Chapter II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Early Childhood Education: Theoretical views of Prominent Educationists:

(i) Plato’s Concept of Nursery Education
(ii) Comenius’ Titbits for All round Development of Children
(iii) Natural Development Proposed by Rousseau
(iv) Pestalozzi’s Vision of Child-centered Approach
(v) Forebel: Play-way Method and Kindergarten
(vi) Dewey’s Progressive Education Movement and Early Childhood Education.
(vii) Hill’s Insistence on Art and Music in Early Childhood Education
(viii) Montessori’s Method of Early Childhood Education.
(ix) Tagore’s Views of Joyful Learning in Nursery Schools.
(x) Gandhi and Pre-basic Education.

Related Studies Conducted in the Area of Early Childhood Education:

a. Studies Related to Play and its Role in ECE

b. Studies related ECE Programmes:

(1) Studies Conducted in India
(2) Studies Conducted Outside India.
Review of related literature is of vital importance in any research study to collect up-to-date information about what has been thought and done already in the particular area selected for the study. Such a review helps the investigator in locating gaps in the existing knowledge, in analyzing the problem adequately, in suggesting procedures of attack, in providing comparative data and in giving a perspective for interpreting the results (Travers, 1978).

Therefore an attempt was made here to collect the literature related to early childhood education (ECE) programmes. The present chapter contains:

1. Theoretical views of ten of the prominent educationists on early childhood education (ECE); and
2. Related studies conducted in the area of early childhood education (ECE).

The details are presented below:

1. EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION: THEORETICAL VIEWS OF PROMINENT EDUCATIONISTS

The central tenets of early childhood education, which is so clear to us today have evolved over a period of time. At different periods, progressive educators rebelled against the unimaginative and restrictive methods of imparting education to young children and evolved their own methods, in keeping with the development and the interests of young children. It is the cumulative effort of these great thinkers that has provided us with the perspectives about ECE that we have today. Here the ideology of some prominent educationists who have made significant
contributions towards the development of early childhood education is summarised.

(i) Plato's Concept on Nursery Education

Even as early as in 350 B.C Plato (429-347 BC) saw the importance of providing the child with a skilled teacher who could understand the needs of children and educate them. He has suggested that music and physical training could be taught during early years of childhood. He was of the view that education should be begin with music and then physical training (Pankajam, 1994). This, he thought that, will lead to harmonious development of the body as well as soul. He believed that education of young children should be given through the stories of Gods and Goddesses. The environment should be happy and congenial for the development of the personality of the children.

Plato talked about Nursery education for the children of three to six years old. He emphasized the importance of activities and plays for nursery education. His concept of nursery education was based on the psychological principles of child development and gives importance to the child, than to the curriculum, teacher and method.

(ii) Comenius' Titbits for All-round Development of Children

John Amos Comenius (1592 – 1670) proposed a system of school education covering the period from birth to maturity. Dividing the period of children's growth into four distinct grades – infancy, childhood, boyhood, and youth he proposed six years of schooling for each grade (Hohmann, Bernard and David, 1979). For infancy, the first six years, according to his classification – Comenius proposed that the mothers lap should serve as
the school. In these years the emphasis should be on stimulating the senses of sight, hearing, smell, sound and touch and developing the child's power of observation. In his opinion the children of this age should be encouraged to play games. He felt that play is necessary for the all-round development of the child.

Comenius emphasised shorter school hours, more play, sounder health, better bodily development and less strain. He called upon the teachers to make schoolwork interesting and to keep the children relaxed. He suggested that children should not be burdened with matters that are unsuitable to their age, comprehension and present conditions.

Comenius believed that the children should be told spiritual and secular stories. He wrote first picture book for children - *The world in pictures*. It included the pictures of birds and animals to aid in teaching young children. He encouraged the integration of curriculum. He said "it may be laid down as a general rule that each subject should be taught in combination with those which are correlative to it". (Comenius, 1642; reprinted 1969, pp. 328 – 330). He believed that children should learn to write by writing, to speak by speaking, and to reason by reasoning. Schools, he believed, should simply be workshops where children worked eagerly. His thinking about the importance of activity was echoed later by Dewey, Montessori and Piaget (Brewer, 1992).

(iii) Natural Development Proposed by Rousseau

Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) introduced a movement in education called "Naturalism". The basic idea of naturalism is that the natural growth of children in natural environment constitutes adequate
education (Pankajam, 1994). His philosophy of pre school education was based on this idea.

Rousseau emphasised that the child is an active being who actively participate in her own development by acting upon the environment. The child continuously organises and interprets her experiences and attempts to solve problems. The child is not a passive recipient of the tutor's instruction, as was believed at that time. In his opinion the child is a discover who explores the world and "learns by doing".

Rousseau believed that nature must be allowed to take it's own course in the development of children because nature has endowed them with an order of development that ensures their healthy growth. He feels that interventions of parents and teachers distort the natural succession of the changes of childhood.

In Emile, Rousseau (1762) stressed the necessity of play for learning. He emphasised the use of objects, pictures and illustrations in educating the young child and advocated less reliance on lectures for teaching. He propagated learning from the environment and emphasised that the child should be free to explore.

He advocated that the child should be to act: harsh discipline and repression hamper development. It is important to stimulate the mind of the child with things she can understand. Learning and not teaching should be the goal. He advised that adult tastes and ways should not be forced upon children.
(iv) Pestalozzi’s Vision of Child-centered Approach

Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi (1746 – 1827) emphasised the role of the mother in pre school education, stating that the task of educating the child inevitably begins with the mother, who could use the early years to promote the all-round development of the child. He stated that education should be child-centered; that is, education should be seen from the developing mind of the child and not from the already developed mind of the adult. The child and not the subject matter should be the centre of the educational system (Gutek, 1968).

Pestalozzi attached great importance to games in the development and education of young children. The spontaneous activity of the child, he said, leads to learning. He believed in the active involvement of the child in learning.

He made great use of objects in his teaching of young children. While he was teaching the children he would put an object before them and then ask them what they saw, encouraging the children to observe and express their observations in correct language. He encouraged the children to prepare albums containing drawings, maps, mathematical problems and natural objects (Gutek, 1968).

Pestalozzi developed various educational materials and set forth a number of exercises for pre schoolers in his book “How Gertrude Teaches Her Children”. According to him discipline should come from within and should not be forced upon the children from outside.
(v) Froebel: Play Way Method and Kindergarten

Friedrich Wilhelm August Froebel (1782-1852) made an important contribution to the theory and practice of early childhood education. He imbibed the ideas about pre-school education through the study of Pestalozzi's book "How Gertrude Teaches Her Children". He realized that children needed to be presented with an orderly series of phenomena that would stimulate their minds and produce an inner organization and integration (Downs, 1978).

Froebel considered childhood as not merely a preparation for adult hood; rather it has a value in itself and it possesses its own creativeness. Childhood participates in the divine whole just as adult hood and, therefore, it can claim the same respect on the part of the educator. In his opinion the true method of educating a child consists in considering the mind of the child as a living whole in which all the parts work together to produce harmonious unity.

