

**INFANT &
TODDLER PLAY:
MATERIALS &
PRACTICES TO
ENHANCE
LANGUAGE
DEVELOPMENT**

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COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

- Play enhances concept development (space, texture, weight, quantity).
- Play provides children with experiences and opportunities to react to the environment.
- Play encourages children's ability to hypothesize; what will happen if....
- **Play enhances language development.**
- Play encourages children to problem solve.
- Play increases creativity, originality and imagination in children.



METHODS FOR FACILITATING CHILDREN'S PLAY

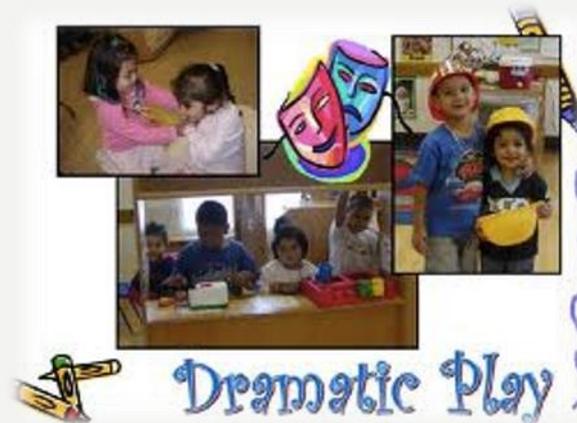
TYPES OF PLAY

- Cognitively Related Play
- Social Play
- Physical Play



COGNITIVE PLAY (PIAGET INFLUENCED)

- Exploratory/Functional Play—How does this work?
 - open ended/vs close ended toys
- Constructive Play—Building—3 Dimensional Models very purposeful.
- Symbolic/Dramatic Play—develop roles, negotiate, build maturity of stories and roles—sustain over time.
- Games with Rules—Board games, hop scotch etc. (school age children)



RECOGNIZE THE VARIOUS FEATURES OF PLAY—YOU KNOW IT WHEN YOU SEE IT

1. Children make decisions
2. Children are intrinsically motivated
3. Children become immersed in the moment
4. Play is spontaneous
5. Play is enjoyable



UNDERSTAND THE NATURE OF PLAY DEVELOPMENT

SOCIAL PLAY

- Mildred Parten (1932) Classifications of Play
- Unoccupied
- Onlooker
- Solitary Independent Play
- Parallel Play
- Associative Play
- Cooperative Play



UNOCCUPIED PLAY

The child is not actually “playing” but watches anything that happens to catch his interest. He may play with his own body, move around, remain in one location, or follow a teacher.



ONLOOKER BEHAVIOR

This stage is termed “behavior” instead of play because this child is content in watching other children.



SOLITARY INDEPENDENT PLAY

Children prefer to play by themselves and are not comfortable interacting with other children. They may play apart with chosen toys, yet within speaking distance, and demonstrate little interest in making contact. Contact may consist of grabbing other children's toys when the opportunity exists.



PARALLEL PLAY

This stage is also known as adjacent play or social coaction. Children occupy space near others, but seldom share toys or materials. They may talk, but each has their own conversation and there is no attempt to communicate with each other. As an example, one child may talk about going to the circus while another interrupts about going to a fast food restaurant.





ASSOCIATIVE PLAY

Children lend, borrow, and take toys from others. However, it's still “every child for himself.” At this stage, the children are beginning to engage in close personal contact, however, they still consider their own viewpoint as most important.

Children are not yet ready to participate in teams or group work, but there should be opportunities for group work so they can gradually learn how to communicate their needs.

COOPERATIVE PLAY

This stage is the highest form of children working and playing together. They share, take turns, and allow some children to serve as leaders for the group. For example, one child may be the policeman, another a nurse, while another is the mother. In cooperative play, three-year-olds play best with approximately three other children; five-year-olds can play successfully with approximately five children.



