



**Thesis by  
IBIAM, JULIANA  
UD**

**University of Nigeria,  
Nsukka**

**Parents' and teachers' attitude towards  
young children's play**

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**November, 1998**



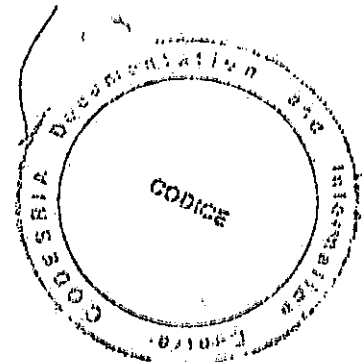
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# **PARENTS' AND TEACHERS' ATTITUDE TOWARDS YOUNG CHILDREN'S PLAY**

***A Thesis Presented To The Department of  
Education, University of Nigeria, Nsukka***

**In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for the Award of the Degree of Doctor of  
Philosophy In Education**

**By**





**IBIAM, JULIANA UDE  
Reg. No. PG/Ph.D/92/14069**

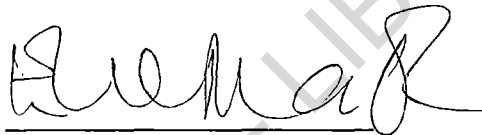
**November, 1998**

## Approval Page

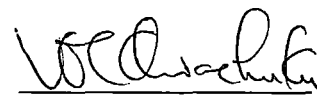
This Thesis has been Approved for the Department of Education University of Nigeria, Nsukka .

  
Supervisor

  
Internal Examiner

  
Supervisor

  
Head of Department

  
External Examiner

  
Dean of the Faculty

## Certification

Ibiam, Juliana Ude, a postgraduate student in the Department of Education with Registration No. PG/Ph.D/92/14069 has satisfactorily completed the requirement for course and research work for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Education. The work embodied in this thesis is original and has not been submitted in part or full for any other diploma or degree of this or any other University.

  
Head of Department

  
Supervisor

  
Co-Supervisor

# Dedication

To Ib, my husband,  
a close friend and insprer

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## Acknowledgement

This researcher is grateful to her supervisors, Prof. (Mrs) E.J. Maduewesi and Dr. (Mrs) W.J.Kalu, scholars, wonderful teachers and mentors. I thank them for their thoroughness and patience during their course of supervising this study. They showed so much expertise in the area of this study and I will forever remain grateful to them.

Worthy of special thanks are Drs, B.G. Nworgu, D.N.Eze and Mr.Okey Abonyi whose advise and very patient tutoring during the analysis of the data of this work helped in completing the work. I am grateful to Professors R.O. Ohuche, A.Ali, J.I.N. Okpala and Drs. G.C. Offoma, S.A. Ezeudu, J.C. Adigwe, N.I. Ogonnaya and Okey Umeakuka for their constructive criticisms, corrections, suggestions and advice at different stages of this work.

The researcher is greatly indebted to her son, Chidi, for his patience and relentless effort in proof reading, and correcting this work. The researcher is also thankful to Chijioke, Chimaroke and Uche for helping to code the data. Also worthy of mention are the researcher's assistants who helped during the data collection stage.

I owe a lot of gratitude to the Community for the Development of Economic and Social Research in Africa (CODESRIA) for their sponsorship of this work.

Finally, my profound gratitude goes to my beloved husband, Chief Ibiam

Agha and our children, Obinna, Nnenna, Chidiebere, Chinedu, for incredible patience and understanding. They kept our home intact during the tensing period of carrying out this research. Above all, I thank Almighty God for making this work possible.

**Ibiam J.U. (Mrs.)**

Department of Educational Foundations  
U.N.N., 1999.

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## Abstract

This study sought to find out parents' and teachers' attitude towards young children's play. Two hypotheses and twelve research questions were used to investigate the relationship that exists between gender, location, occupation, level of education and the attitude of parents' and teachers' towards young children's play. The study design was correlational. A multistage sampling method was used to select 744 parents and 144 teachers in 6 primary schools and 4 nursery schools in 2 local government areas of former Abia State. A questionnaire was used for data collection. Frequencies, Means, Standard Deviations, Spearman Correlation Coefficient product and multiple regression were used to analyse the data. Among the findings are that: 1 Parents and teachers have a negative attitude towards young children's play. 2 There is a significant relationship between parents' gender and their attitude towards young children's play. In the case of teachers there was no significant relationship in all the variables. It was recommended, among others, that parents and teachers should find time to participate in young children's play. Also the Federal and State Ministry of Education, the Local Education Authority, Nigeria Union of Teachers and World Organisation of Early Children Education (OMEP) should organise conferences, seminars and workshops for sensitizing training parents and teachers to the role of play in the overall development of children. The implications for teacher education programmes were discussed.

## CHAPTER ONE

### Introduction

#### ***Background of the study***

Play is a natural activity which contributes to children's development, gives satisfaction and provides enjoyment. According to Maduewesi (1986) "Play like the child's first language is natural like the mother's milk. It is spontaneous, voluntary, self selected and natural". Play is a perfect activity for normal development and growth in all aspects of life. It is especially useful in all round education of the child, in the cognitive, social, affective and psychomotor domain of learning outcomes.

Generally through play, children could practice skills that would ultimately become essential for their safety as adults. John Locke believes that all children's activity should be sport and play, not only because it is important in sustaining and improving health, but because it allows young children to test their limits, to find out what things they can do and cannot do.

Words alone are not enough for the development of young children. Children learn best through active play by manipulating concrete and sensory materials. Play is the way young children experiment and explore the world around them. Through its instrument they form relations with that world and other human beings around them.

Cognitively, play helps children to sort materials and probe for answers. Concepts that are important for academic skills are equally learned through play. Children learn to follow tasks to completion.

In addition, play acts as a socializing catalyst. Children acquire rich social experiences, values and skills as they relate to others during play. Through play, children learn about their culture. This explains why learning about culture is a central concern of the Montessori's method which aims to create a learning environment in which the child can acquire skills necessary for living in his culture without losing his sense of initiative. The pioneer educator believed that through work, the child perfects himself and learns to become independent, acquires strength, inner discipline and develops intelligence.

The custom in many societies of asking riddles helps children to think analytically. As they listen to proverbs told and retold by tribal legends, their language develops. Also, by chanting of nonsense syllabus or repetition, of jokes particularly those containing puns, children derive joy. Traditional games are often built around themes derived from the cultural idioms, farming system, marriage system, and chieftaincy system of the community. Children engage in traditional play for the pleasure of collective singing, rhythmical, physical activities, sensory and bodily stimulation. These also enhance creativity in children.

Physically, through play, children's muscles are developed as they use their bodies in physical exercises. Children run, skip, jump, climb, hop and gain physical fitness. Skills in small muscle activities are important in building high muscle coordination.

Emotionally, play helps in the reduction of anxiety. Children learn to cope with emotional stress, learn to handle problems, gain sense of mastery and self-assertion. As they play, they reveal their true nature, thus providing indications of their emotional well-being.

Children's play is an integrated mechanism which enables children to sort their ideas, feelings, and relationships to know themselves and come to terms with their own experiences. It provides opportunity and avenues for gaining understanding. Whereas for adults, play is what they do when they have finished their work, a form of relaxation, for the young, it is what they do most of the day. According to Froebel (1887) play is one free expression of what is in the child's soul. It is the purest and most spiritual product of children. Play is living and is therefore synonymous with life for a child. As Lima (1981) sees it, play is a particular function of the embryogenetic state that a child is passing through. The child as a foetus starts playing while still in the womb. The embryogenesis of human beings continue long after birth. Hence the urge to play is present at all ages. Play by children is known in all cultures, be they developed or developing environments.

In traditional Igbo homes, adults play with their new born babies. It is a common practice that after bathing a baby, the mother caresses, tickles and gently strokes the baby. On some other occasions, a mother may dandle, tickle and chuckle with the child or make funny faces and engage in baby talk with the child. Even some busy fathers find time to do this with their babies. Thus, generally (unless they are asleep) adults devote time to play with their new born baby: The young baby is a play thing in the adult's hand but, little by little the baby becomes a partner in play and in the process of socialization. As the child grows and develops, he learns to play on his own and to play together with his parents, siblings and objects around him.

A child's play could involve crawling or toddling from one corner of the room to the other or outside the house as the child. At this stage he explores the surroundings with any object he finds. This is why parents or care-givers are careful about the child's safety and try to remove dangerous objects that may harm the child while he is playing. Also at this stage, some parents present their babies with some sound-producing objects or toys of different colours and shapes because it is believed that these colours help to develop the child's perception. A baby shaking his rattle or tossing about the mother's breast without sucking or a toddler cautiously climbing up and down the stairs over and over again is involved in play. Young infants love face to face talking and grasping, partly because they are trying to recognise people and voices

and partly because they are building their touching and grasping skills. Almy, Monighan, Scales and Hoorn (1985) regard this type of play where children have acquired some pattern of action such as grasping or looking as sensory-motor or practice play which is found in early infancy.

As children grow older, their play activities change and they play with their age mates more than they do with adults. Mayesky (1990) observes that play activities of infants are often tied to developmental markers or age and stage determined abilities and interests of the child. The play of a two-year old differs from that of the three-year old, and they in turn play differently from four, five and six year olds. Two and three year old children enjoy engaging in dramatic, creative, imaginative and imitative play. They also enjoy acting as mothers and fathers as they play. It is not uncommon to see female children at the age of three carrying sticks and dolls as new born babies on their backs or "breast feeding" them, and after feeding, rock them to sleep as their mothers would. In addition, they enjoy serving playmates "meals" of sand. As for the males three year olds are either engaged in hunting with "guns" made of stick or driving imaginary cars. Some, use old bicycle wheels as cars or tie ropes to old cartons and drag them along. They construct houses with sand, sticks and leaves. Hardfield (1976) categorized these as imitative play.

In urban areas, three year old children, besides playing the role of fathers and mothers, also play the role of professionals like teachers and



nurses. It is common to observe children whose parents are nurses playing the role of nurses and patients. There is touching or diagnosing imaginary ailments and administering "drugs". Also because of the socio-economic status of some parents in the urban centres and cities, the male children in the same age group do not "hunt" with sticks as in the rural setting but with toy guns. They do not also drive imaginary cars but toy ones. Also, as a result of the influence of television, they may use their toy guns to act as cowboys.

After the age of four, children are generally more imaginative than the three year olds. Though they may engage in the same type of play activities, the children in the later age group can now differentiate between real and imaginary activities. They also engage in more rigorous play activities like climbing, jumping and tumbling, while their dramatic play activities become more aggressive in nature. In rural Igbo communities, male children act the role of local chiefs, wine tappers, or husbands, among others. They engage in masquerading and try to frighten their female counterparts. In urban areas where some parents can provide sophisticated toys, children ride bicycles or tricycles. It is during this period, according to Ibiam (1991) that they begin to play games with rules and invariably introduce competition into their play. In some rural communities, male children, from about the age of five could form competing groups and engage in wrestling. Four to six year old children and older ones also seem to have a drive for creativity and for constructing things.

They build with objects, which in themselves meaningless, for example block building and clay modelling. They also know the differences between playing a character and being a character. They are now beginning to understand the need for rules in behaviour.

Play is a central part of the lives of young children, who are by nature playful. It is a primary vehicle through which learning occurs in children. Educators like Froebel (1887), Dewey (1956) and Hall (1891) in their time, supported play in childhood experiences and play activities became standard in young children's classrooms in developed countries.

In Nigeria, it would appear that the significance of play in children's development has not quite made an impression on most parents and teachers.

Since they are the major significant others in the primary groups that young children grow up in, they are expected to provide a stimulating environment for young children to play and learn. However, it seems that many have been unable to realise the importance of play in the development of young children. They admonish children to avoid the frivolity of play in favour of work and study. In this connection, adults exhibit different kinds of attitude which manifest in their reaction.

Behaviour is a function of attitude, social norms, habits and expectations and when there is consistency between these four dimensions there is consistency between attitude and behaviour (Morankiyo, 1976). This is not so

when the contrary is the case. Morankiyo describes attitude as the base for human behaviour which once formed is likely to be deep-rooted, when allowance is made for the other dimensions.

In this work, attitude is the predisposition of an individual to behave in a particular way to an object or event. Attitude could be negative or positive, favourable or unfavourable. It consists of beliefs of an individual regarding objects. These beliefs revolve around knowledge, understanding and conceptualization of the attitude in question. It is also from people's attitude that an object or event is felt to be pleasing or displeasing or even the tendency to exhibit overt behaviour.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The United Nations Declaration of the Rights of the child in 1989 emphasised the child's right to affection, love, adequate nutrition, medical care, education and opportunity for play and recreation among other rights. This declaration suggests that there may be neglect of the right of the child and hence the need to draw the attention of the people who are significant in the lives of young children to these lapses.

Parents and teachers are two main groups of people who are significant in the lives of young children. Parents in spite of their intimate relationship and interaction with children tend to discourage their children from playing because

they believe it distracts them from domestic chores and academic work. They often rebuke, chase away, flog or smack children found playing. It is therefore doubtful whether such parents understand and appreciate the significance of children's play in their physical, mental, social and emotional development. Teachers on the other hand have been accused of being a great source of nuisance because they would prefer to <sup>encourage</sup> their children to engage in paper and pencil work to playing. There is apparent lack of interest in children's play in spite of their training. It is there doubtful whether they appreciate the importance of using play-way method in teaching their children.

There is limited research information in Nigeria on parents and teachers attitude towards young children's play. For example, baseline studies carried out in 1989 and 1994 by United Nations Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) were done in few towns in one state and the studies did not include male parents and teachers generally. The problem of this study therefore, is to determine the parents and teachers attitude towards young children's play.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The general purpose of this study was to determine the nature of parents' and teachers' attitude towards young children's play.

**Specifically**, the study intended to find out;

- Parents' and teachers' reaction to young children's play.

- to find out; Parents' and teachers' preference of play activities that their children of different ages to engage in.
- Whether parents of different occupations differ in their attitude towards young children's play.
- Whether parents and teachers of different gender differ in their attitude towards young children's play.
- Whether parents of different levels of education differ in their attitude towards young children's play.
- Whether parents and teachers from rural and urban locations differ in their attitude towards young children's play.
- Parents' and teachers' reaction to young children's play.

### **Significance of the Study**

From the researchers experience in the course of searching literature on play and children's play, there is scanty information on children's play in Nigeria generally. The data generated from this study will add to available information on this all important aspect of children's lives in the Nigerian setting.

The findings of this study will be important to parents and teachers of children as they will provide them with a feedback on their attitude towards children's play. This will be necessary so that the noble ideas inherent in play behaviour of children in particular may begin to be appreciated.

Educational planners will find the findings of this study very useful. The findings will help them in articulating approaches and experiences geared

towards the realization of children's educational objectives through play. The National Policy on Education (1981) recommended play-way method to be adopted in teaching young children. What requires to be done is to evolve strategies that will assist educational planners in training parents, Childhood Education personnel and in designing appropriate policies which will be more child-centred and relevant to young children's play. For example caregivers in the Federal Ministry of Education (FME/UNICEF) Early Child Care Development and Education programme (ECCDE) play. Where this is made available, it will make parents, teachers and other members of the society more sensitive to the needs of the child concerning play activities. The outcome of this study could be publicised through organizing lectures, seminars and workshops.

### **Scope of the Study**

This study was limited to parents and teachers of children between 3 and 12 years of age in Afikpo and Ohafia Local Government Areas of former Abia state.

Parents and teachers were subjects of this study because they provide or fail to provide appropriate environment and opportunities for young children to play. Also, children between 3 and 12 years of age were used because, they are those found in the nursery and primary schools. The study also

intended to find out the relationship between parents' and teachers' gender, location and level of education and their attitude towards children's play. However, since teaching is an occupation, occupation as a variable was not inclusive for teachers.

The study also focused on different play activities of young children and parents' and teachers' attitude with regard to importance of play, encouragement of children's play and reactions to children's play.

### **Research Questions**

To guide this study the following research questions were posed:

1. What types of play activities do parents prefer their children of different age ranges to engage in?
2. What types of play activities do teachers prefer their pupils of different age ranges to engage in?
3. What is the attitude of parents towards young children's play?
4. What is the attitude of teachers toward young children's play?
5. What is the relationship between location and parents' attitude towards young children's play?
6. What is the relationship between location and teachers' attitude towards young children's play?
7. To what extent does gender relate with teachers' attitude towards young children's play?
8. To what extent does gender relate with teachers' attitude towards young children's play?

9. What is the relationship between level of education and parents' attitude towards young children's play?
11. What kinds of reactions do parents have towards children's play?
12. What are teachers' reactions to children's play?

### **Hypotheses**

The following hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance.

- HO<sub>1</sub> There will be no significant relationship between parents' gender, location, level of education and occupation on the one hand and their attitude towards young children's play on the other hand.
- HO<sub>2</sub> There will be no significant relationship between teachers' gender, location and level of education on the one hand and their attitude towards young children's play on the other hand.



## CHAPTER TWO

### Review of Related Literature

This chapter reviews works related to the major variables of this study.

It is presented under theoretical and empirical reviews as follows:

#### Theoretical Review

##### Theoretical Framework

- Concepts and theories of play
- Types of play
- Functions of play
- Attitude and its components
- Formation of attitude
- Change of attitude

##### Review of Empirical Studies

- Adults' role in children's play
- Influence of environment on attitude of adults' towards young children's play.
- Parents' and teachers' attitude towards young children's play
- Influences or occupation, income and level of education in adults' attitude towards young children's play.

## Theoretical Framework

Forbears in the field of childhood education believe that exposing young children to physical activities is a veritable mean of learning. Fredrick Froebel was a German educationist who pioneered the Kingdergaten movement. He formulated the first theory on how children should be educated. Froebel's emphasis was on encouragement rather than repression of the child, and the importance of controlling the child's activities and active play.

He believed that the child's whole potential lies within him. It starts inside and develops outwards. He saw children as flowers that should be properly tended and matured so that they will grow according to the needs of the society. His curriculum advocated the use of natural objects and the training of women for the teaching of young children. This was because he was conscious of the need for the early guidance of children. According to him, play is the characteristic activity of childhood. It is the highest phase of child development. He therefore, advocated the use of play and designed special toys for toddlers and children under six years in classes which he called kindergarten or child's garden.

Maria Montessori (1870-1952) was the first female medical doctor in Italy. She was internationally recognised as the pioneer of progressive infant education. She designed a school environment and apparatus that stressed sensory experience and physical activities with learning materials. They were the materials device to fall in with children's intelligence and skills.

