



The Role of Preschool Teachers in Play-Based Learning Activities

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Abstract

Play is essential for developing concepts and skills in preschool children that are crucial for their academic success later in life. Recognising the importance of early childhood education has highlighted the need for early childhood teachers to maintain play-based learning activities in their teaching practices and effectively engage in the learning processes of young children. In this way, preschool teachers play a crucial role in designing play-based learning activities in their classroom. This research explores that what extent preschool teachers use play-based classroom activities in the teaching and learning process, teachers' perception of using play-based strategies and children's participation in those activities. Furthermore, it identifies how preschool teachers approach their teaching and learning activities. The research employed a mixed-methods approach, collecting both quantitative and qualitative data through surveys and interviews conducted with early childhood teachers and early childhood administrators. The study was conducted in the Eastern Province of Sri Lanka, and the survey participants were selected from a random sample of teachers and administrators working in preschools located in the Manmunai Southwest Education / D.S. Division of Batticaloa District, Sri Lanka. Several challenges were identified in designing play-based activities, including inadequate resources, particularly technological aids, a lack of a standardised curriculum, and a shortage of pre-service and in-service training programs. Finally, the research recommends that preschool teachers design play-based activities to improve children's skills and develop classroom activities.

Keywords: Children's skills and development, Play-based learning activities, Role of preschool teachers, and Teaching practice