Chapter 1

Play and Play-Acting
PLAY AND PLAY-ACTING

Play is the initial learning process for children to explore for themselves, to be imaginative, trying to be creative, to put together and narrate a tale and to enrich social skills. This is the most natural approach. Play is yet another access route by which children can learn problem solving. For instance, if a girl child rips off the hand off her plastic doll, she must learn how to fix it back again. When children pay with colorful plastic blocks, they acquire to distinguish different colors, numbers, shapes, sizes and of course the technique of balance. Play has another dimension with regard to children. When the children interact and play with other children they learn to bargain, mediate and make peace. Children love and enjoy playing. If you ask any child the meaning of play, they are bound to tell you that they would like to be outdoors, have fun, and decide on their own to select the kind of activity they would like to indulge in. The other aspect of Play is that it could be indulged indoors or outdoors, loads of boom bang, clumsy, sometimes serious and at other times humorous, at times characterized by great effort and at other times effortless. As children grow and change, so does their play patterns. They play for various reasons. Sometimes they are trying to investigate and seek new entities and at other times trying to practice existing skills and combine learning. Play also is extremely helpful for children to tie up new relationships and to build upon these associations. As already mentioned, Play is usually fun and a great source of enjoyment for children. With playful activities they pool in their own understanding, introduce new expectations and relative experiences.

Time is the essence in the development of children through play. They require time slots to play either indoors or outdoors with children or with adults. They need toys, gadgets, and real implements to play with and to mange artfully for their own purpose. Children prefer and love to make their respective choices as to time, place, the method of playing and the choice of playmates.

Play is a reflection of the first and vital defining behaviour of a young child. Researchers (Bodrova & Leong, 1966) illustrate that there is no alternative activity other than play for a child. This is the only activity that can heighten the development in young children. Whenever children are introduced in a play based learning
a language and logic mindset training for mathematics. Hence play lays the foundations for success in reading (Gentile and Hoot, 1983). During the course of play, children make use of ability to interpret the surrounding environment by processing the function of our eyes and brain. In addition play nurtures the mind to become more analytical, rationalize, make judgments, bring down information in segments and to help children develop a sense of right and wrong in formulating non serious relationships. Moreover, plays a vital component in acquiring both physical and visual memory and perceptual skills, such as the Sponseller, 1974). Ability to develop a mental image or an awareness of the elements of environment through physical sensation. They learn the capacity for comprehension of what is seen tasks involved in complex learning depend on the development of the brain, which is complemented by activity which involves play. Before a child learns to read, write or attempts arithmetic exercises, it is essential that the child is assisted to develop sensory motors skills such as vision, hearing, touch, smell, taste (Gullo, 1992). Play is of paramount importance in the mastery of emotional requirement as suggested by Erikson (1964). Play is the route by which children learn to increase confidence and acquire the ability to trust others. They learn and experience to give, receive, express ideas and feelings, make preferences, share and care and to convey the meaning of friendship to others. Through dramatic play, children learn to play cooperatively with others and during their interactions they use appropriate language and acquire skills of solving problems. Every child has a social identity, which is how we perceive our various roles in society in relation to others. This is learnt through dramatic play. Sutton-Smith (1974) suggest that versatility and flexibility amongst children comes from play. People who turn with ease from one thing to another, readily apply to a new task, or to various subjects are more efficient and competent leaders and they are much easier to work with. The cultivating of adults who respect themselves and others and who make positive impact in the society depends primarily on teachers and parents. The influences of Dewey are quite apparent in the centres where play based learning is carried out. In this environment the children are given the opportunity to play with materials to solve problems through an integrated curriculum. So, most learning centres for children during the early childhood are the source of procedures which include any help given to learners that assist them in using a specific skill. Play is considered as the mode of offering, time and environments for the children
relationships with them. During this process they are elaborating range of responses which are flexible to the challenges they face. Playing helps children learn and to develop as individual members of the community (national Playing Fields Association, PLAYLINK and the Children’s Play Council (2000, p6 cited in Ready Steady Play! A National Play Policy, National Children’s Office, 2004). Over the last five decades or so, the more predominant place of children’s play has shifted from public spaces on the streets to semi-public spaces such as public playgrounds, schools grounds and Early Childhood Care Education (ECCE) settings. In fact, the space provided for play has mostly expanded indoors, in particular within their own bedrooms. Moreover, indoor play technologies such as, television; videos, DVDs, game consoles and interactive games on personal computers have increased rapidly (Buckingham, 2000). Sometimes, it is perceived that providing children with this kind of safe and secure authentic play option curtails and diminishes the possibility of ‘playing outside’, which is really sad. In this contemporary world ‘Virtual Play’ is also promoted offering adventure, thrill, independence, mental and creative activity in a space where children can navigate within networks (Kane, 2004,P.95-133). However, a number of questions arise on this issue. As far as the quality of play is concerned, there is a great differential between electronic or virtual play and other different forms of play, the essence of which is noticed in interactions between players and the physical world (Scarlett, et al., 2005). In a virtual play, children indulge in a non-tactile, non-organic, non-sensual world, disembedded from physical space and a concrete community, where the ‘real’ world is distorted and new worlds are created (Kane, P.171-175; Louv, 2005; Scarlett, et al., 2005). Many other crucial issues arising from this form of play relates to the concern about the risks to which the children are exposed such as access to the internet; the extent to which the electronic play exposes the children to violence and consequently how this in return influences children’s relationships with their parents. It cannot be denied that the role of technology is significant in the contemporary living as well as benefits to the society at large, a measured and balanced approach to play and technology is recommended. If this technology is used appropriately with children, and not as placement to the initial direct, multi-sensory experiences catered by other modes of play, technology has been demonstrated to heighten young children’s perceptivity and social attributes (NAEYC, 1996). In supporting the learning and development of young children,
has been associated with impairment of brain development, lack of social skills, aggression and depression (Hughes, 2003).

