Chapter 2

Preschool
PRESCHOOL

Children during their period of early childhood go through a very demanding phase. During this phase solid foundations are laid for academic learning, acquiring demanding skills for interaction with others, their positive role in the community and their families. Children acquire these skills actively not only at home but participating with their peers, family members, friends and their community. Such skills are also developed when they get a start having an advantage that they have over others in play groups, playgrounds, parks, places of worship and libraries. Most children including children with special needs or disabilities rely upon new experiences and opportunities that they are exposed to, in everyday life and they continue to build upon these concrete foundations for their development and learning. The initial five years of children is the time when they go through great physical, emotional, social and cognitive growth and maturity. During these prime years they are exposed to the world when they really need to be provided with love, motivation, good nutrition for maintaining good health, emotional security and increased activity to improve upon their vital skills that prepare them to be successful in school. In this environment children enter the world with great ability to learn. Glassner,1984 states that “to form a sound healthy development and lifelong learning, the children are constantly searching ways to be successful, being worthwhile, to have fun and enjoyment, in addition to having freedom they like to make their choices, to have sense of belonging, respect and love”.(p.16-18)

The role of the instructor is very important for preschoolers to acquire knowledge. The development of factual information, the appropriate skills and training comes through these early learning experiences. The instructor must ensure that the child builds upon the knowledge of the instructor by using his or her own senses (Lombardi, p.117-122). For children to obtain this knowledge by means of visual or musical, rhythmic intelligence together with bodily kinesthetic intelligence and the ability to create a mental map of a new territory providing a strong sense of spatial awareness for where they are positioned in relation to the world around them, they require an instructor who can demonstrate, observe their reactions, bench mark or
theologian and firmly believed in setting himself to better the material and spiritual condition of people where he preached in French and German. In around 1767, he founded the first known infant schools for the protection of children whose parents went to work in the fields. Later on other educators began duplicating his idea of infant school in places like Lippe-Detmold, Berlin and Kaiserwerth in Germany and, Paris in France. The origins of French nursery schools (salles d'asile) changed from private hands to institutions supported by the Government and in 1833 when these nursery schools were introduced into the education system at the national level. Sometimes later their name was changed to ‘ecoles metemelles’ which now means a preschool in France. Apparently, quite independently of this infant school movement on the continent, one of the earliest to try to offer humane and ‘modern’ approaches was Robert Owen (1771–1858). When he arrived at New Lanark where children from as young as five were working for thirteen hours a day in the textile mills. He stopped employing children under ten. The young children went to the nursery and infant schools that Owen had built. On the New Year’s Day, 1816 he opened the Institute for the Formation of Character. This institution catered for very young children from ages of eighteen months to ten years of age. There were separate classes for the infants between the ages of two to five years olds. These children spent half of their time in instruction and half in recreation. The successful establishment of this school in Scotland was an inspiration to the Englishman James Buchanan, a British educator and who had directed Robert Owen’s school in Scotland. Hence, the first such infant school was founded in London in 1818.

Buchanan commenced the school by introducing some physical movements to the children such as simple gymnastics, exercises for arms, clapping of hands and counting movements. He introduced the chanting and repeating arithmetical tables, simple object lessons where children did most of the talking by observing and describing things. An introduction of modest religious lessons was another dimension of his instruction methods when children sang hymns accompanied by his flute playing. He encouraged children to repeat the prayers from the holy Bible and would tell them stories from the ancient scriptures which he narrated with passion and significance to which children listened with great enthusiasm and interest. This type of instruction in his school caught up with others who imitated these models. This was
In Italy, the Agazzi sisters, Roza and Carolina in 1892 created the method of ‘Nursery School’. They defined it as a life experience. This is due to the fact that at that moment in history there was war and poverty. The Agazzi sisters had a simple method replacing the traditional classrooms with material and own activities and occupations of daily life. The method of Agazzi sisters is based mainly on language education, which is associated with sensory education, developed out of context to mathematics and objects. In this method they cultivated method of singing and body rhythm through various activities taking place throughout childhood.

