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## RESEARCH ARTICLE

### THE ROLES OF TEACHERS AND PARENTS IN PROMOTING CHILDREN INVOLVEMENT IN GAME ACTIVITIES AT THE PRESCHOOL LEVEL

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#### ABSTRACT

Preschool is also known as "nursery school", "pre-primary school", and "play school". Therefore, game activities among children are appropriate to begin since the preschool level. This article will discuss steps taken to encourage children to actively involve in game activities. The discussion focuses on the role of parents and teachers in encouraging children to actively involve in game activities at preschool level. In conclusion, parents are important people who are often with their children at home. Meanwhile, teachers are important people who are often with children in preschool. Therefore, it is undeniable that their roles are very important in order to encourage children to be actively involved in game activities.

#### INTRODUCTION

Preschool Education is an essential elementary education. Preschool Education has gained attention in all walks of life. This is because it is an early education in the development of an individual's life other than the education he receives at home. Preschool Education in Malaysia still maintains the concept of informal educational programs that provide learning experiences for children aged four to six. The program prepares the children to continue their study to Year One (Azizah, 2002). Preschool Education is also an important early exposure to the world of schooling for all children. The physical development of children in early childhood education is one of the most important things we need to know. Physical development is an aspect that emphasizes the fundamental development and growth of children in healthy and cheerful ways. Physical development is an aspect of change that is faced by individuals and is quantitative. These developments are also related to the changing times. The physical development of children can be divided into four parts namely environmental hygiene, safety, health and psychomotor (Ministry of Education Malaysia, 2003). The physical development of children can also be related to children's ability to use their body parts, muscles and coordination to carry out daily activities. In fact, the physical development of children is also important for movement activities. Good physical development will make it easier for the children to involve in game activities.

**Game Activities:** Preschool education should focus on the game activities of children. Play or involvement in games are the innate nature of children. Play is a necessity for all children to create a free, happy and contented environment (Nor A'ini, 2010). According to Siti Nadirah (2017), game activities are part of their innate nature. Game activities are strongly emphasized in preschool education (Fauziah, 2010). Therefore, it is hoped that all preschools in this country have implemented game activities in their teaching and learning process. Game activities provide children with meaningful experiences and enhance their social skills (Siti, 2017). In addition, game activities can also improve the development in the aspects of intellectual, emotional, spiritual and physical among children. On the other hand, Mastura & Kaseh (2012) have stated that game activities contribute to development in terms of motor, affective, social and cognitive among children. In general, game can be defined as any activity that gives children joy and satisfaction regardless of the outcome of the activity. Game activities are part of the children's world. The teaching and learning process is more effective if the children's education curriculum is based on game activities. According to Moyles (2005), game is the best teaching and learning experience and a priority in early childhood education. Through game activities, children can learn about the environment and understand the issues that surround them in exciting situations. Once children understand the new concept and practice it over and over again during games, they will then master the concept at a later stage. At the same time, children have the opportunity to engage in meaningful activities that foster various aspects of development. Childhood development experts believe that game is the best way for children to learn concepts and skills that will then be

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used to learn new things in the future. Children can learn skills about the world around them effectively through game activities. Indeed, the ability of children can increase in game activities. Through game activities, children have the opportunity to engage in meaningful activities that foster cognitive, language, social, emotional and physical development. At the same time, game activities can stimulate brain functions and thus learning becomes more interesting. Therefore, game activities should be embedded in each individual child especially in preschool education. The roles of teachers and parents are very important in encouraging children to be actively involved in gamey activities are the preschool level. Therefore, every party, especially teachers and parents should strive to ensure that game activities are implemented among children.

**The Roles of Teachers in Promoting Game Activities at Preschool level:** In preschool education, game activities are one of the activities that can enhance children development. According to Mariani (2010), children development can be enhanced through game activities. Therefore, the role of teachers is important to enhance the game activities among the children in preschools. Morison (1995) has also argued that to succeed game activities in schools and centers, teachers need to play an important role in creating the environment as well as stimulating and developing children's thinking. Here are the roles that teachers can play in improving game activities among children.

- Teachers need to prepare more creative game activities and teaching aids in the lesson plan.
- Teachers should be responsible for ensuring that the game environment is always safe and comfortable for children to play.
- Teachers need to guide them in every game activities so that every game has its function.
- Teachers should strive to encourage children to learn through their own exploration.
- Teachers need to prepare game activities that will attract the curiosity about the game activities.
- Teachers need to create a variety of learning experiences that enhance their enjoyment in game activities.