The concept behind Montessori's work was that of providing children with suitable environment, in which to live and learn. She was aware of the necessity to take the inclination and interest of children as the starting points of the educational process.

She believed that by the age of three years the foundation of the human adult has been laid in the mind of every child and that through work the child perfects himself and learns to become independent. Through activities the child acquires inner strength and discipline and develops intelligence. Montessori also believed that the child's attention is focused on certain aspects of the environment because of special sensitivities and because the child is specially responsive to stimuli at certain periods of development. For example, she said that the coordination of muscle development takes place mainly between the ages of one and half years and 4 years. Based on this, a very important feature of Montessori system (Reality and Nature) comes into view. According to her, children should be allowed to explore nature, which is to explore harmony and order as revealed in nature. As children use materials, they learn reality in the handling of these things and begin to get introduced to the world of adult activities. Montessori was influenced by Frobel's learning - by - doing approach with the aid of sensory materials.

In the same vein Susan Isaacs believed that children are very active and have interest in everything that goes on in the general world around them.

They are eager to watch and find out about all the concrete events of their environment. Active leisure in looking at these things and eager curiosity about them are the striking features of the minds of young children. She sees how great a pleasure and how rich an education the child gets from the exercise of practical life.

Issacs also believed that child development can be scientifically scrutinized to better understand the young child's need. Observing the child through play has brought dramatic revelation to educators. Much can be learned from observing children with emotional and mental difficulties. According to her the child needs an environment filled with opportunities for gross and fine motor skills, adult companionship with patience and skill to answer confusing/unknown dilemmas and plentiful materials for activities. She was of the view that the child needs security to enable him to explore, to experiment, to take chances, to express emotions and build relationships. She therefore considers play as the starting point which leads to self discovery, reasoning and thought.

Froebel, Montessori and Issacs based their philosophies in the need for experience and participation in activities which act as aid to developing intelligence and skills. The pre-primary education activities of today are based on these philosophies brought together to form the basis of the education of young children.

## Theories of Play

Ellis and Scholtz (1973) define play as the behaviour emitted by individuals temporarily free from the constraints of external rewards and punishments and is presumed to be maintained by forces wired into the individuals themselves. According to Sabora and Mitchell (1961) play refers to those human activities which are free and spontaneous and which are pursued for their own sake alone. Interest in them is self-sustaining, and they are not undertaken under any internal or external compulsion. They further reported Dewey as viewing play as activities not consciously performed for the sake of any result beyond themselves. A critical view of the above definitions reveals certain characteristics inherent in play behaviours. Garvey (1977) observed that play is: enjoyable, intrinsically rewarding, freely entered into (voluntary), active as well as related to other activities. Maduewesi (1986) adds that play is spontaneous, voluntary, self-motivated and self-selected and that it is natural.

Play activities are enjoyable activities According to Seeley (1977) if the participants in the play activities do not enjoy them, then they are not playing. According to Carlson, Deppe and Maclean (1966) enjoyment is necessary for the player to voluntarily return to the activity. Play activity is freely entered into, which implies that engagement in play activities is voluntary. In this regard, Bucher (1975) stated that the individual might have chosen, of his own volition,

to engage in the activities and there must not have been any coercion to take part. If participation in the activity is made compulsory it ceases to be play. This attribute of play covers the self-motivated and self-selected dimension of play behaviour, as expounded by Maduewesi (1985).

Also implicit in the definitions of play behaviour is that involvement in play is intrinsically rewarding. This suggests that play involvement is useful and richly developed since play exists within the child and he is not being forced to engage in it. It is useful and richly developed. The purpose of play engagement is inherent in itself (Meyer and Brightbill, 1963). From the above we may note that some characteristics of play include that it is spontaneous, enjoyable, voluntary and yet useful and rewarding.

The following theories of play provide the framework for this study: Surplus energy theory, Recreation theory, Instinct practice theory, Catharsis theory, Self-expression theory, play as Stimulus - seeking behaviour. Detailed discussion of each of them follows.

Surplus energy theory is one of the oldest and simplest theories of play. According to this theory children play because they are so overcharged with muscular energy that they cannot keep still (Sapora and Mitchell, 1961). They stated that human beings and the playing animals have more energy than they needed for subsistence, reproduction, and defence. This surplus energy then gets accumulated in the organism and only finds expression in play. Play,

according to this theory is regarded as a medium for "blowing off steam" resulting from overcharged muscular energy (Sapora and Mitchell, 1961).

While surplus energy theory looked at play as a kind of activity by which those who have excess of energy get rid of it, recreation theory considers it as a way in which those who have exhausted their energy could recuperate. A cursory view of the two theories will look as if they contradict each other. They do not. According to Sapora and Mitchell (1961) the individual may be fatigued locally by the type of activity he engages in as his work, but at the same time he may possess abundant energy throughout the general organism. This abundant energy, therefore, is expended during play engagements to revitalize the fatigued parts of the body.

Another theory to explain play behaviour of children which is relevant to the present theme is the instinct practice theory. Torkildsen (1992) explained play in the context of this theory as being caused by the inheritance of unlearned capacities to behave playfully. According to Sapora and Mitchell (1961) instinct is favoured as the motivating factor in play. This implies that the child's impulses lead him to engage in play activities.

Another attempt to explain play behaviour of children can be found in catharsis theory of play. This theory maintains that play provides a safety valve for pent-up emotions (Sapora and Mitchell, 1961). This implies that children play to purge themselves of some distressful emotions. Play therefore has a

cathartic effect on the player. Sapora and Mitchell (1961) explain further that in the fighting play of children, emotions of anger are aroused but the fighting play gives adequate opportunity for expression, and through indulgence in it the emotion is reduced.

Self-expression theory of play was explained by Bucher (1979). He explained the play of children in relation to the physiological, anatomical, and psychological make up of an individual. This theory, in addition to explaining why people play, also explained what people play. According to the theory the physiological, anatomical, and psychological inclinations of an organism all predispose the organism towards certain types of activities. The individual, by implication therefore, is expressing himself during the process of playing. Play therefore can be viewed as an expression of one's personality make up.

Play can also be explained as a stimulus-seeking behaviour. Torkildsen (1992) reports that this theory was advocated by Ellis in his book titled "Why people play" where play is defined as stimulus-seeking activity that could occur, only when external consequences were eliminated. According to Torkildsen when primary drives were satisfied, the animal continues to emit stimulus-seeking behaviour in response to the sensoristatic drive. This condition is necessary for the animal to learn to maintain an optimal level of arousal. However, Torkildsen (1992) is quick to point out that it is not all stimulus-seeking behaviour that is play.



Theories of play that are related to the major themes of this study have been viewed here because the researcher believes that understanding of the reasons behind children's indulgence in play activities is important to formation of attitude towards play by both the parents and teachers. When there is this understanding the parents and the teachers are expected to appreciate the children and their play activities better. The reverse would be the case when the understanding is lacking such an appreciation may be facilitated by posing the question: "What types of play do children engage in? The answer can be found in exploration of types of play behaviour.

### **Types of Play Behaviour**

It is not possible to produce a list of all the play activities which children engage in. Thus authorities in the field of play like Hardfield (1976) and Kooij (1977) have resorted to categorization of play behaviour into groups as a guide whose aim is to incorporate as many specific play activities as possible. Many categorizations have been suggested by various authorities. However, the researcher considered the one by Hardfield (1976) most relevant to the present study because he tried to show some play activities belonging to each category.

Hardfield (1976) categorizes play behaviour on the basis of underlying traits of man. Going by this consideration he had impulsive play, racial play,

romping play, imitative play, imaginative play, and symbolic play. A brief explanation of each category is considered necessary here for better understanding of each group.

Impulsive play, according to Hardfield (1976) involves exuberance of spirit, letting off steam, discharging of surplus energy. In other words, this type of play helps to release repressed emotions. A scolded child may suppress his feelings only to turn around to scold her doll.

Racial play is explained as consisting of those behaviour patterns exhibited during play sessions which typify the ones expressed in danger situations. Naturally, human beings respond in some special way to danger situations. Children sometimes recapitulate such behaviour pattern during their play periods.

Another very important category of play behaviour by Hardfield is the romping play. This category is explained to signify the expression of the natural impulses to fight, but without serious intent. The play is rather rough. It is a form of combat. In romping play, for example, dogs knock one another over and "bite" but rarely hurt one another.

In imitative, play, children mimic the activities of adults. A child plays at cooking, bathing a child, driving a car etc. Imitation has been proved by psychologists to be an innate pattern of behaviour.

Imaginative play patterns have been traced to identification tendency in

children. This group of play patterns contain children's imaginations of the kind of situations they will meet with later. This type of play behaviour is seen to help the children cope with such situations when they occur, widens the scope of their experiences more than mere imitation, and also helps them develop ideas.

Symbolic play, according to Hardfield (1976) is an extension of imaginative play. Play is symbolic in the sense that a child gets a bit of stick and calls it a ship, an empty packet of sugar and calls it car etc. Substitution of the stick and the packet, of sugar with real ship and car respectively would bring them down to reality so much so that the child would not accept them as play. They have to be imaginary ship and imaginary car or else the action would not pass for play.

Kooij (1977) gives four categories of play and they include:

**Imitation:** This is also known as fantasy or role play. The child imitates activities or situations by assigning a meaning to his or her movement. Children use this type of play to imitate people or events.

**Repetition play:** also known as function play in which children explore and investigate the play situation or toys. They also manipulate objects without seeming to attend to them. The essential characteristics are repetition of movement.

**Construction play:** Children make things meaningful with objects which were in themselves meaningless, for example block building or clay modelling.

**Grouping play:** Meaningful toys elements (houses, animals and trees) are grouped. They might not be organized in accordance with reality. Children select, combine and organize ready made toys.

**Games:** These could be created by children on the spot or they could be existing games that most children and adults know. Games are played by children and they are played according to rules.

The researcher has a 5-item classification of play activities for this work as follows:

**Body Movement Activities:** This is an umbrella classification since all play activities involved body movement. They include dancing, clapping, jumping obstacle, skipping with rope, playing in rainflood, chasing one another, playing in water, swinging, tumbling, hide and seek, exploring the bush or stream, riding merry-go-round, counting with sticks or other objects, *ikpo-oga*, hopping, sliding, swimming and chasing, swimming and singing.

**Construction and Creative Activities:** These are related to Kooij's construction classification. They include moulding things with sand, constructing things with paper and cardboxes, gathering assortment of empty cans, drawing and painting.

**Defensive Activities:** These are related to Hardfield's romping play classification which was explained to signify the natural impulses to fight but without serious intention. The idea of a play activity like Kungfu was borrowed from South Asia. Wrestling and boxing are freely engaged in by Nigerian children. These activities are related to the culture of the people. They include boxing, karating and kongfu, wrestling and playing football.

**Make Believe and Play Acting:** This is related to imitation play by Kooij and imaginative and imitative play by Hardfield. They include playing adult role and acting play.

**Verbal and Intellectual Activities:** These are ~~just on their~~ own. They include telling and listening to stories, reciting poems or rhymes, reading and tongue twister competition.

The foregoing categorization was done as a guide to incorporate as many specific play activities as possible. The next logical thing to consider is the question of the benefits of play to the player (the children). In other words, what are the functions of play? The next section discusses that issue.

## **Functions of Play**

Play serves important function in the cognitive, social, physical and emotional development of children.

## **Cognitive Development and Play**

Bruner's theory on play can be seen as a means of developing the intellect. He believes that letting a child loose in a decent setting with rich materials and some good models to follow, makes a lot of difference in a child's life. For Bruner, mother tongue is most rapidly mastered in play activities. It is often the case that most complicated grammatical and pragmatic forms of the language appear first in play activity. There is one aspect of acquisition of language that is extra-ordinarily important part of nourishing language. It is called Baby Talk, that is the talk that is at the level of the child, talk that the child can already understand. The question is, how can the child learn his language, from talk that he can understand? Bruner believes that it is a dilemma and the solution is simple.

The importance of baby talk is that the child gets an opportunity to try out the different ways in which he can combine the elements of the language that he already knows in order to make more complex utterances and in order to get different things done with the language that he already has in hand. The child is not simply learning language, but uses language as an instrument of thought and action in combinatorial fashion. Play gives the child a most crucial opportunity to think, to talk and perhaps even to be himself.

Furthermore, Bruner believes that play helps children in problem solving task. Children who spend time in familiarizing themselves with materials in a

variety of ways exhibit superior problem solving performance. Bruner (1985) supports the potential of play for cognitive development. His experiments on play reveal that it promotes concept development. In one of his works, Bruner set up three learning groups and found that those children who had the opportunity to engage in previous free play with creative materials were better prepared to solve subsequent problems presented to them, than were the groups of children who were allowed to handle but not play with materials.

Another important function of children's play relates to and affective development. Play helps children to be creative, imaginative, innovative and intelligent. Through play children also acquire planning skills, foresight, divergent thinking skills, problem solving skills and opportunity of thoughts. Maduewesi (1986) posits that as the child plays, he develops mental images and solves problems, real or imagined. He uses language as he thinks and plans within the play situation, thus promoting cognitive functioning. Playing enables the child to break free from the confinement and disability of powerlessness.

Play also has a major role in children's education particularly in teaching and learning. Range, Layton and Roubinek (1980) state that play is the natural way a child learns. Children's interest in learning is more generated, provided the learning materials are such that help children to sort, classify and probe for answers and offer them opportunity to acquire information for additional

learning. Mayesky (1990) points out that through playing with block, a child learns the idea of equivalents (that things can be equal) and through playing with water or sand the child acquires the knowledge of volume which eventually leads to developing the concept of reversibility. Play is also a means through which children acquire principles of economics, geographical knowledge of their communities, gain ability to discover mathematical relationships and scientific facts as well as ability to read and write. In addition to the contribution from Mayesky, Lieberman and Smilansky (1968) contributed information on problem solving ability, (Sylvia, Bruns and Brainerd 1979) on academic skills and attitude, (Saltz, Dixon and Johnson 1977) on memory. All these are related to cognition.

Coleman and Skeen (1985) believe that through play and games, young children learn concepts that are important for the acquisition of academic skills. For example, shapes taped to the floor and forming shapes with groups, involving two or more young children, can be acquired through early reading skills. Chenfield (1976) observes that learning the left-right and up-down direction helps children to begin to distinguish between such letters as, p, d and q (Frosting and Hume 1964). Cookley (1980) add that young children also develop spatial reasoning skill involving height, depth, length and distance during play.

Julius (1978) is of the view that imaginary results from an internalization of movement during play and games represents the beginning of abstract



thoughts. Along similar lines, Howell (1963) gives an example of how motor actions allow young children to learn the limits of their own bodies, a prerequisite for differentiating themselves from objects. Piaget (1962) feels that imaginative play is the purest form of symbolic thought available to the young child. He interpreted children's play as "predominance of assimilation over accommodation". According to Piaget (1962) play permits the child to fit the reality of the world to her own interest and knowledge of the world. He suggests that play, especially make-believe, might be a source of creative imagination.

Spodek (1972) contributes the view that play is a means of taking the outside world and manipulating it so that it fits a person's organizational scheme. As such it serves a vital function in the child's developing intellect and remains to some extent, always present in human behaviour. Bruner, cited in Barnett (1977) views young children's interaction with their environment as a way of making play possible. Barnett also cited Singer (1973) as suggesting that the ability to fantasize freely is a cognitive skill related to concentration, fluency and spontaneity of thoughts, as well as the ability to organize and integrate diverse stimuli.

Day (1980) observed that through play children learn to follow a task to completion. They learn skills basic to reading, including the ability to concentrate and observe; the ability to discriminate between shapes; the ability to gain the meaning of words; the ability to solve problems and make decision.

## Review of Empirical Studies

Research findings show that there is a strong relationship between play, environment and cognitive development of the child for instance. Lieberman (1977) found a positive relationship between play and standardized intelligence test scores. Evidence suggests a strong relationship between play and cognitive development. In like manner, Jacob (1982) found that reading and writing were highly valued by parents and teachers of the area they studied and this was done through play, Fein (1986) also reports that numerous studies indicate that play with others gave children the opportunity to match their behaviour with others and to take into account, view points that are different from their own.

Sylvia, Bruner and Genova (1974) worked with children aged three to five who had the task of fishing a prize from a latched box out of reach. In order to carry out the task they extended the sticks together. The children had been trained before hand. They demonstrated the principles of clamping two sticks together or practices in fastening clamps together on single sticks or an opportunity to watch the experimenter carry out the task. One group was amply allowed to play with the materials. They performed well in solving the problem as the ones who had been given a demonstration on the principles of clamping sticks together and better than any of the other groups.

### **Play and Verbal Intelligence**

Saltz and Johnson (1974, 1977), also conducted a series of studies that assessed the effect of play training on children's verbal intelligence. Two training groups and two control groups were used. One training group received training in thematic fantasy play that involved enacting familiar fairy role such as "Little Red Riding Hood". The other group received socio-dramatic play training that involved enacting real life roles and activities such as a doctor treating a patient. Before and after the training period, the subjects' verbal intelligence were found to have increased with the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test. The same basic test was done three times in three years. Each year a different group of disadvantaged pre-school children served as subject for all the three years. The results showed that both types of play training resulted in significant gains in verbal intelligence. On their part, Weir (1962) and Keenan (1974) explored their own children's use of language sound, syntax and meaning as play serves as a systematic linguistic exercise. Schwartz (1977) collected language samples of 149 children in the range of six months to ten years, finding evidence of not only solitary verbal play with sounds and syntax, but also of co-operative games with rules. Another study by Matthew, Connoby and Maclead (1978) concluded that role taking during play facilitated the development of social language, flexible and expressive tones and the recognition of rules underlying the voice or dialogue patterns of the assumed

role.

Bateson cited by Schwartzman (1978) suggested that children are not only learning how to play roles but are also learning that there are rules about roles. In the same vein Schwartzman (1978) commented that:

Play enables the child to learn and also to comment on rules for relationship. It is not primarily an activity that teaches the content of specific role because it focusses on relationship form: This is the significant example of sisters playing sisters where the girls are playing with the ideas of a relationship and the idea of context.

In line with the above idea, Ibiam (1991) found that traditional games have rules.

### **Play and Conservation, Language, Creativity**

Some studies have investigated the relationship between play training and conservation. Fink (1976) used a conventional type of training to promote an understanding of conservation in children in middle-class kindergarten. During the training sessions, an adult introduced play, assigned roles to the children and took a role in the play, modelling symbolic play behaviour. The result were negative. A comparison of the assessment made before and after training failed to show a significant difference between the training and the control groups on the task of construction of number. Other research on play and language were conducted by Weir (1962) and Collier (1980) and play and creativity (Wallach and Kogan (1965) Lieberman 1967, Torrance 1970).