Similarly, Maria Montessori, an Italian physician and educator was another pioneer figure in preschool education. She believed in nurturing or favourably exploiting the young children’s natural reflexes in a safeguarded and constructive way. In 1899, she began her research relating to educational problems of culturally deprived and mentally deficient children and she became the director of Orthophrenic School in Rome. This was an institution for ‘retarded and feeble-minded’ children. Due to the fact that her methodology worked well with defective children, she strongly believed that this method of instruction would yield even better results with normal children. So, in 1907 she took sixty children under her care aged between three to six from the slums of San Lorenzo which was a part of Rome where the first Children’s House namely Casa dei Bambini was inaugurated. This institution followed the Montessori philosophy where children used large complex of educational tools such as lacing the frames, numerical rods to develop notion of numbers, map puzzles and sand paper letters that children were to trace with their fingers. In this model, in spite of the child working on his own, group and social activity was not ignored. This was due to other activities such as group gymnastics, games, religious exercises and social etiquettes while sitting together on a table for meals, waiting on tables and the like. Moreover, the children were taught to read, write and to count and to express them artistically.

In Belgium, a doctor named Ovide Decroly was another pioneer educationalist who laid the foundations for schooling young children to meet with their ‘biosocial needs’. This meant that children require to regulate and express their emotions, and to explore and learn from the environment around them. In 1907 Ovide established his School of the Hermitage or in French known as “Ecole de l'Ermitage “near Brussels. Dissimilar
care of children between the ages of four and five. This system works like this. The mothers feed their children in the infant house or also called the toddler house during the nursery stage where about eight children between the ages of three and four are housed. The main focus is emphasized on socialization. A wonderful way to teach and train the children from an early age to learn the skills required for social interaction. Children however visit their homes for a few hours each day. A stage further from here, the child enters the kindergarten up to the age of about seven under the supervision and care of a teacher and her three assistants. Hence, this is an ideal way of preparing the child for the next stage which is the first grade of their primary school.

Yet, another variation of the above concept is found where crèches and kindergartens known as ‘detskiye sady and yaski’ in Russia were established in around 1919. Lenin’s wife Krupskaya persuaded the government to set up such infant institutions who also believed that preschool education or training was the first and foremost step in creating a new Soviet Union citizen. Nowadays in Russia children are placed voluntarily in crèches from two until three year of age and these crèches are administered by the Health Ministry. The next stage is the kindergarten which is under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education which accepts three to seven year old children. In this kind of organizational set up the main focus is on the process of socialization, respect for the authority and the subordination of individual and needs of others are stressed.

**Preschool in Iran**

In the course of the recent five decades, preschool trainings (kindergarten and nursery) in Iran have been considered necessary due to the social and economic changes and requirements. Additionally, the introduction to psychological researches and theories of education caused this issue gain more importance.

From 1999, religious missioners and some minorities of Iran started to establish kindergartens in Tehran and some other cities of Iran, and taken the first steps for taking care of children. Ms. Servojian in Tehran and then Ms. Khanzarian in Tabriz
of middle class families. In the same year, the educations of preschool system attained significantly the attention of public and private sector, and as it was required to train teachers and trainers of kindergartens and nursery schools, required measures were taken in this regard. The establishment of Children’s Book Council in 1962 aimed to improve the quality of the books compiled for the children of preschool and primary school levels and this was very effective to increase the attentions paid to this issue (Mofidi,F.,& Alaghehband,p.40-43).

Until 1943, there were only seven kindergartens throughout Iran, and during only 9 years, from 1943 to 1952, the number of kindergartens increased by 74, and in 1971-1972, this number increased to 431. (Sareh S., p.30-33).

In 1965, several child-minding training centres were established to train the human force required for kindergartens. The articles of association and curriculums of child-minding training centres were approved by the supreme council of culture in 1966. Several years later, some faculties of education including Shemiran Higher Education Institute and Abureihan University established the field of study of child-minding and preschool education.

In 1971, the department general of primary education was changed to the primary education planning office, and the section of kindergartens was appointed to design and plan for preschool educations. In 1975, due to the development of kindergartens and child-minding trainings, the primary education planning office was changed to kindergarten and primary education office. Lastly, in 1980, this office was merged with the department general and then general education office.

It must be noted that according to the last bylaw of kindergartens passed by the supreme council of education in 1970, and upon which it was permitted that preschool grade before the first grade of primary school to be established in primary school, the children liable to enroll at the kindergartens were to be of 3 to 6 years old. In 1974, the ministry of education made some changes in the said bylaw by a circular, in which it was permitted that only the children of 5 years old to be enrolled in the preschool course before the first grade of primary school. This has continued up to the present time.
children of the families facing cultural and economic problems required more attention and education.

