Promoting Moral Development Through Play During Early Childhood
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Foreword

Building a better Mauritius essentially depends on how today’s children are brought up and nurtured to become responsible citizens of tomorrow. We, the adults of today, have the delicate responsibility and duty to ensure that each and every action of ours has a positive bearing on future generations. Nurturing a child is like looking after a sapling before it becomes a full-fledged grown tree. Our children need love and affection: they should have it right from the cradle at home. They need to be socialised: the pre-primary schools take over this relay as this period in a child’s life is very critical and will have a direct impact both on his adolescence and adult life.

At this prime age, children learn, imitate and are easily influenced by their immediate environment. At this stage, as pre-school educators whom the child will remember even when he becomes an adult, you will have a crucial role in forming his character traits. The effectiveness of such an endeavour will depend solely on you, as educator, carer, facilitator and as role model in the transmission of right knowledge, skills and values. The build-up of a nation starts there.

Play is the most effective means to socialise the child on moral value concepts. Your role includes proposing a variety of opportunities and experiences through developmentally appropriate activities, based on the needs and interests of the child.

At the ICAC, children remain at the centre of our concern. Investing in their character formation is an imperative need since they will be the ones who will work towards a clean, fair and just society of tomorrow. In this perspective, parents, who are the prime carers of their kids and pre-primary educators who in some way play the role of surrogate mothers, have a huge responsibility thrust upon them as well.

This document aims at bringing some contribution in the comprehension of moral development. The transmission of moral development concepts is in fact very complex, especially at such early years of development. This document, along with the proposed activities, will surely contribute to a sound inculcation of pro-social values in the child. This is a prerequisite in the fight against corruption, thus paving the way for a better Mauritius.

To conclude, I would like to thank the Mauritius Institute of Education and the Mauritius College of the Air for their collaboration. I wish to express my gratitude to the Director of the Corruption Prevention and Education Division and his staff for the efforts put in this project.

A Ujoodha
Director General
Independent Commission Against Corruption
Preface

The Pre-School Trust Fund is honoured to be associated with this laudable initiative of the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC). We concur with the objectives of the Corruption Prevention and Education Division in promoting moral values during early childhood through the empowerment of pre-school educators.

Education for moral values is a major concern in our society. It’s true that with time and socio-cultural evolution, we have observed a gradual erosion of values in our country. Education today is a considerable challenge as external interference and changes are constant. In the pre-primary sector, we are preparing our children for this changing world with all the love, care and affection of our educators.

Studies have demonstrated that play is the pedagogical medium par excellence to impart education to children. Parents are becoming more conscious about the importance of play in early childhood education. Our Programme Guidelines for Early Childhood Education 3-5 Years published in 2003, gives a clear orientation on the aims of Early Childhood Education in Mauritius, promoting the whole development of the child. Moral education is an important component of this programme.

This handbook will be of great utility to our educators and the Pre-School Trust Fund will ensure its distribution in the pre-primary schools of Mauritius and Rodrigues.

The Pre-School Trust Fund wishes to reiterate its collaboration and support to the ICAC in the fight against corruption through its education and prevention activities in the pre-primary sector.

K Sahadev
Chairman
Pre-School Trust Fund
Introduction

Corruption is increasingly becoming one of the world’s most serious social problems. It is causing much harm, threat and distress to people and institutions all around the world. This is why major international organisations like the United Nations (UN) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC), are rallying a worldwide movement to fight corruption. The Republic of Mauritius, as a developing country, conscious about the seriousness of the problem of corruption, has shown its engagement in curbing corruption by signing and ratifying two international agreements, namely:

- United Nations Convention Against Corruption
- The SADC Protocol Against Corruption

Our country, conscious about its dependence upon foreign investors, tourists and its reputation on the international scene, has engaged itself in the fight against corruption through the adoption by the Legislative Assembly of the Prevention of Corruption Act (PoCA) in 2002. The Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC), a corporate body, was established according to the PoCA in 2002.

The Independent Commission Against Corruption

The ICAC is mandated to develop and lead the national strategy in the fight against corruption. Eradication of corruption is a major concern for the population as well as for the authorities. The mission statement of the ICAC stresses upon the need of a close collaboration between members of the public and the ICAC to curb the scourge of corruption.

