Perceptions and Challenges of using Play Activities as Pedagogy: Perspectives of Kindergarten Teachers in the Ablekuma South Metropolis

*1Winston Kwame Abroampa, 2Fosu Gordon Gyeabour
1Faculty of Educational Studies, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Kumasi, Ghana
2Department of Early Childhood Education, Presbyterian Women’s College of Education, Aburi, Ghana

The study investigated the perceptions and challenges in using play activities as pedagogy in public kindergarten schools in the Ablekuma South Metro of the Greater Accra Region. Cross-sectional survey design was adopted for the study. Using the census sampling procedure, 164 kindergarten teachers were sampled for the study. A likert-type scale questionnaire was used to gather the requisite data for the study. The data were analysed using frequencies, percentages and the independent samples T-test. The study found out that teachers had positive perception about using play activities. It also came to light that lack of adequate funding; teaching learning resources, and inadequate qualified practitioners inhibited the use of play in kindergartens. There was statistically significant difference between male and female kindergarten teachers on the basis of the challenges encountered in the use of play activities. The study recommended that, the Ablekuma South-Metro, in collaboration with the educational directorate and schools organise in-service training on the significance of play activities to the holistic development of early learners. The educational directorate and the sampled school, with the support of the Parent Teacher Association should provide the basic teaching and learning materials required for children to engage in a meaningful and intellectual play.

Keywords: Perceptions, Challenges, Play Activities, Kindergarten teachers

INTRODUCTION

Early childhood is a crucial phase in the life of individuals because of the short-term and long-term implications which learning experiences have for every child. The education and care of young children should thus take into consideration developmentally appropriate activities in order to enhance children’s potentials for learning. Developmentally appropriate activities in early childhood education rely on a play-based curriculum, meaningful adult-child interactions, and healthy relations between the home and programme (NAEYC, 1996). Early childhood experiences ought to contribute towards children’s holistic development and give children a good start in life, with opportunities to play (Van-Oers, 2013). Play is a universal activity shared by humans and animals and is often seen as a necessary and vital aspect of life (Burghardt, 2005). In more recent times it has been argued that it is through play that human beings make sense of, and operate in, the world (Strandell, 2000). Consequently, play has been studied and written about by scholars from different theoretical disciplines and is highly valued by children and by many adults who work with them. Wood and Attfield (2014) reiterate that early childhood education is underpinned by a strong tradition which regards play as essential to learning and development. This is based substantially on the work of pioneer educators such as Jean-Jacques Rousseau, John Dewey, Maria Montessori, Friedrich Froebel, Margaret MacMillan and Rudolf Steiner. More recently, this tradition has been related to contemporary contexts, receiving further validation and critical examination from researchers, policy-makers and practitioners.

*Corresponding Author: Winston Kwame Abroampa, PhD, Faculty of Educational Studies, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Kumasi, Ghana. E-mail: wynxtn@yahoo.com. Tel: +233(0)204903594 Co-Authors: Fosugordon1@gmail.com
Without play, teaching and learning is impossible (Nachmanovitch, 1990). Children should be able to express themselves in whatever means appropriate to them. In the field of early childhood education, children’s play should be considered as an integral element in the teaching and learning process that can be seen as part of an education process which promotes democracy in all early childhood settings (Wagner & Einarsdóttir, 2006). According to Sutton-Smith (1997), the belief in play as an educational tool has become so dominant that we tend to forget the playing child. Children’s ideas of play generally center “on having fun, being outdoors, being with friends, choosing freely” (p. 49). But teachers tend to behave too “teacherly” and misuse children’s play to attain their own educational goals, thus spoiling children’s fun (Pramling & Carlsson, 2008). It is important to rethink the importance of play from the perspective of children and the perspective of teachers. The researcher argues that play and playfulness are a resource of shared pleasure and creativity for teachers and young children. The playfulness of teachers helps to prevent young children from becoming overburdened with strict rules and group discipline. As Trevarthen (2011) wrote: “As they play and make sense together, a baby and parent learn to act their part in a set of performances and mannerisms that grow as the beginnings of a cultural way of life or ‘habitus’ (p. 180). Teachers and young children who co-construct a play-reality are building a strong sense of togetherness through rituals that start the day, rituals that celebrate birthdays, or rituals that are incidentally developed by the children.

