

PLAY IN EARLY CHILDHOOD

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INRODUCTION

Preschool period, which is called the magic years of life by most scientists, is a period that has no tolerance for neglect compared to other periods of life. The damages of this period, in which development is the fastest after prenatal, are permanent and life-directing. One of the most dominant features of this period is the use of the play as the most basic learning tool. When the findings of Developmental Psychology, Educational Psychology and Learning Psychology are examined, it is seen that the most important occupation of the child in this period is play (Koçyiğit, Tuğluk & Kök, 2007). As Montaigne stated centuries ago, "For truly it is to be noted, that children's plays are not sports, and should be deemed as their most serious actions." (Yörükoğlu, 2011). Montessori (1870–1952) also described play as a child's work (Burgaz-Uskan & Bozkuş, 2019).

Play is an important emotional need for the child. According to Önder the child's need for play is seen as important, even vital, as his need for food, love and shelter (Önder, 2016). Yörükoğlu (2011) states that play is the second most important spiritual nutrient after love for the development of the child and gaining personality. Just like a childhood without love, a childhood without playing is unimaginable. If love is considered as the fertile soil of human babies, it would not be wrong to say that play is its light and water.

Play has a different importance in every period of life, especially in early childhood. There are types of plays that individuals of all age groups enjoy playing or being a spectator of. It is known that in early childhood, children mostly like to have an active role in play and they want to turn their every experience into a play. However, what makes the play different from other periods in this period is that children use playing as a tool to understand and make sense of life (Aksoy & Dere-Çiftçi, 2020). Play offers children a unique opportunity in the process of understanding and making sense of themselves and the World (Bulut & Kılıçaslan, 2009; Kurt & Tortamış-Özkaya, 2015). At the same time, play is an activity that expresses how children interpret the world. Play provides an opportunity for adults interacting with children to understand how children perceive and interpret the world. It is because play is the child's language and the most effective expression tool (Filliozat, 2020; Yörükoğlu, 2011). Children express themselves in the easiest and most direct way through play (Koçyiğit et al., 2007). Plays reflect the inner world of the child as it is (Erdal & Erdal, 2003).

There are many ways to communicate with children and enter their world. Play is the most effective and easiest one of these ways. The most effective way to communicate especially with children who have difficulties in communicating with adults and their friends is to start a play and enter the same world with the child instead of saying let's play with you. There is no child who would not want to enter this world. Child removes all the walls in this world and expresses his/her inner world and frees his/her emotions.

All these experiences that children experience while perceiving the world and themselves are actually plays for them. It is also a tool to satisfy the feelings of curiosity. It is entirely at the child's own initiative to do this. It is an action that starts when he wants and ends when he wants. Many actions taken until the goal is achieved, on the one hand, prepare the child for the world (Çalışandemir, 2016).

Play and Definition

Play is the freedom of the child (Yörükoğlu, 2011). For children, play is the bridge between the real world and the imaginary world (Yavuzer, 2005). Play is a way of solving problems, experiencing roles in life, socializing and throwing away excess energy (Yavuz, 2016). Play is the most basic learning tool in early childhood (Solter, 2020). Play is the "original and flexible" actions that the child does freely and spontaneously, sometimes with a purpose and sometimes without a purpose. Play is the most indispensable pursuit for the child who emerges in natural and structured environments to make life safe, meaningful and enjoyable. Play is a universal and contextual process. Play is also a situation, a goal, and an action. In other words, play is a complex human behavior. Play contains many behavioral patterns, it constantly changes, develops, that is, it is dynamic (Tuğrul, 2010; 2016).

When the views of important thinkers of play are examined in the historical process, according to Aristotle (384-322 BC), play is a conscious activity and a preparation for life. However, play should neither be too tiring nor devoid of thought (Adak-Özdemir & Koçyiğit, 2019).

Plato (427-347 BC) emphasized that the child should grow up with play. He suggested that physical education and spiritual education should be done together in the education of each child. Plato stated that it would be harmful for the adult to prevent the child excessively and that play had an important place in the discovery of children's abilities (Koçyiğit et al., 2007).

Ibn Sina (980-1037) defined play as a need for the child and stated that this need should be met in the best way. He also saw play as an important tool for the socialization of the child (Bardak & Topaç, 2019).

Gazali (1058-1111), emphasizing the importance of play in children's education, argued that play relaxes the child, renews his/her memory and increases his/her learning power (Seyrek & Sun, 2005; Adak-Özdemir & Koçyiğit, 2019). He also said that play is the most appropriate way to keep the child vigorous and fit (Koçyiğit et al., 2007).

Luther (1483-1546) opposed physical education hostility in medieval monastic schools and stated that “The body will develop healthier with playing” (Kaya, 2021).

According to Comenius (1592-1670), play is an important learning tool. Play also has an important role in gaining discipline and order (Ramazan, 2013).

Locke (1632-1704) defined play as an instinctive activity and stated that play should be used in childhood in order to make the lessons more attractive (Bardak & Topaç, 2019).

Pestalozzi (1746-1827) stated that there is a power within the child that pushes him/her to play and directs him to action, and that with this power the child cannot stand still and constantly fidgets. He stated that all the plays of the child are joint exercises and named these exercises as "elementary gymnastics" (Kaya, 2021; Pehlivan, 2014). Pestalozzi said, “Stop doing language work inside while the birds are chirping and the worm is roaming on the leaf, because the bird and the worm will be able to teach what you want to teach more easily” (Tuğrul, 2016).

Froebel (1782-1852) described play as the core of life and defined it as activities that reveal the most beautiful and positive aspects of the individual (Bardak & Topaç, 2019). According to Froebel, the child has an intrinsic motivation towards play, so there is no need for adult encouragement. Adult intervention disrupts this naturalness, negatively affects the child's play behavior (Ramazan, 2013). Froebel said, “Play itself is a total achievement, so whatever you are going to teach, teach it in the play environment where the child is the liveliest” (Tuğrul, 2016).

Quantilianus argued that the first education to be given to the child should be in the form of plays (Ramazan, 2013).

Montessori (1870–1952) also described play as a child's work (Burgaz-Uskan & Bozkuş, 2019).

According to Piaget (1896-1980), play is a mirror of the mental development of the child. However, play does not only remain as a mirror, but also plays an active role in the mental, physical and emotional development of the child (Egemen, Yılmaz & Akil, 2004).

Lazarus, on the other hand, defined play as an activity that arises spontaneously, has no goal and brings happiness (Burgaz-Uskan & Bozkuş, 2019).

Einstein emphasized the importance of play by saying "Play seems to be the essential feature in productive thought." (Golinkoff, Pasek & Eyer, 2017).

Although it is very difficult to make a common definition of play, the common point of all definitions is that play is necessary and important for the development of the child (Tuğrul, 2016). Additionally, play is the child's mother tongue, spiritual nourishment, most serious occupation, area of expertise, means of discovering himself and the world, the power of childhood and the language of learning.

Play and child are two concepts that complement each other. Child evokes playing in the mind of the person, and playing reminds the child. It is not possible to consider these two separately. Even while babies are sucking on their mother's breast, they attempt to play with the mother. This makes us think that childhood is play in nature, and play is instinctive. In this respect, it shows the pointlessness of discussing whether play is necessary for the development of the child.

