children of different ages right from birth are engaged in play in different ways. Some children play by observing other children and some play individually with or without material, some in groups with other peer group, younger children, pets etc. Children enjoy, learn, lead, participate, share etc. in this process. Basing on observations of children, different philosophers and psychologists have propounded various theories of play and provided different definitions for the word 'play';

3.1.2 Objectives

The student teacher will be able to understand

- What is play, and definitions of play
- He differences between play and work
- Importance of play for children and play for preschoolers

What is Play?

Play is a term so loosely used that its real significance is apt to the different spontaneous actions of a child with or without any play material...Play means any activity engaged in for the enjoyment it gives, without consideration of the end result.

3.1.3. Definition of play

Play is often a full body activity for young children that helps to develop skills which they need later in life.

Bailey and Wolerg (1984) cited Weisler's and Macall's review of several definitions of play and offered the following. Play consists of behaviour and behavioural sequences that are organism/ living one dominated rather than stimulus dominated, behaviour that appear to be intrinsically motivated and apparently performed for "their own sake" and that are conducted with relative relaxation and positive effect.

Other definitions of play:

Dulles: Play is an instinctive form of self-expression having an emotional value.

Elmar Mitchell and Bernad Mason have gathered many definitions of play that are traditionally used. They are ,

Schiller: "The aimless expenditure of exuberant energy"

Froebel: "The natural tender basic faculties and attributes of childhood.'

Spencer: "Superfluous actions (acting) taking place instinctively in the absence of real actions activity for the immediate gratification without regard for ulterior benefits "eg.(child., acting like a police and enjoying as

if he is the police **Lazarus:** "Activity in itself- free, aimless, amusing, or diversifying."

Hall:" The motor habits and spirit of the past,, persisting in the present, gross instinctive practice, without serious intent of activities, that will later become essential to life."

Seashore:" Free self-expressions just for the pleasure of expression."

Dewey:" Activities not consciously performed for the sake of any result beyond themselves."

Shand: "A type of play directed at the maintenance of joy'

According to Frost and Klein (1979) **the characteristics** of play are:

- 1) play is active
- 2) play is spontaneous
- 3) play is fun
- 4) play is serious and play is linked to exploratory work / play behaviours and to learning.

Spooked enumerates the features of play behaviour as follows

- Play is intrinsically motivated.
- Play is characterised by attention to means rather than attainment of specific goals. Goals are self-imposed and play behaviour is spontaneous.
- Play occurs when objects are familiar. It follows exploration of unfamiliar objects. Children impose their own meanings on the activity and internally control it.
- Play is related to instrumental behaviour. They can be non-literal.
- Play is free from externally imposed rules and the rules of play that do exist are not iron clad.
- Play requires that its participants be actively engaged in the activities..

Understanding these definitions of play help teachers and adults to plan and use play as central programme for the child to form the base for their total learning, holistic and future development. Play is included as an

important activity in preschool programme planning which plays a key role in the early childhood education?

3.1.4 Play and Work

Children are playful by nature. Their earliest experiences exploring with their senses lead them to play, first by themselves and eventually with others. In the growth and development of an individual child, play has been identified as a pervading significant factor which acquires prominence in the field of education. Historically, the earliest attempt to define play was to differentiate it from work. Early writers thought that while play is aimless and useless, spending time for enjoyment and play is natural and when ever, wherever the child likes to play without others' influence. (NCERT Publication, 1964) and work is to be planned and goal directed. This view has been accepted by the scholars and they assert that play activities and its derivatives have always been an essential part of the educational programme.

Hurlock (1981) differentiates "work from "play". Work is an activity towards an end while play, the end result of the activity is of little or no importance. Any activity that is directed towards an end other than enjoyment cannot be rightly called play. The enjoyment aspect of play, thus is an essential element of play. But at the same time, play as a vehicle of learning received acceptance during the first quarters of the 20th century.

3.1.5. Play is work for preschoolers

Medows (1986) notices the distinction between work and play. 'Play' is seen as voluntary and not obligatory. Voluntary activity is seen as free, absorbing, spontaneous, enjoyable, and not serious and done for oneself. Hence play is a voluntary pleasurable activity- teacher and planners can take this as a vehicle for learning and plan play activities for learning. The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) has included play as a criterion in its accreditation process for programs for young children. "They call it their work," says Peter Pizzolongo, associate

director for professional development at NAEYC. "When they're learning and playing with joy, then it's a positive experience. They develop a positive approach to learning."

Child enjoys in play, play is the work of the child, work is planned with a purpose and it is (Play) universally regarded as child's way of learning. They love to play and be happy when they are given freedom to explore and experiment through play, it has been observed that play has a positive effect on development across all domains,. The preschool curriculum therefore gives a great deal of emphasis on play as a medium that provide opportunities to children to interact with the environment and with one another in order to construct knowledge..(Play can be of free play and guided or structured play. Free play is initiated by children and adult supervision is minimal whereas guided play is initiated by the teacher with special learning objectives in mind.)

3.1.6 Summary

To sum up, the difference between play and work in psychology is the same as the difference in the ordinary world. While play is any activity which is primarily for pleasure and recreation, Work is any mental or physical activity which produces a tangible or intangible product. There are critical differences between play and work. Play is mostly a self- chosen activity by the child not prescribed either by the parent or the teacher. Work on the other hand has a specific objective and intent with a prescribed outcome. Various philosophers and Psychologists, Educationists have defined play in different dimensions and in different educational contexts. Play is an important part of the childhood development. Through play, children learn about shapes, colours cause and effect and themselves. Besides cognitive thinking, play helps the child learn social and psycho- motor skills. Play takes different forms for different children and its definition entails many aspects.

Check your progress.

1. What is the definition of play in dimensions as per psychologists and philosophers ?
2. Natural activity of the child is play is play –Explain

3.2 Brief over view of theories /ideas about play: Surplus energy theory, play as superfluous activity (Spencer): The practice theory of play, Symbolic play. The recapitulation theory of play (Hall) Representation (Piaget, Vygotsky) play as viewed by Freud and psychoanalytical theory.

3.2.1. Introduction

Play is not wasted time, but rather time spent building new knowledge from previous experience. Play enables children to make sense of their world. Children possess a natural curiosity to explore and play acts as a medium to do so. Educationalists and child psychologists basing on their long time observations of children at play and Research., shared their observations and developed in the forms of theories of play They viewed play as natural process which spontaneously occur as child grow and develop. The theories of play formulated are interrelated and form a guidance for caretakers in supporting children.

- Play is pleasurable and enjoyable.
- Plays have no extrinsic goals; there is no prescribed learning that must occur.
- Play is spontaneous and voluntary.
- Play involves active engagement on the part of the player.
- Play involves an element of make-believe

3.2.2. Objectives

The student teacher will be able to

- Appreciate various observations of children at play
- Understands the various theories proposed by eminent educators.

3.2.3. Play Theories

Play perhaps is the most authentic expression of child's behaviour which today gained phenomenal importance and sophistication. It has been

subject to a wide range of criticism and evaluation. Several theories have been proposed up since then. Early scholars of the late 1800 and 1900 stood the common ground that play was natural to a human organism and that it fulfil the biological needs of child's development. The theories proposed by different observers are given in the following table in brief.

Theories of Play

Theories	Reasons of Play	Greatest benefits
Surplus Energy (H.Spencer)	To discharge the natural energy of the body	Physical
Renewal of Energy (G.T.W.Patrick)	To avoid boredom while the natural motor functions of the body are restored	Physical
Recapitulation(G.S. Hall)	To relive periods in the evolutionary history of the human species.	Physical
Practice for Adulthood (k.Groos)	To develop skills and knowledge necessary for functioning as an adult.	Physical, Intellectual
Psychoanalytic(S.Freud, A.Freud,E.Erickson)	To reduce anxiety by giving the child. a sense of control over the world and an acceptable way to express forbidden impulses.	Emotional, Social
Cognitive (J.Bruner, J.Piaget,B.Sutton-Smith)	To facilitate general cognitive development to considerate learning that has already taken place while allowing for the possibility of new learning in a relaxed atmosphere.	Intellectual, Social
Arousal Modulation (D.E.Berlyne, G.Fein.M.J.Ellis)	To keep the body at an optimal state of arousal. To relieve boredom and to reduce uncertainty	Emotional, Physical
Neuropsychological (Q.Weloning ,D.Fitzgerald)	To integrate the modes of information processing carried out by the right and the left cerebra hemisphere.	Intellectual, Physical
(Hughes et.al.1996)		

- **Surplus energy theory**

Herbert Spencer propagated surplus energy theory. This theory postulated that a quantity of energy is supplied to an organism or living child/ person which is used for survival. When a child is left with excess energy, he tends to engage in play activities.

Herbert Spencer believed that play is carried out for the sake of the immediate gratifications involved without reference to ultimate benefits (Smith and Lowie, 1998). But this view has been criticized by theorists like G.T.W. Patrik. He propounded the Relation Theory in which he argued that play is a means to replenish the extended energy through the involvement in a relaxing activity.

- G. S. Hill explained play in relation to primitive activities of organisms./living thing. He thought that play was a means for children to work through primitive atavisms, reflecting our evolutionary past. The function of play was thus cathartic in nature, and allowed the 'playing out' of those instincts that characterized earlier.
- **K. Gross** The German philosopher K. Gross exposition was that play is a prior experience for all future mature behaviours. But again the theory lacks comprehensiveness and is not supported by scientific evidence.

All these theories lack precision and evidence. At the same time they succeeded in focusing children's play as the central theme of childhood educational programmes.

- **Freud** Twentieth century theories attributed psychological significance of play

Over the physical. The Psychoanalytic Theory propounded by Freud stressed

Emotional social benefits of children's play. For Freud play is primarily anxiety Objective as well as instinct-reducing mechanism.

Freud considered play as a beneficial activity, allowing children to master difficult situations. Child can use fantasy play situations to act out adult roles gaining a feeling of mastery that allows him to cope with reality situations. The child can use play to act out (Role play, dramatic play etc) personally painful occurrences and to master the pain by coming in grip with it in the fantasy of the play situation.

- **Diarle** (2000) is with that of the opinion that Freud genuinely attributed the first psychological functions to play. Children, need play because they do not have more sophisticated and logical ways of dealing with anxiety producing events. Children repeat everything in play that they cannot deal within life, and in so doing they change from being passive victims of their situation to becoming active master. These conflictive actions, Freud said; take on such patterns in play as wish fulfilment and compensation. Children get satisfaction and fulfils their desire by enacting, expressing and role playing by attributing the thoughts and actions in play when opportunities are given to them . When allowed freely also they express their wishes in their own way by role playing.

- **Erikson**

Woods (1998), disagreeing with Freud, points out that play is a means to build up child ego or sense of self through a variety of physical and social skills. play enhances self-teaching, as the child often attempts to organize and master to think and plan through the medium of "playing out".

Further, Erikson argued that children are partners with their futures in play because play seemed to serve as a metaphor for their lives. When children grow up, their adult life style will get implicit in their childhood free play. It IS through play that they learn to deal with disappointment.

- **Cognitive Theorists like J. Bruner, S. Sutton Smith and J. Piaget**

Regarded children's play as an instrument of cognitive development.

- **Bruner**

Smith and Lowie (1988) emphasize Bruner's suggestion that play in the advanced mammals, and especially in human children, serves both as practice for mastery in skills, as an opportunity for trying out new combinations of behaviour in a safe context. He clearly influenced by Gross and Vygotsky, noted that the increased dominance of play during immaturity among higher primates serves as practice of the technical social life that constitute human culture. Along with Bruner, Sutton Smith maintained that play helps children to solve problems in a stress free situation which later enables them solve complex problems.

- **Jean Piaget**

J. Piaget. Piaget believes that the development of the human intellect involves two related processes: assimilation and accommodation. According to Piaget, play is a way of taking the outside world inside and manipulating it to so that it fits a person's in the child's developing intellect and remains, to some extent, as always present in behaviour. Piaget does not consider play as equal to intellectual development. For him intellectual development takes place through adaptation, which involves both, accommodation and

assimilation, and yet play retains its character after a period of in the child's developing intellect and remains, to some extent, as always present in behaviour consolidation.

Woods (1998) has emphatically pointed out that Piaget considered play to be characterized by the primary function of assimilation over accommodation. The child incorporates events and objects into existing mental structures. As the child evolves through cognitive developmental stages there is an equivalent manifestation in play behaviours.

- **Practice theory of play and Symbolic play**

First, sensory motor play is practice play involving repetitious actions, which gradually become purposive. When language and representations emerge, the child is able to play symbolically. However this is a solitary affair directed initially towards self, and is a simple ability, for instance, to pretend to go to sleep out of the context of reality. Soon, the child will move from this self-reliance to other reference, e.g. He or she will put teddy bear to sleep. This is followed by the ability to use objects symbolically, e.g. A peg serves as a substitute for a doll. Finally the child is able to make sequential combinations i.e. a whole play-scene. Socio-dramatic play is evident between four and seven years, when the child engages in pretend play with others. Play thus moves from purely individual, idiosyncratic, private process and symbols to social play and collective symbols. A s play is about assimilation, pretend play serves to enable the child to relieve past experiences, rather than to create possible future ones.

- Vygotsky. Fromberg (1993) has observed that for Vygotsky the value of play is related to both cognitive and affective development

through the fulfilment of child's needs, incentives to act and motivations. The maturing of new needs and new motives for action are a dominant factor in development. Through play, children satisfy certain intrinsic needs. In order to understand play, we need to understand the special character of these need inclinations, incentives and motives. This links with Vygotsky's ideas about learning and initiations. Through play children are motivated to learn and hence the learning that occurs in meaningful context becomes a spur to further motivation and hence to further learning. Vygotsky considered play as a leading source of development in the preschool years and considered pretend play as a means to liberate the child from situational constraints. The child's capacity for representational thought now allows a greater variety of cognitive activities and thus a greater range of exploration. Children can now play more complex ways than ever before, including elements of fantasy and re-enactment. (Gallotti, 2001).

Vygotsky considered that the developmental course of play is characterized by the changing relationship between imaginary situations and rules in play. In free play, children create an overt imaginary situation with rules. These are sometimes implicit and sometimes explicitly negotiated at the onset of play or during the development of play sequence. Children establish rules about roles, proper actions and behaviour. They are to a large extent dependent on the play context and are the preconditions of successful experiences (Fromberg, 1993). Play for Vygotsky is mainly role play and he was concerned with functions as developmental activity. He regarded play as the leading source of development in that preschool years, but not the dominant form of activity.

Vygotsky discussed play as arising from social pressures, i.e. social and emotional needs. For Vygotsky, play is always a social symbolic activity. Even when a child plays alone, there will be implicit socio-cultural themes, eg., toys are cultural inventions and role play entails socially constructed rules for behaviour and interaction. Vygotsky believed that solitary play was a later development than social play, and that genuine play emerged at about **3** years of age of the child. Genuine play has two main characteristics, namely the imaginary situation and the rules implicit in that imaginary situation. Woods has highlighted Vygotsky's opinion that it is through play that the child creates the *proximal* development. In play a child is always above his average age, above his daily behaviour: 'In play it is as though he was a head taller than himself.' Through these words Vygotsky argued that in play children's actions and behaviour are influenced by contexts and situational constraints (Fromberg, 1993).

Arousal Modulation theorists like D. Berlin, G. Fein and M.J.

Ellis considers play as a drive in the central nervous system of humans to keep our bodies at optimum level of arousal. At extremely high or low arousal levels a person is uncertain or confused. To keep the arousal at optimum level, human beings explore the environment. But when the environment does not provide adequate stimulation, the child resorts to play as an alternative.

- **Lessle**

In modern times, thinkers like Lessle found pretend play as a means whereby a child develops knowledge about his or her own and other peoples' thinking or in other words Meta cognition.

- **Weiner and Fitz**

Recent studies in human behavioural genetics have shed light upon an interesting question of biological factors influencing children's play. Wiever and Fitz Gerald prove that symbolic play is the function of integration of both functional and asymmetrical human brain. The left hemisphere processes information in analytical, conceptual and abstract ways and is mainly responsible for verbal functioning. The right hemisphere controls nonverbal, specific, affective and perceptual sides of human behaviour. The right hemisphere dominates the preschool years. On the contrary the left hemisphere exerts concrete influence during the late childhood. An integration of both these spheres, which happens at a later stage prepares the background for heightened interest in symbolic play. While engaging in play children may continuously change their play routines and explore various possibilities and gradually come to understand the conceptual significance of play, they experiment with and acquire functional understanding. As understanding is attributed to the left hemisphere, in nutshell, Neuro-Psychological theorists view play as the function of integration-one which is perceptual, physical and structural and another abstract and conceptual.

3.2.4. Summary:

Early theorists as well as those of the present day have been fascinated by the way children play. Theories of Play were first developed during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Four theories affected the perception of why and how children play : the surplus energy theory, the recreation theory, the instinct theory and the recapitulation theory. In surplus energy theory, child builds up an excess of energy, and that active

play is necessary to get rid of the surplus energy. The recreation Theory focuses on play as a way to recuperate from fatigue experienced from hard work. In other words play restores energy and provides more benefit to the body than idleness. The Instinct theory proposed by Rousseau suggests that play is inherited and that the child will engage in behaviour and activities instinctively. In recapitulation theory, G. Stanley Hall attributed play to heredity. Curtis (1916) explained that in this wild life of the savage, there were certain activities which were almost universal. There were universal activities of savage man throughout the days of unrecorded history and it is these same activities that survive in the play of the child.

Thus children's play has fascinated many educators, child psychologists, and scientists for centuries because through play children learn to be creative and use their imagination. If what children learn best is what they learn through play, then play should not only be legitimate method of teaching during early childhood years but should be the required method.

Check your progress

- 1. Theory of play and symbolic play ----- Explain**
- 2. Explain Vygotsky's considerations regarding play?**
- 3. What is surplus energy theory ?**

3.4 Developmental pattern of play during infancy, preschool and primary grades: Unoccupied behaviour, solitary play, onlooker behaviour, parallel play, associative play and cooperative play; games with rules.

3.4.1. Introduction

Most infants learn to explore environment with all of their senses: seeing, touching, hearing, tasting and smelling. Through safe exploration, they also begin to develop ways of learning and gathering information. Child development is in sequence in coordination with physical, cognitive, language social and emotional. Understanding children's development, observing children's play on their own as well as with toys and people as they grow, help caregivers to meet young children's unique needs and interests and support their development and learning. Childs play is sequence and scaffolding. Children's past experience development play an important role in gaining new experiences with continuous development. (Ex: Researchers have found that 12-month-old infants can remember and copy some actions they see up to four weeks later, even without practicing the actions in the meantime (Klein & Meltzoff 1999).)

3.4.2. Objectives:

The student teacher will be able to

- Understand the development sequence of child from birth to early child hood period
- Develop relationship with the child developmental stages and the play sequence
- Understand and curious to observe children and assimilate the lend knowledge of play patterns.

3.4.3 Child development- age and play sequence

The examination of children's play explicates several stages of evolution both structural and its essence.

- In the first year children's play is sensory-motor in structure and function. By the end of the first year it turns out to be discriminative representational in play modes. This lateral development includes decontextualized behaviour, development of self, -other relationship,

object situation and sequential combination. Bonstain has rightly pointed out that during early childhood, play progresses in sophistication, as it moves from sensory motor exploration through non-symbolic activities and eventually to expressions of pretend play. At that point, children engage in acts that may be detached from real objects, and they enact experiences and events through symbolic gesture.

- At the end of the decontextualized behaviour, the child demonstrates familiar behaviour plainly without the use of objects. It takes the help of several objects by the middle of the second year, which of course, is the beginning of the second mode of play.
- Child's play at the end of twelve months is centered around its own body. But play acquired the merit of other orientation, the other being essentially inanimate objects of availability. Between 20 and 30 months, the other becomes active representation where in which the child acquires the ability to identify one object with that of the other (object substitution), which later becomes the basis of social development of the individual.
- Piaget described a developmental sequence from practice play, through symbolic play, to game with rules, while acknowledging that these were overlapping stages. Thomas(1996) rightly emphasized that Piaget based his taxonomy of play on his theory of cognitive development and argued that in each stage of development certain types of play become predominant. Thus in the sensory -motor stage (the first two years of life) practice play is common. This consists of

repetition of patterns of movement or sound, beginning with sucking and babbling and finally developing into reacting with the environment in ways in which activities are varied systematically and their effects monitored.

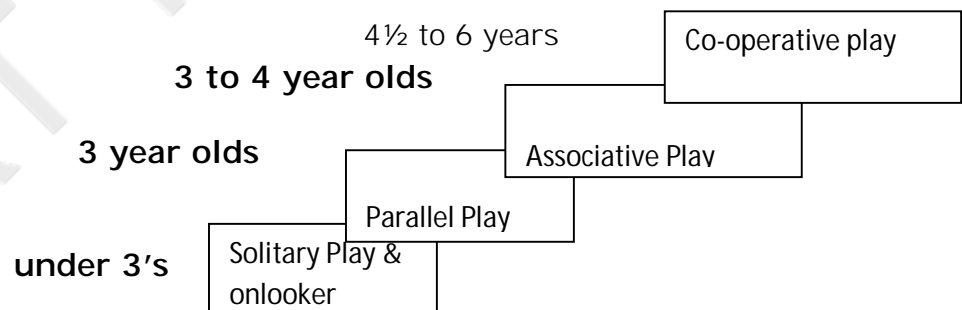
- After the second year, the child moves into the preconception stage with ability to master symbolic functions. Games reflect this change by play becoming symbolic-games of make believe. This is exemplified by the child's use of objects as things different from their apparent intention. Children also begin to place themselves in symbolic relationships with the external world.

In the view of Kohlen (1960) the play of a little child at first is essentially individual and non-social, though the two-year-olds will probably be interested in watching the play of others. A child of three shows progress in this direction as the amount of ground play steadily increases in the years that go by, if the companionship of other children is freely offered. In the words of Lissa (1939), during the pre-school years, the child's play is of three main types (1) Active physical play by means of which the child coordinates and gain control of his body and its complicated mechanisms; (2) Play concerned with investigation, exploration and manipulation, that leads to mastery of materials and creativity (3) Imaginative or dramatic play of the "Let's pretend" sort into which fantasy frequently enters. Smilansky postulated a four fold sequence; from functional play (similar to practice play), to constructive play, then dramatic play and finally game with rules (Smith and Lowie, 1988)

Bailey and Woolerg (1984) has rightly pointed that the conclusion of Sutton-Smith that though different levels of play predominate at different ages, each type of play follows a sequence in its own right, cutting across infants and preschool children. Sutton-Smith identified four modes of children's play (excluding social play). These include imitation - copying the behaviour of others, exploration - finding out what can be done with things and how they work, prediction - testing assumptions about the effects of behaviour, and construction - putting things together. It is true that the sequence of play interests never vary. Different types of play follow one another, reach other **peak**, and fade out to be replaced by the next in Nature's well-ordered succession. This sequence is closely related to general development.

3.4.4 Play pattern

Play pattern of children indicates developmental change



- **Onlooker behavior** - Playing passively by watching or conversing with other children engaged in play activities.
- **Solitary independent** - Playing by oneself.
- **Parallel** - Playing, even in the middle of a group, while remaining engrossed in one's own activity. Children playing parallel to each other sometimes use each other's toys, but always maintain their independence.

- **Associative** - When children share materials and talk to each other, but do not coordinate play objectives or interests.
- **Cooperative** - When children organize themselves into roles with specific goals in mind (e.g., to assign the roles of doctor, nurse, and patient and play hospital).

The parents should create opportunities for the child to explore. Instead of worrying about how you think your child should be playing or what you expect them to do with a certain toy or in a specific situation, let your child decide. When children have control of a situation, they learn to listen to their own cues and promptings, making learning developmentally appropriate for them, and also fun and engaging. Support and guide: Just like parents support a child learning to walk by providing a steady hand when needed, being present and engaged in your child's play gives you the opportunity to support them when they need it.

3.4.5 Summary

Play and activity are the best medium for Preschool education. It offers opportunities to explore, experiment, manipulate and experience the environment thus, children construct their knowledge. The curriculum suggests the play activities, which have balance between different kinds of play like free and guided, active and passive, indoor and outdoor, and structured and unstructured play. It also gives opportunity for self-initiated play/activities emerged through their interest and choices.

Check your progress

- 1. Link child developmental stages with play pattern and describe the types of play**
- 2 What is cooperative play? describe.**

3.5 Importance of play as medium of learning for a child; nature of play and its significance doe different domains of development; Symbolic play and development of language; encouraging stereotypes through play in children.

3.5.1 Introduction

Play is a fundamental right and a vital component of the life of every child. It has a direct impact on physical, mental and social wellbeing. Through the play process, a child Transforms from childhood to a healthy adult with the required skills such as cognitive, motor, psychological, health, education, communication and creativity to be a future citizen of a nation Through play, children develop skills that will be used in future

Play is a natural activity of young children and is an essential part of learning. Through play children develop:

- Communication skills
- Small-motor and gross-motor skills
- Observational and organizational skills
- Problem solving skills
- Concepts and skills
- Creative and thinking skills
- Positive sense of self.

Since children learn naturally through purposeful play, children will be encouraged and challenged to interact with peers and materials in a stimulating learning environment. In this way, they will discover their own intellectual, social, and physical abilities through self-directed learning activities that they find meaningful and satisfying. Children at preschool years meet their unique needs by appropriating different play situations. Every child develops physically, mentally and emotionally at varying depth. Physical play is the basis of Neuro-Muscular development of children.

3.5.2 Objectives

To enable the student teacher to

- develop knowledge about how children learn through play
- develop skills to implement play for the different developmental areas.

3.5.3 Importance of Play as a medium of learning for a child

Play is the primary mode through which children begin their learning .It also supports the all round development of the child. Yet many a times teachers and parents are in a dilemma on account of -

- Distinction they draw between children's play and real learning.
- Looking at play as a pleasurable, but otherwise non productive activity,
- Confusion whether play can help children in acquiring the necessary skills in required to support later academic learning.

This confusion arises on account of looking at curriculum with separated subjects for instruction. Young children's development begins with early-undifferentiated experiences hence the need for integrated teaching and learning which is distinctively provided by play-way methodology. For young children play is voluntary, meaningful, active, symbolic, rule bound, pleasurable even when dealing with serious matter. Hence play becomes significant in children's development. Play leads to development. Teachers can see this taking place as the surface behaviour of children's play reflects their deeper understanding. Play is not enrichment of work nor should it be a release from work that is perceived to be drudgery. Play doesn't limit itself to an outdoor or indoor game nor can a teacher simply say to children "Go Play" and then hope for the best. Play is not a separate component but is integrated in every activity of ECE programme.

Nature of play and its significance for different domains of development:

Although play is a difficult concept to define, it is very easy to recognize. Children actively involved in play may be engaged in a variety of activities, independently, with a partner, or in a group. Because play is closely tied to the cognitive, socio-emotional, and motor development of young children, it is an important part of developmentally appropriate early childhood programme.

The following lists the areas we cover inside and outside to enhance development in all areas of Physical , language , social , emotional , cognitive,

Inside

- Manipulative
- Dramatic Play
- Creative area

- Language area
- Music area
- Sensorial activity area

Outside

- Sandpit
- Water Play
- Climbing and Balancing
- Art and Craft
- Collage

Group Times

- Language – news, re telling events, stories, picture talk, felt boards, puppets, dramatic play , feely bags ,memory games, listening skills, following directions
- Music – finger plays, commonsense rhymes , songs , nursery rhymes , movements , dancing relaxation , records , tapes , scarves , musical instruments.

Benefits of play

- Through play, children develop skills they'll use in their school years.

Expectations – play-Physical development

- Both gross and fine motor development occurs through play. When kids play outdoors, if they feel comfortable and supported, they'll push themselves to new challenges and build motor skills. Developing fine motor skills, such as handling small objects, is a way for children to practice using their hands and fingers, which in turn builds the strength and coordination critical for writing skills. "When you're a preschooler or toddler, your attention comes out in a different way," explains Pizzolongo. "Your attention works best if your body is involved, as many parts of it as possible. So children learning to play where they're physically engaged with materials and interacting with each other would work best."

Expectations – play - language development

- Children build language skills through cooperative play. Their success depends on their ability and patience in explaining themselves. Teachers repeat the words children say to help others understand. They also teach words about the objects the kids are interested in handling. Students may talk to themselves while playing side by side with other children and then begin to repeat what they hear or start talking to each other. This develops into back-and-forth communication about play, becoming increasingly sophisticated by age 4. Children will now set rules, have specific roles, express their interests or objections, and chatter about funny situations that occur in the course of play.

Expectations –play -Self-concept

- Play builds a strong sense of self-confidence. Trying to do a certain trick on a play structure or build with blocks is hard work for a preschooler. Teachers acknowledge these experiences by articulating what they observe and letting the preschooler absorb these accomplishments again. There are also therapeutic benefits to play that help all children. For example, understanding that a parent is going to work and will come back at pick-up time can be reinforced through a play scenario.