According to the assertions of the minister of education issued on Aug. 29, 2012 in Farhangian News, preschool centres have been administered by private sector for the past thirty-three years. In the past, preschools were controlled by the elementary school directorate of the ministry of education; but their licenses were issued by the directorate of people's participations. Therefore, the needs of people to the establishment of preschool centres were not met.

According to the law of private schools, the functions of preschools are classified into three parts: executive functions (issuance of license by the directorate of people's participations), policymaking and supervision (by the directorate of elementary schools), and content production (by the organization for research and planning).

At present, more than 14000 kindergartens are active in Iran; half of them are in urban areas, and the other half in rural areas. According to the statistics provided by the welfare organization, more than 700,000 children are kept at present by kindergarten teachers in order to provide them with comfortable times when their mothers are not at home, and prepare them for preschool level. The statistics of Iran Statistics Organization show that more than six million children under six years old live in Iran; this means that one tenth of Iranian children under six years old attend kindergarten (momtaznews.com).

The reports of the research centre of the Islamic Consultative Assembly (Iran's parliament) on preschool centres compared with those of other countries of the world show that in the developed countries most children are educated, but in Iran around thirty percent of children are sent to education centres such as kindergartens, Dar al-Quran (Quran schools), Islamic schools, etc. The remaining seventy percent of other children are kept at home, and families cannot afford to go to such centres. Most children, who are sent to kindergarten, live in Tehran and big cities, while most children under six years old live in small cities and villages of Iran.
Table 2.1 (Continued)

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Methods of preschool educational activities

Some preschools have adopted specialized methods of teaching, such as Montessori, Waldorf, Head Start, High Reach Learning, High Scope, The Creative Curriculum, Reggio Emilia approach, Bank Street, Forest kindergartens, and various other pedagogies which contribute to the foundation of education.

Montessori Education

This system of early childhood education was started in the beginning of the 20th century by an Italian physician and educator Maria Montessori. She firmly believed that imparting of knowledge through education was not necessarily consistent but education should really seek a path to exploit human potentialities. It is important to mention here that she felt one should not forget that if education is to be a way of development of a civilization, it should not mean that we ignore the value of knowledge, character of the child, discipline, social harmony and above all the freedom of expression and learning. It was in the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Rome in 1896 that Dr. Maria Montessori first devised her teaching philosophy while working with children with special needs. During her teaching while
using this type of sensory learning method, the child acquires knowledge by being more inquisitive independently. In accordance with Montessori’s theory the purpose and goal of education is to find meaningful activities where a child can learn to be creative and enhance his or her development (Montessori, p.14).

Montessori based education method is now used in almost 20,000 schools around the world. This ranges from serving children not only from birth to preschool but beyond to their adolescence. Nowadays, these classrooms using the above systems are designed for a structured three-year age mix (three to six, six to twelve and twelve to fifteen) which allows for individual as well as social development.

Montessori’s system of educating children is designed to target on different skills and practices which were useful in everyday life. Her research was based on the theory that by doing certain tasks a child acquires more knowledge and learn about the concepts through being creative and exploiting his or her own world. To achieve this end she created a child-friendly environment.

To facilitate this process of teaching, she concentrated and laid a great emphasis on the environmental arrangement of the classroom. She firmly was of the opinion that classrooms should be child-centred. For instance, the classroom furniture and apparatuses should be child-sized and materials in the classroom should be easily accessible to the children. As mentioned earlier, she was of the belief that it is through sensory experiences and trained teacher that children can learn and be taught. So, the teacher’s responsibility and role is of prime importance here to ensure that appropriate classroom environment is created with the help of right tools and apparatus for the children and then step back for the children to explore on their own. So the design of the classrooms played a very vital part where the shelves on which the teaching aids are displayed are low, open and reachable without any need from the teacher. Hence Montessori’s methodology provided the foundation of Piaget’s and Vygotsky’s work.

The main characteristics of Montessori’s education system are focused on independence, freedom with structured discipline, a natural development of the child’s psychology as well as keeping abreast with technological advancements of the society. There are many teaching practices which presently exist under the name of
• Development of positive attitude towards the school. Structured learning activities are focused on the children and provision made for the individual child. The children pick and choose each learning task that appeals to them and they work at their own pace and with freedom without interference. By this method the child after trial and error succeeds in the given task and this in return builds a positive confidence and motivates the child towards further learning.

• Assisting each child to develop self-confidence. Tasks are designed in such a way that each new step is built upon the previous step and on what the child has learnt. This process helps in the completion of tasks in a logical way and boosts the child’s self-confidence.