## Social Development and Play

Play acts as a socializing catalyst. Children acquire rich social experience, value and skills as they relate to others during play. Day (1980) states that play enhanced children's behavioural variability and offered them ample opportunity to match their behaviour with others, take into consideration opinions that are different from theirs and learn how to work out the social give and take, that is essential in successful group experience (Fein, 1986; Rubin and Hower, 1986; Day, 1980; Siann et al, 1980; Mayesky, 1990). In this regard, Range et al (1980) state that:

It is through play that young children learn about their culture, personalities and their emotion. Participation in play helps children learn to follow rules, to receive fulfillment of group identity. Children's interest fuse in play, bringing them to new social contacts and situations which they learn to handle.

According to Isenberg et al (1988) human beings need to belong and feel part of a group. Maduewesi (1980) for instance discussed extensively the vital roles of play in the development of a child. According to her, as the child plays he learn to solve problems even in the use of language while playing. The child breaks free mentally and socially as he is able to acquire the tremendous power exercised by adults. He could take on the enormous power of daddy, teacher, president, army commander or king and while it lasts, he could wield tremendous power as he wishes and in this way enjoy a remarkable and significant emotional achievement.... In play situation, the child learns social skills of dealing with and relating to others. These consideration

led Maduewesi (1986) into advocating:

The archaic ideas that playing is akin to idleness or that only children who are too young to do chores are fit for play should be jettisoned. The time has come for the bushes and cobwebs that becloud the plans for the building of children's play parks and providing amusement equipment to be cleared. Toy companies and factories for toys and play equipment for children are as important as investment in the production of textbooks.

Fein (1986) Rubin and Howe (1986), Maionand (1976), Rubin, Watson and Jamboor (1978) remarked that play provided the rich experience which children needed to learn social skills, to handle exclusion and dominance, and to share power, space and ideas with others. In the same vein, Fein and Schwartz (1986) conclude that at all levels of development, play enables children to feel comfortable and in control of feelings by:

- 1 allowing the expression of unacceptable feelings in acceptable ways, and
- 2 providing the opportunity to work through conflicting feelings.

Day (1980) state that while at play children provide themselves with practical experience for learning what they liked, how their actions brought result and how people react to them and they to other people. Children rehearse skills that will be useful in later life. Spodek (1972) views play as a means for children to learn principles of economic and geographical knowledge of their communities as well as to gain ability in measurement.

Maduewesi (1986) on the other hand indicates that on the average, the Nigerian child who is free to play unhindered is the child below seven years of age and that adults excuse such a child on the premise that he knows nothing, meaning that he cannot do anything but play. The implication is that though the children are free to explore their environment as observed by Dasen et al (1978), it is not all categories of children. This situation may be due at least partly to the negative attitude of Nigerian adults to children's play. This is also testified to by Maduewesi (1985) when she states that "rarely do adults and parents set aside time to play with their young children". Play is also the medium, particularly in traditional societies through which children acquire values of their culture and are absorbed into its spiritual life.

### **Physical Development and Play**

Play, like an appropriate diet, is essential for normal physical growth fitness and development of the child. Day (1980) underscores this significance when she observes that climbing the jungle gym and hammering, all foster muscular control. Large objects, long play runways, large sheets of paper, lots of room for active play are essential in early children learning environment. Skills in small muscle activities are also important in building eye-muscle coordination. Isenberg and Quinsenberry (1986) express similar views indicating that as children vigorously and joyfully use their bodies in play, they simultaneously refine and develop fine motor skill and body awareness which

enable them to feel physically fit, confident, secure and self assured.

Coleman and Skeen (1986) noted that physical activity is no longer viewed as appropriate only for males. Everyone needs to be physically fit. They add that women' collegiate and professional sports are ~~are~~ on the rise, offering a select group of women, an opportunity for a well paying and personally satisfying career. On their part, Isenberg et al (1988) assert that play is closely related to the development and refinement of children's gross and fine motor skills and body awareness.

Athey (1984) and Hendrick (1986) reinforce the above mentioned point by observing that as children vigorously and joyfully use their bodies in physical exercise, they simultaneously refine and develop skills enabling them to feel physical confident, secure and self-assured. Elkind and Postman (1989), believe that in societies where children experience pressure to succeed in all areas, confidence and competence are essential.

### **Emotional Development and Play**

Another important function of play is in the area of emotional development and reduction of anxiety. Play contributes great value in children's emotional satisfaction and stability. Leper et al (1974) posit that play is a medium through which children cope with emotional stress, learn to endure problems, gain a sense of mastery and self-assertion, externalize their feelings through dramatic expressions that are shared with others and which provide



avenue for self-discipline and self-control. Smith (1986) also observes that at all levels of development, play enables children to feel comfortable and in control of their feelings by allowing the expression of unacceptable feelings in an acceptable manner.

According to Cass (1971), children enter into their imaginary play environment with fresh and spontaneous action with unique characteristics. Cass believes that those game attributes would not only be useful but necessary for success in later life. To Cass imaginary skills developed during childhood are sub-structures of problem solving, anticipating outcome, foresight, and many other cognitive, affective, physical and creative tasks, encountered at all ages above the early years. He bemoaned the fact that the "freshness and spontaneity to their imaginative play and each child's unique qualities there of, were easily lost as they grow older".

To prevent that deterioration, Cass enjoins all those persons concerned with children's welfare not to preclude the provisions of activities that "feed and stimulate the imaginative life". To do so would be to impoverish their whole education. To Mayesky (1990), one of the keys to the quality of children's emotional health is how they feel about themselves. Creative play activities develop a positive self concept.

Evidence contained in the above reviews show that play serves an important function in the cognitive, physical, emotional and social development of children. Knowledge of this would help create more understanding in adults

and this would in turn help to modify the attitude of parents and teachers.

### **Attitude and Its Components**

Morankinyo (1981) defines attitude as the "internal, mental and neural state of readiness organized through experience and which result in the tendency to act in a particular way, favourable or unfavourable, negative or positive to a situation. Eiser (1986) feels that to say that one has a certain attitude to something could be likened to a short way of saying that the person has a feeling of like or dislike, approval or disapproval, attraction or repulsion, trust or distrust towards that thing. Nigel and Lemon (1986) said "that response towards most objects are prefaced by attitudes towards those objects which in a proximal sense determine these responses". Nigel et al said it is possible to study attitude structure.

Krech, Crutchfield and Ballachey (1962) pointed out that an attitude could be regarded as an enduring system of three components centering about a single object and they itemized these as the cognitive, affective and action tendency component. They also state that the cognitive, component "consists of beliefs of the individual about the objects" and these beliefs revolve around the extent of knowledge, understanding and the conceptualization of the object in question. It is this that will give rise to evaluative beliefs of the individual about the appropriate and inappropriate ways of responding to the object. According to Krech et al (1962) "the most critical cognition incorporated beliefs

in the attitude systems are evaluative beliefs which involve attribution of favourable or unfavourable, "good" or "bad" qualities of the object".

Krech et al refer to affective component as emotions connected with the object. It is the affective component that actually looked into what individual meant when they were talking about attitude. It is through this component that the object is felt to be pleasing or displeasing, liked or disliked. It is this emotional loading which gives attitude its insisting and motivating character.

Krech et al (1962) describes the action tendency component of attitude as that which includes a tendency to exhibit overt behaviour toward the object of attitude. They stated that if an individual holds a positive attitude towards a given object, he would be disposed to help or reward or support the object. If on the other hand, he holds a negative attitude, he would be disposed to harm or punish or destroy the object. Another notable issue is the controversy on whether these three components should be viewed as entirely separate entities or merely different names for the same thing. While Krech et al (1962) favour the tripartite view of attitude, McGuire (1969) suggests that the three components had proven to be so highly inter-correlated, that it is probably not worthwhile to maintain distinctions between them. However, Oskamp (1977) who conducted a series of researches on the three components concluded that from the brief review of researches on the component, it should be clear that, though there is a general consistency between the three components,

nevertheless many scholars have found that there are meaningful differences and distinctions among them.

### **Formation of Attitude**

Formation of attitude, according to Oskamp (1977), refers to the initial change from having no attitude toward a given object to having some attitude toward it, either positive or negative". He explains that to state that adults have no attitude may mean that they had never had any experience either direct or vicarious with the object or simply that they have never thought evaluatively about it. William (1960) agrees that attitudes are learned and acquired. People are not born liberal or conservatives, moslem or christian. The experiences people have determine their attitude.

Oskamp (1977) identifies variables responsible for attitude formation as, genetic, psychological, direct personal experience, among others. Heredity is tendency of living things to pass their characteristics on to offsprings. It determines an individual's level of responses to the environment. Psychological experience can be in such conditions as aging, illness and effect of various drugs. For direct personal experience, traumatic or frightening experience like war, accident could affect attitude formation. Personal experience over time influences attitude formation. This helps to determine an individual position toward objects, person or ideas. Oskamp (1977) states that since attitudes are

generally learned, citing genetic factors in attitude formation might appear not to hold water. However, he asserts that the most plausible way genetic factors might appear in the formation of attitude would be in establishing a predisposition for the development of a particular attitude. He stated further that genetic factors contribute to individual levels of aggressiveness which might help to determine their attitude of hostility to people. Genetic influences in attitude formation are determinant of an individual's level of personability which in turn can influence the attitude that they develop. Oskamp also points out the ways in which psychological factors help in the formation of attitude, which can be seen specifically in such conditions as aging, illness and effect of various drugs. According to him, the general conservatism often found in old age is likely to affect new attitudes.

Whittakers (1976) and Oskamp (1977) assert that the earliest and the most fundamental way in which people form attitudes is through direct and personal experience with the attitude object. In this respect, Oskamp identified three aspects of personal experience in the formation of attitudes as salient incidents, repeated exposure and development of stereotype. Other scholars like Fishbein and Ajzen (1975), Whittakers (1976), Oskamp (1977), McMahon and McMahon (1982) agree that a person's attitude toward an object at any given time is based upon a few salient beliefs he or she holds about the object. Oskamp explain further that salient incidents, particularly traumatic or

frightening ones like war, neuroses, accidents during games, sports and play similarly affect individual attitude formation.

Oskamp (1977) also holds the view that repeated exposure to an object or person or idea over time helps in the formation of attitude. Through that exposure an individual is propelled to determine his position - positive or negative toward object or ideas. He cites Zajonc (1968) as carrying out a series of experimental studies on repeated exposure, findings of which revealed that mere exposure to a stimulus object without any associated reinforcement or tension reduction is sufficient to enhance a person's attitude toward the object. Oskamp said that development of stereotype might be highly evaluative and rigidly resistant to change. He asserts that stereotypes are important to attitude formation because they are largely or entirely derived from what the person had read or heard from family or friends.

Fortunately, attitudes are subject to change. Evidence abounds to support this claim. This is important because since, as we have seen from the review, play is so crucial for children's healthy development. If attitude is found to be negative, this does not necessarily mean that it cannot be changed. The next section therefore discuss changes in attitude.

## Change of Attitude

Blair, Jones and Simpson (1968) declare that attitudes, once formed, are enduring and resistant since they are closely associated with the total personality of the individual, his needs, value system and self esteem. Consequently they are difficult to change. In support of this, McMahon et al (1982) remark that the more involved we were and the more emotional investment we have in an opinion, the harder it would be to alter the opinion. However, Krech et al (1962) are of the opinion that attitudes are prone to change in order to be abreast with the changing world. Although this change could cause ease or difficulty in the individual with ready acceptance or with extreme reluctance to change his attitudes; Oskamp (1977) states that difficult forces and pressures tried to change attitudes and these include need oriented attitude, ego defensive attitude and value expressive attitude.

Oskamp (1977) suggests that as understanding or knowledge function is based on information, the understanding oriented attitude will most likely change in situations which had become ambiguous for the attitude holder due to the existence of a new body of information or changed environment. Another source of change in attitude as prescribed by Blair et al (1968) and Oskamp (1977) centres on the assumption that the individual goal or needs have changed or that the person's need were no longer satisfied by the attitude in question.

Oskamp (1977) points out that the findings from studies on ego-defensive function of attitude showed that ego-defenses are structured to beef up one's self esteem and protect him from threats and conflicts' and consequently such attitudes may not be easy to change. He however, suggests that to change such attitudes, the first thing is to try to dismantle all the prevailing threats and conflicts. This could be done by establishing a supportive atmosphere, as a long-term therapy situation or individuals may gradually outgrow emotional conflicts which underlie their prejudices, or they may acquire insight into their defence mechanism.

Value expressive attitude is difficult to change because as Oskamp (1977) puts it, people's values are apt to be very important and central part of their cognitive structure. He believes that this group of people could change their attitude if they are to become dissatisfied with their self concept or former values or if the people become aware that the attitude does not really fit with their values. Another way in which attitudes could be changed is identified by Blair et al (1968) as motivation. They uphold that a change of attitude may occur if the individual is given the opportunity to experience satisfaction in connection with the new attitude and this was constantly reinforced.

Silverman (1978) suggests that attitude may be changed through exposure to information or communication. He observed that the degree of attitude change in the individual depends largely on the source of



communication and the message content of information being dished out. When the individual regards the source of information as credible, there will be a greater immediate change in attitude than when the communicator is regarded as untrustworthy. In the same vein, he posits that for the message content to change an attitude, the message should be easy to understand. The communicator should begin the message with agreeable materials rather than with unpopular materials; the message should also present both sides of an issue. In addition to this Oskamp (1977) cites three theories as also contributing to attitude change. These are Heider's (1964) Balance Theory, Osgood and Tannenbaum's (1955) Congruity Theory and Festinger's (1957) Cognitive Dissonance Theory.

Oskamp (1977) explain Heider's balance theory as the manner in which people perceive other people, objects and ideas in their environment. This theory revolves around balanced or unbalanced state. A balanced state depicts harmony or stability and thus resists change while an unbalanced or an uncomfortable state is unstable and created psychological tension or discomfort. Since no individual thrives in unstable or uncomfortable state, such a situation invariably presses for a change in attitude to restore normalcy.

Like Balance theory, Silverman (1978) in discussing Osgood and Tannenbaum's (1955) congruity theory, expresses the view that it deals with direction in which an attitude must change in order to restore consistency.

Unlike the balance theory, it tries to determine the degree of inconsistency that is, how incongruous a situation must be before an individual would change his attitude. Oskamp (1977) observes that this theory is based on the congruity of an individual, evaluation of the source, the object and the message. This message or belief was often simplistic or generalized. To restore congruity or change of attitude among adults, Silverman (1978) suggests that it is important to reduce or revise this generalized belief by re-orienting these adults.

Explaining cognitive dissonance theory, Silverman (1978) states that at times the development of a new theory or a new concept stimulates and re-orientes thinking in the discipline or belief which invariably tends to change people's attitudes. He cites Festinger's (1957) theory of cognitive dissonance as a harbinger to this assertion. He posits that Festinger singled out for analysis the way a person's knowledge, beliefs and feelings about himself and his environment may either be in harmony (consonance) with each other or out of harmony (dissonance). He illustrates these views with a person who found eating so pleasurable that he ate excessively but had been told that this was dangerous to his health. Consequently, there is an imbalance or dissonance between the pleasure he feels and the fear provoking information.

Attitude, as a predisposition of an individual to respond in a particular manner to an object, is important in determining what and how he acts. This predisposition is equally relevant in adults involvement in children's play. The next section is set out to review adults' participation in children's play.

## **Review of Empirical Studies**

### **Adult Roles in Children's Play**

Isenberg et al (1988:44) found that parents and teachers provide stimulation, perception and insight that support the development of each child's potentials. With youngest children, the adult is totally responsible for providing materials and playing with the child. Isenberg et al (1989) add that as the attention span increases and interest in the world emerges, provision of materials and experience take a new meaning. The teacher especially must be aware of child's needs and know when to match materials and activities with adults' interest. Also Matterson (1976) found that the good teacher presents new situation and information in an open ended manner that involves children rather than limit them to an adult determined framework. Day (1975) advises that teachers should provide sensory materials as a vital part of the learning environment. Isenberg and Jacob (1992) found that parents and teachers could improve children's play. In this way they could learn about the likes and dislikes, favourite themes and interest of children. Being a model for playfulness, since children learn from imitating adults, parents could help children by asking questions or making comments.

Herman (1969) suggests that in many traditional societies, children are discouraged by adults from asking too many questions which are not regarded as the province of children. Play interaction influences other aspects of

development. Adults have major responsibility in fostering children's play. Cass (1971) admonishes all those person's concerned with children's welfare not to preclude the provisions of the activities that "feed and stimulate imaginative life. To do so would be to impoverish their whole education.

On the issue of designing curriculum on play, Wasserman (1992) suggests that teachers must be able to demonstrate a curriculum rooted in play. This includes the following

- Visualizing how important curriculum concepts can be learned through play and being clear about ideas that are being studied in the curriculum.
- Gathering materials needed for play.
- Organizing the class for cooperative group work on the plays and involving students.
- Allowing time for play.
- Trusting play to the job of teaching the concept.
- Using classroom skills that call for students reflective observation on their play, or "debriefing" the play.
- Allowing plays that enable learners to develop their knowledge of principles as their learning is formed and reformed through added experience.

Bruce (1992) found that what a child could do with assistance today, she would be able to do by herself tomorrow. This being the case, the role of the adult is that of a catalyst. She suggests that children should be allowed to meet new objects and new people. By so doing they will get support and

encouragement of those significant to them. McAuley (1992) examined adult led tasks and pointed that, there is some doubt that such a specific and highly challenging sort of activity is more likely to foster active, creative learning than the broader based activities which might appear less challenging but which individuals could with help used profitably as a spring-board for more challenging work.

In conclusion, adults have a responsibility in fostering children's play but most often as evidenced in the review, children experience discouragement. Parents and teachers can do quite a lot to provide a stimulating environment for their children.

### **Influence of Environment on the Attitude of Adults Towards Young Children's Play**

Peppier and Rubin (1982) found that the knowledge of general environmental influence on play is very vital since it provides an ample opportunity for people to make prediction about children's behaviour within a given environment and thereby allow the creation of play environments that elicit certain play behaviours. No wonder Range, Layton, and Roubinek (1986) suggested that if parents have control of their environment, it is expected that their self concept will improve which would in turn foster similar attitude of competence of their children.

