Physical and digital play: impact on children's development Literature Review

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Introduction

While play seems to be such a simple thing children engage in, it is an essential part of the development of a child. There are many types of play children can engage in and looking directly at physical and digital play will help understand the negative and positive impacts of play on the development of a child. When conducting a literature review on this topic, I included key terms that were specifically focused on the types of play as well as how play positively and negatively contributes to development; I avoided topics that did not include the impact on development. I found qualitative research and secondary articles that specifically covered my topic. Understanding the importance of how different types of play can impact a child's development will hopefully help people to be more supportive of children engaging in play. Most people see play as just a normal thing children do, but looking further into play creates an understanding that play can impact a child's development.

Coverage

Play is such a vital thing in the life of a child it allows them to feel in control as well as contributing to the child's physical, cognitive, social, and emotional development. Ginsburg states,

"Play is important to healthy brain development. It is through play that children at a very early age engage and interact in the world around them" (Ginsburg, 2007, para. #2)

Through play children learn how to manipulate and control the world around them through exploration. This paper states that play has been taken away from children in many ways because of the lifestyle many people are experiencing these days, with play being taken away children do not reap the full benefits of play that they did in the past.

"It could be argued that active play is so central to child development that it should be included in the very definition of childhood" (Ginsburg & Mitleer, 2012).

Benefits of Play:
- Improves the physical health of the child
- Increases a child's brain function by them being involved in the world
- Social and Emotional factors are developed specifically in academic settings where other children are learning
- In a school setting it increases the child's ability to socialize with other children their age
- Play in any setting allows for children to always feel like children

Figure 1: Reference #3.

Figure 2: Refence #9

Methodology

The development of a child can be better understood by two theories from famous theorists Jean Piaget and Erik Erikson. Piaget who was one of the most influential researchers in the 20th century (Huitt, & Hummel, 2006) came up with a theory with four stages that involves cognitive development from birth until old age. Erik Erikson focused on the psychosocial parts of development where he came up with eight stages an individual goes through during their entire life.

Jean Piaget Cognitive Development Theory
Pre-operational Stage: 4 to 6 year old's, the intelligence of a child is shown with symbols, language, and imagination (Huitt & Hummel, 2006). Children are thinking all about themselves

Erik Erikson's Psychosocial Development Theory
Initiative vs. Guilt Stage: the virtue for this is hope, a child playing in this state will pretend to take over roles of family members. They take control of their world
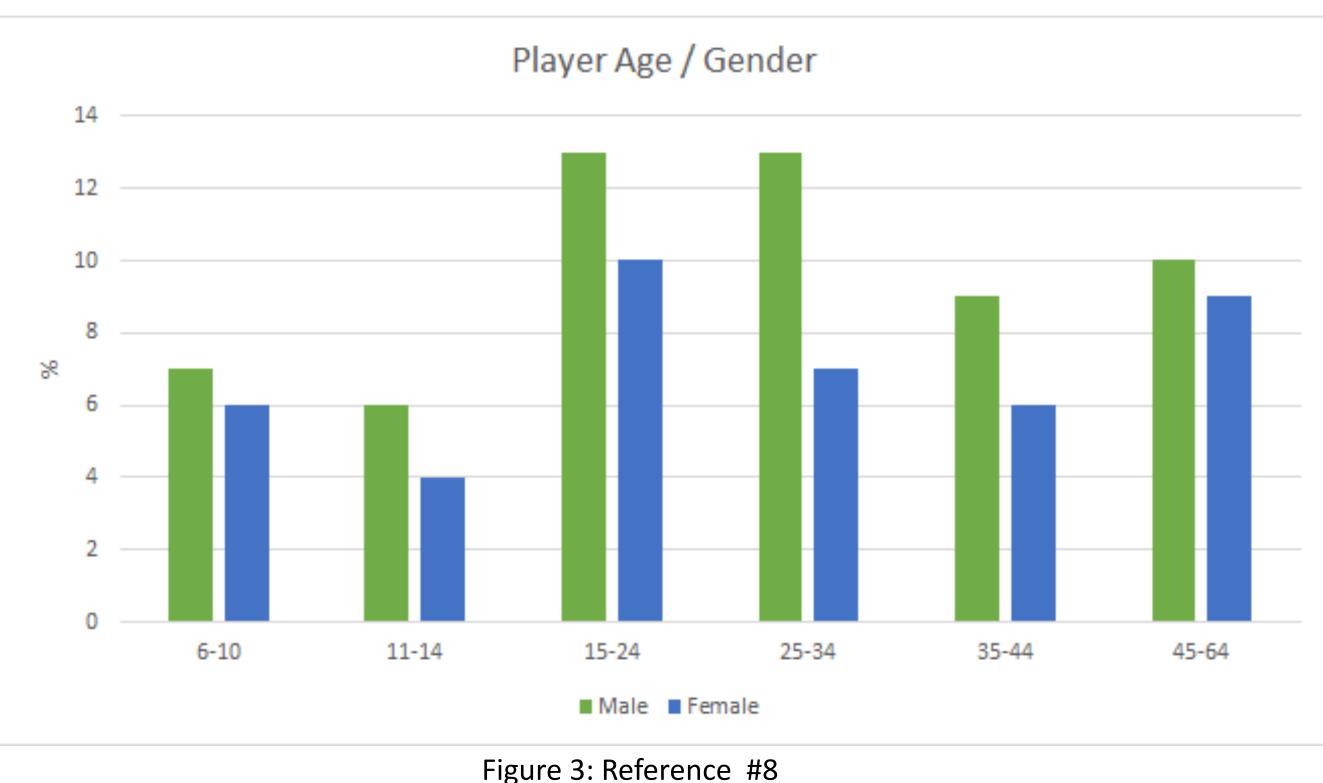
Significance

