



FACULTY OF EDUCATION

The effectiveness of early childhood education centre based dramatic play on the learning and development among four to five year olds at Nyachidze primary school

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ABSTRACT

The study sought the effectiveness of early childhood education centre based dramatic play on the learning and development among four to five year olds. The research study was carried out with twenty learners from forty one learners in ECD A classroom. Data was collected using observational methods, document analysis and interviews. The researcher used the qualitative research design for the gathering of information.

The research findings indicated that dramatic play is effective on the learning and development among ECE learners. It has been established that as learners play at dramatic centre they engage in dialogue talking and listening to each other, hence developing language skills, they act out real life situations, imitating different people, using different materials and equipment hence developing physical, social, emotional and intellectual skills. Academic skills also develop as learners engage in dramatic play. However, there is need for the ECE teachers to provide adequate playing materials for dramatic play to be effective and to avoid unwanted behaviours like bullying and egocentrism.

The study recommends the Ministry Of Primary and Secondary Education to have workshops with ECE teachers so as to equip them with the knowledge of the importance of dramatic play on the learning and development among ECE learners.

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DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my husband Mr Munyaradzi Matsenga who taught me to work hard and remain focused even when things were tough. His teachings helped me to be dedicated to my study even though they were great challenges during the period of the study.

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CHAPTER ONE: THE RESEARCH PROBLEM

1.0 Introduction

Dramatic play is considered as effective on the learning and development of the whole child. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to investigate the effectiveness of early childhood education centre based dramatic play on the learning and development among four to five year olds at Nyachidze primary school.

This chapter discusses the background of the study, statement of the problem, research questions, significance of the study, delimitations of the study, limitations of the study, assumptions, definition of key terms and summary of the chapter.

1.1 Background to the study

Play occurs throughout life although the form of play varies as a person grows older. Early childhood education is recognised as the world of play. Play is widely recognised as a major route to learning and development of early childhood education learners. French (2007) says play has been identified as one of the key contexts for children's early learning and development.

Dramatic play is a type of play whereby early childhood education learners engage in among other types of play. The Expressive arts project (2002) says dramatic play allows early childhood education learners to use their creativity while developing their imagination, dexterity, physical, cognitive and emotional strength, it is vital to healthy brain development and it allows young learners to interact with the world around them. Seefeldt (2007) states that dramatic play is a unifying force by which the child's social and physical experiences with the external world are integrated with his or her internal mental and emotional processes to produce novel transformations which are then projected outward in symbolic form. The

statement above simply means that, dramatic play provides a linkage between external and internal world to develop the whole child, it links or combines the inward skills which is the cognitive and emotional skills together with the outward skills, which are the physical and social skills hence developing the child holistically.

Brewer (1998) says dramatic play contributes to cognitive growth, aids social and emotional development and is essential to physical development. Many of the abilities required to succeed in school settings are gained through play experiences. Eheart and Leavitt (1985) state that play offers young early childhood education learners opportunities to master many fundamental physical, social, intellectual and language skills and concepts. This implies that dramatic play is effective on the learning and development of ECE learners.

Other researchers have come to similar conclusions about dramatic play enhancing learning and development of ECE learners holistically, however, most of this theorists and researchers are from Western countries and the studies were carried out in Western countries where dramatic play takes place in good, motivating, inviting and well equipped environments. Looking at the Zimbabwean context, there are usually small classrooms with little space and inadequate playing materials in some schools like the school this study was carried out.

Therefore, it is from the above observations that this research is being carried out. The study also want to find out whether learning and development does take place through dramatic play to young learners in the Zimbabwean context where the environmental conditions are different to those in Western countries.

1.2 Statement of the problem

This study seeks to investigate how effective early childhood education centre based dramatic play on the learning and development among four to five year olds at Nyachidze primary school is.

1.3.0 Research question

Does early childhood education centre based dramatic play have an effective role on the learning and development among four to five year old learners?

1.3.1 Sub research questions

- a) Which are the dramatic play centres and activities early childhood education learners engage in?
- b) Which skills are developed during dramatic play activities?
- c) How does learning take place during dramatic play activities?
- d) What is the role of an early childhood educator on dramatic play?
- e) To what extent is dramatic play effective on the learning and development among four to five year olds?
- f) How can dramatic play be effective on the learning and development among four to five year olds?

1.4 Significance of the study

The findings from this research study will contribute to an understanding of appropriate methods to use in promoting learning and development among four to five year olds through dramatic play. Early childhood education facilitators could gain knowledge on how to prepare a learning environment for dramatic play which is effective. Nyachidze primary

school could also benefit if the ECE facilitators lay a good foundation for the young learners by promoting dramatic play which help the learners later throughout their education journey. ECE learners themselves could also benefit from the knowledge they will get from their facilitators. Also Midlands State University (MSU) could benefit from this research by offering students who may be studying on this program to some information that is relevant that is within the Zimbabwean context.

1.5 Delimitations of the study

In this study, the researcher was focusing on the learning and development of ECE learners during dramatic play at Nyachidze primary school. This study was limited to ECE learners of ages four to five who were the participants . Nyachidze primary school is located in Mashonaland East, Seke district and it is situated on a farm. The school caters for learners who come from the surrounding farms. From Belvedere technical teachers' college where MSU is operating, it is about 3km to Harare main post office. From Harare main post office to Mbudzi round about along Beatrice road is about 15km. From Mbudzi round about to Nyachidze primary school along Masvingo road is approximately 20km.

1.6 Limitations of the study

The researcher encountered problems in carrying out this research. The dramatic play centres at Nyachidze primary school were not equipped with adequate playing materials because of financial constraints. The classrooms being used during this study at Nyachidze primary school was too small. Parental involvement has failed since most of these parents in the surrounding farms were working in those farms and most of them were failing to appreciate the importance of ECE programs and this led them to have no interest in the participation of toy production.

1.7 Assumptions

In this study, the researcher assumed that dramatic play is effective on the learning and development of four to five year olds. However, the effective part of it is determined by the type of environment, that is how conducive the environment is and the type of playing equipment. The researcher also assumed that the type of materials or toys on different dramatic centres lures the young learners to be motivated to play with them for effective learning and development to take place.

1.8 Definition of key terms

a) Dramatic play

According to Copple and Bredekamp (2009), dramatic play is a type of play that includes acting out specific roles and interacting with others, this type of play is symbolic and usually includes pretend or make believe scenarios. Dramatic play can be defined as a type of play where children accept and assign roles and then act them out (www.earlychildhoodnews.com (2013). Therefore, dramatic play can be defined as a type of play that offers opportunities for all children to do different activities including talking to each other developing different skills such as physical, social, emotional intellectual and language skills.

b) Early childhood education

Greenwood (2001) says early childhood education refers to programs for young children based on an explicit curriculum delivered by qualified staff and designed to support children's development and learning. According to Copple and Bredekamp (2009) early childhood education is understanding and promoting high quality learning and developmental appropriate experiences for children from birth to age eight. From the above definitions, one can say that early childhood education refers to the program that caters for children from zero

to eight years of age and the program's main purpose is to protect these young children's rights to learn and develop holistically in a conducive age appropriate environment until the time they reach the age of eight.