Play -Social development

Listening, negotiating, and compromising are challenging for 4- and 5-year-olds. Though children at this age are still egocentric, or unable to think beyond their own needs, working with others helps them develop an awareness of differences in people around them. These experiences in preschool provide a foundation for learning how to solve problems and communicate with peers. Play also helps build social relations, positive leadership qualities for children who are naturally inclined to direct but must learn how to control their impulses.

Play -Cognitive development

Play is important for preschooler's cognitive development. Play ideas for preschooler's cognitive development include reading, Board and Memory games and outside play. By allowing imaginations to run during play, children create new worlds and form unique ideas and solutions to challenges. Children at play are solving problems, creating, experimenting, thinking and learning all the time. Therefore spending time playing with the child is especially good for the child's cognitive development. It builds relationships and sends a powerful message, "you are important to me."

Preschoolers- cognitive development expectations.

- With time, experience and practice, preschoolers will. start to organize games and make friends
- Start to understand concepts like bigger", taller, longer etc.
- Asks lots of questions
- Start to develop sense of humour and finds happiness in jokes , puzzles and riddles,
- Develop concept of time to some extent
- Starts predicting what will happen next in a story.
- Cannot distinguish what is real and what's pretend.

3.5.4 Summary

The challenge of play for teachers, parents and child caretakers is to intervene only to Maximize the educational consequences of play without sacrificing its essence and the key is to balance. Sensitive and provocative balance, design, and consultation can help move children's activities along so that their thinking too moves along as well. The essence of good teaching and parenting lies in this ability to think about the needs of the young children, to respond, to intervene without unnecessary interventions and distortion. This depends on the quality of relationship maintained with the child and the quality of play. Understanding reasons for children's play and its consequences help one to perceive play as a potential for learning rather than as a challenge.

Check your progress

- How do teachers plan play activities to incorporate in the curriculum implementation to develop communicative and cognitive skills among children.

3.6 Factors influencing play: attitudes of parents , family and teachers, play materials, sex differences and sex typed play materials , indoor and outdoor space

3.6.1 Introduction

The child listens, observes, manipulates, and interacts with the different learning environments and gain sensorial experiences .in which he lives. It is the parents, environment, other adults, peer group, rich/ poor experiences natural, or planned/ created., influence the child's growth, development ,play and learning. hence it is role and responsibility of parents, teachers and community to ensure and enrich with positive leaning factors. and experiences.

3.6.2 Objectives:

The student teachers/ teachers will be able to

- Understand the influence of different factors on child' play
- Develop skills to interact with parents ,peer group in organising play to protect through positive learning environment.

3.6.3 Gender Differences in Play

A close examination of different studies asserts that there exist traditional stereotypes in male-female play preferences. Elkind and Weiner (1978) asserted that a child's awareness of his sexual role and sexual stereotype develop quite early. By the end of the third year most boys and girls know what : sex they are and understand the major aspects of stereotyped sex-role behaviors. Even a three-year old child can correctly identify picture: of clothing, toys, tools and appliances a s to whether they belong to men or women. These subtle differences in play activities are

evident in the types of play children are engaged in. While females take interest in sedentary constructive behaviour, males are explicit in gross motor activity. In the opinion of Holfinan, and Softparis (1988) around the age of three boys becomes more proficient than girls at play that requires strength such as throwing the ball for instance, but three-year old girls are more skillful at most activities that do not require power.

Gender differences affect play preferences, it would be seen as a hallmark of emerging cognitive skills. It becomes pronounced in the type of play and play materials used. Boys engage in such modes of play as adventures, rough and tumble play, group play and constructive play. Girls often exhibit their play preferences at house keeping, cooking, cleaning etc. According to Bee (1985) one of the first areas in which we see the child's classification skill. is in gender identity, which begins to be seen at about two and a half or three years. Noticing whether other people are boys or girls, and what toys boys and girls play with, is itself the first step in the long chain of sex role learning. So the preschooler's emerging cognitive skill lies at the root of her gender concept as well.

The same view has been expressed by Rutter and Norman (1990) and they are of the opinion that children's behaviour is sex typed very early. By age two children select toys and activities that fit sex stereotypes. Some investigators believe that sex differences in play are socially conditioned by the toys and rewards children are given. Usually, girls receive dolls and other house-keeping materials and are rewarded for playing with them. Boys usually receive construction materials, trucks, cars, and so forth, and they are rewarded for playing in "masculine way". This widespread and

persistent sex difference in preschool play is not exogenous to the family set up. Even within the same family, sex becomes a prior factor. In this connection Lissa (1939) writes, "sex too influences the choice of brother and sister of the same age who will play with different things in the same environment, their probably choosing doll play and the boy playing with engines or motor cars." This way of gender stereotyping of preschoolers is much more traditional. Lissa (1939) has maintained that gender differences in play are related to cultural condition and adult intervention.

This factor becomes transparent in the behaviour of children exposed to non stereotyped models. Frost and Klein (1979) have also indicated that sex difference in children's play appear early in life and may be attributed in large part to culturally determined adult expectations. In brief, boys and girls in play show a definite sex-typed interest from the early preschool years onwards.

3.6.4 Play and Culture

There are two factors - culture and adult intervention, which exerts overwhelming influence to evolve distinctive patterns of play preference in preschool children. In this context, Seefeld and Galper (1990) opine that cultural influences are significant in how children play, what they do, with whom, where it is done, and how adults intervene. Children living in a distinctive cultural set up exhibits selective patterns of play culture and cognitive development, intricately woven with that culture.

Play itself can be viewed as characteristically bi-functional. Hughes et. al. (1996) argues that children's play is found in virtually every culture in the world, but there is much variety in the amount of play, and the

complexity of the games children engage in. The study of play in any particular culture provides us with much information about the nature of the culture itself.

According to Berk (1957) culture shapes environment in which children's interaction and play activities take place. Cultural beliefs about the importance of play also affect the quantity and quality of peer associates.

The effect of environment, its physical and cultural aspects at home, in the community, etc.: are important in determining the ages at which children reach certain stages of their development and the particular skills which they may develop (UNESCO Publication, 1976).

The impact of culture on the development of the individual may easily be perceived. Each family has a particular culture. Each society wants to maintain its particular culture. The individual comes into direct and immediate contact of the family, because he is born and nurtured into it. So culture leaves its inevitable impact on child (Chaube, 2003).

The cultural-anthropological orientation contends that play functions as "accommodative behaviour in advance of development". Lev Vygotsky's **zone of proximal development** suggests that play serve as a symbolic bridge or pivot between objects and thoughts.

Physical Play

Children at preschool years meet their unique needs by appropriating different play situations. Every child develops physically, mentally and emotionally at varying depth. Physical play is the basis of Neuro-Muscular development of children. Mohanthy (1998) observes the importance of active play. At nursery or kindergarten or at home, the early years of childhood are

very active years of life. The child possess a natural urge to play i.e. to apply his budding powers and abilities in a variety of ways to explore himself and his environment. The application of mere physical force help the children to achieve both fine and gross motor control through their play activity. Rosalind and Worth (:1000) visualizes play a s a rigorous activity. It begins around the end of the first year when children are able to move about at will, peaks around at four or five years of age, and gradually declines during the primary grades.

The advantages of out-door play to the development of neuro-muscular co-ordination I S best facilitated by setting up such environments which provide children with adequate physical contexts. Hugheset a1 (1996) emphasise the importance of physical context of play. The type of materials or objects in the play environment can also influence how young children play.

Wills (1958) also asserts the importance of physical context of play. Nursery school and kindergarten enrolls need many types of physical exercise. They also need opportunities to use a variety of large muscle and other play equipments.

3.6.5 Indoor and outdoor space : Role of teacher :

Teachers and parents are definitely influencing factors in determining the play and play activities of children. Teachers and families often view the value of play in different ways. Early childhood teachers say that “play is a child’s work “while some parents complain that their children are always at play all the day.

Teachers should have knowledge about child development to determine what is age- appropriate and culturally appropriate for each child in the classroom. Children get frustrated when they cannot easily move

through an environment or find what they need. It is therefore the responsibility and resourcefulness of the teacher to make the classroom thoughtfully designed and materials for play are well organised and accessible to children.

A limited indoor space hinders a child's development in all areas :

- The amount of space in the preschool affects both the efficiency of the programme as the provider tries to meet the many routine care needs of children and the number and types of play activities the children can engage in.
- Insufficient space can lead to conflicts among children due to crowding, and it can create safety hazards from cluttered conditions.
- Insufficient space can cause limitations in the program because materials easily become disorganized or must be minimized to fit the space.
- When a room is too dark, it may be difficult to supervise visually—seeing babies breathing while they sleep or seeing what toddlers are putting in their mouths. Lack of light also makes it difficult for children to comfortably use materials that require close attention.
- If a space is too cold or too warm, children and providers may become uncomfortable.
- Noise levels that are too high could impede language development and create tension and over-excitement, preventing children from sustained involvement in constructive play and learning.
- Natural light can be too bright at times, making sleep difficult or causing glare that can interfere with activities.
- Odors from soiled diapers, the bathroom, or cleaning products could cause an unpleasant smell for providers and children.

Space condition

Why is this important?

- The condition of the space affects the comfort, health, and safety, as well as the self-image, of the children and providers who spend many

hours in the program daily. Space that is in poor repair or poorly maintained encourages rough and neglectful behavior toward the surroundings and materials, and it can also be depressing and dangerous.

Space facilities for children with special needs.

Space for children should be accessible to all children and adults with disabilities

Why is this important?

- Accessibility is legally required in all public facilities so that everyone can have equal opportunity to use the service.

Floors, walls, and other built-in surfaces made of easy-to-clean materials where needed

Why is this important?

- Because children are very vulnerable to infectious diseases, frequent washing and disinfecting of countertops and other built-in surfaces are needed to protect their health.

Here are just a few benefits of indoor play space for preschool children:

1. Development of social skills: These skills help children become socially aware and helps them gain confidence to interact with others , learn about concepts such as winning, losing, and playing fair , develop problem-solving skills.
2. Keeps them Happy and Healthy: Children engaged in regular physical activity are healthier, both physically and emotionally. These children are more likely to be academically motivated and attentive. Indoor areas promote children to be more active and engaged in activities.
3. Develop creativity: interacting with others in play helps children to face challenges that help them develop vital skills like exploring, learn new words and ways to solve the problem by observing others and elder children. They also creativity by imagining and developing ideas on their own.

4. Safety and security: Most of the schools provide safety and security to children by selecting age appropriate non- toxic toys and materials with clean and green playground. Also most of the schools employ supervisors to monitor play equipment and play ground to ensure safety of the children.
5. An alternative for hot sunny/ cold rainy days: Unpredictable weather might force children to play indoors and stay inside the classroom. Hence this space provides scope for lots of interaction, fun and joy for the children by running, crawling, climbing, rolling etc.,
6. An ideal place to celebrate birthday parties and theme based festivals, cultural , local festivities and functions.

Outdoor space: According to Essa, the outdoor area should be more than a place where children can let off steam and exercise large muscles. It should provide opportunities that enhance socialization, cognitive and language development, sensory exploration, creative expression and appreciation of nature. This requirement calls for adequate open spaces that are well maintained and safe. This is because as Carton and Allen observe, children need to engage in movement in the outdoor environment for instance by running and jumping. Ample outdoor space is essential to support children's perceptual motor development and to provide a variety of creative play activities. Essa observes that positive peer interaction is promoted when children are not crowded, when an ample number and variety of items are available.

The play environment should have adequate materials and resources. The environment for early childhood education requires availability of adequate program resources such as teaching materials, indoor and outdoor equipment. The availability of resources and materials can greatly influence the implementation of school programs. According to Cuffaro, materials are the textbooks of early childhood classrooms. They offer openings and pathways by and through which children enter the ordered knowledge of the adult world. Materials become tools with which

children give form to and express their understanding of the world and the meanings they have constructed. Play grounds should be designed with equipment that promotes both quiet and active, individual and group activities.

Even though outdoor play is positively linked to children's well being, health, development and learning, children's opportunities to play outside have reduced in recent years. According to research studies, limited time outdoors, lack of suitable space followed by health and safety concerns were the main factors suggested to hinder children's play. The physical environment, the materials available and the educator's role were the key factors that enhance children's play.

Teacher's role : Outdoor play during and after preschool hours have been reduced due to various factors such as limited space , traffic, fear for child's safety, increased use of electronic gadgets as well as more focus on academic skills etc, teacher's perceptions of play and the outdoor environment are the factors that affect outdoor play. The personal attributes of the teacher relating to play such as views, communication skills, imagination, flexibility and co-operation are the influential factors that affect children's play. Also teachers give utmost importance to children not getting hurt and hence possibly restricting outdoor play.

Attitudes of parents: Apart from environmental limitations, the decline of outdoor play is the adult fear for children's safety. Also, perceived dangers outdoors have been identified as a key factor in declined use of outdoor space and play.

A well arranged environment should enhance children's development through learning and play. The way the physical **environment** is designed and configured influences how **children** feel, act, and behave. The physical **environment** allows growth and development through activities and materials in defined **play** areas.

Different parts of an environment can have different stimulation levels, which have a direct **effect on how children play** – large areas encourage movement and use of space and closed areas with more soft features lend themselves to reading or discovery activities.

Parents in different cultures also perceive play differently. Some see children's play as part of their natural learning process — "learning through play." In other cultures, children's play may be seen as just a pastime and separate from learning. Every child in the world is a master of play. Play is part of the basic developmental experiences of human lives. Children learn about culture, social norms and language through play. Precisely because of its socio cultural nature, children in different cultures engage in play differently due to differences in language, context and social norms.

Contextual differences can also be reflected in the materials available in the environment. Another challenge is language and social norms that mediate children's play. Children bring social language use into play. For example, in role-playing, children often imitate adult use of language and interpret social relations they observe in their culture.

Since language use and social relations are different in diverse cultures, children must engage in negotiating these differences in cross-cultural play.

Parental perception of play is also an important factor that affects how children play in cross-cultural contexts. These differences suggest that play in cross-cultural contexts is complex and dependent on many socio cultural and sociolinguistic factors that stimulate or regulate children's play activities. It's important to note that there is no "normal," "ordinary" or "right" way of play. These differences must be interpreted within the socio-cultural contexts and backgrounds that they come from.

Summary :

Attractive

Check your progress

How do teacher plan and organise indoor and outdoor space for children to facilitate indoor and out door activities.

3.7 Indoor and outdoor safety measures for early childhood play:

3.7.1. Introduction

“Let us think back to happy moments from our childhood. We remember riding a small cycle around neighbourhood, playing in group or alone outdoor games such as climbing, balancing running races etc “ Some of the movements that adults enjoyed in their childhood cannot be forgettable. These events are memorable because they enjoyed and felt independent.

Children crave independence and challenge. Children are active and curious. They enjoy exploring and taking risks. Often, though, they don't understand the danger in the risks they take. They put trust in their environments and their budding abilities. They think they cannot get hurt. Reducing hazards in environment, playful program can allow children to explore safely during this important phase of life. Preparing safe environment is adults role.

3.7.2. Objectives

The student teachers will be able to

- Understand the need for safe indoor and outdoor spaces for age appropriate play
- Recognise safe outdoor and indoor age space.
- Plan routine/creative play activities with safety checks

Children need opportunities to play, prepared spaces (outdoor and indoor) for them to explore and interact. To fulfill this, responsive adults., parents and teachers need to support their learning. Setting indoor and outdoor space with and without play material prepares children not only to become who will work with others cooperatively and approach learning with joy, but also happier people who will not lose their love of play in future. Adults (Parents and teachers) need to provide safe environment, balancing indoor and outdoor activities for small and large muscle development, coordination and control.

The preschool teacher's role in the development of play for children is critical. "Parents should look to see that the teacher has organized the environment," says Pizzolongo, "and is using the curriculum in a way that guides her to plan for how the children are going to be engaged in play. It is a structured way of learning through play. It is also teacher's role to follow up with parents about the child play at home. Teacher must ensure that furnishings, activity materials, equipment, whether intended for indoor or outdoor use, are to be used in a safe and appropriate manner by each child in adult's presence.

Every program will set up indoor and outdoor environments differently to maintain safety. What does a safe environment look like in your school-age program? We can think about this question in three ways. First, we think about our *facilities*. Second, we think about how we arrange and organize our *learning spaces* within the facilities. Finally, we think about the condition of the *materials* in the environment.

Child care facilities should have a policy on use and maintenance of all play areas both inside and outside.

3.7.3 Safe Indoor Spaces

Indoor space can become safer just by meeting the daily needs of the children in program and keeping the developmental needs of children in mind. Arranging and organizing the space, material so that children could be actively participated in a variety of activities without disruption and injuries in a safer indoor environment. Separating active games block building, manipulative material etc from quiet activities like reading together or alone, picture reading , story books etc. Safe space arrangement with age appropriate effective furniture and equipment arrangement helps to support and supervise children for safety

3.7.4 Safe Outdoor Spaces

The outdoor space need to be organized carefully to allow children to play with and without equipment. Often, outdoor play equipment cannot be moved once it is fixed, hence to be planned in the beginning only the space

for play equipment and space for free play such as running balancing, hopping and jumping activities. Provision for adult / teacher to help and supervise by moving around. When children go outside, it is important to make sure that there is ample shade and access to drinking water. Inspections of the sidewalks will be necessary to make sure they are not slippery or rough.

- The equipment available to children for the development of gross motor skills should be appropriate to the respective age group.
- The equipment should be arranged with a plan not to make any distractions.
- The play surface should not be very slippery or not too rough.
- Cleaning and sanitizing and inflammable products should be made inaccessible to children and kept away from food and beverages.
- Supervision is extremely important in ensuring that children are safe and the teachers and parents are properly trained.
- All play equipment s should be properly labeled.
- Protruding nails, bolts or any choking material like plastic bags, rusty parts of broken benches /chairs should not be in the play areas.
- Outdoor play areas must be checked daily for hazards like broken glass, stinging insects nest, nails under strings and slides.
- In the play area, the equipment, furnishings, toys and play materials should have smooth, nonporous surfaces and not too small objects like safety pins, book pins and small pebbles etc...for a child to swallow, this may lead to severe problems.
- Play ground with provision and modifications are to be suitable for children with special needs
- It is important to supervise water storage containers so that drowning suffocation is prevented.
- Empty buckets and tubs should be kept properly upside down so that rain water is not collected in itif they are kept outside.
- Ensure that children are not playing in extreme hot sunny outdoor and suffocating indoors.

- Ensure children are drinking enough water during the day time and also resting in a cool place.
- Ensure children are not crowded around the slides, see-saw and swings to prevent the users of these hit the stand bier.
- A suitable fire extinguisher should be kept handy and method of use should be known to all adults.
- All electric sockets must be plugged or capped without leaving the holes open.
- Extinction chords or wires and other electric devices should be out of reach.
- Trash containers with a disposable liner and a lid should be placed in the play areas.
- Disposal trash bins with a liner and lid should be separated and inaccessible to children.
- Children must never be left unattended. Instead of directing them harshly / shouting on children when anything is wrongly used, educating them on the bad effects of that misuse would make the life of the children safe all over even after an adult is not around.
- Build purposive learning, joy, friendship, leadership, sportsmanship, socialization, surplus energy utilization in play.

3.7.5 Summary

Adults -- Parents /teacher should consider the condition of the physical space and facilities of indoors and outdoors. Look for these items— listed below *Caring for Our Children* and correct them before children are permitted to play:

At a glance

- Missing or broken parts
- Protrusion of nuts and bolts
- Rust and chipping or peeling paint
- Sharp edges, splinters, and rough surfaces
- Stability of handholds
- Visible cracks

- Stability of non-anchored large play equipment (e.g., playhouses)
- Wear and deterioration
- Broken or worn electrical fixtures or cords
- Debris, such as glass, cigarette butts, litter, building supplies
- Animal excrement and other foreign material
- Standing water,
- Surfaces that are too hot or cold for children to touch safely
- Natural objects that might cause harm: sharp rocks, stumps, roots, branches
- Ditches, holes, wells, traps
- Exposed power lines or utility equipment

Check your progress

Describe the precautionary measures to be taken by the teacher for safe indoor and outdoor environment.

3.8 Types of Play

3.8.1 Introduction

It is to notice that young children involve themselves in different types of play in different stages. Research, (observations) has shown that children, depending on their age and development, like to engage in different types of play. There is a correspondence between the Development of social, emotional, communication and cognitive skills and the type of play a Child engages in. In general, children tend to start by playing alone and gradually start playing with other children and eventually engage in complex games and sports where they have designated roles.

3.8.2 Objectives

The student teachers/ teachers will be able to

- Understand the different types of play the children get involved as they grow and develop
- Develop knowledge on the connections types of play

Children are frequently involved in more than one type of play at a time. Most play types progress developmentally with children continuing with and building upon earlier types throughout childhood. When children play, they play at a level with which they are comfortable. Observing children at play is the most effective way to assess their learning and development. Early childhood trained teachers have specific skills in developing environments that encourage play and plan for creating learning opportunities and for development of children

- Play positively impacts cognitive, social, emotional, health, personality and executive functioning skills of a child.
- There are many types of play. The nature of play changes with child's age and developmental stage.
- The main types of play are: Solitary, Parallel, Pretend and Cooperative. Each type of play has developmentally appropriate benefits.

3.8.3 Types of play

Solitary Play (unoccupied play) (0 to 2 Years)

Between 0 to 1.5-2 years of age infants tend to play alone with their toys. At this stage they are not very interested in knowing what other children are playing with. Solitary play helps children explore the environment around them. In this type of play, they are actively using their sensory organs to explore the objects in their environment by seeing, hearing, touching, tasting, smelling etc.

Solitary Play (unoccupied play) helps in:

- Stimulating brain activity and the formation of synapses
- Development of major senses and sensory organs
- Development of fine motor skills
- Development of cognitive skills such as object recognition, relationship between objects, basic ideas of language etc.

Parallel Play (2 to 3 Years)

Parallel play is usually observed in children between the ages of 2-3 years. In this form of play, the toddlers sit alongside with other children but

play on their own. Even as the child is playing on her/ im own, observes and watches the children in their environment

Parallel Play (associative play) helps to develop:

- Language skills
- Social skills including building relationships
- Gross and fine motor skills
- Thinking skills / imagination/symbolic representational abilities. /cognitive skills
- Increases confidence of the child
- Communication skills/expressive skills

Pretend Play (1.5 to 10 Years)

Children love pretend play. This typically starts before 18 months and can continue up to 10 years. Children pretend that they have imaginary friends and talk with them. They sometimes pretend to be mummy or daddy or a doctor or bus driver etc. They can convincingly conjure up a fantastical and magical world. This is an important form of play and should be encouraged. A Child acting /Pretending to be Superman, police man, teacher, doctor and different roles.

Pretend Play (imaginative play) helps develop:

1. Cognitive skills like creativity, cognitive integration, divergent thinking, symbolic thinking, organization, concentration
2. Executive functioning skills
3. Social skills including appreciation of relationships
4. Emotional skills including regulation, develop, coordinate and control of emotions, emotional competence and understanding etc.
5. Language skills

Cooperative Play (5 Years and above)

This is the most complex type of play. In this type of play, the child plays an assigned role in a group for achieving an objective. These games and sports could also have pre-defined rules that need to be followed by the participants. There could also be different rules for different participants. Whether it is .. chess, thought provoking games ., finding /predicting, etc

with indoor games where two participants are playing against each other or cricket (an outdoor sport where two teams of 11 members play against each other), group games ., almost all sports and complex games fall under the category of cooperative play. Usually, children can start engaging in cooperative play from the age of 4-6 years.

Cooperative Play helps develop:

1. Social skills
2. Emotional skills
3. Cognitive skills
4. Motors skills (depending on the nature of the game or sport)
5. Numerous other benefits including higher self-esteem, health and fitness

Children's play can be divided into categories, but the types of play often overlap.

- **Make believe play/ socio Dramatic** — Fantasy-directed play with dressing up in costumes, assuming roles as characters, using toys to represent characters in stories, creating imaginary settings, and pretending to take on the roles of adults. This is overlapping with pretend play / role play, involves the use of symbols. Application of learned knowledge and skills.
- **Manipulative** — Holding and handling small toys often used to build objects but also found in puzzles, characters, beads, etc. Exploratory-- ---- using different material, verbal exploration leads to discovery.
- **Physical** — Using the whole body in activities with bikes, balls, jump, ropes, hoops, play structures, repetition of actions etc.
- **Creative** — Using art materials such as paint, clay, markers, pencils, glue, etc. The play takes place in the process of using the materials, not in the end product

3.8.4 Summary:

As children develop, their play becomes more sophisticated. Up until the age of 2, a child plays by himself and has little interaction with others. Soon after, he starts watching other children play but may not join in. This is particularly relevant to kids in multi-age settings where

younger children can watch and learn from older preschoolers playing nearby.

Around 2½ to 3 years, a preschooler starts to play sitting next to another child, often someone with similar interests. This naturally shifts, through the use of language, to the beginnings of cooperative play. An adult can facilitate this process by setting up a space for two or more small bodies and helping children find the words to express their questions or needs.

Between 4 and 5 years, preschoolers discover they share similar interests and seek out kids like them. They discuss, negotiate and strategize to create elaborate play scenes; take turns; and work together toward mutual goals. It is the parents and teachers role to indoor and outdoor games for the children and also tp participate encourage heir which leads to their holistic I development.

Check your progress

1. In how many ways manipulative play helps children?
2. Pretend play – explain
3. Fantasy play- make believe play explain.

3.9 Characteristics of age and developmentally appropriate and safe play materials, selection of suitable play equipment.

3.9.1 Introduction

A parent, a teacher, A care taker, concerned community member need to always think which toys / play material are best for children of different age groups There are countless toys and materials designed, prepared and available for infant-toddler, preschool children. It is the responsibility of the adults , parents and teachers to get knowledge about the age specific toys and material to be used for children and provide o them appropriately. It is difficult to decide what to include in play space and what not.. Teachers and parents need to select material and toys for children which are developmentally appropriate and also choose materials based on cultural relevance, children's interests, the material's open-ended possibilities and children's developmental goals.

Children go through different learning stages as they grow from newborns to adolescents. While these stages are occurring, changes in their brain are also happening. Although every child develops in their own time, it is important to continuously stimulate their mind and senses in order to help them grow. Learning at the different stages of development is important to help and determine what an age-appropriate toy is for the child. While selecting a toy should consider what developmental stage a child is at.

3.9.2. Objectives :

The student teacher will be able

- to develop knowledge and understand about developmentally appropriate toys and material for young children
- identify key considerations while selecting toys and material and the benefits to infants, toddlers and preschool children
- select toys and materials that represent cultures, interests and learning goals.

3.9.3 Toys, material – Development of child

What toy is best for a child at different age groups? Impact of toys on child's development

- It is most important to think about why to select the age appropriate materials for children. Adults should think; how will this toy help infants and toddlers meet their individual learning and development goals? What will they learn from the toy? Keeping in view knowledge of learning and development standards for children (infants and toddlers) curriculum guidelines to shape the development and learning. Select materials that will help individual children at home and in classroom to work on their current developmental or learning goals.
- Toys and materials promote children's development in a variety of ways. For example, colourful objects hung low for younger infants to grasp, kick and move to assist with their fine- and gross-motor development. These could be constructed out of different coloured and textured fabrics so as infants and care givers interact with them,

caregivers can interact about the different characteristics of the toys and also serves as appreciation, support and encouragement. ("I see you just grabbed the red string," or "Oooh, that one feels soft doesn't it?") These comments help children's cognitive understanding of the world around them and build their early vocabularies.

- Learning and development starts with their motor and sensory skills. Sensory skills involve senses. Things are learned and memorized best by children and adults when they engage their senses.
- Motor skills are used when muscles, nervous system and brain work together to complete a task. There are two types of motor skills: fine and gross. **Fine motor Skills** include small tasks like holding, picking up any thing, bending fingers and Moving lips. **Gross motor skills** include bigger movements like rolling over, sitting and walking, anything that involves using feet, legs, toes and arms is a gross motor skill. **Motor skills** are measured by skills such as Muscle Strength and coordination, Rhythm and timing, Bilateral coordination, Primitive and postural reflexes, Eye-muscle balance and coordination Balance and posture.
- Cognitive skills are developed through play with material including sensory skills. Curiosity drives children to investigate and explore their environment. Through exploration, they play with and manipulate a variety of materials while repeating enjoyable actions and gaining a sense of pleasure while learning.
- Children learn to explore objects with all of their senses: seeing, touching, hearing, tasting and smelling. Through safe exploration, they also begin to develop ways of learning and gathering information about objects. Researchers have found that 12-month-old infants can remember and copy some actions they see up to four weeks later, even without practicing the actions in the meantime (Klein & Meltzoff 1999).

- (Understanding child's development, as well as the role of play, is important to meet young children's unique needs and interests and support their development and learning.)

