

**Lesson  
No 11**

**Play  
and  
Early Learning**

### SUMMARY

Play is universal and all of us agree that play in early childhood is children's path to uncovering, discovering and learning about the secrets of the physical social world. During childhood, new skills are developed or learned through different play activities. It will ensure proper cognitive, socio-emotional and physical development. Play lead to sound and holistic development of children.

In this lesson, you learnt the importance of play in the early childhood years in the early learning of children and how it will boost their further development.

### DEFINING PLAY

- ✚ It is a creative process in which a child uses the mind and body free from externally imposed goals.
- ✚ Chosen act or engagement with objects, peers or just with themselves.

### DEFINITIONS OF PLAY

- ❖ Play consists of responses repeated purely for functional pleasure **Piaget**
- ❖ Play has highly serious and of deep significance, not something trivial. **Froebel**
- ❖ Joyful, spontaneous, and creative activity in which man finds his **Ross**
- ❖ Instinctive practice, without serious intent of activities that will later be essential to life. **Gross**
- ❖ A free, self contained activity that has an inherent goal, that is initiated, and directed by intrinsic motivation, and that provides satisfaction from the activity of playing itself **Stern**
- ❖ Resembles the unending activity of the flowing stream or the growing tree. Play is the work of the child. **Montessori**
- ❖ Any activity that is directed towards an end other than enjoyment cannot be rightly called play. **Hurlock**

#### IMPORTANCE OF PLAY

- It facilitates child growth and development.
- Play is the natural method of teaching children.
- During play children gets opportunity to
  - Exercise their limbs
  - Learn new words
  - Interact with peers
  - Exchange ideas
  - Share their thoughts and feelings.
  - Learn how to work
  - Learn how to obey others
  - Learn how to be disciplined
  - Increase their power of reasoning, imagination and thinking

#### VALUES OF PLAY

- Play is a universal phenomenon.
- It benefits children in their all-round development and growth.
- The most important values of play are:
  - Physical value
  - Social value
  - Cognitive value
  - Moral value
  - Therapeutic value
  - Recreational value
  - Educational value

## TYPES OF PLAY

There are different opinions by different psychologists about the different nature of play and how it helps children to develop skills and interest in learning.

| Piaget (1945-1962)  | Smilansky (1968)  | Parten (1929)  |
|---|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Practice Play (0-2 years)</li> <li>• Symbolic Play (2-7 years)</li> <li>• Games with Rules (7-11 years)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Functional Play (First stage)</li> <li>• Constructive Play</li> <li>• Dramatic Play</li> <li>• Games with Rules</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unoccupied Play (0-2 years)</li> <li>• Solitary Play</li> <li>• Onlooker Play (2.5 -3.5 years)</li> <li>• Parallel Play (2.5 -3.5 years)</li> <li>• Associative Play (3-4 years)</li> <li>• Cooperative Play</li> </ul> |

## HOW PLAY DEVELOPS

### Build Your Understanding

- ✚ Play varies with age
- ✚ Play changes according to the biological, social, emotional and intellectual competencies.
- ✚ There are certain patterns and sequence in play behaviour that children display as they grow.

| Ages 0 to 2 Years   | Ages 2 to 5 Years   | Ages 5 to 12 Years  |
|---|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sensor motor Play - repetition of sensory or motor activity</li> <li>• Play with Objects - starts at age 4 to 5 months</li> <li>• Symbolic Play - starts after the first year</li> <li>• Social Play - starts after the one and half year</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• During this period, all play becomes more purposeful.</li> <li>• The size of the group for social play increases</li> <li>• Selective Play and play mates according to child's interest</li> <li>• Solitary play, Parallel play, and Dramatic play are common</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The play pattern becomes more systematic and regulated.</li> <li>• play becomes logical and rule dominated</li> <li>• starts to play competitive and serious games with rules</li> </ul> |

### SETTING UP AN ENVIRONMENT CONDUCTIVE FOR PLAY AND EARLY LEARNING

With the understanding of play and importance of play in children's learning; it is important to understand the importance of environment in which child plays.

