

# THE IMPORTANCE TO PLAYING IN CHILDHOOD

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## ABSTRACT

This article explains the importance of playing in childhood, especially in early years, with young kids. Vigotsky (1984), Piaget (1973), Winnicott (1971) and Kishimoto (2010), are the basis of this article. Play is a very important ally in teacher's work. This practice is helpful for social and motor development skills, be in nursery or school. Handle a toy or play some game who needs effort, like crawl to touch the toy or raise the arms indicates motor efforts and improvement in his motor skills. Besides that it's necessary focus when we choose the toy or game. What we need with this game? What ability we want develop? Planning is very important at this phase: is suitable for the kid's age and their capacity? The kid have the minimum to handle the toy? Some issues need to be consider when we planning tis kind of activity: the size (because the kid can swallow pieces), if

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is toxic and have string who can asphyxiate the children. The kid will be progress passing by external object perception, possessiveness, function discover, rules and social interaction.

**KEY-WORDS:** Games in childhood. Social skills. Motor skills.

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

This article aims to show the benefits of playing in life and at school, which includes aspects of child development according to the studies of Jean Piaget (1973) and Vygotsky (1984) from theories that value a child and understand that the process of learning and knowledge take place through cognitive construction and also in social interaction. And how can we use this playful interaction in the child's teaching? Without development? The hypothesis raised is that the game instigates the child's interest, which at each step of the playful development will bring clarifications to those responsible for the development of creative thinking, very important for the health of the children.

The participation of Jean Piaget (1973) and Vygotsky (1984) and their studies was something fundamental because it is part of a differentiated pedagogical practice because it provides a renewal of thought, perfecting and adding new ideas through the experiences of educators in the classroom. Winnicott (1975) and Kishimoto (2010) are vital authors for the explanation as well.

In the educational context, toys and games are something that is present not only for the purpose of entertainment and distraction for children, but also with the objective of being a fundamental factor in the child's development by stimulating physical and mental skills and being a facilitator for the child to establish social bonds with his fellowmen.

Play constitutes an incentive to new skills and the search for new explanations, as it is always more pleasant for children to work on imaginary and hypothetical situations, and allows create and respect new rules – to play alone or with friends.

The game is a tool that contributes to body, affective and cognitive formation and, because it has a playful characteristic, it becomes more attractive and efficient in its development, preparing its intelligence and character.

Through games and play in Early Childhood Education in a meaningful way, it allows meeting the needs and peculiar characteristics of each child so that the school plays an important role in this aspect, which is to offer a favorable space for games associated with learning situations, contributing to development in a pleasant and healthy way.

Thus, this article aims to highlight the importance of theoretical thinking to reformulate Early Childhood Education and make the game an instrument for the inclusion of children; games and play are approached in the present study as a stimulus for learning and make the child develop his critical sense, ability to think and create.

## **2. PLAYING**

The game may have a light connotation in some cultures, but for pedagogy and psychology it is extremely important. Vigotsky (1984) and Piaget (1973) are authors who support the practice of playing as part of the child's development.

“The game is, therefore, under its essential forms of sensorimotor exercise and symbolism, an assimilation of the real to its own activity, providing it with its necessary food and transforming the real in function of the multiple needs of the self. For this reason, active methods of educating children require that children be provided with suitable material, so that, by playing, they will come to assimilate the intellectual realities that, without this, remain outside child intelligence” (PIAGET, 1976 apud ALVES, 2010).

Play are essential for the child discovered who he is. It is through play that the individual will be able to unravel facets of his personality and, also, flaws that can pass unnoticed, in this case, motor processes.

The pedagogue, an agent who monitors the course of the game, can find out a lot of information when analyzing the act of playing with his students. And,

by realizing what happens, can plan actions that help improve the child's development. In this field we talk about issues such as social interaction with colleagues, leadership profile, motor skills, etc.

Through the act of playing, important attitudes such as respect, understanding of rules, socialization and tactics are developed - items that enable daily maintenance with the use of toys and games. Childhood is a stage for experimenting with child behavior and how it will shape the adult personality.

“In education, the use of a program that stimulates psychomotor activity, especially through play, allows the child's psychomotor performance while playing to reach levels that only intrinsic motivation can achieve. At the same time, it favors concentration, attention, engagement and imagination. As a consequence, the child becomes more calm, relaxed and learns to think, stimulating his intelligence. In this context, we need to clarify the points of contact with reality, so that the game is meaningful to the child. By observing the performance of children with their games, we can assess the level of their motor and cognitive development. In playfulness, their potentials are manifested and, by observing them, we can enrich their learning, providing through games the "nutrients" of their development. In other words, playing and playing the child will have the opportunity to develop skills that are indispensable for their future training and professional performance, such as: attention, affectivity, concentration and other perceptual psychomotor skills” (ALVES and BIANCHIN, 2010, pg. 3).

As Alves and Bianchin (2010) clarify, the game needs to be meaningful for the child. There needs to be a previous study to define the correct game and what the strategy will be. In addition, it is important to know what the focus of the activity is: exploring motor skills? Sociability? Or playfulness alone? Regardless of the choice, there is a need to keep in mind what we intend with that action.