The concept of play and pedagogy influences the conceptualization and perspectives of practitioners. Practitioners’ perceptions and conceptualization of play are very vital because practitioners play very important role in managing classroom situations in the early childhood. Practitioners also create a cultural balanced environment and put into practice content and policies of the educational goals. Research has shown and confirmed that early childhood practitioners’ balance both theory and practice of play as much as possible in the teaching and learning process (Babić& Ironic, 2004; Davies, 1997; Einarsdóttir, 1998). This involves interactions between the child and the practitioner during the process of teaching and learning. It is during such interactions that the practitioner identifies how the child may be assisted in learning and what the child is capable of doing with appropriate support. Teacher-child collaboration within the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) of the children is critical for effective teaching and learning (Chaiklin, 2003). The use of play in early childhood is to motivate children to be engaged in play activities that are relevant to them. Bae (2010) also agreed that in the early years’ settings, practitioners must be attentive, listen to and attempt to interpret children’s body language and reactions, and must be observant in relation to their actions and in-actions, aesthetic expressions and eventually their verbal communications. This would enable them provide relevant and stimulating play activities that would sustain children’s learning.

In play-based teaching, the most important thing is not the satisfaction the child receives, but the objective used and the meaning of the playful activities deployed that the children are unaware. When teachers or practitioners use planned learning activities and appropriate teaching strategies, children’s social, physical, intellectual creative and emotional domains are all developed. Reasoning, problem solving, classification, comparing, generalization of concepts is all derived through the play and learning process. These are made possible by teacher’s guidance (Ministry of Education Science & Sports, 2007). Practitioners use play in a wide range of activities such as sorting, pairing, matching, comparing, counting, shapes and many others that help the child reason logically, discover new ideas and develops interest in the area later in life. The role and support of practitioners is therefore pivotal for children’s play in any teaching and learning situations. Although, practitioners value the role of play in skills development and learning among children, they are unaware of how to conceptualise it in an instructional manner (Haney & Bissonnette, 2011).

Wood and Attfield (2014) argues that in spite of continuing enthusiastic endorsements for play, its place in the curriculum remains problematic, particularly beyond the early years of school. The role, purposes and value of play in the early years curriculum continue to be debated. What counts as play is contested, and there are ongoing debates about the relationship between play and children academic success. Many early childhood education teachers are feeling the pressure to teach essential literacy and
numeracy skills rather than using instructional time to play. Kindergarten classrooms are beginning to resemble first-grade classrooms with their emphasis on formal reading and mathematics instruction rather than a focus on the development of social skills and play (Meisels & Shonkoff, 2000). The planning of classroom activities and the selection of play materials from the environment are challenging for the practitioners. Ashari and Hushairi (2019) intimate that some teachers are less creative and spent too much time to think of suitable play activities that complement the objectives of learning to be achieved. Due to the constraint of time in planning play activities, some early childhood teachers take short-cuts by using rather formal approach in class such as ‘chalk and talk’. In Malaysia, for instance, early childhood teachers prefer using formal teaching approaches as they are more agitated with the need to complete the syllabus on time rather than to accomplish the needs of children.

The foregoing observations may not quite different from what prevails in Ghana. In Ghana, it may be observed that, teachers placed prominence on teaching and learning in a formal manner to the neglect of more creative approaches. These strategies used by teachers are further enforced by parents because they expect outcomes such as home works, work sheets, and demonstrations of their children’s ability to read and write from a young age. Most kindergarten teachers intimate that the use of play consumed a lot of time, was too laborious, and required the use of a lot of learning materials which are not available for use. The belief that didactic, teacher-centered instruction and worksheets are effective strategies to promote successful performance on standardized tests has resulted in the non-use of play in not only the classroom but from the school entirely (Miller & Almond, 2009). It is against this backdrop that the study examined the perceptions and challenges in using play activities as a pedagogy in public kindergarten schools of the Ablekuma South Metro in Ghana. The following questions and hypothesis guided the study.