THEORIES OF PLAY

Play theories are divided into two groups as classical and modern theories.

Classical Theories

Classical theories that are based on philosophical speculation rather than empirical research emerged in the second half of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century. Classical play theories were concerned with why the play was played and focused on the physical and instinctive aspects of the play. They were not interested in the form and content of the play. In classical play theories, opposing views have been put forward on the function of playing. These theories have been summarised separately under the titles.

Surplus Energy Theory

This theory, put forward by Herbert Spencer (1820-1903), argues that from an adult perspective, people start their day with a renewed energy every day and this energy must be spent. This theory assumes that the energy in the organism is spent through purposeful or purposeless activities, that is, through play. Humans have excess energy that is not necessary for life. Play is due to unnecessary energy left over after primary needs are met. Excess energy is discharged through play. Unspent energy can cause many problems, especially mental problems, in the individual. The child needs to spend this extra energy through play. Children use play to discharge their excess energy by having a pleasant time and at the same time performing various learnings. In other words, the child both discharges his excess energy and realizes enjoyable learning through play. From this point of view, it can be said that playing has an important contribution to the energy balance

in the body, both physically and mentally. There is a need for healthy societies formed by individuals who use their energy in a balanced way from an early age. Based on this theory, the emergence of small or large communities in which all individuals are healthy can be realized with the play of each individual, whether child or adult. The surplus energy theory does not favor the view that the act of playing should be done haphazardly and at desired times. Instead, as in the relaxation/recreation theory, it is emphasized that the time allocated to work and the time allocated to play should be determined in this theory. He argues that it is appropriate for children to discharge their excess energy, which they cannot spend during the lesson, not at any time they want during the lesson or outside the lesson, but during the playtimes (breakdown) placed between lessons (Bardak & Topaç, 2019; Evans & Pellegrini 1997; Kaya, 2021; Koçyiğit et al., 2007; Rubin, Fein & Vandenberg, 1983; Sevinç, 2005).

According to Spencer, unlike animals, human babies do not have to meet their needs in order to survive, so they have more energy and this excess energy creates tension in children. In order for children to regain a healthy balance, they need to spend their energy by jumping, climbing, running, etc. In addition, in his theory, Spencer argued that such behaviors contain an instinctive content transmitted evolutionarily.

Another important point Spencer emphasizes in his theory is the relationship between art and play. Spencer argued that play lies in the source of art and art is a form of play.

This recreation theory of play enables children to get ready to return to the important work of academic learning. These theories view outdoor play as an essential component to academic learning, not as an important activity in its own right (Mabagala & Libent-Mabagala, 2012).

Relaxation/Recreation Theory

In this theory, which was put forward by the German poet Moriltz Lazarus, he argues that, contrary to the theory of excess energy, children need to play in order to collect the energy they spend and to relieve their fatigue. In other words, when the energy of the organism decreases, the play is played to increase the energy. Play is the child's means of finding life (Öztürk-Aynal, 2010; Ramazan, 2013).

According to this theory, exhausting activities in daily life cause children to wear out both physically and mentally. Children feel the need for rest and sleep after strenuous activities. However, sleep and rest are not enough for the organism to regain energy and revive it. Playing, which is the opposite of working, is needed to eliminate energy loss. In other words, play is an activity made out of necessity rather than an arbitrary activity.

In summary through play, children gather their energy and become mentally active again. For this reason, children should berelaxed by playing plays, especially after mentally exhausting activities.

Recapitulation Theory

This theory, which was developed by the American psychologist Stanley Hall (1884-1924), argues that the cultural stages in the evolution of human beings appear in the play parallelly with the development of the child (Duman, 2010). According to this theory, children repeat their race-specific experiences in play. The child plays in order to maintain his/her essence in an evolutionary process; in his/her plays he/she relives the inherited history of his/her ancestors, that is, the prehistoric life of his/her own kind and the interests and pursuits of primitive man; repeats his/her own race-specific life experiences (Adak-Özdemir & Koçyiğit, 2019). In fact, children imitate their ancestors' actions for survival in the past, such as hunting, fighting, finding shelter, etc. through physical activities such as running, hiding, catching, climbing, etc.

According to this theory, children progress from simple behaviors they do through play to more complex and advanced behaviors (Adak-Özdemir & Koçyiğit, 2019; Tuğrul, 2016).

Pre-Exercise Theory

According to this theory, developed by the philosopher Karl Gross, the knowledge and skills necessary for life are first acquired in the play. For this reason, playing has the role of an 'exercise' for the child to learn the rules of life and to do the activities necessary for life. In other words, child prepares for his/her future life, roles and responsibilities by playing from infancy. Gross explained his/her idea with the words “the child explores how to live as an adult through play and finds the opportunity to practice them.” (Ramazan, 2013).

According to Gros, this applies not only to human babies, but also to animals. Animal cubs prepare for life through play. For example, cats rehearse to catch mice by playing with round objects, running after the object.

According to this theory, play is not an aimless, insignificant behavior, but a serious behavior with a biological purpose, a preliminary preparation for future work and life.

According to Tuğrul (2016), children transform their observations into actions by using their imitation skills through the plays they play. Among these actions, the most important imitations are to revive the people they interact with in their immediate environment. With these imitations, children prepare themselves for the future.

Children can be mothers, fathers, doctors, teachers, firefighters, etc. They get ready for their adult roles by playing the roles. They find the opportunity to learn the behaviors required by these professions through pretend play.

Modern Play Theories

Modern play theories emphasize that children find a way to express themselves by using their imaginations and that children meet their wishes by playing (Duman, 2010). Modern play theories are divided into psychoanalytic theories and cognitive theories.

Psychoanalytic theories

Psychoanalytic theories, which are among the modern play theories, try to explain the developmental stages of the child by revealing their psychological needs (Duman, 2010; Tuğrul, 2016). Among these theories, Sigmund Freud's theory of personality development and Eric Erikson's psycho-social development theory come to the fore.

Personality theory (Sigmund Freud)

According to Freud, one of the leading psychoanalytic theorists, play is an environment that children encounter during their personality development from birth to the age of six, where they can directly experience their negative emotions and concerns (Duman, 2010). Freud emphasizes the effect of play on children's emotional development and the importance of play in eliminating negative emotions that arise as a result of traumatic events (Uğürel & Molalı, 2008). Freud's view that the child's subconscious emotions can be revealed from his/her behavior during the play has brought the "play therapy" method (Öztürk-Aynal, 2010). Freud said that every behavior has a reason. Children's plays do not occur randomly or by chance, and they state the feelings that the individual is aware of or not. Children's emotions and desires emerge in uncontrolled play, dreams and fantasies. The child is able to distinguish reality from play. But his/her play is used to create a unique world from objects and events of the real world. Play can help children reduce feelings of fear and vulnerability. It can help children to reflect their feelings such as fear, hatred, anger to others or objects in the play, to reduce negative feelings. Through play, the child gets rid of the obstacles and the prohibitions of the real world and performs unacceptable and aggressive behaviors in a safe environment. Especially children often repeat their unpleasant experiences and feelings while they play (Duman, 2010; Koçyiğit et al., 2007; Mabagala & Libent-Mabagala, 2012). Repetitive behaviors in playing eases the child's anxiety and make the child dominate the situation. Here, the child repeats playing, dividing the event into smaller pieces and plays it again and again. In this way, the child has the opportunity to experience the effects of negative events in a way that his personality can handle. According to Freud, the play process ends when the child's self-development is completed and logical thinking begins (Duman, 2010; Öztürk-Aynal, 2010).