- ✚ Environment should be attractive and accessible, which compel children to engage and lead to play.
- ✚ Absence of sensory material and just empty space will not be rich in promoting play.
- ✚ Understanding of children's

### HOW TO DESIGN A CONDUCTIVE ENVIRONMENT FOR PLAY

The main purpose of play is holistic development of the child, environment should be appropriate to meet the purpose. The points that one should keep in mind while planning are-

- ✚ Ease of supervision and guidance
- ✚ Attention to safety
- ✚ Maximum provision of space for free movement
- ✚ Cater to spheres of interest
- ✚ Satisfy the needs of the group
- ✚ Satisfy the needs of the child individually
- ✚ Activities which are special should be arranged in a readily available place
- ✚ Similar activities may be kept at one place

- patterns of play can provide an environment rich in play.
- ✚ Proper organization and arrangement of play materials and other equipment influences children's activity and play behaviour.
  - ✚ Open and spacious places allow children free movement
  - ✚ Shelves and furniture which are used for playing should be of appropriate size and height
  - ✚ Materials should be easily accessible for all children irrespective of their age, gender and height
- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <p><b>Indoor Arrangements</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✚ Dolls Corner/Dramatic Area</li> <li>✚ Blocks or Construction Area</li> <li>✚ Library, books and puzzle area</li> <li>✚ Art Area</li> <li>✚ Discovery corner</li> <li>✚ Music and movement corner</li> </ul> | <p><b>Outdoor Arrangements</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✚ Outdoor play area also needs to be divided for particular play activities.</li> <li>✚ The position of certain equipment can be rearranged according to the seasonal changes like winter and summer as per the needs and convenience of the players.</li> </ul> |
|--|--|

**Certain play activities can be performed both indoors and outdoors.**

**PLAY FURTHER CAN BE DIVIDED AS GROUP AND INDIVIDUAL PLAY**

|                         |   |   |   |
|-------------------------|---|---|---|
| <b>INDIVIDUAL PLAY</b>  | <b>GROUP PLAY</b>   |   |   |
|                         | Play groups are formed on the basis of children's shared interests, backgrounds or activities of the same age and gender.                 |   |   |
| Child play individually | <b>Large Group</b>  | <b>Medium Group</b>   | <b>Small Group</b>  |
|                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✚ formed for teaching, storytelling, music, dance and similar activities eg Whole Class</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✚ larger group can be divided into two or three groups containing 10-12 children</li> <li>✚ helps for guidance and supervision</li> <li>✚ Promotes proper utilization of space and material</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✚ contains less than six children</li> <li>✚ individual attention and guidance</li> <li>✚ separate areas to play for different groups</li> </ul> |

**PLAY-BASED ACTIVITIES FOR ALL DOMAINS**

|                  |                   |   |
|------------------|-------------------|---|
| <b>COGNITIVE</b> | <b>Skills</b>     | proper use of senses, concept formation, good and bad, identification,  |
|                  | <b>Activities</b> | puzzles, story completion, picture completion, science experiments, memory games, stories, making patterns, recalling of sequential activities etc.   |
| <b>LANGUAGE</b>  | <b>Skills</b>     | reading, writing, oral expression (speaking), listening skills and vocabulary   |
|                  | <b>Activities</b> | use of paper, pencils, slates, sand, crayons, paints and brushes, picture books, magazines, newspapers. telling stories, role play, creative drama, puppet play, doll play, Listening games, auditory discrimination, following directions by listening and stories |
| <b>AFFECTIVE</b> | <b>Skills</b>     | develop interest, attitudes, appreciate beauty and internalize values, how to share, take turns, social values  |

|                    |                   |  |
|--------------------|-------------------|--|
| <b>PSYCHOMOTOR</b> | <b>Activities</b> | dramatizing stories, singing songs, reciting poems in rhythm, dressing up dolls imaginatively, speaking about something, group celebrations and organized festivities, cleaning the work place, celebrating birthdays, being rewarded for good work              |
|                    | <b>Skills</b>     | develop fine and gross motor skills, development of physical and large muscle coordination, inculcate accuracy, precision, concentration   |
|                    | <b>Activities</b> | pushing-pulling, throwing, catching, pedaling, crawling, jumping, stretching, walking, rocking, swinging, sliding, rolling, hopping and kicking, free hand moving exercises, thread printing, leaf or vegetable printing, working with paper, clay, sand and mud |



**ROLE OF TEACHER**

- As an observer
- As a facilitator
- As a reviewer
- As an organiser

**EVALUATE YOURSELF**

- Q1.** What do you understand about the term ‘Play’? How it is important for all-round growth and development of the child.
- Q2.** Discuss different types of play mentioned by different psychologist with special focus on how it helps children to develop skills and interest in learning.

**PRACTICE YOUR KNOWLEDGE**

In the present situation when children are not allowed to play outside due to pandemic COVID 19. Suggest some plays which can be arranged at home and in online teaching for holistic development of the child