Children’s Play and Development

Explore Happy Create
Laugh Grow Discover Learn

PLAY

Jump Paint Imagine Ball

Sing Dance Game Clap
Importance of Play

Why is play important?

• Play is a vital tool for children to use to support their emotional, cognitive and physical development.
• Through play, children can use the skills they have already mastered to extend their knowledge and understanding of the world.
• Children feel comfortable and confident when they are playing and consequently feel able to experiment, take risks, question and explore.
• Through their exploration, children are making connections and building up ideas, concepts and skills.
• Through play children can gain a sense of achievement, thereby developing self-esteem.
TYPES OF PLAY

ACTIVE
Physical
Outdoors
Sports

MAKE-BELIEVE
Dolls
Role-play
Scenes

MANIPULATIVE
Construction
Puzzles
Patterns

CREATIVE
Music
Arts & Crafts
Audio-Visual

LEARNING
Books
Games
Skills
"Play is often talked about as if it were a relief from serious learning. But for children, play is serious learning."

—Mr. Rogers
Burden of Knowledge

- Children are wired to play, let us hone on that, nurture it, support it.

- We have tremendous research to show how important play is in the lives of children, yet sadly it is disappearing from school settings.

- We have to reinvent in play... BIG TIME

- Bill Gates from experience says, “Our first five years determine how our next 60 years of life will be.”
The Developmental Niche

Settings

Caretaker Psychology

CHILD

Customs

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Main Research Questions

1) The Parental Ethnotheories: What are parental ethnotheories of play and learning? What do parents think about what is important for a preschool child? What are the variations in cultural beliefs and customs related to young children’s play?

2) Settings: What kind of props, resources, and environments or settings do parents provide for their preschoolers? Who participates in physical social settings where children are playing?

3) Practices: How are parental ethnotheories put into practices at home?

4) Play Behaviors: What is the effect of parental ideas and home routines on children’s behavior in preschool in relation to play and learning.
Methods

** Background Information Questionnaire

** Parental Beliefs Questionnaire
   (Parmar, Feng, Harkness, & Super)

** Education Attitude Questionnaire
   (Rescorla, Hyson, Hirsh-Pasek & Cone)

** Parental Weekly Dairy

** The child Behaviors Inventory of Playfulness (Rogers et al.)

** Questionnaire for Teachers
## Sample Demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Euro-American</th>
<th>Asian</th>
<th>P</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mother’s Age (years)</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>.034</td>
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<tr>
<td>Father’s Age (years)</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>.676</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mother’s Education (years)</td>
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<td>16</td>
<td>.818</td>
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<tr>
<td>Father’s Education (years)</td>
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<td>.015</td>
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<tr>
<td>Child Care Hours</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>31</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hours Mother works per week</td>
<td>7.81</td>
<td>7.87</td>
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<tr>
<td>Child’s Age</td>
<td>56</td>
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<td>Hollingshead Score</td>
<td>56</td>
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Parents’ Beliefs About Importance of Play and Learning

- Acad*
- Soc
- Sports
- Arts*
- Comp*

Mean Scores

[Bar chart showing comparisons between Euro-American and Asian beliefs across different sub-scale factors.]
Parents’ Beliefs Questionnaire

Factors

- Imp-Play*
- Early-Ac*
- RoleRes*

Means

- Euro-American
- Asian

Means
Importance of Play in Development

Frequency of Mentions

Themes

- Implay*
- Phys*
- Social*
- Individ*
- Cogn*

Euro-American
Asian
What is Most Important for Development?