Psycho-Social Development Theory

In Erikson's theory of psychosocial development, play is a mirror of the child's development and differs throughout developmental stages.

The changes that Erikson says are seen especially in the first four stages (trust versus mistrust, independence versus shame and skepticism, assertiveness versus guilt, success versus inferiority) of childhood increase the child's need to play. Erikson defined the "entrepreneurship versus guilt" period, which is the third of the developmental stages and spent between the ages of 3-6, as the "playing age". Erikson sees playing as a special mechanism of development and attaches special importance to playing. According to Erikson, play is a way of expressing emotions, a means of reconstructing past experiences, and the process of creating new models by designing the future through imagination. Through play, the child creates new situations to deal with real thoughts and events. Erikson stated that play has effects on the child's self-development. Cultural institutions and psychosexual stages have a very important place in the development of the individual. Play is a tool for the child to learn about cultural institutions and successfully overcome the psychosexual stages. Play helps the child get through the developmental stages in a healthy way by fusing his biological and social needs. According to Erikson, play helps the child meet his/her needs by creating situations in the past, in the present, and in the future. In the play, the child dramatizes the uncertainties, anxieties and desires of the self. Thus, the child passes from a stage defined by Erikson to the next stage in a healthier way (Bardak & Topaç, 2019; Duman, 2010; Ramazan, 2013).

Cognitive development theory

According to Jean Piaget, play is a mental activity and a phenomenon in which the child combines experience and knowledge. Playing is the way of placing the analyzed information into the system, that is, the harmony. Play is the most appropriate tool for the child to construct knowledge. Piaget draws attention to the child's process of structuring knowledge and states that it will not be possible to teach the child anything from the outside, and that learning can only be achieved through interaction with the environment and mental processes (Adak-Özdemir & Koçyiğit, 2019; Tuğrul, 2016).

Piaget stated that in the development of children from reflexes to abstract representations, there is a transition through play from being self-directed to cooperative representations involved plays. Thus, play involves a transition from the inside to the outside, from the individual to the social, within the increasing interaction of biological determination with the environment. As the child matures, his/her play develops in a way that includes the perspective of the other and the rules valid for everyone (İnan-Kaya, 2018).

Piaget stated that children's plays developed from imaginary plays to structured plays with rules. There is a directly proportional relationship between the development of play

and the mental development of the child (Duman, 2010). Piaget outlined the evolution of children's play during the first seven years of life by describing three successive systems—practice play, symbolic or make-believe play and plays with rules. These systems are the exact counterparts of sensory-motor, pre-operational and concrete operational intelligences (Nicolopoulou, 2004).

Practice Play (Sensory-Motor Development Phase, 0-2 Years)

It is defined as the plays that occur when babies repeat what they do and do to gain pleasure by running their existing sensory-motor schemes. Babies doing simple movements such as opening and closing their hands, trying to grasp an object, sucking their fingers and repeating the same behavior by enjoying it are examples of practice play (Santrock, 2018).

According to Piaget, this form of play arises from almost all sensory-motor schemes acquired by the child and mainly focuses on the child's use of objects (Nicolopoulou, 2004). It involves the repetition of established sequences of actions and manipulations for pure pleasure derived from mastery of motor activities, not for practical or instrumental purposes. It is due to the baby repeating the movements he/she has learned, testing his/her skills and wanting to have a pleasant time. Piaget emphasizes the importance of exercise plays for children to have knowledge about their cognitive development and environment (Güven, 2018). Babies begin visual and motor processes for exploratory and playful play in their first year of life. For example, at the age of 9 months, babies begin to choose new objects for exploration and play, especially responsive objects such as toys that make noise or jump (Santrock, 2018).

Symbolic Or Make-Believe Play

Symbolic or make-believe play is a play in which the child transforms the physical environment into a symbol. Between 9 and 30 months, children increase their use of objects in symbolic play. They learn to transform objects - by putting them in place of other objects or by treating them as another object in question. For example, a preschool child treats a desk like a car and while holding the leg of the desk saying “I am fixing the car” (Santrock, 2018). It is seen that the ability to symbolize increases in parallel with mental development. At the age of 2-3, children give life to inanimate objects. He/She talks to his/her babies. While they live in fantasy worlds with the objects around them, it is seen that these objects are used with their functions in the real world. Namely, they drink coffee from an empty cup and eat from an empty plate. Or they take the objects out of their real usage area. Eg. They view scraps of paper as a flaming fire or use a stool as a bath. At the age of three, this type of symbolization gives the appearance of the child living in a fantasy world. In addition, there is an increase in dramatic plays. Eg. the child becomes a pilot or a cop. Most fantasy plays for children under the age of three are speechless. In children over the age of three, speech is seen in fantasy plays and the plays begin to become more complex. More objects join the play. These objects are used

for different purposes. This shows that the ability to symbolize develops in proportion to age and becomes versatile (Özdoğan, 2020). Many play experts see the preschool years, symbolic play of dramatic or socio-dramatic nature, as the "golden age" of their play. Symbolic play peaks at the age of 4-5 years, then gradually decreases (Santrock, 2018).

Plays With Rules

This type of play rarely occurs before the age of 4 to 7 years and is predominantly seen between the ages of 7 and 11 (Nicolopoulou, 2004). According to Piaget, who thinks that this stage requires a higher cognitive level, logical thinking develops not only when children are interested in objects, but also when they play with other children. Working together, making an effort together in a group, talking together are important for mental development. The symbolic play in this phase is full of rules, attention to realistic details. The rules of the play and the punishment to be given to those who do not follow the rules are important (Özdoğan, 2020; Ramazan, 2013). In these plays, the child has to choose one of two behaviors. Either he will break the rules, achieve his goal and win the play, or he will follow the rules and settle for the result. Inner conflict arises when the child needs to obey the rules and control himself, and the child often breaks the rules. The goodwill of the children in the group plays a major role in the child's compliance with the rules. While obeying the rules of the play, the child gets rid of the self-centered way of thinking and behaves in accordance with the social norms due to the rules of the play (Özdoğan, 2020).

Socio-cultural development theory (Lev Semenovich Vygotsky),

Vygotsky believes that play contributes significantly to cognitive development rather than simply reflecting cognitive development. According to Vygotsky, real play begins around the age of 3 with pretend play (Nicolopoulou, 2004).

Play typically involves more than a single child; and the themes, stories or roles in the play pieces reveal children's understanding of the sociocultural materials of their communities and their use for play. Therefore, even when a young child plays alone, Vygotsky considers this type of play to be significantly social, as the themes and parts of the play express socio-cultural elements (Nicolopoulou, 2004).

According to Vygotsky, symbols are the basis of socio-cultural activities. Higher mental processes represent the combined use of tool and symbol. Symbols that symbolize control and communication in the application phase turn into problem-solving behaviors that the individual plans and adjusts internally in the future (Duman, 2010).

