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The games 3-6 aged children's wish to play in the school garden

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Abstract

School gardens are places where children meet their needs such as breathe fresh air, relaxation, learning, movement and play. A well-planned garden should be able to meet children's needs. Whenever, school gardens are designed, children's views and recommendations should be given. Hence, the aim of the study was to determine what 3-6 aged children want to play in school garden. In the scope of research, games wanted by children to play in the school gardens were analyzed under three headings as activity types, structure and number of players. 139 girls, 145 boys, totally 284 children were taken place in research's sample. 3 aged children was 63, 4 aged was 77, 5 aged was 82 and 6 aged was 62. In the scope of research, it was asked from 3-6 aged children to imagine a game they wanted to play in school garden and to draw and describe this game. Data were analyzed by using percent (%), frequency (f) and chi-square analysis. Games were analyzed according to their structure; it was observed that gender wasn't cause significant difference. Children aged 3-5 drew imaginary games, while aged 6 drew co-operative games. When games were analyzed according to the type of activity, it was detected that girls drew games played with fixed game equipments such as swing, slide, while boys drew movement games without tools such as running, chase. With increasing age, it was seen that children wanted to movement games with tools like cycling, roller skating, games played with play materials like balls, ropes, games played with songs and tongue twisters and games played with fixed environment equipments such as climbing, swimming. With decreasing age children wanted to play with natural materials like sand, water, stable game like swing, slide and mimic and role-playing games. When games were analyzed according to number of the player, it was determined that gender wasn't lead to any differences. With decreasing age it was seen that children wanted to play individual games, while with increasing age children wanted to games played as a group.

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Keywords: school garden; type of game; age, gender

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1. Introduction

Game is one of the important concepts relating to childhood period (Anderson-McNamee & Bailey 2010; Martorell, Papalia & Feldman, 2013). Children show their development in every kind of experience by playing games (MEB, 2013). Children can play everywhere, every time, under every condition and with everything (Tuğrul, 2006). However; a healthy development depends on the time spared for games and the opportunities offered (IPA, 2014) because games play numerous different roles in the development of the children through providing experiences (Dockett & Fleer, 1999). Therefore; it is necessary to offer various game opportunities according to the children's ages, developmental needs and interests (Gronlund, 2010). It is essential to use games which are indispensable activities of childhood period (Cross, 2010; Greenman, 2003).

Games are a source of fun and entertainment for the children (Heidemann & Hewitt, 2010). Games are voluntarily done activities and have rules, mechanisms and orders (And, 2003). According to the The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989); to play games is a basic child right (UNICEF, 2004). Children should plan, realize and conclude the games as they wish (Brooker & Woodhead, 2013). In this sense; it is vital to provide an environment which is rich in stimuli so that children can play games that support their learning experiences (Ebbeck & Wanigayanake, 2010). Play grounds should be safe places that do not restrict the children, offer different game opportunities and are children-centered with movement-game materials (Henniger, 1994; Naylor, 1985). According to Tuğrul and Metin (2006), play grounds should be age appropriate, attract their interests and meet their needs and be organized in a way all of the children can use.

Of play grounds; school gardens are important places for children. School gardens are places that answer not only fresh-air needs of the children but also their learning needs and game needs (Algan, 2008; Başar, 2003; Strickland, 2001; Terzioğlu, 2005). A well-designed school garden should answer children's individual needs and expectations, too (Frost, Brown, Sutterby & Thornton, 2004; Johnson, Christie & Yawkey, 1999). The studies conducted indicate that enriched play grounds in school gardens have multiple effects upon children's development (Barbour, 1999; Frost, 1992; Frost & Wortham 1988; Guddemi & Eriksen 1992; Hennger, 1994; Rivkin, 1995). According to Maxwell, Mitchell and Evans (2008); game behaviors of the children in school gardens differ depending on the properties of play grounds. Also, Shim, Herwig and Shelley (2001) reported that children demonstrate more complex behaviors in peer relations during outdoor plays than indoor plays. Specialists of early childhood period, teachers and parents agree that garden games entertain children much (Chakravarthi, 2009; Clements, 2004; Davies, 1996). It is very important that children should participate in the design of school gardens that provide significant learning experiences for children (Guddemi & Eriksen, 1992). Yet; while designing school gardens, it is crucial to know what kind of games children play and what kind of games they would like to play in school gardens. In line with the "participation rights" of The Convention on the Rights of the Child; cooperation with children should be made and their opinions and advices should be taken into consideration while designing play grounds (CRC, 2013). In this respect; the main objective of the study was to explore the games that the children aged 3-6 years who attended to preschool education facilities wanted to play in the school gardens by considering their game and participation rights.

2. Method

2.1. Research design and sample

The main objective of the study was to explore what games the children aged 3-6 years wanted to play in the school gardens. Therefore; the study was designed in relational screening model. For the analyses of the data; frequency (f), percentages (%), arithmetic means (\bar{x}) and Chi-square analyses were used.

First of all, the necessary documents related to this study were prepared and given to the Ministry of Education in order to obtain permission in writing to collect data in schools. The study recruited the children aged 3-6 years who attended to the schools of Ministry of Education located in Erzincan Province. In the sample; there were 284 children who were selected with random sampling method (139 girls and 145 boys). 63 of these children belonged to the group of age 3, 77 to the group of age 4, 82 to the group of age 5 and 62 to the group of age 6.

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