Compilation of a list of play activities is quite straightforward as compared to the definition of play. According to Scales, et al., (1991) play is ‘that activity which is taken in by healthy young children in which they participate with enthusiasm and abandon’ (p.15). Csikszentmihalyi (1981) professor at the department of Psychology at the University of Chicago, described play as ‘a subset of life….., and arrangement in which one can practice behaviour without dreading its consequences’ (p. 14). A useful description was given by Garvey (1977) which defines play for teachers as an activity which is: (1)Positively valued by the player; (2) is self-motivated; (3) chosen freely ;(4) is engaging and (5)‘which has certain organized relations to what is not play’(p.5). These features are crucial for teachers to take into account as imposing adult values, needs or motivations on children’s activities may change the very nature of play.

According to the Webster’s Desk Dictionary of the English Language, the meaning of the word ‘Play’ has thirty four different definitions. As far as young children are concerned, some of the following meanings of play are beneficial for understanding

- **Light, brisk or changing movement** (e.g., to pretend being a butterfly)
- **To imitate and act the part of a person or character** (e.g., to enact the daily rituals they see their parents perform)
- **To engage with a piece of apparatus or equipment** (e.g., playing with blocks)
- **To exercise or indulge in an activity for amusement or recreation** (e.g., a game of hide and seek or just running around to catch other players)
- **Fun or jest, as opposed to seriousness** (e.g., the older child hides his face, pops back in the baby’s face and says peek-a-boo I see you! or sing a silly song)
- **The action of a game** (e.g., to play duck-duck-goose (walking in circles and tapping on each child’s head until finally one is to be the new picker!)}
may sustain the social competence of both typically developing children and those with special needs (Couse & Clawson, 2000).

The capability acquired while playing may lead a child to have feeling of self-sufficiency, which contributes to the child’s sense of self. Play provides children with a framework within which they can explore their surroundings. Children learn about the social world and acquire the ability to practice social skills through play activities (Klein et al., 2004). Interactions with others through play based activities; children are able to form opinions for themselves, of others and outside world (Chafel, 2003).