**Teachers Need To Prepare More Creative Game Activities And Teaching Aids In The Lesson Plan:** Every teaching and learning in preschool education should be carried out according to the lesson plan. Through the lesson plans, the preschool teachers can plan interesting game activities for the children. Interesting game activities will make learning activities more enjoyable. There are various ways and types of game activities that children can do. Teachers only need to prepare creative and useful teaching aids that can be used by children.

Fun game activities can influence children's development in physical, cognitive, mental, language and social aspects. Furthermore, planned activities should give priority to all aspects of development. It serves as a platform to help develop other aspects of development. In addition, children can use objects around them as real symbols of the environment (Fauziah, 2010). Teachers can also provide children with a variety of game activities. For example, group games, creative games, dramatic games, free games and structured games. So teachers need to incorporate a variety of game activities into

their daily teaching and learning activities so that children do not feel bored and more enjoyable.

**Teachers Should Be Responsible For Ensuring That The Play Environment Is Always Safe And Comfortable For Children To Play:** Preschool Education emphasizes the play environment for children. This is because the play site determines the success of a game in the teaching process implemented by the teacher. Safe, good and comfortable environmental condition can enhance the effectiveness of game activities for children. Teachers should ensure that any preschool supervisor has provided them with an effective play sites. Teachers need to be aware that classroom management is also one of the most important things. Classroom arrangement should be flexible for children (Mariani, 2010). If the children's play environment is very unsystematic, a variety of problems will arise during the teaching process. At the same time, the safety aspect of a play area is also important in the preschool environment. The setting of corners in an area for game activities should be emphasized by the teachers. Teachers can differentiate the corners according to the subjects taught and provide all the needs of the game activities. The decorated corners should suit the children's favour in terms of color, equipment and so on. The corners complete with a variety of teaching aids can help to boost children's spirit in the playing process.

**Teachers Need To Guide Them In Every Game Activities So That Every Game Has Its Function:** When children have tasted the enjoyment of the game activities, they will continue to play until they are satisfied. At the same time, they will try to play again and again to achieve their level of satisfaction. In addition, children in the preschool setting are more likely to receive stimulation (Lalitha, 2020). They are also passionate about doing game activities until some of them donot want to stop playing. In this case, the role of the teacher is very much needed. Teachers need to control them by giving them clear instructions and guidance. Teachers need to guide them in every level of game activities. Through this way, the game activities of children will always be controlled according to the objectives set.

**Teachers Should Strive To Encourage Children To Learn Through Their Own Exploration:** Teachers should also try different ways to attract the attention of children in game activities. When they are interested in game activities, teachers should encourage them to explore the game process by themselves. Exploring something will enhance their development physically, mentally and so on. Some exploring games include picture puzzles, outdoor activities and Rubik's Cube. For example, inpicture puzzles, children are required to arrange picture pieces into a complete picture. Puzzle is a form of game that requires attention and it trains them to focus. This can develop cognitive skills when using the brain to plan the puzzles arrangement (Wan, 2013).

**Teachers Need To Provide Game Activities That Will Attract The Curiosity About The Game Activities:** Preschool education teachers need to plan game activities that have interesting variations. Apart from interesting variations, game activities should also have benefits that can enhance children's physical skills. Therefore, teachers need to provide a variety of activities that will interest the children to play and they are motivated to know about the activity. According to Saayah Abu (2010), teachers need to be active and creative in

preparing game activities. Children will often be excited to see interesting games or activities. Hence, teachers need to prepare games that children are curious of and cannot wait to play.

In addition, make sure the games preparation are cost-effective as well as reach children's developmental stages. During game activity sessions, make sure that the children can interact with their teacher. This is because children often ask a lot to their teachers. Thus, indirectly, the communication between children and teachers will become more effective.

**Teachers Need To Develop Different Learning Experiences That Can Increase Fun In Game Activities:** During game activities, the role of teacher is crucial. This is because they need to prepare and organize all the fun games for the children. In addition, teachers need to shape a variety of experiences in the teaching and learning process. This will smooth the activity of the teaching and learning process. As preschool education teachers, they need to summarize the experience and make it useful and fun especially for children (Mariani, 2010). The learning experience should be in line with the activities. It is recommended that before starting a game activity, teachers can brief the students about their game experience. Teachers can also involve themselves in the playing process with the children (Saayah Abu, 2010). Teacher involvement in game activities can provide a good experience for children. Teachers need to know that children are like the white canvas that teachers paint on. Children can easily follow all the behaviors of adults. Therefore, we should set a good example for children.

