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Play in Early Childhood Education

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Table of Contents

Introduction.....3

Overview of Early Childhood Education.....6

What is Play.....11

History of Play.....16

Learning and play.....23

Play for children with disability.....28

Babies and Play.....31

Outdoor Play.....33

Influences of Play.....37

Benefits of Play.....41

Advocating for Play.....43

Conclusion.....45

Abstract:

The information in this paper was found in books, Murray Sates library website and other online sources. The purpose of this paper is to define play and the many roles and benefits it has for early childhood education. In this paper, it will define play by what many theorists and researchers have defined it by. The history section will be focused on the different theorists and their thoughts and beliefs about play, This paper will also discuss many sub topics to play such as outdoor play, babies and play and learning and play connected. Towards the end of the paper it will discuss the many benefits that play has for children. Also, it discusses the ways that people can advocate for play.

Introduction

The field of education has always been important to me. From a young age, I have always expressed an interest in becoming a teacher. Since my time in collage, I have grown very interested in early childhood education. I have been in many different settings with young children and have realized these young minds have so much potential. I enjoy just being around young children; I can see how they are ready and willing to explore the world around them. Throughout my time with young children one thing I noticed was all young children love to play. As I started to learn more about early childhood education., I realized how important play was in educating young children. Some people might think of young children not being able to learn at this young of an age, but if people would sit back and observe children in action and play they could see that is not true. When I would stand back and watch young children. the more I saw how they play and learn from their experiences.

Play has not always been welcomed in the classroom setting, but in recent years as more studies have come out, people are starting to realize the importance of play (Sarach and Spodeck,1995). Play is the center of many early childhood classrooms. Play can also play many different roles in the classroom I am a believer that children need to play to learn and develop. The research I will share in this paper will educate people about play in early childhood education and my belief of the importance of play on early childhood education. In this paper, I have set out to put an importance of play for young children. In this paper, this paper will cover many different topics that pertain to play and why children need during play. In the first section, it will give an overview of early childhood education. In the section, it defines play and the different types of play. In the third section, it will cover the history of play. Also in the next section, it will discuss the connection between play and learning. It will also state the

modifications that can be done to help children with disability to play. This paper will also cover the importance of babies and their play. Next, it will cover the importance of outdoor play to young children. In the next section, it will cover the many different influences of play. Towards the end of the paper, it covers the many benefits that play can have on young children.

Play is key when it comes to young children learning. When most people think of young children going to school, they usually don't think the children will be playing during the school day. Play has become a debated topic in early childhood education. Many studies have been conducted to learn more about how young children learn. Play in early childhood education has also started to become a topic that is discussed in our government as there has been legislation passed to increase the support of early childhood education. Early childhood education is becoming increasingly popular in our world today (Pellergrini and Smith, 1998). Many studies that have been done have shown that young children need to be educated in their first years of life (Bruce, 2015).

For many people, they might be wondering what exactly early childhood education is and what it consists of and what its goals are. Early childhood education exists to help the young child and their families. Early childhood education tries to focus on the child in all aspects of the child. Early childhood education has effects on the children as they grow into adults too. Because of this, it means that early childhood education influences society and the future of our nation. It has been said that early childhood makes the child's productivity better as they grow (Evans, n.d).

Play is a natural thing for all children to do, play has been a big part of a child's childhood. In the past, there has been some discussion on how play might be a vital part of how young children learn in the early years of their life. Society has always shown interest learning more about play

(Saracho and Spodek,1995). When people are trying to define play, it becomes evident that many people have different views on the definition of play. Many theorists have talked about play as free and natural activity (Saracho and Spodek,1995). Play is a child's way of expressing their feelings and their interest. The early childhood educators in the progressive era are the ones who made a difference between a child at play or other activities for children (Sarach and Spodek, 1995). Play has played many different parts throughout history in the education of children. In this paper, it will discuss the many different parts of play and why it is important,

Early Childhood Education

Early childhood education has been known to provide many services to children and their families. Also, early childhood education is important for young children to experience and learn from. Another important part of early childhood education is the age groups it covers. Early childhood education consists of the age range birth to eight years (Bruce,2015). This means that early childhood education can have a big impact on children since the span is for eight years. One group of early childhood is the infant and toddlers' programs. The infant and toddlers' programs have seen an increase of programs in recent years. The infant and toddler programs have been one of the fastest growing programs in early childhood education (Bruce,2015). Society is starting to reconsider that education can start at birth with infants. That is why a growing number of infant and toddler programs are being started in schools across the country (Bruce,2015). Many programs enroll children during infancy to help prevent the cycle of poverty. One of the more popular infant/ toddler programs is Early Head Start, which serves children under the age of three.

Preschool, kindergarten and primary grades make up a big part of early childhood education. Preschool age children are a big part of early childhood education. Most programs think of preschool as 3 to 4 years old but some programs will enroll 2 and 3-year-olds too (Bruce,2015). There are many different types of preschool programs across the country. Some are full day and some are half day. A group that often gets left out when talking about early childhood education

is the kindergarten and primary children. Kindergarten and the primary grades can be an important part of early childhood education as they are the last part of a child's early education.

In recent times, the public and the government have become supporters and help fund early childhood education. Some states have a Fund grant that helps states provide child care services. The federal and state governments have had an impact on early childhood education as they have provided funding for different early childhood education programs (Bruce, 2015).

One of the most popular programs is Head Start. Head Start is the largest public supported early childhood program (Bruce, 2015). Head Start provides many different things to young children such as health, nutrition needs, and parents support along with the basic education that goes along with preschool. (Bruce,2015) 1964 was the year that the program Head Start was started, after some concerns of the abilities of children when they entered school (Bruce,2015). When Head Start was first started, its goal was to help break the poverty cycle that many children were in. Head Start tried doing this by providing a program that would help meet the needs of the children and their families. According to (Bruce,2015) , There are Head Start programs all over the United States today, that are there to help young children and their families (Bruce,2015). It is said that Head Start serves around one million children a year. It has been estimated that Head Start has served 27 million children since its start in 1965 (Bruce,2015).

Head Start programs strive to meet the children's need in all areas of their life. Two big components of Head Start are tending to the children's health needs and forming a partnership with the families (Bruce,2015). Head Start helps the families tend to the children's health needs in many way Children in Head Start programs get health checkups and a proper meal and snack while at school. Another key part of Head Start is the partnership they form with the parents and the families. Head Start also provides resources to families. The partnership between school and

parents in head start is a key aspect of the Head Start program, by trying to provide support for the children and their families (Bruce,2015).

When talking about early childhood education it is important to recognize that the things that we are teaching children are developmentally appropriate for the child's age. To be successful in teaching children in early childhood, we must understand how they learn and what they can do, depending on their age (Bruce,2015). Age appropriate lessons and activities in early childhood can make all in the difference in a child's early education.

The teachers and staff that are educating the young children of today play a key part in early childhood education. Sadly, staff turn overs in the early childhood years have a high rate. According to (Bruce,2015), there is 41 percent staff turnover rate in the field of early childhood. This is very alarming as one important skill teachers teach in early childhood is having healthy child- adult attachment. This turnover rate might keep children from developing a healthy attachment to their teachers and aids. Also, the child- staff interaction is a vital part of a successful early childhood classroom. When teachers and staff cannot stay in the center, it effects how the children learn. As it has been shown, the child must trust their teachers and feel safe before they can begin to learn (Bruce,2015).