Discussing play environment, Day (1986) suggested that an important

task for adults is to facilitate learning through an organized environment, one deliberately fashioned with a lot of opportunity for young children to explore and discuss. She suggests that concrete and sensory materials should form the vital part of the environment for children to manipulate, adapt, accommodate and assimilate into their own world. She concludes by saying that "adults who play with the child and assist in setting a stage for play are vital contributors in children's development. In the same vein Almy, Monighan, Scales (1980) hold the view that adults could influence their attitude towards play by providing physical and social environment that would be conducive to play (by participating in the play).

Isenberg and Quisenberry (1988) point out that adults had a crucial role in carefully structuring, planning and organizing appropriate environment with adequately equipped materials and toys that could be adapted at different age levels. Nzewi (1986) also found that the nature of environment to which infants were exposed affected them positively or adversely. While addressing specifically the child - adult relationship within the environment, she writes: "The intensity, sequence distribution and variety of behaviour aroused, that constitute patterns of experience are a function of the nature of mother-infant or adult-infant relationship and the degree of environmental enrichment and deprivation".

It is pertinent to know what is the nature of play environment. For

instance, whether it is deliberately and carefully structured and organized, equipped with materials and toys, and in what way the environment influences adult perception on play. Day (1980) found that formerly in developed countries people used to consider play to be sinful and a waste of time and energy but nowadays many research outcomes which had revealed play as an important motivator in the intellectual, physical, emotional and social development of children have changed this attitude. Sequel to this change of attitude, Pringle (1974) found that in most western countries adults organize structured environments around their homes and equip them with objects and toys that encourage children to explore and play with. These experiences invariably helped them to assimilate new experience and absorb them into their expanding physical, cognitive, emotional and social development. This situation is further explained in play models.

Day (1980) suggested that this change in attitude is also visible in schools. She cited as an example the Bank Street model programme in New York whose aim is to support the play mode by incorporating experiences, by nourishing and by setting the stage for dramatic play activities. Since play is now regarded as basic need in representational thinking and a natural way for young children to gain cognitive mastery through reliving experience symbolically, the Bank Street School gave play an important place in its curriculum. Space was assigned for in the classroom, and time was allotted in

the daily sequence of activities. Materials like blocks, straws, animal and human figures, dress up clothes and home keeping toys were provided to foster play.

The Bank Street model also developed self-initiated and support guided play programmes for pre school years. Being fully aware that during pre-school years, play shifted to take on a quality of industry and self initiated activities, the Bank Street School organized the classroom as the children's workroom where they were free to manipulate objects and explore various media. Children made choices and carried plans while the teacher also looked for a way of stimulating them to searching. Another type of play programme mentioned by Day (1980) was the Nunnicht model whose goal hinged on problem solving. The developers believed that problem solving is better learned in an atmosphere that posed problems and encouraged the discoveries of their solution. The guiding principles of Nunnicht programme is that the environment should be arranged so that children would make discoveries and as Maccoby and Zekner (1970) put it "a child better remembers what he discovers for himself". Throughout the day children are free to chose from a variety of activities, art work, puzzles, looking at books and playing with manipulative toys. The adults arranged the materials and responded to the problems that children would want to solve and that would guide them to learn specific skills or concepts. Environment has a lot of influence in the upbringing of children.



The environment of a child should be stuffed with sensory and concrete materials. These will help children to explore and manipulate things found in the environment. Absence of this could stifle creativity in children.

### **Parents' and Teachers' Attitude Towards Young Children's Play**

Although literature and research findings are replete with information on the effects of various play forms on physical, cognitive, emotional and social development of the child, it appears there are only a few research findings on adult attitude towards children's play. Perkins (1980) reviewed one hundred studies concerning the role of adults on children's play and concluded that adults must engage in systematic observation of children at play. According to Bishop and Chace (1971) if adults allowed children to explore their environment, it will enhance their creative potentials. Also analyzing the researches of Fein, Robertson and Diamond (1975), Fein (1975), Watson and Fisher (1977), Nicholich (1977), Fein and Hincir (1980) on adult facilitation of symbolic play, Almy et al (1982) came to the conclusion that "adult suggestions, modeling, or direct training do have effects on children's symbolic play".

### **Adult Facilitated Play**

On the question of whether there exists any link between adult facilitated play and development or academic outcomes, Sylvia, Bruner, and Genova

(1976) carried out a research with one hundred pre-school children (3-5 years) on adults' facilitated and non adult facilitated play and problem solving. They found that the children who played with adults provided problem solving task materials before attempting problem solving, did better at problem solving than those who played alone and without such materials. They also showed that these children were not only motivated and had the opportunity to order the necessary tools and tasks, but also the anticipated stress of success or failure was reduced.

### **Studies of Play in Africa**

Studies in developed countries show that there are favourable environmental influences on children's play. This section looks at what the studies in Africa are. Dike (1986) cited Ohuche and Otaala's (1981) study carried out with English and Igbo children which showed that both sets of children had similar opportunity for object manipulation, but while the English mothers encouraged and played object games with their children as well as observed them while playing, the Igbo mothers did not. The implication of this finding is that while the English babies' attention is more often focused on the objective properties of reality, the Igbo babies received more social stimulation and early emotional support, leading perhaps to the more technological orientation of one and social orientation of the other.

Akinware, Oyelaran, Ladipo, Pierce and Zenthin (1989) carried out a study on mothers' perception of play in five UNICEF assisted Local Government Areas of Oyo State, found that almost all the mothers used for the study felt that play was important. 72 percent of the Owo mothers reported that play was important for their pre-schoolers, learning of social skills, 22 percent showed it was vital for physical skills. Cognitive or academic benefits of play were not mentioned by any of the mothers in the Owo, Oyo rural or Oyo Urban samples. However 26 percent of mothers in Oyo noted that play was important for academic skills. The study also revealed that urban and rural mothers differed on their attitudes towards play. While most urban mothers mentioned the physical developmental value of play, most rural mothers saw its social developmental value. The study also indicated that more urban mothers view play as developmental, whereas rural mothers emphasize that play kept the young child busy. The perceptions of these parents were important in establishing the mothers' attitude towards children's play.

Analysis of such studies carried out in the UNICEF Assisted states on parents' perception of play by Okebukola, Agiobu-Kemmer, Akin-Aina and Akinware (1994) found the 95 percent of the parents used, believed that play provides children learning opportunities; 74 percent indicate that what children learned from play were social skills. Discussing social skills per se, the study revealed that 43 percent of respondents felt that such social skills were in the

area of cooperation, 14 percent respect for others, 10 percent sharing and 7 percent team spirit. Only 15 percent mentioned that play provided opportunities for the development of creativity and enriched experience for children. The study also revealed that 9 percent of the children in these UNICEF-Assisted States did not have toys available in their homes. The researchers concluded that Nigerian children in these states were deprived of technical stimulation which was necessary for the development of more complex cognitive skills. According to the researchers, such stimulation was provided through playful interaction with toys and objects. Many homes can not provide expensive toys for their children and parents live in materially poor circumstances. This puts them at disadvantage with regard to school readiness since intellectual development in early childhood is facilitated by playful interaction with toys and objects. The above findings collaborated Ohuche and Otaala (1981) and the works of Almy et al (1982).

It is important to note that these studies were in one state in different local government area and only mothers were used. Therefore, the results cannot be generalized to other places. Also the researcher is not sure of how thoroughly the studies were done.

Hake (1972) summarizing child rearing practice in Northern Nigeria found that in Northern Nigeria, family restriction is placed upon children's conversations with their parents. When respondents were asked whether they

were allowed to join their parent conversations, nearly 60 percent of the sample answered negatively. In the traditional family, children are taught to respect and sometimes fear adults, especially those in authority.

Siann et al (1980) felt that this could lead to infantilization of even older children, for just as appropriate diet is essential for normal physical growth so it is for mental development. The most vital ingredients of this diet are play and language. Through them the child explores the world and learns to cope with it. This was true for the outside world as it was for the subjective internal world of thought and feeling. Thus too, were motor skills perception and concept developed. Mundy-Castle et al (1976) reported an observation among the rural Igbo in a study carried out by Whiting and Whiting (1975) that infants in Nigeria do not have interactions with objects apart from mother-given objects to play with. Ohuche and Otaala (1981) in relation to Africa found that mothers did not seem to play object games with their children. Dasen and Inhelder (1978) endorse with the statement that the African environment was usually poor in toys and other structured, technological objects and that mother-child interaction were usually not focused on objects.

Review of literature showed that children in Africa had opportunity for object manipulation but rarely did their parents join in their play. Also restrictions are placed on children conversing with adults. Although research finding in a part of Nigeria showed that some percentage of mothers acknowledge the importance of play in the lives of young children, it is

regretable that provision of toys and other sensory materials are of no importance to parents generally.

### **Studies of Play in other Places**

Bishop and Chace (1971) studied the way environment influences potential creativity and they found that if adults allowed children to explore their environment it would enhance their creative potential. Along the same line, Monigan cited in Range et al (1980) conclude from systematic observation of solitary play in her pre-school that teachers who facilitated solitary play can encourage the young children to gain some mastery of the environment. Such a sense of mastery and well established scheme for one's own activity appeared to provide a solid base for cooperative play, sharing of ideas and social dialogue that were expected from school age children. Moore, Everston and Brophy, (1974); Singer (1973); Storm (1976) agree that consolidation of cognitive schemes in a solitary context might also contribute to the development of problem solving skill. Bishop et al (1971) found that parents who are not rule-dependent but have a flexible and abstract conceptual style are more likely to encourage children and provide playful behaviour. Bishop et al studied 72 children, their parents and their home environment. They ordered the parents along the conceptual continuum using Harvey's (1963:1960) technique. This involved filling out a booklet in which they were asked their belief about ten issues. These statements were then independently rated by

four categories from strongly concentrated dependent thinking to high abstract independent answer. When three judges agreed, the data was accepted. After filling out this "I believe that questionnaires, they first dealt with each parent's attitude towards play; rights of children relation to adults, etc. The second data dealt with factual description of the home environment and was given to the mother.

Two groups of mothers held significantly different opinions about their children's play. They disagreed on the following paraphrased statement:

- Children should be seen and not heard.
- Boys/girls should be discouraged from playing with girls/boys and games.
- Adults should play with their children
- Wrestling and rough housing should be done only out-doors or in designated areas.
- When a child is using toy incorrectly, the parent should stop and teach the correct way.

Bishop et al (1971) summarized by saying that conceptually, more abstract parents provide their children with play environments that are more playful perhaps because of the environment's greater complexity, autonomy for the child and openness to new experience. Bank (1973) argues that if mothers influence children's potential creativity, then so should pre-school teachers. Banks suggests that the influence of the conceptual system of parents and

teachers should interact adaptively.

Wasserman (1992) found how children engaged in investigative play on how fabrics were made particularly, examination of texture, thread, colour, print and elasticity. The children examined the pieces of fabrics, pulling, stretching, looking through the fabrics at the light scrutinizing texture print colour. They played with the fabrics for a long time and the teacher wanted to hear about observation. In the first few responses the children talked about texture, thread and design. Then one child said "my fabrics made different sounds". He showed that when he scratched slowly the pitch was lower. Wasserman concluded that this has implication for music pitch sound and low music is made on stringed instruments, and this eight year old boy had come up with this discovery during his play with fabrics. This is an example of how play allowed children to make discoveries. Teachers can have it all. The development of knowledge, spirit of inquiry, of creativity, of conceptual understanding are all contribution to the empowerment of children.

Goertzel and Goertzel (1962:26) studied the childhood period of 400 eminent adults, writers, composers, inventors, statesmen and women, scientists, artists and others. They looked for keys to understand what factors contributed substantially to their later development as heroes. One of the common threads these researchers found was that, by conventional standards, the attitude of the family towards normal schooling was negative. In some instances, some of the children were never sent to school at all". To



substantiate this point, the Goertzels used as an example the Wright brothers. As youths, these boys were tinkers who enjoyed messing around. When they asked their mother for permission to stay out of school for several years and tinker around in the backyard, their mother agreed. The common thread found by the Goertzel's in the families of the 400 eminent adults was that most mothers were quite permissive with their children by allowing them some degree of freedom to make choice, about what they wanted and did not want to do. To many of these adults, school was a place where creativity was stifled rather than encouraged.

In his book, *Surely You're Joking Feynman* (1985) wrote about his childhood-messing with stuff in the basement of his home and how he was encouraged to do so by a wise and caring father. At the age of ten, Feynman started to play around in a 606 set up in the basement, playing with switches and wire, making his own fuses with his own heater, so that he could cook. He set up his own crystal set, invented a burglar alarm, experimented with electric motors, built an amplifier for a photocell and could make a bell ring when he put his hand in front of the cell. He repaired his own and the neighbour's radios. Feynman developed habits of play as a child and he held onto this and attributed his love for physics and his ability to be creative in theoretical physics to his ability to play: He then came with this assertion:

Why did I enjoy doing it (physics)? I used to play with it. I used to do whatever I felt like doing. I didn't have to do with whether it was important for the development of nuclear

physics, but instead whether it was interesting, and amusing for me to play with when I was in high school, I'd see water running out of a faucet growing narrow and wonder if I would figure out what determined the curve I found. I didn't have to do it, it wasn't important for the study of science, somebody else had already done it. That didn't make any difference. I'd invent things and play with things for my own environment.

When Feynman felt he was growing bored with physics, he turned to play to revitalize his interest. He continued:

So I got this new attitude. Now that I'm burned out and I'll never accomplish anything, and I've got this nice position at the University teaching classes which I rather enjoy, and just like I read Arabian nights for pleasure I'm going to play with physics, whenever I want to without worrying about the importance what so ever.

Wasserman (1992) warns that if we teachers could free ourselves from the need to keep students quiet and "on task" with pencil and paper worksheets, filling in correct answers following correct procedures, learning all the names and places in all the subjects and recalling them correctly so that they may pass examinations. The safe and secure road is that we may open our classroom to more generative items, more original, the more delightful world of play as a means of learning about the world. Isenberg and Quisenbery (1988) confirmed that the Association of Childhood Education International (ACEI) supported those adults who respect and understand the power of play in children's lives and who use their knowledge about how children play at different ages to guide practices with children.

Discussing the context of television viewing experience, Singer and Singer (1975) report from their study that highly imaginative children chose to

watch very little television. On the other hand, Singer (1973) points out that some exposure to television, particularly if mediated by an adult co-viewer, may stimulate ideas for imaginative play. The research suggests that without adult mediation, the passive nature of viewing, limited opportunity for dialogue and symbolic construction which may restrict the child's imaginative behaviour.

A study by Sylva, Roy and Pointer (1980) draws on the experience of pre-school teachers to establish criteria for the evaluation of play as rich (complex and imaginative) or simple (ordinary and dull) and found a preponderance of simple play. This suggests that teachers may pay lip service to play without really understanding it or knowing how to add to its complexity and imaginativeness or how to promote its fullest development. Almy et al (1978) note that few parents believe that pre-school Jack and Jill should abstain from play but they do question whether the pre-school lays sufficient emphasis on child's work. Tizard (1977), for example, questions whether teachers who interfere with children's play might not contribute more to children's learning by being more instructive for example, by working with them on constructive projects and teaching them games. Almy et al (1987) add that the dichotomy posed by the old saying "all work and no play made Jack a dull boy is a false one". The issue was not play versus work, nor play versus instruction but an appropriate balance between play and work.

There is another point worth making about the value of play in children's

lives today as cited in Wasserman (1992). Authors like Elkind (1982), Postman (1982) and Winn (1981) write strongly on what they called "the disappearance of childhood". They noted that "children today have fewer opportunities to play and behave as children. In the place of traditional childhood games that were still popular a generation ago, in place of fantasy and make believe, in place of messing around, today's children have substituted television. Today, children play computer games in the amusement areas and Nintendo at home, instead of messing around with coloured papers and junk. They choose computer camps for holiday fun and asked for apples for Christmas times. If television contributes to the disappearance of childhood, how is the computer affecting play of children? The situation is not yet so in Nigeria because computer and computer games are not widespread. Such new toys might have very grave implication for the kind of adults that today's children are likely to become and for the kind of worlds they were likely to create.

Torrance (1961) in his early research on giftedness, also found that teachers considered highly creative elementary school children to be a source of great nuisance. They seem to be playing around when they should be working at assigned task. They engage in manipulative or exploratory activities, many of which are discouraged or forbidden. They enjoy learning, and this looks to teachers like play rather than work.

Torrance noted that teachers preferred high inquiry students over

creative ones. Because they insisted on invention rather than quietly submitting to what teachers asked of them, they were thought of as "obnoxious" and troublesome. Wasserman (1992) then concluded that the high IQ students were low risk takers and teachers regarded them as serious, ambitious and promising.

The picture in other places is quite encouraging. Children are encouraged to take sometime off school and play around. By so doing children learn a lot informally in play situation. This is an important lesson to adults over here. Children at times get bored with too much school work and they don't gain so much.

### **Influence of Occupation, Income and Level of Education on Adult Attitude Towards Young Children's Play**

Social scientists use occupation, income and education as indicators of socio-economic status but because the level of people's income in Nigeria is difficult to determine, occupation and education are preferably used. Socio-Economic Status (SES) according to Emenyonu (1989) were among the most powerful and least understood influence on child rearing. However, according to Hess (1970) certain characteristics of low and high SES parents hold across race and culture. Among those described by him were attitudes towards discipline where the low SES parent were more controlling, power-assertive, authoritarian and arbitrary in discipline and more likely to utilize physical

punishment, whereas the high SES parent is more democratic and either permissive or authoritative. For occupation, Sanyal, Karn, Varghess and Camara (1989) list some occupational classification of people and they were as follows; Professional, Technical and related workers.

As regards socio-economic variables Similansky (1968), Barnes (1971), Rosen (1974) Rubin Maioni and Horning (1976) in their respective studies note that variables like education, occupation and income are major determinant of various levels of play. Also Almy et al (1982) and Sutton-Smith and Heath (1981) in their studies on play concluded that the attitude of parents or adults to various plays of the child are partly determined by social class.

On the various plays per se, Rubin et al (1976) in their studies observed that lower levels of socio-dramatic play were often found in lower socio-economic groups. Regarding imaginative play, Fietelson and Rose (1973) in their respective studies found that children from lower and working class homes engaged in less imaginative play at least in pre-school, than children from middle class homes. Also Matus, Arend and Shuge (1978) showed in their study that children whose parents used physical punishment as a disciplinary method or who came from tension soaked homes due to marital discords, show low levels of imagination in their play.

