

STAKEHOLDERS' ATTITUDES ON EARLY CHILDHOOD PLAY BASED APPROACH AND ITS RELEVANCE TO LEARNING IN PRE-SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

Quadri Mojeed Akorede, Suppiah Nachiappan, Muhammed Yusuf

Faculty of Education and human development Sultan Idris University of Education, Perak Malaysia.

ABSTRACT

Studies have shown that attending a well-organized pre-school program will not only increases children's readiness for kindergarten, but also aid positive long-term improvements in participants' school performance and social outcomes. This study investigates stakeholders' attitude towards the application of play- based approach learning among pre-school system in Nigeria. The study uses an analytic approach through the relevant literatures reviewed on the subject matter to arrive at a reasonable conclusion. Findings have shown that some stakeholders favoured play based approach while some prefer teachers' instruction strategy; very few prefer a mixed method approach, though parents and teachers have different attitude towards the best method to be used between the pre-school system. It is therefore suggested that children should be left alone to engage in meaningful play with little or no adult intervention and the best method of learning in the system should be focusing on play based approach with little academic involvement.

KEYWORDS: stakeholders, pre-school, play based approach.

INTRODUCTION

Childhood education or pre-school is a form of education acquired prior to primary education globally, it is therefore known as the foundation for all other stages of centre for learning (Nakpodia 2011). There is no doubt this level is having some setbacks despite its usefulness, some of these setbacks according to the literature reviewed are, among others; lack of trained personnel, unbefitting environment, lack of proper pedagogy and uniformed curriculum and finally the attitude difference in the use of play based approach that exist between the stakeholder (i.e. Parents and teachers) even though the use of play based approach is enshrined in the national policy of education in Nigeria (N.P.E, 2004). This paper addressed this attitude difference among the stakeholder on a play based approach in the pre - school system and provide possible ways of making teaching and learning effective in pre-schools in Uvwie local government area of the Delta-State, Nigeria.

The government of Nigeria has been yet to fully support the smooth running of pre-schools in the country despite the many advantages identified by the system. This fact is shown in the findings of a feasibility study done by both the Federal government of Nigeria, Nigerian Educational Research & Development Council-NERDC and UNICEF (United Nations Children's Education Fund) in 2003 to ascertain and assess the early childhood education facilities in Nigeria. The findings shown that a greater percentage of the facilities are privately owned 42% (of the sample population), 34% by the government, while the remaining 21% credited to local communities. Others who also joined in the provision of this service are different NGO's (i.e. Non-governmental Organization), as well as Religious groups'.

The autonomy enjoying by private owners of pre-school in Nigeria make them operate the centre to suit the demand of their customers (i.e parents and guardians) who atimes demand that their child needs to be taught like an adult and hence support the minimal use of play based approach in the system since to them is of no benefits, Barnard (2001) emphasized that if the pre-schools is managed properly couple with a good pedagogy that will help children positively in both their homes and school environment . Teachers on the other hands belief that children need to be faced with rigorous academic challenges, but play based approach is also meaningful and helpful to children especially at this early stage of their lives.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

The pre-school owners that are majorly private individuals are still battling with the challenge to identify the best approach to use in the system, the curriculum problem and the type of skills that children at this level required to have (Zigler & Bishop-Josepf, 2006). This particular problem is also prevalent among the pre-schoolers in Nigeria as it was also reported by Nourrot, (2004) on the same challenge in America society.

However, many of these pre-school's owners are using unskilled personnel as teachers for cheap labour, they are even ready to agree with the parents yarning on what they should be teaching their wards and mostly the environment is not conducive enough to provide a venue for the play based approach as enshrined in the National policy on education in Nigeria. For example, in a study conducted by Ezrim (2004), in the South Eastern part of Nigeria among teachers in pre-school settings reported that, out of the 1,429 teachers in nursery schools otherwise known as pre-schools participated in the study, 20% of the observed centres have teachers with Nigeria Certificates of Education (NCE), which is the minimum qualification for teaching in Nigeria, a much lower level university degrees. According to him, the majority of teachers found were high school graduates who were waiting to complete the requirement for university education.