According to this theory, the relationship of the individual with the environment begins with the individual being directly affected by the environment and shows a change when the individual takes control of the environment indirectly. The play provides the most suitable environment for this cognitive mechanism to work. The child gets rid of the

tension created by the desires, wishes and situations that cannot be satisfied by the social environment through play. The play is exploration and a new creation. Play is a mechanism of conflicts and contradictions that cannot be resolved in any other ways. While the child is playing within this mechanism, he/she uses the elements he/she remembers from real-life experiences and especially the relationships in lived events. With his/her free will, the child produces new behaviors by using the cause-effect relationships he/she has acquired from his/her previous experiences. Thus, the child learns to cope with his/her negative impulses. In the process of coping with negative impulses, the child has a feeling of happiness through play (Duman, 2010).

Vygotsky argues that there is a virtual realization attempt to satisfy requests that cannot be fulfilled during the play. At this point, Vygotsky draws attention to the activity of imagining. He states that imagination, as an activity of human consciousness, originates from action, like all conscious functions, and argues that the daydreaming/imagination activity seen in school-age children or adolescents in later periods is also a type of play that does not involve action. On the other hand, according to him, although play is defined as an activity that the child performs in order to meet his/her needs, it would be misleading to say that the child consciously plays to meet these needs. In this sense, play is different from activities such as work or homework. Here, there is the satisfaction of age-specific needs in the shortest known way (through play) with an unconscious motivation. In this respect, while Vygotsky is consistent with what psychoanalytic theory says about play, he puts forward an idea that includes not only social-emotional development but also cognitive development. However, unlike other theorists, Vygotsky accepts the imaginative aspect of play not as a form of play, but as an inherent feature of all play activities (İnan-Kaya, 2018; Vygotsky, 2016).

Bruner's theory

Bruner (1972) emphasizes that play develops creativity, behavioral innovation and flexible thinking skills in children. He argues that thanks to flexible thinking, children will be prepared for adulthood (Öztürk-Aynal, 2010).

Once children develop new behavior combinations in their plays, they can use them in the problems they encounter in their real lives. The behaviors learned during the play are then recorded in the child's memory as new and useful behavior patterns. Thus, children gain flexibility to develop different behavioral options in their plays. According to Bruner, the process of the child in the play or the meaning of the play is much more important than the result of the play. According to him, children can try many different situations in their plays aimlessly without any worries (Öztürk-Aynal, 2010).

Other Play Theories

Huizinga's theory

Johan Huizinga (1872-1945), Dutch historian, considered playing as the most important element in the formation of cultures and brought the concept of Homo-Ludens (playful person) to the concepts of Homo-Faber (constructive person) and Homo-Sapiens (thinking person) (Uğurel & Molalı, 2008). In his book “Homo Ludens”, Huizinga revealed the importance of playing for human beings and the playing that humans use while creating culture by basing it on documents (Arslan & Bulgu, 2010). Huizinga stated in “Homo Ludens” that the play is older than culture, and human civilization did not add essential features to the overall concept of play. According to him, animals play exactly like humans and all the basic rules of the play have already been performed in animal plays. Huizinga says that it will be enough to watch the puppies' playing in order to observe the basic rules of the play (Arslan & Bulgu, 2010). According to Huizinga, playing serves social and cultural functions that will transform the culture by creating social groups for children and adults, creating different communities, social status, and ensuring social cohesion (Kaya, 2021).

System theory

According to Helanko, who developed this theory, play is a relationship between the individual and his/her environment. The individual and his environment form a system. Helanko defines the individual as the subjective pole of the system and the environment as the other objective pole of the system (Bardak & Topaç, 2019; Uğurel & Molalı, 2008). In order for it to be called play and play behavior, the individual should be able to choose his/her own play activity, the objects in the play and his/her playmate without any external coercion. By creating a play environment, the child can move from one play environment to another by him/herself, and eliminate the negative effects from the outside. The child has such a talent (Bardak & Topaç, 2019; Ramazan, 2013).

Arousal theory

According to Berlyne, playing is balancing the arousal states of the child based on his/her exploration behaviors (Duman, 2010). According to Berlyne, standing still is not the natural state of the organism. The arousal mechanism seen in playing is controlled by the organism and a sense of pleasure is experienced at the end of the process (Ramazan, 2013). The child's enjoyment of the play explains to us the reason for the behaviors done during the play. The child can use play material in different ways and different usage brings uncertainty (Duman, 2010). The young child may be nervous and excited about sliding down the slide, but he/she still slips and repeats this behavior. After a while, the way of sliding shows differences. Each different move brings with it a new state of uncertainty. Although the slide is not a new tool, the child changes his/her own behavior and adds

innovation and excitement to the activity (Ramazan, 2013). With the child's consumption of innovative options, playing loses its interest (Duman, 2010).

When children cannot add something different to the play, they lose interest in that play. In fact, although the children seem to play the same way all the time, it can be seen that they constantly add innovations to the play when the children are released. As the child who learns to slide from the slide increases his self-confidence, he will try different ways such as putting his face down, sliding on his back, trying to slide on his feet, climbing the slide instead of the stairs.

In fact, the fact that children who cannot read patch ask their parents to read the same book over and over is due to the fact that something different draws their attention in each reading.

Here, the duty of adults is to support children to try in different ways as long as they are sure of their safety. This approach is necessary for the continuation of the innate creativity of children.

When children cannot add something different to play, they lose interest in the play. In fact, although children seem to play the same way all the time, actually when children are let free, they constantly add innovations to their play. As the child learns to go down the slide, as his/her self-confidence increases, he/she will try different ways such as going down on his/her face, on his/her back, while standing, climbing the slide instead of the stairs. Here, the duty of adults is to support children to try in different ways as long as they are sure of their safety. Actually, the fact that illiterate children ask their parents to read the same book over and over is due to the fact that something different attracts their attention in each reading.

Parten's theory of play

Parten stated that playing goes through certain stages depending on the age of the child. While creating these stages, Parten prioritized the social development stages of children. These stages, which follow a certain hierarchy depending on age, emerge after the previous stage has taken place. However, in the later stages, playing behaviors of the previous stage continue to be seen. Parten discusses playing processes in six basic play categories. Two of them are non-playing behaviors and the other four are social play behaviors (Bardak & Topaç, 2019; Tuğrul, 2010). These phases are as follows:

Unoccupied (play); it is the stage where the child is not interested in the plays of others and does not actively participate (Kaya, 2021).

Onlooker play (behavior); The child can be interested in the plays of others, talk to other players, but is not a direct participant (Aksoy & Dere-Çiftçi, 2020). In this stage, the child

is still independent as in the previous stage. He/she only plays the role of a spectator of other children's plays without participating in other children's plays. An example of this is the situation of a child who watches a group of children while they are playing with a toy that has just been brought to the classroom without entering the group (Kaya, 2021).

Solitary (independent) play; At this stage, the child plays alone with his own toys, the playground where the child plays does not require him to be together with other children. Individuality is characteristic of this phase. Children are not interested in where and what they play with each other (Tuğrul, 2016). Parten stated that this period is specific to children between the ages of two and two and a half. At this stage, social interaction is very low. However, the stage of playing alone is important, the child should be encouraged to do some activities alone (Aksoy & Dere-Çiftçi, 2020).