1. How do kindergarten teachers perceive playful activities in public kindergartens in the Ablekuma South Metro suburb in the Greater Accra Region?
2. What challenges are encountered in the use of play activities in public kindergartens in Ablekuma South Metro suburb of the Greater Accra Region?

Hypothesis

H0: There is no statistically significant difference in the challenges encountered in the use of play by male and female kindergarten teachers.

METHODS AND MATERIALS

The cross-sectional survey design was adopted for the study in making a quantitative inquiry to examine the play activities of early learners in public kindergarten schools in the Ablekuma South Metro of the Greater Accra Region of Ghana. In the context of this study, the approach helped to quantify data that were collected on the perception of kindergarten teachers on play activities as well as identify the challenges encountered in the use of play. The study consisted of all the 166 kindergarten (KG 1 & 2) teachers in the 42 public kindergarten schools in the Ablekuma South Metro. The census sampling procedure was used to involve all the KG 1 and 2 teachers in the study. However, 164 teachers responded to the questionnaire yielding a 98.8% response rate. The census sampling procedure was adopted due to the limited number of kindergarten teachers in the study area. A structured questionnaire consisting of 20 items on a four-point scale was adopted. The questionnaire was pilot-tested yielding a Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient of 0.91. Data collected with the questionnaire were analysed using frequencies and percentages. The hypothesis was tested at a significant level of 0.05 using the Independent samples T-test to ascertain differences in the challenges encountered by male and female kindergarten teachers in using play activities.

Demographics

Data gathered suggested that gender distribution for the study constituted 58 (35.4%) males and 106 (64.6%) females. The demographics revealed that 16.5% were between the ages of 25-29 years and 40-44 years respectively. The minority of the respondents (2.4%) were between the ages of 50-54 years. The age distribution suggests that the respondents are quite youthful. With regard to professional qualification 39.7% had Diploma in Early Childhood Education, 8.5% had certificate, 14.00% had degree in early childhood education while 37.8% had diploma in basic education. This signifies that more than half of the respondents representing 53.7% are qualified kindergarten teachers which might have therefore influenced their perceptions of using play as pedagogy in facilitating the implementation of the curriculum.

Kindergarten teachers’ perceptions of play activities in public kindergartens

This section explored kindergarten teachers’ perceptions of the use of play activities as interactive tools in early childhood education settings in Ablekuma, Ghana. Data were interpreted using frequencies and percentages.

The data in Table 1 show that 130 (79.1%) agreed that, they balance both theory and practice of play as much as possible in the teaching and learning process. Also, many as 110 (67.1%) agreed that through play activities they identify how the child may be assisted in learning. Again, the majority of the teachers constituting 79.9% agreed that play activities provide them the opportunity to ascertain the capability of child and their appropriate support.
Concerning teachers’ perception of the use of play in early childhood to motivate children for curriculum-based learning tasks that facilitate easy learning, a vast majority 150 (91.5%) kindergarten teachers agreed to this item. Additionally, 111 (67.7) forming the majority agreed that, during playful activities, they plan activities that reflect the aims and objectives inconformity with the educational goals in the national curriculum. There was also slightly more than half (54.3%) of kindergarten teachers agreeing that they consider children’s play as an educational tool for teaching and learning. Similarly, the majority of the teachers 99(64.4%) agreed to the statement; “My concept and perspective of play is to promote the development of motor and cognitive skills”. Many of the respondents 128 (78.0%) concurred that through play, they promote the development of social and emotional competencies for children. A significant majority of the respondent 128 (78.1%) again endorsed the use of play to help children to think logically and acquire language skills. To conclude, majority of the kindergarten teachers 108 (65.1%) agreed that children’s play is a joyous moment in the early childhood years setting. Children develop through play and it is the best way of learning for the future.

From the foregoing analysis, it could be concluded that, majority of the kindergarten teachers consented to all the assertions about the use of play as pedagogy in early childhood settings. Generally, the kindergarten teachers had a positive perception about the use of play activities in public kindergartens. However, the most significant of their perceptions about the use of play were its use to motivate children for curriculum-based learning tasks that facilitate easy learning; the need to balance both theory and practice of play as much as possible in the teaching and learning process and that play activities provide teachers with the opportunity to ascertain the capability of child and the appropriate support. This finding may not be surprising since majority of the respondents have received professional training to enable them teach in early childhood settings so they would have been exposed to and have a good understanding and appreciation of the role and significance of play-based learning in early childhood education. Their perceptions about the use of such creative approaches would have heavily influenced by their orientation.

