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Parental Influence on Play and Creativity Levels of Preschool Children in India

Mahnaz Heidari Nia [1](Corresponding author)
N.N. Prahallada [2]

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effect of parent-related variables including age, education, income, job, and time spent with children, and different components of PAAT including creativity, play, frustration, control, and teaching/learning on play and creativity levels of preschool children. This research was a survey-correlational study and participants were 180 preschool children and their parents selected from different schools in Mysore city, South of India. Parents filled in the Parents as a Teacher Inventory (PAAT) and children took part in Movement Monitoring Tests (MMT). The results of regression analysis showed that only the income of parents had a significant influence on preschool children with a high level of play and creativity. Other finding indicated that the influence of the mother's age, education, income, occupation, and time spent with the child is found to exist only in the group of children with a high level of play and creativity. The findings also revealed that the influence of mothers' attitudes toward parenting connected with creativity, play, frustration, control, and teaching/learning is found to exist in the group of children with low and high levels of play and creativity.

[1] PhD, Nasibeh Campus, Farhangian University, Tehran ,Iran, Email: nazi_nia1000@yahoo.in
[2] Associate Professor, Department of Education, Regional Institute of Education (NCERT), Karnataka, Mysore, India, Email: nnprahallada@yahoo.co.in

1. Introduction

Early childhood is a crucial stage of life in terms of a child's physical, intellectual, emotional, and social development. Growth of mental and physical abilities of children progress at an astounding rate and a very high proportion of learning takes place from birth to age six. It is a time when children particularly need high-quality personal care and learning experiences. Education begins from the moment the child is brought home from the hospital and continues when the child starts to attend playgroups and kindergartens. The learning capabilities of humans continue for the rest of their lives but not at the intensity that is demonstrated in the preschool years.

Nowadays, preschool education has become a hot topic for parents and early childhood educators. Preschool education is the foundation for children's education and by actively promoting and encouraging their preschool learning; the self-esteem of children is promoted as well. According to Zimiles (1986), preschool programs are designed to provide an environment for creative play, social play interactions, and intellectual stimulation while paving the way for a smooth transition into kindergarten. Children need strong gross motor skills so they can engage in age-appropriate physical activities such as running, climbing, and throwing) and participate in classroom activities that require body control. During the preschool years, they improve balance, strength, agility, and flexibility support refinements in running, jumping, hopping, and ball skills. Gross-motor achievements in early and middle childhood result in the advancement of movement abilities (Haywood & Getchell, 2005).

A crucial component of preschool education is play. Play is a term employed in psychology to describe a range of voluntary, intrinsically motivated activities normally associated with recreational pleasure and enjoyment that is most commonly associated with children and their juvenile-level activities (Garvey, 1990).Play enables children to make sense of their world, as children possess a natural curiosity to explore, and play acts as a medium to do so (Hirsh-Pasek, & Golinkoff, 2003). According to Erikson (1983), play provides opportunities for exploration, experimentation, and manipulation that are essential for constructing knowledge and contributing to the development of representational thought. During play, children examine and refine their learning in light of the feedback they receive from the environment and other people. It is through play that

children develop their imaginations and creativity. During the primary grades, children's play becomes more rule-oriented and promotes the development of autonomy and cooperation which contributes to social, emotional, and intellectual development imposed by someone other than the kids themselves.