Froebel believed that the growth of the child is directed by an inner force and education should provide opportunities for free self activity and self determination for the proper development of the inner force (Safford, 1989). He regarded self-activity as the process by which the individual realizes his own nature and builds up his own world and then units and harmonises the two. The chief means of education, according to Froebel, is the child's own activity.

Froebel felt that play is an inevitable factor in the proper growth of the child. Frost and Joan (1976) have mentioned that according to Froebel play is not merely an addition to instruction, but it is the most important phase in the spontaneous development of the child, because it
allows the harmonious exercise of physical and intellectual qualities. In his opinion play for the child is as ethical as devotion to work is for the adults.

Realizing the paramount importance of early childhood, Froebel opened the first ‘Kindergarten’, an institution for children of ages between four and six, at Blackenberg in 1837. The literal meaning of the word kindergarten is ‘children’s garden’. Froebel found much similarity between a child and a plant. He believed that the process of growth and development of the plant and the child was the same; the plant grows from within, according to the seed that is within. In the same way the child grows from within, unfolding her tendencies and impulses from within. Froebel conceived the nursery school as a garden, the teacher as the gardener and the children as the tender plants (Pankajam, 1994).

The objective of kindergarten, according to Froebel (1826) is to give the children employment in agreement with their whole nature, to strengthen their bodies, to exercise their senses, to engage their awakening mind and to make them acquainted with nature and their fellow creatures.

Froebel made use of two types of play materials in the kindergarten. One was certain geometrical patterns and the other was the essential material for activities such as modeling, drawing, sewing and coloring. The geometrical patterns were known as ‘gifts’ and the activities as ‘occupations’. He found that graded gifts could be used as an effective basis of pre-school education.

Froebel saw an organic relationship between songs, gestures and artwork. He regarded these as the three co-ordinate forms of expression
in the child. What is to be learnt by a kindergarten child was first expressed in a song, then it was dramatised or expressed in gestures or movements and lastly illustrated through some creative work with paper or clay.

In the opinion of Froebel (1826) teachers of nursery schools must carefully guide children's play with 'gifts' and 'occupations'. She should demonstrate certain activities to children, sing songs and suggest ideas while children are progressing in play. He remained nursery teachers to avoid external restraint and bodily punishments to children.

(vi) Dewey's Progressive Education Movement and Early Childhood Education

John Dewey's (1859 - 1952) name is most often heard in connection with the Progressive Education Movement – a movement focused on changing schools to decrease rote learning and make teaching more child-centered. Dewey and other leaders of this movement believed that curriculum experience should be based on children's interests and should involve children in active experiences. Dewey (1990) suggested that in learning about biology, children might explore a limited area of their school yard, collect specimens of the plant and animal life, learn to classify these specimens, compare their collections with the collections of others, learn about how their specimens fit into larger ecological systems, and so on. In the process of investigating their own area of the schoolyard, they would read, write, solve mathematical problems and learn to work successfully with others.

Early childhood education has benefited from Dewey's work in developing an active curriculum for young children that is integrated rather
than divided into subject matter segments. Such a curriculum cannot be set ahead of time, but must be built on knowledge of the children and their interests. Teachers are responsible for achieving the goals of the school, but the specific topics to be studied to meet those goals cannot be determined in advance (Dewey, 1902).

Brewer (1992) comments that Dewey's idea have often been misinterpreted to mean that children should do only what they are interested in and that any kind of experience is valuable for learning. In fact, Dewey's belief was that activity itself was not enough for learning. He believed that children need to be engaged in real and meaningful activities that would lend themselves to a wide variety of learning possibilities and that would be the vehicles for learning to think and reflect.

(vii) Hill's Insistence on Art and Music in Early Childhood Education

Patty Smith Hill's (1868 - 1946) most important contributions to the profession of ECE include her dedication to the scientific study of children, her belief in play as a way of learning; her insistence on art and music; and her commitment to the goal of an individualized curriculum (Garrison, 1926). In addition to promoting free play as a valuable learning experience, Hill believed in free expression in art and music. She and her sister introduced children to bells, triangles, and other instruments to "call the children's attention to the beauty of sounds" (Amidon, 1927, p. 17). One of the songs created by Hills is the song most frequently sung in English, "Happy Birthday to You". (The right to this song sold for about 12 million dollars in 1988) (Brewer, 1992, p. 5)

Hill believed that children should express themselves in their art work and that formal lessons in which all the products are the same are
not appropriate. In her opinion the curriculum should reflect the individual natures of both the child and the teacher (Roopnarine and James, 1987).

Another of Hill's contributions to ECE was the emphasis she placed on the importance of the child's home and the learning that took place there. In 1926, in an article (Hill, 1926; republished 1987) she described the function of the kindergarten teacher and later (Hill, 1928) she defined the differences between home learning and school learning and advised teachers to pay attention to home learning and use information about it in their own teaching.

(viii) Montessori's Method of Early Childhood Education

Maria Montessori (1870 – 1952) realized that the first six years of life is the most crucial period of a child's life. She believed that every child is unique and the rate of progress is also different for each child. To her opinion collective methods of teaching crush the child's individuality. She treated each child as a separate individual and recommended that the child should be helped and guided in a manner that helps in proper growth and development.

Montessori asserted that the senses are the gateways of knowledge. She pointed out that senses are very active during the early years and a lot of learning takes place during this period. She also attached the importance of gross motor and fine motor development as a part of the early childhood education. She believed that fostering motor development would facilitate other activities like writing and drawing (Karmen, 1976).
Montessori developed and practised the concept of the children’s house in her institutes. It consisted of a set of rooms for intellectual work, individual play and sleep, rooms for music, games, dining and dressing and a garden.

The materials and equipments designed by Montessori for pre school children was another contribution to her. Those materials were mainly of three type – those for the training of senses, those of teaching practical skills and those for helping children to adopt themselves to the needs of the school life. She arranged the activities in a series from easy to difficult and encouraged children to discover and understand concepts by themselves through activities (Montessori, 1914).

For developing the concepts of length, breadth and thickness she made use of building blocks. Arranging cylindrical pieces of the same height but different diameters in an order of increasing diameter she helped children to understand the concept of relative size.

Activities like fastening and unfastening of buttons, shoe laces, putting the articles in a room in order, setting a table and moving chairs quietly were encouraged in her school. The purposes of these activities were not simply to develop a skill but also to aid “the inner construction of discipline, organization, independence and self esteem through concentration on a precise and completed cycle of activity” (Lillard, 1972. p. 71). She has provided practical exercises in her school to enable children to learn habits of cleanliness and order (Standing, 1962).

Montessori has stressed on social values and for developing these values in children many co-operative activities such as eat together, clean the plates and serve lunch in turn was performed in her school.
Montessori method emphasized an individualized teaching. She thought that the function of a teacher is to direct the child and not to teach them. She insisted that the teacher should have an intimate knowledge of the mind and character of each child. She should keep the physiological records of each child’s development: the height, weight and other measurements.