Mission Statement of the ICAC reads as follows:

“With the Community and all stakeholders including the Government and the Press, the ICAC is committed to making corruption socially and morally unacceptable in our society through a culture of integrity, public intolerance against corruption and public confidence in the fight against corruption and effective law enforcement.”

Vision of the ICAC

“Working together in a patriotic spirit towards a corrupt free Mauritius.”

The ICAC is adequately organised to reach its mission and to promote a clean and fair environment for Mauritians. The Commission has adopted an anti-corruption strategy based on investigation, prevention and education. The two operational divisions of the Commission: Corruption Investigation Division (CID) and the Corruption Prevention and Education Division (CPED) have been set up to deal with corruption through curative and preventive measures respectively.

Investigation as a curative measure has short to medium term effectiveness, it is the repression of acts of corruption through law enforcement measures. This implies that cases of corruption have to be disclosed by the public to enable investigation and prosecution. It is an important aspect of the work of the Commission and through law enforcement, the community will be confident to disclose acts of corruption.

Preventive measures in the fight against corruption, have proved to be more effective in the medium to long term. Studies have shown that the risk of corruption resides on two factors: the motivation of people on one side and opportunities for corruption on the other. The CPED operates on both fronts.

The Systems Enhancement Branch of the CPED is assisting Public Departments to upgrade their organisational framework so as to eliminate opportunities of corruption. The Community Relations Branch (CRB) of the CPED is involved in public awareness and empowerment, through information,
education and skills transfer, to fight corruption. The aim is to encourage people to disclose acts of corruption and minimise tolerance for corruption.

Corruption is regarded as a pattern of behaviour driven by selfishness, dishonesty, injustice, unfairness and deception. An erosion of values often explains such behaviour. Fighting corruption implies a change in attitude, behaviour and mindset through relevant education. To be effective, this type of education must comprise knowledge, skills and moral values so as to ensure the “whole development” of the person since childhood.

Promoting Moral Values since Early Childhood

Working with children in an anti-corruption perspective is long term in scope. The aim of the project is to provide the child with that type of education that promotes the overall development of the person. It is often argued that with the changes in society that we have experienced during the past decades – industrialisation, access to information, technological revolution and access to media, and cultural interference – there has been an erosion of traditional values, more particularly, a shift in moral values. Corruption incubates in such an environment. In the fight against corruption, one important aspect of the preventive activities is to nurture moral values in the person. This will enable the development of the person’s integrity and thus keep him away from any form of corrupt practice. While working with children, we do not mention corruption but refer to good and bad practices and behaviour.

Moral education starts right from early childhood, consolidated during childhood and adolescence. This will reflect on the individual’s personality, behaviour and attitudes. The mission of the ICAC, through its activities in the pre-primary education sector and with this handbook, is to help you educators in your work and the education of children. This handbook will enhance your theoretical knowledge and also help you to provide the appropriate educational environment and activities to children. The finality is to enhance the development and practice of moral values right from early childhood.

Handbook on Moral Values through Play

This handbook has been developed by a team of professionals working in the field of Early Childhood Education. It consists of two parts. Part one deals with the theoretical aspects of child development while part two deals with suggested practical activities.

Part one is divided into two chapters: Chapter One examines the theoretical basis of Moral Development according to perspectives of three eminent psychologists, Jean Piaget, Lawrence Kohlberg and William Damon. After reading this chapter, you will be in a better position to understand the psychological basis of moral development. In Chapter Two, we shall examine the characteristics of play and how play is the most appropriate pedagogical means to promote moral values in children.

Part Two presents four games. Each has its own specificity that can give you an insight on the type of activities that you can utilise and develop in your class to nurture moral values in children.

This handbook together with your experience and efforts will no doubt bring about a boost in the promotion of moral values. We are convinced that you can contribute considerably for a better tomorrow.
Kids of today can make a better tomorrow!

We have been child-centered while writing this document.
“One can acquire everything in solitude – except character.”

Henri Stendahl – French novelist
(1783-1842)
PART I
THEORETICAL BASIS

Chapter 1
Moral Development

1.1 Introduction

This chapter deals with the moral development of the child. This aspect of development enables the child to move further in the process towards independence. As he grows through environmental stimulations, his motives will be to adapt to the environment. Hence, he will develop intellectually and morally. Intellectual stimulation is done formally, whereas moral development is informal and very subtle.