From an individual child's viewpoint, play is an important phenomenon that finds expression in different ways, depending on each person's own experience (Tekin & Tekin, 2007). Different researchers have reported a number of positive effects of children's play on early childhood development such as, motivating and orientating children, as well as giving them opportunities to exercise free choice. Play has been considered the characteristic mode of behavior of the young child, an expression of the natural spirit of childhood, and thus a key defining feature of childhood (Fromberg & Bergen, 2006; Kleine, 1993; Mayall, 2002). Hayes (1991, p.143) sees play as "an absorbing activity in which healthy young children participate with enthusiasm". Csikszentmihalyi (1981, p.42) describes playing as "an arrangement in which one can practice behavior without dreading its consequences". According to Almon (2010), creative play is a central activity in the lives of healthy children. Singer (1973) describes the imaginativeness of play as an aspect of creativity. Play is an important factor in the development of children's creativity, and by providing an opportunity for play, a foundation for creativity is constructed (Dansky & Silverman, 1975). Ginsburg (2007) states that play is essential for development because it contributes to the cognitive, physical, social, and emotional well-being of children and youth. On the other hand, creativity is the capacity to create and produce new things. It is the capacity of the human brain to reach new conclusions and ideas and to solve problems in an original fashion. It can manifest in artistic, literary, and scientific forms, and it can also unfold the area of daily life, improving its quality. The latter aspect will probably not leave its mark on the history of humanity, but it is basically what makes life worth living (Csikszentmihaldy, 1996).

Creativity is a key process for personal development and social progress, and it is therefore included in positive psychology. Creativity is a cognitive style; it frames how children approach learning and how they interpret and process information. It is defined as a totality of processes and a way of attitude and behavior which exists in every child to a different extent. Every child is creative owing to their nature and their perspective on life.

Creativity, which has an important role in the development of societies and humanity and expresses an important ability of the individual, can be defined as an inherent latent power. It is a process that involves certain characteristics such as flexibility, multidimensional thinking, sensitivity, alertness and interest in people and the environment, fluency, being able to think and act comfortably, quickly and independently, originality, and being able to arrive at different and diverse conclusions (Chamberlin, 2005).

Children of pre-primary school come under the age group 3years to 6 years. These children are generally in the foundation stage of motor skill development and hence their movements are involved in the play. The abilities involved in the performance of motor acts in children's play and creative movements are identified by experts in three categories including exteroceptive ability, proprioceptive ability, and motor memory ability. These three abilities together constitute the motor monitoring ability of children which can be considered a measure of the play and creativity of preschool children.

Creative movement activities can be used to enhance all areas of learning and growth. Creative movement play is a dynamic support to babies, children, young people, and parents in their efforts to grow naturally, healthily, and with as much pleasure as possible. Hence, the play and creativity of children are a matter of movement monitoring in children. A creative movement is an art form whose medium is the body used for natural movement (Kaufmann & Ellis, 2007) and creative expression (Bannon, 1994; Cheung, 2010; Dow, 2010; Oshuns, 1977). Thus, creative movement can both increase children's verbal skills and provide an alternate means of expression. The creative movement offers children the opportunity to gain self-creative play which is very important for preschool children's development. Preschool children typically enjoy creative activities that allow them to express ideas and feelings. These activities also help them develop fine and gross motor skills. The preschool years can be one of the most creative times in a child's life (Gottlob & Oka, 2007; Lorenzo & Ideishi; 2018). During these ages, locomotors (creeping, walking, jumping, leaping, etc.), non-locomotors (stretching, bending, twisting, shaking, etc.), and stability and balance skills flourish when children are provided with practice opportunities.

In addition to play and creativity, parental influence on preschool children is considerable. Many people believe that the success of society depends on how well parents

perform their role (Hsu & Hsu, 1999). Parents have an enormous influence on their children for several reasons, most importantly because they are their children's first teachers. Children's brains are like sponges in the first couple of years of their lives that absorb everything surrounding them. Therefore, what they learn from their parents in the first couple of years of their lives will make a lot of impact on children for the rest of their lives. It is important that children learn how to be excited about learning from an early age. Parents are the ones who need to instill this excitement in their children. The family seems to be the most effective and economical system for fostering and sustaining the child's development. Without family involvement, intervention is likely to be unsuccessful, and a few effects that are achieved are likely to disappear once the intervention is discontinued (Bronfenbrenner, 2005).