Parallel play (adjacent play, social coaction); It is seen in children between the ages of two and a half and three and a half. The child plays with or near others, but does not play with them, but continues to play independently, alone. Children use the same toys among their peers that are around other children, but there is no talk about sharing and playing (Aksoy & Dere-Çiftçi, 2020). This type of play can be physical, incorporate objects or language, be pretend, or include all of these aspects (Smith & Pellegrini, 2013).

Associative play; At this stage, children play by communicating within the same play. In associative play, which is a play phase that does not exceed a few people, children do not act in accordance with a common goal due to their egocentric characteristics. Play usually takes place simultaneously. In addition, plays with very strict rules are not seen in this stage where the individual characteristics of children are at the forefront (Bardak & Topaç, 2019).

Cooperative play; The child plays in a group that has come together for a specific purpose and creates a product. In this stage, there are plays with rules that more children play together than in the previous stage (Duman, 2010). With the increase in communication and social skills, there may be division of labor and various responsibilities among children. Children strive to do their best. As the influence of egocentrism begins to wane, plays with rules are easier to understand. Children realize (although they don't want to fully admit it) that other people can have as much say as they do. The plays played in this stage have more similar qualities to the actions of adults. In other words, it allows them to prepare for advancing ages (Bardak & Topaç, 2019).

The Effects of Play on the Developmental Areas of the Child

Play is a part of the child's life, the most serious occupation, a means of discovering him/herself and the world, and one of the most effective ways to learn life skills and discover his/her talents and interests. These features of play contribute to the physical, mental, emotional and social development of children and enable them to develop holistically.

Cirhinlioğlu (2011), İnan-Kaya (2018), Özer, Gürkan & Ramazanoğlu (2006) and Smith & Pellegrini (2013) state that play is one of the most indispensable elements for the development of the child and one of the important tools that provide the child's physical, cognitive, emotional and social development. Play is meaningful as a part of the child's life whether it is species-specific and evolutionary or embedded in the social and cultural context or associated with psychological well-being.

19 th-century kindergarten movement, which popularized the concept of preschool education, was based on the idea that songs, plays, and other activities are a means for children to gain perceptual, cognitive, social, and emotional knowledge that prepares them for entering the world (Wang & Aamodt, 2012).

Effects of play on the child's physical development

Play is actually the language of movement of children (Tuğrul, 2016). During playing,, the whole body of the child moves. This ensures that body systems work in a healthy way (Yavuz, 2016). Plays that require physical strength such as running, jumping, climbing and crawling ensure the regular functioning of the child's respiratory, circulatory, digestive and excretory systems (Anılan, Girmen, Öztürk & Koçkar, 2004). During playing, the child's large and small muscles are constantly working with contraction, relaxation and stretching. Especially in active plays, heart rate, blood circulation rate and breathing increase above normal. In this way, plenty of oxygen passes into the blood and more oxygen and nutrients are carried to the tissues through the blood flow (Anılan et al., 2004; Aykaç & Köğçe, 2020; Burgaz-Uskan & Bozkuş, 2019). Children's brain tissues and body cells need higher levels of oxygen than adults (Yavuz, 2016). For this reason, care should be taken for children to play in the open air in order to have a healthy development.

While playing, during the play, children's movements such as walking, running and jumping are constantly repeated, so the body gets plenty of oxygen and accelerates muscle development, as it allows more blood to be pumped (Aykaç & Köğçe, 2020). Thanks to active plays, functions related to growth such as burning excess fat in the body, strengthening the muscles, and more regular functioning of the endocrine glands are provided (Baykoç- Dönmez, 2000). The sun rays exposed in outdoor plays provide the synthesis of vitamin D, toxic wastes are thrown out of the body through sweating (Yavuz, 2016). During playing, many psychomotor skills such as strength, balance, reaction speed, coordination, flexibility and agility are acquired. In addition, the ability to control large and small muscles and use them at the required speed during movement is gained (Aykaç & Köğçe, 2020).

Body makes its movements thanks to the muscles. Muscles perform learned movements more easily than unfamiliar ones. This accelerates muscle growth. Jumping, climbing, bouncing, jumping, running movements in play activities support the development of large muscle skills, while kneading materials, blocks, and plug-in and remove toys support

the development of small muscles.

Children gain coordination between parts of the body through play. Playing with kneading materials of different hardness, bead threading etc. activities improve children's hand-eye coordination. This situation affects the school readiness level of children. Poor hand-eye coordination can negatively affect academic achievement, as well as cause problems in performing daily activities.

Children can try a move they have never seen before or are afraid to try, by taking strength from their friends and teacher. Here, it is important that the teacher, knowing the child's capacity well, encourages the child in a realistic way, adapts the activity to his/her developmental level and makes it difficult gradually. In this way, both child's physical development and self-efficacy belief are supported. A child who gains self-efficacy in physical skills may generalize this to other areas.

The effects of play on the social development of the child:

Playing plays is the best way to make friends and develop social skills (Kuğuoğlu & Kürtüncü-Tanır, 2006; Yavuz, 2016). Because the play is the most natural agreement environment for children (Yörükoğlu, 2011). When children who do not know each other come together, they can start playing together without asking each other their names. Because the only language used by children living in different parts of the world, speaking different languages and living in different cultures is the language of play. Thanks to this language, they can easily understand and establish warm friendships.

Children who spend time with their peers become more sociable and make friends easily (Yavuz, 2016). Children learn to take the first step in establishing a relationship through play, to know how to participate in an ongoing activity, to maintain the relationship, to overcome rejection, to listen and watch others in the play environment, to understand the behavior of others, to overcome feelings of shyness and introversion, and to show reconciliation skills in conflict situations (Ateş, 2016; Sevinç, 2005).

Play enables children to learn from each other, children learn from each other's experiences, Play is a developmental opportunity to learn from others' perspectives, to recognize the existence of different ideas, and to develop acceptance and sensitivity to different ideas. Children become aware of their own strengths and the strengths of others during peer relationships, and similarly, children reach the maturity to develop and accept their weaknesses during peer relationships (Tuğrul, 2016).

Children acquire social rules and ethical values more easily through play. While enjoying the pleasure of being with other child or children, they realize that if they want to play with them, they must discover ways to get along with them (Cirhinlioğlu, 2011). They learn the rules of acting together with their friends (Tuğrul, 2016). In addition, children

learn social rules such as respecting others, protecting the rights of others and their own rights, undertaking assigned tasks, and being able to make decisions and implement them through play (Anılan et al., 2004). In summary while children are playing and having fun, they are learning skills that are foundational and will allow them to become socially-adjusted, and well-adapted adults (Majumdar, 2020).

Effects of play on the emotional development of the child

The healthy emotional development of the child depends on the trust he/she establishes with his/her parents. Especially the first two years after birth have critical importance in terms of gaining basic confidence. It is important to adequately meet the physical and emotional needs of the child in the formation of a sense of trust. Love and play are the most important emotional needs of the child.