The moral sensibility of a person is initiated during infancy, constructed and consolidated through experiences during childhood and adolescence. This will reflect in the personality of the adult.

In this chapter, we shall examine moral development through three angles: firstly by defining morality, secondly by studying the theoretical explanations of Piaget, Kohlberg and Damon. Then we shall move on to consider the characteristics of moral education.

1.1.1 Learning Outcomes

After studying this chapter, you will be able to:

- explain the meaning of morality and its implications on the development of children;
- analyse the psychological basis of moral development according to theories of Piaget, Kohlberg and Damon;
- apply the knowledge acquired on moral development in your educational practices.
1.2 Defining Moral Development

“Morality” comes from the Latin word, *moralis*, which means, “customs, manners, or patterns of behaviour that conform to the standards of the group”. At every age, the individual is judged by how closely he conforms to the groups’ standards, and he is labelled “moral” or “immoral”, accordingly.

Moral development is related to the rules that people have for their interaction with others. It is concerned with the acceptance of morality which brings along certain forms of behaviour, attitudes and values in an individual. In the early stages, the child simply tries to avoid punishment as he cannot distinguish “right” from “wrong”. Over time children’s values are influenced by parents and educators as role models. Children’s moral development is linked to their intellectual development.

An older pre-schooler proceeds through a very self-centred stage with decisions based on self-satisfaction. In the later stages, a child develops a greater concern for being “good” and doing what is socially acceptable. It includes both the reasoning process by which people decide what is right and what is wrong, as well as behaviour in situations in which morality comes into play.

At this stage, let’s have an overview on some aspects of the theories of three eminent psychologists on moral development. They are Jean Piaget, Lawrence Kohlberg and William Damon. You are already familiar with these.

1.3 Jean Piaget’s Theory

Jean Piaget (1896–1980) is among the first psychologists whose work remains directly relevant to contemporary theories of moral development. In his studies, he focused specifically on the moral lives of children, studying the way children play games in order to learn about children’s beliefs about right and wrong.

Interest in how children think about moral issues was stimulated by Piaget. He watched children play marbles to learn how they used and thought about the game’s rules. He also asked children questions about moral issues like:

- theft;
- lies;
- punishment;
- justice.

Through his studies, Piaget concluded that children, depending on their developmental maturity, think in two distinct ways about morality: Heteronomous and Autonomous morality.

**Heteronomous Morality**

This is the first stage of moral development in Piaget’s theory. It occurs from 4 to 7 years of age. Here, justice and rules are conceived of as unchangeable properties of the world and removed from the control of people.

**Autonomous Morality**

This type of morality constitutes the second stage of moral development according to Piaget. This is displayed by older children (about 10 years of age and older). The child becomes aware that rules and laws are created by people and that, in judging an action, one should consider the actor’s intentions as well as the consequences.

You will recall the essentials of Piaget’s theory of cognitive development. His explanations complement our understanding on the process through which the child proceeds to understand the world and how he integrates rules and values and takes moral decisions.

We shall now study another important theory, that of Kohlberg.
1.4 Lawrence Kohlberg’s Theory

Lawrence Kohlberg started as a developmental psychologist and then moved on to the field of moral education. Through his studies, Kohlberg showed that people progressed in their moral reasoning (i.e., in their basis for ethical behaviour), through a series of stages. He believed that there were six identifiable stages of moral reasoning. These stages can be grouped into three levels of complexity. They are:

Level 1 - Pre-Conventional Reasoning

At this level, the child cannot understand the concept of moral values. Moral reasoning is controlled by external rewards and punishments.

**Stage 1: Punishment and Obedience**
Moral thinking is based on punishment. Children obey because adults tell them to obey.

*Whatever is rewarded is good; whatever is punished is bad.*

**Stage 2: Individualism and Purpose**
Moral thinking is based on rewards and self-interest. Children obey when they want to obey and when it is in their best interests to obey. What is right is what feels good and what is rewarding.

*I’ll do something good for you if you do something good for me.*

Level 2 - Conventional Reasoning

At this level, internalisation is intermediate. The child abides by certain standards (internal). However, these are the standards of others (external) such as parents or the laws of society.