Parents have a role in their children's creative plays. Children tend to be more creative when their parents are involved in their play. The best play occurs when the parent plays alongside the child, rather than just providing the toys or supervising. Parents are the first and best playmates for their children (Jude, 2006). Parents are role models for children, and therefore, they have the power to influence values, attitudes, and behavior. Singer and Singer (1990) believed that children can develop their skills most efficiently with the initial help of adults, who then let the child go on his or her own. Encouragement is greatly needed from adults, but this should not be confused with intervention. This does not mean that children cannot play with adults; however, it is important for the parents to remember that they are there to go along with the child's ideas. Playing with children should not be thought of as a "chore" but an opportunity to experience the emotional rewards for fostering creativity in a child.

Studies have been done on play and creativity in preschool children. Garaigordobil (2011) evaluated the effects of a play program on the creative thinking of preschool children. She indicated that the play program significantly increased verbal creativity (fluency, flexibility, originality), graphic creativity (elaboration, fluency, originality), and behaviors and traits of the creative personality. Oncu & Unluer (2010) investigated preschool children's use of play materials creatively. The findings suggested that young children have the potential of thinking and play creatively because the results outlined that they actually had very little or no opportunity to use unstructured and real objects as play

materials. The researchers concluded that children need to be given plenty of time and varieties of different unstructured materials to play with freely. Preschool teachers have to encourage their students to play freely with different unstructured materials and tools and play in different areas and situations. Also, children should be encouraged to express their creative views and thoughts by educators and families.

Parental influence on play and creativity of preschool children has also been investigated. Tandon and Dimitri (2012) investigated the frequency of parent-supervised play of U.S. preschool children analyzing the behaviors of 8,950 children and their parents. The results showed that physical activity through play is essential for preschool children and also beneficial for motor development, vision, and cognition; mothers were more likely to take children outside to play than fathers; children in a low socioeconomic status may have fewer opportunities to be active and play, and play time was not influenced by household income and mothers' marital status. Lushizhen (2011) indicated that one of the strongest motivations for parents was their high expectations for their children. Jensen (2010) conducted a study on parental perspectives on preschool children and found significant positive relationships between opinions of play and other subscales of "Parent As A Teacher" including creativity, teaching/learning, control, and frustration. Findings suggested that children obtain higher levels of play when parents have an understanding of play and its benefits to learning.

Other studies have investigated play and creativity in preschool children with reference to the parental background. Brockman (2009) used strategies employed by parents to encourage children to participate in creative play based on different socio-economic statuses. Children from middle/high socio-economic schools were more likely to report that they were encouraged by their families to take part in play activities through non-verbal methods; whereas those from low socio-economic schools were more likely to receive verbal encouragement and prompts. Overall, children from more affluent schools were more likely than those from lower socio-economic schools to report participating in family-based activity. Yvonne (2009) studied the description of low-income African American mothers on young children's native play and showed the value of play for young children's development in social interactions, creativity, and problem-solving areas that contribute to kindergarten readiness. Some parents embraced play as essential although

others were less impressed by the fact that play could be a contributing factor in childhood development (Roopnarine, Shin, Jung, & Hossain, 2003). Kimmel and Connelly (2007) found that high socioeconomic-status mothers spend two to three times as much time in preschool childcare as low socio-economic status mothers. Topuz (2017) stated that the development of creative performance in children is a continuing issue within certain processes, and the phenomenon of playing that arises spontaneously in children is effective to ensure and develop the continuity of creativity.

Not much research has been conducted concerning the influence that parents have on children's play and creativity levels. Clay (1996) examined the parental influence on the creativity of preschool children and was unable to report any significant findings concerning parental influence. No study seems to have been done considering play and creativity as one composite factor based on the movement abilities of children. Furthermore, very few studies are reported on the influence of factors like age, socioeconomic status, parents' perception, and attitudes on the play, drawing ability, mathematical ability, language ability, and creativity in preschool children. Therefore, the present study aimed to investigate the effect of parent-related variables including age, education, income, occupation, and time spent with children, and different components of PAAT including creativity, play, frustration, control, and teaching/learning on play and creativity levels of preschool children. This study answers the following research questions:

- What is the play and creativity level of preschool children as measured using Movement Monitoring Tests (MMT)?
- Do parents' age, education, income, occupation, and time spent with children have any significant effect on preschool children's play and creativity levels?
- Can different components of PAAT including creativity, play, frustration, control, and teaching/learning significantly predict play and creativity levels in preschool children?