The importance of education has been noticed by society for a while. Early childhood education really came to light in 1965 when Head Start was started by President Johnson. After that the government and society started to take an interest in early childhood education. Kindergarten was started in the 1800's to help children develop certain skills (Samuels,2014). Since then kindergarten has become much more content based. In 2006 ,it was reported that

teachers and educators spent seven hours on literacy a week. (Bruce, 2015) Literacy has been put at the center of the kindergarten program. Teachers are supposed to start teaching literacy skills in the kindergarten classroom (Bruce,2015). It has been said that in 2006, sixty five percent of teachers thought kindergartens should know how to read, this is a big change from 1998 where a third of teachers thought children should leave kindergarten knowing how to read (Bruce, 2015).

There were times in history that kindergarten was not required. In the beginning, only Eighteen states in the U.S funded kindergarten. In 1970, it was said that about eighty percent of five-year old went to public kindergarten. In the 2000, it was reported that every state had a public funded kindergarten. (Kameron,2007) Kindergarten has become an important part of young children's education. Kindergarten is almost normal thing for every child in the U.S. (Kameron,2007).

Education has been a big part of our country for many years. The United States has put lots of effort into making the education system in our country the best. One of the things that the country did was give some power to each state. Therefore, each state could have their say in what to do in certain areas in the state's education and schools. The Kentucky school reform law made big news and was very popular in the education world at the time. The Kentucky's School Reform law was started by the General Assembly in the year 1990 and got lots of new coverage in the country and in some other countries (Combs, 1991). The Kentucky education reform law came about because Kentucky's schools were lacking compared to other states in the country. It was reported that Kentucky was ranked in the lowest twenty five percent of schools in the nation (Combs, 1991). These findings showed the state and the law makers that something needed to be done to make Kentucky's schools better. The Kentucky Supreme Court also declared the entire public school system unconstitutional. This was a wakeup call to the people of the state and the

workers in the government. It was so major, there was lots of talk and excitement about it. It was one of the biggest tasks ever taken on by the General Assembly (Combs, 1991). It made such big news that even the President Bush made a comment about it (Combs, 1991). This gave Kentucky's School Reform act lots of attention and coverage in the news and throughout the world.

What is Play?

One of the important components of early childhood education is play. It has become a debated topic when it comes to learning in early childhood. It has been found that play has many benefits to young children. Play is a key point for many early childhood education programs. A important part of understanding play is being able to define it. According to (Jung,2014). Many theorists and researchers have different thoughts and definitions about play. The word play has 34 different meanings as stated in the Webster's desk dictionary of the English language. The following definitions help people better understand play. Merriam Webster dictionary defined play as when a person is acting out or act like a person or charter. Play could also be part of a game or something for fun that someone does (Merriam Webster, n.d).

Some child development theorists and scholars have some different definitions and views of play. Scholars have been trying to define play for many decades. (Saracho and Sopdek,1996) list the following definitions that scholars have come up with:

- "Seashore: free Self- expression for the pleasure of expression,

- Gross: Instinctive practice, without serious intent, of activities which will later be essential to life.
- Dewey: Activities not consciously performed for the sake of any result beyond themselves.
- Froebel: The natural unfolding of the germinal leaves of childhood.” (p.135).

Play in early childhood is an important part of many classrooms. Many researcher theorists have had many reasons why play is good for young children. (Saracho and Spodek,1995). One of the big reasons is it is said to help with young children’s development.

Play has been researched by many theorists and researchers. Most of them agree with the education aspect of it, that play does have influence on how young children learn (Saraach and Spodek,1995). The theorist Vygotsky (1896-1934) believed that play has a big impact on children’s cognitive development. Lev S Vygotsky thought that play was one of the ways that young children developed their cognitive skills according to (Saracho,1995). Although Vygotsky wrote that play is directly related to cognitive development, the child development theorist Piaget had some different thoughts pertaining to play and cognitive development. Piaget different thinking was that play and cognitive development are not linked together (Saracho,1995). Piaget divided play into different stages. The first stage is sensorimotor, the second stage is symbolic, and the third stage is games with rule per (Saracho and Sopdek,1995) These different stages of play were in a certain order that would help a child to learn and develop. They were also said to integrate as the child grew up into later childhood.

In the first stage, the child repeats activities and most of them are physical activities. In Piaget's second stage of play, the child starts to have symbolic activity, when they can pretend and create things such as stories (Saraacho and Spodek,1995). Symbolic play also means an object a child is playing with does not have to be present, the child might pretend that it is there. An example of symbolic play is when a child is acting like he or she is feeding a baby doll and just pretending to hold a baby bottle, but there is not a baby bottle there. Symbolic play can begin when a child is 18 months old. The last stage of play that was identified by Piaget, concerns with rules. This stage is all about the social interactions (Saracho and Spodek,1995). This stage begins when a child is six or seven years old. It usually begins when the child is in Piaget's concrete operational stage of development. It is in this age span where the child can start to play games and follow the rules of the game. A child's sensorimotor play and symbolic play is decreased but lasts throughout the child's life (Saraacho and Spodek,1995).

When it comes to play in early childhood, there are many kinds of play. The different kinds of play help children to learn basic life skills. These types of play are important to understand to have a better understanding of play overall. Many of these different kinds of play are related to a developmental stage, too.

When someone says, a child is playing, it can mean that the child is engaging in one of the many different types of play. The first type of play is unoccupied play. This is when the child is doing random play and movements (Rock,2016). The next type of play is independent play. Independent play is when the child is playing alone and is not making any kind of contact with their peers. (Rock,2016) The next type of play is onlooker play. This is when the child is watching other children play, but does not join them (Rock,2016). The next type of play is parallel play. This is when children are playing beside one another, but not actually playing

together (Rock,2016). Associative play is almost like Parallel play, but in associative play the children have given more thought to what the other child is doing and might have little interaction (Rock,2016).

The next type of play is cooperative play. This is when the children start to play with their peers (Rock,2016). Another kind of play is dramatic play. This is when the child uses their imagination to create play. (Rock,2016) The next type of play is competitive play, this is the type of play when children are involved in a game one must take turns and there is a winner during competitive play (Rock,2016). Another type play is called physical play, this is when children use their gross and fine motor skills while playing (Rock,2016). The final type of play is constructive play. This is when children are building or forming something, while they are at play (Rock,2016).

These different types of play are very important to a child's development. Each of these different kinds of play helps to teach young children some life skills that they will need. For example, associative play is where children start to form friendships, by interacting on a small scale with other children. Cooperative play is when children start to play and interact with their peers on a much more (Van hoorn, Nourot, Scales, & Alward, 2011). Cooperative play has a big impact on a child's social skills because this is the first time they start to really use their social skills. Dramatic play helps children to expand their imagination, which many researchers have said that a child's imagination is an important part of their development. Competitive play helps children to learn how to take turns and to play well with others (Van hoorn, Nourot, Scales, &

Alward, 2011). A child's sensorimotor play and symbolic play is decreased although it lasts throughout the child's life. These different kinds of play can be very important when discussing the child and their developmental stage. These kinds of play are thought to help the child develop some skills that are needed as they grow up (Van hoorn, Nourot, Scales, & Alward, 2011).