Helping each child in building confidence progressively through careful individual specific activities where the child remains focused and learns to extend his or her attention.

• Fostering lasting curiosity: In the Montessori schools, children are encouraged and given the opportunity to discover new situations and things. The most important component in this system is the exposure to curiosity.

• Developing habits of initiative and persistence: The tools and materials in the classroom are discerningly chosen and customized for activities which cater for the needs of the inner needs of the child. Hence, the child learns to take initiative at any given opportunity and this results in one of the essential qualities of leadership.

• Nurturing inner security and sense of discipline in the child: Montessori classrooms create an ambiance of security for the child as they are decorated and designed very thoughtfully. All play materials are placed on open dedicated shelves. Children have easy access to these material and tools and they are expected to replace them at their designated place after play. Some characteristics of Montessori education:

• The unique concept here is the process of moving from the concrete to the abstract stage.
In 1939, Montessori arrived in India and established her first official training centres for teachers in Madras (now known as Chennai), Kodaikanal, Ahmedabad, Bombay and Karachi during the British colonial era. As many of her teacher training students had read about her theory and methods of teaching, her work actually involved in implementing these methods rather than just selling her idea (Kramer, 16). As many as over one thousand teachers were trained through this method.

Waldorf Education

The study of human psychology and development is based on the fundamentals of Waldorf education which was presented during 1861 to 1925 by an Austrian philosopher named Rudolf Steiner in his lectures under the title of ‘General Knowledge of Human Beings’ or ‘Study of Man’. Ever since, many other research has been extended in the field of developmental psychology as well as new teaching curriculum. All these have now been saved in the archives of the Waldorf education (paedagogik-goetheanum.ch). His research cut across both spiritual and scientific achievements as he wanted to incorporate these two forms of understanding and experiences leading to the foundation of ‘Anthroposophy’, in the words ‘knowledge of the true nature of human beings (Kotzsch, 84-90). As a result of the havoc of the First World War, Steiner was invited by Emil Molt a German social reformer and an entrepreneur to establish a school for the workforce of the Waldorf-Astoria cigarette factory in Stuttgart in the heart of Germany. The concept was to start a new type of institute that would not only educate the children of the employees of the factory but to change their mindset to become peaceful members of the society at large. It was a revolutionary idea to bring together boys and girls in the classrooms, and open doors for children irrespective of their background without any prerequisite entry examinations all the way through from preschool to high school and self regulatory without the intervention of any external controls. This was almost like a self-governing administrative unit. The first such school started with first grade and not pre-school. Another early childhood school programmeme (kindergarten) was later started in another city. The Waldorf Early Childhood Association of North America (WECAN) supports and provides information and resources for teachers and trainers who are interested in this type of education for the children.
Steiner was of the belief that the best way by which young children learn is by imitation and through their physical environment. So, the emphasis of creative play teamwork and togetherness is the most important aspect of the Waldorf classroom teaching. Such teaching programmes try hard to heighten, excite and evoke the children physically, spiritually, emotionally and mentally.

Play is considered to be ‘work’ of the young child according to Waldorf’s philosophy. The sheer magic of fantasizing is alive in each and every child and this is an essential component of how the teacher works with the child. It is through the skill and training of the teacher that he or she can incorporate storytelling and creates an atmosphere of fantasy into the classroom teaching.

The value of toys in aiding children to re-enact their experiences as they actually happen is essential to the concept of Waldorf education. For instance, a toy may be not complexly assembled but somehow invokes the idea in the child to suggest that he or she could make something out of it, is itself of unique educational value. This is because this process provokes the imagination of the child. So, the type of toy that are introduced in Waldorf classrooms may be seashells, coloured silk or cotton lengths of cloth for making costumes or soft cloth dolls with a minimum of detail or clothing, opening the mind of the child for open –ended imaginative play.

Joseph Chilton Pearce an American author of a number of books on child development in his book ‘Magical Child’ stresses on the concept of play in early childhood as per Waldorf’s education and quotes “The great rule is: play on the surface and the work takes place beneath. For the child, the time is always now, the present, the place, the action and me. The child has no capacity to entertain adult ideologies of fantasy world and real world. He only knows one world, and that is the very real one in which he now plays. He is not playing at life. Play is life” (Chilton, p.141).