**Stage 3: Interpersonal Norms**
Children value trust, caring and loyalty to others as the basis of moral judgment. Children often adopt their parents’ moral standards at this stage; seeking to be considered by parents as a “good boy” or a “good girl” is rewarding.

*Good is conformity to a stereotype of “good” people or to peer approval.*

**Stage 4: Social System Morality**
Moral judgments are based on understanding the social order, law, justice and duty. For example, a child might say that it is always wrong to steal because laws that have been developed are for the good of society.

*Good is defined by laws of society, by doing one’s duty. A law should be obeyed even if it is not fair.*

Level 3 - Post-Conventional Reasoning

Morality is completely internalised and is not based on others’ standards. The adolescent recognises alternative moral courses, explores the options and then decides on personal moral codes.

**Stage 5: Community Rights versus Individual Rights**
The adolescent understands that values and laws are relative and that standards may vary from one person to another. The person recognises that laws are important for society but knows that laws can be changed. He believes that some values, such as liberty, are more important than the law. Values and laws are relative and standards may vary from one person to another.
Good is understood in terms of abstract principles that the society has agreed upon. An unfair law ought to be changed.

**Stage 6: Universal Ethical Principles**

One has developed a moral standard based on universal human rights. When faced with a conflict between law and conscience, the person will follow conscience, even though the decision might involve personal risks.

Good is understood in terms of abstract principles, whether or not societies agree with them – the emphasis is on human rights.

Which stages are particularly relevant to you as an educator?

Kohlberg’s theory shows us that moral reasoning is a complex process and the child needs to be guided throughout. In the pre-school age, you will be dealing with children of the first two stages and eventually the third stage, but it is important for you to understand the whole process of moral development according to the perspective of Lawrence Kohlberg.

**1.5 William Damon’s Theory**

William Damon believes that moral education should follow the knowledge we have about the nature of children’s moral development. Based on scientific studies and observations of children’s moral development, Damon believes that six principles should serve as a foundation for the development of moral education programmes.

What are these principles? This is what we see now.

**Damon’s Six Principles**

I. Children experience moral situations through social interactions. They will come across issues such as fairness, honesty, responsibility, kindness and obedience, for example. Thus, children’s moral awareness develops within their normal social experiences. Their moral awareness may need to be guided, explained and enhanced, but need not to be imposed directly in a punitive or authoritarian manner.

Your role as educator here is crucial in providing developmentally appropriate activities in order to enrich the child’s experience.

II. Children’s moral awareness is shaped by natural emotional reactions. This begins as early as infancy. Emotional positive reactions are empathy, support, moral compassion and altruism. Examples of negative reactions include shame, guilt and fear.

Children’s love and attachment for parents provide an affective foundation for developing respect for authority.

III. Interactions with parents, educators and other adults introduce children to important social standards and rules.

IV. Peer relations introduce children to the norms of direct reciprocity and to the standards for sharing, cooperation, and fairness.

V. Variations in social experiences can produce differences in moral orientation among children.

VI. Moral development in schools is determined by the same cognitive and social processes that apply to moral development in other settings.

Children acquire moral values by actively participating in adult-child and peer relationships that support, enhance and guide their moral tendencies.
1.6 Education for Moral Values

If we advocate for whole education of the child, then we have a duty to develop the necessary environment where moral values form an integral component of the curriculum right from very early ages. There is a need to promote moral value education among the younger generation because very often our education focuses much on the academic side, neglecting the intangible moral education that was being done informally by parents, educators or influential adults. As a result, we are observing a decline in standards of behaviour, attitudes and quality of relationships among people.

You will agree that moral values:

- form the basis for inner judgment for the person;
- are norms of behaviour guided by social, moral, spiritual and aesthetic criteria to select the desirable;
- are ideals in various fields of behaviour: the right way to think, to behave and to do things;
- are important for character formation and personality;
- enable an emotional evaluation of actions, thoughts or behaviour;
- enable the resolution of everyday problems in a positive and ethical way;
- enable the development of self-confidence, self-esteem and self-respect;
- enable socialisation and sharing;
- are the building blocks of a clean, fair and just society.