1.9 Summary

The chapter has looked at the introduction and the background to the study. Statement to the problem and research questions were outlined. Significance of the study, delimitations and limitations of the study were also revealed. Assumptions of the study were also included. Having dealt with the problem of the study in this chapter, the subsequent chapter is going to review literature related to the research study.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.0 Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher presents the literature review by linking different perspectives from different authors and other studies that are related to the topic, thus what different authors say about the effectiveness of early childhood education centre based dramatic play on the learning and development among four to five year olds.

The types of dramatic play centres and the activities engaged in those centres were looked at first. Thereafter the chapter briefly states the skills which are developed through dramatic play activities. How learning takes place during dramatic play activities was also revealed. The remaining part covered the discussion of the topic on the role of an early childhood educator on dramatic play and examined the extent to which dramatic play is effective on the learning and development of ECE learners. Finally, the chapter stated the ways on how dramatic play can be effective on the learning and development of ECE learners.

2.1 Dramatic play centres and activities early childhood education learners of four to five year olds engage in.

Keenan ((1993:35) says “a learning centre is a specific space in the room where the teacher provides a range of planned, sequential experiences that are aimed at helping each of the children develop to their intellectual potential, acquire facility with language and to develop physically, socially, emotionally and creatively according to their own unique rate of development.” Brewer (1998) says young children are observed doing different activities as they play on different dramatic play centres. They put on costumes and pretend they are grown-ups. Young children give each other roles like father, mother and others pretend to be

children in the family, one can also be a doctor for the sick. Brewer (1998) states that some of the most memorable and insightful play experiences educators witness take place when children are engaged in dramatic play sometimes referred to as pretend play or make believe. Brewer went on to say that a child bubbles into the receiver of a toy telephone, a toddler gently rocks a doll while feeding it a bottle, a pre-schooler imitates a conversation between puppets using different tones of voice and another child builds a farm out of blocks and uses miniature animal props to re-enact a story.

The above views mean that, there are different types of dramatic play centres which include hospital/clinic centre, manipulative and block play area, shop corner, kitchen centre, wardrobe centre, sand and water play, ICT/technology centre and music, movement and dance areas. In these different dramatic play centres, different activities such as story-telling, dialogue, music, dances, building, drama and other activities can occur during dramatic play. According to Barker (1995), learners share their secrets and fantasies in their peer groups, exchange tales of mystery, magic and imagination which generally embodies what their minds understand of society's folklore and legends. This means that learners develop language, social skills, problem solving skills and they also become emotionally stable through sharing secrets, fantasies and imaginative stories.

2.2.0 Skills developed during dramatic play activities.

2.2.1 Emotional skills

Isenberg and Jalongo (2006) say play supports emotional development by providing a way to express and cope with feelings. This means young learners can explore and express their emotions, they overcome fear and anxiety through role playing. As ECE learners engage in dramatic play, they learn to release the emotions which are frowned upon in society, a young learner may scold or punish a doll, scolding might not be allowed in society, dramatic play

therefore is used as a form of therapy that is healing against the pain experienced (Kuyanana-Tumbare et al 2014). For example, in dramatic play, ECE learners can play a passive role by transferring the pain to a doll.

When a child is able to control emotions and understand difficult situations, this leads him or her to emotional development. According to Barblet (2000) play with imagination and fantasy is the child's natural medium of self-expression. In dramatic play, children act out real life situations, and they act out anxiety and emotional stress from abuse, neglect, abandonment and various other painful physical experiences (Kuyanana-Tumbare et al, 2014). ECE learners that are abused may not be able to share or communicate their experiences verbally with adults or peers, but may be able to use an anatomically correct doll to show what happened. This means through observing children in their play, one might be able to spot or see a troubled young learner and offer any necessary assistance, play therefore, is seen as young learner's language.

Read (1966) says dramatic play affords the children a means of relieving and clarifying experiences, thus reducing anxiety. This helps children in striving to clarify for themselves the grown up world. This means less supervision is encouraged if dramatic play is to have meaning to the children, however they often need help not direction of what they are doing.

2.2.2 Physical development

Play helps in the development of both gross and fine motor skills, gross motor skills involve large muscles and fine motor skills involve small muscles (<http://www.healthofchildren.com> G-H/Gross-Motor-Skills). Englebright (2008) went on to say children use fine and gross motor skills in their play. Brewer (1998) says that children at play can be encouraged to lift, carry and move in response to rhythms hence developing gross motor skills and children can also practice fine motor skills as they string beads, fit together puzzles, hammer nails into

wood or paint at easels. Kuyanana-Tumbare et al (2014) state that children repeat certain body movements purely for pleasure and these movements develop body control and muscle coordination. When parts of the body work together so that the whole body moves smoothly and accomplishes a task, it is called coordination.

2.2.3 Social development

During play children increase their social competence and emotional maturity. According to Smilansky (1990) school success largely depends on children's ability to interact positively with their peers and adults. Therefore, this ability is learnt and developed during play activities with others. Play with other learners helps an individual learn how to be part of a group. In dramatic play, learners develop skills which help them get along with others, problem solving, negotiation, resolving conflicts with others as they work within the group (Anderson-McNamee 2010). In dramatic play, children communicate and interpret continuously in the negotiation with peers and role play (Samuelson and Carlson, 2008)

Brewer (1998) says in the Piagetian view, play pushes children of egocentric thought, that is, children in play situations are forced to consider the viewpoints of their playmates and therefore become less egocentric. For example, if Susan and Jane are pretending to cook dinner, each may have definite ideas about how the task should be done, they will each have to accommodate each other's thinking in order to continue their play (Brewer, 1998). This simply means that, children develop social skills like cooperation so as to achieve some group goals during dramatic play. They also have opportunities during dramatic play to learn to delay their own gratification for a few minutes, for example, while someone else finishes playing with a doll (Brewer, 1998).

2.2.4 Cognitive development

Cognitive development is defined as an increase in the child's basic store of knowledge (Lunzer, 1959), it occurs as a result of experiences with objects and people (Piaget, 1952). Brewer (1998) says cognitive abilities include identifying, classifying, sequencing, observing, discriminating, making predictions, drawing conclusions and determining cause and effect relationships. When children engage in dramatic play they use their imagination as they pretend to be someone else, for example, a child who wants to play being a "nurse" must decide what will be used for a thermometer, injection and so on (Brewer, 1998). This ability to use objects to represent reality develops children's abstract thought (Kuyanana-Tumbare et-al 2014). Anderson (2010) says that young children also imitate their own family experiences and this helps them to learn more about the different roles of family members hence developing cognitive skills.