Challenges encountered in the use of play in public kindergartens

This section examined the challenges kindergarten teachers encountered in using play as an interactive strategy in early childhood education settings in Ablekuma Metropolis in Ghana. Data gathered were interpreted frequencies and percentages.

The data in Table 2 show that a majority of the 107 (65.2%) perceived the principal challenge to playful activities as lack of effective and well-targeted intervention. When asked whether lack of adequate funding hinders children’s playful activities 111 (67.7%) of the kindergarten teachers conceded that it was a challenge. With respect to limited local and national administration capacity hindering adequate play activities of the children, a majority of the respondents 119 (72.6%) agreed. The data reveals further slightly more than half (57.3%) of the teachers also concurred that low social demand for quality early childhood services makes it impossible to improve children’s play. It also came to light that most of the teachers (57.3%) opined that low quality or lack of infrastructure poses a challenge to children’s playful activities. Relatedly, most of the respondents 126 (76.9%) agreed that inadequate teaching and learning materials hinders children’s playful activities.

In connection with poor curricula which are not well adapted to the needs of children hindering their playful activities, majority of the respondents 123 (75.0%) agreed to this assertion. Regarding the lack of qualified teachers to facilitate play activities posing a challenge to its use, 142 (86.6%) agreed with this statement. Lack of access to quality early childhood education preventing children’s play activities was also perceived as a challenge with 140

---

**Table 1: Early Childhood Teachers Perception of Play Activities**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>A Freq</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>DA Freq (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I balance both theory and practice of play as much as possible in the teaching and learning process</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>(79.0)</td>
<td>34 (21.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Through play activities I identify how the child may be assisted in learning</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>(67.1)</td>
<td>54 (32.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Play activities provides me the opportunity to ascertain the capability of child and the appropriate support</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>(79.9)</td>
<td>33 (20.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The use of play in a pre-school is to motivate children for curriculum-based learning tasks that facilitate easy learning</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>(91.5)</td>
<td>14 (8.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>During playful activities, I plan activities that reflect the aims and objectives inconformity with the educational goals in the national curriculum.</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>(67.7)</td>
<td>53 (32.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I consider children’s play as an educational tool for teaching and learning.</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>(54.3)</td>
<td>75 (45.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My concept and perspective of play is to promote the development of motor and cognitive skills</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>(60.4)</td>
<td>65 (39.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Through play, I promote the development of social and emotional competencies for children.</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>(78.1)</td>
<td>36 (21.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The use of play helps children to think logically and acquire language skills.</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>(78.1)</td>
<td>36 (21.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children’s play is joyous moment in the early childhood years setting.</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>(65.0)</td>
<td>56 (34.1)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 2: Challenges Encountered in the use of Play

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>D</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The principal challenge to playful activities is a lack of effective and well-targeted intervention.</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>34.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of adequate funding hinders children's playful activities</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>32.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limited local and national administration capacity hinders adequate playful activities of children</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>27.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low social demand for quality Early Childhood Services makes it impossible to improve children's play.</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>42.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The low quality or lack of infrastructure poses as a challenge to children's playful activities</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>42.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inadequate teaching and learning materials hinder children's playful activities</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>23.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor curricula which are not well adapted to the needs of children hinder children's playful activities</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>25.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of qualified teachers to facilitate playful activities poses a challenge to children's playful activities</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>13.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of access to quality early childhood education prevents children's playful activities</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>14.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The financial demands of playful materials pose a challenge to playful activities.</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>37.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(85.4%) agreeing to that statement. Finally, the financial demands of playful materials as a challenge to playful activities was conceded as a challenge by majority of the respondents (62.2%).

From the foregoing interpretation, it can be concluded that, though the kindergarten teachers considered all the items as challenges hindering the use of play activities in early childhood setting, the predominant challenges are lack of access to quality early childhood education; lack of qualified teachers, lack of teaching and learning resources and poor curricula which are not well adapted to the needs of children hinder the use play activities and the use of play as pedagogy in early childhood settings.