In their own research, Smith and Dutton (1979) found that mothers of the middle class developed fantasy play episodes with their children much

more often than did the working class mothers. They conclude by stating that fantasy play was scarcely encouraged at all in the case of children who came from educationally disadvantaged homes. Fietelson et al (1973), Freyberg (1973) and Rosen (1974) in their respective studies found that fantasy play in disadvantaged homes was less developed than from middle class or more prosperous homes. In their own contribution on the same point, Rubin et al (1976) in their works pointed out that while middle class children played more fantasy play, the lower class children played more functional play.

Fein (1981) however, warns that the above findings should not be swallowed hook, line, and sinker. She states that the influence might be due to factors of context rather than the much orchestrated socio-economic difference. With regard to pretend play, Matus et al (1978) found that children who were reared at eighteen months showed higher levels of this type of play at twenty-four months than did children of the same age who were not. Also discussing symbolic play, Smilansky (1968) in his work remarks that culturally deprived children aged three to seven years did not develop the ability to engage in such play as their counterparts from middle class and educationally advantaged homes did.

On the other hand, Eiferman (1971) criticized this view on the ground that symbolic play was noted to have developed later than usually expected in disadvantaged children and consequently it was not completely absent as the

studies tended to suggest. In retrospect, after critical analysis of all these various findings on various plays and their attendant criticisms, Kooij and Meyjes (1986) concluded in agreement with Fein that, by giving so much attention to the social class differences in play research, one easily overlooked other important social aspects as parents stimulation, the type of friends a child had, interest of the child or the availability of play materials at home.

From the above excerpts, it could be noted that while it is accepted that social class plays a vital role in influencing various plays, one should not play down other social variables. Two of these social factors that are of interest are, parents stimulation and the availability of play materials at homes. Interestingly, Sutton-Smith et al (1981) and Almy et al (1982) found that parents' stimulation and the availability of play materials at home hinge to a large extent on the socio-economic status of these parents. For instance, Almy et al (1982:18) found that the array of toys and other materials children from lower socio-economic homes found in the typical middleclass pre-school, and the encouragement they receive from their parents (middle class), to play, might contrast sharply with home settings of the lower socio-economic class. And they, therefore conclude that "the pre-school might seem strange situation to the child from an economically disadvantaged home". Also Sponseller (1979) in his study reveals that the lower socio-economic children did not reach levels of imaginative play comparable to middle class children. In summary, types of



home, socio-economic status of parents, types of friends a child has and availability of play materials have influence on children's play.

### **Summary of Literature Review**

Play was defined by Ellis and Scoltz (1973) as behaviour emitted, by individuals temporarily, free from the constraints of external rewards and punishment and was presumed to be maintained by forces wired into the individuals themselves. Based on a critical view of this and other definitions, play characteristics were identified as enjoyable, intrinsically rewarding, freely entered into, active as well as related to other activities.

To explain why children play as well as provide a theoretical foundation for this study, relevant theories of play were explained. They are the surplus energy theory, recreation theory, instinct-practice theory, catharsis theory, self-expression theory, as well as play as stimulus-seeking behaviour. The review later categorized play behaviour. According to Hardfied (1976) play can be categorized as impulsive play, racial play, romping play, imitative play, imaginative play, and symbolic play. Play was reported as contributing towards children's cognitive, physical and social development.

Attitude and its components were also reviewed. It was indicated that attitude is an enduring system with three components namely: cognitive, affective, and action tendency components. Formation of attitude was also

reviewed and it was pointed out that such variables as genetic, psychological, and direct personal experience are important in forming attitude. Next was a review of change of attitude which pointed out that attitude is difficult to change as it is associated with the total personality of the individual. However, nature of information, change in a person's needs, establishing a supportive environment, outgrowing emotional conflicts, dissatisfaction with self-concepts and values among others could make attitude change possible. Such theories of attitude as balance theory, congruity theory; cognitive dissonance theory were also explained.

The last section of the review focused on the influence of environment, occupation and level of education on attitude of adults towards children's play. It noted that in Nigeria, gaps, however, exist in the literature on empirical studies concerning parents' and teachers' attitude towards young children's play and it was in the hope of filling such a gap that this study was undertaken

## CHAPTER THREE

### Research Methodology

This chapter discusses the procedure used in carrying out this study. It includes the following: research design, area of study, population, sample and sampling techniques, instrumentation, validity of instrument, reliability of instrument, method of data collection and method of data analysis.

#### Research Design

The design of this study is correlational. According to Borg and Gall (1977) in correlational studies an attempt is made to discover or clarify relationships through the use of correlation coefficient as well as predicting scores on a variable from subjects' score on the other variable. The variables of gender, age, location, occupation, and level of education were used to predict the occurrence of a criterion behaviour which is the attitude of parents and teachers towards young children's play.

#### Area of Study

This study was conducted in former Abia State and it involved two education zones, Afikpo and Umuahia, both of which were formally in Abia State. As at the time there were 540 nursery and 1,370 primary schools in the state [(Source: Ministry of Education, Umuahia (1995)].

Afikpo is a food and fish farming area while Ohafia is only a food producing area. In these areas, parents' occupation determines their income. Therefore, for this study, income and occupation are lumped together since they are closely related. Civil servants on Grade Level (GL) 1-6 belong to a lower cadre while their counterparts on GL 7 and above belong to the higher cadre.

The parents were categorized into educated and uneducated. For this study, uneducated parents are not stark illiterates, but those who may have first school leaving certificate and below. Their awareness level is likely to be low.

### **Population of Study**

The population of this study consisted of all primary and nursery school teachers and the parents of primary and nursery school pupils in former Abia State. Parents and teachers were used because they were regarded the major significant others in the primary group within which the children grow up. Usually, they provide the environment and opportunity for young children and exercise authority over the children. Thus, they have a major influence in the socialization of the children. Available statistics (MOE, 1995) showed that the population of primary school teachers in Abia State was 27, 805 while that of the nursery schools was 2,640. The population of pupils in the primary schools in former Abia State was estimated to be 553,983 and that of nursery school

was 12941. (see Table 1). The educated on the other hand are parents with school certificate and above.

**Table 1: Total number of Primary and Nursery Schools, Parents and Teachers (of pupils) in former Abia State According to Zones and Local Government Areas**

Zone	No. of LGA's	Primary Schools			Nursery Schools		
		Total No. of Primary Schools	Total No. of Primary School Teachers	Total No. of Parents of Pupils in Primary Schools	Total No. of Nursery Schools	Total No. of Nursery School Teachers	Total No. of Parents of Pupils in Nursery Schools
Aba	7	705	12,672	262603	228	1,824	5,786
Afikpo	5	190	6,153	159701	25	200	2,434
Umuahia	5	475	8,980	131679	87	616	4,721
Total	17	1,370	27,805	553983	540	2,640	12,941

Source: Ministry of Education (1995)

### Sample and Sampling Technique

Multi-stage random sampling procedure was used in selecting the sample for the study. In the first instance two education zones (Afikpo and Umuahia) were randomly selected from the three zone (Aba, Afikpo, Umuahia) using simple random sampling by balloting. Afikpo and Umuahia each has five local government areas.

**Table 2: sample of Primary and Nursery School Pupils whose parents were used in the two zones by two local government**

		Primary Schools								Nursery Schools							
		No of Schools		No of School Sampled		No of Pupils		No of Pupil sampled		No of Schools		No of School Sampled		No of Pupils		No of Pupil sampled	
Zones	Local Government Area	U	R	U	R	U	R	U	R	U	R	U	R	U	R	U	R
Afikpo	Afikpo North	18	12	2	1	2095	1800	210	180	17	8	2	1	990	558	99	56
Umuahia	Ohafia	17	14	2	1	2100	1466	210	147	8	4	1	-	900	515	90	51
Total	2	35	26	4	2	4195	3266	420	327	25	12	3	1	1890	1073	189	107

747 \_\_\_\_\_ 1043 \_\_\_\_\_ 296

U - Urban

R - Rural

In these 2 education zones sampled, there are 10 Local Government Areas. One Local Government Area from each of the 2 education zones was used because of large size children and parents. Eventually, Afikpo North and Ohafia Local Government Areas were taken by random sampling.

In Afikpo North, there were 30 primary schools and 25 nursery schools, while there were 31 primary schools and 12 nursery schools in Ohafia local Government Area. Since these consisted of urban and rural schools, a stratified random sampling was adopted in drawing 2 urban primary schools,

one rural primary school, 2 urban nursery schools and one rural nursery school in Afikpo North Local Government Area. The reason for insisting that schools sampled were stratified was to accommodate both urban and rural schools and thereby take care of urban and rural parents and teachers.

For the parents, in order to ensure representativeness, proportionate random sampling technique was used to draw 10% of the sample. In Afikpo North, out of 2,095 pupils in the urban primary schools, 210 pupils were sampled from primaries 1 to 6. In rural primary schools, there were 1,800 pupils but 180 pupils were sampled. This added to a total of 390 primary school pupils, which was the same number of parents sampled from primary schools. In urban nursery schools, there were 990 pupils and 99 were sampled while in the rural area there were 558 nursery school pupils and 56 were sampled. This makes a total of 155 nursery school pupils which is the same number of parents (See table 2).

In Ohafia Local Government Area, out of 2,100 pupils in the urban primary schools, 210 pupils were sampled from primary 1 to 6 while in the rural primary schools, there were 1,466 primary school pupils and 147 pupils were sampled. This gave a total of 357 primary school pupils which was the same number of parents. For the nursery schools, there were 900 nursery school pupils in the urban area and 90 pupils were sampled. In the rural area, there were 515 nursery school pupils and 51 were sampled. This makes a total of 141 nursery school pupils which is the same number of parents. The total

number of pupils sampled from the nursery and primary schools was 1,043. Out of this number, sixty (60) parents which forms 8% of the total sample of parents were found to be uneducated. A total of 30 parents were sampled in each of the rural primary and nursery schools from each of the two local government areas.

**Table 3: Sample of Primary and Nursery School Teachers used in the two education zones by two Local Government Areas**

		Primary Schools								Nursery Schools							
		No of Schools		No of School Sampled		No of Teachers		No of Teachers sampled		No of Schools		No of Schools Sampled		No of Teachers		No of Teachers sampled	
Zones	Local Government Area	U	R	U	R	U	R	U	R	U	R	U	R	U	R	U	R
Afikpo	Afikpo North	18	12	2	1	425	220	43	22	17	8	2	1	70	35	7	4
Umuahia	Ohafia	17	14	2	1	510	110	51	11	8	4	1	-	50	12	5	1
Total	2	35	26	4	2	935	330	94	33	25	12	3	1	120	47	12	5

127 \_\_\_\_\_ 144 \_\_\_\_\_ 17

U - Urban

R - Rural

For the teachers in Afikpo, out of a total of 425 in urban primary schools, 43 teachers were sampled. Out of 220 teachers in the rural primary schools, 22 were sampled. This makes a total of 65 primary school teachers. For the nursery schools in Afikpo, there were 70 teachers in urban nursery schools and 7 were sampled, in rural area nursery schools there were 35 teachers and 4



were sampled. This makes a total sample of 10 nursery school teachers.

In Ohafia, there were total of 510 urban area primary school teachers out of which 51 were sampled. There were 110 rural area primary school teachers, out of which 11 were sampled. This makes a total sample of 62 primary school teachers. For the nursery schools in Ohafia, there were 48 urban nursery school teachers out of which 5 were sampled. In the rural nursery schools there were 14 teachers and one was sampled. This makes a total sample of 6 nursery school teachers. The overall number of teachers sampled in Afikpo North and Ohafia Local Government Areas were 144, (See Table 3). Thus the total sample used for was 1187 persons made up of 1043 parents (of pupils) and 144 teachers.

### **Instrumentation**

A structured questionnaire constructed by the researcher was used to collect data for the study. The instrument was aimed at eliciting information from parents and teachers on their attitude towards young children's play. The questionnaire, Scale of Attitude to Children's Play (SACP) contains three sections, thus:

**Section A:** Sought personal information from the respondents regarding their gender, whether they were parent or teacher, location (urban or rural), educational qualifications and occupation.

**Section B:** Sought information which respondents preferred for children in each of three age ranges, 3-5, 6-9, 10-12. Thirty-three play activities were presented which were classified into five areas namely; Body Movement; (items 1-3, 4, 7-8, 11, 15-17, 19-20, 24-30) Construction and Creative Activities, (items 6, 12, 21, 32, 33); "Defensive" Activities, (items 9, 22,31); Make Believe and Play Acting, (items 5 and 18); and Verbal and Intellectual Activities (items 11, 13-14, 23) (see Appendix IV for classification of Play Activity). Respondents were required to tick activities common in their locality which children engage in.

**Section C** This has three sub-units

i **Importance of play:** This unit sought information on the respondents' perception of the importance of play. Thirty (30) items consisting 15 of positively cued statements and 15 negatively cued statements were presented for the respondents to react to, on a five point modified Likert-type response scale. This was used for measuring the respondents' attitude. The scoring guide was as follows:

	Positive Items	Negative Items
Strongly agree	4	1
Agree	3	2
Disagree	2	3
Strongly disagree	1	4
Undecided	0	0

ii **Encouragement given to children to play:** This unit was made up of 10 items consisting of 5 positively cued statements and 5 negatively cued statements which the subject also responded to on a five (5) point Likert-type response scale. The scoring guide is as follows:

	Positive Items	Negative Items
Great extent (GE)	4	1
Moderate extent (ME)	3	2
Small extent (SE)	2	3
No extent (NE)	1	4
Undecided	0	0

iii) **Reaction to play of children of different ages:** This was made up of eight items of contextual statements of different play activities that children engage in. This sub-unit has six response modes of how parents and teachers react to those activities.

### **Pilot Testing of the Instrument**

A pilot testing was carried out using 20 parents and 10 teachers within Abakiliki Local Government Area of Ebonyi State. Abakiliki is outside the geographical area of the study but it is considered to have similar characteristics with the area of the study. It was necessary to carry out the pilot testing outside the area to avoid contamination of the subjects used for the main study. Apart from testing the instrument during the pilot study, the researcher used the opportunity to train six research assistants who helped to interview the uneducated parents in the sample.

## **Validity of the Instrument**

Face-validity of the instrument was established by giving it to two specialists in childhood education, the researcher's supervisors and two specialists in measurement and evaluation. They were requested to examine the items and statements carefully as to relevance, clarity of meaning and language. Based on the contribution of the experts, some items were modified and in some areas new ones were incorporated. In particular, modifications were made to some content. For example, section B of the instrument had thirty-nine items which were reduced to thirty-three. In the first part of section C (importance of play) all the items were initially positively cued but the experts suggested a mixture of positive and negative statements. Some double-barrelled statements were also modified (see appendix II).

## **Reliability of the Instrument**

To determine the reliability of the instrument, the scores for the 30 respondents in the pilot study were collated and the researcher calculated the internal consistency using Cronbach Alpha ( $\alpha$ ). The result showed positive reliability of 0.72. (See appendix II).

## **Method of Data Collection**

The questionnaire was distributed to the 144 teachers in their schools and all the 144 were collected after completion. The teachers assisted the

researcher to identify the pupils in the sample, who were subsequently used to reach their parents. Sixty (60) parents of pupils in the rural who identified as unable to respond to the questionnaire were interviewed using the questionnaire which had been translated in the dialects as interview schedule. (See appendix III) for translation of instrument to Afikpo and Ohafia dialects.

Using the pupils to reach their parents had its own problems as some copies of the questionnaire were either not returned or mutilated. In the final analysis, usable responses were obtained from only 744 (about 75%) out of 1043 parents in the sample.

### **Method of Data Analysis**

In analysing the data generated from the study, frequencies and percentages were used to answer research question, 1,2,11 and 12 while mean and standard deviation were used to answer research questions 3 and 4. Spearman correlation coefficient was used to answer research questions 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10. Also any mean score below 3.00 on a 5-point Likert Scale was treated as a negative response.

Hypotheses 1 and 2 were tested at 0.05 level of significance using Multiple Regression analysis to determine the correlation of the variables (gender, occupation, location and level of education). The analysis of the data was done using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS).

## CHAPTER FOUR

### Results

In this chapter, the results of the study are presented. The results of the analysis are presented in sequence according to the research questions and the hypotheses formulated for the study.

#### Research questions one

What types of play activities do parents prefer their children of different age ranges to engage in?

Result for research question is presented on table 4.

**Table 4: Proportion of parents' preference of types of play activities for 3-5, 6-9 and 10-12 year old children**

Category	Types of play Activities	3-5 years			6-9 years			10-12 years		
		Maximum obtainable Types of play Activities preferred	Obtained Types of play activities Preferred	%	Maximum obtainable Types of play Activities Preferred	Obtained Types of play activities preferred	%	Maximum obtained Types of Play Activities preferred	Obtained Types of Play Activities preferred	%
1.	Body movement	14136	12864	91	14136	9754	69	14136	6078	43
2.	Construction and creative Activities	3720	3348	90	3720	3885	91	3720	1711	46
3.	Angrisive Activity	2232	1986	89	2232	1920	86	2232	2187	98
4.	Make Believe and play Acting	1488	1354	91	1488	1414	95	1488	1146	77
5.	Verbal and intellectual Activities	2232	1763	79	2232	2098	94	2232	1250	56

The data on Table 4 suggest that for 3-5 year olds, parents do not appear to have particular preferences since proportions range between 79 and 91 percent across the 5 types of play activities.

For 6-9 year olds parents' preference seem a little clearer since 86-90 percent showed preference for four of the five types of play activities, while body movement has 69 percent proportion. This suggests that whereas the last four types enjoy high preference, Body Movement is the least favoured.

In the case of 10-12 years old, the picture is even clearer. Defensive activities are easily the most preferred with 98 percent response proportion followed by Make Believe and Play Acting (77 percent). The other three with less than 60 percent frequency do not appear much favoured by parents.

### **Research question two**

What types of play activities do teachers prefer their pupils of different age ranges to engage in?

Result for research question two presented in table 5.

**Table 5: Proportion of teachers' preference of types of play activities for 3-5, 6-9 and 10-12 year old pupils**

Category	Types of play Activities	3-5 years			6-9 years			10-12 years		
		Maximum obtainable Types of play Activities preferred	Obtained Types of play activities Preferred	%	Maximum obtainable Types of play Activities Preferred	Obtained Types of play activities preferred	%	Maximum obtained Types of Play Activities preferred	Obtained Types of Play Activities preferred	%
1.	Body movement	2736	2654	97	2736	2572	94	2736	2462	90
2.	Construction and creative Activities	864	847	98	864	778	90	864	613	71
3.	Defensive Activities	432	259	60	432	363	84	432	415	96
4.	Make Believe and play Acting	288	279	97	288	279	97	288	282	98
5.	Verbal and intellectual Activities	432	415	96	432	415	96	432	380	88



The data on Table 5 suggest that for 3-5 years old, teachers do not appear to have particular preferences in four types of play since their proportion ranges between 96 and 98 percent while for Defensive activities their proportion is 60 percent. This suggests that whereas the last four types of play enjoy high preference, Defensive Activities is the least favoured.