It is with this background that this paper is written to address one major problem out of the ones identified; i.e. studying the stakeholder attitude towards the use of play based approach among pre-school and to see how relevant is the play based approach in teaching and learning situation among pre-school. Researchers differed on the best approach to be used in pre-schools, some agreed with play based method while some favoured the teachers directive approach (i.e didactic approach) though Copple & Bredekamp, (2009), emphasized that adopting the two approaches complementing each other in educational service delivery will be more interesting and result oriented if it is properly used based on the need of children involved. Stipek (2004) also ascertain that to attain the quality preschool education, it requires tracking both hands-on, play based learning approach and direct instruction of academic skills/knowledge concurrently. But despite all these submission stakeholder still have the divergent attitude towards play based approach as a method of learning process in pre-school settings in Nigeria.

It is therefore to be noted that studies have shown that the attitude teachers and parents are having over integrating play as part of the pre - school curriculum differs. That means the differences exist and very glaring and henceforth required further research (Zhang et al., 2008; Ho, 2008).

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The result of the study will be useful especially to the stakeholder as well as pre-school's owner to realize the benefits and advantageous use of play based approach in pre-school settings in Nigeria and for them to know other necessary things needed to be provided that will make pre-school centres more meaningful.

The government also is expected to see the need why the recommendation made in policy to be followed strictly by creating to supervise, monitor and oversee the establishment and implementing pre-schools in Uvwie local government area of Delta-State.

The recommendation here will also go a long way to assist other countries to take a lead from Nigeria and use the findings to help their situation as well.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY.

The main objective of this study is to enumerate as follows;

- i. To highlight the need to play based approach in pre-school settings in Nigeria since it is identified as one of the basic approaches for learning according to the National Policy of education in Nigeria.
- ii. The study has also bridged the gap that exists between the stakeholder attitude towards play based approach in pre-school settings in Nigeria.
- iii. The study also examines some benefits of adopting play based approach among children in pre-school settings.

LITERATURE REVIEW.

The State Of Childhood Education In Nigeria

The origin or emergence of childhood education or pre-school settings in Nigeria can be traced back to the British colonial masters era who introduced such centres for their convenience to have a place for their kids while at work, but later imitated by the Nigerians that are their employees, though it was only those who are rich that can send their children to such school as at then (Oyewunmi et al., 2010).

However, the effort to establish more pre-schools spur up in Nigeria but majorly owned by private owners who are charging their customers very high fees to sustain their schools, this attitude prevent the poor families from sending

their wards to such schools until the introduction of Universal Primary Education (UPE) by the government allowing poorer families to send their children to school because education was made free for all. It is pertinent to mention here that presently in Nigeria most private owners who are running the pre-school settings with the distinct aim of making money and aiming at academic activities that are above the abilities and capabilities of the children involved without necessarily considering the play based approach recommended in the policy.

The tone of what a pre-school will follow or uphold is majorly dictated by parents involved and these parents are taken decision based on exposure and level of education attained. This observation is related to what Fogle & Mendez (2006), revealed that parents with high level of education preferred enrolling their children in a play-based; child centred pre-school settings compare to, parents with lower education attainment who prefers enrolling their children in a didactic pre-school settings. This is because parents with high level of education above bachelor degree level understand and appreciate the positive impact of play in a child's life and sees play based approach as the most suitable method of teaching in pre-schools, to the less educated parents play or play based approach is seen as a waste of time and they belief that children only needs to play when catching funns not learning through play that is why their choice of school differs from other parents whose educational level is high.

Educators should be knowledgeable on child education and how best or what strategies to be used for children at a given time. They should also be aware that there are individual differences, each child should be attended to separate from others that is why the National policy of education in Nigeria stressed on the standard ratio to be considered in a particular class between teachers and pupils. In the work of Ojuederie (2007), he argued that as it is reasonable for an intelligent child assimilate easily within a short period so also is suicide to expose a less intelligent child to such challenges without putting him/her in confusion.

However, because of irregularities in the part of government, many parents are pushing to have their wards, complete their education quickly and the move start from the pre-school where they will be demanding much from the schools as well as teachers saddled with such responsibility.

Consequently, most schools available presently catering for early skills needs of children in Uvwie local government area of Delta state in Nigeria are observed to be overpopulated, lack adequate facilities for effective learning, very small or no playground to play. This same attitude is what is referred to as the third teacher in the Reggio Emilia schools (Gandini, 2002). According to him the school environment should be seen as educative as possible because through it children learn, that is why it refers to as the third teacher. It is on this premise that made Inan (2009), asserts that the provision of a good and a rich physical environment couple with a suitable curriculum will aid children to have access to play, this will help them initiate and control their activities, interact and communicate with their peers easily, and it will also help them to develop in their motor skills.