Piaget expresses play as “a reality which the child is inclined to believe when by himself, just as reality is a game at which the child is willing to participate in play with an adult and anyone who the child considers also believes in it. Thus we can say that a child’s play consists of independence and not controlled by others.”
given the opportunity to demonstrate their skills and ability. However, the far reaching advantage of using Waldorf educational methods for children with special needs is when these methods encourage the children to develop independently to become self-reliant individuals when they can work and encounter their daily needs of life on their own terms rather without active or concerted effort and just looking to others for guidance. This makes their development easier for long term success, with the teacher as a collaborator and co-learner.

Since the first Waldorf School was founded in 1919 to cater for the children of the employees of Waldorf-Astoria cigarette factory, there are now one thousand and twenty-five independent Waldorf schools, two thousand kindergartens, and six hundred and twenty-nine institutions for special education in sixty different countries all over the world. There are also public schools; charter schools and homeschooling environments based on the Waldorf Model and other government and private schools are also increasingly adopting methods used from the Waldorf education.

**Reggio Emilia Approach to Early Childhood Education**

**Reggio Emilia** is a prosperous town in the hills of northern Italy, rich in culture and famous for its vintage basil vinegars, wines and cheese. Moreover, it is also home to a programme of early childhood education that has gained international repute in the last century. An Italian teacher named Loris Malaguzzi and some of the parents of the children in this town got together and set up preschool and primary education just after the Second World War. There was a lot of destruction from the war and the parents felt that there was an urgent need to find a solution to educate their young children. They believed that good early school education leads to form good adult citizens. This idea prompted the community with the help of Loris Malaguzzi to set up special school curriculum based on the philosophy of social principles of respect, responsibility and community spirit through creativity, enriching the environment especially supportive for the children. Hence, Reggio Emilia is now the site of one of the most innovative, high-quality, city-run-toddler and pre-primary schools systems in the world (Edward, Gandini & Forman, p.4-89).
interaction with adults that children acquire, expand and enhance their knowledge. Within the Reggio Emilia schools it is believed that when children come face to face with others, make judgments or errors, it is then only they begin to believe the truth (Staley, p. 21). Children are encouraged, motivated and helped while representing their plans, notions and understandings by using one or more “languages or modes of expression” (Edwards, et al., p.3.) and not only by limiting themselves to making sculptures, drawings, painting, dancing, participating in drama, writing or puppetry (New,p.4-10). In fact, this act itself is the basis for the advancement of knowledge. “During this process when children make comparisons of various representations, they encounter fresh possibilities and ask new questions that would have not happened had they used only one medium” (Forman, p.172). In this context the meaning is enhanced and expanded. As a result, by making use of various expressions of knowledge by children is understood to be the creation of continued learning process and revealing multiple forms of understanding.

The Role of Teachers

The role of a teacher according to the Reggio Approach is considered to be that of a collaborator and co-learner with the child and not just an instructor. Teachers are trained to encourage, motivate and facilitate the children’s learning processes by planning classroom activities and lessons paying particular attention to the child’s interests by proactively being engaged in activities alongside the child, instead of just sitting back and observing. In Hewett, 2001 the teacher is described “as a partner to the child, the teacher is inside the learning situation” (p.96). The teacher as a collaborator and co-learner as much as the child within the Reggio Emilia School is looked upon as the active and competent person who takes the lead in her learning (Edwards, p.154; Gandini, p.19; Rankin, p.30). “In fact, the teachers consider themselves to be partners in this process of learning”, (Gandini, p.19). Reciprocal exchanges between children and adults throughout the course of constructing knowledge are valued and fostered. The idea that instruction travels in a two-way direction through the collaboration between children and adults is illustrated in Malaguzzi’s (p.41-89) metaphoric description of a Ping-Pong match. Both players, adult and child, are required to make appropriate adjustments in order to allow for and
development of the child’s cultural upbringing, every function appears twice: first at the social level, and later on the individual level. In other words first between people and then inside the child. A second aspect of Vygotsky’s research mentions about “Zone of Proximal Development” (ZPD). This means that the potential for cognitive development of the child is attained when he or she engages in social behaviour. Through peer collaboration and adult guidance and with a range of skills the child can exceed what he or she learns and not alone. He further elaborates that children’s social surroundings and interactions have a great effect on the cognitive development through the notion of ZPD. A task which cannot be completed alone but with the assistance of others can be described as a child’s zone of proximal development. In Vygotsky’s theory, the help offered by a teacher or peer is referred to as ‘scaffolding’.