The child, even small, knows many things: he makes decisions, chooses what he wants to do interacts with people, expresses what he knows how to do and shows, in his gestures, in a glance, a word, how he is able to understand the world. (KISHIMOTO, 2010, p. 1)

The child, even if on a totally instinctual level, begins to absorb the world from the beginning of his life. For this reason, the stimuli presented to it are essential for a full development.

### 3. PLAYING IN EARLY CHILDHOOD

Playing in early childhood is very important. Winnicott (1971), explains that the manipulation of toys as something external by the baby is already extremely important. The baby begins to perceive his world and that not everything is part of him. It leaves the phase of knowing your body (detailed analysis of the hands, fingers and what they are for) to evolve into a new phase: the toy. Winnicott (1971) uses the expression “not-me” to explain this baby-object relationship. And another very interesting phenomenon begins: the affective relationship with the chosen object.

For the child, playing is the main daily activity. It is important because it gives her the power to make decisions, express feelings and values, to know herself, others and the world, to repeat pleasurable actions, to share, to express her individuality and identity through different languages, to use her body, the senses, the movements, to solve problems and create. (KISHIMOTO, 2010, p. 1)

The possessiveness that the child develops with the toy is indicative of the way he expresses affection. With careful observation it is possible to verify that he is in the correct stages of emotional development. For example: if in contact with other babies at the daycare center, there is an exchange of toys, or does it not allow colleagues to touch? If the baby approaches the others for a game? Of course, this will depend on the child's age. The youngest, with a few months, may behave more distantly, even so it is possible to assess behavioral habits. And adjust whatever is necessary with care.

Another aspect that we need to take into consideration is the type of toy that will be given to the child. As discussed earlier, there is a need for planning according to the child's age and the central objective of the activity.

The selection of toys involves several aspects: being durable, attractive, suitable and appropriate for different uses; ensure safety and expand opportunities for playing; attend to racial diversity, not induce prejudices of gender, social class and ethnicity; not to encourage violence; include diversity of materials and types - technological toys, industrialized, handmade and produced by children, teachers and parents. (KISHIMOTO, 2010, p. 2)

When the focus is on very small <sup>3</sup>and small children<sup>4</sup>, toys should be resistant, without small parts that can be ingested, non-toxic, without sharp edges, washable, without cords that can wrap around the neck and cause suffocation and toy duty, according to Kishimoto (2010), to be twice as big as the child's fist. This, because if the kid take it to his mouth, do not have the risk of ingestion. This care is valid when analyzing the oral phase, which occurs in the baby's first year of life, listed by Freud. “[..] the mouth is the right destination for everything that is close to the baby”, explains Couto (2017).

We are not going to go into the Freudian details of oral fixation, but of the need to explore orally that object that is not part of itself. Rescuing Winnicott's speech (1975) about the analysis of the little one about oneself and, later, about the “not-me”, the process of exploration remains the same: as well as exploring the body with the hands and feet in the mouth, sucking fingers, for example. The same is true with the toy. That is why it is very important to choose the best and the biggest one.

- “Interaction with the teacher - Interactive play with the teacher is essential for the knowledge of the social world and to give greater wealth, complexity and quality to the games. Especially for babies, playful actions that involve shifts of talking or gesturing, hiding and finding objects are essential.
- Interaction with children - Playing with other children ensures the production, conservation and recreation of the children's play repertoire. This type of culture is known as children's culture or playful culture.
- Interaction with toys and materials - It is essential for the knowledge of the world of objects. The diversity of shapes, textures, colors, sizes, thicknesses, smells and other specifics of the object are important for the child to understand this world.
- Interaction between child and environment - The organization of the environment can facilitate or hinder the performance of games and interactions between children and adults. The physical environment reflects the conceptions that the institution assumes to educate the child.
- Interactions (relationships) between the institution, the family and the child - The relationship between the institution and the family enables knowledge and inclusion, in the pedagogical project, of popular culture

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<sup>3</sup> According to the Base Nacional Curricular (BNCC), very young children are from 1 year and 7 months to 3 years and 11 months.

<sup>4</sup> According to the BNCC, Young children are from 4 years to 5 years and 11 months.

and the toys and games that the child knows" (KISHIMOTO, 2010, p. 2).

Playing from the beginning of a child's life is of vital importance for a full and healthy life. Kishimoto (2010) relates above the interaction with the teacher and colleagues, dimensioning the social life and the reproduction of the child's playful repertoire. The environment is also considered whether at school / day care or in the family environment.

#### 4. **SOCIAL AND MOTOR SKILLS BENEFITS**

The act of play generates many benefits to the childrens and some were mentioned. Social and motor skills are two most important: during the game, is possible to the kid develop without social pressure, without the fear of failure. For the child is just a game and entertainment focus. But, for the teachers the game is a very important instrument to development socialization and motor skills. For an example: when the child crawling to find and took the toy shows effort and strength on legs and arms, thus the awakening of baby's interest (na important characteristic in the choice of the toy). Teachers or parents can use obstacles to encourage the use of motor functions such as placing the toy on top of pillows.