Children are subjected to academic rigour between 8am in the morning till 4.30pm when the parents will be closing from their offices in order to pick them on their way back home, non-adequate or no supervisory role expected by the government is being carried out. The situation is not just starting but has been like for so long. For example, in a report made available in a National Forum for Policy Development Workshop on Education Reforms (2007), asserts that: government intervention in terms of funding and supervision is minimal, as at that time too, children in the age range of 2-5 that's supposed to be in pre-school should be 16million from the total population as against 1million that was recorded, that represent 6.25%.

Another problem in the educational setting up in Nigeria is problem of inconsistency, Aluede (2006), argued that the trend of different changes occurred in educational policies in Nigeria has actually brought confusion to the system and he therefore calls for full government intervention which has not been attends to till now, especially when there is political instability, insecurity and the recent removal of the incumbent Minister of education in Nigeria, Professor Rukayyat Ahmad Rufai. Presently who has been trying to reposition the education sector to a greater height.

Benefits Of Play In Pre-School

There is no doubt that children at tender age required much attention, this is because there is no doubt that the pre-school settings is the foundation of all other stages of learning of a child through adult, effort should therefore be made to strengthen the system and attend to all the five domains of children as suggested by Inan (2009) when explaining the findings of Bowe (2000). Inan postulated that these domains required much attention in order to boost

the required development a child at this stage are; the adaptive, cognitive, communication, physical, and social/emotions domain. In the findings Bowe stressed that:

“By looking at the whole child, the pre-school special educator can help a child develop strengths-not just improve on areas of weakness”.

In conclusion, Ojuederie (2007) explained the situation here in Nigeria where an underage child is admitted into pre-school and eventually find themselves in primary schools by 5yrs as against the 6yrs age stipulated in Nigeria. Other countries, according to him have different age as entrance age for primary schools, for example; England prescribed 7yrs for proper learning (but uses the years before this in playing, painting and modeling), and in USA years differ depending on different states, but the average age is also 7years. In other word, pre-school settings remained the best environment to be prior to primary education because of what it offer to children as a preparation for primary education.

On a final note Study by Barnett (2006), revealed that some of the important to play can be summarized as follows:

- i. It is a great opportunity for children to get to know and interact with the world around them when playing.
- ii. Children learn to play adult roles that prepare them for a greater future during play time either alone or with guidance of an adult or caregivers in a conducive environment.
- iii. Children develop and master some skills that built in them confidence that will be needed for future challenges ahead of them.
- iv. Free play allows children to learn how to work in a team (i.e. Collaborative skill), to share, to negotiate within their peers and friends. Not only that, it also helps them to know how to resolve conflicts, and to learn self-supportive skills.
- v. Through free play, it is easy for children to do things in their own way, explore their own areas of interest, practice decision-making skills, and engage fully in what will enhance them and bring joy to them, also among their peers.

Threat to play in Childhood Education

Play is known to be popular among children and adult, though still posed with some threats either in secret or openly. Some of the threats facing this concept based on some reviewed literatures are; lack of space, time, lack of professional pre-school instructors, lack of materials needed and adequate support from stakeholder i.e. parents and teachers.

Some of these threats can be captured as follows:

- i. Parents are more concern about safety these days, hence prevents children from engaging in free outdoor play as a result of parental care. (Clements, R., Binkley, B. 2004).
- ii. Concentration in academic pursuance has prevented the involvement in play activities in pre-settings system. (Zigler, E.F. 2004). Some of these pressures came from parents, especially those whose education is a bit lower.
- iii. The emergence of technology and media devices as well as urban land use design have taken the natural environments and material needs for play activities for children. Hence children are no longer eager to welcome playing physically, but prefer spending more time for example, with their computer games and the rest.