3.9.4 Characteristics of age appropriate toys

- Toys made of fabric should be labeled as flame resistant or flame retardant.
- Stuffed toys should be washable.
- Paint on any toys should be lead-free.
- Art materials should say nontoxic.
- Crayons and paints should be non toxic.
- Toys should be age and developmentally appropriate

3.9.5 Selection of toys and material

Children will feel a sense of security when they are able to see and play with materials at home and school. While explore materials that are interesting to them, it is the caregiver that helps make the experience meaningful. Caregivers should select materials keeping in mind the following :

- **Culturally relevant:** Do these materials reflect and respect the racial, ethnic, cultural, linguistic and family diversity of the program and of the broader community?
- **Developmentally appropriate:** Do these materials allow infants and toddlers to play in a variety of ways? Do these materials help us reach important learning goals for infants and toddlers?
- **Linked to children's interests:** Do these materials reflect the infant and toddlers' current interests and help spark new interests?

Culturally Relevant

Infant and toddler play and learning materials should be culturally relevant. Cultural relevance means the choice of materials should reflect the backgrounds, knowledge and experiences of the diverse children. The materials that validate and empower children of all racial, ethnic and social backgrounds, build a bridge between children's home and school lives that

will provide a strong foundation for learning. There many simple ways to expose children to positive images of people from a variety of backgrounds:

- Display pictures that represent all children, families and school and society
- Display pictures of men and women in a variety of jobs (police officer, construction worker, teacher, etc).
- Include items that represent cultures from around the world (scarves, cooking utensils, musical instruments)
- Stock your learning space with books that give positive messages about age, gender, race, culture, special needs, different families and linguistic diversity (e.g., alphabet and counting books from various cultures).
- Ask family members to lend you items from their homes.
- Dolls should represent a range of ages, races and abilities.
- Play traditional and contemporary music.

Display framed pictures of families. Create family books with the children. Encourage family members to share their home language and help you label items in the class room with words from that language.

Developmentally Appropriate Toys and material

- Toys and materials in learning space should be developmentally appropriate. This means they should match the stage of development of the children in caring the children.
- Children develop at different rates, choosing developmentally appropriate materials means, should have a range of toys available that can accommodate differences between individual children's skills, interests and characteristics.
- A room stocked with developmentally appropriate materials "fits" the child—the child should not have to adjust to "fit" the learning space!
- Children develop and change dramatically. Caregivers should consider what toys and materials match their current development and how materials can support ongoing development and learning. For

example, looking at and reading books with infants and toddlers can support the following types of development:

- **Emotional:** Book reading and quiet book areas give infants and toddlers an opportunity to relax and recharge.
- **Social:** Looking at books with a caregiver or friend can help strengthen a relationship.
- **Motor:** Turning the pages of a book uses and enhances fine-motor skills.
- **Language:** Caregivers can read with and help infants and toddlers explore books, pictures and new words.
- **Cognitive:** Infants and toddlers are introduced to new words, text and pictures.

Developmentally appropriate toys facilitate learning through play. When toys are too difficult or advanced, children may become frustrated. If toys are too simple, they may become bored and seek to entertain themselves in unsafe ways (e.g., running throughout the room or climbing on furniture). Part of developmentally appropriate materials includes having multiples of favourite items whenever possible. Create many natural opportunities for children to begin learn about "turn-taking" /waiting for their chance with caregiver guidance; make sure the materials provided are safe. All materials the learning space should be made for infants and/or toddlers./children Ensure the room is free of toxic materials (e.g., certain plants or art supplies).

Linked to Children's Interests

Effective materials are safe and complement the infants' or toddlers' abilities, strengths and interests. For example, for a toddler who expresses interest in animals, the caregiver can add plastic animal toys to the sensory or block area where he enjoys playing.

Materials that can be used in a variety of ways and that meet infants' and toddlers' developmental needs can provide a sense of security. Opportunities created for infants and toddlers to easily access, have fun

with and manipulate materials that meet their interests and learning styles help children feel competent and recognize they have the ability to do different things and express ideas

- Develop self-help skills
- Interact with their caregivers and peers
- Feel calm and supported

Remember some families may not value play the way other families do. Some families may not have an environment that allows for safe play or a tradition of special time or floor play with their infant or toddler. Learn about families, seek to understand differences and find what is most important in the care of their infants and toddlers.

Open-Ended Materials

Some toys spark imagination and some hinder it. It is to notice that young children are often more interested in the covered box than the toy that came inside it. Why? Because the box can become anything. It becomes a drum when hit it, a house when put a doll inside it, a hat when put it on head and a mask when play hide and seek behind it. The possibilities are endless. Infants and toddlers learn and explore more when a toy is only limited by their imaginations. Consider the following list and think about why toys spark or limit imaginative play.

Toys that may limit imaginative play:

- Action figures or plastic dolls with preset accessories or movements
- Toys that talk, sing or dance
- Toys that are branded, such as with a TV show or popular character

Toys and materials that spark imaginative play:

- Dress-up clothes
- Large boxes
- Baby dolls
- Musical instruments
- Writing and art materials

- Items that are “open-ended” or can be used in a variety of different ways (e.g., blocks, scarves)

Safe Toys for Infants, Toddlers, and Preschoolers

- Always read labels and select to make sure a toy is appropriate for a child's age. .
- Consider the child's temperament, habits, and behavior when selecting a toy.
- Even a child who seems advanced compared with other kids the same age shouldn't use toys meant for older kids.
- The age levels for toys are determined by safety factors, not intelligence or maturity

3.9.6 Age-Appropriate Toys for Children

Birth to 5 Month Old infants

Everything is new for a baby at this stage, so introducing them to soft toys, textures and contrasts will help to stimulate their senses. Toys that improve their eye-hand coordination are key. Exposure to colours, shapes and sizes will help babies differentiate between round and square objects and because they are starting to grasp items, this is the perfect time to introduce them to shapes. Few of toys may include Rattles, Squeeze toys, Large rings, Plush animals, Interactive play mats Black and white Books, Toys with mirrors, rotating wind fans

6 to 11 Month Old children

Six to eleven month old are crawl and eating solid foods. It's all about taste in their world right now and they are learning what they like and don't like to eat. Also, they are now able to recognize their parents. These babies have also learned to stand up on their own by holding on to sturdy furniture.

Babies at this age are able to pick up larger items with their fingers and use both hands at the same time. They like to bang objects together and throw them. At this stage, babies need to be introduced to constructive play, which are things that feed their imagination.

Toys that help with creativity, visual stimulation and constructive skills are best for a baby at this stage. Toys that lead them to explore as well as improve their sensory and cognitive skills as well as language development are to be given to children. Few of them are:

- Xylophones, Stacking toys, Wooden puzzles, Baby blocks, Musical toys, Play phones, Pretend kitchenware, Baby dolls, Large balls, Nesting toys (e.g., plastic cups,) Plastic and wood vehicles with wheels

1 Year Old children

One-year-old child is with a bundle of joy and energy. They stand by themselves (and maybe even take a few steps), they may be able to eat on their own and they sleep less during the day. By this time, baby is probably scribbling and covering/uncovering objects such as plastic lids or boxes. They are at the age now where they want to investigate everything. They like to find hidden objects and imitate the sounds that make.

Toys with moving parts, levers, wheels and blocks are ideal. Songs also play a huge part in development because they help with memorization and repetition skills. Toys to build and put together are great for motor skills. It's all about sensory and imagination at this age, so anything with music will stimulate their brains.

Eg. Cloth, strong paper, books with photos or illustration, Non-toxic markers and crayons, Wooden blocks, large peg boards, Sensory ball sets, Spinning spiral towers, Mini pianos, Wooden bead mazes, Push toys, Shape sorters

2 Year Old children

Child is growing quickly. They now like to run away, play hide and seek, complete sentences and even show a little independence. By this time, child kicks a ball, climbs up and down the stairs and points at everything h/she see. They like to interact with other kids and are now using one hand more than the other, although it's still not certain if they are right or left handed. Best toys for two-year-olds are that require physical strength and help them with their language and social skills. Because they have more

control over their hands, two- year-olds can play with heavier toys that build physical strength. Playing pretend at this age also allows them to get a better sense of dressing themselves and every day activities. wooden puzzles with 4-12 pieces, fabric Puzzles, Dress-up/pretend items, puppets, Construction toys, house hold equipment for doll play, Art and craft material, Toy food, Books with illustrations, Dollhouses, Play scooters and cars- transportation toys Blocks, , More detailed picture books

3 to 6 Year Old children

Child walks and runs more than ever and is even ready to ride a bicycle. Although their activity level is often higher, they also require a lot of good rest. They have now started school and are interacting with many kids of their age. By this time child has more strength. They are able to control heavier items and have much better coordination when using scissors or crayons. They are most likely brushing their own teeth and becoming more independent

Because they have more control over their reflexes and movements, it's important to get toys for child that involve brain activity and hand and muscle movements. Allowing child to do crafts, play outside and play memory games is ideal.

Material like Jumping ropes, Toy cars and trucks, Percussion instruments Butterfly nets, Sidewalk indicators... chalk, Tricycles and bicycles , Hula hoops, Jigsaw puzzles Spelling toys Drawing easels etc.

7 to 8 Year Olds

7-8 year old child has an understanding of cause and effect. They are able to write complete sentences and enjoy being part of a team. Because of this, though they are easily influenced by peers, make sure they have the tools to be used individually also By this time, child is learning vocabulary through reading, telling stories and has a creative imagination. They have a longer attention span and love to collect things. They are more active and can play for long hours.

As they are eager to learn, science toys and educational board games are perfect for this age range. Toys and activities that involve a lot of concentration, such as knitting, are also ideal.

9 Year Olds and Older

Nine-year-olds are becoming independent. They are building lasting friendships and are facing more academic challenges. By now, their attention span has increased and they ask more questions.

At this age, memory is developing at a rapid pace. Child can concentrate on a single activity for prolonged periods of time. Consequences of bad behavior are now understood and they are able to express their thoughts and opinions about a variety of topics.

Reading plays a huge role in child's life at this age. It stimulates their imagination, communication skills and vocabulary. Problem-solving toys are ideas at this age and may keep them entertained for hours.

Toys for this age group children are -3 Dimensional puzzles, board games, Sports equipment Electronic dictionaries, Journals, Race tracks, Funny books, Mechanical toys, Card sets Comic books.

No matter what age is child or loved one is, it is always great to get them toys that will improve their motor and sensory skills. It keeps them alert and eager to learn new things..

3.9.7 Characteristics of age-specific toys

- Toys should be large enough — (at least 1¼ inches (3 centimeters) in diameter and 2¼ inches (6 centimeters) in length) considering their specific age. — so that they can't be swallowed or lodged in their mouth/ear etc.
- Avoid marbles, coins, balls, smaller beads etc.
- Battery-operated toys should have battery cases that secure with screws so that kids cannot try them open. .
- When checking a toy for a baby or toddler, make sure it's unbreakable and strong enough to withstand chewing. Also, make sure it doesn't have:

- sharp ends or small parts like eyes, wheels, or buttons that can be pulled loose
- small ends that can reach the back of the mouth
- strings longer than 7 inches
- Most riding toys can be used once a child is able to sit up well while unsupported — but check the manufacturer's recommendation. Riding toys like rocking horses and wagons should come with safety harnesses or straps and be stable and secure enough to prevent tipping.
- Hand-me-down and homemade toys should be checked carefully. They may not have been tested for safety. Do not give to infant painted toys made long back before 3 to 5 years, they may have paint that contains lead.
- Stuffed animals and other toys that are sold or given away at carnivals, fairs, and in vending machines are not required to meet safety standards. Check carnival toys carefully for loose parts and sharp edges before giving them to your infant.

3.9.8 Maintaining Toys Safely

It's also important to make sure kids know how to use them. The best way to do this is by supervising play. Playing with your kids teaches them how to play safely while having fun.

Parents/teachers should:

- Teach kids to put toys away.
- Check toys regularly to make sure that they aren't broken or unusable:
 - Wooden toys shouldn't have splinters.
 - Bikes and outdoor toys shouldn't have rust.
 - Stuffed toys shouldn't have broken seams or exposed removable parts.
- Throw away broken toys or repair them right away.
- Store outdoor toys when they're not in use so that they are not exposed to rain or snow.

- And be sure to keep toys clean. Some plastic toys can be cleaned in the dishwasher, but as per the manufacturer's directions. Another option is to mix antibacterial soap or a mild dishwashing detergent with hot water in a spray bottle and use it to clean toys, rinsing them afterward.

3.9.9 Avoid Dangerous Objects

- Many non-toys also can tempt kids. It's important to keep them away from fireworks
- matches
- sharp scissors
- balloons (uninflated or broken balloons can be choking hazards)

3.9.10 Summary

Toys have a direct bearing on types of play and children's interest in playing. Play is an indispensable and important tool for facilitating children's learning in the developmental process. Toys make children to stimulate, engage, motivate, and interact in enhancing their play which leads to develop their physical, intellectual, social, creative and thinking abilities. Play and appropriate material are considered to the best for promoting children's learning and development. Hence the toys selected to be suitable, safe, age appropriate and act as best resource. It is role and responsibility of the adults to create facilitates children for over all development of children.

3.10. Constructing diverse play environments in the classroom. Balance between cognitive and social play, functional, constructive, dramatic indoor, out door , vigorous and quiet play.

3.10.1 Introduction

Children are active and curious learners hence, their safety and learning at the center becomes the most challenging task. Designing physical space for young children blended with pedagogy and safety may help in their process of learning. Physical space for young children's activities will vary depending upon the availability of space and number of children. A well-designed physical environment supports exploration, gives

young children a sense of belonging, and enables them to engage in focused and self-directed play. Good environment also makes parents and caregivers feel welcomed and involved. Given below are some of the important considerations while designing learning corners in the ECE class rooms.

ECE Classroom

The fundamental medium for children's learning is play .It is the core of an effective early childhood curriculum. Play is central to planning learning opportunities in each of the foundation learning areas. Teachers should provide the context in which children's knowledge and understanding can be extended, strengthened and leads to exploration, investigation and innovations. They should get engaged, self motivated, developing fundamental processes including creating, making choices, organising, taking and sharing responsibility , interpreting, recalling, and reflecting, talking and communicating, and they have a sense of reaching the tasks. To reach this tasks and challenges children need to play by themselves, interact and individually and in groups with material, peers and adults. Hence the need for creating learning areas in ECE classrooms. This leads to balance between cognitive and social play, functional, constructive, dramatic indoor, outdoor , vigorous and quiet play helps to develop skills physically, cognitively, socially linguistically, emotionally balanced and controlled and with creativity.

3.10.2 Objectives:

The student teacher will be able to

- Understand the need for creating diverse play environments (learning corners) in the ECE Class room /centre.
- Develop organisational skills of planning and arranging learning / interested corners / centers in the ECE class room.
- Develop knowledge and understanding in procuring and arranging the objects, toys, learning and play material

3.10.3 Class room arrangement and organisation

The ECE classroom should be arranged in a way that facilitates implementation of play-way method by creating diverse play areas to equip

the children with physical, cognitive, socio – emotional language and functional skills.

The classroom should be arranged to provide space for both large and small group activities. Ideally, it should have a large, covered floor area for children to sit on for different large and small group activities and small low tables and chairs in a corner for any individual table work e.g. drawing, colouring, crayon work, puzzles

- The classroom must have provision for display of children's work as well as project related pictures, charts, etc. This display must be at the eye-level of the children.
- In the available space the classroom should be set up with specific activity centres such as
 - ❖ Doll's corner with doll's equipment, puppets, and accessories for imaginative play
 - ❖ Blocks' corner with construction and manipulative materials
 - ❖ Picture book corner for choosing and handling books
 - ❖ Science corner for simple experimentation and observation
 - ❖ Creative arts corner
- There should be a specific space for keeping children's lunch packs etc.
- Blackboard provision should be at children's height for them to use freely for drawing, scribbling etc.
- The classroom must have adequate stacking provision for play material from which children should be able to take material for free play for them and replace the material methodically after play.

For effective learning to take place in a pre-school a variety of colourful attractive and adequate numbers of learning materials and equipment are most essential. This would enhance child's needs of curiosity and manipulation. It would be crucial to emphasize that these are predominantly used to serve as learning materials and not as teaching aids. In other words, materials have to be used by every child to explore, manipulate and learn.

Important considerations for material selection

- Safety
- Appropriateness in terms of children's interests, age and learning abilities
- Quality and durability
- Flexibility of use i.e. material that can be used in a variety of ways and situations.

Materials used in the learning corners can be acquired through different channels

- Purchased/supplied material
- Teacher made materials
- Teacher collected material- from different resources.

The material in activity areas provides opportunities for exploration, investigation, individual and group play. The selected material should have loose parts and be open ended so that it empowers creativity in children to think, plan and carry out their play in a variety of ways. Teachers can also design and make a variety of low cost and no cost play and learning material. She should routinely check the contents of activity areas for safety and replace unattractive materials by more appealing materials which children enjoy to play with. Children are active and curious learners hence; a well-designed physical environment accessible to all children supports exploration, gives young children a sense of belonging and enables them to engage in focused and self-directed play. Good environment also makes parents and caregivers feel welcomed and involved. Given below are some of the important considerations while designing Learning areas.

3.10.4 Designing Indoor Environment with Activity Areas

- **Activity Areas**

Activity areas also known as learning centres, are established places in the classroom with resources that actively engage children and they may change according the themes or topics- month wise / week wise.

- **Importance of Activity Areas**

Playing in activity areas helps children exercise their choices and explore what interests them. It provides opportunities to create, draw, manipulate, discover, learn new skills, make mistakes, modify their strategies and gives a sense of achievement after they have mastered the activity in which they were engaged such as building a tower, fixing the jigsaw puzzle or solving a maze. It helps in their socio-emotional development as children learn to play with other children, share, take turns in using the material, wait till the other child finishes his/her activity. They learn time management as well as self regulation. It helps in fine and gross motor development as children play with water, sand, manipulate things. Children learn to solve problems, provide reasons, explore new material, make choices thus helping in their cognitive development. Observing children while they are involved in the activity area specially, doll corner and dramatic play reveals a lot about child's contexts-family, interactions, relationships, pent up feelings/bottled up emotions, which may be used by the teacher.

- **Setting up Activity Areas**

Activity areas should invite and promote active, independent exploration and discovery, creating an atmosphere in which children can learn. It should contain a variety of manipulative and materials that children can use in creative ways. The materials should be displayed and kept attractively on the open shelves for easy accessibility to encourage exploration. The material should be stored in such a way that children can start playing without adult help, and be able to arrange the material and clean up after they have finished playing. There should be enough material in each activity area so that children don't fight or compete over one toy. Each classroom may have several activity areas such as- art area, block building area, doll and dramatic play area, maths/manipulative area, science/discovery area, music and movement area, sand and water play area, book reading area etc. These areas may also be created on a rotational

basis as per curricular needs. While children play indifferent corner feel and boost their self esteem. This can be understood by following observations

Block corner

- When I am building with blocks, I am learning about shapes and sizes. I am learning how to follow a design that I have in my head. When I work with friends I have to cooperate and explain my ideas and plans. I am counting, grouping, sorting, classifying, and problem solving and matching.

Dramatic corner

- When I am playing in the dramatic play area I try on various roles to help me process and understand my world. I am developing my social skills and ability to play with others, while using my imagination and being creative. I am exploring concepts and relationships by acting them out.

Art area

- In the art area I am expressing myself and being creative. I am using my small muscles and am developing eye-hand coordination. I am seeing cause and effect and the different properties of my materials. I am exploring all different types of media. All of my creations are unique and special – like me!

Book corner

- I am able to learn many concepts and things I didn't know with books! I am also able to stretch my imagination, creativity, and language development. Books show me that there are universal symbols that represent words – this will help me to learn to read and write. Books take me to new places!

Science corner

- I learn many things in the science area! I learn labeling, classifying, comparing, weighing, measuring and the properties of things. I am also formulating questions about what is happening, and what will happen next. The science area helps me to understand the world around me.

Manipulative corner

- When I am working fitting small pieces together I am concentrating and developing my fine motor skills. This is good practice - I will need to use these small muscles for holding a pencil when I learn to write. When I finish, make, or master something I feel good about myself.

Large motor activities

When I am pushing, pulling, jumping, running, throwing, climbing, and peddling I am developing my muscles and coordination. I am learning about controlling my body, spatial concepts, and working on my balance and eye-hand coordination.

Small motor activities

- When I am at the workbench I feel very grown up! I am learning how to create something I have visualized in my head. I am working on my fine motor skills and eye-hand coordination. I have to use math skills, such as shape, size, contrast, comparing, spatial relationships, and problem-solving. I also get to be creative!

Music corner

- Music lets me be creative and express myself. I am developing an appreciation for the arts, and my ability to be musical. I am learning listening skills and how to differentiate sounds. I am using the part of my brain that also does math. It is also fun to move my body and express myself through music!

Sand and water play

- Sand and water play is very calming. It teaches me about science concepts like the properties of things in my world, and how they change and respond when manipulated. I use my small muscles when I pour, sift, scoop, and dig. I am also measuring, counting, and comparing. As I talk with my friends, I am expanding my language development.

Note :

- The teacher needs to provide support for ongoing activities by enriching interventions without being intrusive in children's play. During play in activity areas teacher may be able to identify children with developmental needs or emotional problems and she can provide required support and intervention. Teacher interventions may range from assisting with problem solving; questioning, redirecting undesired behaviours, and enticing children into play themes. Based on the available play material and the size of activity area teacher should decide the maximum number of children who may work in an activity area to avoid crowding at one or two centre.
- Most of the play materials that are appropriate for preschool classrooms are also appropriate for use by children with special needs. It is sometimes necessary to physically modify the instructional or play materials that facilitate children's participation, for example, adding handles, making material larger, adding velcro on materials, etc. These modifications are useful for all children.

3.10.5 Summary

Learning environment, and arrangement space(indoor and out door), toys and learning material, facilitator ,peer group are important factors of the children to motivate and enhance learning. The facilitator need to provide learning and play opportunities with variations in the environment and content with flexibility Through different types of play and learning activities/ opportunities that cover different learning areas ,teachers may help children develop their basic skills and cultivate their. Positive values and attitudes teachers and adults may also make use of objects that interest children to provide them for exploratory learning opportunities .to enhance motivation and attitude towards learning. Hence it is important and necessary to create learning areas with relevant material and opportunities in the preschool centre.

UNIT-4: CONCEPT OF DEVELOPMENTALLY APPROPRIATE CURRICULUM: COMPONENTS AND APPROACHES

Introduction

Objectives

- 4.1 Goals and objectives of preschool education in terms of all-round development of child and school readiness: role of teacher : need for a planned curriculum frame work with contextualised child centred curriculum
- 4.2 Need for and components of a balanced curriculum
- 4.3 Understanding of different approaches – child centred ,holistic development , play way method and approaches such as formal vs informal, planned vs incidental, integrated and thematic approach in curriculum planning; advantages and disadvantages
- 4.4 methods of pre school education thematic approach, play way method, activity method and project method
- 4.5 Risk of formal instruction, rote learning and effects of laissez faire approach on children's development and learning.

Introduction

Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) encompass the inseparable elements of care, health, nutrition, play and early learning within a protective and enabling environment It is an indispensable foundation for lifelong development and learning, and has lasting impact on early childhood development. It is imperative to accord priority attention to ECCE and invest in it since it is the most cost effective way to break the intergenerational cycle of multiple disadvantages and remove inequity. Investing in ECCE will undoubtedly lead to long term social and economic benefits.

Objectives:

To enable the student teacher/ teacher to

- understand the need and importance of curriculum at preschool stage.
- Develop knowledge and skills in planning an dimplemetation of preschool programme.
- Learn about the basis for curriculum planning

Goals and objectives of preschool education in terms of all-round development of child and school readiness:

Children are to be happy, healthy and confident; each child with unique identity, grounded in their individual strengths and capacities with respect for their unique social, linguistic, and cultural heritage and diversity. As children grow and learn, they explore, enquire, make discoveries and apply their understanding to become self regulated lifelong learners. Furthermore, they are sensitive to diversity, communicative, caring and creative in their relationship with people and environment. Development is a function of both maturation and learning .regardless of how much environmental stimulation children may receive, they cannot learn until they are developmentally ready to do so., The ECE programme therefore takes into account the developmental readiness of the child as well as experiential level. Even though ECE programme need to be with age wise objectives and activities these need not be strictly adhered to. The main guiding factor should be maturational, experiential and developmental levels of the child.

Goals of ECCE curriculum

Ensure inclusive and equitable quality pre school education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.

To nurture children

- to attain all round development in the domains of, physique, cognitive, social and emotional , ethics and aesthetics, so as to prepare them for life.
- and cultivate in them positive learning attitudes in order to lay the foundation for their future learning by simulating children's interest in learning

Goals of Preschool Education

To

- promote children's 'learning and development through an individually appropriate, socially relevant and culturally inclusive curriculum
- Strengthen children's disposition to learn and their feelings of self worth, security and confidence.

- Encourage children's contribution to participation in learning communities.
- To enhance partnerships with adults and communities that enhance learning and continuity of experience.

ECCE programme is

- A program which provides age/developmental /context specific experiences and interactions that enable children to develop a **sound foundation** for all round development for life, including a life long interest.
- A program which helps children to develop **readiness** for primary schooling in terms of social, physical, academic and cognitive readiness.

Objectives of the Early Childhood Care and Education programme are to:

- Ensure each child is valued, respected, feels safe and secure and develops a positive self Concept
- Enable a sound foundation for physical and motor development of each child as per each child's potential
- Imbibe good nutrition routines, health habits, hygiene practices and self help skills
- Enable children for effective communication and foster both receptive and expressive Language
- Promote development and integration of the senses
- Stimulate intellectual curiosity and develop conceptual understanding of the world by providing opportunities to explore, investigate and experiment
- Enhance development of pro-social skills, social competence and emotional well being
- Develop sense of aesthetic appreciation and stimulate creative learning processes.
- Imbibe culturally and developmentally appropriate behaviour and core human values of respect and love for fellow human beings.
- Enable a smooth transition from home to ECCE centre to formal schooling.
- Enhance scope for overall personality development

Bases for ECCE Programme Planning

An ECCE programme should be planned based on -

➤ **Goals and Objectives**

The context, the content and the strategies are all determined by the goals and objectives set for the programme. Hence it should -

- Reflect the goals and objectives.
- into consideration – the age, the stage of development and experiences of that specific group of children

1. ECCE Curriculum

ECE programme should help the child enjoy learning. Hence the skills of learning and understanding and not formal academics but with pre academics which leads to academics should be the part of curriculum. A broad range of cognitively stimulating preparatory activities and concepts needed for later learning should be the curriculum. Rote learning and routine actions such as learning letters or numbers may contaminate the whole excitement of learning at this preschool stage.

2. Focussing on how children learn.

Learning begins when the child is starting with familiar and progressing to new understanding.

Children learn:

- best when their physical needs are met and they feel psychologically safe and secure
- through social interaction with other adults and other children.
- through play.
- when motivated by Interests and "need to know" and construct knowledge.
- Best through actual participation and expression.

3. Recognizing individual child

Human development and learning are characterized by individual variation

- Encourage the development of positive self esteem and sense of ' I CAN DO IT and I AM DOING ' in young children
- Recognize importance of each child in the group and also groups of children as learners

4. Getting to know the children

Teacher needs to know how young children learn.

Each child is an individual and develops at her/his own rate and time. Hence in an ECE class a teacher finds a wide range of individual differences. Children also differ in the background of experiences they bring to the centre. Teacher can learn about children through

- Direct observation
- Parent conferences
- Home –school connections

Observation is very important in understanding young child. It should always focus on the behavior of the child. Often free play time – either indoors or outside provides the ideal opportunity to conduct observation. Observation should be carried over a period of time- at least a 5-day period each time. Recording observations of children should be done with care.

5. Holistic approach

Children develop their optimum potential when all areas of development are considered and addressed holistically.

The programme therefore should emphasize and integrate different aspects of development and learning.

6. Pace with advancing knowledge -- Brain development and Multiple intelligence theory

3 to 6 years period is significant from the point of view of brain development with a focus on psychosocial development. Though the genetic makeup of the brain is determined at birth, giving experiences enhances brain development. Providing right stimulation and repeated experiences at the right time is the key to the networking of brain cells, which shape the way individuals behave, think and learn for the rest of their lives. Hence providing opportunities for complex perceptual and motor experiences favorably affect various learning abilities.

7. Creating a classroom for every child.

Considering the theory of Multiple Intelligence to identify the innate ability within each child in different areas and curriculum need focus on how to encourage learning in ways that respect the individual interests and strengths of children. The diverse opportunities in the class room /ECE centre help to cater to multiple the learning of the child. The combination and level may vary from child to child. The theory helps in discovering the areas of strengths in children and to build on them.

Principles of Early Learning and Development - its implications for practice through preschool education.

The principles and practices relevant for learning and development in the early years are based on observations of thinkers and evidences from researches. Each of the principle elaborates specific ideas and at the same time they are all interconnected like the domains of development.