Vygotsky’s theory endeavoured to explain consciousness as the ultimate product of socialization. For instance, the process of learning involves our initial interactions with peers or adults for the purpose of communication but once the children become experts they begin to be internalized and allow ‘inner speech’.

In Crawford, 1996 it is stated that Vygotsky focused on the connections between people and the sociocultural context in which they interact and behave. Humans according to Vygotsky use tools such as speech and writing which develop from the culture they inhabit to resolve the issues they encounter in their social environments. Children make use of these tools as social functions and to communicate. These tools form a good foundation to higher thinking.

Due to the reason that Vygotsky’s research focuses on cognitive development, it is a matter of interest to note that his view can be compared with those of Bruner & Piaget.

The two basic modes of learning take place through social interaction and use of language. The capability of engaging in social interactions and sharing experiences comes through by way of using a language. ‘The most significant fact exposed through the study of speech and thought is the relationship which between these two and the many changes that they go through’ (Lev Vygotsky, p.4). In the first instance the child’s new acquired knowledge is interpsychological which means they he or she
Way back in 1957, an ex-military Swedish, Goesta Frohm created the idea of ‘Skogsmulle’ (Skogsmulle Foundation). In Swedish language ‘Skog’ means wood and ‘Mulle’ is one of the four fictional characters he created to teach children about nature. The second was ‘Laxe’ which represented water; the third was ‘Fjallfina’ representing mountains and fourth ‘Nova’ representing unpolluted nature. Forest schools based on Frohms model were called ‘I Ur och Skur’ or Rain and Shine Schools. In this concept he moved the idea from the usual activities of formal nursery schools which were set up by Siw Linde in 1985. Juliet Robertson’s review of Skogsmulle is a valuable modern-day summary (Robertson, J., p. 4-16).

In Denmark, Ella Flautau established forest kindergartens in 1950s. Her school came into being when she would often spend time with her and her neighbour’s children in the nearby forest. This was like a form of day care for the children whose parents went out to work and many parents in the neighbourhood liked this concept. The parents formed a group and took the initiative to establish this first Forest Kindergarten in Denmark.

Forest Kindergartens have existed in Germany since 1968 but they were officially recognized only in 1993 as day care centres. But nowadays they are quite popular. Since 2005, there are now 450 forest kindergartens in Germany. Some of these schools offer the models based on forest kindergartens and traditional day care centres where children spend their time in the natural environments outdoors and in the afternoons they come indoors for their lessons.

In 2006, Nature Kindergartens were opened by Mindstretchers. Another nursery by the name of Whistlebrae Nature Kindergarten opened in the countryside near Brae near Perthshire in North Scotland. Yet another second Nature Kindergarten was established called Auchlone was opened near Crieff in Perthshire. These preschools are run under the direction and management of Claire Warden.

The idea of Forest Kindergartens was brought to England by a Scottish child minder Cathy Bache. She opened a preschool called ‘The Secret Garden’ with the financial assistance from funding authorities and private donors.
valuing of extrinsic aspirations and no change of intrinsic aspirations.’ (Weinstein, Przybylski, & Ryan, p.1315).

**Mental Health**

Initial research has shown that in the well being and good health, the part of nature is very vital. For example, parks and nature reserves provide access to human beings to maintain good mental health and to boost general sense of feeling good and happy (Mailer, Townsend, Pryor, Brown, & Leger, p.45). (Also see Kaplan, R., p.507-542; Maller, et al., p.45-54; Wells & Evans, p.311-330).

Increased exposure to natural environments especially during childhood like hacking or playing in the woods, camping or fishing, caring for plants, planting trees etc., can have a very positive effect to adult environmental attitudes.” Wild Nature’ participation is related to environmental behaviours. One can see that people who continuously expose themselves to natural surroundings are generally found to have glowing faces, healthy and very conscious of the mother earth issues (Wells & Lekies, p.1).

Attention Restoration Theory: According to (Berman, Jonides, Kaplan, p.207; Kaplan, S., p.169-182) ART as it is known as providing guidelines in issues relating to taking nature walks, viewing and visualizing looking at pictures of nature around us which can improve what is called’ directed-attention abilities’.

Support for children with ADHD diagnosis: “Twenty minutes in a park setting was sufficient to elevate attention performance relative to the same amount of time in other settings. These findings indicate that environments can enhance attention not only in the general population but also in ADHD populations. ‘Doses of nature’ might serve as a safe, inexpensive, widely accessible new tool in the tool kit for managing ADHD symptoms” (Taylor & Kuo, p.402).