(ix) Tagore’s Views of Joyful Learning in Nursery Schools

Rabindranatha Tagore (1861-1941) was convinced that in the early years the child should arrive at truth spontaneously, through natural process, by coming in contact with things and persons. This will pave the way for the widest possible development of child’s interests (Pankajam, 1994).

Learning for the child, he felt, is essentially explorative, active and full of joy. The pre school curriculum, according to him, should be activity centered rather than subject centered. He believed in education through play and activities in pre schools. Art, for him, was the bridge between man and the world. The cardinal principle in his educational theory is the freedom for creative self-expression and so he stressed the creative aspects of learning crafts work and play.

Tagore believed that drama and histrionic arts should be an integral part of the pre school curriculum. This is because children need the opportunity to express themselves through bodily movements. He stressed teaching through environment. To his opinion teaching can be done when they are on ‘nature walk’ or on “trek”.

Tagore was of the opinion that too many restrictions on young children would make education joyless. So he was against rigid discipline in pre schools. He believed that the objective of education is the freedom of mind.

The child teacher relationship was the most significant aspect of his educational philosophy. The primary function of a nursery school, he believed, is to produce an atmosphere conducive to create activity.

(x) Gandhi and Pre-basic Education

Gandhiji (1869 – 1948) in his pre-basic education system gave importance to the child, the “educand”, in the educative process. He was of the opinion that education should be child oriented or child centered. He emphasized the harmonious development of the child (Kaul, 1991).

Gandhiji suggested that the child’s creative urge should be channelized and manifested through creative and at the same time productive activities. Gandhiji emphasized “learning by doing” and stressed on education through some constructive and useful activities. He gave importance to the teacher also and expected the child to be inspired in the presence of the teacher.

Gandhiji believed that home is the first centre of a child’s education and learning. There should, therefore, no contradiction between home influence and school. He considered close parent teacher relation as an imperative factor and emphatically recommended for parent education also.
2. RELATED STUDIES CONDUCTED IN THE AREA OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Under this section two types of research studies related to early childhood education (ECE) viz.,

a. Studies related to play and its role in ECE; and
b. Studies related to ECE programmes; are included.

a. Studies Related to Play and its Role in ECE

All children like play and playing, as it is enjoyable to them in its own sake. The benefits of play are many and varied. Researchers have shown that children learn through play and play fosters various developments in children.

Many eminent educationists like Isaacs (1930), Schiller (1954), Lee (1977), Sylva (1977), Yardley (1984) and Curtis (1986) have concluded that the most valuable learning comes through play. They have supported this by statements such as: play is the child's main business in life; through play she learns the skills to survive and finds some pattern in the confusing world into which he was born; plays is the principal means of learning in the early childhood......... Children gradually develop concepts of casual relationships, the power to discriminate, to make judgments, to analyse and synthesize through plays.

Parten (1932) has studied the levels of involvement of children while they engage in play. She described that there are five different levels viz.,
(i) Solitary level of play;
(ii) Onlooker level of play;
(iii) Parallel level of play;
(iv) Associative level of play; and
(v) Co-operative level of play.

In solitary level, children play without regard for what other children around them are doing. A child may be constructing a tower with blocks and be completely oblivious to what other children in the room are doing.

In onlooker play level, child who is playing individually is simultaneously observing those playing the same area. The child may be talking to peers. Children who watch other children play may alter their own play behaviour after watching. Children engaged in onlooker play may seem to be sitting passively while children around them are playing, but they will be alert in observing the action around them.

In parallel level of play, several children are playing with the same materials but each is playing independently. Children working on puzzles are example for it.

In associative level children play altogether, but in a loosely organized fashion. In co-operative level, each child accepts a designated role and each is dependent on the others for achieving the goals of the play.

Piaget (1962) observed that play pushes a child out of egocentric thought patterns. His studies concluded that children in play situations are forced to consider the viewpoints of play mates and therefore become less egocentric.
Piaget (1962) and Inhelder (1969) have described different types of play with objects, including practice play, symbolic play, games with rules and games of construction.

Frank (1968) supported the merits of play and he concluded that play is a way of learning by trial and error to cope with the actual world.

Rosen and Rosen (1973) were of the opinion that one must promote children’s playing with words in ways one had not encouraged sufficiently before. They suggested that children must be motivated to use their own vocabulary forms as this inventiveness in children’s speech is of vital importance to future language competence.

Currie and Foster (1975) found that children try and symbolize the real, physical world through their play and through various art forms.

Sylva and Genova (1976) found that children who played with materials were as capable of solving a problem as children for whom the solution had been demonstrated. Their studies have realized that children who play with materials are more likely to assume that there are many possible solutions to a problem and to continue trying to solve the problem longer than children for whom the solution has been demonstrated.

Studies of Singer and Singer (1977), have shown that the children who indulge freely in good quality fantasy and pretend play, the children who are considered to be “high fantasizers” and spend a good deal of time in imaginative thinking have greater tendencies towards being creative with materials and situations. Their studies have also found that these creative, internal thinkers have better concentration, are less aggressive generally, can tell more creative stories with greater originality and more
complex characters and situations, and are more inclined to enjoy what they do than children who are low fantasizers.

Directed play can offer the chance to convert exploratory process into play directed towards a goal which, according to Sylva et al (1977) is a prerequisite to problem solving. This will require that the children are guided into specific observations and reflections on their exploratory play leading to the identification and investigation of selected problem.

Hohmann, Banet and Weikart (1979) studied the importance of visits of pre-school children and concluded that parenting is teaching and parents already know a lot about child development in general and their own children in particular. The study remarked that teachers are not purveyors of knowledge but rather people who wish to support and extend the learning that is already going on at home.

Bruner (1977) observed that the main characteristic of play—whether of child or adult—is not its content but its mode. Play is an approach to action, not a form of activity.

Stevens (1977) considered as play is necessary and vital to normal development of both the organism itself and of its maturation as a social being.

Bronfenbrenner (1979) felt that for a vast majority of children play is a real motivator—it has its own intrinsic rewards, it is done spontaneously and voluntarily and it is thoroughly enjoyable.

Pellegrini (1980) studied the relationship between kindergartener's play and achievement in language skills and found that children's play was
a better predictor of success in some aspects of reading and language achievement than IQ or socio economic status.

Piers and Landau (1980) report one study by Feitelson undertaken with matched pairs of Israeli children, half of whom undertook directed play with puzzles, mosaics and blocks and half of whom were tutored on pre-reading skills through pencil-and-paper activities. In a follow up test for which they were asked to copy a five-word sentence, the children who had had the opportunity to play made significantly fewer mistakes and approached the task more readily and enthusiastically than did the pencil and paper task children. Feitelson concluded that certain types of play may will be more effective than teaching for promoting certain skills.

Freyberg (1981) studied the effect of creative play training on preschool aged children. She used pie cleaner people, play dough, bricks and small toys to act out make believe adventures and then encouraged the children to tell stories like wise. After eight sessions, using the Singer's test of imaginative play predisposition, Freyberg found that creative play training had not only increased children's ability to fantasize but increased attention spans, verbal communication and enjoyment.