Most of the time many parents are confused about what play is and what they should do to help their children. Parents should be an encourager to their child's play. They should just watch and follow the child's lead. The NAYEC offers ten things that parents should keep in mind regarding their children's play. According to (Borgiorno,n.d), these 10 things are not only for parents, but for everyone. They help people understand play better. One of the more important ones is that while children are playing, they are also learning. (Borgiorno,n.d) Another one is that's it is a healthy for children to do because many times it involves physical movement. Another thing to keep in mind while thinking about play is that play is a source of stress relief for children. Also, there is much more to play then what the human eye can see. Another important aspect to play is outdoor play. Outdoor play let the child explore there surrounding better (Borgiorno,n.d).

These ten things can help parents educators and anybody else understand play a little better. One of the most important of these points is remembering that children learn through play (White,2011). Also, play is far more then what you can see with your eyes. Lots of times parents forget that play can be beneficial to a child's health, as play has shown to reduce stress and many other things regarding a child's health (White,2011). Parents and educators need to

remember play has many parts to it and can very good for children's development and learning. Play has also been described as these things too. The first is remembering that play needs to be considered Pleasurable thing (White,2011). If the activity that the child is doing is not considered pleasurable it's not really play. Another statement that helps to understand play better is that children engage in play because the action of play brings them satisfaction. Play has no external goal function. Also Play is part of a process. This means that children like to play, just to play. Play is also a free choice, this means that play is a chosen action for children. Play is also an action that the child must be fully engaged.(White, 2011) This means that are fully focused on the action of play are engaged in. Another important part of play always involves the imagination.

This list helps to break down the meaning of play. The word play can have more than one meaning. The list above helps people to have a better understanding of what play consist of. Play is a vital role in a child's early years of life, each of these things can help people develop a better understanding of play.

History of Play:

Play has always been a part of early childhood education. Many different people have helped shape what we know as play in early childhood education. Play has always been documented in history as an activity that children do. For quite some time play has been recognized that it has

some importance for young children learning. Friedrich Froebel, a German educator, Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi, a Swiss educator, and Maria Montessori, an Italian educator, all had some belief in the importance of play. All of them thought play was important but all had different ideas on how play should be used with children in the early childhood years.

Play has been studied and researched, there is always new research coming out about what play is and its benefits. The four theories of play are surplus energy, recreation, recapitulation and instinct (Saraacho and Spodek,1995) These theories are about what play is and how play has come about. The surplus energy theory is advocates that children build up lots of energy and play is how they release that energy. The recreation theory thinks of play as a time to relax and calm down or free time. The recapitulation theory refers to play as an act that everyone does. The instinct theory is the thought that play was an inherited act that everyone does.(Saraacho and Spodek,1995). These theories helped to bring light to the subject of play and create how we see play in early childhood programs today.

Froebel is known for developing the first kindergarten. His vision of kindergarten consisted of lots of play for the children (Saraacho and Spodek,1995) .His idea for kindergarten included lots of manipulation of objects such as blocks. Froebel's kindergarten also included craft activities. He thought the craft activities were very important to a child's learning. Froebel called these craft activities occupations. Some of these were things such as paper folding and weaving (Saraacho and Spodek,1995). He also saw that songs needed to be a part of kindergarten. Froebel's idea of kindergarten did not include expressive and free play like most did. He had observed this kind of play in the German children.

Maria Montessori developed her elements from her observation of children in natural play (Saracho and Spodek,1995). Montessori would bring materials in and watch how the children

played with them or used them before using them in a project or something. Like Froebel, Montessori was not for free play for the children. Froebel and Montessori based their findings and thoughts off the observations of children. Even though they came up with their ideas in the same way, they still had different ways of thinking about certain things. Froebel was known more as an idealist. He used activities and materials to help the children gain abstract ideas. While Montessori was an empiricist. By using her materials she thought the children would gain greater skills and awareness of the objects (Saracho and Spodek,1995). Montessori also stressed the importance of letting the children use these different materials to help their sensory impression. Montessori had many ideas regarding play and early childhood that helped shaped how we think of play today.

Another theorist that helped shaped the history of play in early childhood education was John Dewey. Dewey did not agree with Froebel's ideas of play. To let people, know that he did not agree with Froebel's kindergarten he called kindergarten sub- primary (Saracho and Spodek,1995). He did this because he wanted to establish a difference between himself and Froebel. In colonial the America period people thought that children should not play and start doing things more work related. Dewey was for young children to have an education instead of the children being put right to work (Saracho and Spodek,1995). He thought that play could help young children in many ways, such as gain memory from it and help the child to gain from past experiences. Dewey also thought that play would help the children function better overall, but he was not a big supporter of free play (Saracho and Spodek, 1995). Dewey thought that teachers should create an environment that would encourage children's learning and an environment for them to play too. Many of Dewey's thoughts and reasons are still used today to help educate young children.

The twenty-century kindergarten movement and the modern nursery school was all lead by Dewey (Saracho and Spodek,1995). This is the time that play became accepted and thought of as important. Even though they gave play more importance during this time, it was still well known that play was not the only way for young children to learn.

Another child theorist that had a vital role in early childhood and the development of children is Jean Piaget. It was Piaget who thought children went through four stages of cognitive development. The four stages are sensorimotor, preoperational, concrete operational and the formal operational stage (Saracho and Spodek,1995). Piaget believed that each stage was marked with signs of the child's development. The sensorimotor stage was classified as birth to age 2, preoperational was ages 2-7, concrete operational was 7-11 and the formal operational starts in adolescence and lasts through adulthood (Saracho and Spodek,1995). He thought these four stages were how children grew and developed into adults. Each of these stages have certain goals that Piaget thought a child should meet. After many observations of children Piaget developed an interest in their development. One of the first things that Piaget noticed while he was observing young children was that they did not have a certain skill that Piaget called object concept. Piaget came up with the idea that children do not understand that some objects and individuals are different and are not connected (Saracho and Spodek,1995).

In the early years of Piaget's studies, he wanted to watch how his infant daughter developed through infancy and childhood. He noted that during the early months of her life, she thought once something was out of sight that it did not exist. This is now known as object permanence. Object permanence is something that Piaget did lots of research on and observed many children to learn more about (Saracho and Spodek,1995). Object permanence is one sign that parents look to see if their child has mastered it. After observing his daughter and many other children he came

up with the idea that the human brain just takes time to develop and that a child's brain is not just smaller than an adult's brain. Piaget also stressed the idea that older children do not really know more information they just know how to use it. Piaget suggested that older children just have a more developed brain to use the information (Saraacho and Spodeck,1995). For example, a 2 year old might know a piece of information that a six-year-old knows, but the 6-year-old has a more developed brain to put the information to use.

Some other ideas that Piaget came with also relate to a child's development and learning certain skills. These concepts play a big part in how children develop and Piaget's stages of cognitive development. Schemas are the physical and mental actions that must be done to understand something (Saracho and Spodek,1995). Schemas help us understand the things around and in the world. As young children, they do not have a big concept of schemas, for example they might believe everyone's house is exactly like there if they have been to many others and only have an understanding about their own and no other people's house. Another important skill that children learn and develop in early childhood is assimilation. Assimilation is when a child takes in new information that is already there because of schemas (Saraacho and Spodek,1995). Assimilation is when a child just adds to their already existing schemas. Another concept is accommodation this is when the child gets new information. So, we must change or modify our existing information or knowledge. By combining these, it gives a young child a concept called equilibration. Equilibration is what helps children grow and develop through the different stages. These terms are some of the key factors that helped Piaget develop the cognitive development theory (Saracho and Spodek,1995).