According to Mabagala & Libent-Mabagala (2012) the play also provides opportunities for bonding. The plays that children play with their parents create a beautiful and warm moment between parent and child. It creates close relationships and bonds between children and their parents. Ties also lead to love and trust. Solter (2020) states that when parents play with their children, they meet their need for bonding and help them feel loved. According to Solter, play is one of the best ways to recharge the emotional energy of the child.

Quality time spent with children also supports the social and emotional development of children. Quality time is not when a parent and child share the same space or when a mother watches her child play with a toy. For a qualified union, parents must leave their world and enter the child's world, and let themselves be swayed to its rhythm. This is not only for the emotional development of the child, but also a good way for parents to relieve the stress and tiredness of the day. The best ways to do this are to play plays with children, read interactive books, take nature walks, observe nature together, using natural materials at home. You don't have to go to the forest for this. Going to a nearby park and collecting leaves, cones, stones, branches is enough to play with. Different colors of sensory materials can be prepared by dripping jams of different colors into the sour yoghurt at home. A great playground can be created by making bridges and castles from a sheet, table and chairs. This will also provide children with different perspectives and flexible thinking skills

One of the most important functions of play in terms of children's emotional development is that the play activity is therapeutic because it is natural. In particular, with the influence of psychoanalytic theory, the claim that there can be an implicit representation of reality in plays, just as in other experiences (dreams, slips of the tongue, etc.) (İnan- Kaya, 2018).

Freud (1920) was the first to argue that the child experiences his emotions in his/her plays. He saw the relationship between fantasy behaviors and plays and said that children

experience their unconscious desires and difficulties while playing (Özdoğan, 2020). Freud argued that play reflects the inner world and emotional life of the child. He argued that play has a therapeutic effect, that the child can express his/her anxieties and fears through play, and that play has both a preventive and a solving effect on the child's emotional problems. Freud used symbolic play to understand the child's conscious or subconscious fears and wishes (Aydın, 2008; Teke & Avşaroğlu, 2020).

Even if children have excellent parents, from time to time they may experience feelings such as anger towards their peers and disappointment towards adults. Even being unable to assemble a toy can make kids nervous. Children need to get rid of the tension caused by the negative stimuli they receive from their environment in their daily lives. Especially the limited cognitive and language development skills of young children make it difficult for children to express their anger, anger and disappointment. Children who cannot express their emotions through play or crying have to throw out their accumulated emotions over time by having tantrums. In the play environment, the child freely expresses the deep feelings that disturb him in an emotionally safe environment. Especially children who have experienced a traumatic event try to overcome this trauma by reflecting it in their plays.

As has been noted by Fillizoat (2020), children have the ability to express everything simply through games that they cannot state otherwise because they do not have the courage, are not aware of or do not have enough knowledge of the details of the problem they are experiencing.

While children have the opportunity to express their negative feelings such as sadness, anxiety, enmity, and jealousy in the play environment, they often feel relieved by getting rid of these negative emotions (Cırhınlıoğlu, 2011; Koçyiğit et al., 2007). They find the opportunity to live without suppressing these feelings (Koçyiğit et al., 2007). With fantasy plays, children can face situations that cause anxiety more easily, and they can change the direction and shape of the results that cause them stress to a form that gives them less or no discomfort (Barnett, 1990; Duman, 2010).

According to Tuğrul (2016), children get rid of tension and conflicts by transferring their emotional needs in their inner world to objects, situations or friends in their plays. To cope with negative experiences, play offers the child the opportunity to rehearse. In this context, play is the safest way to improve children's emotional lives.

According to Fillizoat (2020), playing with children by paying attention to their emotions and by interacting with them has a positive effect on children's stress hormones. Moreover, Fillizoat maintains that children whose play needs are met by their parents can cope with challenges more easily when they encounter difficulties and stressful situations during the day. Particularly, starting the day with a game can significantly reduce the restlessness, whining or crying that may follow.

The child experiences and makes sense of all emotions while playing. As a result of this interpretation, he/she directs his/her relationship with other people. As a result of the events that take place during the playing, he/she learns to control his/her emotional reactions by experiencing all the emotions between pleasure and pain, such as happiness, sadness, anger, surprise, in his/her inner world. This control skill is not a situation that can be realized immediately, but has a long development process (Aykaç & Köğçe, 2020; Bardak & Topaç, 2019).

Dramatizing and playing emotional reactions also helps the child to know him/herself. The child is separated from egocentrism through playing. Play also develops self-confidence (MEB, 2007). In addition, while children experience spiritual satisfaction with the pleasure of achieving and sharing something in play, their self-confidence increases in order to achieve greater success (Gökşen, 2014).

Play helps the child to discharge the aggressive impulse, which is one of the most powerful and natural impulses (Yavuzer, 2005; Yörükoğlu, 2011).

Tören (2011) also revealed in her study that children can control and cope with many emotions they feel during playing. Arslan & Dilci (2018), in their study to determine the effects of children's plays on the developmental areas of children, from past to present, revealed that children's plays generally contribute positively to the development of children's physical skills, especially to character development, to form effective social relationships, and to their emotional and cognitive development.

Yatmaz et al. (2021) investigated the effects of traditional plays that are played together and require sharing on the social-emotional development of children aged 3-6, and found that these traditional plays improved children's social and emotional skills by enabling them to release their energies more easily, expressing their feelings and thoughts more easily, improving their self-confidence, increasing their communication skills, and improving cooperation and solidarity.

Effects of play on the language development of the child

Particularly dramatic and symbolic plays played from an early age are helpful for the child to both recognize sounds and intonations, and develop their ability to use them. Especially rhythmic and harmonious children's literature products such as children's songs, nursery rhymes, rhymes, finger plays and poems make significant contributions to expressive and receptive language skills (Bardak & Topaç, 2019). As children often have the opportunity to express their feelings and thoughts verbally by engaging in pairworks and dialogues while playing, they increase their vocabulary (Aykaç & Köğçe, 2020). They also improve their ability to use language and thought effectively.

Children learn all the structures of language through play. Therefore, play is also important

in terms of learning the basic concepts. They conceptualize objects, situations, words about people during playing (Tuğrul, 2016).

Studies on children's language development and communication skills have shown that children's plays have an effect on language development. Vygotsky, one of these researchers, said that children derive meanings from objects and actions through play, and as a result, symbolic representations are formed. According to Vygotsky, play and communication create a “zone of proximal development” between the skills that children have at the moment and their potential level. Children can build on their learning through play and communication. While doing this, language has a very important place in relations with adults who are more experienced than themselves (Duman, 2010).

British linguist Guy Cook notes the “predominance of play in all areas of human life, language in particular.” The feeling for rhythm, rhyme, assonance, consonance, and even grammatical structure emerges through play according to Cook, as learners while enjoying in the sounds and comforting society that go into making words and building vocabulary (Eberle, 2011).

According to Smith & Pellegrini (2013) research shows that children improve their verbal skills, increase their vocabulary and improve their language comprehension skills during play.

Gözalın & Koçak (2014) conducted a study to investigate the effect of "play-Based Attention Training Program" on the language skills of 5 and 6 year old children. They implemented the program. As a result of the research, they concluded that the "Play-Based Attention Training Program" was effective in increasing the language skill levels of 5 and 6 year old children.