Weister and Mc Call (1976) and Hutt (1982) suggest that exploratory play is very likely to be beneficial to subsequent problem solving activities. These researchers identify 'specific exploration' as being that kind of play which looks at what the material is and what it can do, and 'divertive exploration' as essentially leading a child to explore what they can personally do with the material.

Smith (1982) argues that play has the power to motivate children in learning and will continue to give its educational value.
school motivates children to explore and experience the home, garden, street, shops, neighbourhood and so on. It provides a longer time scale and learning which is likely to be spread and on going.

Pepler and Rubin (1982) studied the relationship between play and learning and found that children who are more inclined towards divertive exploration are more inclined to trial-and-error learning. Exploration is defined by Sutton-Smith (1986) as exposing oneself to what the object is like and what it can do. Play is when one makes it do what one can wants it to do.

Rutter (1982) observes that children, who cannot play, such as Wayne, are ‘poorer’ for the lack of such ability and it does not appear that those children who can play desire enormous benefit from it.

Collier (1983) found that play assists the development of representational skills and the formation of symbolic foundations that are necessary for reading.

Almy (1984) has published statements in several sources about the child’s right to play. She wrote that the distinguishing characteristics of play make it essential to the child’s development.

Tizard (1984) along with most other early educators does believe that children’s conceptual development depends to a large extent on good, first-hand experiences and opportunities for active participation in play activities.

The strong relationship between play and language is borne out in a study by Levy (1984) wherein she examined a wealth of literature on
play and language use in 4-year-olds. She found an 'undeniable association' and concluded that play is an effective medium for stimulating language development and innovation in language use, particularly, in relation to clarifying new words and concepts, motivating language use and practice, developing meta linguistic awareness and encouraging verbal thinking.

Ebeart and Leavith (1985) state that play offers young children opportunities to master many fundamental physical, social and intellectual skills and concepts. Garvey (1977), Sylva, Bruner and Genova (1976) have come to similar conclusions for both younger and primary school children.

Katz (1985) reports about the findings of the unpublished research by Crahay in 1980 which has shown that within a typical pre school class only about five or six of the children (those who are most articulate) are receiving most of the teachers verbal interaction. Crahay suggests that teachers tend to engage in more interaction through plays, with those children who are in the back position.

Coates (1985) examined the nature of young children's discussion. The study concluded the preparation of appropriate play materials for groups of children selected for their varying language skills and ability to work together, would appear to be important at this beginning stage of education.

The studies such as those by Smith (1977) and Fein (1981), Chazan et al (1987) has concluded that pretend play does seem to be related to an increase in divergent thinking skills, verbal fluency and story telling skills.
Henniger (1987) in a study found that curiosity, divergent thinking, and motivation to learn are vital for success in mathematics and science and these traits are best fostered through play.

The longitudinal study of Osborn and Milbank (1987) concluded that investment in pre-school education, inference in the quality of the play and providing opportunities for involving suitable plays could well pay good dividends in the shape of calculable beneficial effects on the children's educational attainments.

Brierley (1987) examined the effects of play on improving the memory of pre-school aged children and found that a child remembers only those things to which he plays keen attention.

Christie, Johnson and Peckover (1988) studied the effects of play period on children's behaviour modification and found that children engage in longer play periods were more mature than those children engage in shorter play periods.

In a study Clark (1988) reports: observational studies have shown that free play setting has potential for stimulating learning in young children.... it must be carefully structured with the adults paying a crucial role in its organization and by selective intervention with the children in their play.

Brewer (1992) studied the effect of play and found that both exploratory play - play in which the child has no objective other than exploration and rule-governed play - play in which the child has objectives such as finding solutions to a problem or determining cause and effects - contribute to cognitive growth.
b. Studies Related to ECE Programmes

The studies under this section are categorized into:

(1) Studies conducted in India; and
(2) Studies conducted outside India.

(1) Studies Conducted in India

Devi (1975) studied the nature of group activities of nursery school children and the size of the group. For this she used observation schedules, questionnaires and checklists for collecting the data. The study concluded the followings:

* there is no significant difference between social development and sex of the child;
* there is no significant difference in the social behaviour of children at specific level of development of the different religious groups;
* healthy children were more sociable than unhealthy children;
* size of a family has a direct influence on social development of children;
* the socio-economic conditions of parents and conditions of nursery schools affect the social development of children; and
* more children prefer group play to individual play.

Seethamony (1989) conducted a diagnostic study of pre primary education in Kerala. Some of her major findings are

(i) ten percent of the teachers are seen without any pre primary training.
(ii) there is no uniformity either in the nature of activities or in the duration of each activity.

(iii) facilities of anganwadies are in pitiable condition

(iv) majority of the parents, irrespective of their educational status are seen ignorant about the intellectual development of the children.

(v) pre primary education has a positive effect on children’s future achievement.

Pankajam (1979) studied the impact of pre school education on language development. The followings were the objectives. (1) to study the language development of children from 2 ½ years to 5 years of age. (2) to examine whether attending pre school helps in the learning of language. (3) to examine whether there is any relationship between the socio economic status and language development of children.

The sample of the study was drawn from both urban and rural areas of Madurai district in Tamil Nadu. The total sample size was 511 of which 258 were drawn from a population attending pre schools and 253 from the population, which was not attending pre schools from the same area.

To observe the children, the time sampling and situational sampling methods were followed. The children were observed in three different situations: (i) while playing with a peer group, (ii) in the company of adults at home and (iii) their responses to a set of pictures of common objects and toys. Each observation in the first two situations extended over a period of 15 minutes for two days and a running record of their speeches was made.
In order to stimulate the children to speak, stimulus objects were provided. These included photographs, pictures, model and toys of animals, insects, birds, vegetables, flowers, vehicles, play equipments, house hold equipments, writing materials, shopping centre, railway station, doctor with patient and other common activities found at home and in the school. A big doll was used to identify the different parts of a body.

The result of the study revealed that the language abilities of children who attended pre schools seems to be significantly higher than those who did not, in the use of nouns, verbs, case particles and vocabulary. The differences were found to be significant at 0.01 level. In the case of verb adjuncts, compound verbs and numerals the difference was found to be significant at 0.05 level.

Vagh (1984) remarks that pre school education can provide a base for economic development and national progress. She reminds that the task, therefore, remains to educate the community in general and parents in particular and to bring about awareness of the advantages of pre school children.

For this she has recommended various strategies such as home visits by the teachers, school visits by parents, conducting exhibitions at schools, parent's meetings, picnics in children's homes and parents social gathering.

Vagh has developed five models of home visits. The first model focuses on explaining the parents about the child's developmental stages, needs and requirements at that stage. In the second model stress is on advising and educating the parents, especially mother about the requisites of the physical development of the child. The third model concentrates on
understanding the problems of the children of deprived and disadvantaged homes and provide them with opportunities to develop social qualities. The remaining two models focus urbanized rich parents who force their own aspirations and ambitions on the child in the matter of education even at the pre school stage.

Sharma (1985) has suggested some activities for the personal and social development of pre school children. They include exploring objects, places and people; exploration and awareness of body parts, structured activities such as painting, drawing, cutting and pasting, clay modeling, finger painting and water play. Story telling, puppetry, singing and dancing, dramatization and role playing, group activities such as collage making, block building and cleaning up the class room are some other activities suggested by her.