PHYSICAL PLAY

- Sensorimotor
- Exploration of Materials
- Mastery Play
- Rough and Tumble Play



Sand and
Water
Tables



PLAY STAGES INFANTS AND TODDLERS

- **Birth To 6 Months**

- Looking & Noticing, Grasping, Mouthing, Tummy Time
- Toys: You! Colorful Rattles (cause and effect), textured items

- **6-12 Months**

- Repetition, Things to grasp (pincer grasp), Making things work, Rolling/Crawling/Cruising, Sounds and Language!
- Toys: boxes, sorters, stackers, nesters, things to push and pull, Blocks and Buckets, Board Books, Fingerplays, Songs and Rhymes

- **12-24 Months**

- You are still their favorite toy! Interactions are Play too!! Friends and family...
- How objects work together--fit together, and how to be together! Pop Beads, spoons and cups, buckets and sand, busy boxes, Nesting cups, buttons and switches, chunky puzzles
- Musical instruments, early art experiences (paint too!) telephones, dolls, puppets (modeling communication)
- Movement: tunnels, wagons, push toys, balls

24-36 months-everything above and pretend play!!!

DISCOVERIES OF INFANCY

COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT AND LEARNING

6 DISCOVERIES

- Learning Schemes
- Cause and Effect
- Use of Tools
- Object Permanence
- Understanding Space
- Imitation

LEARNING SCHEMES

- Children gain valuable information by learning schemes such as banging, shaking, and mouthing objects.



- Schemes help children discover how objects are used and how to use objects in new and interesting ways.

SIMPLE SCHEMES

Young infants use a variety of simple schemes such as mouthing, banging, handling, grasping, and reaching to discover the properties of objects.

- Hard things such as blocks
- Soft things such as a cotton ball
- Noisy things such as rattles
- Sticky things such as a piece of tape

COMBINING SCHEMES

- Infants practice adapting and combining schemes until they perfect an approach that works for them.
- Such practice also leads to the discovery of new problems to solve.
- As children grow older, they become increasingly selective in the way they explore and manipulate objects.

SOCIAL SCHEMES

- Infants also develop schemes related to the actions of people.
- They begin to understand the relationship between actions such as hearing music and dancing, saying good night, and falling sleep.
- They learn the appropriate use of objects such as cups, forks and spoons.



CAUSE AND EFFECT

- They learn that they can cause things to happen with their own bodies or through their own actions.
- They learn that other people and objects can cause things to happen to them.
- Specific parts of objects such as wheels, light switches, knobs, and buttons can cause specific effects.



USE OF TOOLS



- Tools are anything children can use to accomplish a task.
- Tools can be a cry, a hand, a caregiver or an object.
- Infants learn to extend their power through the use of tools and as a means to an end.

BODY AS A TOOL

The first tools young infants discover are their bodies.

- After repeated responses children learn that a cry can be a means to having their needs being met.



INFANTS USE THEIR BODIES TO:

- Reach out for things with their hands.
- Crawl to desired objects.
- Pull what they want to them.
- Use their mouths as tools to hold or carry objects.



CAREGIVERS AS TOOL

- Infants see their caregiver as someone who can wind up a toy, reach an object, or open a container for them.
- Using their caregivers as a tool is an important step in the infant's cognitive growth.



OBJECTS AS TOOLS

- As children grow older, they increasingly work out strategies for the use of tools in their heads.
- With their developing thinking ability, children continually devise new ways to bring about what they want to happen.

OBJECT PERMANENCE



- For young infants, “out of sight” often means “out of mind.”
- Infants are not born knowing about the permanence of objects.
- Infants make this important discovery gradually through repeated experiences.
- Infants learn that things exist even when one cannot see them.

OBJECT PERMANENCE

- There is an emotional component to the concept of object permanence.
- Object permanence is initially understood by identifying and tracking objects as they move through space.
- Children's capacity to keep in mind an image of a parent or other important caregiver strengthens the development of emotional attachments.

UNDERSTANDING SPACE

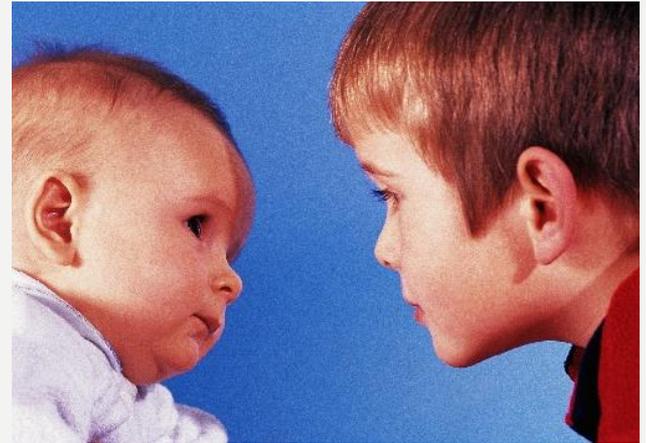
- Much of early spatial learning has to do with issues of distance, movement, and perspective.
- Infants learn about spatial relationships through bum squeezing into tight spaces, and seeing things from different perspectives.