Another important child theorist that studied cognitive development and play was Lev Vygotsky. Piaget and Vygotsky had similar thought on some issues, but others did not agree on.

Vygotsky was a big believer of play, he thought that a child learned best through their own experiences and actions (Saracho and Spodek,1995).

The different ways we view children can have a big impact on early childhood education. Throughout history, different theorists and researchers have come up with three different ways to view children. Each of these different ways to view children have helped shape what we know and think about early childhood education. The three different ways are empiricist lenses, nativist lens and interactionist lens (Meade and Cubey, 2008).

The empiricist lens is when we think of a child as an empty slate, that it is our job to teach and mold that child into an adult (Meade and Cubey,2008). John Locke was behind the thinking of this idea. In this lenses the adult is someone that is supposed to guide and mold the child into an adult. Also in the empiricist lense, the child is taught little by little. Locke thought that a child should master one concept before being taught another one (Meade and Cubey,2008). Also, the children are expected to learn things as a habit such as writing their name or lining up in a line. Locke thought that these kinds of things should become a habit for children (Meade and Cubey,2008).

The next lens that we can see a child through is the nativist lens. The nativist lens see the child as already being set up unfold in certain ways at a certain time (Meade and Cubey,2008). This idea was created by a person named Jean-Jacques Rousseau. In the nativist tradition, it is their thinking that adults should let the children learn and discover things on their own (Meade and Cubey,2008). This kind of thinking means that the adult is not to step in and help or guide the child. Rousseau believed that children learn through past experiences. In this lens, the adult observing this child and their milestones are very important. By the adult observing the child, it still means the child is learning and discovering on their own (Meade and Cubey,2008). As you

can see the nativists approach is the total opposite way of thinking, then the empiricist lens. It is said that these looks very different in theory but when they are put in to practice they start go together in some ways. Since these two views are so different from one another, there has been some confusion about some of the things we believe and do in early childhood education. It is important for people to take both different views and take parts of each and put them together (Meade and Cubey,2008).

The third kind of lens that we can see a child through is the interactionist lens. The interactionist lense see the child as an empty slate, ready to fill and partly pre- programmed (Meade and Cubey,2008). This is taking both the empiricist and nativist lenses and putting them together. This idea was brought up by Immanuel Kant (Meade and Cubey,2008). He also had a big impact in the enlightenments ideas. The interactionist lenses are believing that there are some internal things that happen naturally but also certain things can be influenced by the world around the child (Meade and Cubey,2008). This lens can also have the give and take, sometimes the adult leads and other times the child leads. This lens is the one that makes the most sense and it has the most research and studies to back it up (Meade and Cubey, 2008).

Learning and Play connected

Albert Einstein once said that play is one main type of research (Else,2009). Play is one of bases of most early childhood programs. Play has been researched and is shown to help children learn. Many people are probably wondering how play can be connected to learning. Play can influence learning in many ways. As more and more research is coming out, many people are

starting to realize that play is very important for young children to learn. Many studies have shown that play and learning are very closely connected to each other. Play is a normal and beneficial thing for young children to do. Children learn through their actions and explorations (Great Information,n.d). Since early childhood education has become such an important part of the past, play has also been put in the center of the early childhood discussion. Children need a chance to explore their environment to learn. The brain is developing so much during the early childhood years that play is a key aspect of helping the young children's brains develop (McDevitt and Ormrod,2002). Many people want proof that when young children play they are also learning. Play and children have been studied and many researchers have understood that children learn through his or her senses. In the article (Great Information, n.d). states that children use all of their senses to learn, such as smell, touch, sight and taste.

Children learn through their senses because it helps them have new experiences. Play is one of the main ways young children learn because they like to play. When teaching young children, you have to grab their attention with something. When children play, they feel in charge and they are having fun, this allows them to learn through play. It is the teacher's and adults job is to provide them with many things for them to play with and things that will help them learn. Some examples, according to the article (Great Information, n.d). are some things that are good to provide children to play with but will also help them learn. Water and sand table can help the child learn through their sense of touch, building blocks helps them learn through their senses of sight and touch. Singing is also a good way for children to learn through their sense of hearing. When a child learns through his or her senses it helps them to build their creativity (Great Informationn,n,d).

The key that connects play and learning is providing the right toys/ tools for the children to play with. One of things that people tend to forget is that learning needs to be fun during the early childhood years so that the child will stay interested. Another important thing to remember when children are learning through play, is not to rush them to discover new things. The child needs to discovery the new things on their own (Van hoorn, Nourot, Scales, & Alward, 2011). It is important to remember that each child grows and develops at his or her own rate. Every child is different and that is why teachers and parents need to pay close attention when a child is at play, so that they can help guide the child's learning.

Many people might be wondering how researchers have conclude that play helps young children to learn. The play experience help the child's brain to grow and develop. As a child grows and develops their brain goes through lots of changes and growth. One of the bigger changes is in the prefrontal cortex (McDevitt and Ormrod,2002). For the children's brains to develop, they need to engage in free play. Another important aspect of play that helps children's brains develop is the social interactions. When children are playing together, they learn how to share and decide things together. Through this experience, the child is given time to develop and grow their social skills, that will become key as they grow up. Young children set the starting points of his or her social skills during the early childhood years. For the child to develop social skills through play, the child needs to be the leader during the play. This means the adult needs to follow the child's lead while playing (Van hoorn, Nourot, Scales, & Alward, 2011).

Cognitive skills are another important concept that is developed during the early childhood years. Cognitive skills can be developed through play, too. When children are playing, they are learning how to solve problems and explore many different things. As young children grow they

build better cognitive skills such as better memory and decision making abilities (Van hoorn, Nourot, Scales, & Alward, 2011).

Parent and early childhood educators have an important job on choosing the right toys to promote learning for young children. As the child grows older ,the kinds of toys the child will need will change as the child develops and grows. According to the article (Great Information,n.d). Here are some toys that are good for certain ages. In the first year of a child's life toys such as Stacking toys, rattles and pictures books. In a child first year of life they are exploring their own body and surroundings. Some these toys let the infant/child do that, for example the teething toys make the child aware of his or her mouth. Also, it helps the two discover their senses, for example the rattle help them to learn more about the sounds they hear. These Kinds of toys will help the infant develop the skills they need during their first year of life (Great Information,n.d).

The next age group is one to three-year olds. This is the time when a child's brain is growing and developing at a fast and high rate. Some toys that would be good for this age group would be toys that they can ride on and large, games that involve lots of movement (Great Information,n.d). These kinds of toys will help the child develop their gross and fine motor skills. During these years for child to develop their gross and fine motor skills is a key thing (Great Information,n.d).

The other age group that is important during the early childhood years is three to five. During this time is when children are starting to attend school and learn many new things (Great Information,n.d). During this age span, some toys that would be good would be puzzles, puppets and books. These kinds of toys will help the child to grow and explore their surroundings.

The final age group in the early childhood group is young school age children. Early childhood education includes children up to age eight. So many school children are included in this. In the early school age child, they need toys that will help to continue their learning and development (Great Information,n.d). During this time span for children they are growing their skills and learning new skills. Some toys that would be appropriate for this age group would be bicycles, books and games. (Great Information,n.d) .