Brewer (1998) states that children develop problem solving skills abilities in play through puzzles and games, they increase their understanding of size, shape, colour and texture through play, they begin to understand relationships as they try to put a square object in a round opening or a large object in a small space. This means that, when children discover that a square object cannot fit into a round opening, they will have created knowledge, hence developing cognitively.

2.2.5 Language development skill

Anderson (2010) argues that children involved in dramatic play can stimulate several types of learning. They can strengthen their language skills by modelling other children and adults. They use language to talk to each other and they can create stories about their roles such as "I am the mother." Children's language development skill is reinforced through imitation from other peers when they participate in dramatic plays. Language skills are so vital to concept

formation and are called for and practised in dramatic play (Hildebrand 1971). Grossman and Keyes (1985) say that dramatic play affords opportunities to expand expressive language and facilitates speech production. This means that dramatic play makes easier the speech production. Smilansky (1990) propounds that to engage with others in dramatic play, children use language to explain what they are doing and ask and answer questions. Different dramatic play activities such as storytelling, drama, dialogue, music, folktales help children for language development.

2.3 Learning during dramatic play activities

Brewer (1998) says sometimes observers of young children think that children will not learn academic skills if they spend their time playing. Brewer went on to say that abilities in Mathematics are developed when children play, children learn about set theory as they group objects such as wooden blocks, buttons or seeds, they learn about geometry as they explore various shapes. Dramatic play has many opportunities to sort, group and classify. Children also learn to use mathematics to solve problems like “how many forks are needed if we need one for each plate.” This means that dramatic play affords children an opportunity to learn different Mathematical concepts.

Dramatic play also fosters concepts associated with science. Brewer (1998) says children may experiment in their play, they learn through observation, by comparing items or events on the basis of similarities and differences, development of science skills is easy to observe in play situations, children observe, make predictions, gather data and test hypothesis. For example, children constructing with blocks during dramatic play are learning about physics as they experience practical applications of stress, mass and weight, they can also explore ramps and gears and the operation of simple machines (Brewer, 1998). This means that dramatic play affords an opportunity for young learners to learn science concepts.

Brewer (1998) says writing requires fine motor development; therefore any activity that contributes to developing control of the fine muscles is useful in writing. Brewer went on to say children can cut, work on puzzles; build with legos, manipulate with clay and other things during dramatic play for developing the control needed to make letters, all these examples illustrate the support for academic learning that is provided by play. This means different dramatic play activities contribute to learning of young learners.

Brewer (1998) states that reading is a complex process that involves eye coordination, visual and auditory discrimination, and the cognitive ability to work with parts of wholes. Dramatic play is vital especially in developing such abilities. Collier (1983) states that play assist the development of representational skills and the formation of the symbolic foundations that are necessary for reading. Brewer (1998) found out that one of the most important goals in reading instruction for young children is oral language development and during dramatic play, children have a chance to talk, argue, explain and persuade as well as to use language in imaginative ways. This means that dramatic play also affords opportunities in the development of academic learning like reading ability.

2.4 The role of an early childhood educator on dramatic play

Keenan (1993) states that when setting up a learning centre, the ECE teacher must look at the abilities, interests, and needs of the learners. Thus, the early childhood educator has a pivotal role of providing dramatic play areas which are attractive with inviting materials which are conducive to learning so that learners will be encouraged to go there. The environment should be rich and varied in stimulation and that materials should be age and developmentally appropriate. ECE teachers should also rotate the materials on the centres to promote continued interest.

Kuyanana-Tumbare et al (2014) say it is the responsibility of an ECE teacher to choose materials and resources based on his or her knowledge of child development and individual children's interests and abilities age and developmental levels of learners must be carefully considered when selecting materials and the materials should be familiar to the children and also provide those that are novel in order to present a challenge. There is need for the early childhood educator to create space for children to move around freely. Hildebrand (1971) says that early childhood educators must be friendly, open, and spontaneous and be creative and let the ECE learners do activities which are self-expressive. Early childhood educators should make the materials accessible to the learners so that they can choose the resources that best suit their purposes (Kuyanana-Tumbare et al). This means that the manner in which these resources are stored and made available to the learners can either support or hinder their play.

Brewer (1998) says an early childhood educator's role during dramatic play is that of an observer. In observing the ECE teacher should watch learners' interactions with others and with objects. The teacher should observe the length of time that learners can maintain play episodes and should look for any learners who have trouble playing or joining play groups. Brewer went on to say these observation should then be used in planning additional play experiences and in making decisions about whether to enter play situations and also in making assessments of the play of individual learners.

As learners act out their roles in dramatic play, they disrupt the arrangement of materials on the dramatic play centres. ECE teachers should encourage learners to restore order and to take satisfaction in arranging the materials for the next time use (Hendrick, 1993). ECE teachers should also take the opportunity to chart with the learners about what they are doing and what fun they had during dramatic play. Dramatic centres should be attractive and

brightly presented to lure and inspire creative and imaginative play. This should be an area where the learners can immediately take on a role and begin pretending.

2.5 The extent to which dramatic play is effective on the learning and development among ECE learners.

Kuyanana-Tumbare et al (2014) state that when children engage in dramatic play with peers and families, they begin to learn that some behaviour is acceptable while other behaviour is unacceptable. Parents and early childhood educators start these lessons early in the child's life by teaching the child to control aggressive behaviour during play (<http://www.healthofchildren.com/A/AggressiveBehaviour.html> 2012). ECE teachers can develop morals in children by reading stories to them and deducting the moral values in the stories, with their peers during dramatic play, learners can quickly learn that taking turns is rewarding and cheating is not, group play helps the learners to appreciate team work and share and respect others' feelings (Kuyanana-Tumbare, 2014). This means that dramatic play is effective to the extent that it enhances moral development.

According to Kuyanana-Tumbare et al (2014), through dramatic play, learners learn practical skills, children learn to lay the table, clean up, prepare food, cut with a knife, house cleaning, dressing self as they dress dolls, healthy habits, problem skills and many other self-help or practical skills. Brewer (1998) propounds that play contributes to the development of academic ability. As learners engage in different dramatic play activities, they learn or develop skills needed in Mathematics, Science, Social Studies, reading skills, writing skills and other skills needed in project work. Brewer (1998) says that play is one of the teaching strategies available to teachers as they plan for children's learning. This means that dramatic play is effective to the extent that it develops practical skills and academic abilities in ECE learners and is also used as a teaching strategy.

2.6 How can dramatic play be effective on the learning and development among ECE learners of four to five year olds?

Brewer (1998) says play that aids children in their development can be achieved at school if teachers provide time, space and materials. Obviously, children need time to plan and carry out play episodes if they are to develop knowledge and skills in play. No child can get organised and complete a satisfying block construction in the ten minutes allocated to play in some classrooms (Brewer, 1998). Christie and Wardle (1992) found out that the play patterns of children in longer play periods were more mature than those of children in shorter play periods. This means that, for learning and development of young learners to be effective during dramatic play, learners must be given enough time to play, there should be enough space for different activities to take place during dramatic play.