- **Development and learning takes place in all domains, development in one domain influences the other domain:**

Senses are gate ways for knowledge and understand , for growth and development of human since conception /birth

Children think, feel and interact with environment and human beings with mind and body. Interaction with objects, nature and people through senses supports the child to gain knowledge, understand apply. Which promotes growth and development in different areas of development. Hence it is important that curriculum need to address all domains for their holistic development. Changes or development in one domain facilitates or hinders the development of another domain.

- **Children's development and learning follows a sequence in which later acquired abilities (skills and concepts) build upon what children already know and apply.**

In the first few years of life the growth, change and development mostly follow a predictable pattern and scaffolding. These changes are demonstrated and varies in different contexts and culture. Knowledge of known sequence of development enables in developing early stimulation activities and curricular planning for children. the contribution of curriculum should follow the learning and developmental pattern of the child.

- **Learning begins from birth, continuous and cumulative:**

- Learning begins at birth and continues over life. From birth onwards children are mentally and physically active.
- children learn through their senses and Curriculum for Preschool Education stimulations, the early care and stimulation have a cumulative impact on their development.
- Care and early stimulation promotes brain development and leads to forming neural connections, it is crucial that children are provided with optimal stimulation in the early years and prevent cumulative deficit in the long run.

It is also important that children including those with special needs are provided with optimal stimulation in the early years. hence learning environment should be stimulative, creative, adequate with appropriate opportunities.

- **Evidence from neuroscience proves that early learning matters for later outcomes:**

Neurobiological research shows that pathways set in the very early years of a child's life program the ways in which children learn. While genetics plays an important role in the way brain is structured, it is often a child's early experiences that are crucial in determining how the brain will eventually, be shaped.

- **Child Development and Learning are characterized by individual variation:**

Learning and development follows an individual variation in the normative course of development as well as uniqueness of each child as an individual. No two children, even within the same family are the same. Each child has an individual pattern and timing of growth and development as well as individual styles of learning. Each individual child has his/her own strengths.

- **Children develop holistically and benefit from experiential learning:**

Children learn best through active exploration using the senses such as touch, taste, smell and manipulation to build perceptual skills. Children should be actively interested and engaged in their learning with a high sense of motivation and positive disposition to explore and build skills across various domains. Curriculum need to plan and implement to reach the challenges for holistic development of the child.

- **Development and learning result from a continuous interaction of biological maturation and experience.** A child has genetic endowments which may predict healthy growth, but inadequate nutrition in the early years of life will keep this potential from being fulfilled. On the other hand if the child is suffering from an inherent condition, then the detrimental impact learning and development can be minimized through systematic, individualized intervention. With this perspective in mind, it is important for early childhood educators to maintain high expectations and employ all their knowledge, ingenuity, and persistence to find ways to help every child succeed.
- **Critical periods in child's envelopment:** Research evidences reveal that some aspects of development occur most efficiently at certain points in the life span. For example the optimal period for oral language development in children is in the first three years of life, peer social skills are developed effectively during 3-5 years of life etc. Thus it is important to use these "windows of opportunity" and ensure that the children get the needed environmental inputs and supports for a particular kind of learning and development at its "prime time" for desired outcomes.
- **Children's learning reflects a recurring spiral that begins in awareness, and moves to exploration, to inquiry, and finally, to application:**

Any new learning by children begins with awareness, which is generated from their experiences with objects, events, or people and ends with utilization, where children are able to use what they have learnt for multiple purposes and apply their learning to new situations. At this stage children start exploring the next level of information and the spiral continues. Children with disabilities show a great degree of individual variations and the curriculum should make suitable adaptations to ensure that children are provided developmentally appropriate materials and experiences.

- **Children learn and develops in stimulating/nurturing/supportive/protective environment:**

During the early years of life, children move from sensory or behavioural responses to symbolic or representational knowledge. They learn within a social context and from meaningful interactions with other children, adults and materials around them. Throughout the early years, adults must provide a nurturing environment and play significant roles in helping children learn to develop empathy and cooperation, cultural socialization and self-regulation, language acquisition and communication, peer relationships, self concept and identity formations.

- **Development and learning is largely influenced by the social and cultural context of the children.**

Development and learning of children happens hand in hand and it largely depends on the influence of the child's family, immediate environment, the community and at a broader level the society. Every culture has its own norms, structures and behaviours and more so each culture has its own way of interpreting children's behaviour and development in its own way. Educators must be sensitive how their own culture has shaped their thinking and also consider the multiple environments in which different children live and how they need to be considered while making decision for children's development and learning.

- **Children have curiosity and desire to learn:**

Children are curious and have an innate desire to learn. Children observe what happens, talk, discuss and reflecting on their findings, stretch their imagination for possibilities, ask questions, and formulate answers. While exploring and learning young children construct their knowledge and understanding of the world, they learn as well as from teachers, family members, peers and older children, and from books and other media. To enable these ECCE teachers/caregivers must use multiple teaching strategies in meeting children's different learning needs.

- **Children learn through play:**

Play is central to the child's well being and development. Children's spontaneous play provides opportunities for exploration, experimentation, manipulation and problem solving that are essential for constructing knowledge. Play contributes to the development of representational as well as abstract thought. Children engage in various kinds of play, such as physical play, language play, object play, pretend or dramatic play, constructive play, and games with rules. This further influences their motivation, disposition and approaches to learning. Developing positive approaches to learning goes a long way to determine later academic success in life. Adults must provide opportunities for children to explore, play and apply.

Each child is different and grows, learns and develops at her/his own pace:

Children largely follow the same sequence of development, each child is unique and acquires abilities and skills at his/her own pace. A good preschool programme respects different abilities and individual pace of development of children and ensures that all children develop physically, socially, emotionally, morally and intellectually to their full potential. The

curriculum follows developmentally appropriate practices (DAP) that are appropriate to their age, stage and context to promote children's optimal learning and development. It suggests the use of multiple teaching strategies to address the needs of children at the different developmental stages.

Play and activity are the primary context of learning and development:

Play and activity are the best medium for preschool education. They offer opportunities to explore, experiment, manipulate and experience the environment thus, children construct their significance of Preschool Education 5 knowledge. The curriculum suggests play activities, having a balance between different kinds of play like free and guided, active and passive, indoor and outdoor, individual and group and structured and unstructured. A substantial part of play should provide self-initiated play/activities which emerge from children's interest and choices.

Responsive and supportive interactions with adults are essential

to children's learning: Children learn through the relationships they have with their parents, families, caregivers, teachers, and communities. Nurturing relationships help children become secure, confident, curious, and communicative. These relationships and interactions help children learn how to control their emotions and relate to others in socially appropriate ways.

Children learn by being provided the environment for experiential

learning: Children learn through active and direct experiences with their environment, which helps them to construct their knowledge with interaction and guidance from teachers and peers. Learning sustains when constructed. At early stage, children start exploring the next level of information and the spiral continues. It needs to be ensured that children are provided developmentally appropriate materials, experiences, and challenges in order to help them construct their own knowledge. The process also involves repetition of tasks, guidance from the teachers and more knowledgeable peers so that each child reaches her/his potential and is able to do the task, independently.

Interactive teaching enhances learning experiences: Interaction (child-child, child-teacher, and child-material) is the most significant aspect of quality preschool education. The interaction between children, the range of environmental and cultural experiences along with meaningful dialogues helps children build a solid knowledge foundation and prepares them for formal schooling.

Development and use of indigenous material enhances learning opportunities: Use of available indigenous resources helps in Curriculum for Preschool Education providing early stimulation and education to children. It also preserves indigenous values and other aspects of cultural background vital for cultural identity. It provides opportunities to the teachers, children, caregivers, and community to contribute in active and constructive teaching-learning process.

Responsiveness to the context and appreciation of diversity support learning: It is essential that programmes identify the strengths and abilities of all children to ensure that learning opportunities are maximised. All children need to be fully included in every educational experience and activity. Children with disabilities may need more individualised instructions in order to develop and learn the required skills, behaviours, and concepts. Since socialization is an important goal of preschool education the children should be given ample opportunities to interact with others during play, group activities and various forms of conversation. It is important to ensure that all children have access to learning opportunities regardless of their race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, ability, disability, language, culture, religion and social or economic condition. Curriculum decisions should value and include the knowledge perspectives, cultural backgrounds and experience each child brings to the preschool. Opportunities should be provided to develop intercultural and intergroup understanding and value diversity.

Mother tongue/Home language should be the medium of instruction: Language is closely linked to children's identity and emotional security that helps them freely express their thoughts and feelings. However, language of instruction is a complex issue in a multilingual country like ours, where children may come into the preschool with a home language which may be different from the preschool/regional language. Research also demonstrates that children who attend preschool programme conducted in their mother tongue face fewer problems of comprehension. Teaching through children's mother tongue/home language, is also internationally recognized as the most appropriate way of working with children in the early years of concept formation. In case there are more than one language as mother tongue, teachers may allow as many languages as are in the classroom to be used for expression with gradually exposing the child to school language. There is a need to provide all children exposure to sign language. It helps to lay the foundations of inclusion.

Family involvement contributes to learning:

Involvement of parents and family contributes to the learning and development of the children. The preschool curriculum recommends participation and involvement of families in preschools as well as at home.

4.2 : Need for and components of a balanced curriculum. Activities and experiences for communication and language, cognitive, physical and motor development; personal and social development; arts and aesthetic development; school readiness activities for ensuring readiness for reading, writing and math.

Activities and experiences for communication and language, cognitive development, physical and motor development; personal and social development; arts and aesthetic appreciation; school readiness activities for ensuring readiness for reading, writing and maths .

4.2.1: Introduction : An early childhood professional working with young children are decision –makers and one has to make many decisions about children in the programme on a daily basis. Understanding DAP –its meaning and intentional practices is essential in guiding the decisions one will make for young children. Developing the skills to make good decisions for children relies on building knowledge about individual children and child development principles combined with knowledge of effective early learning practices. These are the core considerations in developmentally appropriate practice.

Developmentally Appropriate Programme is a decision making tool.
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4.2.2 Objectives: The student teachers will be able

- To understand the objectives, importance of developmentally appropriate program
- Understand and plan developmentally appropriate activities and experiences for different domains of development.

What is a Developmentally Appropriate Programme?

- The term *developmentally appropriate programme* is commonly used by child care professionals to describe programme that takes into account the level of physical, social, emotional, and intellectual development of a child. A “developmentally appropriate” or “developmental” child care environment is one in which the physical, social, emotional, and intellectual development of each child is considered when planning the program. “Developmental appropriateness is generally defined within two guidelines:

- Age appropriateness—the universal, predictable sequences of growth in children
- Individual appropriateness—the unique sequence of growth of each child. This takes into account the personality, learning style and background of each child.

What are the components of Developmentally Appropriate Programme?

DAP is informed by three areas of knowledge that are critical components in making good decisions for children.

1. Child development appropriateness (Knowledge of Childhood Development)

+Child development follows general, sequential patterns and is interrelated across domains (cognitive, physical, social and emotional). Knowledge and understanding milestones and sequences of development in all domains and using child development information for planning and identifying activities, environments, experiences, and strategies (for large/small groups or individuals) helps in promoting appropriate growth and learning in young children.

Knowing typical development and learning at different ages provides the teacher with a benchmark that will help prepare her/himself to make decisions on the environment, interactions, activities, and materials. This knowledge should be based on research.

Ex :The teacher has to plan age- appropriate activities for children. The teacher should consider rolling the ball to a 3 yr old child in a group, while she can throw the ball to a 4 yr old child.

2. Individual appropriateness(what is individually appropriate for each child through assessment)

Each child is an individual and develops in her own, unique way. The Knowledge of each child's strengths, abilities, needs, challenges, interests, temperament, and approaches to learning helps an ECE professional /teacher to plan the activities accordingly as per the interests of children. The teacher should also know their individual skills, ideas and joys. This can be done through the time spent together (conversations, etc.), observation, assessment, work samples, documentation, and information from families and past teachers/programs. Observing children at play, their interactions with their peers and environment helps the teacher to learn what each child's interests, skills, and developmental progress. These observations are crucial in refining how and what to teach each child as an individual. Having this knowledge allows the teacher to know each child's

individual skills, needs, strengths, abilities, challenges, and interests. Ex : One child may be interested in just copying alphabets from the board, while some children find interest in pasting paper balls on the outline of the alphabet. The teacher has to assess the individual learning style and interest of each child and plan assignments accordingly.

3. Social and cultural appropriateness (Knowing what is culturally important)

The ECE teacher should consider each child's cultural and family background – his unique family, values, language, lifestyles, and beliefs. It is to ensure that the experiences that are provided should respect these and should be meaningful for each child/family. What makes sense to children is their own culture and teachers must consider this, along with overall child development and learning program. Each child has their own cultural and family background. Having this knowledge ensures that each experience is respectful and meaningful for each child and family. EX: Playing with a Barbie doll for a child in urban setting may find interesting and joyful but not for a child in a rural setting because the child has never been exposed to that culture and hence could not find interest in such play. Instead he/she finds interest when given wooden toys pertaining to their culture.

What is Age and developmentally appropriate curriculum?

The curriculum is the sum total of all the experiences available to the child, and it cannot be reduced to a syllabus. It has to be constructed to suit the child's requirements in different contexts, and should be in tune with the age, needs and abilities of the child; Often it is seen that the present pre-school education programme forces children to do things most inappropriate for their age and needs. A good programme should cover all the things that would facilitate children's learning and development. This calls for a developmentally appropriate programme that focuses on the holistic development of the child in a stimulating and stress free environment, fostering active exploration and experimentation through play.

Cognitive skills such as problem solving, observation, memory, sequential thinking, classification and analysing play an important role in all the activities that involvement is the most important component of learning for young children. Young children need opportunities to use their cognitive skills as they actively engage with materials and activities rather than learning situations that require them to listen or to watch.

Literacy development is growth in communication skills including initial speaking and listening, and then writing and reading. A certain level of attainment in language skills is essential to enable the child to begin

formal education successfully. "The classroom should display print rich environment and quality children's literature. The whole child should be the focus of the programme.

Physical and motor development should cover the activities and experiences for gross motor and fine motor skills such as , building with blocks, sand and water play, stringing beads, lacing cards, creative art activities and so on. Apart from development of physical abilities it should also include conversations on caring for the body, how to keep the body healthy and fit, and nutrition for healthy body. Motor skills that are needed in the performance of gross motor activities involve control of arms, legs and trunk and for fine motor activities these would involve control of the hands, feet and fingers. Music activities provide children with opportunities to learn clapping, singing, rhythm, and the interpretation of music through movement.

Self- help routines also include washing and drying hands and face, brushing teeth, combing one's hair. Toddlers are also involved in putting toys back to the storage, dressing dolls, completing two piece puzzles, stringing beads, using crayons, turning pages, building blocks, sand and water play, etc.

Social skills are very important because children must learn to get along with others. Sooner the children learn the skill of getting along easily and happily with others, it is more likely that they would enjoy school life and feel confident. ECE programme should plan and include such experiences that promote the ability to control antisocial impulses/behaviour. Small group activities and play in carefully planned activity areas help children to get along in a group, enjoy playing with other children , cooperate and share.

Emotional domain is emphasised in the quality ECE programme because child needs to develop emotional stability or control over her emotions to feel self confident. Emotionally safe and healthy children do not feel insecure; they feel free, and have positive self-esteem. Social emotional development during ECE stage is about socialization where children learn about values and socially desirable behaviour.

How do you ensure a Balanced Developmentally Appropriate Daily Schedule ?

During the early years, repetition is an essential form of learning. A daily schedule is the planning of the day by time and activities therefore, the daily schedule should include certain basic activities every day. This gives children a sense of security. Well planned daily schedules help parents to understand the order of the day, and support teachers to plan age

appropriate activities for children. but the routines should not be rigid. They should be flexible, open to suggestions from children, able to accommodate unexpected events such as a visitor or a celebration. There should be room for adapting according to children's changing attention span and shifting moods.

The characteristics of a daily balanced schedule are as follows:-

- It should be age and developmentally appropriate A good schedule includes a variety of developmentally appropriate activities. Children should be able to explore a variety of materials.
- It should promote for holistic development of the child. Activities should include all areas of development: physical, cognitive, social and emotional, and language and literacy.
- It should promote for the development of 3R's- Reading ,writing and number readiness for smooth transition to Primary school.
- It should provide for balance of active and quiet activities/ experiences. Alternating active and quiet activities helps children avoid fatigue and boredom and helps them maintain self-control.
- It should provide alternating periods of structured and unstructured activities. The schedule should balance child-initiated activities and adult guidance and support.

Children should have daily opportunities for indoor and outdoor play. Children need both indoor and outdoor experiences every day. A good schedule includes at least one hour of outdoor play in suitable weather. Children will experience outdoor play for a portion of every day unless weather conditions are extreme. A good schedule provides a reasonable pace for children's participation.

- It should provide for balanced experiences through individual, small group and large group activities.
- It should provide for active exploration of the environment.

It should provide for Self-directed, hands-on learning activities. Most preschool children can sustain interest in self-initiated activities for relatively long periods of time. During group times, 10-20 minutes is the expected attention span for most three to five year olds.

Balance between individual and group activities.

- Regular and supportive interaction with teachers and peers..
- It should also include traditional large group activity i.e., circle-time, when the children sit in a circle and teacher discusses a topic, any experiences, stories, etc.
- A good schedule is predictable. The sequence of events is always the same, although the actual clock time may vary a bit. A good Early childhood programme schedule is flexible within the curricular framework.
- Flexible time-blocks allow for both predictability and flexibility. While the sequence of events is predictable, the teacher can adjust the length of time for each block according to the children's involvement or restlessness.
- While planning is essential, there must be flexibility in a day's programme, for example, free play may be planned for about 30 minutes, but if the children are involved and interested in an activity, it may be extended to 45 minutes. It has been seen that often children are rushed from one activity to another or sometimes the activity is stretched just because the lesson plan indicates that at 12.00 p.m. dramatic play is scheduled. Flexible schedule allows flow of activity.
- Changes in planning must be spontaneous and teacher should take advantage of teachable moments. For example, one day a small little piglet came close to the outdoor play area. The children were excited and started asking questions. A good and wise teacher can take advantage of this and help children to satisfy their curiosity by talking about the piglet.
- Every day there should be some time where the child can select and choose her activity center.
- Daily planning should be such that it allows time for teachers to observe children, talk with them and work with them individually and in groups.
- Time must be allocated for transition from one activity to another.

- Extra time must be allocated for moving the children from one room to another such as activity room, music room, etc.
- A hurried schedule opposes a positive learning environment, leading to boredom and conflict. A helpful schedule allows time for children to complete tasks in a satisfying way. A good schedule recognizes developmental differences in attention span.

4.2.3; What is the role of teacher in organising Developmentally Appropriate programme?

- Write the plans in a diary. It helps to provide structure to the programme. Writing plans in a diary also helps in keeping a record of activities.
- Prepare a web chart or a web programme plan as a visual scheme that depicts relationships between a theme and developmental domains/activity centres. Fig.3.4 and 3.5 provides sample programme planning webs.
- Try to put more challenging activities in the morning as children are fresh at that time.
- Consider each child's energy level and health condition in planning activities.
- The teacher must understand that all developmental aspects depend on each other. When children are planning with manipulatives or working on puzzle, they may use mathematical reasoning, language skills, or trial and error strategy to solve a problem. These learning skills are not separated into different content areas but occur simultaneously. Learning is interconnected and integrated. Therefore, the day must be planned and organized before the children enter the classroom.

DAP focuses on five key areas of early learning practices:

- ***Creating a caring community of learners.*** Build positive and responsive relationships between children, staff, and families, both among groups and within the program, to create a community that supports all children as they develop and learn to their capacity in all domains.
- ***Teaching to enhance development and learning.*** Provide a balance of teacher-directed and child initiated activities and plan experiences that meet individual needs, interests, and learning goals.

- **Planning curriculum to achieve important goals.** Develop a written curriculum that reflects developmental milestones and appropriate early learning goals for children and that supports individualized learning.
- **Assessing children's development and learning.** Link assessment to curriculum and early learning standards and use authentic assessment methods to measure a child's progress.
- **Establishing reciprocal relationships with families.** Work in partnership with families to learn about each child, to develop two-way communication, and to establish supportive relationships with all families.

There are many basic principles of development that inform DAP, which include: the domains of development, observations/documentation, seeing each child as unique, and knowing the impact of early experiences, relationships and play has on the early years. Here are the basic principles of development:

- All the domains of development and learning are important, which include: physical, social, emotional and cognitive, which are interrelated to one another and influence what takes place in each of the domains
- Learning and development is observed and documented
- Each child is unique and develops at their own pace
- Early experiences are important for children's development and learning
- Children develop best when they have secure and consistent relationships with adults and peers
- Social and cultural contexts influence development and learning
- Play promotes self-regulation, language, cognition and social competence

How do you set up the preschool classroom with principles of developmentally appropriate practice?

- Provide age-appropriate and culturally appropriate materials (ex. infant, toddler or preschool)
- Have materials and equipment at children's height (ex. chairs, bookshelves, activity shelves)

- Spaces should accommodate movement of children
- Have play areas that provide manipulatives, puzzles, music and movement, books, dramatic play, blocks, physical materials for large muscles (ex. push toys) and sensory materials (ex. sand and water)
- Frequently change materials and equipment to reflect children's interests and needs
- Focus on development for a specific age group to plan experiences and the environment
- Understand that each child is unique
- Allow time for teacher and child guided experiences in small and large groups
- Respect the social and cultural context of each individual child
- Support children's play

Let's discuss each Domain of development and below are suggested few activities age-wise :

4.2.4 : Activities and experiences for LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT :

Speech, language and communication skills are crucial to young children's overall development. Being able to speak clearly and process speech sounds, to understand others, to express ideas and interact with others are fundamental building blocks for a child's development.

Essentials for Language development

- 1. Listening skills(sound discrimination)**
- 2. Speaking skills (Free conversation, creative expression)**
- 3. Reading skills (sound discrimination, visual discrimination, association between sound and visual discrimination)**
- 4. Writing skills (Fine muscle coordination, eye- hand coordination)**

Although the first year is really important for language development in children, major learning continues throughout a child's early years. In their first 12 months, babies develop many of the foundations that underpin speech and language development. For the first three years or so, children understand a lot more than they can say. Children learn language through

- ❖ Imitating others
- ❖ Repetition
- ❖ Encouragement
- ❖ Opportunities by parents, caregivers and adults and other children
- ❖ Freedom to play and interact with environment-through Nature walk.

Objectives

- Improves listening skills and creative use of language
- Stimulates imagination and thinking
- Increases ability to discriminate sounds
- Increases attention span
- Learns to follow instructions
- Learns sound discrimination

Here are some activities for children to develop language and continue the games as long as the child enjoys it. and increase the complexity of the game once the child attain the skill.

Name of the activity	3-4Years	4-5Years	5-6Years
Story telling using Stick puppets, flash cards etc related to familiar themes. Narrate simple short stories to children. The themes of the stories should be familiar and of interest to children, (for example, animals, circus, fair, etc.) to motivate them to listen. Use appropriate gestures, facial expression, voice modulation, sounds etc. to hold the interest of the children	Enjoy Listening to story	Repeat the story using visual aids	Narrate the story in their own words
Sound boxes	Can discriminate two sounds	Can discriminate three or more sounds	Can identify the object of the sounds
Rhymes	Listen and enjoy to the rhymes	Sing with action along with the teacher	Sing with action on their own

Show and Tell	Identifies the picture	Describe the picture	Describes and imagine about the picture
<p>Jungle main Mungle Material: Pictures Cards of familiar animals and birds.</p> <p>Ask the children to sit in a circle. Then give the picture card of familiar animals/birds to each child and instruct them not to show it to other children . Then ask each child one by one to create the sound of the animal/birds they are having on the picture card . Ask rest of the children to identify the animal/bird. When the children are able to identify the animal/birds, they can be asked to create the sound along with action. Children can also be asked to create sound in rhythm too. i.e. koo, koo and beat of Dhapli Dap, Dap</p>	Identifies the picture /animal by seeing and naming them.	Able to identify the animal /bird by the clues given and able to produce the sound of animal/bird.	Able to do action of the animal/bird with rhythm of the dhapli and create his/her own movements.
<p>Follow the instructions : As per local availability (Ball, flower, leaves, seeds etc)</p> <p>Ask the children to sit in a semi circle. Give each child some simple instructions, for example. "Bring me the ball". "Clap your hands", etc. Once the child has done the action, ask all the children what the instruction was and whether the child did it as required or not. It will encourage all the children to listen attentively to the instruction and do the action . Tell all the children to clap for the child who does it correctly.Increase the complexity of the instruction for senior group children.</p>	Able to follow one simple instruction.	Able to follow two instructions at a time.EX Pick a pebble from outside and put it on the table.	Able to follow complex instructions.Ex:Ask a pencil from Raju and give it to Sita and take the book that is on the table and put back in the cupboard.
<p>Riddles :For each theme some simple one line riddles can be made which the children should be asked to answer, for example, theme on Animals</p>	Able to tell with more significant clues or recognises the picture.	Able to tell with more significant clues.	Able to tell with less significant clues.

<p>and Birds could have rhymes like "I say Quack, Quack, Quack, Who am I?" I am an animal with a long long trunk. Who am I?". The riddle should include some significant clues, for example, "quack" and "trunk". For each theme two to four line riddles can be prepared, for example, a) I am green, green, green, I have a red, red, beak ,I fly "tai, tai, tai, Guess who am I?" (Parrot). b) I am an animal, I eat grass & I love carrots,I live in a burrow, guess who am I (Rabbit)</p>			
<p>Completing the sentence : For critical listening, activities like listening to clues to complete a thought are also useful. For example, "We take the tooth brush, put tooth paste on it and then"..... Let the children complete the sentence. What we do after it.</p>	<p>Able to complete the sentence in one word</p>	<p>Completes the sentence with words in a meaningful way</p>	<p>Completes with full sentence and explains in a meaningful way.</p>
<p>Picture of animal/birds/fruits etc. Let children sit in a circle. The teacher should pin a picture of an animal/bird or anyother object on the back of any one child in such a way that the child does not get to know what the picture is. Let him go round the circle showing his back towards children so that they can see the picture. The child with the picture has to now guess what could be the • picture about by asking other children for clues, for example, Is it an animal? Is it a bird? Does it cry? if the child gets the correct answer all the children should clap & game continue.</p>	<p>Children just participate in the game.</p>	<p>Children give general clues to guess.</p>	<p>Children give specific clues about the picture to guess.</p>

4.2.5 : Cognitive development :

Essentials of Cognitive development

- ✚ Development of Basic skills
- ✚ 2. Development of Mental skills
- ✚ 3. Concept Formation

Cognitive development Domain: Development of various concepts including pre number and number concepts and operations• (knowledge and skills related to comparing, classification, seriation; understanding of and vocabulary related to space, quantity, length and volume, one to one correspondence; counting etc), Predicting patterns and making estimations in measurement; data handling;• Develop skills related to sequential thinking, critical thinking, observing, reasoning and problem• solving; Explore the physical, social and natural environment by manipulating objects, asking• questions, making predictions and developing generalizations. Differentiate between events that happen in past, present and the future• Develop knowledge of relationship between people, places and regions•

Memory

Memory matching games or simple card games allow preschoolers to intellectually work through a problem to find the answer or a solution. Beginning to differentiate between objects and people, and learn their daily routines. For example, when a child puts away their toy bin back in the same place it was on the shelf before.

Puzzles

Puzzles provide children with opportunities to hone their problem-solving skills as they figure out where pieces fit or don't. They teach preschoolers to solve problems and think in a more logical way.

Since there is only one way to solve a puzzle (a piece either fits or it doesn't), they also teach children how to be more patient. As an educator, pay extra attention and encourage children to continue searching for the right piece if they begin to get impatient.

Sorting and classification activities :

Categorizing plays a large role in a preschooler's cognitive development. Through sorting, children begin to understand that certain things have similarities and differences. This type of logical thinking forms the foundation for future mathematical concepts and even everyday tasks. A

child's ability to categorize, sort, group, and connect objects. For example, sorting different colored pom poms into the same colored boxes. Choose activities that encourage sorting and classifying items such as sorting toys by colour, type or size.

Sequencing activities

Preschoolers typically use their own routines to understand events and recall sequence. They understand time in a general way (for example, "yesterday" could mean something that happened anytime in the past), but can work on their sequencing skills to develop a better sense of time.

For example, you could ask your preschoolers to draw you a sequence of their morning routine in the correct order. As an educator, remember to emphasize sequencing words like, first, start, finish, next, last, then, before, after, etc. so they become a part of a preschooler's vocabulary.

Symbolic

Both parents and caregivers can support preschool cognitive development by playing symbolic games with their children. Taking part in imaginary play with a preschooler helps them develop their natural curiosity about the world, invokes their problem-solving skills and helps develop their focus and attention as well. During play, children use objects, ideas and actions to stand for other things. For example, holding a toy phone up to their ear or rocking a baby back and forth. Plus, in a world where there's a product for just about every activity, imaginary play is completely free!