When selecting toys for a child there are some certain thing that people need to keep in mind. Selecting the right toys that will help the child learn is an important aspect of the child's learning (Great Information,n.d). Here are a few things that are mentioned in the Great information article on how to select the right toys. The first thing that adults should keep in mind when selecting toys is to make sure that the toys are right for the child's age (Great Information,n.d). Another important thing to remember when selecting toys, is the child's hobbies and favorite things such as their interest. ("Great Information,n.d") Also, adults should think about is the toy safe for the child. The safety of the child should always be a key thing. Another thing that is important when selecting toys is how will the toy help teach my child. If the toy has no learning aspect to it. It might not be the right choice. ("Great Information,n.d")

Play can help children develop skills that are needed for life. Play can help the development of the four domains, intelligence, personality, competencies and social self. Each of these four are closely related to play (Van hoorn, Nourot, Scales, & Alward, 2011). Play can have a big impact when children are developing these skills in the four domains. Play can assist in the development of many skills that young children need.

The first domain is intelligence. Play can help young children develop the intelligence that they need. In a child's early years most of the things they do are play based. This isbecause they

haven't developed the intelligence to go off anything else. According to (Van hoorn, Nourot, Scales, & Alward, 2011) young children don't have the intelligence because they haven't developed a foundation between assimilation and accommodation. As a young child counties to explore the world around them, they are developing intelligence. A child develops their intelligence through the actions that they choose and that feels natural to them. Children need a chance to play to develop their intelligence (Van hoorn, Nourot, Scales, & Alward, 2011) .

The next domain is the personality. Play is also linked to the development of a young child's personality (Van hoorn, Nourot, Scales, & Alward, 2011). Play is the first way that children know how to express their feelings and interest (Van hoorn, Nourot, Scales, & Alward, 2011) . Therefore, play is a key factor in the development of a young child's personality. Play brings out a child's personality because during play children show undirected activity and shows their inner self (Van hoorn, Nourot, Scales, & Alward, 2011).

The next domain that play can have a role in developing is competencies (Van hoorn, Nourot, Scales, & Alward, 2011). When a baby is born, they have no competencies besides things like reflexive things. Such as looking around, sucking and grasping. As a young child grows and develops he or she will grow competencies such as physical, emotional and social. Play help young children grow their competencies because play is allowing them to get practice in their competencies (Van hoorn, Nourot, Scales, & Alward, 2011). Play also helps the child develop with others. Play engages the children in the things they need to gain competencies in things such as socialization, functional practice and understanding meaning (Van hoorn, Nourot, Scales, & Alward, 2011).

The last domain that play can help to develop is the development of social self. When an infant is born they are their own self, but it they go through stages to develop the understanding of

social self (Van hoorn, Nourot, Scales, & Alward, 2011) .The first stage is when an infant understands the difference between their self and others. In the end the child understands there self and the world around them (Van hoorn, Nourot, Scales, & Alward, 2011) .

Play is a big part of early childhood education. Every child is different in how he or she learn and develop (Van hoorn, Nourot, Scales, & Alward, 2011). The adults in a child life's needs to remember that each child will develop at he or she own rate. Parents and teachers need to focus on providing the right environment and toys that will make it easier for child to learn. If a child has good and safe environment to play in, the learning will come along as they are playing. Play can help the child develop important things that they will need during their life. Every child needs time to learn and play to develop certain life skills. It is important for society to realize that play and learning are very closely related.

Play for Children with Disabilities

All children enjoy and love to play. Unfortunately, children with disabilities can have a hard time being able to join in with other children to play (Sandall,2004). The last thing a child wants to feel is left out of the fun with the other kids. Thankfully in the world today, there has been technology and equipment designed to allow children to be able to play with the other children. There are eight sections of play modifications to help young children play and be involved in the classroom (Sandall,2004). It is the teachers job to watch the child play and then figure out what is the best way to improve his or her quality of play in the classroom.

The first type of play modification is environmental support. This is when the teachers decide what needs to be changed in the child's environment (Sandall,2004). This could mean that the teacher could change social, physical and temporal. An example of this would be for a child who wanders the classroom looking for a certain thing. The teacher could make pictures of each section of the classroom. Then the child could decide where to go from the pictures instead of going all around the room.

The next type of play modification is materials adaptations. This is when a teacher takes an object and makes it where the child can handle it. If a child cannot stand very well, the teacher could make sure to put that child at a center where he or she could sit down. By doing things like that it will make the child feel that they can have a place in the classroom. The third type of play modification is when the teacher makes the activity simpler for the child (Sandall,2004). An example of this would be if a child does not have good hand movement, the teacher might want to go ahead and cut the paper. So that the child does not have to use the scissors. By doing small tasks like this it makes school activities less stressful for children with disabilities.

Another play modification that teachers can do is taking the child's preferences to assist the child (Sandall,2014). An example of this would be if the child never seemed interested in the science/sand table. The teacher could add an interest of the child to the sand table. For example, if the child like bugs, the teacher could add bugs to the sand table. One other play modification that is popular in today's schools is when the child is provided with special equipment. This is when the teachers provide equipment that makes the child able to participant with the other children (Sandall,2004). If the teacher was planning on taking the class on a nature walk and she had a student using a walker, she could either provide the student with a wheel chair or shorten

the walk. This way the child with a walker would be able to complete the walk with the other children. By the teacher doing this, it will make the child's walk much more enjoyable.

Another play modification is having an adult to support the child (Sandall,2004). This is when an adult assists a child that might need a certain push on doing an activity. An example of this would be if a child is shy and does not play much on the playground; an adult could go with them on the playground and encourage him or her to play, while the adult is with them. By doing things such as this it will make the child feel more comfortable in the situation that they are having trouble with.

Another kind of play modification a teacher can provide to a student is called peer support (Sandall,2014). Peer support is when a peer of the students helps the other student to do a certain activity. For an example, if a student has trouble helping with circle time, the teacher could pair up the student with a buddy. This way the student would have extra help support from one of his or her peers and would not feel so much of the pressure (Sandall,2014).

The last kind of play modification is called invisible support (Sandall,2004). This is when a teacher plans a lesson that she knows a student will be able to do without any other assistance. By doing this, the teacher is almost planning for the student to succeed. When a teacher does this, it will give the student a confidence boost in his or her actions.

These different types of modifications for students with disabilities are ones that can help improve the child's learning experience at school. It is imperative that children with disabilities get the extra assistance they need. This will help the child to be successful in school and throughout his or her life.

Babies and Play

Play is necessary for infants as they grow and develop. There are different kinds of play that infants need in different stages of their growth and development. By playing infants will learn about their selves and their environment. When adults provide the right toys and environment, we make it easier for the child to be able play and learn about he or she's environment. By providing the right toys for an infant to play with they can help with he or she's development.

According to (Sawyers and Rogers,1988), In the stage of birth to four months the child needs toys and a environment that will help them explore. For example, a toy that is bright colors, to catch the attention of the infant. Another way that can you help the infant play and develop is by having toys that make movement. When babies have toys that move ,that is something that they can look at while it's in motion and learn more about. In this stage, it is also important aspect that infants start to identify common objects that are in their environment (Sawyers and Rogers,1988). This could include leaving the toy in the same spot in the house. Also, putting toys near and far away from them will help them see the visual difference. The toys should be near and far away from them, the people in contact with the infant should do the same. Babies also like to be engaged in games of recurrences, such as the adult talking and the infant laughing after (Sawyers and Rogers,1988).

