

Danica Berard

Children's Play: Theory and Practice

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Week 1 Summary

Play is very important for children. Theorists such as Freud, Vygotsky, Piaget, Bruner, Erikson, and Parten reveal that play is important for children because it helps them build their cognitive development. Freud argues that play is important for children as it can help them work through their emotions (Freud Museum London, 2017). Freud's research also links children's play to creativity in adulthood (Freud Museum London, 2017). Vygotsky's theory reveals how play is important because it helps children socialise and build relationships which ultimately results in cognitive development (Nilsson and Ferholt, 2014). Play can also allow children to use their imaginations, sparking creativity (Nilsson and Ferholt, 2014, pp. 924-923). Vygotsky also highlights how adults have an important role in creating rules and guidelines for children to follow while playing in order for children to get their enjoyment and psychosocial development (Nilsson and Ferholt, 2014, p. 923). Piaget teaches us about the different stages of children's development and how play directly relates to children's cognitive development. His theories reveal that children learn through meaningful interactions with their environment (Aubrey and Riley, 2022). For instance, children develop different schemas through their experiences during the different stages of growing up (Aubrey and Riley, 2022, p. 55). Play is very important for the development of schemas as it gives children the opportunity to understand patterns and

processes. For example, children may discover patterns of connect or disconnect while playing with items such as puzzles or lego (Meade and Cubey, 2008). Burner studied the spiral curriculum which is where students learn through a process of revisiting the same topic with a higher complexity each time, expanding on their understanding of concepts (Aubrey and Riley, 2022, pp. 146-149). Burner referred to three modes where children learn through their experiences, including play (Aubrey and Riley, 2022, p. 149). Erikson's research reveals that children develop in stages. Children must undergo certain conflicts and if they are successful, they will move on to the next stage and carry those skills throughout their lives (Malone et al., 2016, p. 21). However, if they are unsuccessful, they will face difficulties moving forward (Malone et al., 2016, p. 21). Exploration and play allow children to learn independence and power by working through anatomy and initiative conflicts (Malone et al., 2016, p. 21). Parten theorised that children develop through six stages of social play and that play is very important for children's social growth (Parten, 1933, pp. 136-147). Within these stages, children progress from playing solo, observing others, playing alongside others to actually sharing and playing with their peers (Parten, 1933, pp. 136-147). Overall, these theorists reveal that play is essential for children's cognitive development as it helps them develop schemas, social skills, independence, creativity, good relationships and to understand their emotions better.

Reference List

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