Frequency of Mention

Themes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Theme</th>
<th>Euro-American</th>
<th>Asian</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Play*</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ac*</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soc*</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ind*</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cog</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phy</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role</td>
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<td>1</td>
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</table>
Structuring Home For Play I

Place Where Children Can Play

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Percent Mentions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Place*</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Room*</td>
<td>80</td>
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<tr>
<td>Desk *</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Living</td>
<td>90</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Euro-American

Asian

Mentions
What Kind of Toys are Bought

Types of Toys

- Phys
- Edu*
- Crea
- Fun*

percent mention

- Euro-American
- Asian
Where are Preschool Children Spending Their Time?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Place</th>
<th>Hours per Week</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Home</td>
<td>0.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Out</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Park</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friend's</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Car</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B-Sitter*</td>
<td>0.3</td>
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</table>

**American**

**Asian**
Time Spent in Activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Activity</th>
<th>Mean Hours per Week</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Play</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acad*</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TV</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chores*</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VisLib*</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **Euro-American**
- **Asian**
Play Activities of Preschoolers

Types of Play Activities:
- Phy
- Const*
- Puzz
- Simpl
- Pret*

Hours per Week:
- Euro-American
- Asian
Pre-Academic Activities of Preschool Children

Mean Hours per Week

Pre-Academic Activities

![Bar chart showing mean hours per week for different activities and groups.](chart.png)
Play Behavior Observation in Preschool

![Bar chart showing play behavior observation in preschool with categories: Watch, Par, Mut, Sim, Comp, Solo, Bids. The chart compares Euro-American and Asian groups.](image_url)
Children’s Engagement in Different Types of Play

![Bar graph showing the number of episodes for different types of play (No-Play, Social, Pretend, Function, Gross-Motor) for Euro-American and Asian children. The graph indicates that Euro-American children have a higher number of episodes in the Function category compared to Asian children.](chart)
Levels of Play

The bar chart illustrates the number of play episodes across different levels of play for Euro-American and Asian groups. The levels are categorized as Preliminary, Examine, Appropriate, and Elaborate. The chart shows a comparison between the two groups, with Euro-Americans generally having a higher number of episodes across all levels.
Teachers’ Observations

- Asian kids are quiet, less aggressive.
- They prefer quiet corner more than Euro-American Kids.
- They already know alphabets and numbers.
- They seldom use words like “excuse me” or “Sorry.”
What is most Important for Development?

**Quote From a Euro-American Parent**

“Most important is sharing and cooperation with kids her age. She should have lots of fun, should be able to play independently. This is the time to explore the world and also develop her own identity. She should get exposed to plenty of different experiences. This is also a time to develop positive self-esteem.”
What is most Important for Development?

Quote From a Asian Parent

“She needs lots of love, secure environment, she needs books and exposure to alphabets and numbers. She is ready to learn.. Earlier the better if we spend time educating and making her smart now it will be better for her in future. This is a time to explore and manipulate world, also get general knowledge”
How is Play Important for Development?

*Quote From a Euro-American Parent*

“We provide an environment that provides our children opportunities to learn, but we do not “instruct” our children at home. Play itself develops cognitive and social skills; when our children express desire to explore topics more in depth, we do so, we wait for our children to initiate .....we strive to stimulate a life long interest and love for learning for our children rather than to satisfy our own need for validation by trying to create child geniuses.”
How is Play Important for Development?

Quote From an Asian Parent

“Yes very important for physical development. It promotes circulation and respiration, makes them stronger. They learn basic concepts. They learn how to get along with other kids, prepares them for future. It helps her to share, respect, and cooperate with others.”
Oh my! When Asian kids first arrive in preschool, they already know their alphabets and numbers. I don’t know what their parents are doing at home. Asian kids are quiet and less aggressive and they also complain less when other children hit them. They just smile and get out of the way. They also do not use the words “thank you,” “excuse me,” and “sorry” a lot. But soon they learn to be like any other preschooler in the class...
Asian kids are very quiet in the classroom settings, I think their parents are very pushy at home and also they have very high expectations from their children, which I do not think does any good, but we help them to be themselves here.
Hirsh-Pasek (1991) argued that because there were no lasting academic gains from early academic training, it is not defensible to introduce formal instruction during preschool years. She claimed that play oriented school environments buffer some of the negative effects that arise from academic pressure at home.
Conclusions

- Bridging gaps
  - Between Parents and Teachers
  - Between research & Practice
  - Apply research for teacher training & Parent education
  - Spread cultural, multi-cultural & diversity research and its application
  - Involve policy makers, educators, Developmental researchers
  - More research