2. Research Method

This research was a survey-correlational study. In order to collect data through "Movement Monitoring Tests (MMT)" and "Parents As A Teacher Inventory (PAAT)", 180 preschool children and their parents were selected from different schools in Mysore city, India. Most of the preschools in India are run by private and service organizations. Pre-primary schools are called by different names such as kindergarten schools, childcare centers, Montessori schools, and Anganawadis. Kindergarten schools are the most popular and Anganawadis are managed by the Department of Women & Child Welfare Department in Karnataka State. These schools are located in localities with different socio-economic backgrounds. To have a representative sample for the study, the socio-economic background of the locality was categorized as high, medium, and low. Table 1 reflects the distribution of the preschool children and their parents in this study.

Table 1. Details of children, parents, and Schools selected for the study

Sl. No	Name of the Selected schools	No. of Children	No. of parents
Low Socio-Economic region			
1	S.K.K.B Preschool	20	20
2	St. Rita's Preschool	20	20
3	Akkanabalaga Preschool	20	20
Medium Socio-Economic region			
4	St. Mary's Preschool	20	20
5	St. Thomas Preschool	20	20
6	Sharadvilas Preschool	20	20
High Socio-Economic region			
7	Maharshi Preschool	20	20
8	J.S.S Preschool	20	20
9	VijayaVittala Preschool	20	20
	Total	180	180

In this study, "Parent As A Teacher Inventory" (Strom, 1995) was used to measure parental perspective and expectations. The purpose of the PAAT inventory is to identify favourable qualities of parents with 3 to 9-year-old children and detect behaviours for which further education appears warranted (Strom, 1995, p.29). The PAAT identifies how parents interact with their children, what they desire or expect of their children, what actions are taken in response to children's behaviours, and their understanding of how to facilitate children's development. The inventory includes 50 Likert-type items that constitute five subscales that contain 10 items each. The subscales represent key child development and parenting concepts including creativity, play, frustration, control, and teaching/learning. PAAT instructions inform respondents to read statements on feelings about their children. For each statement, they have to circle only one answer. Each item includes four possible answers: (1) strong yes, (2) yes, (3) no, and (4) strong no. If parents have no doubt about a statement, they are directed to circle strong yes or strong no. Otherwise, yes or no should be circled, indicating the direction of their feelings concerning each of the 50 statements. There is no time limit. The Parent As A Teacher (PAAT) in English was translated by five experts knowing Kannada and English languages into the Kannada language. The content validity of the questionnaire was also established with the help of five experts knowing both English and Kannada languages involved in the field of education and psychology. The subject experts did not suggest any changes or modifications. A pilot study was conducted on a sample of 30 parent's preschool children in Mysore city. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for Indian (PAAT) inventory was found to be 0.81. Hence the reliability of the Kannada version of PAAT is confirmed.

The standard Movement Monitoring Test (MMT, Sudarshan, 2001) was used to measure the play and creativity levels of upper kindergarten children. The purpose of MMT is to measure the play and creativity levels of preschool children. Three variables are quantified using this test battery including exteroceptive ability, proprioceptive ability, and motor memory ability. Average scores of these three abilities are added to represent a score of movement monitoring ability. This score was justified as a score of play and creativity of preschool children in the present study. The construct validity of MMT was established by the correlation coefficient of the score of each of the abilities, 0.8, 0.7, and 0.07 for exteroceptive ability, proprioceptive ability, and motor memory ability respectively, with the composite score.

In addition, a short demographic survey was developed to obtain information on the personal and professional characteristics of the parents. The items on this survey used either fill-in-blank or forced-choice responses. The use of these types of response formats helps provide consistency across the parents by limiting their responses to those that are relevant.

A request letter for data collection was addressed to the head of the selected schools by enclosing a permission letter from Block Educational Officer, Mysore city. The research scholar fixed a date and time for two days with the head of the institution for data collection. From each school, class teachers of UKG were requested to select 20 children by random selection from the attendance register based on the roll number.