According to Brewer (1998), for play to be effective in children's learning and development, the necessary playing materials should be readily available. To encourage children to learn about appropriate clothes for the weather, then teachers should provide many different pieces of clothing in the dress-up area, to encourage children to learn how to create colours, teachers should provide paints in the Art area, to encourage children to demonstrate the ability to classify, then materials like leaves, seeds, buttons, blocks of different colours and models of farm and zoo animals should be readily available in different dramatic areas. Teachers have many opportunities to plan environments and materials so that learning goals can be achieved in playful activities. This means that for learning and development to be effective during dramatic play, the dramatic play areas should be fully equipped with necessary materials, if not so, then play will be of no meaning.

2.7 Summary

The reviewed literature has outlined the dramatic play centres and the activities which are done in those centres, the skills which are developed during dramatic play activities were also outlined. The literature has also explained how learning takes place during dramatic play activities. The roles of an early childhood educator on dramatic play were established. The literature has also explained the extent to which dramatic play is effective on the learning and development among ECE learners and the ways in which dramatic play can be made effective on the learning and development of ECE learners were stated. Therefore, the next chapter will focus on research methodology and instruments to be used on the study.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the methods used in collecting information for the study. The chapter focuses on the research design, population and sample, sampling techniques and research instruments used in data collection. Data presentation, analysis and discussion as well as summary of the chapter are also presented.

3.1.0 Research design

The researcher used the qualitative design. It is based on field observation and does not involve statistics. Pollard and Burne (1994) say the qualitative research typically involves observing events in a real social and natural environment. In addition to the above statement, Zikmund (2003) describes a research design as a master plan specifying the methods and procedures for collecting and analysing the needed information. For this study, the researcher used the case study design so as to carry a thorough observation of the problem.

First-hand information was found through observation, document analysis and interviews. According to Robinson (2000), a case study is a strategy for doing research which involves empirical investigation of particular, contemporary phenomena within its real life context using multiple source of evidence. Thus a case study helped the researcher to gain a rich understanding of the context of the study. In support, Borg and Gall (1993) point out that a case study examines an in-depth social group and social institution for a community. In this case, the researcher observed learners in their natural settings, that is in the classroom and the results reflected a true picture of what was happening.

3.1.1 Advantages of a case study

The advantage of a case study is that the researcher collects raw data direct from the learners in their natural settings and in a relaxed manner. Best (1993) explains that a case study allows a researcher an opportunity to gather empirical data such as observable behaviours of social play during the interaction of the researcher and the children being studied.

3.1.2 Disadvantages of a case study

A case study is hard to draw definite cause-effect conclusions and possible biases can be there in data collection and interpretation since single person gathers and analysis the information (Best, 1993). Gay (1987) says that case studies may lack generalisation. This may be so because information collected from one school cannot be generalised to other schools because of different circumstances. Thus, results which may be found from a particular case study may not apply to other cases.

3.2 Population and Sample

In this study, the researcher used a population in an ECD A class which consists of four to five year old learners both boys and girls. According to Nachimas and Nachimas (1989) a population refers to a group of individuals of interest to the researcher. In this study, the population was drawn from one school and it consistd of forty one learners in the class.

A sample is a small group of people selected from the total population (Sidhu, 1997). In support, Cohen and Manion (1994) define a sample as a group or subset of the population in which information is collected.

3.3 Sampling technique

Borg and Gall (1989) define sampling as a means of selecting a given number of representatives of a population. Hill, Winfred and Bonnie (2003) say that sampling is the way sample elements are to be selected from the entire population and come up with representative samples. Sampling also enables the researcher to collect information from a small group rather than a whole group so as to overcome time, money and access constraints.

Random sampling was done among four to five year old learners by picking up numbers from a box. Those who picked the even numbers were selected for the sample. Random sampling was done so as to choose and achieve effect on gender sensitivity from the participants. The researcher was dealing with twenty participants.

3.4.0 Research instruments

According to Best (1993) research instruments are measurement tools, for example questionnaires or scales designed to obtain data on a topic of interest from research subjects. In this study, the researcher used observation method, document analysis and interview method.

3.4.1 Observation method

In observation method, the actual behaviour is observed as it occurs naturally. Farrant (1980) says that observation is the combination of telling, showing and doing. Borg and Gall (1993) say an observation method is a research technique in which the behaviour of research subjects is watched and recorded without any direct contact or interaction. In this study, the researcher had an opportunity of observing the learners in dramatic play. This method enabled the researcher to collect primary data in a natural setting. The researcher tried not to interfere

with the learners during interaction with each other because the results may be biased in the sense that it will be like giving directions of the activities.

3.4.2 Advantages of observation method

The main strength of observation method is that, it provides direct access to the social phenomena under consideration instead of relying on some kind of self-report such as asking people what they would do in a certain situation, one actually observes and records their behaviour in that situation (www.strath.ac.uk>3Datacollection>unit5 2014). Thus, data was collected on a free environment and the researcher had enough time to observe the learners and data was also collected from a natural setting whereby the activities were not initiated by the teacher.

3.4.3 Disadvantages of observation method

It is susceptible to observer, bias-subjective on the part of the observer, thus undermining the reliability and hence the validity of the data gathered. This can be because the observer records not what actually happened but what he or she wanted to see, expected to see or merely thought they saw. The method needs time to plan for the environment in which learners must be observed in and planning for the materials as well (www.strath.ac.uk..2014).

3.4.4 Document analysis

Documents are also important records in carrying out research because they are also a source of information. They provide the researcher with information which may help in analysing data. According to Best and Kahn (1993), documents are records of specific episodes and they define certain events. In support, Sidhu (1994) points out that documentary data can be useful as it provides information that can guide the researcher. In this study the researcher used health, daily attendance register, developmental checklist, social and pre-reading record

books to understand how learners learn and develop through dramatic play. Social record book helped the researcher with information pertaining to the background of the child, problems, interests and ambitions. The register guided the researcher to see how regular the learners were coming to school. The developmental checklist was used by the researcher to record the developmental milestones attained by the learners. The health record book helped the researcher to check the child's physical health and the pre-reading record book helped the researcher to check the academic skills being attained by the learners through dramatic play.

3.4.5 Advantages of document analysis

Like any other method of research, the document analysis has its advantages and disadvantages. Best and Kahn (1993) state that documents serve a useful purpose in adding knowledge to field of inquiry and they explain certain social events. This implies that documents provide the researcher with child's development information which may be useful to the researcher.

3.4.6 Disadvantages of document analysis

Documentary is a one way channel of communication and there is no clarification of information which may be clear. Some of the information may be outdated especially on development aspects. Gaflo and Miller (1968) say that using documentary sources does not mean that all the data appearing in print are trustworthy. However there was need of regular communication with parents either by writing letters or calling for a meeting so that update of correct information was recorded.