The small child plays on the mattress, rolls, somersaults, crawls to go through a tunnel, climbs on the jungle gym. The sheet and bedspread, when pulled by an adult, serve to rock the child to the rhythm of transport sounds or, when covering a table, they serve as a hut for him to hide. Small children play with water, earth, sand; they experiment with paints, food, plants and other materials, to explore and see what happens, driven by curiosity. (KISHIMOTO, 2010, p. 5)

Games with balls, water, running, jumping, hiding, balancing, are well accepted and stimulate body skills. Give more strength to the muscles, helping to burn calories (in the case of older children), involving playful aspects and rules of good coexistence. In addition, they can maintain better integration with family, through contact in sports activities with parents, uncles, cousins, and others.

Performing activities alone is also important. As much as social contact is formidable for human relationships, learning to live with yourself is very important as well. Reading magazines or books, solving hobby games, drawing and

painting, caring for plants, playing video games, building games like puzzles, watching TV, choosing a movie, are ways to maintain pleasant moments without the presence of third parties.

It is relevant point out that what games can be more interesting for the children and instill rules and respect ideas. An example: when a very young children play with ball, seated at the floor and passing the ball to another kid, we can observe some things. First, the kid already understands the rule, which is pass the ball in right line. Second, the baby can stand seat and can use motor skills to push the ball. This show strength is his arms, core, and legs.

At the beginning, according Piaget (1984), the children's focus was at the egocentric stage. That means he did not allow another kid plays with his toys, who understands like his possession, but the kid can take the fellow toy. Therefore, it is important some caution to avoid conflicts, even though it was normal conflicts during the social development.

Invest in games and toys propitiates more engagement and motivation, because they feel included in this ludic environment, promoting competition, teamwork, socialization, and effort to conquer. As occur in the game, this strategy holds the attention and provide reward every level was done. And the children can ride up levels when the new skills can be develop improving their knowledge.

But how is the correct way to include the games at the de apprentice process? First, we recommended games are involved in daily tasks and exercises – considering the age and skills already conquered by the kid - and increasing the difficult according the progression and objective we need achieve. When the children show capacity to try harder levels, the teacher can bring new challenges.

Organize teams as an extreme important task, because stimulates a collaborative learning and engagement, as a good performance in a teamwork as well. A method who can bring a great result is work with smartphone apps. This can be a way to turn the class more dynamic and fun. The student can use your own equipment and finished the tasks in his home, providing an independent environment. Had a ludic and fun classroom it is a great opportunity to encourage more attention and interaction in class. The point here is improving the cognitive development, competences socioemotional, teamwork and socialization.

## 5. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

We have a lot of alternatives to improve our classes and turn the daily care funnier. Technologies it is around us and can be used to stimulates the imagination and logical thinking. With this article and research we can elucidate the principal virtues who games can bring to us, specially children and motor, social, affective and cognitive development. In addition, it is also able to stimulate learning in reading and mathematics, making it more familiar with areas that directly involve the school.

One of the considerations who this work clarify is yes: toys, games and ludic learning are very important in child education. The children behavior and the act of playing was associated over the years by researchers like Jean Piaget (1973) and Vigotsky (1975). Winnicott (1971) it is another important author who dedicates years studying about the relationship in between playing and social and motor skills development. Kishimoto (2010) join the thoughts with Winnicott (1971) to stablish a Strong connection between play and child development, because the action had the power to evidence some things: allows the kid to show your knowlegde and interaction with the enviroment. This is possible because the game bring a lot of stimulus.

After research and findings that games and play are important in the formation of the child as an individual in society, it is important to reiterate that in addition to all the aspects mentioned there is a careful look so that the child feels in a familiar and relaxed environment and can explore the your knowledge in the best way.

Including the child in the school environment is to make him use his direct experience as an object of study, and with that, bring him to the classroom with the pleasure of being able to ambiguously understand the meaning of games and play in the playful and educational context.

Playing the child has the opportunity to have the knowledge, explore it, create it and discover it. While playing, the child has the pleasure of being able to enjoy his world and, at the same time, to use these resources so known as

learning and knowledge devices; playing is a natural need of the human being and through playing it is possible to learn in a more complex way, to improve thoughts and to use space and time in order to adapt in the best way to each situation presented.

The use of playfulness as an alternative and pedagogical resource requires a careful look from the educator towards the students and contents covered; there needs to be consistency for the teacher and the student. With coherence and creativity, playfulness in the learning process is essential; playing, playing and using toys are important activities for cognitive, emotional, affective and social development.

It is clear that playfulness brings new development possibilities for children, but together with playfulness, some important factors are necessary, such as infrastructure, training of all involved and understanding of the context presented so that there is an inclusive and quality education, in order to offer effective and familiar learning to children.

Finally, games and play have a fundamental role in the child's development process and in Early Childhood Education, bringing innovation and alternatives. Through games, children develop a better relationship and socialization with other children and a capacity for interaction and self-knowledge.

Playing and playing provide the development of self-esteem and creativity and make children have some notions and develop important behaviors for living in society, such as the notion of rules, social roles and respect for others.

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