She has also suggested group games such as running and movemental games, circle and team games and rhythm game, sand play, allocation of various responsibilities to children and special projects for attaining various developments.

Thakkar (1987) believes that pre school is the vantage point to observe and understand the world around the child, to learn to cope and gain in confidence. To achieve these, according to her, an early childhood education programme could aim to promote cognitive competencies, physical developments, mathematical experiences and social development.

She describes various activities such as talk about pictures, picture sequencing, story telling, using pictures, TV programmes, socio-dramatic play and rhymes and songs for the development of cognitive as well as
social developments. For promoting physical co-ordination and mathematical experiences she recommends various games such as "over, under, in and out", "one more than", drawing various shape, games of "left and right", eurhythmics, creative drama, painting and craft works.

Bevli (1990) conducted a study on the motor, adaptive, social-personal and language development of Indian children. The main objective of the study was to understand the growth and development of Indian children in aspects such as motor, adaptive, social-personal and language. The study was designed on the times of Gesell's developmental schedules, which provide both qualitative and quantitative evaluation.

The study was conducted on both cross-sectional and longitudinal bases. The sample of the study covered pre school aged children (2 ½ - 5) years from the urban, rural and industrial areas of Calcutta, Bombay, Madras, Allahabad, Ahamedabad and Hyderabad. At each centre, approximately 360 children each from urban, rural and industrial areas were tested, covering a total of 1080 children per centre for the cross sectional study. For the longitudinal study 292 children were tested. The tests from Gesell's schedules were adapted for the Indian situation.

The results indicated that urban children are faster in their development compared to the rural and industrial children. The industrial children were found to be better than their rural counterparts.

Raghavan (1998) using a sample of 45 ECE centres, studied about the functioning of pre primary institutions. The sample included Anganwadies, Government Nursery Schools, Pre primary classes run by the PTAs in institutions run by private agencies. The study concluded that
the programmes conducted in the centres were not suitable for the overall development of children.

(2) Studies Conducted Outside India

Pettrie (1991) undertook a 9-month observational study of the interaction of 7 children and their mothers in a co-operative nursery school to evaluate the nature of children’s emotional responses to their mother’s presence and absence, and to explore factors mediating any changes in children’s patterns of behaviour. Qualitative analysis of videotapes and transcripts were done. Quantitative data was analysed according to three categories: mother-child interaction, teacher-child interaction and children’s characteristic patterns of emotion regulation.

Findings demonstrated a broad array of individual differences. It also indicated two distinct sub groups one in which the children struggled with problems of attachment and other issues of adaptation. Parent’s involvement was found to be particularly important in the facilitation of children’s trust in the teacher.

In his study Senlak (1991) investigated two types of correspondence construction, linguistic (implicated and counting activities) and spatial (implicated in relative number judgments). In addition, the study examined pre school aged children’s ability, age 3,4 and 5 years, to solve correspondence problems which varied with respect to their set size (medium and large), set relation (equal and unequal) and screening (both sets were visible as compared to problems where only one set was visible).
Six supplementary assessments problem sets were administered to measure the young children's ability to complete counting and correspondence problems.

Results of the study indicated that children possess a range of counting and correspondence capabilities. The majority of the children were able to generate a list of three number names and match these values with objects in a set.

To examine the relationship of the organization of pre schools to the quality of standards of early childhood programmes Brandford (1992) conducted a study. The study concluded that the quality standards among the sites varied, and that the presence of such standards was more apparent in programmes that were internally and externally evaluated.

The purpose of the study of Tims (1992) was to evaluate the effectiveness of the use of guided imagery to enhance the writing skills of young children.

The study was conducted in two kindergarten classrooms for a period of 6 weeks. The subject followed a treatment of guided imagery experiences including relaxation techniques. The study concluded that the writing skills of the children did improve. However, because of the small range of possible scores, the gains were favourable. The results demonstrate that guided imagery is a visible intervention for an educational setting.

Lim (1992) studied the relationship of play and language patterns among Singaporean pre school children in homes and classrooms.
The subjects for this study were 116 four-to five-year-old Singaporean children of ethnic Chinese origin. Correlations between the language and play measures showed that higher levels of play and higher levels of language were correlated. Lower levels of such play behaviours correlated with lower linguistic competencies. Correlational data demonstrated the utility of specific play and language measures and the need for a battery of linguistic or play measures.

Cho (1992) studied the relationships of pre schoolers empathy and perspective taking with their pro social behaviour observed in a naturalistic classroom setting. Perspective taking was assessed by the Denham (1986) perspective-taking task. Empathy was assessed by the picture-story task patterned after Eisenberg-Berg and Lennon (1980). Children's pro social behaviours (helping, sharing and caring) were measured by naturalistic observations during free play for a total of 60 minutes (thirty 2 minutes sample) for each child. Teacher rating on pro social behaviour questionnaire were used as another independent measure of children's pro social responding.

The participants were 24 boys and 34 girls (mean age 54.3 months) enrolled in four different classes in a university attached pre school.

The study concluded that empathy and perspective taking were not related to naturalistic observations or teachers independent rating of pro social behaviour. Gender effects were not found. But the overall pro social behaviour observed during free play increased with age.

Weaver (1992) studied the effect of Sesame Street Pre school Education Program Initiative. The purpose of the study was to know
whether the program has an effect on the thinking skills of four and five year old day care students.

The sample of the study included 36 predominantly middle class four and five year olds who regularly attend one of two suburban day care centres.

The result of this investigation revealed significant increases in the overall mean scores of the tests on thinking skills. It was, therefore, concluded that a coordinated paradigm, which includes interactive television viewing, storybook reading and related activities can enhance the thinking skills of young children.

In his study Walker (1992) examined the long-term effects of an intervention programme on a multi ethnic sample of children from low-income families. Subjects included 29 children from Austin Community Nursery Schools. Test scores and findings of the children's academic achievement, school attendance, grade retention, placement in special education and acceptance into the gifted programme were analyzed from kindergarten and compared with the Austin Independent School District norms.

The findings indicated that the intervention programme had positive effects on school attendance, grade, retention, placement in special education and acceptance into the gifted programme.

Mei-Chun (1992) studied the overall effect of the integrated thematic curriculum on the quality of free play involvement and the quality of dramatic play competence in pre school children. Participants in the study included 32 pre school children who were involved in three play
units. The study concluded that the relationship between the teacher designated "unit themes" and the child initiated "play themes" was significantly high when integrated curriculum was used for the class.

Everett (1992) examined the changes that occurred when kindergarteners received one of three instructional programmes about children with disabilities and their associated etiologies.

The study revealed that both puppetry and film have potential for reducing children's disability related concerns.

With an objective of examining the effects of early childhood programmes for at-risk children on the development of achievement behaviour, Parry (1992) conducted an experimental study. Achievement behaviour was measured in the following main areas: Task Mastery, Recognition, Interpersonal relationship and Creativity. The major question was: Are there significant differences in the achievement behaviour characteristics between at-risk pre school participants and non-participants in this area?

