



Designing for Children

- With focus on 'Play + Learn'

Children's Environment

- Focus on play and learn

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Abstract: Play is central to children's learning. Play is children's work.

It has long been recognized that children learn through play - at home and at school, indoors and outdoors. Play is key to all the aspects of a child's development, but most of all to them is becoming A Competent Learner in the environment which they are cared and educated.

Through play, in a secure environment with effective adult support, children can:

- ✓ Explore, develop and represent learning experiences that help them make sense of the world.
- ✓ Practice; build up ideas, concepts, and skills in thinking creatively & imaginatively.
- ✓ Learn how to control impulses, understand the need for rules, express fears or relive anxious experiences in controlled and safe situations.
- ✓ Learn to attend tasks, to overcome obstacles, to block out distractions, to use resources (leadership) and resource persons effectively (team building), to achieve an intended outcome.
- ✓ Be alone, be alongside others, take risks, make mistakes or cooperate as they talk, rehearse their feelings, communicate with others as they investigate or solve problems.

Most important of all, learning through play can encourage a lifelong love of learning.

Play is an absorbing, satisfying, and sometimes joyful experience for children.

Well-planned play, both in indoor and outdoor environment, is key way in which children learn with enjoyment and challenge.

Children's understanding is facilitated by planning learning environments and activities for play that build on what children already know and move them to a step or two further.

A child friendly, colorful, encouraging, peaceful environment to freely express themselves where their senses - Vision, Listen, Speech and most important of all Touch is felt and reacted.

When children are allowed to free-flow play, alone or with others, they are able to reach their deepest and most wide ranging levels of learning. Example a simple shopping game enables them to learn without saying anything of the personal, social and emotional skills developed through cooperating, communicating, negotiating and sharing.

Creating an outdoor space that brings nature back into the playground also holds great potential for the actual work of creating garden spaces, planting shrubs, flowers and creating hilly areas. They feel closer to nature and enjoy its initiate, variety and spontaneity.

They appreciate the feeling of being trusted to play spontaneously, to present their own play with naturally occurring things outdoors and explore without stifling constraints.

However, if children are always in situations where adults control what they do, they may lose their love of learning and ability to learn through play.

We at Srujanavani School are planning to create an environment providing activities and play opportunities to develop children's emotional, physical, social, creative and intellectual capabilities to shape themselves as a responsible citizen of the country.

Key words: Creative, Co-operative, Competitive, Communicative, Socio-emotional climate.

1. Introduction

Play is learning. Play opportunities and activities give a firsthand experience to build children's natural curiosity as early learners, develop language, thinking mathematically, analyzing, improving their imagination, building social relationships in serene and natural environment as human attraction to nature should be exercised given opportunities from their early years of life to avoid developing aversion to nature or biophobia.

Children have a unique, direct and experiential *way of knowing* the natural world as a place of beauty, mystery and wonder. Children's special affinity for the natural environment is connected to the child's development and his or her way of knowing. Natural elements provide for open-ended play that emphasizes unstructured creative exploration with diverse materials.

2. Method

2.1 Concept School

Srujanavani School is aimed at turning a child to responsible citizen of the country, to make a child multi faceted, multi-tasking, diversity in talents. Education through play is

experimentation and risk taking, practice of skills, self-confidence, self-esteem, **communication** skills, attention regulation and persistence.

Srujanavani School aims at making education a collaborative process instead of **competitive** winning and losing game. It aims at making creative learning, a comprehensive journey aesthetically engaging resources and introducing cross-curricular elements fostering high level of enthusiasm and thirst for more knowledge, understanding underpinned by key skills and attitude since their foundation stage making education (learning through play) a continuous rewarding and joyous journey.

2.2 Different Ages

Children till three, their toddler stage, do not make distinction between play and work. At this age play is a key for learning. Learn through play develops **social-emotional** skills which give them the self- esteem and self-confidence they need to continue building loving and supportive relationships all their lives.

Children in primary school, play is planned, organized using strategies and skills which are made for developing creativity, competency and confidence in them.

In next stages, learning through play is planned in teams **co-operative** to each other refining their skills and abilities increasing the importance of play in various projects, sophisticated games and puzzles instead of sticking their heads to books. Quality of play includes senses, emotion, intellect, individual growth and social interactions of children.

At teenage, these play activities become basis for a life-long interests and hobbies. They tend to play in less traditional way and begin to transform their interests and hobbies into the play of the adult.

2.3 Environment

The environment which is natural and near to nature instead of artificially created environment is best suited for the child. The environment should be serene and purposeful offer suitable means and ways to maintain creative methods in cross-curricular activities. Environment which makes them move ahead of their rooms, video games, computers to a delightful offer of free play in open places.

A play ground of different textures, filled with trees, shrubs, lakes, hills where they can create their own space to recreate.

A class room which gives importance to the children than the four colored walls, row wise administered furniture of the room. Class room filled with innovative products, works, arts of the children themselves which builds up competent spirit in them and learning made through one another skills.

A curriculum which does not include too many text books or theoretical listening by the children, that includes play as medium of instruction and learning is made an enjoyable process.

The teachers are guides to instruct the children and take care of their disciplined, controlled play.

A school where technology is created by the children themselves in a friendly environment than adopting the ongoing technologies and infra structures.

The opinion poll of different sections of the school community is as follows:

| | Idea of school | Concept | Environment |
|-------------|--------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Teachers | A well established | Easily understandable techniques | Disciplined, colorful classrooms. |
| Students | Play & recreate | Easily understandable | Friendly, encouraging. |
| Parents | A well established | Make competent & able person | Disciplined, well designed. |
| Academician | Creative | Innovative, co-operative | Recreative |



Figure.1 Glance at our Srujanavani School



Figure.2 Saastra workshops for children

6. Conclusions

Srujanavani had conducted many educative initiatives like Teachers workshops for innovative learning for children and teaching techniques, Saastra programs for the children to develop their imaginative and creative skills making learning boisterous. The Srujanavani school adopts new techniques to involve children learn and understand the concepts of subjects practically through play and experiment. A curriculum which involves all the senses of the children and which reflects our age old Gurukula concept of education of 'Sravan-Manan-Smaran'.

Acknowledgement

References from Northern Illinois University, Child care information service and National literacy trust.

References

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