Effects of play on the brain development of the child

Childhood is critical for brain development (Tuğrul, 2010). But as Golinkoff et al., (2017) stated, filling children with information does not encourage brain development.

The thing that most affects brain development is the healthy relationship established between the child and the parent. Play offers unique opportunities to establish and develop a healthy relationship between parent and child. Physical contact between the parent and the child, especially during playing, causes the secretion of the oxytocin hormone. The oxytocin hormone helps to form deep and lasting bonds between parent and child.

According to Uludüz (2019) American researchers, in a study they conducted in 2017, found that the brains of babies who had more physical emotional contact with their parents gave stronger responses. It has been determined that there is a greater increase in gray matter activity, which allows nerve cells to function in these babies. On the other

hand, with hugging, hormones that are effective in many issues from brain development to nutrition of babies are stimulated, and hugging also provides lifelong emotional and empathy development in babies.

Playing has the effect of activating the development of all functions of the brain. Because while children play, they take actions simultaneously, they use their multiple senses effectively, they are in motion, they use their language, they are in the application themselves, they enjoy, rest, etc. All these opportunities provided by play mean that the brain is used holistically, which is directly It is extremely important for the development of the child. The pleasurable feature of play allows the brain to be stimulated holistically with its features based on interaction, active participation, and thinking. Touch, sounds, colors and visuals mean the stimulation of the child's senses, which is important in terms of stimulating the synaptic connections in the brain (Tuğrul, 2010).

By enabling the formation of new connections in the prefrontal cortex, play supports the development of executive functions such as problem solving, reasoning and planning, cognitive flexibility, self-control, and self-regulation (Golinkoff et al., 2017).

During active plays, brain uses connections it uses to process learning in reading, writing, and math. It facilitates learning. Oxygen is supplied to the brain through active plays, and oxygen is essential for learning. As a result of the increase in the amount of oxygen in the blood cells going to the brain, attention and focusing skills increase (Bencik-Kangal, 2021).

Effects of play on the cognitive development of the child

Scientists such as Donald Winnicott, Jean Piaget, Lev Vygotsky, and Jérôme Bruner argue that play is effective in the development of a child's cognitive skills. According to Yavuzer (2005) plays have an important place in children's physical, emotional, social, language and especially cognitive development, because children learn to think and explore through play.

Children can try a move they have never seen before or are afraid to try, by taking strength from their friends and teacher.

Play develops versatile and flexible cognitive abilities. According to Golinkoff et al. (2017), play is to a child what petrol is to a car. Every mental activity that children participate in derives its strength from here. According to Tuğrul (2016), play is the most natural practice area for children to make logical inferences

By establishing relationships between the experience and knowledge gained through play, children gain the ability to use this knowledge to solve the problems they encounter later (Burgaz-Uskan & Bozkuş, 2019). The richness of play and the complexity in the

structure of the play develop children's convergent thinking skills. Children who play roles in the play use materials in richer forms and meanings. Again, children who play roles frequently can exhibit more flexible attitudes towards negative situations coming from outside (Duman, 2010). Sutton-Smith (1967) states that children's plays develop children's representation skills. According to Sutton-Smith, exploratory plays develop the child's analytical thinking skills, the plays played in the form of trial and error develop the child's guessing skills, the roles that the child plays with the imitation, and finally, the construction plays develop the structural thinking skills of the children (Duman, 2010). According to Piaget, children should be free to their wishes and preferences while playing. The child's setting up his own play and turning to objects according to his curiosity and interests support the cognitive development of children (Kaya, 2021). In play experiences, combining the sense of touch with the senses of vision, hearing, taste and smell helps build cognitive skills.

Vygotsky sees the benefits of play in terms of cognitive development for the preschool child as a prototype of the learning and development that will occur during a successful education in the following years (Duman, 2010). Through plays, children develop higher-order thinking capacities and executive function skills, which form the basis of learning complex academic skills such as literacy (Lockhart, 2010; Öztürk & Aksu, 2019).

Cognitive functions such as working memory, self-regulation (e.g., being aware of and controlling her emotions and behaviors), internal language or “self-talk,” and the ability to organize, concentrating attention, plan, strategize, prioritize, starting and maintaining a task, ability to move between multitasking and perform other skills that determine later success in school. In fact these cognitive skills are all part of what we call executive function — the cognitive abilities that control and regulate other behavior. Play helps young children develop these abilities (Lockhart, 2010).

Gmitrova & Gmitrov (2003) studied two forms of management of the playing process: (a) teacher-directed play with simultaneous involvement of all children in the classroom, where the teacher plays the dominant role in the education process directing children's activity, and (b) child-directed play in various small groups. Twenty-six observations were performed on 51 children in two mixed-age classrooms. The mean age of the children was 4.6 years, with age span from 3 to 6 years. They found a significant increase in cognitive manifestations during direction of the playing process in groups compared with frontal management of the lesson which is related with better employment of the powerful education engine of the free-play children.

Türkoğlu & Uslu (2016) revealed that the "Play-Based Cognitive Development Program" was effective in the cognitive development of children and its effect was permanent, as a result of their research that examined the effect of "Play-Based Cognitive Development Program" (GBCDP) on the cognitive development of 60-72 month-old children.

The relationship between play and learning

There are two complementary views on the importance of play. In "just play", which is one of these views, play is only important because it is a play. Playing itself is a value for the child. Child's play is a natural part of a child's childhood. He/she lives to play. From this point of view, play is the meaning of life for the child. Child maintains his/her existence through play. Play is the need, interest and right of children. Another view that emphasizes the importance of play is that play is an act of learning. It is important to place the play at the source of the child's learning (Tuğrul, 2010).

Play is the child's learning language (Tuğrul, 2016) and the most natural learning environment (Yörükoğlu, 2011). Play that emerges naturally and spontaneously in a child's life is the best way for a child to get to know the world. Plays help children to understand their environment and discover the world they live in (İnan-Kaya, 2018). According to Yörükoğlu, the play is an experiment room where the child tests what he/she hears and sees, and reinforces what he/she has learned. In short, the child playing is in his/her own little world. He/she is the ruler of the world him/herself (Yörükoğlu, 2011). Due to these features, the child is too much to be excluded from education. Human nature and development determine both the act of play and the formal and informal form of education. Therefore, it can be said that an understanding of education that does not emphasize playing is at risk of being outside the naturalness of the child. In this framework, thinkers and practitioners discussing child education often refer to the importance of play in education (İnan-Kaya, 2018). Drawing attention to the importance that should be given to play as an inseparable part of education, Plato, in his work titled "Republic", states, "...Even if what is forced on the body is not bad, what is forced into the head will not be remembered... Then you will not use force on happy young children. You will make education become a play for them. In this way, you can better understand what they are naturally suitable for." (Erol & Erol, 2018; İnan-Kaya, 2018). Gazzali said that the child should be given the opportunity to play whatever type of play he/she likes. According to al-Ghazali, the child only has the desire to play. If the child is completely banned from the play and only clings to the lesson and learning, his/her heart dies, his/her intelligence is canceled, he/she will always be troubled (Yavuzer, 2005). Choosing playing as the cornerstone of teaching and learning in the educational process is based on the educational philosophy of Jean Jacques Rousseau. According to Rousseau, education should not be on paper. The best learning is based on experience. It is okay for children to play plays all day, it is the activity that prepares them for life (İnan-Kaya, 2018). It follows from these views of Rousseau that one of the best learning methods for children is play.