The next stage the infant goes through is four to eight months. In this stage, infants can use many more things to explore and play in their environment (Sawyers and Rogers,1988). They can use the ears, eyes, hands and mouth. During this stage, since the baby has more things to explore with, it is important to give them a chance to explore those different things. When providing infants of this age toys it is important to remember the safety of the child. Since the child is using his or hermouth to explore during this stage, adults need to make sure the toys are

not small enough for the infant to put it in his or her mouth. It is important that the toys are made out materials that are safe the child to be in the child's mouth (Sawyers and Rogers,1988).

Another kind of toy that could be helpful in this stage to help the infant develop and encourage play is toys that travel from one place or another (Sawyers and Rogers,1988). Another toy that will help the infants play is toys that make a sound to cause a reaction from a baby. This kind of toys grabs the infant's attention. Also, when an infant is this age. it is important to let the child explore and not to disturb the infant in play. During this age span ,the infant starts to enjoy social play such as someone singing songs and sayings to them (Sawyers and Rogers,1988).

The next age span where it is important to encourage play is eight to twelve months. During this stage, the baby is much more mobile, which makes it easier for the infant to play and explore his or her environment(Sawyers and Rogers,1988). During this stage infants start too now combine playing with certain toys. For example, they will throw, drop and squeeze different objects/toys.

One important thing to do during this age span is to encourage the infant to play with things that involve taking objects in and out of containers (Sawyers and Rogers,1988). This encourages play because it gives the infant a goal to either put them all in or all out. Also, another form play that is important during this stage is hiding the toys and asking where the toy is. Also, it is important to provide the infant with toys that will push them to develop certain skills. Another important task during this age span to encourage play by reading books to the child. (Sawyers and Rogers,1988)

The next age span is twelve is eighteen months. During this time infants like to try new things and to see what will happen (Sawyers and Rogers,1988). This is when the child also starts to

exhibit pretend play, most of the time infants/ toddlers of this age will pretend to do normal activities, such as eating or sleeping. There are many ways that you can help encourage play during this age span. One thing would be to print out pictures of toys that the child is familiar with. This way the child can learn how to say the names of these objects. Also, to help support the babies in play the adult should perform pretend play for the baby while telling the baby what action they are doing, such as pretend to eat (Sawyer and Rogers,1988). This is a kind of play that will help children develop their language skills.

It is key for infants to be encouraged to play their first year or so of life. Infants are using this play to help develop their skills. It is important to know that infants start to play and learn at birth (Sawyers and Rogers,1988). It is our job to provide them with the right toys and environment.

Outdoor play

Outdoors is an important part of a child's play. Outdoor play is something to young children that most times indoor play cannot offer. Outdoor play can help the development of the child's body. Outdoor play has been researched and become an important part of childhood (Charles, Louv, & Bodner, 2008). Stated in recent years,there has been a growing concern that many children are not getting enough outdoor time as they need. They have thought the reasoning has been related to the life style and certain situations that families are experiencing in to today's society Such as more parents are working longer hours. That means the children are often left at home to sit in the house. Also in recent times the safety of children playing in their yard has become an issue. The safety issue could be leading parents to keep their children inside more and

not letting them receive the outdoor play that is needed. There is a fear that children are being robbed of this outdoor time, that some children could develop nature deficit disorder. There was a campaign called leave no child inside which informs people of the importance of young children being able to be outdoors during these development years. (Charles, Louv, & Bodner, 2008) Louv started a campaign as the no child left behind act was getting so much attention too.

Another concern that relates to outdoor play is that funding has been geared towards testing achievement, that some schools have cut out the activities that involve physical activity and outdoor play. Also some schools have had some liability issues that have led them to take away playground equipment that doesn't require some important physical activity task. (Charles, Louv, Bodner, 2008).

Outdoor play area is where children go to discover their environment alongside with their peers (Perry, 2001). For people to realize that outdoor play is an important part of a young child's development they must understand that the outdoors is part of the classroom too. Some people see outdoor time as a break from learning for the child, but the outdoor area is as much a learning environment as the classroom. Outdoor play offers things to young children that indoor play cannot always provide (Perry, 2001). Outdoor play lets the young child explore his or her environment without any limits in activity or noise level. This is an important aspect of outdoor play because this gives children more freedom with outdoor play as opposed to indoor play.

According to the the National Association for Sport and Physical Education (2004), there are six standards physical education for young children. These standards are things that young children should be learning how to do during the early childhood years. The first standard is when a child exhibits the ability to perform motor skills and accomplish other physical activities. Motor skills development is an important thing in the early childhood years. The second

standard is that the child shows that he or she have a strong understanding of movement ideas and relate them to learning. When a child understands movement, it can help him or her learn better through physical activity. The third standard is that young children are involved in consistent physical activity. If a child is involved in physical activity often it will help them to develop motor skills and learn other skills. The fourth standard is that the child has a healthy life style of physical fitness. This means that it is best if young children are engaged in physical activity often. The fifth standard is that the child shows a healthy behavior that compliments themselves and others during physical activity. This means that the child shows a positive relationship with physical activity and with others. The last standard is that young children learn the importance of physical activity for many reasons, such as fun, social and health. This Standard means that the child realizes the importance of physical activity. These standards try to ensure that young children receive physical activity that is needed during this age span.

One important part of outdoor play is nature play. Nature play is part of a young child's development. It helps children develop their senses and learn more about their environment. It is important for children to grow a relationship with nature, outdoor play allows children to do this (Charles, Louv, & Bodner, 2008). Believed that it helps the child develop a basis for it the attachment to the outdoors. When children get the chance to play in nature. It gives them the chance to learn more about outdoor living things. When children play in nature it can also help their emotional health, it helps them to feel calm and let them have space to think. Nature play also lets the experience activities that help him or her develop his or her sensory development.

There are certain things that outdoor play can provide that indoor can play cannot do the same thing. One of things is that indoor play has strict expectations, where during outdoor play the

expectations have more room to stretch and are not as strict (Van hoorn,Nourt, Scales , Alward,2011).

Another difference between indoor and outdoor play is the difference in the physical space. During indoor play the children are in a constricted space, unlike during outdoor play they are not confined in one place most of the time. It can be healthy for a child to have more space to play and not be so confined. Another difference in indoor and outdoor play is the type of play environment that the children are in. During indoor play the play environment, usually has a softer noise level and it is usually more directed to a certain activity (Van hoorn, Nourot, Scales, & Alward, 2011). In outdoor play, there is usually more noise compared to indoor play. Also during the outdoor play there is more physical activity than there would be in indoor play. One other type of difference in indoor play and outdoor play is the way the child understands certain things. During indoor play children rely more on guided instructions, which leads them in a certain direction on how to interpret things. On the other hand, outdoor play is where children are freer to invent their own ideas and have more freedom. Another difference is the communication and social skills that are related to indoor and outdoor play (Van Hoorn, Nourt,Scales, Alward,2011). During indoor play, usually not as much communication is needed. During outdoor play, there is usually more communication skills that take place (Van Hoorn,Scales ,Alward,2011).

The teacher's job is to create an outdoor play environment that will be safe and help children develop their skills. The teachers must make the activities they provide for children while outdoors engaging and interesting to children (Van Hoorn, Nourt ,Scales, Alward2011). stated there are six goals that teachers need to meet when trying to provide a proper outdoor play area. The first goal is to promote play in children. Teachers want to create environment where it

invites the child to direct the play. The second goal for teachers is to maintain an environment where the child will continue to be the leader during play. When children can maintain play for long amount of times, it allows them to develop certain skills such as social skills, organization and solving problems. (Van Hoorn,Nourt,Scales,Alward,2011) The third goal for teachers when providing an outdoor play area is to have things that will boost the children's imagination and expand their creativity while outside. When a teacher can do this, he or she are enabling the child to create an imagination while outdoors (Van Hoorn,Nourt,Scales,Award,2011).