3.4.7 Interview method

This kind of data collection method enables the researcher to ask questions and get answers from interviewees. A conclusion is reached basing on how the participants respond.

According to Charle (1988) an interview is a formal meeting or conversation with a person in order to obtain comments and information. In support, Nachimas and Nachimas (1989) say a personal interview is a face to face and interpersonal role situation in which an interviewer asks respondents questions designed to obtain answers pertaining to the study. This implies that, the researcher gets information through direct verbal interaction between her and the participants. In this study, the researcher was doing face to face interviews to get information relevant to the study.

3.4.8 Advantages of interview method

Borg and Gall (1994) point out that interviews may be seen as providing higher quality information which is free from bias. Interviews are useful to obtain detailed information about personal feelings, perceptions and opinions, they allow more detailed questions to be asked and they usually achieve a high response rate and respondents' own words are recorded ([www.evalued.bcu.ac.uk.Home>HowtoevaluateE/S](http://www.evalued.bcu.ac.uk/Home>HowtoevaluateE/S) 2014). This implies that, the researcher is able to verify facts and get clarification from the respondents rather than assuming then reach to a conclusion.

3.4.9 Disadvantages of interview method

Interview needs much time because it is not a conversation of one word answer but clarification is most commonly done. Respondents may tend to hide some of the important information in fear of publicity.

3.5 Data presentation, analysis and discussion

The researcher collected data which was presented, analysed and discussed on the next chapter. Howard and Sharp (1988) view data presentation and analysis as ordering and structuring of information so as to produce knowledge. Discussion involves explaining the

findings and answering 'why' questions, attaching significance of particular results and putting patterns into analytic framework.

The researcher was using the qualitative perspective which is more concerned with extensive data than figures. It has notes on observations, document analysis and interviews. Data was presented using detailed descriptions and explanations of the evidence on the effectiveness of dramatic play on learning and development among four to five year old learners.

3.6 Summary

The chapter was concerned about the methodology which was used to carry out the study. The research design was highlighted as qualitative research and a case study. Population and sample, sampling techniques and research instruments were explained. Advantages and disadvantages of the methods were stated. Data analysis and interpretation was outlined. The next chapter will focus on data presentation, analysis and discussion.

CHAPTER 4

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents data collected from participants through the use of different methods. Focus is on presentation, analysis and discussion of the research findings. The use of observation guides, document analysis, and interviews for the ECE teachers helped the researcher to obtain the much needed information for the research.

4.1 Demographic data

Three (3) qualified ECE teachers were given the chance to participate in this study and all of them were female teachers. All the teachers were diploma holders in ECE. Twenty learners were randomly chosen from ECD A classroom which consisted of forty one learners of ages between four to five years and eight of the participants were boys and twelve were girls.

4.2 Restatement of the research problem

The study sought evidence on the effectiveness of early childhood education centre based dramatic play on the learning and development among four to five year olds.

4.3 Research question

Does early childhood education centre based dramatic play have an effective role on the learning and development among four to five year old learners?

4.4 Sub research questions

- a) Which dramatic play centres and activities early childhood education learners of four to five years engage in?
- b) Which skills are developed through dramatic play activities?
- c) How does learning take place during dramatic play activities?
- d) What is the role of an early childhood educator on dramatic play?
- e) To what extent is dramatic play effective on the learning and development of ECE learners?
- f) How can dramatic play be effective on the learning and development among four to five year olds?

4.5 Research findings

The researcher observed learners as they were playing freely at each dramatic centre. The activities were observed to answer the first three research questions. Question one intended to find out dramatic play centres and activities ECE learners engage in, question two sought evidence of the skills which are developed through dramatic play activities and question three sought evidence on how learning take place during dramatic play. In an attempt to answer these above mentioned questions, table one will highlight the activities engaged, the skills developed and how learning takes place using different materials on different dramatic centres. The above mentioned questions were addressed at the same time. The information was gathered during indoor and outdoor free play whereby ECE learners of four to five years engaged into dramatic play activities. This means that table one below reveals data for questions one, two and three. Data was collected through observation and document analysis.

TABLE 1 Indoor free play: Manipulative and block centre

The table below summarises the results of the activities at the block centre and reveals data for question one, two and three at the manipulative and block centre.

Routine context	Dramatic centre	Materials provided	Activities engaged	Skills developed
Indoor free play	Manipulative and block play centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Interlocking blocks of different colours, size and shapes. -Bottle tops of different colours and sizes. -Different types of seeds. -Puzzles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Boys and girls were involved in block construction of cars, guns, garages, buses and other things. -All the learners engaged in dialogues, sharing ideas and appreciating each other's work. -Sorting using seeds, bottle tops and blocks. -completing four piece puzzles of shapes and animals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fine motor skills like finger dexterity and eye-hand-coordination. -creativity -problem solving -cooperation -sharing -turn taking -appreciation -classification -sorting

The above findings revealed that ECE learners like to act out real situations when they are at the dramatic play centre, they like to imitate different people like builders. This was noticed at the manipulative and block centre, where the learners were constructing different things. In support of the above findings, www.earlychildhoodnews.com (2013) says dramatic play is a type of play where children accept and assign roles and then act them out. The findings also revealed that dramatic play can help ECE learners to develop different skills such as problem solving, creativity, sharing and cooperation. Emotional skills were also developed as the

learners were achieving their goals of construction using interlocking blocks, hence perseverance skill was also developed. Learners developed fine motor skills as they were constructing different things and moving blocks from one point to the other. Supporting the above idea, Blakley et al (1989) say that by carrying, lifting, bending, reaching, grasping, holding and pushing blocks of all kinds, children have opportunities to develop large and small muscles and muscular coordination. These findings also revealed that learners develop speaking and listening skills as they were engaged in dialogues in their peer groups.

These findings also revealed that learners developed cognitive skills as they were constructing with blocks. They learn about different sizes as they were fitting the interlocking blocks together and as they were completing four piece puzzles. They also learn about different shapes and textures as they were manipulating different objects. They learn to share ideas and to appreciate each other's work hence developing good social skills.

TABLE 2 Indoor free play: Shop corner

The table below summarises the results of the activities at the shop corner and reveals data for question one, two and three during indoor free play at the shop centre.