1.7 Summary

Moral development concerns the integration of rules and values that are promoted by one’s social environment. This is learnt through social interactions and experimentation starting as early as infancy while observing influential adults. In this chapter, we have examined the definition of morality and analysed through the theories of three eminent psychologists, the Swiss Jean Piaget and the Americans Lawrence Kohlberg and William Damon and how children proceed in their moral development. Two perspectives are proposed by Piaget’s Heteronomous and Autonomous morality. Kohlberg refers to three levels of reasoning: Pre-Conventional Reasoning, Conventional Reasoning and Post-Conventional Reasoning. Damon helps us to understand the characteristics of a moral education programme through his six key principles.

As the child grows, he will interact and experiment within his environment and peers. Different aspects of development will unfold and regulate each other. During this process, play will constitute the major learning method through which the child will learn about his environment. In the next chapter, we shall study the characteristics of play and analyse how this pedagogical method is appropriate for imparting moral values to children.
The best way to teach moral values is to make it a habit with children.
Chapter 2

Promoting Values through Play

2.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, we looked at the theoretical basis for moral development of children. How can we promote moral development? Values can be efficiently promoted through play. Play is a natural activity inherent in any child. The type of play in which a child will be involved will depend upon his potential. This will start with the sensory ability during the early months where the child will respond happily to the caregiver’s voice and sounds of toys. As the child develops physically and intellectually, his curiosity will unfold, raising his interest in his environment. During infancy and early childhood, the child’s main occupation is play.

During infancy, the child will spend most of his time exploring, imitating and experimenting while playing alone or with siblings. The main task during this period is the development of physical and communication skills.

You will agree that the socialisation process starts when the child joins the pre-school setting. Play will constitute the most appropriate pedagogical tool to stimulate the whole development of the child. In this chapter, we shall study play from different angles and see how play can be used for imparting moral values to children.

2.1.1 Learning Outcomes

After studying this chapter, you will be able to:

- explain how play stimulates the child’s development;
- differentiate between the stages of play;
- analyse the different types of play;
- demonstrate the importance of play in the transmission of moral values.
2.2 The Importance of Play

Early childhood lasts from the age of two to six years. During this period, there will be major developments in the child’s physical appearance and potential. As you may have observed in your class, considerable cognitive and physical-motor developments occur during this period. As the child grows, he needs to acquire a variety of new skills and attitudes that will be essential for his development and socialisation. This process starts since the early months of life and it is through play that the child will develop his potential and learn things about his environment.

Play can be defined as: “enjoyable activities that one takes part in for the sake of amusement, mental, physical and social development (Oxford Dictionary)”.

Play is considered to be a natural primary need of every child. Adults, more particularly parents and educators, have a key role in stimulating the child to play since the early months and at the same time encouraging him to participate in games with other children as he grows. Play will provide the required opportunities for the child to proceed through the different stages of cognitive, physical, social and language development. In the pre-school setting, through your creative guidance, the child will be involved in more elaborate games and activities. This will enable him to unfold his potential and proceed towards socialisation and more independence. **While playing in groups, the child will learn rules and regulations with the appropriate set of moral values.**

Your role as educator is to propose a variety of opportunities and experiences through developmentally appropriate activities based on the needs and interests of the child. Both values and norms, cut across most pre-school activities. You will have to present them in an integrated way that aims at the overall development of the child. Pleasure, fun and language will help the child to internalise the concepts and skills much faster.

Children play on every occasion from the first months of life. As the child grows, the type of play varies and will become more and more elaborate. There is no age limit for playing. The first stage of play is when babies start playing by exploring their mouth, hands and later with objects they can hold and put in their mouth. The final stage is the complex adult games whether for sports or leisure. Hence, play, in one form or another, continues from childhood into adulthood.

We can therefore distinguish two types of play: free play and structured play.

- **Free play** occurs when the child is leading the play experience. He sets out the rules and boundaries. This type of play will often hold the child’s interest longer. The child can become engrossed in the activity because he developed it himself.

- **Structured play** is adult led, guided and planned activities. This type of play tends to be more limiting and minimises the child’s opportunities to be inventive, but he will have to abide by rules and regulations.

For the proper development of children, you will agree that a good balance between free and structured play is essential. How can this be done?