DISCUSSION

A play based approach as good as it has some threat confronting it as it is explained in the literature reviewed. The attitude of parents and teachers who are major stakeholders in the pre - school system differ in the relevance of a play based approach in teaching and learning in such settings. The study carried on by Kagan (1990), highlights three basic obstacles to the usage of its application despite its usefulness and relevant in early childhood settings. The hindrances are categorized as follows;

- i. Attitudinal hindrance, this implies the attitude teachers attached to play itself, which may either, hinder their implementation. Even parents also fall within this category because they sometimes dictate what teachers are to teach their wards brought into their school for learning.
- ii. Functional hindrance is seen also to be close to the attitudinal challenge as stated above, though some pre-school teachers may be trained for them to appreciate a play as integral part of learning, but fail to

- make it functional because of their personal beliefs about it, this also depends on the environment they find themselves or following strictly what a school owner plan for his/her school.
- iii. Structural hindrance, this entails the limitation enforced through curricular demand, space, time and materials to be used. Some pre-school settings if seen in our contemporary Nigeria manifest this flaw that is why the achievement expected in these settings is retarded. Many pre-school approved are not having enable an environment for play, even those who have the environment, restrict the time and fail to allow children to play on their own without adult intervention.

Summarily, the attitudes, beliefs, practices and perception of teachers as one of the stakeholders in pre-school settings are very important in determining the need for play method in their teaching/learning situation, and the conviction in understanding that play is suitable to enhance learning and children's development (Hadley, 2002; McLane, 2003).

A survey done in the United Kingdom on parent's perception to play shows that children nowadays play less compare to how their parents had the opportunity of playing when they were still young (Jonathon O'Brein and Jenny Smith, 2002). Though, this same set of parents keeps restricting their children to involve especially in outdoor play because of reasons like fear, safety and their perceptions. The pre-school educators are also adding to this problem because of the demand of most parents that called for the total academic pursuit in their children's schools or unprofessionalism on the part of the educators.

Early childhood scholars established that young children learn through play activities as against the belief of some stakeholder like parents or teachers (Bredekamp, 2010; Singer et al., 2006; Early et al., 2010). This attitude has really brought step back to the aim and objectives for establishing pre-school, which is basically preparing children for primary education rather serious academic rigour subjecting them to.

Bergen (2009), therefore, suggested that an effort should be made to bridge the gap between the belief between teacher's belief and their service delivery as related to play because of what children may likely be missing if play activities is found wanting in learning. It is believed that pre-school providers should be firm in with their standard and approach without necessarily allowing parents to dictate to them as it is observed in Uvwie local government area of Delta state, Nigeria.

Furthermore, going by the discussion above, the differences in terms of attitude among parents and teachers in pre-schools and its approach of learning based on some studied can be systematically arranged as follows;

Parents concentrate more on academic skills through cognitive development, guided play with restrictions and also learning activities (Ho, 2008; Nell et al., 2011, Shlay, 2005). Whereas the teachers' beliefs according to many research done are centred on the development of inquisitiveness (Fogle & Mendez, 2006; Zhang et al., 2008). Their attitude on how children are to be handled differ, this attitude call for a serious attention which this paper is trying to address for the betterment of the settings. The other perception parents have on children learning through play is basically achievable only through structured activities where they can be monitored and follow them up the activities step by step while educators concern achieving what children needs to learn through play when they are exposed to unstructured play (Fisher et al., 2008).

Research done by Nell et. al., (2011), shown that there are some parents who doesn't even believe that play has any vital role to play in children's learning activities. Though some of them according to Fisher et al., (2008), established that their belief that play can be useful and beneficial during teaching/learning exercises among children and also help them to socialize positively. Some parents have this attitude is also prevalent in Uvwie local government areas of Delta state, Nigeria.

There is no doubt that teachers succumb to the pressure and demand made by parents base on their beliefs and perception over the connection between play and learning (Cannon & Ginsburg, 2008; Kim & Fram, 2009; Shlay et al., 2005). This demand is difficult to reject it, especially since many of the pre-school owners re out to make money and conclude accepting their customers demand to get more wards more money.

RECOMMENDATION

The following are the possible recommendation proposing to solve some of the issues raised earlier. We are optimistic that if these recommendations are followed strictly there will be the possibility of getting more benefits

through play based approach as suggested by many studies. Some of these are based on some work made by the following individuals;