During the preschool years, children are undergoing a period of rapid brain development. This is why it's so crucial to choose activities that are developmentally appropriate, so their developing brains are properly nurtured.

Number sense A child's understanding of number concepts (e.g. more and less) and number relationships. They begin to understand quantities, recognize relationships and understand the order of numbers. For example, singing along to 'Five Little Monkeys Jumping on the Bed'.

Development of basic skills

FORMATION OF BASIC CONCEPTS :

In order to develop any concept in children, the teacher has to conduct various activities in the programme in the following substages..

Level	Skill	Process
1 st level	Matching	Able to match by seeing.

2 nd level	Identification, Recognition	Able to grasp and understand the concept in mind and in words and language.
3 rd level	Naming (Which colour is this? This is red colour.	Able to express their understanding of the concept and explaining the concept using vocabulary.
Fourth level	Gradation	Able to do relative comparison ex: Grading leaves from tender to ripe leaves to dry leaves.
Fifth level	Classification	Able to sort basing on two or more attributes.

1. Basic cognitive skills

- Sense of sight(visual)
- Sense of Hearing (Auditory)
- Sense of Touch (Tactile)
- Sense of Taste (gustatory)
 - Sense of smell(olfactory)

2. Mental skills in cognitive development

- Observation
- Classification
- Problem-solving
- sequencing

3. Formation of basic concepts

Concept Of Colour

Concept of Size

Concept of Shape

Pre Number Concept

Concept of Time

Activities for sensorial development

Activity	3 to 4 years	4 to 5 years	5 to 6 years
<p>Sense of sight</p> <p>Materials: Picture/Aids (to provide experience to children in matching, charts, discriminating, seriating, sequencing etc.)</p> <p>Method :</p> <p>Make children sit in small group of 5-6 each Give them aids (cards of games on a tablet) so that they learn to match identifiable objects i.e. two same pictures or objects Discriminate a different object from a group of common objects e.g. picture of an animal from group of fruits</p>	<p>Able to match two identifiable objects</p>	<p>Able to sort, discriminate, seriate objects upto three levels.</p>	<p>Able to discriminate seriate things upto 5 levels, sequence objects, predicts what happens next?</p>
<p>Sense of sound :Identification of sound :</p> <p>Material: Wood, Glass, Tin, Musical Instruments etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Method :Make children sit in 	<p>Able to identify familiar sounds of animals like dog, cat etc.,</p>	<p>Able to identify with blindfold 3 to 4 sounds that are introduced.</p>	<p>Able to identify 4 to 5 sounds with blindfold and also identifies the direction of</p>

<p>semicircles or rows. Familiarize them with the sound of different objects like metals, glass, wood, musical instruments, animals, means of transport etc. Also make them aware about the sounds of clapping and snapping. Then blindfold children one by one and ask them to identify different object/animals etc. by their sound. Also ask them to tell the direction from which the sound has been heard. Allow one child to search his family using the sounds e.g. cat meowing.</p>			<p>the sound, can discriminate loud and soft sounds etc. Can identify sounds in a sequence.</p>
<p>Feely bag : Materials :A bag of cloth containing items like piece of wool, metal, plastic, cork, rubber, small fruits.</p>			

<p>Touch board :</p> <p>A cardboard piece on which pieces of sand paper glaze paper different clothes such as jute, wool, nylon, silk, cotton etc. have been pasted.</p> <p>Method :</p> <p>Make children sit in a circle Pass on the feely bag to children use Daphli. Stop the beat. The child who holds the bag at this time has to touch one object inside it and describe his feelings. He has to tell whether the object is rough or smooth, hard or soft, light or heavy, short or tall, round or square etc. Finally child has to identify the object and show it to everyone. The activity continues till all children get a chance. Similarly, each child can touch the various pieces of cloth, paper on cardboard and identify them.</p>			
<p>Sense of Taste Activity Identification of different taste Material</p>			

<p>Sugar/Jaggery</p> <p>Make children sit in two consecutive semi circles or rows. Discuss with them about things that taste sweet, salty, sour, bitter and hot etc. Make them taste these things so that they can identify them by taste. Do not force anybody to taste chilly powder. Blindfold one child, give him something to taste so as to identify the item with its taste. Give chance to all children by turns.</p>			
<p>Sense of Smell</p> <p>Activity :Identification of different taste</p> <p>Material Kerosene oil, pieces of onion, fresh and fermented food, spices, pieces of rubber, leather and other smelly objects like flowers garlic, agarbatti, pudhina etc.</p>	<p>Objective :Able to distinguish between good and bad smell.</p>	<p>Able to identify the object by smell.</p> <p>4 to 6 yrs</p> <p>Take children to nature walk and ask them to observe good smell and bad smellobjects.Encourage them to explain orally.</p> <p>Take good smell objects like agarbathi, soil etc to the classroom.Ask the children to close their eyes and recognize the object by its smell.Also</p>	<p>Able to identify the familiar smells and recognize the object.</p>

		<p>introduce smell-less objects like water, sugar , salt etc. let the children guess the object by its smell.</p> <p>Make picture cards of different pictures like rose, garlic, lemon, fruits ,face powder, plant manure, bommalu, Dustbin overflowing with garbage.Now ask the children to sort and categorise good smell objects and bad smell objects by seeing the picture.</p> <p>Ask children to enact or different smells like Aha or good smell by their expressions and feelings.</p>	
<p>Odd Man Out : (classification)children sit in a semicircle. Call one child at a time and ask him to spot the shape that is different from the rest. Helps to discriminate between various shapes, and classify them. Increase observation skills.</p> <p>BeQuick (identification & Classification.) Make children sit in a circle.</p>	<p>Able to sort things with only one attribute.Ex :colour</p>	<p>Able to classify things with two attributes.Ex: colour and shape</p>	<p>Able to classify things with more than two attributes. Ex : colour, shape and texture.</p>

<p>Ask the children to clap their hands twice and click their fingers till they get into a rhythm. At the clicking of fingers, the children have to tell the names of the objects with specified shape. For example the teacher starts with. - "Be quick" tell me the names of "round" things. The children who fail to name objects at the clicking of fingers have to start again. Develops ability to recognize different shapes, Develop attention skills too.</p>			
<p>Sense of touch</p>	<p>Make cards, cotton, wool, polyester, Jute Make etc. Ask the children to match with variety of cloth pieces like satin by touching the cloth.</p> <p>Collect and give locally available material like leaves, sticks, twigs, cotton, wool, tree barks, tree wooden pieces, touch soil,</p>	<p>Make touch cards with Rough surface paper like sand paper, tissue paper, crape paper, wool, mukmul, cotton, gunny bag cloth piece etc Give any three cards to children and ask them to arrange in sequence from rough to smooth.tell them that these things are categorised into rough and smooth.</p> <p>Make a feely bag and collect locally available material . Drop each one of these items in the bag and the rest of the things are kept outside the bag.</p>	<p>Ask the children to put/arrange the touch cards in a sequence from rough to smooth.</p> <p>Let the children sit in a semi-circle.Ask one child to put different materials at the back of. one child Those</p>

	<p>sand, pebbles etc. to children. Ask them to classify basing on the attributes- Rough/smooth, hard/soft. Encourage them to speak about the texture and the reason for categorisation.</p>	<p>Now ask the child to match the item in the feely bag with that of outside things and verify by taking the item out of the bag.</p>	<p>children who are sitting should put their hands at the back and search or the materials. Those who find should describe about the material whether it is rough or smooth, hard /soft etc, without turning back.</p>	
Activity	Objective	3- 4 yrs	4-5yrs	5-6yrs
<p>Classification</p> <p>Activities</p>	<p>Objective</p>	<p>Should be able to classify objects and sort them based on one attribute.</p> <p>Two different objects like leaves and pebbles are mixed and given to children. Ask the children to sort two different things and classify them into two groups.</p>	<p>Should be able to classify objects basing on two attributes</p> <p>4-6yrs</p> <p>Classification activity can be done taking into account all the themes.</p> <p>Prepare classification cards with</p>	<p>Should be able to classify based on two or more attributes.</p>

		<p>Make cards that are suitable for classification.ex: colour cards Ask the children to categorise pictures based on colour.</p> <p>Find out the odd one :Make a card with five pictures in it. Four pictures should be of one type and the other one should be different. Ex: four pictures of vegetables and one picture of fruit. The child should be able to find the odd one out.</p> <p>Ex: Four pictures of animals and one picture of bird. This concept of classification can be included in all the themes.</p>	<p>any two attributes- three colours three shapes. Ask children to classify as per their interest.Elder children can categorise according to shape, colour, and size.</p> <p>Make classification cards with objects and their utility.Ex pen, pencil, chalkpiece, knife, blade, scissors, broomstick, blackboard, brush,duster etc. Mix all the cards and ask the children to sort, classify them .</p>	
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ACTIVITY/OBJECTIVE	3 TO 4 YEARS	4 TO 5 YEARS	5 TO 6 YEARS
<p>Thinking ability</p> <p>Sequential thinking in daily helps children to recognize the number sequence and helps in understanding numbers .It also helps to regularise their thoughts in problem solving .</p>	<p>Able to arrange things/objects in an order on his own by observing things that are in an order.</p>	<p>Able to arrange/create logically in an order /sequence and should be able to extend the order using few objects/ pictures stories, Incidents.</p> <p>Ask children to retell the story in the sequence that was told.</p> <p>Ask children to develop a story following a sequence and logical reasoning</p> <p>Ask children to create a pattern with matchsticks, beads, leaves, flower petals etc.</p> <p>Make sequence cards on familiar tasks like bathing, daily routine</p>	<p>Able to move front and back in an order.</p> <p>Let the children sit in a circle. One child starts saying, "I went to the Market , I bought onions". The child next to him /her will start saying, "I went to the market ,I bought onions, potatoes."The third person says adding, 'I went to the market , I bought onions,potatoes ,tomatoes" and the game continues.This game helps in development of memory,children should be encouraged to tell in the sequence.</p> <p>Draw the picture of clothes that</p>

		<p>at home and school. Mix all the cards and ask the child to arrange them in a sequence. Also story sequence cards can be prepared and let the children arrange them in the correct sequence of the story..</p>	<p>are hanging on a rope. All these pictures should be in 3 sets. Ask the child to place these cards on the second line by seeing the first line. In the third string, ask them to place the cards in descending order.</p>
<p>Problem-solving, logical thinking process</p>	<p>Able to understand the concept of 'full-part.'</p> <p>Able to think to solve simple problems.</p> <p>Make a picture and cut it into two to three pieces. Ask the children to assemble these pieces and encourage them to complete it.</p> <p>Simple mazes -find the way, should be developed and given.</p> <p>Take cardboard boxes and cut shapes differently in the centre of each</p>	<p>Able to understand the concept "Full/part" relationship in a complex level.</p> <p>Able to use their thoughts to solve more complex problems.</p> <p>Draw a picture and cut into 4 or 5 pieces ,make the problem</p>	<p>Able to understand the "full-part" relationship in a more complex level.</p> <p>Able to express orally the problems and try to solve the problems in many ways possible.</p> <p>Increase the complexity of Maze</p> <p>By making it more complex.</p>

	<p>box. Give children the shapes and ask them to insert the shape into the box accordingly.</p> <p>The teacher along with children should be able to solve simple tasks.</p> <p>Give pictures that are familiar to children. Ex : lock-key, shirt- knicker, comb- ribbon,- pictures of relationship should be given. The teacher should shuffle all the pictures and ask the children to match the pictures.</p> <p>Pose simple problems before child realise the cause and effect relationship.EX:What happens if it rains?</p> <p>Why does a paper fly-off when we put on the fan ?</p> <p>What happens when you keep your hair dirty ?</p> <p>How do you reach the doll that is kept in the almirah ?</p>		
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4.2.6 : Socio-Emotional development

Children learn social-emotional skills in the context of their relationships by watching, imitating and responding to the social behaviour of others. Children also learn from the ways others respond to their emotions. Social-emotional skills are closely connected to a child's family, cultural background and early experiences. Children learn by interacting and forming relationships with members of their families, child care groups, schools, and communities.

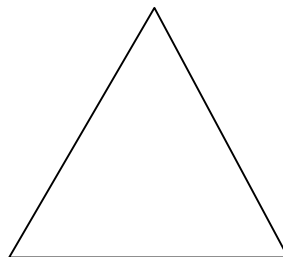
Social-emotional learning begins in infancy, and adults are the most influential models for young children. When caregivers validate children's feelings, address their needs, and are responsive and supportive, preschoolers are better able to communicate their needs and emotions and are more likely to demonstrate healthy social-emotional development.

Healthy social-emotional development is strongly associated with responsive care giving. Responsive caregivers are supportive and positive, provide stimulating materials, play and engage with children, share events and experiences, follow children's lead, and support children's interests and learning. Responsive caregivers plan meaningful opportunities throughout the day to help children practice and learn social skills. As you read this section, envision the role you play in fostering healthy social-emotional development for the children in your care.

Essentials for social and emotional development

Safe and secure environment

Praise and encouragement



trust and age appropriate

Socio- emotional indicators in children :

Development of self- concept

Develop initiative and curiosity in new experiences and learning

Developing a sense of independence and autonomy

Display awareness of abilities and preferences appreciates similarities and differences in people and awareness of behaviour and its actions.

Displays relevant and appropriate habit formation, increased attention span, engagement and persistence in daily activities.

Develop interpersonal skills, with respect to peers, family, teachers, community

DISPLAY cooperative behaviour, compassion, social relationships, group interaction pro- social behaviour ,expressing feelings, accepting others feelings.

Develop the ability to adapt and control emotions.

Here are some simple but fun activities you can do with young children to build these skills.

1. Ball Games

Ball games are a relatively simple way for younger children to build relationships. Co-operatively rolling a ball back and forth is a rudimentary way of initiating play and turn-taking. For older children, they can play in a larger group and say each other's names before rolling the ball, practicing initiating play verbally.

2. Role play

Role play is a great way for children to experiment with social behaviour, rules and expectations. Children often enjoy acting out what they know, such as cooking and eating dinner together, but also experimenting with risky social scenarios such as games of cops and robbers. Role play is a safe space for children to develop social skills, though to begin with they may need guiding through the narrative. After a while though children will begin to develop imaginative scenarios that allow them to work on their social-emotional skills through play.

3. Stories

Reading has a huge range of benefits, including social-emotional benefits. Reading a story with emotional content, and discussing it with your child gives them the opportunity to develop empathy, as well as tools to use in their own experiences of emotions. You might ask; "Why did the character get angry? What makes you get angry?"

4. Puppets

Similar to stories and role play, using puppets to act out social situations and emotions is a good way to develop children's recognition and understanding of emotions as well as explore ways for managing social scenarios and feelings.

5. Listening games

An important part of social-emotional development is the ability to recognize, understand and respond to appropriate boundaries and behavioural expectations. Helping your child to listen carefully to instructions and change their behaviour in response to this will improve their social-emotional skills as well as listening, attention and focus. Games like "[Simon Says](#)" and "Red light, Green light" allow children to practice listening carefully, following instructions and changing their behaviour in line with expectations. Here are some more [listening games](#) to play.

6. Board games

Board games are an ideal way for children to experience turn-taking, as well as winning and losing and the emotions that are involved in both. With so many educational games on the market for preschoolers, children can work on a whole host of skills through playing games. Encourage children to follow the rules, take turns, and keep play friendly even when they are frustrated.

7. Sports

Encouraging an active lifestyle through playing sports is valuable in and of itself but sports also offer fantastic opportunities for social-emotional development. Sports that are played as a team such as football or basketball are especially encouraging of social development. In playing as a team, children begin to understand that their actions have an effect on others, and that humans rely on each other. Team sports are also by nature competitive; as teams there is often a level of conflict whether a difference of opinion on tactics, or losing a game. By learning to deal with these situations children develop resilience and learn to manage their emotions and behaviour.

Suggested activities

Activities with songs:

Developmental objectives : To inculcate good habits

To help children become aware of personal cleanliness

Song on cleaning day, Mango tree, good manners, looking neat, Folk songs and folk dancing help children become acquainted with their cultural heritage.

Name of the activity	Objective	3 to 4 yrs	4 to 5 yrs	5 to 6 yrs
<p>Mirror- Mirror Provide hand mirror during free play or place a full length mirror in the classroom /AWC</p>	<p>To develop good personal habits and to boost their self-esteem.</p>	<p>Tries to be neat and tidy.</p>	<p>Tries to be neat by combing his hair , tuck his shirt properly .</p>	<p>The child is conscious to be neat and tidy.wear s and adjust his dress ,combs hair, buttons up in front of the mirror.</p>
<p>My name puzzle To make a puzzle for each child's name using first and last names. Encourage each child by fixing the name puzzle.</p>		<p>The child feels happy and pride by pinning his name card to his/her dress which boosts their self-esteem.</p>	<p>Tries to fix his n.ame puzzle upon clues</p>	<p>Fixes his name puzzle on his own.</p>
<p>Guess who? Make "guess who" riddles describing individual children. Teacher suggests clues that reflect's the child's positive characteristics. Encourage children to guess the name of that child.</p>		<p>The child passively enjoys listening to the positive characteristics.</p>	<p>Tries guessing the name of the child.</p>	<p>Tries guessing the name of the child, can also refer</p>

Play with dolls Dolls, utensils doll houses in doll corner where children can play with dolls and create their own world.	Imagination Creativity Language development Emotional outlet Sublimate aggressive feelings and be able to express them indirectly.	Love to play with dolls and utensils and finds joy	Enact with dolls 'utensils, doll houses by playing different roles and express their feelings in their own way.	Enact with dolls ,utensils by playing different roles and express in their own language basing on their experiences and also involve in imaginative play creatively.
I can do Flash cards with pictures or drawing of tasks such as running, sitting, flying etc. Make I Can Do cards with pictures or drawings that children can do. As the teacher hold the cards up children do the skill or pretend to do it.		Imitate other children / teacher doing the task	Do the action/ skill or pretends to do so.	Can do the action or skill on their own., can do other actions too.

4.2.7 : Arts and aesthetic appreciation: children need to understand the world around them and helping them in this context plays a key role in early childhood development. Children not only ought to learn the subjects and concepts but they also need to learn an appreciation for the arts. In doing so young children will see the connection and importance of music, visual arts and pretend play in their education. It will help increase motivation and develop appropriate interpersonal skills. Hence a preschool teacher should carefully plan activities for exploration and use of manipulative activities in the daily schedule to foster aesthetic development in children.

Aesthetic is connected to beauty and it can stimulate children's senses in the form of art, Music, dance and drama . This stimulating environment will enhance children's learning and thinking. Children's creativity will get enhanced if supported by responsive and observant teachers. Providing opportunities for children to express freely their thoughts, ideas and feelings through art, music and drama enables children to express things creatively and fosters the development of other domains such as physical ,cognitive, language and social.

Aesthetic involves the love and pursuit of beauty as found in art, movement, music and life as defined by Schirmacher, (1998, p.222). Feeney and Moravcik (1987, p217) define aesthetic as 'the awareness and appreciation of pleasant sensory experiences' and they further defined it by stating it as 'the ability to critically evaluate the works of art according to criteria that are defined by the culture'.

- Aesthetic responses lie at the heart of many daily events. The stimulating beautiful environment boosts the sensory experiences and it further reduces the stress level, leading to positive behaviour. The exposure to nature and beauty encourages children to express their thoughts freely without any obstruction or hindrance. Alvino highlighted that arts allows children to enjoy success as it develops children's skills in eye-hand coordination, persistent patience and good working habits. Besides, visual arts, music, dance or drama also gives children the opportunities to develop social skills as they work together as a team cooperatively.

Drama, music, dance and visual art foster creativity and imagination in toddlers . These activities also help young children develop their senses through exploration and discovery. They let toddlers express how they see the world and their place in it.

Toddlers can use creative play to communicate their feelings. They might not always be able to say why they're feeling angry, depressed, happy or frightened. But in an encouraging environment, they might be able to use activities and experiences to express these feelings using paint, colour, movement, and mime, dramatic gestures, singing or dancing.

Development of creative and aesthetic appreciation:

- Representing objects, events, and ideas in the form of drawing, clay modelling and other art forms.
- Develop expression, enjoyment and disposition for music and movement
- Demonstrate creativity and inventiveness with materials

Following points are to be kept in mind while dealing with creative and aesthetic appreciation.

- All children have potential for creativity but in different degree.
- Creativity is not identical with intelligence.
- Environment is important for nurturing creativity in children.
- Opportunities and facilities for free play –dramatic play and constructive play foster creativity in children.
- Acceptance and appreciation are the main tools to expect creative expression and aesthetic values in children.
- Encouraging children for exploration, imagination and curiosity proves vital.

Major areas of creative expression

1) Creative art : drawing, painting, printing, paper tearing, pasting and cutting, paper folding, clay modelling.

2) creative movement : Action rhymes, creative body movement, creative drama

3) creative thinking : Free play, asking open ended questions, creating new stories, rhymes.

4) Aesthetic Appreciation : decorating doll house, AWC, Nature walk and appreciating nature.

Importance of science at a glance : science involves a lot of communication with other people.

Science develops patience and perseverance in children.

It teaches kids about the world around them.

It can spark in kid's minds that they too can help solve the world's big problems.

It can help kids form a healthy dose of scepticism.

Creative play lets toddlers try out different ideas and ways of doing things.

The process of doing activity is the most important part, not the final result.

Name of the activity	Objective	3 to 4 yrs	4 to 5 yrs	5 to 6yrs
Drawing and colouring		Scribbles randomly.	Scribbles up and down in a vertical direction side to side and in circles.	Scribbles and colours in single direction.

Threading beads		Can thread big beads with large holes,	Can thread beads with relatively small holes, can copy pattern with the beads.	Can thread beads with ease and skill according to colour or with the shape of the beads and create his own pattern.
Folding the paper		Folding the paper under the guidance of the teacher/ adult and make shapes of square, rectangle etc.,	Can fold the paper with the guidance of teacher/ adult to make more shapes with complicated folding.	Can fold the paper with more complicated folding to make more shapes.
Clay models		Kneads clay, makes different balls, again mix and knead the dough.	Can make clay models and decorate with colours sticks/twigs, flowers etc.,	Can make more complicated and meaningful clay models.

4.2.8 : school readiness activities :

Reading readiness:

Recognising Auditory discrimination	Objective	3 to 4 yrs	4 to 5 yrs	5 to 6 years
		Should be able to identify and recognise different sounds in the environment .Should be able to tell the direction from which the sound is coming.	Able to identify the familiar things by their sounds. Should be able to grade the sound (low, loud, far, near sounds) and grade the things accordingly. Able to identify	Able to identify familiar animals birds, things based on their sounds. Able to identify human beings with their voices. Should be able to find a meaningful

			<p>the beginning sound and develop another word with the beginning sound.</p> <p>Should be able to find another rhythmic word to the given word though it doesnot possess any meaning.</p>	<p>rhythmic word to the given word.</p>
		<p>Able to identify different sounds in the surrounding environment. Basing on the sound, should be able to tell easily from which direction the sound is heard.</p>	<p>Basing on the sound , should be able to identify the object easily.</p> <p>Depending on the level of the sound heard, should be able to identify low and high sounds and arrange the objects in the sequence accordingly.</p> <p>Able to add rhythmic word to the word given though the meaning is not known.</p> <p>Let the children sit in semi-circle. Let them</p>	<p>Able to identify animals, birds and objects basing on their sounds they make.</p> <p>Able to identify human beings based on their voices.</p> <p>Able to tell a meaningful rhythmic word to the word given.</p> <p>These games can be assigned the games for 4 to 5 year old children.</p> <p>Teacher can play anthyakshari with this</p>

<p>Activities</p>	<p>Develops visual discrimination</p>	<p>close their eyes. Make familiar sounds to the child. Ex; pouring water sound, bangle sound, tambola sound, clap sound, mouth sounds etc., Let the children identify these sounds. Now ask each child to make one of those sounds while the rest of the children need to recognise that sound.</p> <p>Sound boxes with different types of materials are to be made and let the child arrange these boxes in a sequence of low to loud sound.</p> <p>Let the children identify the beginning sound by starting their names. Let them identify the beginning sound in their names. Make</p>	<p>children. Let the children sit in a semi-circle. The game starts with one child uttering one word say , "teacher" The child next to him should start with the word beginning with "R" and the game continues.</p> <p>Children are divided into two groups. One group after thinking will say aloud only the beginning sound and end sound of the word .the other group after many clues and questioning, will guess the word. And secure one point. It is now the turn for the other group to say the beginning and end sound of the word. The first group guesses the word. And thus the game continues.</p>
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<p>skills</p> <p>Observation skill.</p> <p>Let the children sit in a semicircle. Let them close their eyes and listen intently to the sounds in the environment. After a while , let them open their eyes and explain about the sounds heard.</p> <p>The teacher can make the children learn the songs on animals and their sounds.</p> <p>The teacher should take</p>	<p>Able to identify the picture and tell the sound.</p>	<p>them learn the beginning sound. Then play classification game by grouping - grouping according to the same beginning sound in their names. In the same way, identifying the things in the classroom that begin with the same sound EX ;Words beginning with B, like board, bottle, box, bat, book, ball etc.,</p> <p>Let the children sort the pictures according to the beginning sounds .and classify them into groups accordingly. Let them paint one colour each for each group cards.</p> <p>Let the children sit in a semi-circle. The teacher gives a two letter word for which the</p>	<p>Let the children create their own song. Or else the teacher can start two sentences ask the children to continue further.</p> <p>I went to the market.....</p> <p>I bought vegetables, I bought.....</p>
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<p>Audio- visual association</p>	<p>small tins that can make sound and each tin is filled with sand, pebbles, food grains, marbles etc. Each type should be filled in two small tins so as to match them. Let the child hear the sound of the box near his ear and let him identify the same sound boxes and match them. Let them match the boxes of same sound.</p>		<p>children have to identify another rhythmic word. Ex; Cat for mat. The teacher can say cat sat on a mat with a hat. These children do not possess much vocabulary and so need not give meaningful words.</p> <p>Able to sort pictures / objects that start with the same beginning sound.</p> <p>Able to match the pictures/ objects with the oral words.</p> <p>Collect pictures from old magazines and</p>	<p>The child matches sound of the letter to the relevant alphabet. Matches picture with the relevant word.</p> <p>Let them play the game of identifying the beginning sound and end sound by introducing alphabets to children</p>
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			<p>give them to children. Give any one letter card to the children and ask them to sort the the pictures basing on the sound of the letter card.</p> <p>Likewise, tell the names of the pictures and ask them to sort and recognise them.</p> <p>Make a card with four pictures. Three pictures should begin with the same alphabet. The fourth picture should begin with different sound but very near to those pictures and ask them to identify it.</p> <p>Give picture books to children and habituate them to turn the pages correctly .</p>	<p>.they will be able to find and coordinate the relation ship between the pronunciation and the written letter.</p> <p>Give letter cards few objects /pictures to children. Let them match the alphabet card with the relevant picture or object.</p> <p>Draw a picture on a card on one side and write the name on the other side. Make the card into two to three pieces and ask the children to join them.</p>
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<p>Proceeding from left to right</p>			<p>In picture – card matching games, dominoes activities, encourage them to initiate the activity from left to right.</p> <p>When given paper work, encourage them to do work from left to right.</p>	
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WRITING READINESS

Activity	Objective	3 to 4 yrs	4 to 5 yrs	5 to 6 yrs
<p>Tracing activities</p>	<p>Eye- hand coordination and control of the fine motor muscles</p> <p>Handling writing material</p> <p>Letter perception.</p>	<p>Will be able to draw or scribble.</p>	<p>Will be able to trace shapes of big size- squares, triangles</p>	<p>Will be able to trace shapes of big size like square, triangle, circle, alphabets etc.,</p> <p>Will be able to complete the incomplete shape.</p>
<p>Number readiness Pattern making</p>		<p>Able to copy simple shapes, and alphabets.</p>	<p>Able to trace shapes and alphabets quite easily.</p>	<p>Traces complex shapes and alphabets, able to draw different patterns in between two parallel lines.</p>

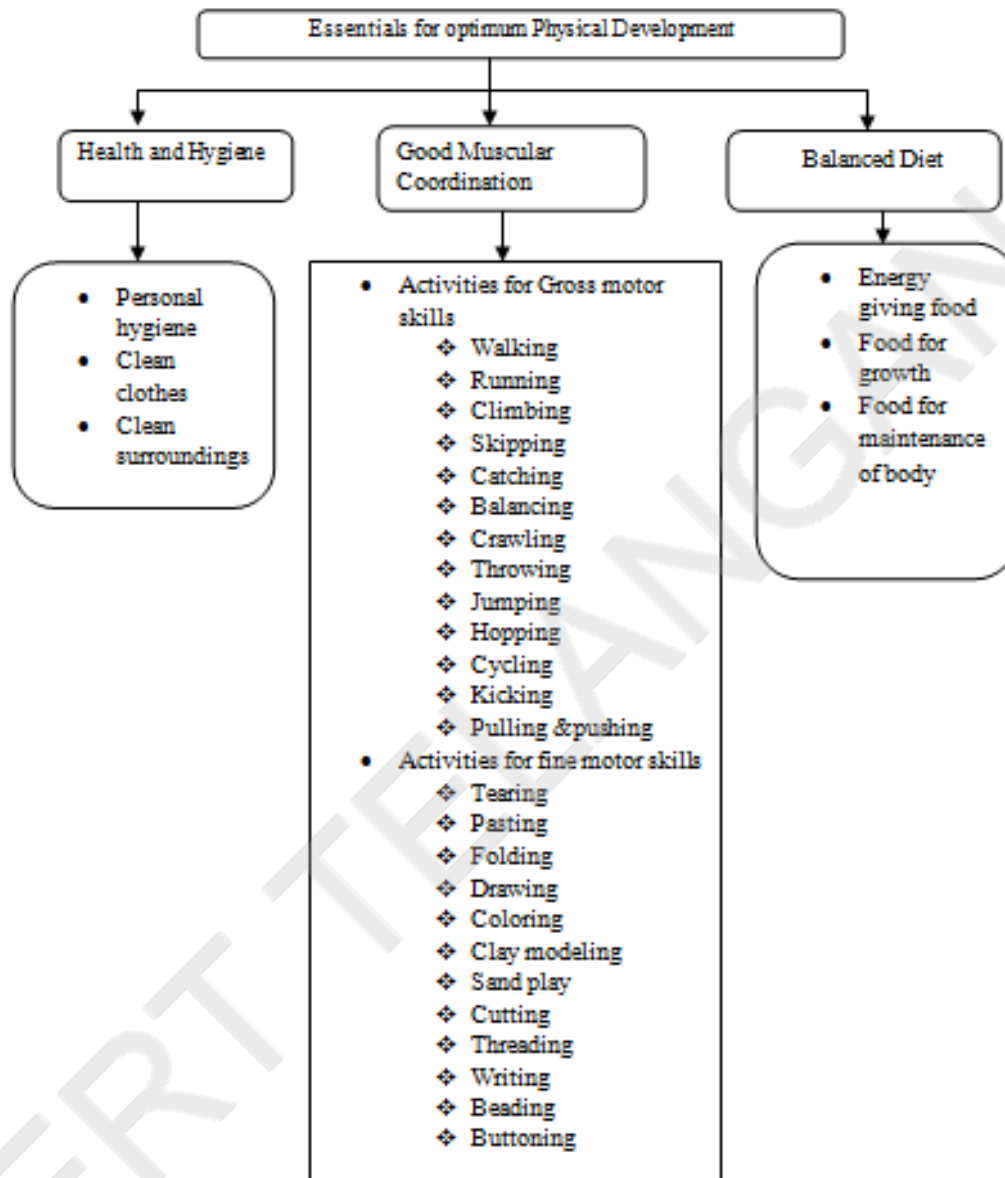
Name of the activity	Objective	3 to 4 years	4 to 5 years	5 to 6 years
One- to one correspondence	Develops understanding of one-to one correspondence	Able to spell orally from one to five.	Can place one pebble on each leaf upto five.	Can place one pebble on each leaf upto ten , learns order of numbers.
<p>Number order</p> <p>Children sit in a semi- circle. Let one child start counting from number1. The child sitting next continues with number2 and the next child continues with 3 and so on. The child who has to say 5 or 10 says chhup and the next child continues from one. The child who forgets to say chhup is considered out of the game.</p>	<p>Develops concept of numbers.</p> <p>Helps to learn order of numbers.</p> <p>Helps to learn counting and number names upto 10.</p>	Able to start counting with guidance from teacher.	Start counting till five.	Can count till 10 and aware of multiples of five., can play on his own.