**The Role of Parents in Promoting Game Activities at Preschool Level:** Preschool education is very important for children involvement in game activities. Therefore, before the children attend preschool, make sure that they have the parents' encouragement about game activities. The nurture of interest to involve in game activities among children should begin at home. At home, parenting is very important for promoting game activities among children. Nowadays, preschool education emphasizes parental involvement. The role of parents can greatly benefit the learning process of preschool children. Usually, children are prone to learn from people who are older. They easily follow the behavior of the elders, especially their parents. This is because parents are the closest and best known people. Thus, the role of parents is important in encouraging children to actively involve in game activities. Among the parental roles are:

- Parents always provide motivation, guidance and strong support for children to participate in game activities. Parents need to encourage their children and instill their interest in game activities.
- Parents should give their children the freedom to play without any restrictions.
- Parents should provide interesting game activity necessities.
- Parents can involve in game activities with their children.

**Parents Always Provide Motivation, Guidance And Strong Support For Children To Participate In Game Activities:** Game activities in preschool education can improve the fitness level of the children. In addition, these activities can also expand the potential of preschool children. Therefore, if children show interest in playing games or any game activities,

parents should motivate their children. Motivation can influence the learning process (Rasidah, 2007). Children will be more motivated if they receive support from their own parents.

At the same time, parents need to provide guidance on all the game activities their children perform. The guidance provided must be accurate to the game activities so that all game processes are easy to implement. In fact, they will also benefit from the activity.

**Parents Need To Encourage Their Children And Instill Their Interest In Game Activities:** Parents can encourage their children to play. Parental encouragement can help children to master skills in game activities. Furthermore, mastery of skills in game activities will increase if they are fully encouraged by their parents. Parents can instill their children's interest in a particular game activity. Various ways can be done if we want to instill interest in game activities. For example, parents can provide the children with exciting toys. Parents can also do outdoor game activities with their children. Outdoor game activities can enhance the gross motor skills and enhance the concept of the game with the guidance of the parents (Azizah, 2002). Furthermore, parents can give the children everything needed as long as their interests are nurtured in the games. Parents should not prohibit their preference of game activities because at this time their development can be shaped and seen.

**Parents Should Give Their Children The Freedom To Play Without Any Restrictions:** In preschool education, children are very interested in game activities. They are stimulated by the games they see. Therefore, parents should give them the freedom to involve in any game activity (Fuad, 2013). Playing and participating in activities and physical exercises is important for children. Parents also cannot prohibit children's interest in game activities. The hindrance from the parents will stunt the interest of the children and they will soon be bored. In fact, game activities promote children's creativity in activities, build social, physical and mental growth. Subsequently, various developments can be seen in terms of cognitive, physical, social and emotion. Therefore, we should support them and give them confidence in their ability to play games. If we prohibit children from involving in game activities, they will easily rebel.

**Parents Should Provide Interesting Game Activity Necessities:** To promote game activities among children, parents can also provide complete game activity necessities for their children. There are various forms of play activity necessities that can be provided to children. One of the ways is parents can provide a meaningful learning environment especially in game activities (Wan, 2013). Through game activities, they are able to recognize a concept and reinforce their understanding. Not only that, parents can contribute game necessities to any preschool. A game that can reinforce concepts is lego game (Wan, 2013). Lego game is a plastic block toy which is popular among children. In order to develop the lego model, high cognitive ability is required. This is because they will try to combine these blocks into an interesting model. It can facilitate the learning process of children. This can further enhance the quality of a game and their imagination.

**Parents Can Involve In Game Activities With their Children:** Parents play an important role in creating a variety of

meaningful learning experiences for their children (Halimah *et al.*, 2014). As parents, they should be involved in playing with their children at home and in preschool. Via this way, parents can maintain and build good relationship with their children. This positive relationship is fundamental to children's emotional and social development. When children have good emotional and social health, the whole process of game activities will become easier. Most of the time, children are more comfortable in their preschool or kindergarten when they see the bond between their parents and the teachers. Children will also follow the behavior of their parents. Parents can participate in a variety of game activities. Among them are sports events, art competitions and many more. This parental involvement will further strengthen the bond between each other. The strong bond between teachers and parents will empower children in the games.

### Conclusion

Children's game activities are emphasized at the preschool level. There are numerous ways to get children involved in game activities. Of course, we need know and be aware of children's interests in the various games available for preschool level. Therefore, the responsibility of teachers and parents should be emphasized in enhancing children's game activities. Through game activities, children will become more active at the preschool level. At the same time, both the government and the private sectors need to provide support from various aspects so that teaching through game activities can be implemented in preschools. The cooperation from all parties, including parents and teachers is essential to facilitate the involvement of children in game activities in preschool.

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