

LESSON 30

INVOLVEMENT OF PARENTS AND COMMUNITY IN A PLAY CENTRE

SUMMARY

Guiding the development of children should be a co-operative endeavour, a two-way process between parents and teachers; play centre and home. Neither can work effectively without the understanding, support and assistance of the other. The parent and the teacher need to see the child as a whole in order to provide appropriate guidance. The quality of teacher-parent relationship during this period will have an influence upon the child throughout the formative years.

Play centre – Home relations

Parents are the first socializing agents for the child and family has a significant role in the personality development of children. It sets the stage for the development of many important characteristics, both inside and outside the play centre. The play centre and home need to work efficiently and co-operatively with proper understanding of each other.

The play centre-home relations help to create:

- a better understanding between parents and teachers assuming what children are like
- a better understanding with regard to what a play centre is
- opportunities for parents to meet other parents and learn from their experiences,
- understanding of emerging techniques in child rearing and child training.

If these goals are achieved, the children will have a nourishing, rich and full life in the play centre and at home.

How to Make Play Centre-Home Relations Effective

In order to make the play centre-home relations effective, a teacher should:

- understand the needs, feelings and expectations of each parent
- focus her attention on what the parents want to know
- cater to the needs of the parents regarding their children and achieve good co-operation from them
- respect the parents for what they are
- be comfortable, free and friendly with the parents
- be willing to learn from parents
- convey the fact that the teacher is interested in the welfare of the child and seek co-operation of the parents to do his/her duty more efficiently
- avoid being defensive and thus, putting the parents at ease
- show willingness to accept parents' suggestions
- be a good listener and encourage the parents to communicate
- avoid discussing about the child with the parents in child's presence
- avoid drawing hasty conclusions and remarks
- be positive and less critical of children
- be impartial and not compare the child with other children
- avoid bossing and dominating the children
- aim towards creating positive relationship with parents

Parental Involvement

Programmes for parents constitute an important aspect of the play centre. However efficient they may be, play centres cannot stimulate optimum development of children unless they work in close collaboration with parents.

Parental involvement is a process of actualising the participation of parents, of helping parents discover their strengths, potentialities and talents and of using them beneficially.

Parental involvement enables:

- reduction of financial burden on play centre budgets by supplementing paid personnel
- teachers to conduct more meaningful and individualized play activities through parental help
- parents to learn and become better equipped to accomplish their role effectively

Methods of Parental Involvement

- **Informal talk** - The teacher meets the parents when they come to leave the children in play centre or fetch them back. Through informal talks with parents, mutual relationship is established.
- **Parents' meeting** - Regular parents' meetings become a means of learning for parents both informally and formally to know the play centres' goals, activities and evaluation.
- **Social functions** - Accompanying for picnic or field trip with the children provides an opportunity for parents to get to know teachers and perhaps form friendship, network and support.
- **Home visits** - The teacher makes an appointment with the parents and informs them that she would visit them at home. The teacher observes the home set up and tries to help the child suitably.
- **Parent education** - Parents may meet together and gain knowledge and skills through educational classes conducted once a month or once in two months at the play centre.
- **Individual discussion** - Some parents may not like to talk about the problems of their children in a meeting, but may freely express their difficulties individually to the teacher alone.

Sensitivity to the uniqueness of individual parents and their needs are essential to promote parental contributions. When parents are involved in making decisions, they feel responsible and will have greater commitment to the play centre.

Community Involvement

The community includes all the members in the families in the immediate neighbourhood, community workers and personnel working in various institutions. The caregiver should ask herself a few questions and discuss them with the families in the community.

Are the children in the community healthy and well-nourished? What are the problems faced by them?

What are the food habits of the families?

What are their preferences? Do the mothers breast-feed their children? Do they discard the colostrum? When do they introduce semi-solid foods to the child? Do they eat green leafy vegetables and yellow fruits and give these to their children?

Do the parents permit them to play?

What kind of play facilities do the children have?

Do they get their children immunized? If not, why?

How do the families use preschool facilities?

Is there a primary school in the community?

How about the environmental sanitation in the community?

What is the source of drinking water in the community? Is it safe? Does it lead to diarrhoea and other diseases?

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Are there any common diseases or epidemic in the area? What measures are taken to control them?

Is there any developmental programme going on in the community?

Who is the community leader and which are the associations functioning in a play centre?

Other Members of the Community

Members of the community, mothers, older girls and boys may be involved in various aspects of running the play centre as listed below:



Other Community members can help by -

- Maintaining the play centre clean and safe.
- Developing a garden at the play centre.
- Ensuring safe drinking water supply for the play centre.
- Cooking and serving nutritious food.
- Gathering mothers and others for meetings and education classes.
- Involvement in the play centre through teaching songs, games, stories and dramatization etc.
- Organizing festivals at the play centre.
- Eliciting community's help in equipping the play centre adequately (e.g., fencing the play area).
- Assisting the teacher in any of her activities.
- Help in maintaining play equipment of the centre.

Community Contributions



Community contribution

- Supply of food materials, like grains and pulses. These may be procured at the time of harvesting.
- Local fruits and vegetables, especially green leafy and yellow vegetables.
- Equipment for play centre like old tyres, wooden beams etc.
- Waste material from household or from artisans
- Cash donations

Role of Mahila Mandals in Running a Play Centre



They can play vital role by -

- Enthusing parents to support play centre; motivating them to enrol their children; collecting aids and play materials for the play centre.
- Holding meetings regularly.
- Creating awareness in their community regarding the importance of a play centre for young children.
- Promoting community participation for the successful running of a play centre.

Support Services

The term support services refer to the nature and extent of the social networks to which a person has access. Anyone who has extensive social support has several people to depend on for encouragement, advice and help. The organisations that help in establishing a play centre are:

- **Central Social Welfare Board, New Delhi.**
- **Indian Council for Child Welfare, New Delhi.**
- **Directorates of Social Welfare in different states.**

These organizations sponsor play centres/ crèches/ preschools for the needy groups of children.

Evaluate Yourself

1. Suggest ways to make play centre and home relations effective.
2. Which organizations can help in establishing a play centre?
3. How can a community contribute to a play centre?