<p>Seriation cards</p> <p>Cardboard pieces of 5"x5" size, paints, brushes</p> <p>Draw any object on all the five cardboard pieces indicating five levels gradation of a particular concept. Ex; tall, taller, tallest.</p> <p>Short, shorter, shortest.</p> <p>Three cards are placed at a time in front of the child .</p> <p>Sequencing activity</p> <p>Make children sit in small groups of 4 to 5 children each. Distribute buds, leaves and flower among children. Ask them to complete the sequence. Example; keep a leaf first, then bud; and a flower. Explain them the stage. First comes seed, seedlings, bud and then flower.</p>		<p>Able to identify tall and short</p> <p>These children point out the cards /objects that follow a sequence.</p>	<p>Able to seriate at 3 levels</p> <p>They can explain the sequence and arrange cards of three in a sequence.</p>	<p>Able to seriate at 5 levels</p> <p>They arrange cards of five in a sequence and explain with much math vocabulary .</p>
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<p>What is missing/what is missing?(memory development)</p> <p>Materials required :Locally available material : Leaves, pebbles, flowers etc</p> <p>Activities ; 4 to6 yrs:colouring within the boundaries.</p> <p>Joining the dots</p>	<p>To develop skills to draw straight, horizontal and ,slanting lines .</p> <p>They will be able to develop eye-motor coordination control skills should be enhanced.</p>		<p>Let the children sit in groups. Draw different shapes pictures and ask them to colour them with crayons and encourage them to colour within the outline. In order to develop writing readiness in children, children have to do the activities independently individually.</p> <p>Draw different designs ,shapes on paper or slate</p>	
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Tracing activities	By tracing the given shapes, be able to develop eye-motor coordination control skills should be enhanced.		by inserting dots on the outline of the figure. Ask them to join those dots using crayon or slate pencil. Take a piece of paper and put dots in rows. Let the teacher draw certain shapes using straight, horizontal, slanting lines in upper row of dots. In the same way children should join the dots and make the same picture.
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4.2.9; Physical and motor development : The process by which a child learns to use his/her body parts is referred as “motor development”. Motor development is important for further development and integration of all other domains of development. For example: if a child doesn’t learn how to walk (motor skill) he may never be able to live an independent life. It may be defined as developing control over bodily movements through the coordinated activity of the nerve and muscles. A motor skill is a skill that regards the ability of a child to utilize skeletal muscles effectively. Motor skills depend upon the proper functioning of the brain, skeleton, joints, and nervous system and thus motor skills involve proper functioning of such systems. Most motor skills are learned in early childhood, although disabilities can affect motor skill development.



Motor skills are divided into two parts: Gross motor skills are the skills that are attained using large muscles of the body. It includes lifting one's head, rolling over, sitting up, balancing, crawling, and walking. Gross motor development usually follows a pattern. Generally large muscles develop before smaller ones. Thus, gross motor development is the foundation for developing skills in other areas (such as fine motor skills). Development also generally moves from head to lower limbs..For example, the first thing infants try to learn is to control their head.

Fine motor skills are the skills that involve the small muscles of our body. It includes the ability to manipulate small objects, transfer objects from hand to hand, and various hand-eye coordination tasks. Fine motor skills may involve the use of very precise motor movement in order to achieve an especially delicate task. Some examples of fine motor skills are

using the pincer grasp (thumb and forefinger) to pick up small objects, cutting, colouring and writing, and threading beads.

4.2.9 :ACTIVITIES FOR GROSS MOTOR DEVELOPMENT :

Name of the activity	3-4yrs	4-5 yrs	5-6yrs
Able to balance	Able to walk on approximately 8cms thick wooden plank by stretching hands for balancing initially. They slightly bend towards one side initially but by practice , able to balance.	Able to walk without stretching hands on a thin wooden plank of 6cms thick.Able to walk with alternate feet.	Able to walk on a balancing plank with confidence
	Able to stand on one foot for a short time always.	Able to stand on one foot for a longer time always.	Able to stand on one foot for even more longer time always.
		Able to walk on a slanting plank by balancing using his/her two hands and legs. By practice , able to walk straight.	Able to walk/climb on a slanting plank with confidence and with speed.
Running	Able to run straight	Able to run properly with speed and with coordination.	Able to run with good control and coordination.In alternate activities like horse galloping and rope games , able to run with speed and control.

	Able to stop if not fully when asked to do so while running.	While running, able to stop easily and run suddenly with coordination when asked to do so.	
Jumping	<p>Able to jump from two and half feet height with or without hands stretching .may not b able to jump with perfection , may not place two legs at the same place while landing.</p> <p>Should be able to jump forward atleast to a short distance.</p> <p>Should be able to swing correctly with the help of adults /boy/ girl by sitting on the swing.</p>	<p>Can be abl to jump from approximately 4 feet with confidence and joy.While landing, two feet are placed at one place strongly and secured after practising.</p> <p>Should be able to jump forward to even more distance .</p> <p>Should be able to jump from obstacles –tyre, rope, boxes etc.</p> <p>Should be able to swing by sitting on the swing without seeking adults help.</p> <p>Should be able to swing by standing on the swing with little support from adults.</p>	<p>Should be able to jump with coordination and self confidence from about 5 feet height.before jumping, should be able to jump with two feet from one place.After jumping, should be able to land with two feet on the landing space.</p> <p>Should be able to jump forward upto 65 to 85 cms distance.</p> <p>Should be able to jump from obstacles with ease and self-confidence.</p> <p>Should be able to swing without anyone’s support by standing on the bench of the swing.</p>
Catching			

	Should be able to catch the big plastic ball that is thrown from a short distance by using elbows and hands.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Should be able to swing along with the hanging rope. <p>Should be able to catch the small ball with two hands that is thrown from a short distance in his/her direction.</p>	Should be able to catch the ball thrown towards him/her using hands.
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ACTIVITIES FOR FINE MOTOR DEVELOPMENT

Activity	3-4 yrs	4-5 yrs	5-6 yrs
Threading beads	Should be able to thread big holed beads with wire or strong thread.	<p>Should be able to thread beads with slightly smaller holes.</p> <p>Should be able to make mala with a few things by using blunt old needle.</p>	<p>Should be able to thread beads that are arranged in a sequence or in a pattern.</p> <p>Should be able to thread through holes of a cardboard and make a pattern /arrangement with coloured threads .</p> <p>Should be able to create and sew small designs using blunt needle.</p>
	Place coloured beads of big size in a bowl or basket and give them to children. Ask them to make a chain of beads by threading them using a wire or a strong thread.	Ask the child to wire the smaller beads with smaller holes using wire and make a chain. In order to make it somewhat complex task , ask the child to thread the coloured	Make holes through the shapes of animal pictures or alphabet shapes and give to children. Ask them to sew through the holes using wire or thread. One can make use of old

	<p>Can make use of beads made with clay in case of non-availability of wooden beads or plastic beads. Clay beads can be made, dried in sun and can be coloured by this children. The lids of the bottles can be holed and used as beads.</p> <p>Take a hard cardboard from an old book .Draw simple pictures like tree or a fish . Make holes along the outline of the diagram. Ask the child to sew through the holes using strong thread, /wire or old shoe lace</p>	<p>beads in a planned sequence. EX: the child has to thread initially red, yellow and blue beads and this order is to follow throughout the chain and complete.</p> <p>Let the child tie his own shoes. Ask the child to sew small beads, paper flowers, leaves, thermocoal pieces to make a garland using a blunt needle.</p>	<p>notebook card boards, old greeting cards etc. for this activity.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children can also be given old jute bags and ask them to make their own designs using blunt needle and thread.
<p>Tearing-cutting(scissors)-pasting.</p>	<p>Give old papers to children. Let them crush and tear the paper and ask them to paste on the line drawn on another paper . let them do the task if not neatly.</p>	<p>Give old used papers to children. Ask them to cut along the line of the folded paper and they should be able to make simple shapes like square, rectangle and triangle.</p> <p>Should be able to cut with scissors along the folded line of the paper and paste it neatly.</p> <p>Ask the child to cut the paper into small pieces and paste it along the line that is drawn.</p>	<p>Ask the child to cut the paper into different shapes and in small pieces with the help of scissors. They should be able to paste them in a nice shape with little space.</p>

<p>Drawing , colouring</p> <p>Activities:</p>	<p>They like to scribble and find joy in it. They should be able to draw straight lines and circles.</p> <p>They should be able to trace diamond and star shapes though not so perfectly.</p> <p>Should be able to draw using many colours if not perfectly.</p> <p>They should be able to colour the picture with the help of the brush even though he cannot hold the brush properly.</p> <p>Give slates made up of soft clay or mud to children. Let the children draw whatever they like using small sticks.</p> <p>Give old magazines or other papers, crayons to children. Ask them to draw whatever they like on the paper using crayons.</p> <p>Ask them to draw on slates or on cement slabs with colour chalkpieces. Make colours with</p>	<p>Give them paper to draw and crayons to colour .The children should be able to draw meaningful pictures and can be also easily recognisable.</p> <p>The children are given colour pencils they should be able to colour neatly within the already drawn pictures.</p> <p>Should be able to draw human beings, tree like shapes with the help of the brush. Should be able to hold brush properly. Should hold the brush properly.</p> <p>Draw a picture and ask the child to recognise different body parts.Let the child fill each body part with different colours.</p> <p>Explain any familiar event to the children and ask them to imagine , draw and colour the picture.Ex: It is raining while you are going to school. Can you imagine and draw</p>	<p>They should be able to colour within the frame neatly with the help of the brush.</p> <p>Should be able to draw pictures meaningfully with the help of the brush although not as per the requisites.</p> <p>Give coloured crayons and colours to children. Ask them to draw pictures of their liking and interest. The complexity to colour the pictures may be increased by limiting/narrowing the space to colour the pictures. For example, the child is asked to colour in small spaced figures.</p> <p>Let the children mix few drops of water to flower peatls and make colour out of it.</p>
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	<p>colour powders. Let the children draw their own colours with the brush. In case brush is not available, it can be replaced with broom sticks or cotton with which colours can be filled.</p>	<p>the picture and colour it? Let children sit in a circle. Give each child small string of thread. Ask the child to dip the thread in colour water and make multiple designs by dabbing on the white paper.</p> <p>Let children sit in a circle. Ask the child to place and arrange the coloured thread folded to make a particular design in between the folded paper . One end of the thread should be extended out of the paper. Press the top end of the paper with left hand and gently pull the thread moving right to left and vice-versa. A beautiful design is seen once the paper is opened. Note: with locally available Colours can be prepared with locally available materials like mehendi leaves are grinded gum is added and leaf green colour is prepared. Black colour can be prepared with charcoal powder. One can</p>	<p>This can be used for colouring shapes etc., Let the children draw to their imagination the incidents that are explained to them. Let the child do spray work on the picture that is drawn with the help of a tooth brush.</p>
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		make use of lower petals to make color .	
PRINTING:Objectives:	Should be able to print small designs with Adult support and supervision. Onion printing;Let the child print with half- cut onion or ladies finger that are dipped in colours to make different designs. Potato is half-cut and a design is carved on it. Let each child dip this carved potato in colour and let them print on whitepaper. Let the children do finger printing or hand printing on white paper. Let the teacher extend the printing by drawing lines to the printing and making it into a figure. Ex a thumb printing of a child can be created into a bird, caterpillar, an insect etc.,	Should be able to print small small designs by themselves. The teacher makes different shapes and ask the children to paste them on a cardpaper that can be hung to a wall with the help of a hook. Let the children colour the shapes and make a print of these shapes by pressing a white paper against these coloured shapes. Take a thin white paper and place coins, /leaves. Now rub with pencil or crayon on the top of the paper that is underneath.The shapes of these things are being printed on the paper.	Should be able to print different designs and by different methods . Candle printing :This activity should be done in the presence of Adults. A lighted candle should be bent alongside the picture drawn so that wax drops fell wherever required. Now this paper is dipped in colour. Colour will not stick to the wax drops on the picture and the rest of the picture is coloured. Children will be able to do potato printing by carving the design by themselves and encourage them to do printing.
CLAYWORK OBJECTIVES:	Should be able to knead and mix the clay dough.	Leg and Hand printings can also be done by the children.	Should be able to do more meaningful complex dolls
Activities :	All children can do clay work with increasing	Should be able to do small dolls with clay balls and decorate them with sticks , colours or flower	

	<p>complexities. The teacher should first sieve the clay dough .add required amount of water so that children can manipulate the dough to make different patterns. The teacher needs to give one clay ball to each child on a cardboard sheet or a small wooden plank. Ask the children to make dolls with it.let them dry.Children can colour them after it is dried. The teacher can motivate them to do dolls pertaining to festivals like deepavali . Children are encouraged to do diyas, dry them and later colour them. The teacher should encourage them to do more dolls by sitting with them doing more complex dolls.S he should not tell them to do the same but indirectly helps them to observe and think differently and increase their imagination.</p>	<p>petals etc.,</p>	
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4.2.10: Summary: It is important for the teacher to organise developmentally appropriate materials and program transaction. In order to ensure this, the teacher should provide variety of multi-sensory materials and activities as per the development and age of the child. . The teacher has to plan the daily schedule and ensure that it is balanced in terms of activities- quiet activities to follow active activities, free play/guided play, individual/group activities. The teacher has to understand that different kinds of opportunities for learning physical skills are reflected in the structured activities conducted for children. Therefore a good programme should cover all the things that would cover facilitate children's learning and development. This calls for a developmentally appropriate programme that focuses on the holistic development of the child in a stimulating and stress free environment fostering active exploration and experimentation through play.

4.2.11 Unit end questions : Q1)What is Developmentally appropriate Programme? What are the principles involved in order to practice in a preschool classroom.?

Q2)Plan and suggest few activities for physical/ motor development, language , cognitive and creative development for 3 to4 and 4 to 5 year old children.

4.3 Understanding of different approaches – child centred, holistic development, play way method and approaches such as formal vs informal, planned vs incidental, ntegrated and thematic approach in curriculum planning; advantages and disadvantages

Introduction

Early childhood education curriculum planning, curriculum implementation process and (observation, assessment) evaluation are the three key components of preschool education which influences holistic development of the child during early years of child's life. Teachers are main implementers of the curriculum in early childhood centres/preschools. The mastery of the curriculum content/concepts and their attitude and skills in planning and conducting activities affect directly the effectiveness of curriculum implementation .The curriculum planning and implementation process should be age and developmentally appropriate. The implementation process, the approaches, methods and techniques followed during classroom transaction enhances child's interest, developmental and learning skills. Hence teachers/curriculum implementers should consider play, play activities in teaching and learning process /and care as a whole as these are interrelated in the holistic development of the children. In this context it is necessary to select the suitable, relevant methods./approaches with child centeredness in the teaching learning process. The knowledge, about the

different child centred approaches in early childhood education implementation process and abilities of the implementer helps to support lifelong learning and development of children.

Objectives:

Enable the student teachers /teachers to

- Develop knowledge and skills on different child centred approaches to be used in the curriculum implementation process.
- Learn to select the suitable and relevant approaches / methods in the classroom transaction.
- Understand and develop necessary skills to implement the different child approaches in transacting the curriculum

A sense of achievement reinforces further learning. "Learning by doing" , "Learning through play", developing interest is the driving force for learning; Play is happy learning experience; Sensory activities are the media of learning. Observation, exploration, thinking and imagination are the essential learning approaches.

Creating learning experiences leads to tap the natural curiosity and excitement of children. This includes not only supporting emerging skills in reading, writing and mathematics, but also in the skills of critical thinking, collaboration, communication, creativity, technology, literacy, and social-emotional development which are known as *21st Century skills*. These skills have significant impact on the learning and development of young children. It is expected that the strengthening of key development and learning skills (focussing on cognitive skills) would also contribute to providing the child a sound foundation for meeting the challenges of negotiating new technologies in the years ahead which should be enforced while transacting the curriculum at preschool stage. There are different approaches for curriculum transaction such as child centred, theme based, activity based, project/inquiry based and emergent curriculum. Planning and creating learning environment for children to gain experiences is essential. The role of the teacher is very crucial in selection and planning of relevant teaching learning approaches in different learning situations of the children which should consider their age, /development and previous knowledge and learning experiences.

Every child has special interests and learning styles. Therefore, the teacher needs to adopt innovative and different strategies to help all children succeed as learners.

Child centred approach

A good ECE programme is adapted with child centred approach in ECE centres that empowers the child and makes she/he as an active participant in the learning process. An early years education programme is transacted in a child-centric manner, adopting a holistic approach which is not limited to what the teacher transacts in the classroom setting, and child's learning theoretically but involving the child as a co-creator in the context of their natural and social environment, including home and community.

In order to cope up with the challenges of life, children and adults need greater ability to learn how to learn, possess problem solving, critical thinking skills, Expressive skills and socio emotional skills. This is the challenge and role of the teacher to create environment and use suitable methodology to help children to develop knowledge, understand and create by themselves.

A child-centred curriculum offers children the opportunity to make choices about what, how and whom they want to play. This approach enables children to initiate and direct their own play with the support of interested and responsive adults. In early childhood education curriculum, children construct their own knowledge from their experiences and interactions with the world around them. Educators foster children's growth and development by building on children's interests, needs and strengths within a safe and caring environment.

A child-centred approach in curriculum transaction:

- Is planned and implemented with a focus on children learning through play
- Is based on children's needs, interests, strengths, understandings and capacity.
- Reflects a range and variety of experiences to cater for children's needs, interests, abilities
- Takes into account., the need for children to pursue their own interests and play experiences
- Recognises the child's voice, it captures the child's ideas and intentions and recognises their learning strategies or learning goals.
- Is communicated appropriately to children, families and educators through written and verbal information
- Is sufficiently flexible to permit changes initiated by children and educators working together
- Reflects the interests and diversity of the children and the expertise of the educators
- Reflects the connections between children, families and communities and the importance of reciprocal relationships and partnerships for learning.
- Values the cultural and social contexts of children and their families

Teacher's role

Research has shown that children's play

- becomes richer and more complex when adults /teachers support children in their play.
- teacher have to facilitate and support play,
- it is essential for children to be involved in play experiences that they have chosen.
- Teachers take an important role in play with children and use a range of strategies to support learning.
- Need to plan variety of play environment for the children to interact
- Create interest and learning corners with play materials to facilitate children to select and get involved and to initiate.
- engage in sustained shared conversations with children to extend their thinking.
- provide a balance between child lead, child initiated and educator supported learning.
- interact with children to build attachment utilising routine times and play experience Learning.
- Allowing children to be spontaneous and to direct their own play experiences and then sometimes joining them, but on their terms (not taking over and directing), requires experience, along with a deep trust in the children themselves and in one's own knowledge base. That knowledge might be from training/study, mentors, reading books, sharing ideas with learning from the children and families.
- Children's play culture is taken seriously; the conditions which make it flourish are carefully created.

In child centred approach teacher's role is important in facilitating learning environment for children with age appropriate and interested learning material to interact.

Focus on child -centric approach reduces the children to be passive recipients of knowledge. Creating an environment in which children are systematically encouraged to continually seek their own learning. Teachers

play the role of "facilitators".,hence the child centered approach is to be planned carefully as per the suitability .

Holistic development

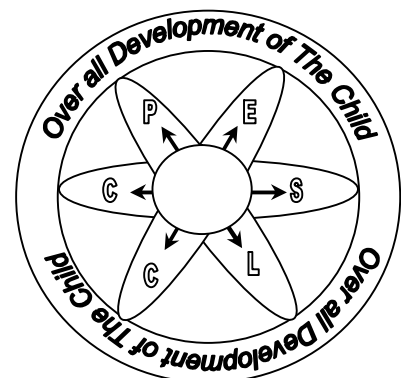
The first eight years of a child's life form the foundation for all later development. They begin to absorb the world around them and develop. The experiences that children have early in their lives affect their physical, cognitive, emotional and social development. The development of the child physically, --(physical and motor development), cognitively,(cognitive / intellectual development) language development, socially and emotionally,(Socio emotional development), development of creative expression and aesthetic appreciation, emphasises the holistic development of the child. Paying close attention to the broad range of a child's holistic needs is important and can help to prevent problems later in life when child's all-round development is taken care.

Research indicates that brain connections multiply exponentially in their first three years of life, and the potential for ensuring optimal development is very high up to eight years. This development is influenced by not only the nutritional and health status of the child's but also the psycho social experiences and environment the child is exposed to during these early years. Hence the quality ECCE programme caters to holistic development is important. Children who participate in quality early childhood education programme demonstrate considerable gains in social, educational and intellectual spheres, distinctively different from those who do not participate in ECCE programmes. It is an indispensable foundation for lifelong development and learning, and has lasting impact on children's development. Hence ECCE programme is to develop the child in the indifferent developmental domains adding to holistic development.

ECE programme is a child centered practice .This implies an understanding of how children develop and learn. The practice requires that teachers structure instruction around the needs of growing individual children. It also means that one looks at all the domains of children's development, social, emotional, physical and cognitive. Development of one area influences development in the other areas

Any ECE programme should include activities and experiences related to all the developmental areas.

- ⊗ Physical and motor
- ⊗ Emotional
- ⊗ Social
- ⊗ Language
- ⊗ Cognitive or Intellectual
- ⊗ Creative expression and aesthetic appreciation



What an ECE Programme in an ECE Centre provides:

- Safe and secured environment with care and affection
- Interactions, communication with adults and child to child
- Socialisation social and physical development using Materials and activities
- Staying away from home, playing and sharing
- Habit formation by developing skills of personal and environmental cleanliness, good eating habits, discipline
- Experiences and sense of self through activities based on child's interest and stimulating environment
- To identify developmental lags and helps in early identification
- Satisfies the needs
- Preparation for school by providing school readiness activities

What are the expected outcomes -----

Children develop

- Self concept
- Expression and vent for emotions
- Explores, experiments
- Ready for large social groups
- Organised life
- Constructs knowledge
- Self confidence "I am..I can"
- Mainstreaming
- Facilitate maturation
- Fosters motivation and love for learning

Children develop their optimum potential when all areas of development are considered and addressed holistically.

The programme therefore should emphasize and integrate different aspects of development and learning.

- What is the role of teacher in implementing the programme using child centred approach
- What is holistic development –Importance of Developmentally appropriate programme in Preschool

Theme Based/Thematic Approach

Theme based approach is followed in most of the preschools around the world. The main focus in this approach is themes are selected from simple to complex, initiated from the child, as Me –myself, likes and interests, surroundings, ..etc. Each theme is linked with different activities as supported to that theme. The activities planned are for physical, cognitive, socio emotional and language development connected to the theme.

(Ref. DPSE 2nd Year learning material paper 2 ... (Methods of teaching.)

It attempts to tie in various skills and knowledge to be acquired by children, into a coherent whole, organized around a specific theme, such as myself, plants, animals, fruits, vegetables, etc. A deliberate focus on a given topic enables even very young children to be more efficient in acquiring skills and processes required to gather and process information in later life. When we take a particular theme, and help children to actively and visibly build knowledge on that theme, we enable children to acquire skills to make learning more efficient in their future. To plan the content following a thematic approach, each theme could be spread over about 1-2 months, with sub-themes that cover a smaller period, such as a week or two weeks, so that the information surrounding a large unit is organized in a way that makes sense to the children. For example, if the chosen theme is plants, it could be spread over a duration of 1 month with various sub-themes such as parts of plants, types of plants, uses of plants, taking care of plants, etc., each covered in detail over a one-week period. Theme teaching is generally carried out according to a detailed predesigned lesson plan. Such an approach is largely teacher-directed with very limited scope to allow for child-initiated learning.

Young children's curiosity and fascination for their surroundings lead them to explore and question their environment so that they can come to a personal understanding about their world. They observe and investigate primarily through their senses. This curiosity can be channelled through interesting themes so as to lead the children on an exciting adventure to many areas of inquiry.

A good quality Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programme engages young children in a variety of theme based experiences, inspiring them to explore their immediate world. Theme based integrated ECCE programmes create activities and experiences around an idea or theme and offer many opportunities where young children learn in enabling environments which are stimulating, emotionally supportive and inclusive. Theme based learning nurtures holistic development in every child and

empowers them to use their capacities to become successful learners. Learning through themes helps young children connect with their immediate world and also connect classroom learning to their lives at home and in the community.

Role of Teachers in the Theme Based Integrated ECCE Programme

The caregivers/ teachers in an ECCE programme are facilitators who engage children in multiple experiences to foster their all round development. They play the following roles:

- Observe children, identify their interests, needs and capabilities and the pace of their development
- Plan integrated, developmentally appropriate, and challenging learning experiences built around a theme, to ensure that they meet the objectives of the curriculum.
- Adapt experiences to suit the learning abilities of children with special needs. (E.g., a visually challenged child could be given multi-sensorial experiences)
- Organise a supportive learning environment by taking care of aspects such as the physical environment, equipment, scheduling of learning experiences and events and the grouping of children.
- Respect the child and the social environment the child comes from.
- Focus not only on planning and conducting the themes but also on the continuous process of assessing the children's progress, and using the assessment to modify/review the teaching strategies.
- Create nurturing and positive relationships in the classroom.
- Interact with children in a calm, respectful and friendly manner.
- Ensure social inclusion of children with disability in the ECCE classroom.

Planning for a Theme Based Approach

Developmental Domains

Before beginning to plan a theme, it is important to know that young children develop in several areas or domains simultaneously. Also, we must always remember that these domains of development are interdependent and interrelated to each other. Each of these domains is equally important

to all children. It has been said that when a child's self-esteem is positive and she/ he feels good about her/him self, it influences her/his intellect. Research studies on neuro-science also suggest that social and emotional development and intellectual or cognitive development of young children go hand in hand. Young children's growth and development is better understood in physical, language, socio emotional, cognitive developmental domains..