To collect PAAT data, the parents of twenty children from each school were requested one day in advance to cooperate in providing the data on PAAT inventory. On the stipulated day, parents were assembled in a room and the researcher explained to them the objective of the study and gave a copy of the questionnaire to all 20 parents (mothers). They were given sufficient time to mark suitably in the given questionnaire. In the end, data sheets were collected, and the data of180 mothers were collected. The author of the MMT test was available at Mysore and he was requested to orient 4 nursery teachers for conducting 8 tests of MMT and collecting the data. Along with the researcher, the 4 selected nursery teachers were given orientation on the 8 tests of MMT. The trained testers were taken to school by the researcher as per the schedule and the test was conducted. Test scores of 180 UKG – Preschool children were computed. The scores represented the play and creativity levels of children. These scores were arranged in ascending order and classified into three groups with low, medium, and high levels of play and creativity. After gathering the data, SPSS software 16 was used to analyze the data. Descriptive statistics including frequency, mean, and standard deviation were used to measure the play and creativity levels of preschool children. Regression analysis was used to assess the effects of parents' demographic factors and the components of PAAT on the play and creativity levels of preschool children.

3. Findings

The first research question investigated the play and creativity levels of preschool children. Table 2 reflects the descriptive statistics of low, medium, and high Play and creativity levels in the sample of preschool children. As shown, 48 children were categorized under low play and creativity level, 93 children under medium play and creativity level, and the remaining 39 children under high play and creativity level. The range of mean scores between the low, medium, and high levels of play and creativity was 40, with the mean scores being 368, 402, and 441 respectively.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics of the low, medium, and high play and creativity levels in the sample of preschool children

Low			Medium			High		
Frequency	Mean	SD	Frequency	Mean	SD	Frequency	Mean	SD
48	368	11.74	93	402	9.11	39	441	15.11

The second research question investigated any significant effect of parents' demographic variables including age, education, income, occupation, and the time spent with children on children's play and creativity levels.

Table 3. Regression analysis for levels of play and creativity and demographic factors

Levels of play and creativity	Predictor variables	Beta coefficient	t-value	Level of significance	F	R2 value
Low level of play and creativity	Age	12.023	1.634	.124	0 .521	0.239
	Education	2.722	.549	.591		
	Income	3.943	.379	.710		
	Occupation	6.185	.970	.349		
	Time spent With the child	1.928	.373	.715		
Medium level of play and creativity	Age	2.368	1.020	.325	0.764	0.154
	Education	.957	.641	.532		
	Income	.964	.589	.565		
	Occupation	.040	.023	.982		
	Time spent With the child	.823	.497	.627		
High level of play and creativity	Age	5.768	1.457	.167	0.056	0.504
	Education	6.410	1.613	.129		
	Income	10.521	2.495*	.026		
	Occupation	2.537	.446	.662		
	Time spent With the child	1.609	.476	.642		

*Significant at .05 level.

As exhibited in Table 3, beta-coefficients for various demographic factors-ages, education, income, occupation, and time spent with the child with respect to low level of play and creativity are found to be 12.023, 2.722, 3.943, 6.185, and 1.928 respectively and all these values are non-significant, which is confirmed by a non-significant F value 0.521. Also, as exhibited in the table, beta-coefficients for demographic factors of age, education, income, occupation, and time spent with the child with respect to medium level of play and creativity are found to be 2.368, 0.957, 0.964, .040, and .823, respectively and all these values are non-significant, which is further confirmed by a non-significant F value 0.764. Finally, beta-coefficients for various demographic factors of age, education, occupation, and time spent with the child with respect to the high level of play and creativity are found to be 5.768, 6.410, 2.537, and1.609 respectively, and all these values are non-significant, except for income where the beta coefficient is found to be 10.521. However, the obtained F value of 0.056 failed to reach the significance level criterion. It can be concluded that only the income of parents with the high level of play and creativity had a significant influence.