For the 6-9 year olds, teachers do not have particular preferences in all the types of play since their proportion ranges between 84 and 97 percent. This suggest that all the types of play are favoured.

In the case of the 10-12 years old, teachers do not have particular preference in all the types of play since proportion ranges between 71 and 98 percent. This suggests that all the types of play are favoured.

### Research Question Three

What is the attitude of parents towards young children's play?

### Research Questions Four

What is the attitude of teachers towards young children's play?

Results for research questions three and four are presented on table 6.

**Table 6: Parents' and Teachers' Attitude Towards Young Children's Play, Showing Mean Score and Standard Deviation**

Group	Total Attitude Score	No of Items	Mean Attitude Score	Standard deviation	Interpretation
Parents	68.15	40	1.70	0.47	Negative
Teachers	80.14	40	2.00	0.55	Negative

Table 6 indicates that the mean attitude scores for parents and teachers are 1.70 and 2.00 respectively. This means that the attitude of parents and teachers are generally negative because the mean scores are below the cut off mean of 3.00.

### **Research Question Five**

What is the relationship between location and parents' attitude towards young children's play?

### **Research Question Seven**

To what extent does gender relate with parents' attitude towards young children's play?

### **Research Question Nine**

What is the relationship between occupation and parents' attitude towards young children's play.

### **Research Question Ten**

What is the relationship between level of education and parents' attitude towards young children's play?

Results in research questions five, seven, nine and ten are presented on table 7.

**Table 7: Co-relation Coefficient for Parents**

Variables	Computed	$r^2$	n	df	Critical r
Location versus attitude	0.01	0.000	744	742	0.1946
Gender versus attitude	0.08	0.0064	744	742	0.1946
Occupation versus attitude	0.01	0.0001	744	742	0.1946
Level of education versus attitude	0.04	0.0016	744	742	0.1946

Table 7 shows that for research question five, the and parents' attitude towards young children's play was 0.01. The critical value at 5 percent level of significance was 0.1946. This means that the relationship between location and attitude toward young children's play was not significant. The coefficient of determination ( $r^2$ ) was 0.0001. This means that location can only account or 0.01 percent of parents of parents attitude towards young children's play. For research question seven the magnitude of correlation between gender and parents' attitude towards young children's play was 0.08. The critical value at 5 percent level of significance was 0.1946. This means that the relationship between gender and attitude towards young children's play was not significant.

The coefficient of determination ( $r^2$ ) was 0.00064. This means that gender can only account for 0.08 percent of parents' attitude towards young children's play.

Also, the result for research question nine shows that the magnitude of correlation between occupation and parents' attitudes young children's play was 0.01. The critical due at 5 percent level of significance was 0.1946. This means that the relationship between occupation and attitude towards young children's play was not significant. The coefficient of determination ( $r^2$ ) was 0.0001. This means that occupation can only account for 0.01 percent of parents attitude, towards young children's play. Finally for research question ten, the magnitude of correlation between level of education and parents' attitude towards young children's play was 0.04. The critical value at 5 percent level of significance was 0.1946. This means that the relationship between level of education and attitude towards young children's play was not significant. The coefficient of determination ( $r^2$ ) was 0.00015). This means that level of education can only account for 0.04 percent of parent attitude towards young children play.

### **Research Question Six**

What is the relationship between location and teachers' attitude toward young children's play?

### Research Question Eight

What is the relationship between teachers' attitude toward young children's play?

Results for research questions six and eight are presented in table 8.

**Table 8: Co-relation Coefficient for teachers.**

Variables	Computed	$r^2$	n	df	Critical r
Location versus attitude	0.0551	0.003	144	142	0.1946
Gender versus attitude	-0.967	0.009	144	142	0.1946

Table 8 shows that for the research question six the magnitude of correlation between location and teachers' attitude towards young children's play was 0.0551. The critical value at 5 percent level of significance was 0.1946. This means that the relationship between location and attitude towards young children's play was not significant. The coefficient of determination ( $r^2$ ) was 0.003. This means that location can only account for 0.0551 of teachers' attitude towards young children's play. For research question eight the magnitude of correlation between gender and teachers' attitude towards young children's play was -0.967. The critical value at 5

percent level of significance was 0.1946. This means that the relationship between gender and attitude towards young children's play was not significant. The coefficient of determination ( $r^2$ ) was 0.009. This means that gender can only account for -0.967 of teachers' attitude towards young children's play.

### Research Question Eleven

What are parents' reaction to children's play?

### Research Question Twelve

What are teachers' reaction to children's play?

Results for research questions eleven and twelve are presented on table 9.

**Table 9: Showing the percentage of parents' and teachers' reaction to young Children play.**

	3-5 year olds		6-9 year olds		10-12 year olds	
	Approval %	Disapproval %	Approval %	Disapproval %	Approval %	Disapproval %
Parents	54	46	55	45	7	93
Teachers	49	51	36	64	7	93

Table 9 shows that in parent reaction to the 3-5 year olds playing, they gave 54 percent approval and 46 percent disapproval. For the 6-7 year olds they gave 55 percent approval and 45 percent disapproval. Also, for the 10-12 year olds, they gave 7 percent approval and 93 percent disapproval. For the

teachers' reaction, they gave 49 percent approval and 51 percent disapproval for the 3-5 year olds. For the 6-9 year olds, they gave 36 percent approval and 64 percent disapproval. Finally for the 10-12 year olds, teachers gave 7 percent approval and 93 percent disapproval.

**HO<sub>1</sub>:** There will be no significant relationship between parents' gender, location, occupation and level of education on one hand and their attitude to children's play on the other hand.

Result on hypothesis one is presented on table 10.

**Table 10: Multiple Regression Analysis of Parents' Gender, Location, Occupation and Level of Education and Parents' Attitude Towards Young Children's Play**

Variable	Multiple R	Multiple R Square	B	Beta	Standard error	% variance explained	F observed	F Critical	Interpretation
Variable 2 - Parents' Gender	0.07445	0.00554	7.425009	0.07492	3.63382	.554	4.175	2.24	S
Variable 3 - Location	0.07525	0.00566	-0.8136324	-0.00866	3.46616	.012	0.055	2.24	NS
Variable 4 - Occupation	0.07615	0.00580	-0.51781190	0.00087	2.29245	.014	0.001	2.24	NS
Variable 5 - Level of Education	0.08765	0.00768	1.160575	0.04522	0.98024	.188	1.402	2.24	NS
Constant	32.98669								

Significant at 0.05 level

degrees of freedom (df)4

S = Significant

NS = Not significant

Table 10 indicates that the observed F value of 4.175 in respect to the relationship between parents' gender and their attitude towards young

children's play is more than the critical value of 2.24 at 4 degrees of freedom. This means that there is a significant relationships. In other words, the .554 percent of the parents' variance accounted for by parents gender is significant at 0.05 level.

The observed value of 0.055 in respect to the relationship between parents' location and their attitude towards young children's play is less than the critical value 2.24 at 4 degrees of freedom. This means that there is no significant relationship. In other words, the 0.012 percent of parents' variance accounted for by their location is not significant at 0.05 level.

The observed F value of 0.00 in respect to the relationship between parents' occupation and their attitude towards young children's play is less than the critical value of 2.24 at 4 degree of freedom. This means that there is no significant relationship. In other words, the 0.014 percent of parents' variance accounted by their occupation is not significant at 0.05 level.

The observed F value of 1.402 in respect to the relationship between parents level of education and their attitude towards young children's play is less than the critical value of 2.24 at 4 degrees of freedom. This means that there is no significant relationship. In other words, the .188 percent of parents' variance accounted by their level of education is not significant at 0.05 level.

**HO:<sub>2</sub>** There will be no significant relationship between teachers' gender, location, and level of education on one hand and their attitude towards young children's play on the other hand.

Result on hypothesis two is presented on table 11.



**Table 11:** *Multiple Regression Analysis of Teachers' Gender, Location and Level of Education and Their Attitude Towards Young Children's Play*

Variable	Multiple R	Multiple R Square	B	Beta	Standard error	% variance explained	F observed	F Critical	Interpretation
Ver 2 - Parents' Gender	0.09674	0.00935	10.98388	0.09777	9.50324	.936	1.336	2.24	NS
Ver 3 - Location	0.11160	0.01245	5.67368	0.05102	9.64758	0.346	0.346	2.24	NS
Ver 5 - Level of Education	0.11321	0.01282	0.8722760	0.01105	4.06078	0.046	0.046	2.24	NS
Constant			92.85779						

Table 11 shows that the observed f value of 1.336 in respect to the relationship between teachers' gender and their attitude towards children's play is less than the critical value of 2.24 at 4 degree of freedom. This means that there is no significant relationship. In other words, the .936 percent of teachers' variance accounted for by their gender is not significant at 0.05 level. The observed f value of 0.346 in respect to the relationship between teachers' location and their attitude towards young children's play is less than the critical value of 2.24 of 4 degree of freedom. This means that there is no significant relationship. In other words, the .31 percent of teachers' variance accounted for by their location is not significant at 0.05 level.

Finally, the observed F value of 0.046 in respect to the relationship between teachers level of education and their attitude towards young children's play is less than the critical value of 2.24 at 4 degree of freedom. This means that there is no significant relationship. In other words, the .003 percent of teachers' variance accounted by their level of education is not significant at 0.05 level.

## Summary of Research Findings

Based on the analysis of the research questions and hypothesis, the following are the findings of the study:

- 1 Parents prefer their 3-5 year olds to engage in types of play activities classified under Body Movement, Make Believe and Play Acting. For 6-9 year olds, they prefer Make Believe and Play Acting and for the 10-12 year olds they prefer Defensive Activities.
- 2 Teachers prefer their 3-5 year old pupils to engage in types of play activities classified under Body Movement Make Believe and Play Acting. For the 6-9 year olds, they prefer Make Believe and Play Acting and for the 10-12 year olds, they prefer Make Believe and Play Acting.
- 3 In the attitude towards young children's play, it was found that parents' attitude was generally negative. Their gender, location and level on education notwithstanding.
- 4 In the attitude towards young children's play, it was found that teachers' attitude was also generally negative, their gender and location notwithstanding.
- 5 In the combined relationship of parents' gender, location, level of education and their attitude to young children's play in the multiple regression, the parents' gender had a significant relationship while the other variables had not.
- 6 For the teachers, all the variables had no significant relationship.
- 7 In the reaction to children playing, parents give more approval to the 3-5 year olds. For the 6-9 year olds, there is minimal difference in the approval given to them as to the younger group. For the 10-12 year olds, there is outright discouragement.
- 8 In the case of teachers, they encourage the 3-5 year olds playing but for the 6-9 year olds, just like the parents' reactions, teachers give minimal encouragement For the 10-12 year olds no encouragement is given.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### **Discussion of Results, Conclusion, Implications, Recommendations and Summary**

The chapter presents first the discussion of major findings from the study. The major concern of this study was to determine parents' and teachers' attitude towards young children's play. The discussion is followed by conclusion from the study. Educational implications of the findings, recommendation, suggestion for further studies and limitations to the study are provided. The chapter is concluded with a summary of the next work.

The discussion is organised under these subheadings :

Play activities preferred by parents and teachers for nursery and primary school children.

Parents' and teachers' attitude towards young children's play.

Other factors in attitude towards young children's play.

#### **Play Activities Preferred for Nursery and Primary School Children**

Results from this study indicate minimal difference in the parents' and teachers' preference for types of play activities suited for young children. Some categories of play activities are considered to be more suited to certain ages of children than others. This awareness is expected to come out from the responses of parents and teachers. For instance, taking the 3 - 5 year old,

in the *Body Movement* category, apart from singing and dancing which is not even very popular for 3 - 5 year olds, there is very little in this category that nursery school children enjoy. The same applies to *Defensive Activities*. On the other hand, nursery school children enjoy many activities in the *Construction and Creative Activities* category involving moulding with clay, mud or plasticine, building with sticks and wood. They love drawing and making marks with pencil, chalk or charcoal. They love to splash colours and paint or stamp leaves on paper and cloth. Children of that age also love to tell stories (*Verbal and Intellectual Activities*), about themselves and their families - the "I" and My ...."Stories, narrating what they their mother, father, sister, brother said, did and have. They love to dress up in adult clothes and shoes (Make Believe and Play Acting) to act as doctor or daddy, mother or teacher. These young ones love to display their ability by reciting in loud voices the rhymes and poems which they have learned.

Six to nine years old (6-9 years old) children and ten to twelve years old (10-12 years old) are generally more vigorous than the nursery school ones. Indeed these constitute the middle childhood children with all the characteristics of being very active physically and intellectually. (Stone and Church 1973). They are eager to do and learn almost anything, very teachable and full of energy. The vast majority of the activities listed in all five categories are suitable for this age of children. They are now assured body balance and

physical agility suit them for all the activities listed under *Body Movement*. They run and chase, deftly move their hands, feet, eyes, voice as they dance and sing, clap and jump. In *construction and Creative Activities* they excel as they knock sticks, tins and cans together, stinging their with ropes as they wish. They are more intellectually inclined or exposed. Between the ages<sup>of</sup> 9-12 years children now begin to love reading novels, to develop refinement in language use, and to learn to argue and debate. Many love to play, act, imitating real or novel created characters. They are tremendous competitors in practically everything -talking, running, reading, wining games. They are capable of committing to memory lengthy passages and reproducing them at will.

The researcher expected that teachers and our primary school teachers who are almost all trained to be able to identify more critically than parents the age-appropriate play activities of these nursery and primary age pupils. That the finding showed that teachers were unable to do this supports the researchers suspicion that many teachers do not actually appreciate the tremendous value of play to children and its role in learning. It points to the need to continue to sensitize teachers to this situation through lectures, workshops, etc as was recommended.

## **Parents' and Teachers' Attitude Towards Young Children Play**

Results show that parents' and teachers' have a negative attitude towards young children's play. This confirms Maduewesi's (1985) view that "rarely do adults and parents set aside time to play with their children. This in spite of results from studies carried out on mothers' perception of play in five UNICEF assisted local government areas of Oyo State by Akinware, Oyelaran, Pierce, and Zenthin (1989) and by Okebukola Agiobu-Kemmer, Akin-Aina and Akinware (1994) that found that parents recognised importance of play. This present study confirms that at best parents do not understand the value of play to children. Play is important in children's academic, physical and social skills. Play also provides opportunities for the development of creativity and enriches experience for children. Since parent's attitude towards young children's play is negative, it means that young children are deprived of technical stimulation, which is very necessary for the development of more complex technical skills. Technical stimulation of children can be achieved through the provision of toys and interaction with objects found in the children's environment. Lack of stimulation may put young children at disadvantage with regard to school readiness. If parents encourage their children to explore their environment, it would enhance their creative potentials. It is generally recognised that children who are provided with problem solving task before attempting problem solving are likely to do better at problem solving than those without such

materials. They will also be motivated to order play materials and anticipated failure could be reduced.

Teachers also have a negative attitude towards young children's play. Teachers have undergone training in child development and in the course of their study were taught the use of play-way method as the best for teaching young children. So how would they not appreciate the enormous value of play in children's lives? Research evidence shows that some teachers, especially those in the nursery schools are not qualified in the work they are doing. Consequently they do not possess competencies like knowledge of the value of the use of play in teaching which qualified teachers should possess. Oti ( ). This finding is congruent with that of Bousequest (1985) who had observed that adults think that play means less time for work and do not understand that for children, play and work should be one and the same thing.

Teachers are by virtue of their profession responsible for providing materials and knowing when to match materials and activities to suit children's interest. A good teacher presents activities for children in an open-ended manner by involving them rather than limiting them. Learning is facilitated through an organised environment that is fashioned with a lot of opportunities for young children to explore. Also, sensory materials form a very vital part of the environment for the children to manipulate, adapt, accommodate and assimilate. Also teachers have a crucial role in structuring planning and

organising an appropriate environment for children. This view is in line with the ideas of Day (1980) who cites an example of Bank Street model programme which aim was to support the play mode and set the stage for dramatic play activities. Bank Street school gave play an important place in the curriculum. This idea would work even in the Nigerian educational system provided that teachers show enough commitment to it. As children manipulate objects found in their environment, they meet some problems and find solutions to them by themselves depending on the encouragement they are given by their teachers.

### **Other Factors in Parents' and Teachers' Attitude Towards Young Children's Play**

There are no relationships in the computed 'r' in parents' and teachers' attitude towards young children's play across location, level of education and their attitude towards young children's play.

In the rural areas, many parents' excuse for not allowing their children to play is because they may injure themselves while playing. Although they have a negative attitude, they are not always around to monitor what they do and children still go out to join others to play in the stream, village square or with their neighbours because of the intrinsic urge to play. When their parents come back, they mete out all kinds of punishment to their children probably because the children did not carry out the instructions given to them to do certain domestic chores. In one of the areas of study, Afikpo a riverine area, parents



restrict their children from playing in the stream or around the river for fear of being drowned. The children on their part still go there to play because swimming is part of the life style of the community.

Children form the labour force of farming enterprise in various homes. Instead of allowing these children to play while they are away, they prefer taking them along. Also in Afikpo, their cultural practices restrict the girls from going to village square to play with their male counterparts. This village square is exclusive for the males. The females are only allowed to pass through it at certain hour of the day especially during dry season because the males do their secret things there that they don't want female to know. Although there is no relationship in parents' attitude towards young children's play, parents gather children at night to tell them moonlight stories after which everyone goes to bed.

For the urban parents, restricting children from play is because of the traffic problem which the urban setup poses. Some families now live in flats where there is not enough space for children to play and because they do not want their children to get into trouble with their neighbours which they may not be able to contend with, they restrict them to their flats. Urbanization also creates problem for parents in the sense that due to the crime rate in this area, parents may not like their children to get involved. Children lack curiosity and active exploration of the environment as a result of these child rearing practices. A

child who plays with other children will among other things being equal, have easier time adjusting to school life than a child deprived of these opportunities.(Durojaiye, 1976).