Emotional development is enhanced through play. No doubt, conflicts and complaints do arise during play sessions, but the children ought to learn to express what he or she feels and how to compromise with their playmates (Hughes, 1999). It is easier to resolve conflicts and disputes when the child is capable to take the perspective of others and consequently negotiate in an effective manner with playmates (Rubin & Coplan, 1998).

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) recommends that schools ought to cater for play experiences for all pre-school primary-aged children (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997). Play provides children from the very early years through to their primary school years with experiences that promote, social, cognitive and language development (Stegelin, 2005). In addition, classrooms with inclusive settings may allow access to children with special needs, greater opportunities to prompt play with their typically developing peers than traditional, self contained special education classroom settings. In the inclusive early classrooms, children with special needs may observe and imitate the actions of their typically developing peers (Couse & Clawson, 2000).

Defining Play -The Theoretical Perspectives

Classical Theories: Four ideas existed to find out why humans play (review by Rubin, Fein and Vandenberg, 1983). The core principle of the Surplus Energy Theory was that less immature form of life (e.g., infants and children) are not capable of their individual survival. For such young people, the energy that would have gone into
they begin to become experts on their play objects and get satisfaction from their newly sophisticated ways of thinking and behaving. Perceptive abilities at a higher-level emerge as a result handling objects and role play skillfully which is inseparable in play (Wolfberg, 1999). Piaget firmly believed that play occurs for its own sake. It is the repetition of means that might have been connected to an end previously, but the concentration shifts to the means. Ultimately, this constant repetition leads to mastering a skill (Rubin et al., 1983).

Similarly like Freud, Piaget refers that it is possible for children to change the meaning of misfortunate events through play (Rubin et al., 1983). Moreover, both Freud and Piaget are convinced that play begins to fade away with time when the child is able to reason. Freud believed this was because of the ego which had developed to the point where it would no longer allow the psychic energy (id) to express itself freely (Rubin et al., 1983).

**Sociocultural Approach:** Vygotsky (1967) believed just like Freud that play is the result of child’s unfulfilled desires. To achieve these cravings, the child enters his fantasy world. Although Freud and Vygotsky both viewed play as a release from stress, Vygotsky viewed play as a therapy from general, day to day tensions whereas Freud viewed it as happening in reaction to particular events (Rubin et al., 1983). Both Piaget and Vygotsky understood play as an activity which the child engages in for the fulfillment it brings. Satisfaction is achieved from the play activity itself as well as taking control of the skills involved during this action (Wolfberg, 1999).

Dissimilar to Piaget’s theory, Vygotsky saw play as an experience which is shared; in which children interpret situations in the framework of the values and knowledge prevailing in their culture (Wolfberg, 1999). The play produced by children represents what they believe in as far as their society values are concerned. Vygotsky claimed that the transmission of cultural knowledge through social interaction was necessary for the development of mind. Therefore, according to Vygotsky’s research, play is prominent for the development of humans (Wolfberg, 1999).

**A theoretical Perspective:** Reber (1985) described play as a diversion of recreation which is not necessarily taken seriously. He mentioned that having looked up one
By way of play, children study and experience the appropriate skills to participate effectively in their world. Play furnishes support with natural opportunities to involve in real and meaningful activities that heighten physical, linguistic, social and cognitive development. Whilst playing, children enhance their knowledge and understanding of themselves and others and of the others around them. The growth of muscular coordination in a child becomes increasingly more refined through the physical activity that the framework of play naturally provides. Through the handling of toys and play materials, children learn motor skills. Larger motor skills are developed when children run, climb or throw a ball.

The development of children’s language learning skills are also developed by means of play. They experiment with language during play and make use of the words for the expression of their thoughts. As children become more highly developed in their play skills, their development to learn a language simultaneously becomes sophisticated. Children also learn problem solving by interaction during play and to express their desires.