The fourth goal is to create a environment where the children can play in nature and connect learning points (Van Hoorn, Nourt, Scales, Alward,2011). The fifth goal for a teacher in outdoor play area is to care for all the problems of the child that could be at risk. This means that the teacher would make sure that each child has been provided with the things he or she need. These goals will help students get the most out of outdoor play. When the teacher does these things, it allows the young children to have the chance to develop the skills and learn different things during outdoor play.

Influences of Play

When children play, they are not only showing their interest and their personality but they are also showing many different parts of their life. Play can be influenced by many different things in a child's life. A child can show things about his or her life through play. Things such as culture, temperament, gender and violence can all influence a child's play (Heidemann & Hewitt, 2010). In this section covers the different kinds of things that can influence a child's play. These things can have an impact on how the child plays.

The first thing that can influence a child's play is their culture and language. Every child comes from a different background and culture. According to (Heideman and Hewitt, 2010) culture is in the play of all children. Through the child's play they can express more about their culture and language. The child's play can represent many things in their culture or language. For example, their culture inside their home or on a more wider scale of their culture. His or her culture can also influence what kinds of things they play with and the different kind of interactions they have during play. One example of how a child's culture can be brought out in his or her play is when a child pretends to cook food that is eaten in their culture. Language can also be a big influence on a child's play, his or her language can affect their interactions with others during play (Heidemann and Hewitt,2010).

Some things that caregivers can do to help protect the influence of the child's culture and language would be, making sure all the children's cultures are reflected in your classroom. Also, educators can talk with parents about the child's language and culture, so that parents can better understand the child's life. It is important as educators and care givers, to respect the culture and language of the children we come in to contact with.

Another influence on a child's play can his or her gender. A child's gender is what helps to make a child's identity (Heidemann and Hewitt,2010). Many children are shaped in this role as what to gender they are. A child's gender can have an influence on what kind of toys he or she will play with. It is the caregivers role to offer many different play experiences for the children. While most children will want to play with toys that are regularly geared towards their gender, it is important to give the children a chance to explore other options as well.

Another thing that can influence a child's play is temperament. A child's temperament can be seen a lot through a child's play. There are nine characteristics that help make up a child's

temperament (Heidemanna and Hewitt,2010). These nine characteristics were formed by Alexander Thomas, Stella Chess and Herbert Birch. Each of these characteristics can influence a child's play. The first one is the child's activity level, some children are active and some are not very active at all. Their activity level can affect their play ; example Like when a child is overly active, it can be a distraction to others around them. The caregiver needs to help the child by providing support for the child to better improve his play and actions with others. When a child is not active enough it could lead to the child only watching others plays and not joining and playing with the other children. A caregiver needs to help encourage the inactive child to join in the play with the other children.

Another characteristic of a child's play is his or her regularity. When talking about a child's regularity we are meaning if the child is on set routine and schedule (Heidemanna and Hewitt,2010).A child that has routine that he or she is used too can adjust better to free play. Unlike a child that does not have a regular schedule, this child might have trouble with routines and it is difficult for them to figure out a timetable, since they are not used to having one. For a child that does not have a regular routine the caregiver should try to provide consistency in their play and toys (Heidemann and Hewitt,2010). Another part of a child's temperament that can affect their play is their adaptability. A child skill to adapt is an important skill that needs to be learned. A child that needs to be able to adapt to different thigs with in their play.

One other part of a child's temperament is their approach/ withdrawal (Heidmann and Hewitt,2010). Certain children are very comfortable with a change. When a child has this open mind to new things it helps them to become more comfortable with new settings and things. The children that do not approach new things well tend to withdrawal themselves from activities more. This child sits back observe things instead trying new things (Heidemann & Hewitt, 2010).

Another part of a child's temperament that can affect their play is their physical sensitivity. Children with a high and low physical sensitivity can be affected by it in their play (Heidemann and Hewitt). A child who is very sensitive will notice things while playing such as noise and how close the other children are. Things like this can interrupt a child while they are playing. A child is on the other end and is not very sensitive will usually not notice the things that sensitive child noticed. Many times, it doesn't mess up their play but you want a child to notice some of his surroundings such as their peers. Intensity of a child's reaction is also a part of their temperament that can affect their play (Heidemann and Hewitt,2010). Every child is different on how they will react to a certain situation. How a child will react to a certain situation has many different factors such as stress and health. If a child has intense reaction this can lead to problems during play. Children who have a lower reaction are many of times not seen as an issue. But these children need to be given attention because, it is good for a child to have a reaction. When a child has a reaction to something it can help their play bringing more excitement to their play. Another part of a child's temperament that can affect a child's play is their distractibility. When a child can focus in a task and not get distracted, it will help their play skills develop better and play for longer amounts of times (Heidemann and Hewitt,2010). Unlike children that get distracted easily.

Another part of a child's temperament that can affect play is their mood. A child that has a more positive mood are more likely to get along with others better during play. A child that tends to have more negative mood will have more difficulty when interacting with others during play. While you need to help the child with more negative moods to improve their mood. But also, the child with a more positive mood needs to be encourage to show their other emotions. The last part of a child's temperament that can affect a child's play is their persistence

(Heidemann and Hewitt,2010). Every child will persist for different amounts of time. It is important for the children who do not have a longer persistence, to be encouraged to play for longer amounts of time. When a child can play for a good length of times it helps them to grow in play skills.

In this section it has discussed gender and temperament as two different influences of play. Another influence of play is experience. Some children might not have a good exposure to play and the objects that go along with play. The caregivers need to encourage children to have more experience with play. Another influence that can affect a child's play is when they are around violence (Heidemann & Hewitt, 2010). Children often play out things they have been a part of or seen. The caregiver needs to help redirect their violence that they are showing in their play. Another thing that can influence a child's play is if they are gifted and talented. The gifted and talented children sometimes miss out on play with their peers because they don't know how to interact with the others (Heidemann and Hewitt,2010). The teachers and caregivers need to help and support these children by understanding the child's interest and ideas. Another influence that can affect a child's play is if a child has a special need. These children are sometimes left out of play with other children. The caregivers should support and help the child with special needs to get involved with play with peers.

Benefits of Play:

As discussed through this paper ,play is big part of young children's growth and development. Play is a big part of a child's life. Play has been researched over the years and has

been found to have many benefits for children. Play is especially important for children in the early years of their life. In this section, it states some of the benefits of play to children in different age groups. Every child can benefit from play. Children learn many different things through play such as language and communication, cognitive development and physical development (Hedemann and Hewitt,2010). In this section the benefits of play to young children will be discussed.

The first benefit of play is that language and communication development take place during play time (Heidemann and Hewitt,2010). During play, children like to explore stories they have made up, heard from family members or others ,or have had books read to them. Another benefit of play is a child's socioemotional development. Children grow in a socioemotional way during play (Hedemann and Hewitt,2010). They discover things like what they like and dislike and they start to discover their feelings during play. Play can also be a way for children to release energy and in some cases for them to release tension if they are stressed in some way. Cognitive growth can be another benefit of play. Cognitive play can take place in children during play time (Hedemann and Hewitt, 2010). Children expand concepts based on what they live in everyday experiences. Some of these are cooking, driving, shopping and taking care of babies. It is during these types of play that children are growing and developing their cognitive skills.