The third research question investigated any significant if different components of PAAT including creativity, play, frustration, control, and teaching/learning can predict play and creativity levels in preschool children. To determine the predictive power of parents' perspectives and expectations on the play and creativity level of the children, a regression analysis of creativity, play, frustration, control, and teaching/learning was done with regard to the three levels of play and creativity in preschool children. Table 4 exhibits beta coefficients, t-value, and, F values with the level of significance.

Table 4. Regression analysis for levels of play and creativity and PAAT variables

Levels of creativity	Influencing Variables	Beta coefficient	t-value	Level of Significance	F	R2 value
Low level of play and creativity	Creativity	25.56	2.86*	0.01	0.05	0.50
	Play	14.13	1.70	0.11		
	Frustration	06.49	0.59	0.55		
	Control	05.85	0.72	0.47		
	Teaching/ Learning	21.33	2.25*	0.04		
Medium level of play	Creativity	02.41	0.73	0.47	0 .16	0.40
	Play	0.22	0.05	0.95		

and creativity	Frustration	4.54	1.45	0.16		
	Control	2.22	0.94	0.36		
	Teaching/ Learning	5.47	1.37	0.19		
High level of play and creativity	Creativity	15.14	2.15*	0.04	0.05	0.50
	Play	4.63	0.66	0.51		
	Frustration	05.58	0.77	0.45		
	Control	15.47	1.83	0.08		
	Teaching/ Learning	10.55	2.15*	0.04		

*Significant at .05 level.

As shown in the table, beta-coefficients for various influencing variables- play, frustration, control, with respect to low level of play and creativity are found to be 14.13, 06.49, and 05.85 respectively, and all these values are non-significant. However, for teaching/learning and creativity the beta values of 21.33 and 25.56 which are significant at 0.04 and .01 levels have the F value of 0.05 which is significant. Furthermore, the table beta-coefficients for various influencing variables- creativity, play, frustration, control, and teaching/learning with respect to medium level of play and creativity are found to be 02.41, 0.221, 4.54, 2.229, and 5.476 respectively, and all these values are non-significant with the non-significant F value (F=0.16). Finally, beta-coefficients for various influencing variables- play, frustration, control, and teaching/learning, with respect to the high level of play and creativity are found to be 04.633, 05.584, 15.477, and 10.556, respectively and all these values are non-significant. Only for creativity, the beta coefficient of 15.14 is significant at 0.04 level. The F value is 0.05 and significant. It can be concluded that teaching/learning and creativity significantly predicted low levels of play and creativity, and only creativity predicted high levels of play and creativity, but no predictions were found for medium levels of play and creativity in preschool children.

4. Conclusion

The results of the study showed that the influence of the mother's age, education, income, occupation, and time spent with the child is found to exist only in the group of children with a high level of play and creativity, and in particular with the income of parents. The income of the parents is found to influence the play and creativity level of children. The study by Clay (1996) is in agreement with the findings of the present study. Clay examined the parental influence on the

creativity level of preschool children and was unable to report any significant findings concerning parental influence. She analyzed the parental scores of PAAT sub-scales, with the additional variables of gender, educational level of parents, and occupation of the parents using multiple regressions. None of these variables were significant in predicting the child's creativity score. Runco (2007) has reported that culture, family background, and school environment are implicated in creativity development in children. Miller (1979) noted that the creativity level of children can be linked to the family background and parent-child relations through numerous factors such as gender, birth order, socioeconomic status and parental relationships tend to contribute to a child's creativity level. Kimberly (1999) also found that socioeconomic status had significant effects on the PAAT overall, creativity, and control subscales. These findings are in agreement with the present study. It is clear from the findings of various studies that numerous factors assessed on the PAAT scale have influenced the process of the development of play and creativity in preschool children. The findings also showed that the influence of mothers' attitudes toward parenting connected with creativity, play, frustration, control, and teaching/learning is found to exist in the group of children with low and high levels of play and creativity. Level of play and creativity, are significantly influenced by variables of creativity and teaching/learning. Studies by Clay (1996) and Kimberly (1999) contradicted the findings of the present study with no relationship between the PAAT and the creativity level of preschool children. However, studies by Jensen (2010) and Slaughter (1981) support this study with significant positive relationships between the level of play and other areas of parenting including creativity and teaching/learning. It is clear from these studies that play activities and their promotion in preschool are crucial factors in the overall development of creativity in children.