102 participants and 102 non-participants took part in the study. The data used were taken from student's records, teacher's records and achievement files. It was found that at-risk pre school participants exhibited significantly greater achievement behaviour characteristics than did at-risk pre school non-participants.

Morales (1992) conducted an investigation into the effectiveness of pre school interaction programmes on the education of Hispanic children. The study attempted to explore that Hispanic children who attempted a
pre school programme would perform better in reading mathematics and academic grades in the first standard.

The results showed that local private pre school programme made no significant difference in the scores in both reading and mathematics. It was also concluded that a pre school programme made no statistically significant difference in the final academic grade in first standard.

Mc. Donald (1992) examined the effects of informal dramatization on the language and story production of pre school children. Analysis compared the language and stories of children allowed to dramatize their original, dictated stories with comparable peers who did not dramatize their original stories.

Results of the analysis confirmed that the treatment, dramatization of original stories had effect on the measures of oral language fluency. The study concluded that the children who dramatize their original stories developed a capacity to tell more complex stories.

A qualitative study conducted by Mc. Clellan (1992) offered a home visit programme to educate and support parents in their role as their child’s first teacher.

The study used home visit records, interviews, observations and a parent survey to explore the content and parental involvement behaviour of this home visit programme.

The analysis of the study revealed that through the home visit programme parents gain self-confidence in their parenting role.
Lawrence (1992) examined the appropriateness of utilizing microcomputers with young children. The study population consisted of 17 girls and 25 boys who were enrolled in programmes of the early childhood education centre at the State University of New York at Buffalo and who ranged in the age from 39 months to 62 months. Procedures included identifying the subjects on age-appropriate instruments, providing and observing microcomputer experiences, post testing, and analysing data at the <0.05 level of significance.

Results of the study indicated that young children preferred traditional pre school activities rather than interaction with a microcomputer. This was especially true of the subjects who scored higher on the academic measures.

Kindall (1992) examined the nature and degree of autonomous behaviour among Montessori elementary students. A further aim of the study was to elucidate those elements of the Montessori educational model, which may affect the development of autonomy.

The results of the ethnographic observations demonstrated clear distinctions between the Montessori and traditional classroom environments in all five elements examined. Results of the observations of the student's behaviour indicated that the Montessori students demonstrated significantly higher level of independence, initiative and self-regulation (These were the three constructs used to define autonomy). The nature of autonomous behaviour also differed between the two groups with Montessori children initiated more social interaction and employing a more varied approach to task completion and problem solving.
In a study Hearron (1992) used qualitative methods (participant observation, tape recording in homes, interviews and collection of artifacts) to address three questions which emerged during the first semester of an observation in a kindergarten serving 17 low-income, ethnic minority children. The questions were: (1) how do families of non mainstream kindergarten children responded to requests with activities related to school tasks? (2) what was their understanding of those requests and how does that understanding compared with that of the teacher? (3) what were possible outcomes of such participation?

The study revealed that the relationship between interaction process and potential outcomes was reciprocal.

Abu (1992) observed that pro social behaviours of 58 kindergarten children in their classrooms during free play activities over a period of seven weeks. Each child's self concept was assessed by the Purdue Self Concept Scale for Pre school Children. Classroom teachers responded to questionnaires evaluating children's pro social behaviours and their self-concept. In addition, children provided evaluation of their peers' pro social behaviours in personal interviews.

Data analysis revealed significant relations between:

(i) the combined aggregate of spontaneous pro social behaviours and overall self concept;
(ii) total co-operating with self concept;
(iii) spontaneous co-operating with self-concept;
(iv) physical, social and personal self-concepts with spontaneous cooperating; and
(v) teacher ratings of requested pro social behaviours and children's observed requested actions.

Ward (1993) conducted a study to determine whether a developmentally appropriate, activity centered mathematics curriculum in kindergarten improved problem-solving skills and attitudes towards mathematics when compared to a traditional mathematics curriculum.

Eight kindergarten classes in three Tennessee countries participated in the study. Three qualitative tools were used to test the effects of activity-centered mathematics curriculum.

Results demonstrated that children in the new curriculum were more successful problem solvers, depending upon their socio economic level. There were no significant differences in attitudes towards mathematics regardless of curriculum approach. Achievement test results indicated that low SES children in the new approach scored as well as high SES students.

The state of pre school education in the Sultanate of Oman was studied by Moosa (1994). Four globally recognized and distinct philosophical pre school models were used as points of reference for the investigation. They were Bereiter-Engelmann, British Infant School, Montessori and Piaget.

34 pre schools in the Muscat region of Oman were included in the sample. Descriptive and cluster analysis were employed to determine possible adherence to one of the four pre school models.
The study revealed that none of the pre schools included in the sample adhered to a philosophic mode. The programmes were eclectic. However, several pre school curricula were more oriented towards the behavioural-based Bereiter-Engelmann model.

Nixon (1995) conducted a study to determine whether any differences in academic self esteem exists between full-day and half-day kindergarten students at the end of their kindergarten school year.

The study found that there exists no significant difference between the average scores of full-day (63.5) and half-day (60.6) kindergarten students.

Lee (1995) examined two issues for an integrated understanding of developmental and cultural dimensions of pretend play. First, to examine the role of the culture in children’s play, the pretend play of Korean and Anglo-American pre school children was compared. Secondly, to understand the rate of social competence and friendship in pretend play, the relationship between pretend play and these variables were investigated between the two cultures.

Participants were 46 Korean and 46 Anglo-American pre school children who were observed in a free play conditions and in a toy play condition.

Results indicated that Korean-American children engaged less frequently in social pretend play in the free play condition, however the differences disappeared in the toy condition. Korean-American children displayed more realistic themes, whereas Anglo American children enacted more fantastic themes. Also, the communication of Anglo-
American children was characterised by description of play in term of their own activities and few attempt to influence each other. On the other hand, Korean-American children were likely to attempt to influence peers behaviour using social bids.

Hong (1995) studied about large group conversation in a pre school classroom. Conversation in dyads and in all small groups has been valued highly however, the importance of large group conversation has ignored.

The study concluded that rich and meaningful learning at large group time is possible through the mutual efforts and support of the teacher, children and parents.

The effects of three adult strategies on children's cognitive play were examined by Erwin (1995) in an experimental study. Two adults were trained to use non-informational support; open-ended questions and extending strategies during thirty minute play groups while children played with Legos. Children between the ages of 40 to 70 months were randomly assigned to one of the three conditions and videotaped in some-sex pairs. The complexity of cognitive play, amount of on-task language, amount of 'non cognitive' play, and Lego structure complexity were measured. The analysis concluded that there were significant interaction effects between the adult and the type strategy on average level of cognitive play.

Phillips (1995) studied the impact of early childhood education programme. The Metropolitan Readiness Test (MRT) and the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills (CTBS) were the measures used to determine the academic success of kindergarten, first, second and third year grade students. Test scores at grades K-3 used to compare those
students who had no early childhood experience, with students who had from one to three years' participation in an early childhood programme.