UNDERSTANDING SPACE

- Infants are young scientists investigating the physical universe.
- They learn about relative size as they try to fit objects into containers.
- Infants explore gravity as they watch toy cars roll down a slide.
- Infants experience balance as they try to stack objects of different shapes and sizes.

IMITATION



- One of the most powerful learning devices infants and toddlers use is imitation.
- Imitation fosters the development of communication and a broad range of other skills.
- Imitating what people say is one of the major ways that children learn to talk.

IMITATION

- Infants use the words and actions of others to organize their thinking and communication.
- Imitation enables young infants to engage in meaningful interactions with their caregivers.

SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Learning does not take place one discovery at a time.

Children do not think, “Now I am learning about object permanence and now cause and effect by using a foot to squash a block to cause a noise.”

CONNECTIONS



Infants make connections between discoveries and all developmental domains – cognitive, emotional, social, physical, and language development.



FACILITATING COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT AND LEARNING

Maintaining an attitude of respect and appreciation for what children are doing is at the heart of a teacher's role in facilitating cognitive development and learning.

GUIDELINES FOR FACILITATING LEARNING

- Set up a rich, yet uncluttered environment.
- Avoid the temptation to teach children specific lessons.
- Observe children to see which of the discoveries they are engaged in.

GUIDELINES FOR FACILITATING LEARNING (CONTINUED)

- Let activities go on longer than you might think you should before you try to help.

Only provide enough help to keep the child working on a problem or task.

Keep in mind that the least amount of help is often the most effective assistance.

**FACTORS
THAT
INFLUENCE
PLAY**

ADULT STIMULATION

Adults observe children and add props, ask questions or adapt situations to enhance children's play. Adults are sensitive to not take over the play and follow the lead of the child. Adults teach social skills for children who need direct intervention.

PLACEMENT OF TOYS AND MATERIALS

Materials need to be accessible to children and should be organized so that children know how to use the materials and where to put them away. All materials need to be safe for children and developmentally appropriate. Creative materials encourage creative play.

SIZE OF THE GROUP

Smaller groups allow for more individual attention from the adults. Group size should be dependent on the age of the children, the complexity of the activity and the type of materials.

AMOUNT OF PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE

Children's play skills have a scaffolding effect. The more experience children have with other children and various types of play materials, influences their play behaviors.

LENGTH OF PLAY PERIOD

Adults need to observe children and determine the appropriate amount of time children need. If not enough time is allotted for children's play, they will hold back and not get involved. Too much time without adult interactions and children may become bored or act out.

MENTAL LEVEL AND SOCIAL MATURITY OF THE CHILDREN

Children's cognitive skills and previous experiences influence children's play. Children who have had little experience or are very young need more adult intervention.



OBSERVE AND ASSESS CHILDREN'S PLAY

**PROVIDE A PLAY
ENVIRONMENT CONDUCTIVE
TO CHILDREN'S PLAY**



**RESPOND AND
PARTICIPATE IN PLAY.**



**ENGAGE IN SYSTEMATIC
OBSERVATIONS OF THE
CHILD DURING PLAY**

PLAY IS....

- Experimenting
- Discussing
- Organizing
- Validating
- Observing
- Enjoying

PLAY IS....

- Coordinating
- Testing
- Questioning
- Improvising
- Participating
- Discovering
- Comparing

PLAY IS...

- Constructing
- Designing
- Building
- Adding
- Subtracting
- Multiplying
- Ordering

PLAY IS...

- Balancing
- Sorting
- Arranging
- Transporting
- Imagining
- Socializing
- Initiating

PLAY IS...

- Fantasizing
- Pretending
- Recreating
- Directing
- Encouraging
- Sharing

PLAY IS...

- Expressing
- Communicating
- Responding
- Dancing
- Listening
- Accomplishing
- Achieving

PLAY IS...

- Recalling
- Moving
- Creating
- Experiencing
- Imitating
- Necessary!