Another benefit of play is the physical development of children. During playtime, obviously physical development takes place. Movement takes place during play while cleaning, shopping and other activities that cause children to move (Hedemann and Hewitt, 2010). When children do activities such as writing and stirring, it helps them to develop their fine motor skills. Large motor skills can be developed by any type of movement that is a large body movement, some examples would be jumping, running and climbing (Heidemann & Hewitt, 2010).

Another benefit of play is the self-regulation development. Many children will organize their thoughts and behavior during play (Hedemann and Hewitt, 2010). During play children will grow and development to help them regulate themselves (Hedemann and Hewitt,2010). When children are playing they cope with their feelings and are planning their play.

Another benefit of play is academic development. Teachers and caregivers can provide experiences to help children learn more about things such as literacy and math (Hedemann and Hewitt,2010). Children do things such as role- play a certain job, count money and write notes. These things can help in their academic development (Heidemann & Hewitt, 2010).

When children are playing, they are building a foundation for learning for their life. Play can help children develop and grow many skills that are needed for life. Every child should have the opportunity to play and develop their skills during play. Play should be a form of learning in the early childhood years (Heidemann & Hewitt, 2010).

Advocating for Play

Now that we all know the power of play in a children's life, it is also important to know how to advocate for play with fellow teachers, children's parents and perhaps policy workers.

Advocating for play is the only way we will ensure that play has a spot in educating the young children of our society. Once we have advocated for play, it shows our society how important play is for young children. In this section, it will cover things that are important to do while advocating for play.

One step in advocating for play should be defining and understanding your own beliefs about children's play (Heidemann and Hewitt, 2010). This is an important step because to be able to advocate for play a teacher or parent must first understand your own ideas and beliefs about it. Once you have your own understanding of children's play, the next step is communication. The communication step involves working on communication with other people, so that you can educate others about the importance of play (Heidemann & Hewitt, 2010).

The third thing that teachers and educators should keep in mind when trying to advocate for play is being prepared to show exact examples of what children are learning from play (Heidemann and Hewitt, 2010). This is an important thing to do because people are going to want some examples and proof of why you are advocating for play. It is another good idea to show the children's work to people. Another step is connecting all observations of what they are learning, how they demonstrate sharing toys and ideas, and improvement of coordination. You should show examples of how children are learning in a different area (Heidemann & Hewitt, 2010).

Another important step in advocating for play is keeping record of what children are learning during play (Heidemann and Hewitt, 2010). It would help teachers and parents in advocating by sharing this information with others that would benefit from it. Another step in advocating for play would be to put an educational write up in your school newsletters about play (Heidemann and Hewitt, 2010).

Advocating for play is an important step in making sure play is used in early childhood education. Advocating for it can help the world around us see how important play really is. By following these steps, it can help a person be more successful in advocating for play. Educators, parents and many others can be the ones advocating for play (Heidemann & Hewitt, 2010).

Conclusion

This paper gave an overview of play and how it is used in early childhood. It gave information pertaining to play and the importance of it. Play is something that all children do and can learn from. (Bruce, 2015) In this paper, it discussed what play is and the many different parts that go along with play. This included topics such as outdoor play, babies and play and benefit of play.

In the first section, this paper gave an overview of early childhood education. It set the tone for the paper by giving the background about early childhood education. As discussed in the first section the progress on early childhood education has come a long way in recent times. As early

childhood education has progressed and became a larger and more importance placed on it, it has given way for play to become a part of learning in early childhood. In the future, educators need to keep early childhood education at the center, so that we can better educate our young children. If we keep the focus on making early childhood better. Teachers can continue to put more focus and importance on play for young children.

In the second section this paper defined play in many ways. Many theorists have defined play and how children play. Most described play as natural things for children to do (Saracho and Spodek, 1995). Being able to define play is an important process in being able to understand play and knowing how young children play. There are also many different types of play that can help with the growth and development of young children. It is important that teachers include and encourage the different types of play in the early childhood setting. By being able to define play, educators can have a better understanding of how children play. I think when people have a better understanding of play is when they can be better equipped to know how play can affect young children.

In the third section this paper discusses the history of play. I think we need to know the history of play and where it came from to understand more about play. Also, when we understand the history of play it can help us to know how direct play in the future. Many theorist had a part of making the play a part of history. The history of play in early childhood education can help us to learn more about play and the benefits of it for young children.

The next section is on how learning and play are connected. When the educators and parents start to understand the connection of play to learning, it will help to know to encourage play that will promote learning. I think in the future there will be more studies done that will help professionals to connect play to learning and have a better understanding. Play is something that most children enjoy and it just so happens that they can also learn from it. I believe that children can learn and benefit from play.

It is important for students with disabilities to have chance to play too. Since technology has grown in recent years, it has become easier to make sure all children have the chance to be a part of play just as the other children. The modifications discussed in this section plays a vital role for children with disability to be included in play and the classroom. In the future as technology and research grows, I think there will be more modifications in the classroom that help children with a disability to be a part of play in the classroom. In the Future, I believe there will be more modifications for children with disabilities.

The next section covers how babies play and the importance of babies playing. I have always noticed that babies begin to do activities after birth. After some research I have discovered that infants begin to play as soon as they are born. I have learned that babies are learning and developing as they are playing. I have discovered that babies use play to explore the world around them.

Outdoor play is the next topic that this paper covered. Through research it has been found that children today are not getting enough outdoor play time (Charles, Louv, & Bodner, 2008). I

think this is partly due to the new technology we have in our society today. There are more things for children to do inside, there use to be in my opinion. After doing research on outdoor play, it is my opinion that outdoor play has been but in the back burner and more academic skills have put out first. In my opinion children need time outdoors to develop certain skills, and it could affect their physical health.

The next section was over influences of play. Many different influences can affect children's play. As I have done research on the influences of play, it has made me consider how the influences can affect a child's play. In my opinion ,these influences have a big impact on how children's play and their development. Educators always need to be aware of their influence that can affect a child's play and learning. In my opinion when educators are more aware of these influences they can better help to guide a child's play.

The main point of this paper was ,to put an importance on play in early childhood education. In the last few sections this paper covered the benefits and how people can advocate for play in early childhood. The benefits of play discussed in this paper show how play can help children learn and develop as they grow. Some of the benefits of play are physical development, academic development and communication skills (Heidemann & Hewitt, 2010).

Educators and professionals also need to know the importance of advocating for play. When there are people out there that are willing to advocate for play, it will help spread the importance of play. Advocating for play can be a key aspect that can help play be understood and used in

the correct way. If professionals continue to advocate for play, the more importance will be put on play. I know in the future I will always be an advocate for play.

Play is involved in every child's life. After this research that I conducted, it has confirmed my belief in play during the early childhood years. Throughout my research, I have found that play is used in many ways and has many benefits. I think educators should continue to fight for play in the early childhood setting. If someone does not fight for play, I am afraid that it will be gone from our schools. The stress of standardized testing that is put on our teachers and students today, could make it where there is no room for play. Play should be something that children enjoy and that they can learn from. If play gets taken away from our children, it could be harmful to their growth and development. In my opinion people need to be educated about the importance and the benefits of play. When young children are exposed to play, I think it will only benefit their growth and development. Play should be kept in the center of early childhood education for the benefit of the children.

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