In urban areas parents engage in all kinds of jobs including tradesmen, civil servants and businessmen. In the rural areas, the occupation of parents is predominantly farming, fishing, hunting with a few civil servants and skilled men. These parents would rather prefer their children to join them in their workplace where they would be under close supervision or send them to lesson instead of allowing them to play. This finding is inconsistent with that by Sutton-Smith (1981) and Almy et al (1982) who in their respective studies on play found that parents attitude was partly determined by social class.

For level of education of the parents, surprisingly, one would have thought that the more educated the parents are, the more understanding and appreciation of the value of play they would have. This is because of their exposure and the knowledge they gained in the course of their educational training. Experience has shown that some parents, although they have a minimal level of education, buy toys and sensory materials for their children to play more than the educated parents. Parents, educated or uneducated, prefer to engage their children in academic activities all through the day instead of encouraging them to play. After school children rush back home, take their lunch and rush to lessons. In big commercial cities like Aba, Onitsha and

Lagos, children don't even come back home until four or six in the evening tired. Parents spend a lot of money to give these children extra lessons and keep them in school. This practice affords them very minimal interaction with their children. Some parents send their children to hawk on the highways or even push wheelbarrows till late in the evening. Even before evening, children get tired. While waiting to load their wheelbarrows, they sleep under the bridge. This is a clear evidence of child labour. Although Maduewesi (1995) is of the view that this practice is regarded as responsibility training but too much of it could lead to child labour.

Many teachers, are still parents. Most of the things discussed earlier, still apply to them except for school regulations where there is time for recreation. Their attitude is still the same, their location and level of education notwithstanding. This is quite disturbing and disappointing because they have undergone educational training and been taught the values of play in the lives of young children and that play-way method is the best for the teaching and training of young children. For the nursery school teachers, theirs is a different case because majority of them are unqualified for the work they are doing and consequently lack competencies which they should possess as teachers.

Adults could enhance children's play by providing physical environment that would be conducive to play. One way of doing this is by participating in their play. Parents and teachers have a crucial role in carefully structuring, planning

and organising appropriate environment with adequately equipped materials and toys that can be suitable for young children to interact well with their peers and also in the development of their potentials. One would have thought that location would have a significant relationship in adults attitude towards young children's play because the rural environment is rich in unstructured objects like palm leaves, sticks, rubber seeds, *akpii*, *koso*, empty tins and cans etc which children can explore and play with than in the urban environment. This finding is in agreement with that of Dasen *et al* (1978) who found that African environment was rich in unstructured objects which are favourable for symbolic play.

## **Conclusion**

The following conclusions are based on the result of this research:

First, parents do not appear to have particular reference for the types of play activities engaged by the 3-12 year old children .

Second, just like parents, teachers do not also have a particular preference for the types of play activities engaged by their 3-12 years old pupils.

Third, in the mean attitude towards young children's play score, it was found that parents' and teachers' attitude towards young children play, according to the variables, (gender, location, occupation and level of education) was generally negative.

Fourth, there is a significant relationship between parents' gender and their attitude towards young children's play but there is no significant relationship between their location, occupation and level of education and their attitude towards young children's play.

Fifth, there is no significant relationship between teachers' gender and location and level of education in their attitude towards young children's play.

Sixth, in parents' and teachers' reaction to children playing, encouragement is given to the 3-5 year olds, lesser encouragement is given to the 6-9 year olds and very little encouragement was given to the 10-12 year olds children.

### **Limitations to the Study**

Using the pupils to reach their parents had its own problems as some copies of the questionnaire were either not returned or were mutilated. In the final analysis 299 out of 1043 questionnaires were lost and consequently not returned. Since play for young children is more of a physical than a mental activity, it was difficult for the researcher to assign equal play activities to the various categories. That was why play activities in some categories outweighed the others

### **Educational Implications**

The findings of this study have some important and far-reaching educational implications for children and parents, primary and nursery school teachers,

teacher education institutions and curriculum developers. For the first time as far as we know in Nigeria, the findings have provided empirical evidence as to the attitude of parents and teachers toward young children's play. The study found that these two significant groups have a negative attitude towards young children's play. This is in spite of the acclaimed love that Nigerians have for children. One implication is that these two crucial groups do not actually understand or appreciate what is good for children and the role of play in providing for children's well being and healthy development. For teachers particularly, this is tragic as it exposes the inadequacy of our teacher education especially for teachers of young children.

The implication of the need to have change of attitude of parents and teachers is based on the information emanating from this work. They ought to understand that play enhances physical fitness, growth and development in learning skills and competencies of children through attending workshops and seminars.

The teacher visualizes how important the training of teachers in child development and the need to use play as important method of teaching the young children. The curriculum developers may also be sensitised to carrying out curriculum revision in primary and teacher education institution with the aim of including the importance of play. Since there is no provision for the training of nursery school teachers in the teacher training colleges, train the trainers

workshops should always be organized for nursery school proprietors by organisations in childhood education.

## Recommendations

As a result of the research findings, the following recommendations were made:

- 1 The Federal and State Ministries of Education, State Primary Education Board (SPEB) the Local Education Authority, Nigeria Union of Teachers and World Organization of Early Childhood Education (OMEP) should organise enlightenment campaigns for parents and teachers to create awareness on the importance of play. This will help change their attitude.
- 2 Teachers should minimize the practice of forcing children to read and write and build open classrooms stocked with learning materials and projects where children can work in groups. This would enhance their cognitive and psychomotor skills and they would learn to work co-operatively. Play time is teaching and learning, therefore teachers must arrange special activities that encourage children to play and learn at the same time.
- 3 Teachers should provide stimulating materials as an important part of learning environment. As children use materials, their senses are more developed and they become more interested in learning. Such materials are those that children can manipulate, adapt, accommodate and assimilate. A teacher facilitates learning through an organised environment where children can explore, discuss, build their confidence and competence.
- 4 Both parents and teachers should find time to participate in children's play because children learn a lot from imitating adults. They also have a crucial role in structuring, planning and organising appropriate environment for young children to play. Play time is diagnosis time and during play children's behaviour provide indicators of their emotional wellbeing. By participating in children's play, parents and teachers may screen for anxiety, fears and hostilities.

- 5 These bodies above should organise conferences, seminars and workshops for training parents and teachers on the role of play in the overall development of children. In such training workshops, the making of toys should be placed in the priority of the activities.

### **Suggestion for Further Research**

- 1 Since culture has profound impact on the types and characteristics of play traditionally recommended for children, a study of this nature could be carried out to compare attitude of parents and teachers to young children's play in different cultural settings.
2. Culturally, the degree of freedom allowed male and female children for play differ. It could be that, the attitude of parents and teachers towards young children's play vary with the gender of the children. This needs further investigation.
- 3 Appropriate strategies for promoting the quality of children's play could be explored
- 4 Explore the impact of adult interaction on play behaviours and emotional responses of pre-schoolers with development delays.

### **Summary**

Play is recognized as a crucial medium through which children learn, while parents and teachers are significant figures in children's lives, who make decisions and exercise authority. This study was aimed at finding out parents' and teachers' attitude towards young children's play. To do this, twelve research questions and two hypotheses were formulated. Related literature was reviewed and correctional study design was used. Multistage, stratified random sampling technique were used to select the sample which took into



account the following variables (gender, location, occupation and level of education) used for this study. Seven hundred and fourth-four (744) parents and one hundred and fort-four (144) nursery and primary school teachers were used in this study. The instrument used for data collection were validated by experts in Childhood Education and Measurement and Evaluation. These were a structured questionnaire for the literate parents and teachers and interviews for the non-literate parents.

A reliability test was carried out on the instrument and measures of internal consistency were employed using Cronbach Alpha. The value obtained was 0.72. Data analysis was done using frequencies, percentages, means, standard deviation, Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient and Multiple Regression analysis was also used to test the correlation of the variables used. All the hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance.

Results indicated that parents and teachers had a negative attitude towards young children's play. There was a significant relationship between parents' gender and their attitude toward young children's play but there was no relationship between parents', occupation, location and their level of education and their attitude towards children's play. For the teachers there was no significant relationship between their gender, location, and level of education and their attitude towards children's play. These results have

implications for parents, teachers, teacher educational institutions and curriculum planners.

The study recommends among others, that parents, school proprietors, international agencies and all who care about children should provide toys and other play materials for young children's use. Teachers should minimize the practice of forcing children prematurely to read and write but instead should create open classroom stocked with stimulating materials where children can work in groups. The Federal and State Ministries of Education, State Primary Education Board (SPEB) the Local Education Authorities, the Nigeria Union of Teachers, teacher education institutions and the World Organisation of Early Childhood Education (OMEP) should cooperate in training and sensitizing parents and the general public on the role of play in the overall development of children.

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## APPENDIX I

## Showing working of Reliability Scores

The reliability of the composite score of independent tests will be approximately a weighted average of the reliabilities of the components.

Guilford and Frutcher (1978:447)

section on reliabilities and Test Batteries

Sections	Nos.	Alpha $\alpha$	Cases N	Items N	df	Weighed
i	1-39	0.69160	30	39	37	25.5992
ii	1-39	0.80982	30	39	39	29.963340
iii	1-31	0.83844	30	31	29	24.31476
iv	1-13	0.56193	30	13	11	6.18123
v	1-13	0.59817	30	13	11	16.17987
vi	1-13	0.61174	30	27	25	15.2935
					150	107.9319

$$= 0.7195446$$

$$0.72$$

$$\alpha = \frac{n}{n-1} \left[ 1 - \frac{\sum S_1^2}{S_x^2} \right]$$

- $\alpha$  = Cronbach alpha  
 $n$  = No. of items  
 $S_1^2$  = Variance of a single term  
 $S_x^2$  = Variance of the total test

## Appendix II

Table showing corrections from the validity of the instrument.

S/N	Source of correction	Corrections suggested	page	Corrections Effected
1.	Section B	Repetition of items eg. (a) Running and chasing one another. (b) Skipping and hopping, skipping with rope (c) moulding things with sand and paper, constructing things with cardboard paper and cardboxes.(d) Drama, acting a play(e) Walking about in the bush, playing in the stream, exploring the bush or stream in search of insects, hide and seek.	2	Select skipping with rope constructing things with paper and cardboxes. Acting a play. Exploring the bush or stream in search or insects. Hide and seek.
2	Section C (1)	(a) Not comprehensive and few. (b) All the items positively cued	4	Items increased to thirty (30) positively and negatively cued in equal,number.
3.	Section C (ii)	Some statements were double barrelled eg. I don't buy toys for my children because I have no money (b) I don't buy toys for my children because it is waste of money. (c) I don't allow my children to carry out any playful activity because it is not important.	5 and 6	I don't buy toys for my children I allow my children to play with other children. I don't encourage my children to play much.
4	Section C (iii)	Mixed up sections C (ii and (iii)	5 and	Separate the sub units and contextualize statements in section (iii)
			6	Provide options of reactions for the statements.

## APPENDIX III

## LETTER OF INTRODUCTION TO RESPONDENT

Department of Education  
University of Nigeria  
Nsukka.  
Date:

**Dear Respondents,**

I am a postgraduate student of the above named institution, undertaking a survey study on parents' and teachers' attitude towards young children's play. Your cooperation is therefore highly needed in order to make this work successful. In the attached questionnaire, you are provided with five options namely strongly agree, disagree, strongly disagree and undecided; and great extent, moderate extent, small extent, no extent and undecided. You are requested to mark an (x) in the preferred option column against the item.

I assure you that every information supplied here will be treated as highly confidential and will be used for the purpose of this research study only.

Thank for your anticipated cooperation

Yours sincerely

**Julie U Ibiam**  
(PG/Ph.D/92/14069).



## SCALE OF ATTITUDE TO CHILDREN'S PLAY (SACP)

## SECTION A: PERSONAL INFORMATION

Sex: Male ( ) Female ( )

Location: Rural ( ) Urban ( )

Category of Respondent: Teacher ( ) Parent ( )

Occupation: Tradesman ( ) Civil Servant ( ) Business ( )

*Qualifications:*

Never went to school ( )

First School Leaving Certificate ( )

West African School Certificate ( )

Teachers Grade II Certificate (TC II) ( )

Ordinary National Diploma (OND) ( )

Higher National Diploma ( )

Nigeria Certificate in Education (NCE) ( )

Other please indicate

## SECTION B

Play activities which children in your locality engage in. Please tick

1. Dancing ( )
2. Clapping ( )
3. Jumping obstacle ( )
4. Skipping with rope ( )
5. Dramatising adult role ( )
6. Moulding things with sand, mud or clay ( )
7. Playing in the rain/flood ( )
8. Chasing one another ( )
9. Boxing ( )

10. Telling and listening to stories ( )
11. Playing in water ( )
12. Constructing things with paper or card boxes ( )
13. Reciting poems or rhymes ( )
14. Reading ( 0
15. Swinging ( )
16. Tumbling (.)
17. Climbing ( )
18. Acting a play ( )
19. Hide and seek ( )
20. Exploring the bush or stream in search of insects etc ( )
21. Gathering assortment of empty cans ( )
22. Karating and kung fu ( )
23. Tongue twister competition/games ( )
24. Riding merry go round ( )
25. Counting with seeds or other objects ( )
26. Ikpo oga, an Igbo play ( )
27. Hopping and jumping ( )
28. Sliding ( )
29. Swimming and chasing (.)
30. Swimming and singing ( )
31. Wrestling ( )
32. Drawing and painting ( )
34. Footballing ( )



Which of the following activities would you recommend for 3-5 year olds 6-9 year olds and 10-12 year olds. Please tick ( )

B. Preference of Play Activities

Play activities	3-5 yrs	6-9 yrs	10-12 yrs
1	Dancing		
2	Clapping		
3	Jumping Obstacles		
4	Skipping with rope		
5	Dramatising adult roles		
6	Moulding things with sand, mud or clay		
7	Playing in the rain flood		
8	Chasing one another		
9	Telling and listening to stories		
10	Boxing		
11	Playing in water		
12	Constructing things with paper or card boxes		
13	Reciting poems or rhymes		
14	Reading		
15	Swinging		
16	Tumbling		
17	Climbing		
18	Acting		
19	Hide and seek		
20	Going into the bush or stream in search or insects		
21	Gathering empty cans		
22	Karate and king fu		
23	Tongue twisting competition/games		
24	Riding merry go round		
25	Counting with seeds or other objects		
26	Ikpo oga (an Igbo play activity)		
27	Hopping		
28	Sliding		
29	Swimming and chasing		
30	Swimming and singing		
31	Wrestling		
32	Drawing and painting		
33	Playing football		

## SECTION C

*Please Note*

Strongly Agree (SA)      Agree (A)      Disagree (D)

Strongly Disagree (SD)      Undecided (U)

i      Indicate the extent to which you agree with the following statement by ticking ( ) in the column of your choice:

I.      Importance of Children's Play

STATEMENT		SA	A	D	SD	U
1	Playing helps children to be creative					
2	Playing makes children to be less imaginative					
3	Playing helps children to learn new things					
4	Children who play do not develop foresight					
5	Children learn how to plan through playing					
6	Playing do not promote divergent thinking					
7	Playing is the natural way that children learn					
8	Ability to sort things is not enhanced by playing					
9	Children learn how to classify things through playing					
10	Learning through the senses is not promoted by playing					
11	As children play they learn the characteristics of things					
12	Playing does not teach children about their environment					
13	Playing improves development of reading skills in children					
14	Development of children's writing skills is not improved by playing					
15	Playing enables children to understand so many things					
16	Playing makes children to be rascals					
17	By repeating the words they use in play children learn more words.					
18	Playing breeds indiscipline in children					
19	Playing enhances physical fitness in children					
20	Improvement of hand and eye coordination is not enhanced by playing					
21	Playing makes children confident					
22	Playing does not make children feel secure					
23	Fear and tension reduced by playing					
24	Ability to endure problems is not promoted by playing					
25	Playing helps children to cope with their stress					
26	Playing does not disturb children from carrying out their home and school assignment					
27	Playing enhances stubbornness in children					
28	Learning about culture is inhibited by playing					
29	Playing disrupts children from listening to instruction					
30	Playing promotes carelessness in children.					

ii. To what extent do the following statement apply to you? Please indicate by ticking ( ) in the column that best represent your feelings about each statement.

*Please Note*

Great Extent (GE) Moderate Extent (ME) Small Extent (SE)

No Extent (NE) Undecided (U)

II. Encouragement given to young children to play

STATEMENT		GE	NE	SE	NE	U
1	I don't like my children playing					
2	I help my children repair broken play materials					
3	I don't buy toys for my children					
4	I allow my children fiddle with gadgets					
5	I disallow my children playing with materials they find around them					
6	I help to make play materials for my children					
7	I don't teach my children games					
8	I teach my children new ways of playing					
9	I don't encourage my children to play much					
10	I allow my children to play with other children.					

iii. How do the following statements apply to you. Please indicate by ticking ( ) in the column that best represents your feelings about each statement.

*Reaction to Children's Play*

		Scold them	Beat them	Send them indoors	Stop them from playing	Help direct their play	Encourage them to play
1	When he or she should be doing his her school assignment						
2	When he she should be resting.						
3	When he or she should be helping out in the household chore						
4	When he or she is supposed to have gone to bed.						
5	Fiddling with gadgets at home						
6	On Sunday when he or should be in the church						
7	Reading his picture						
8	On Sunday during clean up						
	Total						

Translation of instrument to Afikpo dialet

**Section A**

Ini ru gini?

Igu beri na we n'ulo ekwukwo?

**Section B**

Ura di iche iche umuruma na ama n' ekuku nkaayi. Nnaa kpo na ikarim nke wo na maa.

1. Ite egwu
2. Iku eka
3. Ihe bu ge ihe
4. Itu udo
5. Ime umara ka ezenze
6. Iji eja yaa uria na-akpu ihe
7. Ima ura n'akpukpo mini
8. Ichu oso
9. Ikpa, ya igete ububo
10. Iku okpo
11. Iji mini na ama ura
12. Iji ekwukwo na emefute ihe
13. Igu ebu
14. Igu ekwukwo
15. Anyagari ihe

16. Ikponkpo nkpo
17. Inyi elu
18. Ime ka onye ozo
19. Ime ihe ezomi
20. Ichu nta ogugu
21. Ichokota okonko
- 22.
- 23.
- 24.
25. Iji akpuri ihe n'agu ihe
26. Ikpo oga
27. Ikwu ntu
- 28.
29. Ichu oso na mini
30. Igu egwu na mini
31. Igba mgba
32. I se ihe ya itechi ihe
33. Iku bolu.