The interdependency of all the developmental domains, of social with cognition, language and motor skills, ensures that children are developing holistically. A good teacher needs to implement the theme based ECCE programme in a balanced manner throughout the day and plan every learning experience carefully to include opportunities for learning for every child in all the developmental domains, including Creative and Aesthetic appreciation. The content selected for theme has to be organized as concepts and introduced in phases. Each theme need be planned in such a manner that the children get participated in the activities which leads to acquire knowledge and skills in different developmental areas relating to the concepts.

In theme is planned with the activities to develop physical, language, socio emotional and cognitive domains. Whatever the theme teacher plans it should be implemented with three phases.

Phase I – Introduction of the concept

Phase II – Reinforcement and elaboration of the concept/ concept building

Phase III- Application of the concept.

- From simple to complex
- From familiar to unfamiliar
- From concrete to abstract
- From easy to difficult

Play Based Approach/ Play way method

Play is more powerful for children, however, **It's actually the key to learning**. Researchers and educators across the world have found that play can help enrich learning and develop key skills such as inquiry, expression, experimentation, and teamwork.

Children learn best through play. Children should get engaged in play activities which are neither too challenging nor too easy for their developmental level. In a play based approach stimulating materials and activities are made available by the teacher and children. Select activities according to their interest at each point of time and learn at their own pace. The teachers role is that of a facilitator and she does not carry out any specific structured activities. In order to enable children to benefit from this approach teachers need to observe and identify learning opportunities and make play materials available accordingly. If a teacher is unskilled and ineffective, it may lead to loss of learning opportunities and learning by doing. Any pleasure- giving activity is play for them and is central to child's well-being. Play stimulates curiosity and exploration and leads to mastery of body controls, encourages creativity and social skills, and develops emotional balance and language skills.

Play is meaningful and joyful that leads children to learn. Hence play based approach /ply way method is more effective in implementing preschool programme.

For young children, play is a full body activity that helps them develop skills they will need later in life. Running, dancing, climbing, rolling—these activities all foster muscle development and help fine-tune motor skills. Children also build their mental and emotional muscles and vent for emotions as they create elaborate, imaginative worlds rich with a system of rules that govern the terms of play.

What is Meaningful Play?

Preschools, early primary schools /Schools focus on encouraging children to learn through "meaningful play." "Meaningful play" has five characteristics. ref.Book.... [From Play to Practice: Connecting Teachers' Play to Children's Learning](#),

Play :

1. Gives the child a choice about what he or she wants to do
2. Feels fun and enjoyable for the child

3. Evolves spontaneously, rather than giving children theory / script to follow
4. Is driven by intrinsic motivation about what the child wants to do
5. Creates a risk-free environment where kids can experiment and try new ideas.

In meaningful play, children are active participants. For example, instead of passively listening to a lesson/topic, if it is planned through play based approach, children take on roles alongside their peers and respond to the teacher/ other children according to the rules of play that they've created relating to the concept.

While "rules" may seem counterintuitive to the idea of free, voluntary play, a system of mental rules is actually one of the other key features of play. Children may state these explicitly, form them collaboratively or follow a selected leader, or have an inherent sense of what governs the terms of their playful engagement. This active, pleasurable negotiation of rules and symbols can offer a number of learning benefits during play.

This role playing helps children build social skills and helps them become the kind of adults who are able to thrive in a range of personal and professional environments.

Importance of play based approach to Include in the Classroom

- In an academic setting, play can also help children learn and grow. Teacher-initiated play is a close cousin to [inquiry based learning](#). Early child educators ask children questions about the rules and process that govern the play, and then encourage children to make connections to the wider world through their own body of knowledge. It can be two ways: teacher guided and child initiated.
- Dr. Angeline S. Lillard, author of *Montessori: The Science behind the Genius*, wrote about about how Maria Montessori encouraged educators to use play as a part of the learning process.
- In a Montessori classroom teachers guide learning within structures but do so playfully and loosely, with particular focus on the goals they have in mind... the Montessori education resembles playful learning.

- In an ECE centre when a play-based approach is planned to combining different learning areas it is to be observed that teachers can create an educational experience greater than the sum of its parts. Children develop critical thinking skills, their language abilities, expand their range of knowledge and increase their social emotional awareness—all without realizing how much they're learning.
- Teacher organise classroom with learning and interest corners in such a way that children can choose, initiate play individually /in groups and learn by themselves with guidance and organisation of the teacher.
- From offering children a chance to ask questions, problem solve, play / work collaboratively and conduct structured experimentation, play is a key component of learning. One way that teachers bring a sense of play into the classroom is by taking an activity-based approach through play nearly in every learning and developmental area.

For example, when teachers read a book aloud, they encourage young children to turn each page and follow each word with their fingers. They can also prompt children to talk to each other about the content, and to talk about the associations it sparks from their own lives. Teachers also engage children' imaginations and sense of curiosity by asking "What do you think will happen next?" " If you are in that place what will you do" act and role play the as the charecters of the story.

Students are also given an opportunity to bring stories to life through dramatic play. When children are given opportunities to act out scenes and express themselves, they improve their social confidence, increase their ability to see the perspectives of others and increase the attention they give to the literature.

Play gives children a chance to practice what they're learning.
- Fred Rogers

learning is not just a formal activity they do in the classroom—it's actually a lot of fun! One of ECE goals is to give children opportunities to wonder, question, work as a team, experiment, play with different possibilities and investigate that interest them. Eg., educators give students the opportunity to design an object from their imagination. Then they ask children to

explain, "Why did you make that?" "What did you make it out of? What is the purpose of that object?" and How did you make that? Children not only initiate and make by themselves but also explain how they have done with which logic, sequence, thought process sensorial expression develops.

This teacher supports children in their creativity, while also challenging them to think about why they chose to create any particular thing through play and activity. It also requires them to think through the challenges they solved in creating it and helps them become more confident in their problem solving abilities.

Help Your Children through play

Orientation to parents on "Play as a Powerful instrument that makes children learn with enjoyment. It can be taken up by home - school connections teacher involvement. Orient the children about the importance of play in early childhood stage.

"Our goal is to help children learn to ask questions, express themselves, collaborate with others, and take creative risks. We also want them to retain their natural curiosity and to never lose the excitement of learning something new. All those things are achieved by making learning fun for children for this, play way approach is very much suitable for youngsters."

Activity based Approach

Activity is the process, where the doer/learner actually experiences the theme of learning content. They get sharpened their senses through the sensorial experiences and conceptualise. This is very essential and basis for experiential learning. The activity is concrete operational and formal as postulated by Piaget as he trust upon an important learning stages. (This is from tactile to no tactile.. ,concrete to abstract) More than theoretical learning, activity based learning results direct, immediate and long lasting It is described activities are of many kinds leads to is physical, social, emotional, cognitive development.

It is recommended to include as many activities as possible in learning process with learning objectives than mere oral, written and narration.

The primary belief of activity-based approach is that children learn through participation in activities, which provides opportunities for exploration and experimentation with different teaching learning material.

The sensory experience and actions make the learning better and more impactful. This leads to an exciting journey of discovery and enhanced Pedagogical Approaches for Curriculum transaction

Ref.. DPSE 2nd year learning material Paper 2 (Unit 1)

Formal vs informal, planned vs incidental Formal learning

Formal learning aims at of purposes and objectives long term and short term goals. This requires a systematic plan, scheduled content, place of learning, Venue.. (organised classroom in a school / preschool/ centre etc), planner, administrator and implementer, learning material and evaluation process.

This requires a formal set up and long setup which are called institutional and long year preparation.

Informal learning

In informal learning, the purpose of learning content is relevant to the context of the learner, needs of the learner .Since beginning of human civilization, humans learn from experiences, experiments, trial and error, observation and imitation by self and in groups. Till the beginning of industrial revolution, child was a part of supporter of family economy and production system in their occupations. ex- agriculture.

Planned learning

Planned learning has a fixed aim, objectives and the content is supportive to achieve the learning objective. The learning is also evaluated to verify if the aims are achieved or not.

Incidental learning

As Vivekananda said “let knowledge come from all direction”. Every occasion and incident in life is an opportunity for learning. The facilitator of learning or the actual learner should draw inferences from incidents. Incidental learning is not organised, planned or pre-assumed, it happens when the learner is sensitive and enthusiastic for drawing knowledge from experiential learning. The facilitator/teacher/parent should discuss the incident to derive useful conclusions.

Emergent Curriculum

Emergent curriculum is defined as a process where teachers plan activities and projects based on the specific group of children they are working with, taking into account their skills, needs, and interests. Teachers conduct observations and plan based on their observations of children. Teachers practicing emergent curriculum also utilize reflective practice, taking time to reflect and act on their observations of children. This philosophy encourages active participation, relationship building, flexible and adaptable methods, inquiry, and play-based learning. Curriculum is child-initiated, collaborative and responsive to the children’s needs.

Curriculum for Preschool Education

Integrating Approaches

The above mentioned approaches are not mutually exclusive. The preschools are free to choose one or a combination of suggested approaches in their own context. The resulting approach would lead to a balanced preschool programme. In such an approach ideological methodologies of different approaches are integrated to respond to the needs of the children. The days schedule is divided between teacher initiated planned activities and child-initiated free play leading to self paced learning. A weekly plan of activities by integrating different approaches is included with different activities ensures the advantages of using different activities through different approaches.

Summary

Planning and Transaction of Preschool Curriculum

Planning is important for implementing the curriculum. Systematic and good planning leads to an effective transaction of the curriculum. The activities of curriculum need to be drawn up and transacted keeping in mind the objectives. It should be innovative and flexible to accommodate immediate needs, interests and situations. The teacher should keep in mind the objectives, characteristics of all children including those with special needs, age specific and developmentally appropriate practices along with physical infrastructure and materials required and available for curriculum implementation. Planning in terms of specific objectives and activities should be done both on a long-term and short-term basis.

The teacher should have collection of a variety of games, activities, play materials, stories, songs, rhymes, etc. There should be balance between teacher directed and child initiated activities.

Transaction of Preschool Curriculum

Following points must be kept in mind while transacting the Preschool Curriculum; **Build on prior knowledge** - always start with what the children know and are familiar with. **Encourage positive interactions (child-child, child-teacher, and child-material)** - Interactions between children, the range of environmental and cultural experiences along with meaningful dialogues help children build a solid knowledge foundation, and prepare them for formal schooling.

Organize variety of activities - Plan and organize lots of games and activities .It is important to build lot of practice and repetition in the skill areas. Teaching routines that ensure personal safety and hygiene are considered important.

Listen to children - listen to what children are talking while they are observing and exploring during the activities, to understand the level of

strengths they have in order to plan activities to promote their learning further.

Spend time in observation – Observe children while they are engaged in activities. The teacher may choose to participate in activities with children or decide to stand aside while observing them.

Scaffold a child's experiences - elaborate on the child's "hands on" experiences, encourage children to recall experiences that relate to a current task, to build learning continuity and establish new concepts and understandings.

Celebrate diversity - The diverse language and dialects of children may be endorsed and expanded by the teachers. The topics should be addressed by variety of ways like musical, story-based, play, discovery, pictorial, artistic, logical deductive because of the fact that children learn in diverse ways and can show understanding by using different symbolic media.

Listen to and co-coordinate with parents and family members

- involve parents in the programme, invite them to share local folktales, songs, traditional festivities, and also encourage them to organize meaningful developmentally appropriate activities at home as well. With the above principles the transaction process and implementation strategies help the teacher in selecting the relevant approaches.

Know your progress

What are the different approaches to be followed in preschool

What is the role of teacher in planning curriculum transaction for preschool children

What are activities in implementation of preschool programme

4 .4 Methods of Preschool Education

Play and activity are the primary context of learning and development:

- Play and activity are the best medium for preschool education. They offer opportunities to explore, experiment, manipulate and experience the environment thus, children construct their knowledge and required skills

- play activities, having a balance between different kinds of play like free and guided, active and passive, indoor and outdoor, individual and group, structured and unstructured. A substantial part of play should provide opportunities for self-initiated play/activities which emerge from children's interest and choices.
- Children learn through the relationships they have with their parents, families, caregivers, teachers, and communities. Nurturing relationships help children become secure, confident, curious, and communicative. These relationships and interactions
- Play and activities help children learn how to control their emotions and relate to others in socially appropriate ways.
- Children learn through active and direct experiences with their environment, which helps them to construct their knowledge with interaction and guidance from teachers and peers. Learning sustains when constructed. At early stage, children start exploring the next level of information and the spiral continues. It needs to be ensured that children are provided developmentally appropriate materials, experiences, and challenges in order to help them construct their own knowledge. The process also involves repetition of tasks, guidance from the teachers and more knowledgeable peers so that each child reaches her/his potential and is able to do the task, independently.
- Interaction (child-child, child-teacher, and child-material) is the most significant

aspect of quality preschool education. The interaction between children, the range of environmental and cultural experiences along with meaningful dialogues helps children build a solid knowledge foundation and prepares them for formal schooling.

The above factors includes planning and activities in play way methods provides more opportunities for the children in holistic development. Hence planning the process of preschool programme implementation through activity and play way methods are some of the relevant methods of teaching in Early childhood education.

Projects /Inquiry based Approach

A Project is inquiry based, investigation or in-depth study of a topic or theme, usually done by small groups within a class, an entire class or sometimes by individual children. The teachers offers some open-ended triggers and then observes the children, listen to their stories, their questions, see how they navigate the activity, take note of their interest levels and talk with the children. Children decide what they want to know

more about and investigate further. Then with the variety of materials are offered to the children, the teachers encourage children's engagement in activities, to go deeper and deeper to find the answers to their questions, and in turn ask new questions help them to make their learning visible through modelling or building, collage or drawing, dramatic play or music; any means at all. These activities are not pre-planned/designed. They are subtly suggested to the children and the discoveries from one experience lead onto the next. A project may not constitute the whole day's schedule. Teachers may allocate half a day for the project and plan activities for the remaining half.

The projects can be taken up by the children in early child hood stage. Implementation through projection is basis for inquiry and learning by their involvement.

The teacher has to plan simple projects for the young children.

The process of project method could be as follows.

- Selection and allotting the project to individual or group of children.
- Collecting / gathering information about content of the project.
- Filing /assembling the material collected /prepared by the child.
- Sequentializing/ analyzing the information / data collecting
- Synthesising the concept. Starting with content into small concepts activities done information/material collected
- Talk /explain about the process of project work carried what , how, when and with whose help

The role of the teacher here is consolidate and make individual files , record in the port folios and interact with children and also with the parents.

Check your knowledge

- What are the different approaches of preschool education implementation process which involve the children and get initiated by them?
- How activity method and play way method make children enjoy their learning in the pre school.

Summary

In the preschool education implementation process activity, play way, thematic approaches are methods of teaching where children involved and learn by doing , individually or in groups interacting with adults, parents and with peers. Any /or two, three together can be planned so that it can be child centred, child initiated and teacher guided.

4.5 Risk of formal instruction, rote learning and effects of laissez faire approach on children's development and learning.

Introduction

Education is a race - and that the earlier you start, the earlier you finish. This encouraged educators to introduce early academic programs based on the learning theories of E. L. Thorndike and B. F. Skinner. These writers assume that learning follows the same principles at all age levels—ignoring both children's developing mental abilities and the fact that academic skills vary in their logical complexity and difficulty.

The curriculum surveys in all major cities indicated that children as young as 3-5 years old are being taught the syllabus prescribed not only for class and I but also for class II for which they are neither cognitively nor physically mature enough. They are even given regular tests and examinations and assigned regular doses of homework. Exposure to formal instruction is causing harm to children. This is the result of misinterpretation of early care and education -----**National policy of Education (1986)**

Risks of formal instruction at preschool stage are both short term and long term. The short term risks include the manifestation of stress and anxiety symptoms among children and the long-term risks include far-reaching effects on the children's motivational, intellectual, and social behaviour.

Objectives:

To enable the student teachers/ teachers to

- Understand and develop knowledge on introducing and impact of formal instructions on development and learning of the child.
- Develop the knowledge and skills for not to introduce rote learning at preschool stage.

Complex Understandings

- the giants of early childhood and their followers agree that early education must start with the child, not with the subject matter to be taught
- Those who believe in academic training for very young children make a fundamental error: They fail to recognize that there are different levels of understanding in math and reading. Learning to identify numbers and letters is far different from learning to perform mathematical operations and to read with understanding. Children today know their numbers and letters earlier than ever before. Many know them by age two. Yet children today are only learning the names of numbers and letters but not the true numerical understanding and reading comprehension.
- Learning the names of numbers and rote counting are less important in this attainment than is practice in classifying and seriating many different materials.
- A child who can read "hat," "cat," and "sat" may have trouble with "ate," "gate," and "late." Likewise, a child who knows "pin" may have trouble with "spin" because it involves a blend of consonants that may throw kids off. In Piaget's terminology, "concrete" operations are required for this highest level of reading.
- Those calling for academic instruction of the young don't seem to appreciate that math and reading are complex skills acquired in stages related to age. Children will acquire these skills more easily and more soundly if their lessons accord with the developmental sequence that parallels their cognitive development.
- Studies of children in different types of preschools are merely suggestive. One study by Leslie Recorla, Marion C. Hyson, and Kathy Hirsh-Pasek compared children who had attended an academic preschool with those who had attended a developmentally appropriate program. Although there were no academic differences between the two groups, the children attending the academic program were more anxious and had lower self-esteem. These results diminished after the children began to attend schools in later stage.
- Concerns over our educational system, fueled by the teachers and parents so called believed students' poor performance in academic achievements, referred (have increased voices for the call) to early academic instruction as a remedy for inadequate teaching later on.

Many kindergarten teachers are under pressure to teach their children numbers and letters and to administer standardized tests. In some kindergartens, children are even given homework in addition to the work sheets they must fill out during class time.

- Children are not born knowing the difference between red and green, sweet and sour, rough and smooth, cold and hot, or any number of physical sensations. The natural world is the infant's and young child's first curriculum, and it can only be learned by direct interaction with the things around. There is no way a young child can learn the difference between sweet and sour, rough and smooth, hot and cold without tasting, touching, or feeling something. Learning about the world of things, and their various properties, is a time-consuming and intense process that cannot be hurried.
- In a developmentally appropriate classroom, children are busy taking care of plants and animals, experimenting with sand and water, drawing and painting, listening to songs and stories, and engaging in dramatic play. It is hard to believe that these young children learn more from work sheets than they do from engaging in these age-appropriate activities.

The early academic training is superior to (or worse than) the more traditional, hands-on model of early education.

Why take the risky step of engaging in formal academic training of the young children when we already know what works?

Research evidences - harms of early formal education

- The educators who established early childhood as a legitimate time for guided learning all emphasized the importance of manipulative experiences—of seeing, touching, and handling new things and of experiencing new sensations—for infants and young children and the dangers of introducing them to the world of symbols too early in life. Froebel, Montessori, and Steiner all created rich, hands-on materials for children to explore and conceptualize. Each of them acknowledged, in his or her own way, that the capacity to discriminate precedes the capacity to label, that the understanding of quality precedes that of quantity. Children, for example, learn to discriminate among different colors before they can distinguish different shades of the same color.

- An older study was carried out by Carleton Washburn, the famed Evanston, Illinois, educator. He introduced children to formal instruction in reading at different grade levels from kindergarten to 2nd grade. The children who were introduced to reading at these three levels were then retested in junior high school. The assessors didn't know the grade at which each child had learned to read. Washburn found little difference in reading achievement among the groups. The children who had been introduced to formal instruction in reading later than the others, however, were more motivated and spontaneous readers than those who had begun early. Similar findings were reported in the Plowden Report in England, which compared children from the informal schools of rural areas with children who attended the more formal schools of urban centers.
- "To read phonemically, a child must be able to recognize that a letter can be pronounced differently depending on the context. . . . In Piaget's terminology, 'concrete' operations are required for this highest level of reading."
- In order to learn to read early in life, children need the requisite mental abilities, but they also benefit from the motivation that develops from rich exposure to language and books and the special attention of a warm and caring adult.
- Positive attitudes or 'dispositions' to learning experiences are viewed by Katz as the basis of the curriculum for early childhood education. An important feature of children's dispositions is that they are environmentally sensitive—meaning they are acquired, supported, or weakened by interactive experiences in an environment with significant adults and peers. However early formal instruction, structured curricular practices, repeated negative outcomes, in the form of criticism from adults or the inability to achieve tasks successfully, can lead to feelings of 'helplessness'. We often focus on knowledge and skills and the cognitive domain and give little consideration to feelings and dispositions. As a result the disposition to learn, make sense of experiences, being reflective, inquisitive, inventive, resourceful, full of wonder and perhaps puzzlement is damaged at a very early age.

- When ECCE Teachers/Caregivers display curiosity and creativity and value the same dispositions in children, these are likely to flourish in the classroom.
- ECCE Teachers/ Caregivers can influence parents' perceptions of their children's dispositions, address to parental concerns in terms of dispositions.

Check your understanding

What are the risks and impact on child of early introduction of academics other than pre academics at preschool age –explain

Summary

The guiding principle of early-childhood education is, then, the matching of curriculum and instruction to the child's developing abilities, needs, and interests. This principle is broadly accepted and advocated by most early-childhood educators.

It is only at age six or seven, when they have attained what Piaget calls "concrete operations," that children can construct the concept of a "unit," the basis for understanding the idea of interval numbers. To attain the unit concept, children must come to understand that every number is both like every other number, in the sense that it is a number, and at the same time different in its order of enumeration. Once children attain the unit concept, their notion of number is abstract and divorced from particular things, unlike nominal and ordinal numbers. Mathematical operations like addition, subtraction, and multiplication can be performed only on numbers that represent units that can be manipulated without reference to particular things.

If we want all of our children to be the best that they can be, we must recognize that education is about them, not us. If we do what is best for children, we will give them and their parents the developmentally appropriate, high-quality, affordable, and accessible early-childhood education they both need and deserve.

UNIT-5: PROGRAMME PLANNING

5.1 Principles of programme planning: Long term and short term objectives; Balance between indoor and outdoor activities – individual, small group and large group activities- individual, small group and large group activities, and guided activities, active and quiet activities; inclusive approach for all children, balanced approach to all developmental domains for holistic development of the child

5.2 Factors influencing programme planning: The philosophy and the objective of the programme, policy support at the national, state and local levels, geographical social and economic background of the child: expectation of parents and community; location of the centre – urban, rural and tribal; infrastructure facilities available; teacher- child ratio, Age range of children within a group, the staff, their training and experience; duration of the programme per day.

5.3. Planning for year, term, weekly and daily.

5.4 Provision for continuous formative and summative evaluation

5.5 Building a personalised approach in social and cultural context to address classroom diversity in gender, caste/class; religion, language, festivals, food, dress, needs of children in different regions and situations.

Introduction

Providing adequate opportunities for stimulating experiences favourably affect various learning abilities. Based on this understanding, preschool curriculum aims at providing a cohesive approach to facilitate the unfolding of each child's innate potentials in all the domains of development. The curriculum focuses on the developmental stages when children inquire, explore and discover a great deal about themselves and establish attitudes and competencies related to the learning that stay with them for life. It also aims to integrate the various domains of development with the expected learning outcomes in ways that are compatible with the natural learning behaviour of young children in this age group. In this connection it is very important to plan the preschool programme in such a way that caters to all round development of the child. Hence planning,, organising, implementing in the preschool by providing the required background and facilitating the environment by facilitators is crucial at this stage. In this unit it discussed the importance of programme planning at different level and different periods along with the required processes.

Objectives

- To enable the student teachers/ teachers to develop knowledge and skills to plan and implement appropriate programme programme in the preschools .
- To understand the need and importance of planning the programme long and short terms.
- To understand the need and importance of classroom transaction catering to the needs of all children in urban, rural and tribal areas.

5.1 Principles of programme planning: Long term and short term objectives; Balance between indoor and outdoor activities – individual, small group and large group activities- individual, small group and large group activities, and guided activities, active and quiet activities; inclusive approach for all children, balanced approach to all developmental domains for holistic development of the child

Principles of programme planning

A balanced developmentally appropriate programme for 3-4 and 4-5 year old children should be planned for a whole year (i.e long term planning), keeping in view developmental and learning goals. These goals need to be explicitly stated. To the extent possible effort should be made to be with details of specific activities for specific objectives. It needs to be recognising that a specific activity might lead to the realisation of more than one objective A whole year's programme may be divided into three –four terms, which is called short term planning or term planning. Further weekly planning and daily planning is to ensure that programme is appropriate for children and supported by appropriate materials. It is also important that the programme at each level is balanced from the point of view of children's developmental needs. In the beginning more of free activities may be useful, but later more structured activities for school readiness would be necessary.

The programme should ensure a care full balance between:

- Individual and group activities
- Free and guided activities
- Active and quite play activities
- Indoor and outdoor activities / games
- Small group and large group activities.
- Child initiated and teacher initiated activities.

- Child guided and teacher guided activities
- Concrete and abstract

In planning, the socio cultural context of the children should provide the basic framework. The children from the deprived house holds are with less stimulating environment and might suffer from cognitive, language and other deficiencies They should adequately address the issue of experience-gap between children when they come to preschool / ECE centre as there may be many children who had the exposure of nurturing and stimulating environment at home in comparison to those who come from deprived environment. (from urban , rural and tribal).

Benefits of long term and short term planning provides to

- Minimises monotonous
- Prior panning and organisation of activities - simple to complex, concrete to abstract, age appropriate, spiral curriculum /activities ,
- Variety, suitable techniques could be planned such as puppetry, dramatisation, field visits/exposure etc.
- Needed repetitive activities /convergent and divergent thinking activities
- Age appropriate creative activities like colouring, collage work, drawing, music and movement
- Reinforce where ever needed/ plan for newness.
- Designing a balanced and developmentally oriented activities
- Plan activities for different developmental domains leading to holistic development
- Adaption of basic appropriate approaches
- Use to suitable learning material, to strengthen senses
- Plan for inclusion at every step and for every child with special needs.s

Characteristics of a good ECE Programme for 3 to 6 years age group.

- Provides conducive atmosphere and warmth in the center/school .The children feel they are wanted, loved, s and protected by adults when needed.
- Developmentally appropriate, designed to address the needs of the whole child - physical, motor, socio emotional, cognitive and language, correlates activities for the holistic development of the child.
- A planned programme yet flexible to suit individual needs.
- Balanced and process oriented.

- Contributes to overall development of a child in a holistic manner
- Child centered programme catering to individual needs, interests and abilities
- Provides learning experiences to the child in a concrete form through play and activity approach.
- Facilitates continuous evaluation (formative and summative) of children and programmes
- Lays foundation for the development of reading, writing, and number work
- Provides first hand experiences to children that help in the development of skills related to the process of learning
- Helps in developing good healthy habits and building basic skills and encourages independence
- Designed to be used in a variety of settings with a variety of children.
- A preparatory programme for primary grades.
- Contributes to universalisation of Elementary Education

A preschool programme should

- Help children develop disposition towards learning as opposed to focusing on acquiring desperate skills
- Emphasize curriculum from perspective of helping children to understand main ideas, see relationships, and grasp concepts as opposed to stressing the importance of covering facts or information.
- View engaging a child's mind as basic educational goal as opposed to entertaining young children and keeping them occupied as a primary purpose.
- Help children to develop intrinsic satisfaction from their accomplishments as opposed to their becoming dependent on extrinsic rewards as motivation.
- An ECE programme should enable the child to move to higher levels of planned cognitive, and creative activity, developing motor and communication skills , forming good habits, along with opportunities for social interactions.

(Ref—unit 4)

Check your progress

What are the main principle of programme planning in a preschool.

5.2 Factors influencing programme planning: The philosophy and the objective of the programme, policy support at the national, state and local levels, geographical social and economic background of the child: expectation of parents and community; location of the centre – urban, rural and tribal; infrastructure facilities available; teacher- child ratio, Age range

of children within a group, the staff, their training and experience; duration of the programme per day.

(Ref—unit 4)

5.3 Planning annual plan, Weekly plan and daily schedule

The curriculum is a holistic educational plan which is formulated with the intention of achieving specific aims and objectives at preschool level which plays an important role throughout a child's longer life. Instructional plans are formulated more concretely in order to achieve the aims, objectives stipulated in the curriculum. They show 'when' and 'what kind of activities' children do with the aim of promoting their development and active life. Instructional plans should be formulated so that children can have experiences appropriate for their age or development stage. Teachers formulate instruction plans by setting objectives and curriculum content so that the curriculum is put into practice, creating an environment that enables children to achieve the objectives and curriculum content and making sure that teachers' support /leads the activities in a favourable direction.

There are two types of instruction plans –

- Long-term instruction plans: -- yearly and monthly
- Short-term instruction plans: weekly and daily plans.