- i. Many researchers like Barnett et al., (2008), Nicolopoulou (2010), call for integration of play into Childhood Curriculum having established how play enhances the cognitive, social and emotional, physical learning as well as language and literacy development mostly for children at their tender age. It is therefore important for Nigeria government through the ministry of education to enforce this since it is already enshrined in the National policy of education in Nigeria.
- ii. Researchers found teachers who adopt scaffolding method more meaningful in their teaching and enhance the children to learn practical by having more experiences compare to others who does not have such opportunity. Children in this setting developments in domain of learning, i.e. enhancing cognitive as well as learning of self-regulation skills and more (Barnett et al., 2008). Teachers are to therefore be ready to allow children to create knowledge by themselves, but they are to take the sole responsibility of guiding them to achieve this.
- iii. The connection between play and child's learning is a long established relationship in the literatures. Children benefits more when they're given the opportunity to play on their own than to be regulating their activities (Neitzel et al., 2008). The Nigeria government should therefore consider availability of a befitting environment in a pre-school as a yardstick for its approval.
- iv. Finally, government should also be having a periodic seminars, symposia with various stakeholders at intervals in order to educate them with the educational needs of children in pre-school.

CONCLUSION

There is no doubt that adopting play based approach for teaching and learning among pre-school settings in Uvwie local government area of Delta-state in Nigeria will meet up with the standard of the International rating and the children attending such schools will also enjoy the benefits that all other children enjoying in places where the required standard for setting a pre-school are already met. It is therefore important for government as well as pre-school owners to organize a periodic seminars and symposia to educate various stakeholders to have a positive attitude towards the use of play based approach in pre-school settings.

REFERENCES:

- Aluede, R.O. A. (2006). Universal basic education in Nigeria: Matters arising. *Journal of Human Ecology*, 20 (2).
- Bowe, F.G. (2000). *Birth to five early childhood special education*. New York: Delmar Publishers.
- Barnard, W. M. (2001). *Early intervention, parent Involvement in early schooling and long-term school success*. Doctoral Dissertation, Unpublished, Madison: University of Wisconsin, Madison.
- Barnett, W. S. (2006). Research on benefits of preschool education: Securing high returns from preschool for all children. *New York: National Institute for Early Education Research*.
- Barnett, S. W., Jung, K., Yarosz, D. J., Thomas, J., Hornbeck, M. A., Stechuk, R., & Burns, S. (2008). Educational effects of the tools of the mind curriculum: A randomized trial. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 23, 299-313.
- Bergen, D. (2009). Play as the learning medium for future scientists, mathematicians and engineers. *American Journal of Play*, 1(4), 413-428.
- Blinkert, B. (2004). *Quality of the city for children: Chaos and order, children, youth and environments*. 14 (2), 99-112
- Bredenkamp, S. (2010). *Learning and cognitive development*. In V. Washington & J. D. Andrews (Eds.), *Children of 2020: Creating a better tomorrow* (pp. 48-53). Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children.
- Cannon, J., & Ginsburg, H. P. (2008). Doing the math: Maternal beliefs about early mathematics versus language learning. *Early Education and Development*, 19(2), 238-260
- Clements, R. (2004). An investigation of the status of outdoor play. *Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood*, 5 (1), 68-80.
- Copple, C., & Bredenkamp, S. (2009). *Developmentally appropriate practice in early childhood programs serving children from birth through age 8* (3rd Ed.). Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children.
- Early, D. M., Iruka, I. J., Ritchie, S., Barbarin, O. A., Winn, D. C., Crawford, G.M., & Pianta, R.C. (2010). How do pre-kindergarteners spend their time? Gender, ethnicity, and income as predictors of experiences in pre-kindergarten classrooms. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 25(2), 177-193
- Ezirim, M. (2004). *A survey of nursery schools caregivers in the South Eastern States of Nigeria*. UNICEF Zone A office.
- Fantuzzo, J., McWayne, C., Bulotskyl-Shearer, R., Frye, D., McDermott, P., & Perlman, S. (2007). Investigations of dimensions of social-emotional classroom behavior and school readiness for low-income urban preschool children. *School Psychology Review*, 36(1), 44-62.
- Federal Government of Nigeria (2004). *National policy on education*. Lagos: Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council.