Nime ura a di iche iche, nda nke iji cho na umuruma adi aho eto, rue ise, isii rue tighinani, ya iri rue na irile ebo ima.



Nime ura a di iche iche, nda nke iji cho na umuruma adi aho, eto, rue ise, isii rue tighi nahi, ya iri rue na irile ebo ima.

	eto-ise	isi-tighinani	iri-irilebo
1. lte egwu			
2. lku eka			
3. lhe bu ge ihe			
4. ltu udo			
5. lme umara ka ezenze			
6. lji eja yaa uria na-akpu ihe			
7. lma ura n'akpukpo mini			
8. lchu oso			
9. lkpa, ya igete ububo			
10. lku okpo			
11. lji mini na-ama ura			
12. lji ekwukwo na emefute ihe			
13. lgu ebu			
14. lgu ekwukwo			
15. Anyagari ihe			
16. lkponkpo nkpo			
17. lnyi elu			
18. lme ka onye ozo			
19. lme ihe ezomi			
20. lchu nta ogugu			
21. lchokota okonko			
22.			
23.			
24.			
25. lji akpuri ihe n'agu ihe			
26. lkpo oga			
27. lkwu ntu			
28.			
29. lchu oso na mini			
30. lgu egwu na mini			
31. lgba mgba			
32. l se ihe ya itechi ihe			
33. lku bolu.			

## Section C I

Ekwe rim okam	-	strongly agree
Ekwe rim	-	Agree
Ekwete gim	-	Disagree
Ekwetegim okam	-	Undecided

Nime ihie nja agufutari gi bu uru ima ura baari umuruma, karim nke ikwelegeri na wo.

1. Ura na eme na umuruma rifuta ihe neka wo
2. Ura na eme na umuruma narifuta ihe neka wo
3. Ura na eme umuruma imuta ihe ohu
4. Umumma na ma ura ana ga amuta ihe di na mgbenihu
5. Umuruma na muta atumatu hite n'ima ura
6. Umuruma anaga kwalite iri oriri nuzo di iche iche
7. Ima ura bu uzo umurama gana amuta ihe.
8. Aghaghi omuma ura na achofuta ihe
9. Umuruma n'amuta idokote ihe n'udi hite n'ima ura
10. Amuta ihe na uzo di iche iche anaghi ehite na ura
11. Umuruma na ama ura wo a-nagi muta nke iha diga na udi a
12. Omuma ura anaghi ezi umuruma maka gburugburu ibe wo no
13. Omuma ura na akwalite oguguekwukwo na umuruma
14. Imuta odide ekwukwo anaghi ehite na omuma ura
15. Omuma ura na eme umuruma na amuta otutu ihe
16. Omuma ura na eme na umuruma a na akpa aghara
17. Ina agulagari okwu, Umuruma ji e na amuta yeko okwu
18. Omuma ura na eme umuruma na eme isi ike
19. Omuma ura na eme n'umuruma ana agbasi ike
20. Mmekote enya ya eka anaghi adabacha hite n'ima ura
21. Omuma ura na eme na obu akaa umuruma
22. Omuma ura anaghi eme na umuruma eweri na odighi ihe je me wo
23. Ujo ya oriri na ebelete ihite na ima ura
24. Inwo ike idi nsogbu anaghi ehite na omuma ura
25. Omuma ura na eyeri umuruma eka inaghide nsogbu
26. Omuma ura anaghi egbochi umuruma iru oru wo kwesiri iru n' ulo ya ulo ekwukwo
27. Omuma ura na eme umuruma anaeme ekweghiekwe
28. Umuruma anaghi amuta maka omelali wo hite na uma ura.
29. Omuma ura na egbochite umuruma n'ime ihe asi wo mee
30. Omuma ura na eme ka umuruma a juhu hu na eme ihe.

## Section C II

- A. Nuzo hiri ne - Great extent  
 B. Nuzo hituru ne - Moderate extent  
 CH. Nuzo habaeka - Small extent  
 D. Odighi uzo obula - No extent  
 E. Amachaghim - Undecided

Gusi uzo ikweteri n'ihie nja ju gi hite ha iza n'uzo ani.

	A	B	CH	D	E
1. Anagim acho na umurumom maje ura					
2. Anagim eyeri umum eka i meche ihe wo ji na ama ura.					
3. Anagim azutari umum ihe woji na ama ura					
4. A nam ahabu umum iji ihe obula diga n'ulo na ama ura.					
5. Anagim ahabu umurumam ji ihe obula wo huru na ama ura					
6. Anam eyeri umuruma m eka na emete ngwaa wo ji na ama ura					
7. Anagim ezi umum nke a gana ama ura.					
8. Anam ezi umum uzo ohu agana ama ura.					
9. Anagim anabata na umum maje ura okam.					
10. Anam ahabu umum ima ura waa umunima ozo.					

## Section C III

Gusi nke ina eme ma gi biakwute umuruma ndi aho eto rue ise, isii rue tighinani ya iri rue irile eboo na ama ura. Iji zaga ihe iche iche inimege enhua.

- A. Akoru wo Okuko
- B. Etiwo ihe
- CH. Atuchi budowo ulo
- D. Akwusiwo omuma ura
- E. Eyeriwo eka na agbasi ura no
- F. Akwaghide wo ima ura

	A	B	CH	D	E	F
1. Mgbe o kwesiri iru oru ulo ekwukwo						
2. Mgbe o kwesiri ini uzu ike						
3. Mgbe o kwesiri ini ye eka noru n'ulo						
4. Mgbe o kwesiri elabawo						
5. Ma ya weri ngwe edebegeri n ulo na atukasi						
6. N' izu Sonde o kwesiri ijege wo chochi						
7. Ma yo noo gu ekwukwo asegeri ihe umuruma						
8. N' izu Sotodee mgbe ana zachaga ibe aha.						

Translation to Ohafia Dialect

## Section A

Iruga gini?  
Igukwara ra ole ibe?

**Section B I:**

Mmeriga di iche iche umirima eme ra  
Okuku nkeayi. Nnaakpo, gi ikpareye me nke wo mego

1. Ite iri
2. Iku aka
3. Ifefe ife amewni ahu
4. Ife udo
5. Ime ume elege ndi ichine
6. Igi aja akpu ife
7. Ime mmeriga idonyi
8. Ichu ibe wo oso
9. Iku okpo
10. Ikpa ububuo yara inu nke ndi oduo kpai
11. Imemariga amini
12. Iji akwukwo aru ife
13. Ibu abu
14. Ikpo akwukwo
15. Igwu mmini
16. Isuheri
17. Inyi elu
18. Ime ife nlele
19. Ihe nhibe
20. Ipie ofia nnunu
21. Ibukota komkom ife ochigi
22. Igba okpa
23. Iku akumaku
24. Igbuhari gburu gburu
25. Iji nkpuru agu ogu
26. Ikpo oga
27. Ifeli elu
28. Imi ami
29. Iguru mmini yara ichu oso
30. Igwu mmini yara ibu abu
31. Igba mgba
32. Ise ife
33. Igba bolu

## Section B II:

Nime mmariga di iche ide, nda nke ioho ha umirimo di afo oto rue iso, isii rue tolu, na iri rue iri le abuo ime.

	Ato-Iso	Isii- Tolu	Iri-irilebuo
1. Ite iri			
2. Iku aka			
3. Ifefe ife amewni ahu			
4. Ife udo			
5. Ime ume elege ndi ichine			
6. Igi aja akpu ife			
7. Ime mmeriga idonyi			
8. Ichu ibe wo oso			
9. Iku okpo			
10. Ikpa ububuo yara inu nke ndi oduo kpai			
11. Imemariga amini			
12. Iji akwukwo aru ife			
13. Ibu abu			
14. Ikpo akwukwo			
15. Igwu mmini			
16. Isuheri			
17. Inyi elu			
18. Ime ife nlele			
19. Ihe nhibe			
20. Ipie ofia nnunu			
21. Ibukota komkom ife ochigi			
22. Igba okpa			
23. Iku akumaku			
24. Igbughari gburu gburu			
25. Iji nkpuru agu ogu			
26. Ikpo oga			
27. Ifeli elu			
28. Imi ami			
29. Iguru mmini yara ichu oso			
30. Igwu mmini yara ibu abu			
31. Igba mgba			
32. Ise ife			
33. Igba bolu			

## Section C I.

- A. Ekwesiri m ike  
 B. Ekwe gi m  
 CH. Ekwesi zigi m ike  
 D. Amazigim  
 E. N'ime ife onwa nha agupuseragi bu iru mmeriga abara umirima. nda nge kweye ro wo

	A	B	CH	D	E
1. Imemmeriga eyere umirina aka wo amara ichepusa ife					
2. Imemmariga eme umirima wo ani ga ichepusa ife					
3. Ime mmeriga eme umirima wo amara ife ofuru					
4. Umirima emeni mmariga aniga ama ife ya emeni mgberifu					
5. Umirime amusa elege eji eme ife zaa ameririga					
6. Mmeriga aniga ekwe mmadu eche uche ahara ahara.					
7. Mmeriga wo abum puse uwe umirima eji anusa ife					
8. Oke mmeriga aniga ekwe mmadu mara nke wo nke.					
9. Umirima amara nke wo nke zaa a mmeriga					
10. Mmeriga aniga ekwe ezi amuru					
11. Mgba Umirima ame nmeriga wo mgba wo amusa elege ife eji eme.					
12. Ime mmeriga ahiga akuziri ife diwoni akuku					
13. Imemmeriga ame umirima wo amara nne eji akpo akwukwo.					
14. Imemmariga aniga ekwe umirima ha wo mara elege eji ede ife					
15. Ime mmeriga eme umirima wu amara ife ukwuu.					
16. Ime mmariga eme umirima wo ana eme isiikike.					
17. Mgbe umirima ikpaiga okwu noli wo kposi lee mbu ome wo wo amara ukwu otutu.					
18. Ime meriga eme umirima wo ara onu isi ikike.					
19. Ime mmerigo eme umirima wo atahi ike.					
20. Ime meriga aniga ekwe umirima mara elege wo ji eme anya wo yara aka wo.					
21. Ime mmriga eme umirima imara onwe wo.					
22. Ime mmariga eme umirima obigi egwu.					
23. Mmeriga eme umirima ahugi egwu					
24. Mmeriga aniga ekwe umirima inwe ndidi mgbe wo nwe nsogbu.					
25. Mmeriga eme umirima amara ife wo ya ema ma wo nwe nsogbu					
26. Mmeriga aniga emechu umirima iru oru ani wo ulue akwukwo.					
27. Ime mmeriga eme umirima wo ana amu isiikike.					
28. Ime oke mmeriga eme umirima wo aniga ama omerali.					
29. Ime oke mmeriga eme umirima wo ani ga anu ife asi wo mme.					
30. Ime oke mmeriga eme umirima amagi ife.					

## Section C II

- A. Ruzo di ukwu  
 B. Ruzo ditu ukwu  
 CH. Ruzo di nké nta  
 D. O dighi uzo obula  
 E. Amazigim

Zim uzo iji kwesa rime ife onwe nha gu pusara gi sita ri iza uzo olu.

	A	B	CH	D	E
1. A choo m ha umu m n'me mmeriga					
2. Ana meyere umu m aka imesi ife wo ji eme mmenga.					
3. Anima azuru umu m n'ini metu ife wo eji eme mmeriga.					
4. Ama akwe ha umu m n'iri metu ife wo fuu dikpa woni aka					
5. Anima ekwe ha umu m nini metu ife wo fuu dikpa woni aka					
6. Anima enyere umu m aka ime ife wo ji ame ime mmenga					
7. Anima amu umu m elege eji eme mmeriga.					
8. Anima ezi umu m uzo ofuru eji eme mmeriga.					
9. Anima azu umu m ha wo meta mmeriga ike.					
10. Anima ahapu umu m wora umirima ndi oduo esoro mee mmeriga.					



## Section C III

Zim nno iji okpa agwea mo ibakwusa umirima di afo ato rue iso, issi rue tolu, iri rue iri la abuo na eme mmeriga, ija ozigba ife ide ide i na eme nno onwe.

	A	B	CH
1. Mgbe nwanta kwesiri ina ru oro asii ya rue n'ulo akwukwo			
2. Mgbe nwata kwesiri ji rahu ura ukori			
3. Mgbe nwanta kwesiri ina aru oru ulue			
4. Mgbe nwanta kwesiri ilaba ulue			
5. Imetu si ngwongwo ulue aka			
6. Ubochi chochi mgbe nwanta kwesiri ino a chochi			
7. Mgbe nwanta guga okwukwo ya isere ife			
8. Mgbe nwanta husi haga ulue ra izu satodee.			

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## APPENDIX IV

### Classification of Play Activities

- i *Body Movement.* Play activities classified under this heading include: Dancing, singing, clapping, tumbling, jumping obstacles, climbing, skipping with rope, chasing one another, foot stamping, foot movement and hand clapping activities, Ikpo oga, hop step and jump and others.
- ii *Construction and Creative Activities* include; Moulding things with sand and clay, building with sticks and pieces of wood, gathering assortment of empty cans or using them to build cars, drawing and painting, football, constructing paper toys and others.
- iii *"Defensive" Activities.* Under this are classified; Boxing, body wrestling, hand wrestling, karate and kung fu and like.
- iv *Make Believe and Play Acting.* Classified under this is role playing in a variety of setting eg. as parents, authority figures like military administrator or governor, professional like doctors, nurses, teachers etc.
- v *Verbal and Intellectual Activities.* Classified under this is telling stories, recitation of rhymes or poems, reading, display or competition in tongue twisters, retelling stories or past incidence and others.

## APPENDIX V

*Names of Schools Used for the Study*

1. Amuro/Mgbom Primary School, Afikpo
2. Ngodo/Amachi Primary School, Afikpo
3. Oziza Central School, Afikpo
4. Polytechnic Nursery School, Afikpo
5. Teresa Montessorri Nursery School, Afikpo
6. St. Mary's Nursery School, Afikpo
7. Uma Ukpai Primary School, Asaga Ohafia
8. Nkwebi Community Primary School, Nkwebi Ohafia
9. Ofali Agwu Primary School, Amaekpu Ohafia.
10. Interkins Nursery, School Amaekpu Ohafia.

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## APPENDIX VI

Table showing analysis of reaction to children's play

*Parents' Reaction to Young Children: Aged 6-9 years Showing Their Frequencies and Percentages*

		Scold them	Beat them	Send them indoors	Stop them from playing	Help direct their play	Encourage them to play
1	When he or she should be doing his her school assignment	65	59	25	39	89	436
2	When he she should be resting.	106	89	48	23	251	73
3	When he or she should be helping out in the household chore	41	38	60	23	167	347
4	When he or she is supposed to have gone to bed.	41	120	32	15	283	162
5	Fiddling with gadgets at home	55	419	22	14	79	92
6	On Sunday when he or should be in the church	10	433	18	25	44	55
7	Reading his picture	18	21	36	30	106	407
8	On Sunday during clean up	08	401	11	13	72	236
	Total	344	1580	252	182	1091	1808
		Disapproval Total = 2358 = 45%				Approval Total = 2899 = 55%	

Grand total = 5257

*Parents' Reaction to Young Children: Aged 10-12 years Showing Their Frequencies and Percentages*

		Scold them	Beat them	Send them indoors	Stop them from playing	Help direct their play	Encourage them to play
1	When he or she should be doing his her school assignment	150	482	41	56	67	-
2	When he she should be resting.	205	407	18	26	27	18
3	When he or she should be helping out in the household chore	195	412	18	26	09	27
4	When he or she is supposed to have gone to bed.	461	103	12	40	22	35
5	Fiddling with gadgets at home	436	174	30	21	31	26
6	On Sunday when he or should be in the church	413	488	29	51	14	26
7	Reading his picture	112	431	07	16	29	-
8	On Sunday during clean up	508	74	27	13	60	-
	Total	2480	2171	212	249	259	132
		Disapproval Total = 5112 = 93%				Approval Total = 391 = 7%	

Grand total = 5503

*Teachers' Reaction to Young Children: aged 3-5 years Showing Their Frequencies and Percentages*

		Scold them	Beat them	Send them indoors	Stop them from playing	Help direct their play	Encourage them to play
1	When he or she should be doing his her school assignment	07	05	12	10	25	80
2	When he she should be resting.	06	04	73	07	10	25
3	When he or she should be helping out in the household chore	10	06	04	10	03	92
4	When he or she is supposed to have gone to bed.	05	07	76	04	04	18
5	Fiddling with gadgets at home	05	03	07	10	73	10
6	On Sunday when he or should be in the church	70	20	11	05	07	08
7	Reading his picture	06	03	07	09	25	78
8	On Sunday during clean up	04	05	08	72	05	14
	Total	113	53	198	127	152	325
		Disapproval Total = 491 = 51%				Approval Total = 477 = 49%	

Grand total = 968

*Teachers' Reaction to Young Children: aged 6-9 years Showing Their Frequencies and Percentages*

		Scold them	Beat them	Send them indoors	Stop them from playing	Help direct their play	Encourage them to play	
1	When he or she should be doing his her school assignment	10	08	03	01	21	73	
2	When he/she should be resting..	08	11	10	82	07	04	
3	When he or she should be helping out in the household chore	07	35	03	77	02	06	
4	When he or she is supposed to have gone to bed.	03	21	15	10	03	08	
5	Fiddling with gadgets at home	08	10	10	06	81	10	
6	On Sunday when he or should be in the church	04	07	10	73	06	02	
7	Reading his picture	125	03	04	12	24	74	
8	On Sunday during clean up	26	75	-	10	-	-	
	Total	71	170	55	271	144	177	
		Disapproval Total = 567 = 64%				Approval Total = 321 = 36%		

Grand total =

*Teachers' Reaction to Young Children: aged 10-12 years Showing Their Frequencies and Percentages*

		Scold them	Beat them	Send them indoors	Stop them from playing	Help direct their play	Encourage them to play
1	When he or she should be doing his her school assignment	25	86	-	13	-	-
2	When he she should be resting.	03	06	-	75	06	-
3	When he or she should be helping out in the household chore	14	79	07	06	10	02
4	When he or she is supposed to have gone to bed.	28	12	-	73	-	-
5	Fiddling with gadgets at home	22	97	-	15	-	-
6	On Sunday when he or should be in the church	79	23	-	-	01	-
7	Reading his picture	12	17	10	76	06	-
8	On Sunday during clean up	20	104	-	05	10	-
	Total	203	424	17	272	33	02
Disapproval Total = 916 = 93%						Approval Total = 35 = 7%	

Grand total = 951