The results conducted that in some academic area, students who had one or more years of early childhood education performed at a higher level on some of the skills tested than did those who had not had any early childhood experience.

Lin (1995) conducted an ethnographic study of science discourse in a kindergarten classroom where the teacher placed an emphasis on science.

The investigator used participant observation, video recording of classroom interactions and descriptions of the children's activity preferences to sketch out children's participation in science activities.

In analysing the children's participant structure at group-time it was found that "contextual knowledge" was important to children's classroom participant patterns.

Crawford (1997) examined the effect of dramatic play on five-year-old children when one of the active participants is their teacher and considers the place of dramatic play in a school setting. The researcher investigated the "dramatic playing" in a kindergarten environment using a qualitative methodology. The data was collected by observing and recording the events and dialogue.

An examination of the recorded events revealed that dramatic play was a learning medium that five year olds used for exploring ideas that resulted in their growth as learners. The teacher as a participant was only
an intervention agent who supports the development of dramatic play initiated by five year olds.

The analysis concluded that dramatic playing could provide educators with an environment in which they can intervene in role while observing the children and assessing possible areas of development and exploration.

Chang (1997) examined two aspects of narrative construction social pretend play: (1) the content and intertextuality of play narratives and (ii) process of play narrative construction. The method of the study was qualitative in nature. Observation of children's naturally occurring social pretend play was employed over time. Besides informal interviews with children, parents and teachers were conducted. Analysis included constant comparative methodology and symbolic interactionism. The findings of the study showed the novel nature of children's play narratives.

Teresa (1997) conducted a naturalistic observation of fourteen parent-child pairs in four pretend play exhibits in a children's museum. A contextual analysis across exhibits determined how the social and physical contexts influenced each parental contribution. Analysis included the amount of time in the exhibits, frequency of parent contribution in the exhibits, information gathered in interviews with parents and museum educators, and the researchers own interpretations of what influenced parental contributions.

Parents had the same number of contributions per minute across all the exhibits. Parents were observed either playing or teaching. Seventy-five percent of the parent contributions were some form of play, while twenty-five percent were associated with teaching.
Parental teaching was analyzed according to type of knowledge: academic or social knowledge. The study concluded that the physical contexts influenced the type and frequency of knowledge taught. Direct Instructions and Academic Knowledge Scaffolding occurred when parents perceived something to teach, and when they responded to a child’s initiative to learn.

The purpose of the study conducted by Chuang (1977) was to describe and compare the nature of Taiwanese parents distancing strategies and mutual operational demands (MODs) when they taught their pre school children paper folding and story telling.

The research questions in this study were (1) During parent-child teaching interaction, what were the types and percentages of Taiwanese parents distancing strategies? (2) How did the MOD level of distancing strategies differ between mothers and fathers? (3) How did Taiwanese parents differentiate their distancing strategies in accordance with the gender of children (4) How did Taiwanese parents differentiate their distancing strategies in accordance with the native of the task?

The finding was that Taiwanese parents used distancing strategies at high MOD level most frequently, followed by those at low-and medium MOD levels. The gender of parent and children made few differences in Taiwanese parents’ teaching strategies: parents gender difference was significant only in parents use of medium-MOD strategies: while children’s gender difference was found in high-MOD levels.

Sharon (1997) studied the effectiveness of two phonological instructional strategies viz;
(1) Segmentation and blending, and
(2) Rhyming and first sound identification in training low-skilled kindergarten students.

Sixty-one low-skilled kindergartners, who did not score more than four items correctly in 3 out of 5 phonological measures (segmentation, blending, rhyming, first sound identification and syllable deletion) were assigned to one of the two strategy groups through a randomized blocking sampling procedure. Students received the instruction in small groups of 3 to 4, with each session for 20 to 30 minutes, twice a week over 10 weeks. Results showed that both strategy groups were effective in improving student's phonological skills such as segmentation, blending, rhyming, first sound identification and syllable deletion and pre-reading/pre-writing skills based on the measures of the Woodcock Johnson Letter-sound identification and Dictation Subtests. No significant difference between the two strategy groups was found in the improvement in either phonological skills or pre-reading/pre-writing skills. Neither group demonstrated successful transfer of the trained phonological skills to the broader structure of phonological skills designed in the Lindamood Auditory Conceptualization Tes.

Pivola (1997) conducted a two year study to test the impact of using humor as a teaching methodology in preschools. This study determined the relationship of using elements of humor to increase achievement levels in the area of language arts. The target population included 42 preschool children, consisting of 17 boys and 25 girls from a suburban preschool in the state of Connecticut.

The design for the study followed classic experimental lines. Both the experimental and controlled groups were comprised of
heterogeneously grouped intact classics. There were 21 children in each group. The same teacher engaged the class over the two-year period. The experimental treatment consisted of using elements of humor as methodology to teach four areas of language arts skills.

Data from the pre and post-test scores were analysed to show the overall impact of using humor as methodology. The students variable selected to be included and compared to levels of achievement were: gender, hand dominance and familiar position.

The results revealed that there was significance shown for using humor as methodology with two stands of the student's population. Those two stands consisted of left hand students and who were the middle children in familial position.

To determine the influence of the puzzle place television programme - a programme designed specially to develop social skills in pre schoolers on their behaviour - study was conducted by Margret (1997). A 2x2 MANOVA was used to examine the mean gain scores of the four treatment groups on each of the four programme goals. The treatment groups were (1) those who watched the programme and used the accompanying guide. (2) those who used only the guide. (3) those who only watched the television programme and (4) the controlled group. The four programme goals were appreciation of diversity, self-confidence, social skills, and problem solving and decision-making.

There were no significant gains on the measures of social skills from watching the television programme. Use of the guide resulted in significant gains on measures of appreciation of diversity, social skills and problem solving and decision making. The group of pre schoolers who
used the puzzle place television programme alone with the accompanying guide did not make greater gain scores in any of the four goal areas than preschoolers in the other three treatment groups.

Lawton (1998) conducted a study with an objective of obtaining descriptive data on teacher-child touch in pre school classrooms, the teacher, child and center variables which affect such contact and the messages teachers give to children regarding human closeness. The central question addressed was: do all children receive physical affection from caregivers?

The frequency and duration of seven categories of touch were measured in eight pre school classroom and in four day care centres. Data were collected through observation of teachers and 148 children and interview with 20 teachers and four directors.

The results indicated that while teachers do provide physical affection for children they were more likely to use touch for care taking. However, much difference was found among individual teachers and centres in both the frequency and nature of touch. Education and positive attitudes towards physical contact were found to be related to higher rates of positive touch and lower rates of controlling touch.

A qualitative study conducted by Land (1998) examined the role of talk in kindergarten children's construction of story, and impact of talk on oral and written stories of children. Subjects were twenty-three children from one kindergarten classroom in a small rural community in a southeastern state. Five of the subjects were randomly selected for an indepth case study analysis of the talk among children during the shared journal process (i.e., a story telling time, a questioning time and a
negotiation time). This process was videotaped each day for a period of six months. Transcriptions of this talk were examined to determine the kinds of questions asked, the kinds of story elements included and the story organization of the oral stories.