It is through play that children are given the opportunities for social interaction with their peers. They begin to learn the importance of social conduct and how to get along while playing. It is through this social interaction that children learn to express and regulate their emotions and learn conflict resolving abilities. When children are motivated and inspired to explore and handle objects on their own in their given environment, their cognitive skills are developed and challenged. They begin to improve their confidence and start to have fun with play. This increased confidence motivates and encourages them further to discover their world and to seek more demanding activities. So, children’s ideas and notions expressed during the course of play begin to enhance and eventually their play skills become more complex.

**Play Acting**

The performance of a part in a play or drama is known as play acting. It is usually no more than having an available table or a desk as the substitute and chairs if required. This is an enactment of some part of a character without any frills such as makeup, lights or costumes. More often the focus is on the development of a character or movement with body language rather than stage movement pantomimed (The Wisconsin Forensic Coaches' Association-WFCA).
When children play act they usually practice real time situations and in this regard play acting is really important. Researchers have shown that children who engage in this play acting activity, (i) have greater language learning skills, (ii) have better social skills, (iii) have more imagination, (iv) are more likely to be kind and compassionate towards others, (v) are less aggressive (vi) demonstrate more self-control and higher levels of thinking, (vii) develop better self-discipline and regulation.

During the process of play acting the child imagines himself as if he was another and by doing so he builds upon skills of understanding of both self and others and the interpersonal relationships between the two. This progresses to another level in the game stage where the child develops a more complex and sophisticated understanding of self as he begins to understand the network of relationships and roles that exists independently in his world of fantasy and abstract thoughts. Most importantly, this process of play acting requires him to imagine playing the possible roles of a network of playmates and play out in his mind the potential narrative that may or may not come to pass. George Herbert Mead influenced Erving Goffman a great deal who built on the idea that play is the very foundation of organization in his classic theory, ‘The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life’ (Goffman, 1956).

If we were to put play acting in a pack, it would have the following benefits:

- Stimulates imagination
- Encourages observation
- Improves memory
- Develops self-expression
- Encourages humor and a sense of fun

Further analysis of the theory of play acting we would also not forget to mention the following components:

Theater: This is the public display of acting. In this setup the story or ‘play’ is often planned, practiced and rehearsed in advance. Parts of a script may be memorized, but it is usually more effective and better for learning as a process if the participants fully
interests without causing any harm or personal offence. This is a wonderful outlet for children to express their feelings, conflicts that they may have through this wonderful display. Imagine if a real person were to say anything publically that would have been said some people might be angry or hurt. So, a puppet show can add a sense of creative imagination, humor and fun to the child’s daily routine.

Different forms of play

Social Play

Play helps the child in socializing. This of course is an additional benefit for their intellect and overall development. In the first instance such social play contributes towards the learning of rules both in play and social interaction (Hughes, 1999). For example, by way of social play, the child adapts to receiving instructions that teach him the skill of knowing when to start and finish a turn in a conversation. This is indeed an important part of learning to interact with others, which must be respected. Secondly, with the help of appropriate playthings, social interaction can be encouraged (Hughes, 1999). For instance, Colorful blocks are very suitable form of toys for children who find social integration difficult. With the help of blocks, children are free to choose the level of social involvement that they are comfortable with. Blocks can be handled in a solitary play, in pairs or in groups. As a matter of fact children who play blocks alone, they would gradually become more involved socially with other children through this activity (Rogers, 1985). A similar effect can at times be observed when playing with clay which is the common material and also during music time (Hartley, Frank & Goldenson, 1952). Even though, musical play time is not really technically free play time, yet again the same effect might be noticed when children in a group decide to play a game involving music, such as hand clapping, running and chasing games using rhyme and skipping songs. Thirdly, social play provides the child the chance to express his or her inner thoughts and feelings to the others around. Take for an example, creative actions and movements during the class time encourage the child to perform an emotion through facial expressions or body language like in a play (Werner & Burton, 1979). Children have the preference to choose to repeat such exercises and actions during free play time. Fourth, social play is an aid for assisting the child to understand the views of others in various social
alone with their backs to others. They are in their own solitary world and may even be playing with a different toy than their peers.