Teachers while planning the instructional lesson plans should consider the following three aspects, in the form appropriate characteristics of each plan

1. **Contents of activities:** what the children will experience pertaining to age and developmental level..... Referring to the content ... topic / theme/concept planned to be taken into consideration (separately for three different age groups 3-4 years, 4-5 years and 5-6 years.)

2. **Objectives of curriculum content:** are expected to be developed through the activities.

3. **Creation of the environment:** how to provide an appropriate environment to achieve the objectives of curriculum content.

- Yearly Plan: Instruction plan that covers a school year (June to April)
- Monthly Plan: Instruction plan that covers a month in order to put the yearly plan into practice month wise

- Weekly Plan: Instruction plan that covers a week programme and is formulated concretely in order to put the monthly into practice, paying attention to the continuity of life
- Daily Plan: Instruction plan that covers a day and shows the activities and opportunities provided to the children

Devising the Daily Schedule

A daily plan / schedule should be prepared by all the teachers. It should provide for specific activities, work and play. These will vary for classrooms catering to different age groups. The teacher must weave the activities into the daily schedule and make it a balanced day's program.

A well-designed schedule not only provides for systematic planning, but also allows the teacher the flexibility for effective implementation of the plan. Each day's plan should include the developmental and learning objectives to be promoted.

Although planning is done before hand, the planning should be flexible enough to accommodate any change that might become necessary depending on the interest shown by the children at a particular moment.

For example, if the plan mentions a conversation on 'plants' but the children spot 'mouse' and want, to talk about that, the teacher/worker should shift the topic at that moment to the 'mouse' itself.

Daily scheduling allows time for the teacher to observe children and work with them individually and in groups. It is necessary for the teacher to observe, and determine the needs and interest of the children allowing them flexibility. An example of this can be a early Science experiment in the 'Discovery Area' which may be planned for about 15 minutes, but if the children enjoy it and become more interested, then it may be extended to 30 minutes. Teachers should always be nearby to give assistance and encouragement during small group activities and summarise salient points. Since a child's attention span is gradually developing and varies with age, hence activities should be planned accordingly. Children tend to have variations in ability to focus and need for sit down activities(passive) in the day, this should be accounted for in a day's schedule e.g. towards the end of the day, children tend to be mentally tired and find sit down work to be more challenging. Divide children into smaller groups according to their ages/ developmental levels and give them activities by rotation. It is sometimes also useful to put one older child with younger children.

The day's routine can be planned keeping in mind the principles of programme planning based on the age, needs, interest and developmental level of the children. The teacher may select any approach and plan activities and experiences using the given activity schedule.

Check your progress

- Explain the need and importance planning the programme for long term and short terms
- Develop a sample daily schedule in a preschool

5.4 Provision for continuous formative and summative evaluation

TYPES OF EVALUATION

• Informal Evaluation

ECE is development-oriented and not syllabus-oriented programme. Learning process involves activity approach. Hence continuous informal evaluation is essential

■ Evaluation should be done individually and should cover all aspects of development i.e. physical, socio emotional, cognitive and language.

• Continuous Evaluation

– Continuous evaluation should be done mainly through observation of the child's, participation and response during various activities e.g... Cognitive activities, games, creative activities, story telling and rhyme sessions.

– For 4+ to 5+ children, participation during school readiness activities also need to be observed.

– Each term's evaluation should be based on the objectives of the related programme (A sample of evaluation preformed is given in appendix) worksheets can be used for this.

– Continuous evaluation helps to identify children who have some specific needs/problems and teachers should plan the programme accordingly.

● Formative Evaluation

Formative evaluation is the assessment done once in a week/fortnight that is in shorter periods after completing one concept of implementing a programme.

● Summative Evaluation

Summative evaluation is conducted after the completion of a programme for a longer period that is at the end of the planned period. This is to identify the learning levels/developmental levels after completion of programme for a planned period.

● Competency Based Evaluation

Competency based evaluation refers to the performance of the learners in terms of indicators (norms) of achievement. Competency connotes quality as well as quantity. It is the basis against which learner's mastery or non-mastery can be judged.

5.5 Building a personalised approach in social and cultural context to address classroom diversity in gender, caste/class; religion, language, festivals, food , dress, needs of children in different regions and situations.

The learning environment for the children should be welcoming, safe and predictable, offer variety of developmentally appropriate material for children to explore and experiment independently. All children especially those with special needs develop positive self image and self-confidence when they are appreciated, encouraged and responded to.

Teacher's resourcefulness is very important during classroom transaction at preschool stage It is the responsibility of the preschool teacher while transacting the curriculum in the classroom to keep the following in mind.

- As classroom is with the children whose back ground is urban/ rural/ tribal. Hence the experiences provided in the preschool stage should cater to the needs of all children..
- The experiences provided need to be supported to the diversity in gender ie no specific activities specified for gender. Common activities to the both gender to be incorporated in the programme planning.
- Orientation and exposure to be given and experiences to be provided about all festivals irrespective of religion and regions.

- Bilingual language is to be used to facilitate children to comprehend and develop language skills. It is the teacher's responsibility to be with the knowledge of dialects of different languages spoken by the children in the preschool to facilitate children to develop the common regional and school language.

Ref 2nd year paper 1 unit for diversity in the class room

Check your progress

The role of the preschool teacher is crucial in addressing the diversity in the class room.-Explain

Summary

The planning of preschool programme, implementing, evaluating is to be done keeping in mind the goals, objectives, preschool transaction process and evaluation strategies. The environment, classroom settings, time table/daily schedule, the curriculum and pedagogies and practices need to be aligned to the pre-primary classes. Throughout the early childhood period, early childhood teachers develop their knowledge of each child's strengths, interests, cultures and abilities. They also develop strong relationships with children's families. When this information is shared with other teachers of primary schools, new learning and development opportunities can be planned in a way that responds to children's strengths, interests, cultures and builds on what they have learned before. Progress from preschool to early primary classes should be seen as a continuous process in child's holistic learning.

UNIT-6: SCHOOL READINESS

6.0 Objectives: You will be able to...

- Understand the significance of school readiness in young child's learning journey
- Understand the importance of early experiences at home and school
- Become familiar with the components of school readiness
- Identify the major challenges of multilingual contexts.

6.1 Introduction:

The first five years of life is critical in a child's lifelong development. Young children's earliest experience and environment set a stage for future development and success in school and life. Early experience actually influence brain development, establishing the neural connections that provide the foundation for language, reasoning, problem solving, social skills, behaviour and emotional health. Therefore it is of utmost importance that we prepare and develop our children's potential and ability to learn to utmost in this phase. Pre-school stage is not meant for formal instruction, it is essentially the stage when the child is readied for and equipped with the required capacity for learning.

6.2 Low learning levels in schools and concepts and significance of school readiness and emergent literacy; Factors influencing school readiness: age, chronological and/or mental ; home vs regional or school language; parental literacy and socio economic environment.

6.2.1 Low learning levels in schools :

Universalization of elementary education (UEE) is today a national priority UEE does not only mean bringing all children into the elementary schools and retaining them. It also means being able to ensure that all children who go through primary school attain certain minimum levels of learning, reading ,writing and arithmetic .Studies and surveys indicate that as vast number of children drop out of school by class V. Even among those who continue in school a large percentage go through the primary grades without being able to even read or write. Children universally pass through different stages of development. In each stage there are certain limitations and capacities to the Child's potentiality of learning. Before any instruction or any teaching can begin the teacher needs to consider the child's cognitive development, language development, development of concepts and skills.

6.2.2 Concept and Significance of school readiness:

What is School Readiness?

A Child's readiness for school is multi-faceted, encompassing the whole range of physical, social, emotional, language and cognitive skills that children need to thrive. School readiness is a measure of how prepared a child is to succeed in school, cognitively, socially and emotionally. It also implies that the child has reached a certain stage in their development where formal education will be advantageous to the child.

"Readiness is a stage where a child's development is rapid when they can learn easily, effectively and without emotional disturbance. It is a condition or state indicating that the child is ready to learn. " Parents, day-care providers, and preschool programs play an enormous role in the preparation of a child for school. Research shows that learning begins long before a child enters Nursery school. No child becomes ready on their own. Children need to be provided necessary support and opportunities to learn and explore the world.

Why it is important to determine whether the child is ready for school or not.

The demands placed on the grade 1 child are high. A child who enters the grade 1 classroom without the necessary skills is likely to develop problems emotionally, behaviorally or academically.

Knowledge of the child's strengths and weaknesses when they enter grade 1 may be beneficial for understanding the academic performance of the child. This knowledge may also be utilized to develop strategies to facilitate effective learning in the child.

At the entry stage the young child may not be ready for the instruction the teacher has planned. Just as the infant may not be able to walk, similarly a child at the entry stage may not have intellectual skills and the prerequisite knowledge for learning. The teachers must not push her/him too fast to learn. Teacher must make the child ready to be receptive to learning.

Readiness is essentially the state of receptiveness and ability to be receptive for learning.

What must not be done at the preschool stage?

At the preschool stage we must avoid teaching of formal reading, writing and number work this is so because.

- Young children are neither physically nor mentally ready to learn formal reading, writing and arithmetic
- Their fine muscle coordination , particularly of eyes and fingers yet to be strengthened
- Their listening comprehension is still inadequate for group instructions
- Their thinking is limited to concrete objects and events logical and abstract reasoning is yet to develop
- Their attention span is limited to a maximum of 7 to 10 minutes duration
- Formal work puts undue pressure which can be harmful for their development
- Attempts to initiate children into reading ,writing and mathematics may be damaging to the children's self confidence and create emotional and health problems

What should be done at the preschool stage?

A proper development of a readiness programme should be designed for the preparation of formal reading , writing and mathematics i.e programme for reading readiness , writing readiness and number readiness.

6.2.3 Emergent literacy

During early speech and language development, children learn skills that are important to the development of literacy (reading and writing) .This stage, known as emergent literacy, begin at birth and continue through the preschool years. Emergent literacy skills are the basic building blocks for learning to read and write. They are the skills, knowledge and attitudes that children develop before they learn the conventions of formal reading and writing.

Emergent literacy refers to the literacy rich activities children participate prior to formal reading and writing instruction from birth to about 5 years of age. Examples of emergent literacy activities include engaging in shared picture book reading, pretending to write or draw and engaging in oral word play such as rhyming games .Parents read to children who are very young before they can verbally participate.

Books, magazines and other forms of media can be extremely useful in emergent literacy-and can capture the child's imagination by ensuring that it is rich with illustrations and colour. Along with this the child need to be encouraged to draw and scribble which will ensure that their emergent literacy stages are positive, and that they are fully prepared for the schooling.

6.2.4 Factors influencing school readiness

Readiness for learning to read, write and number work depends upon several factors. These factors are listed below.

1. **Age (chronological and mental)**

Readiness to read, write and number work depends on the chronological age (actual age) and mental age of the child

2. **Ability to see and hear distinctly**

A child with poor vision and difficulty in hearing will not be able to effectively perform the readiness activities

3. **Physical fitness**

The child should be healthy and fit to perform the activities. A sick or undernourished child will not be able to effectively perform the activities for her/his age

4. **Socio emotional environment**

The child who is under stress, tense and nervous cannot approach reading with full efficiency, as we know the linguistic background and social experience of children are different.

5. **Intellectual**

General intellectual ability and problem solving abilities relating to language are yet other factors. If a child has a good vocabulary and can speak clearly and use complete sentences in her/his conversation, the child is moving towards reading readiness. The child who is tired, tense and under stress is not likely to listen carefully and express herself/himself as freely as the one who is happy, confident and physically fit.

6. **Parental literacy**

Research suggests that parents' education particularly mothers' education significantly impacts children's academic performance. They have more educational materials at home which could potentially support a child's learning

7. **Socio economic status**

Research indicates that children from low socio economic households develop academic skills slower than children from higher SES groups

8. **Home vs regional or school language:** While mother tongue is the native language that a child learns at home, home language should be the medium of instruction as children come to the preschool with a home language which may be different from the preschool/regional language. Language is closely linked to children's identity and emotional security that helps them freely express their thoughts and feelings.

6.3 Importance of early experiences and environment at home and role of preschool education

- Research shows role of home/parents in the early years play a key role in children's brain development .Babies begin to learn about the world around them from a very early age including during the prenatal and postnatal period
- Children's early experiences -- the bond they form with their parents and their first learning experiences deeply affect their future physical ,cognitive , emotional and social development
- Parents and other caregivers can support healthy brain development through experiences like speaking to , playing with and caring for their child
- Children learn best when parents take turns when talking and playing and build on their child's skills and interests.
- Parents are the child's first role model. Children behave, react and imitate same as their parents
- Parents play an important role in encouraging and motivating their kids to learn .
- Good parental support helps children to be positive ,healthy and good life long learners .
- Children acquire skills at the very early stage of their life if the parents are responsive and understanding.

Role of preschool in developing School Readiness in young children:

Children's School Readiness is affected by the early care and learning experiences they receive. The research in brain development emphasis that early learning(especially from birth to five)directly influences a child's ability to learn and succeed in school. These studies have contributed to a growing awareness of the importance of quality early education and preschool experiences. Research indicates that preschoolers who attend the quality programs:

- Enter Kindergarten with skills necessary for school success.
- Show greater understanding of verbal and numerical concepts.
- Are more socially competent
- Show ability to stay with an activity longer
- Are more likely to make typical progress through the primary grades

Major challenges for teachers are to nurture children's learning and give them various experiences to face this challenging world .Teacher moulds the children to be responsible and independent learners. Teacher is the first person from whom children learn their social skills in school.

Teachers make them comfortable' and guide them in the early concepts and developmental skills of life

The development of school readiness skills allows school teachers to expand and further develop a child's skills in the specific areas of social interaction, play, language, emotional development, physical skills, literacy and fine motor skills.

Role of Teacher:

While working with children the teacher need to

- Be a good listener , allow the child to finish what she/he is saying
- Elaborate on the child's explanations - help her to express her thoughts
- Ask children to discuss and compare things which will help them to make logical choices between alternatives
- Encourage children to speak in full sentences
- Encourage the quiet child also .Try to draw her/him out gradually through proper attention and affection
- Provide ample opportunities for children to work and play together in small groups.
- Speak politely and softly .Always use connect language because children tend to imitate teachers
- Let the children handle picture books/ information and teach them to handle them with care
- Read many types of good literature at the children's level of understanding
- Be sure every child is seated comfortably from where she/he can see and hear well

Always Remember

- Children of 3 to 6 years of age cannot sit still for a longtime
- They are curious and eager to learn
- They tend to learn through concrete objects and first hand experiences
- They are spontaneous and demonstrative in their emotional readiness towards others
- They respond spontaneously to music rhyme and rhythm
- Each child is unique
- Each child grows and develops at their own pace, do not compare children.

6.4 Components of school Readiness: A joyful teaching learning environment for positive attitude towards readiness for reading, writing and pre mathematics; habits of regular attendance, disposition to persevere on a task ;interest in learning

School readiness is foundational across early childhood systems and programs. It means children are ready for school, families are ready to support their children's learning and schools are ready for children.

School readiness refers to whether a child is ready to make an easy and successful transition into school. School readiness develops appropriate skills to help optimal learning when they start school. In addition to some academic basics, school readiness skills also include self-care (independent toileting and opening lunch boxes)attention and concentration, physical (large and small motor) emotional, language social and play skills.

There are 3 key elements of the term school readiness

- Children's readiness to school-What children should know and be able to do in order to enter school ready and eager to learn, thereby enabling a successful transition to a primary school environment.
- Schools' readiness for children-School environments and practices that foster and support a smooth transition for children into primary school and later years. These practices also promote the learning of all children.
- Ready Families-Family and community supports and services that contribute to children's readiness for school success

Parental and caregiver attitudes and involvement in their children's early learning and development and transition to school plays a great role.

By school readiness we mean that a child is ready for school in terms of

- Personal social readiness
- Psychomotor readiness
- Academic readiness

6.4.1 Personal Social readiness means developing in the child

- a. A sense of security in the school environment
- b. Good personal habits of regularly and punctually coming to school , coming neat and clean every day , being able to sit in a place for some time and attend to the school activities etc
- c. Social habits - sharing , cooperating with other children, participating willingly in group activities , waiting for one's turn , respecting others

rights and property and so on .Personal social readiness can be developed in children by

(i) Welcoming the child warmly to school and making the school programme interesting and attractive

(ii) Encouraging good personal social habits through

- Health checkups
- Storytelling and conversation
- Rhymes
- A balance of individual , small group and large group activities
- Encouraging children to wait for their turn
- Opportunity for free play and dramatic play

6.4.2 Psychomotor Readiness - means developing in the child

- a. Adequate eye hand coordination to be able handle writing/ drawing material
- b. Adequate coordination of larger muscles and a sense of balance to take part in sports games

For psychomotor development activities like the following would be useful

Fine muscle development

- Manipulative play with blocks, puzzles
- Sorting of locally available material Eg :- leaves ,seeds etc
- Creative activities like drawing, coloring, tearing, pasting, cutting, clay work etc.
- Dramatization with finger puppets

Large muscle development

Activities involving large muscle skills like jumping, running, hopping, walking, balancing ,climbing and skipping etc.

6.4.3 Academic Readiness

The third type of readiness i.e academic readiness would include readiness to learn the 3Rs ie –Reading ,writing ,arithmetic (number work)

A. Readiness means the stage when a child is mature enough to learn to read .It means developing in the child the ability to

- Discriminate sounds –the beginning and end sounds of words (sound discrimination)

- Discriminate different shapes and patterns (visual discrimination)
- Relate sounds with pictures/ objects/ shapes(auditory visual association)
- Have an appropriate vocabulary (vocabulary development)
- Working from left to right (directionality)
- Be familiar with and be interested in the use and handling of books (book handling)

These readiness skills can be developed in child through play activities

- a) Listening games eg: find those objects whose names start with the sound 'Ra'
- b) Visual discrimination activities eg; Find the odd man out letter/Alphabet dominos puzzles
- c) Auditory visual association activities eg: find the pictures of objects starting with a particular sound
- d) Directionality letting children arrange things from left to right,
- e) Vocabulary development can be facilitated through stories, songs, word games, conversation, dramatization etc.

B. The skill of writing: writing readiness involves well coordinated and controlled movements of the fingers while holding and using the pen/pencil and good eye hand coordination. Writing readiness involves the development of all the skills in children before starting formal writing .These skills include

- a) Eye hand coordination
- b) Finger muscle coordination and control
- c) Directionality
- d) Visual discrimination (letter perception)

To develop writing readiness in children fun activities with crayons and chalk can be given like

- Joining the dots
- Tracing shapes
- Copying of forms
- Pattern making
- Colouring in enclosed spaces

C. Readiness for number work requires the child to form some basic concepts and related vocabulary. These concepts are known as " pre number concepts" .It also requires the capacity to use some essential cognitive skills like ...skills of classifications ,seriation , sequential thinking and problem solving.

The pre number concepts and vocabulary that must be clear to the child before she/he is introduced to 'number' are related to measurement eg:

a. **Measurement**

- i. Big /small (related to size)
- ii. Long/short (related to length)
- iii. Fat/ thin (related to thickness)
- iv. More/less(related to quantity)
- v. Tall/short (related to height)
- vi. Heavy/ light (related to weight)
- vii. Wide/narrow(related to width)
- viii. Slow/fast (related to time)

b. **Space concepts like**

- i. Over/ under
- ii. Above/below
- iii. In/out
- iv. First/last
- v. Front/back/
- vi. Before/after

c. **One to one correspondence**

One-to-one correspondence is an early learning math skill that involves the act of counting **each** object in a set once, and only once with **one** touch per object.

d. **Classification:** Children should be given practice in skills of classification

(grouping of objects),

e. **Seriation:** Ordering of objects along any given dimension.

f. **Sequential thinking** :Arranging objects / events in a given sequence, problem solving

These are the basic skills required for the learning of science and mathematics later. Activities for number work include.....

- Classification of games using cards, objects, words, blocks etc
- Seriation activities for each of the pre number concepts with objects , cards , blocks etc
- Activities/games for sequential thinking
- **Free play with blocks, storytelling & dramatization.**

6.4.5 Habits of regular attendance

Many studies show that attending a quality learning program strengthens school readiness and academic performance. Regular attendance in these programs is important for children to become successful learners. Not only will good attendance help build good habits for the children, it can also help in academic problems later on.

If a child is absent they often miss the foundation skills. It can take days and even weeks to then teach the child that skills they have missed. If they fall behind too much they may never fully pick up the skills.

If children are absent regularly they may not be able to fully be prepared for school. Preschool is a time for building the social, emotional, cognitive, and language skills needed for school readiness. The best way to help children prepare for school is to make sure they are consistently attending so that they can learn the necessary skills.

Here a few tips that can prepare children for preschool and ensure attendance:

- Avoid letting the child stay home unless he or she is truly sick. Sometimes complaints of a stomach ache or headache can be a sign of anxiety and not a reason to stay home.
- Know the first day of school and make sure the child has the required immunizations and materials.
- Avoid scheduling medical appointments and extended trips when school is in session.

6.4.6 Disposition to persevere on a task

Perseverance is the ability to overcome obstacles and the desire to continue to work toward a goal or task even when challenges are involved. The ability to persevere and overcome challenges is key to success in work and relationships. Many children struggle in class but continue to study and improve. When a child is 3 or 4 learning to persevere often starts by trying something at which he or she is naturally skilled. This could be puzzles, building blocks, colouring or painting depending on the child's interest. As the child gets better at doing puzzles, for instance she may learn to persevere in which she's not as skilled.

We can help lay the foundation for the child's future success by teaching him about failure and perseverance. If the child is working on a puzzle or trying to zip his jacket and you see him struggling try not to step in immediately allowing the child time to work through difficult tasks will help build his perseverance. Even if the child isn't successful it's OK to

simply say to him/her," Do you need help with your zipper? 'instead of solving the problem for him/her.

Children need to know that time and perseverance is required for success, for example, when starting a puzzle or learning to tie a shoe laces tell them it won't be completed in one sitting. There might be a smaller goals for today, crossing the laces with a long-term goal in the future, to tie the shoelaces by themselves.

Talk to the child about the work that goes into success. Often, children think that success "just happens," but by talking about the effort that goes into success we can show the child the benefits of perseverance. A Great way to discuss perseverance with the small child is to read books where the characters overcome obstacles.

6.4.7 Interest in learning

"If we succeed in giving the love of learning, the learning itself is sure to follow." ---- John Lubbock

Children have an innate curiosity. They're eager to explore the world around them, acquiring new information and skills. But somewhere along the way, this natural love of learning is often LOST. Many children grow to dislike and even dread school and learning new things. The love of learning can be developed and cultivated using a few simple strategies.

1. Help Children Discover Interests and Passions

Studies show that learning is enhanced when children are allowed to select topics of interest to pursue. This is one reason it's so effective for teachers to build choice into the classroom. Talk to your child about what he/she is doing, reading, watching, and learning. Expose him/her to different experiences like museums, dramatic play performances, zoos, etc. Help him/her check out books on a variety of topics from the library. All of these activities can help to find and spark the child's interests.

2. Provide Hands-On Experiences

Research has shown that hands-on learning is the most effective for kids. When children move, touch, and experience, they learn better. Not only does hand-on learning help children learn information, but it's also a more enjoyable way to learn.

Most children simply don't enjoy reading from a textbook, copying notes, or "learning" through rote memorization. Experiences and hands-on activities, however, will develop a child's interest and imagination.

Teaching basic addition, for example, children can count using any objects, like crayons or marbles. When teaching classification, have children sort blocks of different shapes and colors.

3. Make Learning Fun

Subjects can become more fun through songs, academic games, scavenger hunts, or creative activities. Incorporate art projects, music, or creative writing into any academic subjects. Create a song about the water cycle, or write a story from the perspective of a tadpole as he transforms into a frog. Build a model of the solar system using materials found around the house or classroom.

4. Demonstrate Your Own Passion

Be a great role model for the child by enthusiastically exploring your own interests and passions. Show that YOU are passionate about learning.

Read books or watch videos to learn more about a topic that interests you. It sounds simple, but demonstrating your own enthusiasm for learning helps instill this same passion in the child.

5. Find The Child's Learning Style

Children have their own unique learning style, or a type of learning that is most effective for them. Some children learn effectively when it's presented in writing or as images, others are good listeners, follow directions well and often have verbal strengths and musical aptitude. Some learners are good at sports or dance, they learn best through movement and touch. They may count on their fingers or use frequent hand gestures. We can help the children learn in the way that he finds most comfortable and enjoyable.

6. Have Discussions.

Make learning a conversation where children can actively participate. When the child demonstrates curiosity by asking a question, answer it. This is true in the classroom as well. Even when a question is slightly off-topic, it shows interest and creates a learning opportunity for the children.

The conversation can be expanded by asking open-ended questions yourself. Begin questions with, "Why," "How," or, "What would happen if....?" These questions can move children to higher levels of critical thinking and problem-solving.

7. Be Supportive and Encouraging

Many children lose their love of learning as they begin to associate learning with anxiety and pressure. They're worried about getting a bad grade, answering a question wrong, or failing the test.

It's important to teach children that success is not the result of innate abilities like "intelligence." Instead, success comes from persistence, practice, hard work, and many failures. Be supportive and encourage the children.

6.5 Challenges of multilingual contexts, facilitating children's transaction from home to school language

6.5.1 Challenges of multilingual contexts:

Multilingualism is the ability to speak more than two different languages fluently. Multi Language learners (MLLs) are children learning two or more languages at the same time, as well as those learning a second language while continuing to develop their first language

Multilingual education context in language learning remains one of the key concerns for children from diverse communities who are entering schools in large numbers

- In some states there exist as many as four to eight different language /dialect which are different than the state language used for classroom instruction
- MLL Children have to negotiate the divide between home and school language right from the time they enter preschool often without much support. They learn in either regional language which is either their second or third language. AS such many children become silent and find school meaning less
- Many parents and educators are reluctant to expose children to multiple languages because they are concerned that this will put undue pressure on the child and lead to delays in development.
- Children will temporarily mix language while speaking .It is normal for bi/multilingual children to mix up language until about the age of 4. If children are lacking the right word in language "A" they will borrow from language "B" to communicate their message.

6.5.2 Facilitating children's transaction from home to school

It's amazing how young children learn to converse with others. They have to not only learn grammar and vocabulary but also develop an understanding of culture.

Early education settings need to be places with dual language/multi language learners and their families know that they have the "right to speak" that they will be heard and responded to. To create a supportive classroom, teachers need to hold on to several basic ideas about young children who are multilingual...

- “Code –mixing” or combining different languages in a single sentence is not a sign of a developmental delay. Because DLLS(dual language learners) are learning two languages at once , they often only know certain words in one language
- Language development is not delayed because these students are learning more than one language at the same time
- Encourage children to speak their home language in safe settings ...such as with peers or working one on one with a teacher.
- Avoid asking them to speak publicly in front of a group if they are not comfortable doing so
- Set up small groups that include both English only students and DLLS to ensure inclusion .Explain to English only students that DLL students are still learning and model the way they can communicate effectively with their peers
- Learning key words or phrases in DLLs' home language and singing songs as a class in those languages too.
- Provide “ Language free safe environment where children play without talking using blocks ,clay or puzzles etc
- Pay attention and respond to children when they speak to you in their home language.
- Keep English language simple, repeat important words and use gestures to support what you’re saying .Whenever possible use DLLs language too.
- Invite multilingual families to volunteer in the classroom and use their home language and ask them to write labels for items in their language.

6.6 Summary

The transition into school represents a major step in a child’s life. The research in brain development emphasizes that early learning (especially from birth to five) directly influences a child’s ability to learn and succeed in school This unit aims to identify the skills and abilities that contribute to school readiness and to understand the role of preschools for fostering an appropriate transition and school success. Concept of school readiness which includes psychomotor readiness,persal-social readiness and academic readiness has been discussed in detail. Challenges of multilingual context, facilitating children’s transaction from home to school has been included. The development of school readiness allows school teachers to develop a child’s skills in the specific areas of social interaction, play language, emotional development, physical skills, literacy and fine motor skills.

6.7 Unit end exercises.

Activities

1. Collect rhymes suitable for young children and maintain a book of rhymes.
2. Make low cost musical instruments to be used by preschoolers
3. Prepare a list of creative activities suitable for various age groups in the preschool
4. Prepare a readiness kit

Questions

1. Define school Readiness programme
2. Mention the factors influencing school Readiness
3. List out the personal and social habits to be developed in children
4. Mention the three types of school Readiness
5. What are the skills to be developed for reading readiness in young children?
6. What are the pre number concepts to be developed in children?

Suggested Practical Activities:

- Prepare an early stimulation kit for sensory-motor and language development for children below 3years.
- Design an outdoor play activity for preschool children keeping in view the space required, safety and suitable play material for that age. (for example sand play)
- Plan an activity for symbolic play.
- Write a record on developmental milestones (age wise i.e 3-4yrs, 4-5yrs, 5-6yrs) in all domains of development
- Prepare a daily plan of activities using play way method.
- Any other work suggested by the Teacher Educator.

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