Findings of the study indicate that information gained during the shared journal process aided children in their construction of oral stories and stories in their journal entries. Talk among the children provided information that was used to develop stories in the journal entries through illustrations and written texts.

To examine the possible relationships of four specific factors to the development of writing ability of four and five year old children Salas (1998) studied the influence of early childhood writing of linguistically diverse children. The factors were (1) presence or absence of direct writing instruction. (2) being read to or not being read to at home. (3) socio economic status—lower income or middle income, and (4) being bilingual-English/Spanish.

The writing samples were collected from pre schoolers in Head Start and private pre school programmes. The hypotheses generated by the research questions were tested using a chi-square test of independent variables. The statistical test examined whether or not a relationship existed between writing form and each of the variables identified. The statistical analysis yielded the following results.

(i) A relationship was found between being read to on a daily basis and writing ability.

(ii) There was also a relationship between direct writing instruction and writing ability.
(iii) No relationship was found between economic level and writing ability or between being bilingual and writing ability.

This study contributes to the existing body of research on the positive effects of reading to children on a daily basis and its relationship to beginning writing regardless of socio economic status or cultural diversity.

In a five-month case study Huang (1998) investigated three kindergarten children's writing with computers. The focal children were from families of Taiwan, Arabia and Nigeria. Taking a socio-cognitive view, the researcher examined the impacts of using two different computer software packages on various aspects of kindergarten children's writing development.

The computer software that served for focal children to practice their writing were: (1) the phonemic spelling component of IBM'S “Writing to Read (WTR), and (2) word processing in “Logo Writer". Acting as a participant observer the researcher collected data form four major sources. (1) classroom observations (2) interviews (3) children's artifacts, and (4) video and audio recording sessions.

The result of the study indicated that the potential of computer applications in writing was influenced by two major factors. First, it depended on the extent in which it was used. Second, it was influenced by the extent to which individual writers were familiar with computer use. The participating children's prior experiences in writing and in computer use, levels of acculturation and cultural background were found to be significant contributing factors in the quality and progress of their learning
to write. These factors in turn impacted their success in writing with computers.

The findings suggested that computers could not be used as the only writing tool. It was also necessary for kindergarten children to feel in control and to learn how to plan their writings.

The study of Sykes (1998) interprets the experience of nine family representatives on three different early childhood interagency councils. These councils were now creations which functioned at the country level in the state of Ohio and were created through the Ohio family and children First Initiative.

These nine cases examine the experience of family representatives on local councils, the impact of family involvement on service re-design and implications for this practice on a broader basis.

Research methods included individual and group interviews, observation and document analysis. Results of study were presented in two forms as reconstructed stories and in a social science categorical analysis.

The study found the experiences of the participants on their respective councils to be largely positive. They constructed multiple roles within the councils and moved from being relatively ineffective and overwhelmed at first to eventual contributing peers with professional council members.

In a study West (1998) trained 8 young children in the use of both mouse and a trackball for point and chick exploratory play on the
computer. Four of the subjects were typically developing and between the ages of 3 and 3.5 years. The remaining 4 subjects were identified as having developmental delays. These children were between the age of 3.0 and 4.0 years and had cognitive and fine motor skills in the 3 to 3.5 year old range. An alternating treatment design was used to compare each subject’s performance on the two devices in terms of independent activations, repeat activations, assisted activations and false clicks over six individual training sessions per device. None of the subjects showed significant learning of either device within the time frame of the study. All the subjects demonstrated a greater number of repeat activations with the trackball as compared as to the mouse. The results indicated that children functioning in the 3 to 3.5 year age range were not able to learn independently operate a mouse or trackball for point and click activities. However, when given assistance with cursor placement, they were frequently able to independently activate icon and to repeat activations of the same icon using a trackball but not a mouse.

Hong (1999) investigated the perceptions of 145 kindergarten teachers in the Kaohsiung and Pingtung regions of Taiwan about using music with children and their attitude towards using music in their classrooms. The participants were all the kindergarten teachers teaching the Institute of In-service Teacher Training, National Pingtung Teachers College, in December 1998.

The main research questions included: (1) what kinds of music experiences are provided by the teachers in Taiwanese kindergarten classrooms and how frequently do they use music? (2) What are the kindergarten teacher’s attitudes about the role of music experiences for their students?
A total of 145 kindergarten teachers completed the investigator's questionnaire. Descriptive statistical analysis was used to compute the frequency, percent, mean and multiple regression.

Four major conclusions were:

1. most kindergarten teachers reported that their kindergartners have adequate musical equipment;
2. the music experience observed were varied and frequently used;
3. these teachers believed that music is important in child development, classroom management and development of music skills knowledge; and
4. the teachers in Kaohsiung and Pinghtung regions exhibited high confidence in their music teaching ability and enjoy music with their students.

The effects of creative drama on story comprehension was studied by Lin (2000). Eighty-five subjects who were five to six years old participated in three experimental treatments: drama condition, discussion condition and repeated read-aloud condition. The research was conducted over a period of seven weeks.

Data were collected from three measurements: ten-item interview question, picture sequence exercise and story retelling.

The children in the present study showed a better performance on story understanding when stories were familiar, which demonstrated the values of repeating literature experiences. A significant interaction between story style and story familiarity revealed that the effect of story style was moderated by that of story familiarity on story comprehension.
In a study Rene (2000) trained three Head Start teachers and one pre school teacher to embed three Activity Based Interventions (ABI) strategies during daily transitions to encourage pre schoolers to use Say – Do – Review, a self management routine. A single subject, multiple-baseline design across three teacher-child dyads was used to evaluate the effectiveness of the training on teacher's use of the Activity Based Interventions Strategies and Children's Subsequent use of Say-Do-Review during transitions. The effect of children's use of Say-Do-Review on their social behaviour also was evaluated.

No functional relationship was established between children's use of Say-Do-Review and their social behaviour.

The influence of story discussion of original stories on kindergarten children's narrative competence and convergent literacy were compared in 4 kindergarten classrooms by Ann (2000). Eight kindergartens volunteer teachers and their students (N-62) were observed over a fifteen-week period.

Qualitative data included videotaped records of the activities, notes from training meetings with the teachers, and semi structured interviews with teachers.

Multivariate analysis of covariance resulted in a marginally significant difference in favour of the story discussion contexts for narrative competence.

Jamison (2000) examined some possible reasons for low participation rates in urban public pre school programmes.
The qualitative methodology used for data collection involved focus group interviews, individual interviews and questionnaires. 129 participants were asked general questions such as age of pre schoolers, programmes of participation, method of programme awareness and the highest level of educational attainment of the parents.

Respondents provided their thoughts on early childhood education in general and reasons for low programme participation. There were thirty-five respondents of the focus groups, thirty-nine to the interviews and fifty-five to the questionnaires.

Results of the study revealed that weak programme participation was primarily due to the lack of awareness. Other reasons offered for low urban participation rates were: low level of concern on the part of parents to seek out programmes, lack of transportation facilities and economic backwardness of parents.