**Parallel Play**

This type of play can be described by the term introduced by Mildred Parten in 1932. He referred this to a stage in development of social activity in which children play with toys like those with the children around them but are absorbed in their own activity and often play besides rather than with one another. In this situation, children may imitate what another child is doing or even pass a comment, but he or she rarely cooperates in task or engage in some kind of dramatic play or formal game with others (p.259). This stage takes place after solitary and onlooker type of play and before associated and cooperative play when children engage in parallel play. This is particularly observed when children are using, such as sand, water, blocks and art material. Play with such material serves as a bridge to more complex cooperative play activities (Bakeman, R., and J. R. Brownlee, 1980). Gradually they become aware of others but do not understand how to ask others to play with them. Hence they just play near other. This behaviour is called ‘Parallel Play’ because the child makes no effort to organize an activity with a playmate (Reber, 1985), rather he or she will play individually even when in the close proximity to a peer. Rubin and Coplan (1998) defined parallel play as an independent play activity taking place within the perimeter of three feet of other children. Parallel play is the most common form of social interaction that children indulge in (Rubin and Coplan, 1998). Research by Parten, 1932 although suggests that solitary play is the least mature form of social play; Rubin, Maioni and Hornung (1976) however ascertain that this is not the case. These researchers suggest that parallel play actually represents the lowest level of the social-cognitive play regime.

Children who play in a solitary way may prefer to do so as an escape route, whereas children who engage in parallel play may do so because they lack the ability to take on the perspective of others to take the first step to being group play (Rubin et al., 1976). Alternatively, children might choose one form of play over the other depending on their respective personalities. Possibly, a bashful child enjoys parallel play because in this situation it is not necessary to initiate and form dialogue with a peer, in spite the
support social or group play. So, it is during this stage that children commence to
develop new friendships or strengthen existing friendships. Playing with other
children with a shared common purpose or goal during an activity can also be
described as group play.

As per Parten, 1932, group play was originally separated into two classifications:
associative play and cooperative play. He defined associative play as playing with
other children without any role assignment or organized activity but now more
interested in each other’s personality rather than the toys they are using.

This first category brings about strong social interaction between the children while
playing. In associative or partnership play as we can put it, children show signs of
beginning to do the same activities or playing with similar toys, material or equipment
or by imitation.

Cooperative play on the other hand differs from associative play because it is more
organized way of playing (Parten, 1932). Here children have the same goal and plan
and decide how to adopt a particular role and act as a group or a team, take turns,
share and compromise on what to play. The plays together, develop and discuss and
reach an agreement on ideas for their play. As babies, toddlers and young children
learn and develop their play skills with others, that sometimes become more complex
and hard to follow.

On the other hand, Rubin, Watson and Jambor (1978) broke down these two
categories into one ‘Group Play’. This was done to facilitate the coding procedures of
identical activities in pre-school and kindergarten because ‘associative play ‘and
cooperative play’ appeared to be used as the action of giving and receiving.

Unoccupied/ Onlooker: These two kinds of behaviours were referred to by Rubin and
Coplan (1998) as two other types of social play participation. Children who are
unoccupied or not busy in any activity lack the focus in their activities. This is
observed when the child stands at one point with random movements and no obvious
purpose. A relatively less frequent style of play refers to the child who takes an
interest in other children’s play but fails to join in or integrate. He or she may ask
4. **Communication Play:** Through this mode of play, the use of different words, variations of tunes or gestures can be invoked. For instance this could be done through miming, a pretence or fiction, jokes, play acting, mickey talking, singing, whispering, directing, pointing, debating, using street slang, reciting poetry, sending text messages, talking on mobiles, using emails or browsing the internet, skipping games and finally group or ball games.

5. **Locomotive Play:** This type of play refers to movements from one place to another like: skipping, chasing, tagging, playing hide and seek, tree climbing etc.