The Impact of Physical Play

There are many different types of physical play which include locomotor play, social play, object play, and pretend play. Physical play provides children with many different learning opportunities (Pellegrini & Smith, 2008) Locomotor play, also known as exercise play, increases physical activity that can lead to children concentrating better during tasks (Pellegrini & Smith, 2008). Social play increases interaction between children which develops their social capabilities. "In addition, social skills may be enhanced through opportunities for collaboration with other peers, as children collectively decide and learn how to manage risk" (Cornell, Gibson, & Gill, 2017 para. #2).

Object play allows children to develop problem solving skills, increase their independency and creative thought (Pellegrini & Smith, 2008). "Pretend play can also be observed when a child is playing with conventional toys, such as a bed and a doll" (Stagnitti, & Unsworth, para. #6). Unstructured play which can also be known as a child-led activity, this type of play impacts large portions of a child's development. "unstructured play allows children space to choose and create their own playful activities, to navigate their social worlds, to make independent decisions and to experience the consequences of their own actions" (Cornell, M., Gibson, J., & Gill, T., 2017)

Types of Play

Locomotor	Involves exercise play with large parts of the body such as running or climbing
Social	Interactions between children and caregivers up to age 2
Object	Use of objects during play such as puzzles and dolls
Pretend	Use of the imagination, such as a baby dolls or stuffed animals as students
Language	2 year old's talking themselves to sleep

Figure 3: Reference #8

Results

The Impact of Digital Play

The world we live in today is full of advancing technologies, it can have negative and positive effects on a child's development. "Even though the early childhood curriculum is traditionally based in play, the majority of studies are focused on the use of computers to enhance learning in a particular curriculum area" (Kervin & Verenikina, 2011, para. #6). The use of technology has taken over in the used of educational online games compared to physical recreational games. A study showed that during short periods of online gaming can be associated with increased heart rate that was equal to that of doing a physical exercise (Sobani, Pervaiz, Yakub, Khawaja, & Khan, 2011). Another study showed that in preschool age children they preferred digital games that involved the use of their imagination as well as games that weren't on the screen (Kervin, L., & Verenikina, I., 2011).

Conclusions

Development of a child is a vital part to them growing in every aspect of their development. Along with their development, the use of play can be very impactful in every aspect that helps children to develop appropriately. Children of the four to six ages are experiencing the Pre-operational Stage according to Piaget and the initiative vs. guilt according to Erikson. They are beginning to use their imagination during play and they are using their abilities to take control of their world with initiative. Physical play has many benefits and covers many different types of play, such as through objective play we can observe children using their gross motor skills through jumping or building blocks. Digital play is a large part of what the world is introducing to children since technology is advancing, there is quicker and easier access to many things that help children to learn. In preschool children, it was shown that they use their imagination when playing on digital devices but also prefer to play beyond the screen.

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