5. Implications

The present study clearly brought out the fact that creative play is very important for preschoolers' development. Creative play and artistic activity are important to children's overall development. Preschoolers typically enjoy creative activities that allow them to express their ideas and feelings. These activities also help them develop fine and gross motor skills. Play is a psychomotor activity; it involves not only the movement of bodily organs but also cognition. Intelligence and higher-order problem-solving abilities are acquired gradually through various modes of play. The creative expression and the preschool stage should be viewed from the capacity for various forms of motor activities and the basic form of problem-solving ability in children. Creative play is very important for development because it stimulates curiosity, flexibility, and improvisation, and promotes

problem-solving behavior that leads to learning, imitation, and adaptation to change. The play has been referred to as children's work and its importance in cognitive development has been acknowledged by many researchers in the field of child and school psychology. Children's tendency to play has been specifically linked to creative thinking skills; however, this is not always recognized by parents. Play is valued differently among different cultures. Sometimes the parent's attitude towards playing children can be one of indifference; in fact, play is a natural activity for children and provides an important window for us to understand the development, views, and necessities of children, which has been clearly documented in the present study.

Nowadays, we have the task of convincing parents to see themselves in a new context, as their children's first teachers who should arrange preschool learning at home to prepare children for the classroom. Some related tasks for educators include determining the level of parental knowledge about early development, finding out what they expect of young children, and learning how their influence is affected by demographic factors. If educators are made aware of the normative attitudes of parents, they will be better able to establish partnerships with them. The present study has opened our eyes to these possibilities. The level of children's play will be optimum when parents are involved and actively play with them. The variety of play in which children engage will help parents to join them. Based on the findings of the present study, the researchers suggest four key roles of parents to promote children's play:

a) Parents can be a role-model to develop positive attitudes in children towards play. They can encourage play and provide a balance of indoor and outdoor play throughout the year. Indoor games consist of more cognitive abilities and outdoor play involves more physical abilities. When parents join the play, it is important that they are guiding, shaping, engaging in, and extending help not dictating or dominating.

b) Parents can prepare appropriate stimulating environments. It is important to offer a variety of materials and experiences at varying levels of difficulty. The choice of materials is critical because it provides the motivation for children's exploration and discovery. Both indoor and outdoor experiences should provide exploratory centers and spaces. The play environment should allow children to make choices and explore the play possibilities. The play environment should be reflective of the child's day-to-day living experiences.

c) Parents can observe children in their play. Observation is an ongoing process that provides information about the child's interests, abilities, strengths, and opportunities for further learning and development. Observation helps identify the ways parents can build on and guide learning.

d) Parents can also enhance or facilitate play by encouraging children to bring their interests and experiences into the play, and ask questions to expand and enhance activities related to play.

The more stimulation given by the parents to their children, the early foundation as formative years for the child will be strengthened for healthy future development.

Furthermore, young children's play is important for the development of skills, concepts, and approaches. It is essential that public policy promote and support early education methods that make full use of play and child-initiated activities. State and local policymakers should:

- Adopt preschool learning standards/foundations that identify play as the primary method for early learning
- Require the adoption of preschool curricula that emphasize play and child-initiated activities
- Establish parent education programs that explain the importance of play for cognitive development
- Require assessment based on teacher-documented observations of children during play. Rule out high-stakes testing of preschool children.
- Developing tools to measure creativity in preschool children in the context of multicultural background
- Consider the impact of family life environment on play and creativity in preschool children
- Evolve strategies to nurture play and creativity in intellectually exceptional children
- Consider the impact of training teachers in cognitive problem-solving on problem-solving abilities in children
- Consider the effect of some psychological and social adjustment variables on creativity levels in children.

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