Another benefit would be that children would be ready to focus on indoor learning activities after time spent outside using their minds and bodies.
In 1930 BEE moved to 69 Bank Street in Greenwich Village and set up the Cooperative School for Student Teachers, a joint venture with eight experimental schools to develop a teacher education programme to produce teachers dedicated to stimulating the development of the whole child. BEE’s research, clinical studies, and children’s literature work continued. In 1934 the BEE Nursery School was renamed the Harriet Johnson Nursery School following the death of Bureau co-founder and Nursery School Director, Harriet Johnson.

In 1935 Mitchell lead the first annual Long Trip to Morgantown, W. Va. Designed to expose student teachers to new physical, social, and political environments and expand their concept of human geography, it continued until 1951. In 1996, it was revived in a slightly different format.

In 1937 Mitchell set up a Division of Publications to produce books for and about children for publishers. The Writers Laboratory, a workshop which brought together professional writers and students of the Cooperative School for Teachers, was also formed. Early Writers Lab members include Ruth Krauss, Margaret Wise Brown, and Edith Thacher Hurd. In 1943 The New York City Board of Education asked the Cooperative School to give workshops for teachers on its methods. In 1946 The Cooperative School began to offer night and weekend courses for non-matriculated students.

In 1965, Bank Street developed the "Bank Street Readers" line of books. It was unique due to its featuring of racial diversity among urban people of contemporary culture.

**Preschool Education Activity**

Preschool education and kindergarten emphasize learning around the ages of 3–6 years. Preschool education activity is classified as an activity of direct public concern and is performed as a public service thereof. Preschool education activity, in terms of the Law, is educational process of children under school age. Within the meaning of the Act, preschool age is considered the age of children up to six months before the commencement of elementary education.
• Physical and Motor Development: Gross motor skills; coordination of fine muscles with dexterity; eye hand coordination; sense of balance, physical coordination, and awareness of space and direction; nutrition, health status and practices.

• Language Development: Listening and comprehension; oral skills/speaking and communicating; vocabulary development; pre-literacy/emergent literacy skills like phonological awareness; print awareness and concepts; letter-sound.

• Correspondence: recognition of letters; building words and sentences and early writing. Introduction to language of school transaction.

• Cognitive Development: Development of various concepts including pre number and number concepts and operations (knowledge and skills related to comparing, classification, seriation, conservation of space and quantity, one to one correspondence; counting); spatial sense; patterns and estimations in measurement; data handling; skills related to sequential thinking, critical thinking, observing, reasoning and problem solving; and knowledge about concepts and physical, social and biological environment.

• Socio-Personal and Emotional Development: Development of self-concept; self-control; life skills/ self-help skills; habit formation; initiative and curiosity; engagement and persistence; cooperation; compassion; social relationships; group interaction; pro-social behaviour; expressing feelings, accepting others feelings.

• Sensorial Development: Development of the five senses through visual, auditory and kinaesthetic experiences.

• Development of Creative and Aesthetic Appreciation: Exploring different art forms, develop dispositions, expression and appreciation for artistic, dance/drama and musical activities.

The objectives of preschool education include support to:

1. The overall development and welfare of a preschool child, providing the conditions and incentives for them to develop capacities, gain experiences and acquire knowledge about themselves, others and the world;
delays. Special education is defined as instruction that is specially designed to meet the unique needs of a child with a disability, or a child experiencing developmental delays. Specially designed instruction may include adapting the content, methodology, or the delivery of instruction to address the unique needs of an eligible child. Special education can include classroom instruction, home instruction, instruction in hospitals and institutions, or other settings. It can include speech-language pathology services or any other related services, instruction in physical education, vocational education, and travel training.

Preschool special education is a programme designed to meet the unique developmental needs of a particular child. The programme may focus on self help skills, motor development, language skills, pre-academic learning, social skills or any combination of these. Preschool special education is education; it is not designed to meet a child’s medical needs, nor does it provide the child care services typically found in day-care (www.brighttots.com).

Children are eligible for special education if he or she meets the criteria of one of the disabling conditions recognized by the Disabilities Education Act regulations.