To ascertain the mean variances in the use of play activities by male and female kindergarten teachers, the Independent samples T-test was employed.

Table 3: Differences in the Challenges Faced in Using Play by Male and Female kindergarten Teachers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Group</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std.</th>
<th>Df</th>
<th>t-</th>
<th>p-</th>
<th>Dev.</th>
<th>value</th>
<th>value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Challenges Male faced by teachers in Female</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>30.48</td>
<td>3.79</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>106</td>
<td>26.01</td>
<td>3.64</td>
<td>162</td>
<td>9.99</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **significant at p=0.05 (2-tailed)**

From Table 3, the data suggest that male kindergarten teachers had a mean score of (\(\bar{x}=30.48; SD=3.79\)) while the female teachers had a mean score of (\(\bar{x}=26.01; SD=3.64\)). This shows that the male kindergarten teachers encountered more challenges in using play as compared to female teachers. This implies that, the male teachers faced more difficulties in the use of play than the female teachers. Again, the standard deviation (\(SD=3.79\)) of the male teachers indicates that the challenges the male teachers encountered in the use of play varied more than that of the female teachers (\(SD=3.64\)). However, when the mean scores of the two groups were tested using the Independent Samples T-test at 5% significant level, two-tailed, the results reveal a statistically significant difference in the challenges faced in using play by male and female kindergarten teachers in the Ablekuma South Metro (\(t(162)=9.99, p = 0.00\)). Therefore, the null hypothesis that, there is no statistically significant difference in challenges faced in using play by male and female kindergarten teachers is rejected. This finding may not be surprising since nationally and globally the statistics of early childhood practitioners is skewed towards women probably due to their naturally caring nature and their traditional roles as mothers. Having their way around children and negotiating the challenges that characterises the handling and teaching of children comes to them naturally (Abroampa, Mumuni & Okunloye, 2018).

Discussion of Findings

A gleaning from the forgoing discourse suggests that kindergarten teachers have a positive perception about the use of play activities in early childhood settings due to its enormous significance to the social, physical, intellectual, creative and emotional abilities of children. The most significant of their perceptions about the use of play being its use to motivate children for curriculum-based learning tasks that facilitate easy learning; the need to balance both theory and practice of play as much as possible in the teaching and learning process and that play activities provide teachers with the opportunity to ascertain the capability of child and the appropriate support. These finding resonates with several researches.

The beginning of the last century saw a plethora of researcher and postulations from the great educators such as Pestallozi, Froebel and his cohorts touting the enduring significance of the use of play in as pedagogy in early childhood curriculum development and implementation. Other pioneer developmental psychologist such as Piaget (1962) endorsed its use by describing it as the primary
mechanism through which children encounter and explore their immediate environments. Piaget goes further to indicate, that play is a natural way by which children are motivated to learn about their environment and the world around which they live. Other theories such as social constructivism espoused by Vygotsky in the 1960s gave these earlier submissions enormous momentum. More lately, evidences provided by Platz and Arellano (2011) and Abdulai (2016) have given credence to the use of play as not just an important technique for interaction at the early childhood level but the legitimate technique that can facilitate the effective learning in early childhood context and the successful implementation of any early childhood curricula. Relatedly, the National Association for the Education of Young Children (2009) in its report for the year 2009 stressed that children, no matter their age, love to play and that play provides children the opportunity to develop physical competence. The association further indicate that play aids children to develop and take control of themselves.