Routine context	Dramatic centre	Materials provided	Activities engaged	Skills developed
Indoor free play	Shop centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Packets of zap-nax filled with dried leaves. -sweets -empty tins of maheu, cocacola, lotion and ponds -empty boxes of cerevita, cornflakes, toothpaste, tea leaves, biscuits -Old money (notes and coins) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Both boys and girls were engaged in buying and selling. -Learners assigned each other roles like shop-keeper, customers, father, mother and children. -Dialogues were being done, learners were asking and answering questions. Materials at the shop corner were being re-arranged accordingly, the same products were arranged at the same place, (Order was being maintained. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Cooperation -Problem - solving -Ordering -Arranging -Sharing -Speaking -Listening -Counting -Calculating -sorting

The findings at the shop centre revealed that dramatic play was shown as learners were role playing buying and selling. Learners were able to take leadership roles and they do not hesitate to be involved in different kinds of occupations. It was noticed that even though the learners of four to five years had problem in calculating change, they know that when they buy something they can be given change. These findings also revealed that dramatic play affords opportunities to develop different skills. At the shop corner learners were developing social skills as they were interacting with each other, cognitive skills as they were trying to calculate change and language as they were engaged in dialogues.

The findings at the shop centre also revealed that learners can also develop cognitive skills. As they were re-arranging materials at the shop corner according to sameness, the learners were developing ordering, sorting and classification skills that will be needed in Mathematics. As they were calculating change though the change may not be correct, the learners were also developing Mathematical language, the word 'change' was being said out. Counting was also exercised as the learners were counting notes and coins though they were identifying the money wrongly but however, counting skills were developed. It was noticed that one-to-one correspondence was also being developed as the learners were mentioning the number of items they needed from the shop.

TABLE 3 Indoor free play: At the home centre

The table below summarises the results of the activities at the home centre and reveals data for question one, two and three during indoor free play at the home centre.

Routine context	Dramatic centre	Materials provided	Activities engaged	Skills developed
Indoor free play	Home centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Dress-up clothes of different sizes and different occupations. -Human dolls -Animal dolls -Towels -kitchen utensils -Water -Toy cars made from empty containers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Learners involved in role play. -They assigned each other roles like mother, father, brother, sister and child. -Dramatic play was done as learners were imitating the roles of different family members. -Learners engaged in dialogues. -They were engaged in fantasy and pretend play as they were pretending to be other people in the society. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -self-help skills -cooperation -sharing -imagination -appreciation -respect

The above findings revealed that ECE learners assigned each other roles and could end up imitating other people's roles which they aspire in their society such as teachers, nurses, headman and other professions. Different skills were developed such as sharing, cooperation, respect and imagination. This was shown as the learners were engaged in fantasy play, pretending to be other people. Problem solving skills were also developed. Hess and Croft

(1972) say imaginative play affords children an opportunity to relate to one another and to develop ideas as to how others feel. Thus learners develop different social skills through dramatic play. ECE learners are ready to play when they are given the materials and they are capable of choosing how to play with the materials. However, the researcher noted that if the materials are enough for all the learners, then they could go beyond. This means the inadequacy of playing materials limit the learners hence learning and development may not be effective.

The findings at the home centre revealed that learners were also developing self-help skills as they were dressing and undressing dolls. Academic skills were also developed as the learners were feeding the dolls because times of the day were being stated, for example, the one who was pretending to be a mother was instructing the sister that she should give the baby (doll) porridge in the morning and sadza in the afternoon. This means that as learners engage in pretend play, they develop and master concepts that will help them in formal learning like times of the day, that is morning, afternoon and evening.

TABLE 4 Indoor free play: clinic centre

The table below summarises the results of the activities at the clinic centre and reveals data for question one, two and three during indoor free play at the clinic centre.

Routine context	Dramatic centre	Materials provided	Activities engaged	Skills developed
Indoor free play	Clinic centre	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -towels -clothes -empty tins and plastic bags of drugs -wooden sticks -thermometer -water 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Learners engaged dialogue, consulting a doctor or a nurse -Learners assigned each other roles of doctor, nurse, patient, father, mother, baby -Dolls were covered with towels and clothes to protect them from cold -Doctors and nurses gave treatment to the patients -Temperature was taken using the thermometer which was provided by the facilitator and also sticks were used as thermometers and injections -Instructions were given by doctors and nurses to the patients so that they can prevent colds and coughs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -self-help skills -appreciation -leadership -problem solving -imagination -cooperation -speaking -listening -leadership -caring

The findings at the clinic centre revealed that learners are able to assign each other roles differently according to the materials provided to them. Learners were imitating what nurses and doctors do, what mothers and fathers do when a child become sick. Speaking and listening skills were developed as learners engaged in dialogues. Cooperation and team work were developed as learners were interacting and play in groups. Caring was shown and demonstrated as the mothers were covering the babies (dolls) with towels so as to prevent them from catching a cold. Imagination and skills involved in thinking were developed as learners were pretending to be doctors, nurses, mothers, fathers and as they were using sticks to replace injections and thermometers. According to Seefeldt (1997) socio dramatic play with children acting as if they were astronauts, mothers, fathers, doctors or teachers is important in the development of learning strategies and the skills involved in thinking. Thus role taking helps children to understand their world. Fine motor skills were developed as the learners were picking up different things and eye-hand-coordination skills were also developed as the learners were injecting the patients.

According to Brewer (2008) reading is a complex process that involves eye-coordination, visual and auditory discrimination. This means that as learners developed eye-hand-coordination, they were also developing eye-hand-coordination skills that will be needed in reading as they enter formal learning and even in informal leaning they do pre-reading of pictures. Finger dexterity was being developed and is needed in writing and shaping of the letters when they enter formal learning. This means dramatic play also affords opportunities for ECE learners to develop academic skills.

TABLE 5 Indoor free play: Technology centre

The table below summarises the results of the activities at the technology centre and reveals data for questions one, two and three during indoor free play at the technology centre.

Routine context	Dramatic centre	Materials provided	Activities engaged	Skills developed
Indoor free play	Technology centre	-toy cell phones -toy cars -broken watch -broken calculators	-Learners were pretending to send and receive messages using the toy cell phones. - They were pretending to take photos using the cell phones. - Playing with toy cars pretending to be drivers and conductors. -producing sounds made by buses.	-fine motor skills - eye-hand-coordination -speaking -problem solving -listening

The above findings revealed that learners are capable of playing with the materials that are only familiar to them. This was noticed when the learners showed no interests on the calculators. The learners loved to play with toy cars and toy cell phones. Some were pretending to be drivers, some conductors and some passengers. Imagination, speaking and listening skills were developed. Fine motor and eye-hand-coordination were developed as the learners were manipulating the cell phones and toy cars. However, few activities were done at this centre because of few playing materials. The researcher noted that when materials are

few, it promotes ego-centrism and aggressiveness will also appear and this will not lead to effective learning and development.

TABLE 6 Outdoor free play: Sand and water play centre

The table below summarises the results of the activities at the sand and water play centre and reveals data for questions one, two and three during outdoor free play at the sand and water play centre.

Routine context	Dramatic centre	Materials provided	Activities engaged	Skills developed
Outdoor free play	Sand and water play	-sand -water -empty containers -plates -pots -sticks	Learners engaged in building different things like bridges and houses. -Most of the girls opted mothers roles like cooking and most of the boys opted fathers roles like building. -Learners were involved in role playing.	-experimenting -creativity -discovering -leadership -problem solving -gross and fine motor skills.

