

It is a type of play whereby children play side by side using similar materials but independently without involving other children.

ii) Social Play

Older children engage in social play that is cooperative, associative or dramatic in nature since they can easily communicate verbally.

Cooperative play:

It includes social pretend and constructive play. The children cooperatively work on different parts of a structure in complimentary pretend roles. They could pretend to be a mother, aunt, father, uncle, teacher, pupil etc.

Associative play:

This is a social/friendly type of play in which children assign one another role. They use/share the same play materials, talk together or imitate each other but the play is uncoordinated and they are never very clear on exactly what they are trying to accomplish.

Dramatic play:

It involves children engaging in make believe or pretence play in which imitation of real life activities familiar to them occurs. During dramatic play, the children pretend to be somebody else or in another place. Dramatic play is important as it helps the child to socialize and practice or perfect whatever they have previously learnt.

Importance of Play

Play enhances children's holistic development (physically, mentally, language, socio-emotionally). It helps children practice social roles and exploration of their environment. It enhances acquisition of many concepts. Children learn about their environment through exploratory play. They also gain skills/experiences in handling different play materials/apparatus and to relate them in daily life (home corner). Play enhances co-operation and responsibility in looking after the play materials. It helps children learn how to share materials. Children develop oral fluency and acquire vocabulary as well as understanding of terms used during play activities e.g. forward, backward. Play helps children to relax and enjoy themselves. It helps them to release stress or pent up emotions and in developing their accuracy and estimation skills. It also helps children explore and develop personal talents e.g. working towards becoming professional athletes. Play encourages children to appreciate our cultural heritage and to develop a sense of nationhood through their singing games.

How can you enhance play in children?

You can enhance play through provision of developmentally appropriate play materials i.e. they should be attractive, adequate, durable, repairable, cleanable, locally available or familiar, cost-effective and safe for use.

- **Discussion Method**

The discussion method is an oral interaction between the teacher/children. The discussion could be planned or unplanned. Discussions help to improve children's oral fluency, expand their vocabulary, confidence and understanding of concepts. Children could for example be given an opportunity to describe their own activities to other children/teacher, tell stories, talk about

Principles of Good Story Telling

Choose or create a simple and relevant story according to children's age. You must read, rehearse to know and tell the story smoothly. Use gestures, facial expressions, relevant songs/poems to the story, puppets, and good illustrations/pictures/real objects to enhance the emotions needed. Help children to follow or keep track of the story by involving them in activities such as questions, singing or saying a response lines in the story. End the story at the peak of the climax e.g. "They lived happily thereafter or The hare won the price of his good work". Be lively and modulate your voice well (raise/lower voice as required).

- **Singing Teaching Technique**

A song may be defined as a chant, hymn or tune produced by children or even birds in the environment.

Criteria for Selection of Songs

Children's songs must also be developmentally relevant or appropriate i.e. enjoyable, short, simple in language, tune and rhythm as well as repetitive in order to aid their memory. They should be meaningful and purposeful, action oriented, morally appropriate and relevant to learning theme/topic being taught or occasion.

Importance of Songs in Teaching Children

Songs can be used in various ways. They can be used to introduce a lesson thereby arousing children's learning interest. They can be used to teach or revise other curriculum areas, to ensure teacher/child participation in learning or offer relaxation and enjoyment to children after tedious learning activities. Songs can be used to end boredom in children, help them appreciate their cultural heritage and enhance their physical development. Songs can instil confidence in children (as they present them before others, improve oral fluency/pronunciation, proper use of vocabulary and expression, enhance imagination/creativity (as they compose own songs or present them in own style), memory and retention of learning content.

- **Recitation/Memorization Teaching Technique**

To recite or memorize is to learn something by heart or rote. It is also to deliver or present a verbal information (poem) publicly. Recitation or memorization is an important learning method because there are important things that children need to remember by heart. Children for example need to learn the order of numbers or alphabet. They also need to memorize songs and poems. Recitation/memorization helps children to remember or retain facts taught to them. Children however should not just be engaged in memorizing learning content without understanding.

- **Role Play, Dramatization, Imitation and Mimicking**

Role-play involves fantasy, pretence and imitating real models performing their roles spontaneously or the way they know. Dramatization on the other hand requires guidance or instructions from the teacher. To imitate is to copy someone else's actions or speech while to mimic is to non-verbally copy or imitate a character's actions in a story, poem or song. In order to enhance children's ability to role play, dramatise or mimic it is important to ensure they are provided with lots of materials, costumes and time to perform.