The findings, for instance confirmed that kindergarten teachers agree that both theory and practice of play should be balanced as much as possible in the teaching and learning process (Babić & Ironic, 2004; Davis, 1997). Also, many of the respondents agreed that through play activities they identify how the child may be assisted in learning. This involves interactions between the child and the practitioner during the process of teaching and learning. It is during such interactions that the practitioner identifies how the child may be assisted in learning and what the child is capable of doing with appropriate support (Einarsdóttir, 1998). Again, the majority of the teachers conceded that play activities provide them the opportunity to ascertain the capability of child and their appropriate support. The findings corroborate Hyvonen (2011) assertion that the use of play in early childhood is to motivate children for curriculum-based learning tasks that facilitate easy learning. The finding also underscores the Ministry of Education Science and Sports, Ghana (2007) exposition that, when children play, the domains (cognitive, affective, and psychomotor) are enhanced. The planned learning activities and appropriate teaching strategies used by the teachers encourages reasoning, problem solving, classification, comparing, generalization of concepts all derived through the play and learning process. It also emphasizes Ali, Constantino, Hussain and Akhtar’s (2018) position that the use of play-based learning also promotes and supports the continued development of problem-solving, coping, understanding cultural differences, classroom etiquette, social competence which is the ability of a child to successfully and appropriately select and achieve their interpersonal goals.

In spite of the enormous literature on the enduring benefits of play to the holistic development of early learners, its use in implementing early childhood curricula across the world is bedevilled with numerous challenges. Indeed, the findings of the study revealed that kindergarten teachers agreed to all the challenges that impede the use of play. Lack of access to quality early childhood education; lack of qualified teachers, lack of teaching and learning resources and poor curricula which are not well adapted to the needs of children were considered as the most predominant.

Wood and Bennett (2007) concluded that there were gaps between the rhetoric and reality of play, particularly in early years classrooms where the constraints on the timetable, low ratio of teachers to children, and the limitations on space added to the difficulties which the teachers had in figuring out an appropriate role in the children's play. Haney and Bissonnette (2011) underscored the difficulty in operationalising play in early childhood settings by arguing that although practitioners value the role of play in skills development and learning among children, they are unaware of how to conceptualise it in an instructional manner.

These findings of the study are consistent with that of GPE (2012) that the principal challenges to ECE programmes are an effective and well-targeted intervention and lack of adequate funding. According to the GPE (2012) inadequate ECCE services, the low quality or lack of infrastructure, teaching and learning materials, poor curricula which are not well adapted to the needs of children coupled with the lack of qualified teachers are some of the challenges bedevilling early childhood education in Sub-Saharan Africa. The findings are also in consonance with Atmore and Niekerk’s (2012) submission that inadequate facilities, funding and inadequate qualified practitioners are challenges inhibiting the use of play. This exemplifies the situation in most developing countries. In Ghana, not until 2007, kindergarten education was not part of basic education. As a result, there were no clear policies on the management of early child education though the operations were supervised by the Social Welfare. Just like other levels of education, the paucity of resources in all forms; human and material, have been the bane of early years education in Ghana. Majority of those teaching in nurseries and kindergartens in Ghana, for instance, are either non-professionals or paraprofessionals (Abroampa, 2017). Abroampa explained paraprofessionals to mean teachers who may possess education related qualifications other than early childhood education. In Ghana, most of such teachers hold a diploma in Basic Education and are therefore generalist teachers who may not have the skills set required to use play effectively in early childhood settings and also negotiate the challenges that come with it. Besides, almost all structures and architecture for public kindergartens does not support the effective use of play activities; this in itself is a challenge. The design of classrooms and furniture used make it challenging to maximise the use of space and also insulate other classes from the ‘purposeful noise’ that may characterise the use of play.
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It could be concluded that Early Childhood Teachers perceived play activities as quite educative and instructionally beneficial to the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor development of the child in the initial stages of life. If these views are maintained the use of play activities would be improved. The study concluded that the implementation of play activities was impeded by the lack of funds, trained personnel, time allocation and regard for play activities. If these findings are abated, there would be a profound increase in the practice of play activities and the quality of children’s play.

Giving the finding derived from this study, the following recommendations were made. The Ablekuma South Metro, in collaboration with the educational directorate and the sampled schools of the study should organise in-service training for teachers on the significance of play activities to educate them on the various aspects and components of play activities to equip them to effectively identify children’s needs, and development. The Ablekuma South Metro, in collaboration with the educational directorate and the sampled schools, with the support of the Parent Teacher Association should provide the basic teaching and learning materials required for children to engage in meaningful and intellectual play activities.

REFERENCES


---

**Accepted 10 February 2020**


**Copyright**: © 2020 Abroampa and Gyeabour. This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License, which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are cited.