Learners assigned each other roles like father, mother and children hence leadership skills, problem solving and self-expression skills were developed. Creativity was demonstrated as the learners were building different structures using sand and water. Both gross and fine motor skills were enhanced as learners were carrying tins full of sand and water from one point to the other and also as they were constructing different structures.

The findings at the sand and water play also revealed that learners discover many things scientifically, for example learners come to know that sand or soil without water is dusty and soil with water is muddy. As the learners filled the empty containers with sand and water they learn about different weight, that is they developed heavy and light concepts. They also learn about different properties of water like 'water flows, water takes the shape of any container and water make things wet'. Frank (1968) cited in Brewer (1998) concludes that play is a way of learning by trial and error to cope with the actual world. As the learners were playing with sand and water, they realised that if sand is mixed with water then it can easily stick together and be used in constructing different things than dry sand without water. This means dramatic play is effective on the learning and development among ECE learners.

4.6 Findings from the interviews made on dramatic play

The researcher also interviewed three ECE qualified teachers at Nyachidze primary school. Their responses to the questions are summarised below. The responses tried to answer questions four, five and six during interviews. Question four intended to find out the role of an early childhood educator on dramatic play. Question five intended to find out the extent to which dramatic play is effective on the learning and development among ECE learners and question six intended to find out how dramatic play be made effective on the learning and development among ECE learners.

TABLE 7 Responses from interviewee A

The table below summarises the responses to the interview questions from interviewee A and these responses tried to answer question four, five and six during interviews.

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS	RESPONSES
1) How often do you engage learners in dramatic play?	Everyday for forty five minutes. She introduces one dramatic play centre per day and uses the same materials, for example, on the first day the learners will play at the manipulative and block centre with interlocking toys only, the next day they will play at the manipulative and block play but with bottle tops and seeds only. Her reasons were because of small space.
2) What is the role of dramatic play materials on the learning and development of ECE learners?	To develop different skills in learners. Learners will also explore with different sizes, colours, shapes textures, weight and height.
3) What is your role in dramatic play?	To monitor the learners as they play and to give them directions wherever possible.
4) How often do you change materials on dramatic play centres?	The learners play with the same materials because there are no materials to change.
5) Is dramatic play effective on the learning and development of ECE learners?	Yes
6) To what extent is it effective?	To a greater extent if resources are enough and to a lesser extent when there are no resources.

The above findings from interviewee A showed that this ECE teacher came up with a strategy so as to accommodate her learners well during dramatic play. She uses the strategy of introducing one dramatic centre and the same type of materials to cater for the small space.

She also revealed that she doesn't change the materials because there are no playing materials to rotate. Interviewee A revealed that dramatic play is effective on the learning and development among ECE learners only if there are enough resources and if there are no resources, then it is effective to a lesser extent. In support of the above findings, Brewer (1998) says play that aids children in their development can be achieved at school if the teachers provide time, space and materials. For play to be effective in children's learning and development, the necessary materials should be readily available. This means that when there are enough materials that could be changed regularly to keep on attracting the young learners, when there is enough space for the learners to move around and also enough time to play and plan for their play, then dramatic play is effective on the learning and development among ECE learners.

TABLE 8 Responses from interviewee B

The table below summarises the responses to the interview questions from interviewee B and these responses tried to answer questions four, five and six during interviews.

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS	RESPONSES
1) How often do you engage learners in dramatic play?	Five days a week for forty five minutes. Introduces one dramatic play centre per day with the same type of materials, for example, on the first day the learners play at the manipulative and block play centre with blocks only, the next day learners play at the same centre but with puzzles only, on the third day with dolls. Her reasons were because the classroom is too small.
2) What is the role of dramatic play materials on the learning and development of ECE learners?	When learners manipulate dramatic play materials, they develop different skills like physical and social skills and they also develop different concepts like comparing sizes, colours and they observe different textures.
3) What is your role in dramatic play?	To monitor and assess the learners by asking what they are doing, how and why.
4) How often do you change materials on dramatic play centre?	“Normally I do not change materials but I displayed all the materials that are there because they are not enough.
5) Is dramatic play effective on the learning and development of ECE learners?	It depends, in some cases yes but in some cases no.
6i) In cases of ‘YES’ to your answer in question five, then to what extent is it effective?	If resources permit, then dramatic play can develop the whole child.
6ii) In cases of ‘NO’ to your answer in question five, then what is it that can be done to make it effective?	Playing materials should be available and should be enough for all the learners and enrolment should be normal not too many learners in a small room.

Just like interviewee A, interviewee B also uses the strategy of introducing the learners to one dramatic play centre while using the same type of playing materials. Interviewee B does not change play materials because there are no materials to change or to add on. Interviewee B

revealed that dramatic play can be or cannot be effective on the learning and development of ECE learners. this ECE teacher revealed that if resources are there and enough for all the learners then dramatic play can develop the whole child, that is, physically, socially, emotionally and intellectually, however, if enrolment is too high, the space is too small, no adequate playing materials to play with then dramatic play will not be effective on the learning and development among ECE learners.

However, these findings from interviewee B revealed that dramatic play is effective on the learning and development among ECE learners when there are enough resources, that is space and playing materials.

TABLE 9 Responses from interviewee C

The table below summarises the responses to the interview questions from interviewee C and these responses tried to answer question four, five and six during interviews.

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS	RESPONSES
1) How often do you engage learners in dramatic play?	Five days a week for forty five minutes. Introduces one dramatic play centre per day using the same type of materials.
2) What is the role of dramatic play materials on the learning and development of ECE learners?	By playing with different materials, learners will know different colours, sizes and shapes and they will also develop different skills.
3) What is your role in dramatic play?	To observe what the learners are doing and to help where necessary.
4) How often do you change materials on dramatic play centres?	No materials to change. Learners play with the same materials.
5) Is dramatic play effective on the learning and development among ECE learners?	Dramatic play just helps learners develop some skills. It's another way of teaching method amongst other ways.
6) How can dramatic play be effective on the learning and development among ECE learners?	The effective part of it only image when other teaching methods are introduced along with it. However, there is need of enough materials, for example, modern things like technological materials.

These above findings showed that interviewee C also introduces the same strategy on planning for dramatic play just like interviewees A and B. Interviewee C does not change the playing materials on dramatic centres. She revealed that dramatic play is only effective when it is introduced along with other teaching methods. This simply means that dramatic play is effective on the learning and development among ECE learners. Brewer (1998) says play is one of the teaching strategies available for teachers as they plan for children's learning. This means that play as a teaching strategy is effective that is why it is introduced.

The researcher has noted that all the three ECE teachers interviewed used the same strategy of introducing learners at one play centre while playing with the same materials per day. The researcher opted to observe her participants playing at the manipulative and block centre using the same materials. The researcher wanted to see if learning and development does occur to learners by using such strategy.