6. **Deep Play:** This is a unique kind of play which gives the opportunity to the children to take risks, or sometimes take life threatening experiences to conquer out fear and develop survival skills in a hostile environment. Such games are encouraged in Boy Scouts or Girl Guide groups. This could involve in making fire with matches, make Stone Age weapons, and conquer fear such as heights on fairground thrill rides, touching snakes or creepy crawlies. In these situations children find strength and learn to fight fear which they would have never had explored otherwise.

7. **Exploratory Play:** Exploratory playtime is where children want to study about things which interest them. In this situation children are given time while playing to explore objects or an area either by manipulation or movement, assessing the makeup of such items.

8. **Imaginative Play:** It is important to mention here the difference between fantasy play and imaginative play as they both seem to be quite connected. Imaginative play involves representation of, for example, animals, people, places and experiences that exist in reality e.g. a tiger, a tree etc., whereas fantasy play involves unreal people / places / behaviours e.g. Superman, Wonder woman, Dracula, Spiderman or performing magic. Children are engaged in imaginative play when their imagined scenarios involve 'real' things in 'unreal' situations but it is fantasy play when the images or situations they are forming are either nonexistent or not experienced.

9. **Mastery Play:** This kind of play is when a child has reached a level of complete competence and can take charge physically with effective control
demonstrated when the child bangs a rattle on the floor or tries to explore it with his mouth. It is noticed in the instance that the child is not at all shaking the rattle that is in fact the right way to play with this toy. However the child is actually trying to explore the physical properties of this object.

Functional Play: As infants try to explore objects within their vicinity and eventually learn to use these objects to entertain or amuse themselves this is the participation in functional play. ‘Functional Play’ as the term suggests, involves the using of objects as their function denotes (Libby et al., 1998). Engagement of children in such a play is seen to be the repetition of their play behaviour over and over again for the sake of enjoyment they get by doing so (Rubin & Coplan, 1998). In this play the child is seen shaking the rattle and not putting it in his mouth or banging it on the floor because this is the correct way to play with the toy.

Pretend Play: The age when this type of play is observed amongst children is somewhere around eighteen months. Children at this level of play are seen to pretend and act out adult roles, actions and events which they are familiar with. As they mature and grow to the age of three or four this type of play becomes more abstract in nature This means that children are now able to substitute one object for another. Through observation it is noticed in a situation when a younger child ‘feeds’ a baby doll in her lap with a toy milk bottle while the older child ‘feeds’ a baby doll with a wooden block pretending that this wooden block is a baby toy bottle. The foundation for play for the child in this level of play is the direct influence of the child’s own experience which influences this action. Child Development Reference Volume 6 refers to the children between three and six years who exhibit play behaviour that is not dependant on the presence of physical object (decontextualizations) and increased use of items to represent absent objects(object substitutions, Rubin et al., 1983). As a result the nature of this kind of play is symbolic. Pretend play in accordance with the research by Malone and Stoneman (1990) involves an element of make-believe or pretense. For the child, playing with whatever the object may be, as long it aids the child in maintaining pretense this would be considered as pretend play. Three main principles govern this nature of play. First, the child must substitute an object pretending it to be something else. Second, the child must attribute false properties to
child makes use of objects to make or build something (McCabe et al., 1996). The child’s aim in this kind of activity is to build or construct something which would remain intact after play has terminated (Rubin & Coplin, 1998). This can be illustrated when the child builds a tower from blocks or a sand castle.

**Games with Rules:** Playing games with predetermined agreed rules take place when the children decide the roles to be enacted and the division of team members prior to the commencement of the game. This kind of play activity is not very common in the preschool and children at the kindergarten age group level. Games with rules are usually played by adults as well (Rubin & Coplan, 1998).

**Free Self-Directed Play:** Participants in this play activity either play alone or with others using materials or ideas and sometimes seek assistance from the adults if so required.