Preschoolers may be found eligible for Early Childhood Special Education services under one or more of 13 disability categories:

- autism spectrum disorders
- deaf-blind
- emotional disability
- hearing impairment
- learning disability
- intellectual disability
- multiple disabilities
- orthopedic impairment
- other health impairment
- speech or language impairment
disabled children. Between 1801 and 1805, he used systematic techniques to teach a boy, how to communicate with others and how to perform daily living skills, such as dressing himself.

In 1848 French psychologist Edouard Séguin, who had studied with Itard, immigrated to the United States and developed several influential guidelines for educating children with special needs (ex. Mental retardation). Seguin’s education programmes stressed the importance of developing independence and self-reliance in disabled students by presenting them with a combination of physical and intellectual tasks.

Maria Montessori (1870-1952): Montessori education is a flow experience; it builds on the continuing self-construction of the child—daily, weekly, yearly—for the duration of the programme. The Montessori schools are divided into multi-age classrooms:

Parent infant (ages 0 to 3), preschool (ages 3 to 6), lower and upper elementary (ages 6 to 9 and 9 to 12), middle school (ages 12 to 14).

The prepared environments introduce an uninterrupted series of learning passages, a continuum. The "prepared environment" is Maria Montessori’s concept that the environment can be designed to facilitate maximum independent learning and exploration by the child.

In 1901, Ovide Decroly founded a school for children with mild disabilities (behavioural disorders, learning disabilities, light mental retardation). He gradually invented his pedagogy. In 1907; he founded a school for “ordinary” children with the same pedagogy.

His pedagogy includes: The hobbies and interests of the child as a guide to education. Globalization means that the child learns globally, without order. It's a complete picture that we must give the child, then he passes onto particularity and analysis. The class workshop or class laboratory in which the child lives and works. The "class" strictly speaking is everywhere; he advocated the breakup of places of learning: the
concepts, improve senses, preparation for reading and writing, mathematics, and motor skills that help to cohere the education of students based on their abilities.

Preschool Programmes for the Children suffering from Hearing Disorder. The preschool programmes held for these groups of children are divided into two types:

From the birth to the age of 4: At this stage, the parents are trained, and they are taught how to interact with their deaf child naturally. The children are educated based on natural method through their parents, and the education centre acts as a guide to direct the process of education of disabled children. Children attend together with their mothers in classrooms that do not have any desk and chair but are similar to normal bedrooms, and their educator teaches the mothers how to interact and behave with their children and teach them speaking by playing games. This programme is a specialized course and held only in special education schools under the supervision of the experienced and trained educators. Moreover, parents receive other rehabilitation services such as consultation, speech therapy, and hearing education.

2-year Preschool Programme from the Age of 4 to 6: This programme includes parts 1 and 2, whose objective is to improve the speech and hearing skills of students suffering from hearing disorder by teaching sounds by specialized educators, enhance their hearing skills, by hearing educational techniques, correct speaking under the supervision of speech therapists, provide parents with consultations on the manners of interaction with their children, and finally prepare the students for entering into elementary school and continue education in normal schools. In case, hearing disorder is of adverse type, and the related student is not able to attend normal schools, he/she should be introduced to schools for deaf students. Preschool Programmes for the Children Suffering from Vision Disorders. The preschool programmes held for these groups of children are divided into two types:

From the diagnosis of the disorder up to the age of 4: at this stage, the parents are educated to pave the way for the growth of children suffering from vision disorder.
Table 2.2 (Continue)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title of Programme</th>
<th>The Number of Target Population</th>
<th>The Number of the benefited Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Child</td>
<td>Parent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provision of Educational and Rehabilitation Services to the disabled children under the age of 14 in education centres.</td>
<td>10,641</td>
<td>10,641</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provision of Educational and Rehabilitation Services to the children suffering from pervasive developmental disorder, between the age of 2 to 16, in education centres.</td>
<td>1,597</td>
<td>1,597</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cochlear implant for the children under the age of 6.</td>
<td>1,250</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procurement of rehabilitation aids and equipments for the disabled children under the age of 6.</td>
<td>12,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provision of services to the children under the age of 6 in medical rehabilitation centres</td>
<td>245,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

According to the statistics provided in 2012 by the Special Education Organization, there are 672 Preschools in Iran that provide 10643 disabled children educational services.

The most important concern of the parents of disabled children is that their children are not admitted in the kindergartens, in which non disabled children are educated. These families are interested to send their disabled children to the kindergartens of normal children. There is moreover no regulation circulated by the government to require kindergartens to admit disabled children, and therefore, the principals of such