The table below shows how early childhood educators at Nyachidze primary school plan for dramatic play everyday and reveals data on the ways in which dramatic play can be made effective on the learning and development among ECE learners and also reveals the extent to which dramatic play can be effective on the learning and development among ECE learners. the information was gathered through observation during indoor free play at manipulative and block play centre.

TABLE 10 Indoor free play: Manipulative and block play centre

Routine context	Dramatic centre	Date	Materials available	Activities engaged	Duration of interest in play	Skills developed
Indoor free play	Manipulative and block	19-03-18	Interlocking blocks	Construction of different structures	fifteen minutes	-finger dexterity -eye hand coordination Creativity Cooperation
Indoor free play	Manipulative and block	20-03-18	puzzles	Completing simple puzzles provided	Ten minutes	-Problem solving
Indoor free play	Manipulative and block play	21-03-18	Dolls	-Most girls were playing mothers with human dolls. -Boys loved playing with animal dolls	Fifteen minutes	-caring -cooperation -speaking -listening
Indoor free play	Manipulative and block play	22-03-18	Bottle tops and seeds	Learners were not interested they just looked at the provided materials.	None	None
Indoor free play	Manipulative and block play	23-03-18	All materials at once, puzzles, interlocking blocks, dolls, bottle tops and seeds.	Construction, Completing puzzles, pretending to be fathers and mothers, engaged in dialogues, bathing the dolls.	One hour	-finger dexterity -creativity -problem solving -caring -turn taking Classification -sorting -appreciation -coordination

The above findings showed that on the first day the concentration span for learners as they were playing with interlocking toys was only fifteen minutes. On the second day the learners were provided with puzzles only and the concentration span with puzzles was only ten minutes. On the third day the learners were given dolls to play with and the concentration span was fifteen minutes. On the fourth day the researcher provided bottle tops and seeds and the learner's concentration span was zero. On the fifth day the researcher provided all the materials at once and the concentration span was one hour.

The above findings revealed that, for learners to develop different skills during dramatic play, then the materials should be presented at once so that learners will be motivated and have the interest to play with the materials and also have the choice to choose the material for themselves. The materials should be attractive and enough. This means early childhood educator's role during dramatic play is to provide enough and adequate playing materials and learners should be given enough time to play for dramatic play to be effective on the learning and development of ECE learners. Enough space should also be provided for learners to move around during play. Keenan (1993) says that when setting up a learning centre, ECE teachers must look at the abilities, interests, and needs of the learners. This means that playing materials should be attractive and inviting otherwise learners will just look at the playing materials and do nothing with them and the concentration span will be zero.

4.7 Summary

In this chapter, the researcher has presented data that was collected from the participants. The researcher overallly noted that dramatic play is effective on the learning and development among ECE learners. Different skills were developed and learning was also taking place. In the next chapter, the summary of findings, conclusions and recommendations will be given.

CHAPTER 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This chapter consists of summary of findings, conclusion and recommendations of the study. The researcher summarised what was found during the study. The researcher also gave suggestions which ECE teachers at Nyachidze primary school should use when planning and engaging learners in dramatic play.

5.1 Summary of findings

The study found out that, centre based dramatic play is effective on the learning and development of the whole child. Different activities which the learners engaged in during dramatic play helped the learners develop different academic learning skills like sorting, classification, observing, experimenting, describing, reading, writing eye-hand coordination and also helped the learners develop different physical, social, emotional and intellectual skills like gross and fine motor, cooperation, respect, appreciation, problem solving, perseverance and other skills. Brewer (2008) says play contributes to the development of gross and fine motor, to cognitive growth, and to social and emotional development. In dramatic play, learners strengthen many problem solving abilities, learn to express emotions in socially acceptable ways and learn the social skills necessary for success in groups. Brewer (1998) says play contributes to academic achievement; it helps children to gain abilities in Maths, Science and reading.

Another finding is that, for dramatic play to be effective, meaningful and to serve its purpose in the learning and development among ECE learners, there should be enough and adequate materials, enough space and time should be given during dramatic play. Materials need to be

changed regularly to keep on capturing the eyes of the learners. ECE learners are curious about new materials and this encourages them to play. The more they play, the more they learn and develop.

5.2 Conclusion

In conclusion, dramatic play is effective on the learning and development among four to five year olds. From the findings done, the researcher concluded that for ECE learners to effectively learn and develop through dramatic play, the materials on dramatic centres should be enough to the extent that learners should not fight over them. The materials should be changed regularly to lure learners on the centres. From the findings done, it indicated that some ECE teachers have limited knowledge on setting and planning of dramatic play centres.

5.3 Recommendations for this study

In light of the research findings from observations, document analysis and interviews, the following recommendations were made:-

- 1) ECE teachers should put a variety of playing materials on different dramatic centres to promote learning and development among ECE learners.
- 2) Teachers should let the learners choose the materials to play with not to choose playing materials for the learners.
- 3) ECE teachers should be creative and should improvise so that they come up with enough playing materials and space for learners to play freely.
- 4) Parental involvement should be encouraged so as to boost toy production which will help learners on their learning and development.

5) There is need for staff development workshops for ECE teachers to educate each other on how to plan for dramatic play and on how to set up different dramatic play centres.

APPENDIX 1

OBSERVATION GUIDE FOR THE RESEARCHER

ASPECT OF OBSERVATION	OBSERVATION	COMMENTS
Types of dramatic play centres, e.g. hospital, shop.	Which activities do learners engage in these learners?	
Resource materials and their adequacy.	Are there adequate play materials which promote effective learning and development?	
Academic learning skills.	Do learners learn new words and academic skills?	
Developmental skills.	Do children develop any skills during dramatic play?	
Planning and organisation of dramatic play activities.	How do teachers plan and organise dramatic play activities for the learners?	
Duration of dramatic play.	Is dramatic play given adequate time?	

APPENDIX 2

DOCUMENT ANALYSIS GUIDE FOR THE RESEARCHER

TYPE OF DOCUMENT	OBSERVATION	COMMENTS
Health record book	How is the learners' physical health?	
Daily attendance register	How often does the learners come to school?	
Social record book	Are the learners live with both parents, single parent, orphan or child headed? How is the learners' social interaction with other peers? Are the learners aggressive or shy?	
Developmental checklist record	Are the learners creative and be able to solve problems?	
Pre-reading record book	Are the learners able to identify playing materials and name them correctly?	

APPENDIX 3

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR TEACHERS

DATE :

AGE :

SEX :

1) How often do you engage learners in dramatic play?.....

.....

2) What is the role of dramatic play materials on the leaning and development of ECE learners?.....

.....

3) What is your role in dramatic play?.....

.....

4) How often do you change materials on dramatic play centres?.....

.....

5) Is dramatic play effective on the learning and development of ECE learners?.....

.....

6a) If 'YES' to question five, then to what extent?.....

.....

6b) If 'NO' to question five, then how can it be made effective?

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