**Symbolic Play:** Symbolically, representing concrete objects, actions or situations is known as symbolic play. Play which allows control, steady search and enhanced understanding without risk. As children develop and mature, they are capable of making use of blocks and cardboards as objects that represent a less realistic form and function than the child imagines. Both constructive and dramatic play is incorporated in symbolic play.

**Gross-Motor Play:** Activities while playing which require the use of large muscles of the body of the child are considered as gross-motor play. These activities comprise of running, climbing and riding bicycles or tricycles etc.

**Fantasy Play:** This is the fictional or pretend play activity of any child. This aids to invoke a child’s wild imagination and allow it to run free. This is a play full of fantasy and fictions. For example, pretending to be a pilot of an airplane and flying around the world, pretending to be a particular character like clown, a racing driver, pretending to be six foot tall or as tiny as possibly they can imagine. The list for this sort of play is really endless as a child’s imagination!
writing skills. Pizzolongo explains that for a preschooler or toddler, his or her attention comes out in different ways. Their attention works best when the body is involved in physical activity with the help of as many parts as possible. So, while playing when children engage physically with materials and interaction with their play mates the results are extremely good.

**Language and Literacy Development:** Verbal communication such as oral language together with social skills development and in addition dramatic play are understood and believed to complement and support one another (Steeling, 2005). During the course of social interaction with one another, children are capable of practice and refine their oral language skills. Research has shown that some planned play based activities especially in early childhood settings are conducive to promote literacy development amongst children (Stegelin, 2005). Behaviours related to literacy are seen when a child is handling paper, telling stories and makes attempt at writing and reading (Morrow & Rand, 1991). Children get the opportunity to practice, elaborate and display literacy abilities (Marrow, Rand, 1991).

Children also acquire and build language skills by participating in a cooperative play. Favorable results depend on the ability and patience of the children to express themselves. Teachers make repetition of words spoken by children to help others in the play group to understand. They also teach words for the objects which the children are interested in playing with. It is noticed that sometimes children talk to themselves and thereafter start to repeat what they hear from others or start talking to one another. This develops in a cycle of communication, working back and forth and this type of play activity becomes more refined by the age of about four. About this time children begin to set down rules, participate in specific roles, come out and express their interests or thing they dislike. They may also chatter about funny situations which take place during play activity.

**Self-Concept:** Play is another activity which builds a strong sense of self-confidence of the child. Trying to manipulate or do certain tricks on to play structure like building blocks is difficult for a preschooler. Teachers do accept these experiences by expressing what they observe or notice and as such encourage and allow the preschooler to absorb these accomplishments again. This is also a kind of therapy.
accomplishing a given task of role play resulting in improving their focus and concentration levels (Way, 1967). Opportunities arising from impulse, without any constraint, and are open ended, contribute a great deal for the development of the child. Individual expression of children with cognitive and physical opens up their confidence to learn, create and enjoy creative dramatics. Dramatic play is frequently used in early childhood as the process by which children expand their awareness of self esteem in relation to others in a given environment. It is the process that is most important and not the production. Thus, drama is not the production of plays to entertain adults rather than children (Wagner, 1976).

Socio-dramatic play is also like dramatic play with an additional element of social interaction either with a peer or a teacher (Mayesky, 1988; Smilansky, 1968). An educational researcher and consultant named Diane Paynter says that “play is how children learn’. Socio-dramatic play gives freedom to children to act out roles and scripts. This kind of play also contributes to gains in literacy, language and vocabulary, critical thinking, problem solving and competence in social environments.

Creative dramatics comprises of spontaneous creative play. It is structured and incorporates the skills required for problem solving and analyzing activities. In this situation, children re-enact a particular scene or a story. So, creative dramatics develops skills to implement a strategy and analyzing a task (Chambers, 1977).