- Fisher, K., Hirsch-Pasek, K., Golinkoff, R. M., & Gryfe, R. G. (2008). Conceptual split? parents' and experts' perceptions of play in the 21st century. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*, 29, 305-316.
- Fogle, L. M., & Mendez, J. L. (2006). Assessing the play beliefs of African American mothers with preschool children. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 21 (4), 507-518.
- Gandini, L. (2002). *The story and foundations of the Reggio Emilia approach*. In V.R. Fu, A.J. Stremmel & L.T. Hills (Eds.), *Teaching and Learning: Collaborative Exploration of the Reggio Emilia Approach*. New Jersey: Merrill, pp. 13-21.
- Hadley, E. (2002). *Playful disruptions*. *Early Years*, 22, 9-17
- Ho, C. W. D. (2008). Exploring the definitions of quality early childhood programs in a market-driven context: Case studies of two Hong Kong preschools. *International Journal of Early Years Education*, 16 (3), 223-236.
- Ibiam, J. & Ugwu, G. C. (2009). Government quality control measures in pre-primary education: problems of implementation and the way forward. *Review of Education: Institute of Education Journal*. University of Nigeria, Vol. 20, No 1.
- Inan, H.Z. (2009). The third dimension in preschools: Preschool environments and classroom design. *European Journal of Educational Studies* 1 (1): 55-66.
- Jonathon O'Brein & Jenny Smith (2002). Childhood transformed? risk perception and the decline of free play. *The British Journal of Occupational Therapy* (65): 283-312
- Kagan, S. L. (1990). *Children's play: The journey from theory to practice*. In E. S. Klugman, & S. Smilansky (Eds.), *Children's play and learning: Perspectives and policy implications* (pp. 173-187). New York: Teachers College Press.
- Kim, J., & Fram, M. S. (2009). Profiles of choice: Parents' patterns of priority in child care decision-making. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 24, 77-91.
- McLane, J. B. (2003). Does not, does too: Thinking about play in the early childhood classroom. *Erikson Institute Occasional Paper Number 4*. Retrieved from <http://www.erikson.edu/files/nonimages/mclaneoccasionalpaper>.
- Nakpodia, E. D. (2011). Early childhood education: Its policy formulation and implementation in Nigerian educational system. *African Journal of Political Science and International Relations*, Vol. 5(3), pp. 159-163.
- National Forum for Policy Development (2007). National education reform: An alternative. *A Communiqué of the National Forum for Policy Development Workshop on National Education Reforms, Issued at the Auditorium, National Universities Commission, Abuja*.
- Neitzel, C., Alexander, M., & Johnson, K. E. (2008). Children's early interest-based activities in home and subsequent information contributions and pursuits in kindergarten. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 100(4), 782-797.
- Nell, M. L., Drew, W. F., Rankin, B., Merrill, B., Klugman, E., & Simmons, G. (2011). Building play leadership and advocacy. *Young Children*, 66(1), 64-67.
- Nicolopoulou, A. M. (2010). The alarming disappearance of play from early childhood education. *Human Development*, 53, 1-4.
- Nourot, P. M. (2004). *Historical perspectives on early childhood education*. In J. L. Roopnarine & J. E. Johnson (Eds.), *Approaches to early childhood education* (pp. 3-31). Englewood, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- O'Brien, J., & Smith, J. (2002). Childhood transformed? Risk perceptions and the decline of free play. *British Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 65, 3, 123-128.
- Ojuederie, B.M. (2007). *Tips on knowledge acquisition and confidence building*. Ibadan: Spectrum Books Limited.
- Oyewumi, A., Alhassan, A. B., & Ofoha, D. (2010). *Management of early childhood education*. National Open University (NOUN). Available at: http://www.nou.edu.ng/noun/NOUN_OCL/pdf/EDUs/ECE%20412.pdf.
- Shlay, A. B., Tran, H., Weinraub, M., & Harmon, M. (2005). Teasing apart the child care conundrum: A factorial survey analysis of perceptions of child care quality, fair market price and willingness to pay by low-income, African American parents. *Early Childhood Research Quarterly*, 20(4), 393-416.
- Singer, D., Golinkoff, R., & Hirsch-Pasek, K. (2006). Why play, learning: A challenge for parents and educators. In *Play learning: How play motivates and enhances children's cognitive and social-emotional growth* (pp. 2-14). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Stipek, D. (2004). Head start: Can't we have our cake and eat it too? *Education Week*, 23 (34), 43, 52.
- Zhang, X., Sun, L., & Gai, X. (2008). Perceptions of teachers' and parents' regarding school readiness. *Frontiers of Education, China*, 3 (3), 460-471.
- Zigler, E. F. & Bishop-Josef, S. F. (2006). *The cognitive child vs. the whole child: Lessons from 40 years of head start*. In D.G. Singer, M. R. Golinkoff, & K. Hirsh-Pasek (Eds.), *Play = learning: How play motivates and enhances children's cognitive and social-emotional growth* (15-35). New York: Oxford University Press.