In 1693 the empiricist philosopher John Locke, for example, insisted that learning to read "must never be imposed as a task, nor made a trouble." And to remove the fatigue and punishment, he engage attention that "dice and play-things, with the letters on them to teach children the alphabet by playing" would "make this kind of learning a sport."

(Dewey, 1930; Eberle, 2011). John Locke has guided educators in arranging learning environments by saying "if you want the lessons to be more attractive, take advantage of the child's play instincts at early ages" (Kaya, 2021). Two and a half centuries later, Locke's American heir, John Dewey, also took pains to think the relationship of necessary work to play where learning is concerned, and expressed the feeling. "Where something approaching drudgery or the need of accomplishing externally imposed tasks exists," Dewey said, "the demand for play persists. . . . No demand of human nature is more urgent or less to be escaped." (Dewey, 1930; Eberle, 2011). Dewey, which is unique to the nature of the child, on the other hand, allows him/her to be a part of the society, and is a means of acquiring values while socializing, should be a part of education (İnan-Kaya, 2018). Dewey also argued that it is important for the child to be included in the learning environment by doing and experiencing. According to Dewey, such an environment should be prepared with plays (Koçyiğit et al., 2007). According to Fröbel, play; It is the core that determines all life. child playing games is in need. Therefore, everything can be better taught to the child through play. Child provides physical and mental development through play. Information acquired during the game settles better in the child (Asımoğlu, 2012). Donald Winnicott, Jean Piaget, Lev Vygotsky, and Jérôme Bruner are among the scientists who advocate that games should be used for effective and permanent learning.

One of the main features of the preschool education program in many parts of the world and in Turkey is that it is play-based. In the Pre-School Education Program, "Play is the most appropriate learning method for children in this age group. "All activities should be organized play-based." These statements show that playing is described as both an activity and a method (Bardak & Topaç, 2019).

In the interviews Adak-Özdemir & Ramazan (2014) had with preschool teachers, teachers stated that when there is no play time in the daily schedule, children face many problems ranging from developmental problems to negative moods, and play-based learning environments are of great importance in freely reflecting the child's self and potential.

While playing allows many methods such as observation, experimentation, and problem-solving to be used together, it is possible to consider the interests, wishes and needs of children while planning the learning process. However, playing makes it possible to use all the senses effectively. Children who activate all their senses through play internalize knowledge and skills. Thus, more effective and permanent learning takes place.

Children acquire new knowledge through play, use their old knowledge and restructure their knowledge by rearranging it. The play method is in a sense the cement of the educational process, with this feature of connecting old and new knowledge. In the process of learning new information and synthesizing it with old information, the playing has an important motivating role in activating the relevant units in the brain (Bardak & Topaç, 2019; Kuşuoğlu et al., 2006; Tuğrul, 2016).

Play is based on the principle of reusing what is learned during playing. In other words, new concepts and rules are learned during play and it is possible to continue playing thanks to these new learnings. Therefore, motivation and participation are high while playing, which ensures that the learning that takes place while playing is permanent. For example, teaching numbers in a foreign language based on the play of hopscotch enables the child to learn new concepts in a play they know and on the other hand, to become more proficient while playing that play (İnan-Kaya, 2018).

While playing, children discover, try, research and question people, objects and events (Aksoy & Dere-Çiftçi, 2020). Children actively use cognitive skills during play, contributing to memory and recording processes in the brain (Bardak & Topaç, 2019).

Play also encourages important learning dispositions, engagement and participation and the assembling of different cognitive processes (<https://theeducationhub.org>).

Play also important to the development of that most specialized skill of linguistic intelligence—writing. (<https://theeducationhub.org>).

Young children learn better using multiple senses at the same time. Sensory plays are the best learning tools for children as they include activities that stimulate all senses. Playing with easily accessible sensory materials such as soil, mud, dough, yoghurt, legumes, and different fabrics enables the formation of new synaptic connections in their brains. The more often the synaptic connections in the brain are used, the stronger they become, and when they are not used, they are destroyed. The number of synaptic connections affects learning. More synaptic connections provide better information transfer.

According to Butcher & Pletcher (2016) as stated in Early childhood educators cannot exaggerate the importance of sensory play in the educational process. It is the basis of all the skills children will use in school learning to read, write and solve math and science problems. Once a child has these experiences, they are able to draw upon the body memory and cognitive memory of their experiences when faced with new situations. Also, the process of observation is a skill in and of itself. Keen observation skills give a child an advantage in school and throughout life. This process continues through the child's whole life and is the same process adults use to discover new medications or comprehend the nature of matter at the molecular level. "By providing students with materials that they can physically manipulate, play with and explore, teachers help them learn more about the world and develop crucial skills that they will utilize later in life," said Caitrin Blake of Concordia University Nebraska.

According to Tuğrul (2016), the process of learning through playing consists of generating ideas, researching, examining, observing, participating, and experimenting instead of rote reminders. Also Process and action are directed by the child rather than the teacher. This increases the permanence of what has been learned.

Children need to practice and develop previously learned skills before they can learn new skills. Plays provide opportunities for children to practice and develop these skills.

Highly active plays help children master their impulses and concentrate on important things at school. In his study, Pellegrini revealed that giving school-age children play breaks maximized their attention levels in school tasks involving thinking (Bencik-Kangal, 2021).

In order for learning to take place, children need to feel safe in the learning environment. According to Tuğrul the psychological climate of the learning environment directly affects the learning efficiency of the child. Organizing the necessary learning environments that will determine a child's learning styles will not only affect the learning success of the children, but also make them feel safe and happy emotionally and socially (Tuğrul, 2016). One of the important factors affecting learning is anxiety. In cases of intense anxiety, normal thinking activities do not occur. Anxiety prevents learning from happening. In these cases, playing plays with children can be effective in reducing their anxiety. Because play activities reduce the level of stress and anxiety by reducing the release of cortisol.

The data reaching the brains of children who do not feel safe is sent to the brain stem (cerebellum), where more automatic movements occur, instead of being transmitted to the neocortex via the thalamus and amygdala in the limbic system, where emotions are processed. Faced with such a situation, the person tends to exhibit behaviors that will ensure self-security instead of producing high-level thoughts (Keleş & Çepni, 2006).

Based on these views, it is possible to say that the play that contributes to the holistic development of the child is a multidimensional phenomenon. In the books written by many thinkers and educators from the past to the present, it is emphasized that the play is an inseparable part of education. When teachers plan their activities as much as possible, giving wide space to plays and allowing children to start the plays will keep their innate desire to explore and learn, as well as ensure that what is learned is permanent.

Children want to direct their play and get great pleasure from it. They are uncomfortable with adults directing plays. Adults should immerse themselves in the rhythm of the play and the child as much as possible.

Although what happens during playing is not real for us, it is real for the child. The child really lives. Therefore, when the child prepares a pizza in the oven for the adult, that pizza is really hot. The adult needs to pretend to eat a really hot pizza while eating the pizza. Otherwise, the child cannot fully enjoy playing.

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