Creative Dramatics: Spontaneous creative play is the key element of creative dramatics. Creative dramatics is also defined as the youngster’s ability to improvise and act out his feelings, emotions and attitudes in a creative way and expressional way using verbal actions or non verbal actions (Yawkey, 1981). For instance, a two year old would use one object to represent another, or behave in a way as if he is another person. It is also observed that three year olds begin to perform in ways that have a theme or take on roles of significant people around them during this period. Their play is observed through actions and words and interactions with others. At the age of around four to five, dramatic play becomes more complex and self-directed. A story may even emerge within their dramatic efforts and attempts (Wagner and Heathcote, 1976). Therefore, creative dramatics is typically put together within other
**Socio-dramatic play:** This is another makeup of dramatic play with added element of social interaction within the peer group or a teacher (Mayesky, 1988; Smilansky, 1968).

Creative dramatics promotes creative and spontaneous play. The communication of children improve dramatically so does their self esteem. In addition creative dramatics provides a wonderful opportunity for students to interact with children from different backgrounds and expand their horizons. This type of play activity is well structured to teach problem solving, planning and evaluation skills to the children. Usually children enact a scene or a story and hence planning and evaluation occurs during this play (Chambers, 1977).

Early classroom education in the current twenty first century are becoming overwhelmed with standardized curriculum preparing our children to be good global citizens, responsible and compassionate adults, ethical workers, curious and knowledgeable life-long learners. As a result, teachers can find that old fashioned preschool and kindergarten classroom centres such as those for dramatic play is pushed aside. However, this is not an appropriate approach. In fact dramatic play is a crucial play activity for the development of children in their physical, cognitive, social and emotional development.

**Physical:** The physical element in the dramatic play engages the child to run, jump or climb that boosts his physical stamina, strength and general health. Dramatic play which engages the child to chase aggressively encourages him to make use of his large muscles resulting in building breathing stamina. Children also build coordination, balance and control through dramatic physical play.

**Cognitive:** Play environments which involve the child some sort of mental stimulation are believed to facilitate higher levels of thought throughout childhood (Stegelin, 2005). Interactions of informal nature with peers in play activities may nourish children with good competent social behaviour that is necessary for the process of learning concepts and general development (Stegelin, 2005). In theories of cognitive development by Vygotsky a Russian pioneer of psychology, it is mentioned that play provides an opportunity for children to practice skills what a learner has already mastered (the actual level of development) and what he or she can achieve.
Creative dramatics and imaginative play just emerge as soon as children commence to play. Creative dramatics is described as the ability of a youngster to improvise and act out feelings, attitudes, emotions creatively expressing through verbal actions or motor movements (Yawkey, 1981). Creative drama is valuable for teaching both skills and concepts to young children. Children play naturally, and much of their learning in the early stages of life comes from this active vicarious experience. There are some important reasons for using creative drama in early childhood education. Communication skills are emphasized in creative drama as children express themselves using voice, hands, face and body. Another reason is that sense awareness is emphasized as children learn to relax and listen, look, feel and smell their environment. Some children are taught to pretend a character.

In this study, the inclusion of two disabled children to the group of nondisabled children in all playacting activities benefitted both nondisabled and disabled children to understand themselves better. Non disabled children can be acquainted with the physical problems as well as social and motor limits and needs of disabled children more closely. In playacting groups, the participating children learned to listen to each other carefully, and experience the problems of the disabled children practically and provide suggestions and solutions for their problems. The nondisabled children asked about their wheelchair and crutch as well as about the materials they are made, how they are used, how they use their wheelchairs to go up and down the stairs, how they take bus or personal cars, etc. The disabled children explained them their problems, consulted other children, and tried to find solutions, as well as created an environment suitable for the disabled children in the safe environment of playacting.

The disabled children participated actively in the playacting activities of the nondisabled children, and felt that they were suitable and efficient. These playacting activities helped nondisabled children to communicate positively with and develop their understanding of disabled children, and encouraged all children to provide their ideas and cooperate with each other.

Playacting activities had moreover physical effects on the disabled children. The playing of roles was so exciting for them that they felt encouraged to use their weak and inactive organs in order to move puppets. They did their best to show the group