2.3 Stages of Play

As the child grows, we observe that he becomes involved in more elaborate games. This constitutes a natural evolution and will depend on how the child is stimulated. In general, we can distinguish five stages of play during childhood.

**Stage 1: 0 – 1 year**

The child tends to play alone.
There is little or no interaction with other children.
Stage 2: 1 – 2 years
The child acts as spectator.
There is hesitation to join other children (egocentric period).

Stage 3: 2 - 3 years
The child becomes a parallel player.
The interest to join other children increases but hesitation persists.

Stage 4: 3 - 4 years
The child reaches the stage of associative players.
He starts to interact with others in activities.
He starts to develop friendships and to choose his friends to play.

Stage 5: above 4 years
The child reaches the stage of cooperative players.
He enjoys playing together with other children.
He will share roles, collaborate and become absorbed in what they are doing.

Inter-individual variability will exist among children. Each child will proceed through the above stages at his own pace. This will depend on the upbringing of the child, that is, environmental stimulation, love, care and affection. The more a child is stimulated, the earlier he will proceed through the stages.

2.4 What are the Benefits of Play?
After having considered the characteristics of play, we shall now examine briefly the importance of play for children. Play and games constitute the best learning method. Active involvement in games and play activities stimulates and develops the following aspects of the person:

Intellectual Development
While playing, the child concentrates, thinks, talks, memorises, organises and solves problems. These intellectual stimulations enable him to develop his intelligence.

Social Development
As the child grows, he will adopt group games. Through interaction with peers, he will have to acquire the social skills such as, waiting for turn, sharing and cooperation. These skills are required to become accepted in groups.

Emotional Development
Children enjoy themselves completely while playing. They are happy, smile, sing, and take initiatives without fear. They feel really at ease and ready to make the required efforts, thus developing a positive attitude.

Physical Development
Certain games involve physical efforts, specific movements or gestures, for example running, jumping or throwing a ball in a basket. These games are very important for the child’s physical development.

Remember that physical development concerns the muscular and skeletal (bones) development as well as psycho-motor coordination. For example, pre-writing exercises involve physical development.
Language Development
Children have to learn the vocabulary of a game to be able to play it. While playing, they will have to sing, communicate and express themselves consciously or unconsciously. So, play offers an interesting opportunity for children to learn a language.

Development of Curiosity
Children are curious by nature and this is the basis of motivation. Due to his curiosity, the child will explore and experiment his environment through play. As his curiosity grows, the games and activities in which he will be interested become more elaborate.

2.5 Play and its Impact on Child Development
You are already familiar with a variety of games that children like to play in Mauritius. We shall now analyse the different types of play and examine their impact on child development.

Imaginative Play
- Includes pretend, fantasy and symbolic play. Ideal first toys are dolls, puppets, household utensils, etc.
- Develops self-expression and also gives children the opportunity to explore their environment to create and experiment. They will also create stories and games out of their imagination.
- Helps children to see things from others’ point of view. Hence, children develop social skills.
- Appears and is common in children as from two years old.
- Helps the child develop cognitively, emotionally and socially.

Associative Play
- In associative play, children use the same play materials. They talk to each other, share toys and imitate each other;
- Appears in children as from three years old;
- Triggers social, language, emotional, moral development of the child.

Constructive Play
- In constructive play, the child manipulates objects in order to create or construct something, for example puzzle, Lego, etc.;
- This type of play is of interest to children between three and six years;
- Promotes physical, cognitive, personality, emotional, social and language development, which has an impact on moral development.

Cooperative Play
- Play is goal-directed where the children want to achieve something in group, for example family game, pretending game, football, etc.;
- In cooperative play, each child will have a specific role and the result of the whole outcome will depend on the contribution of each member;
- This type of play concerns children above five, younger ones can be included with older ones who will guide them.
- Promotes physical, cognitive, personality, emotional, social and language development, which have an impact on moral development.
**Creative Play**
- Creative play covers a range of activities from art and craftwork to self-expression through music and dance;
- Creative play offers children the opportunity to develop fine manipulative skills;
- Children’s creative work should be displayed without being altered so that they can feel proud of their work;
- Promotes cognitive, emotional and social development.

**Physical Play**
- Physical play covers many different indoor and outdoor activities. It can involve equipment such as climbing frames or vehicles or no equipment at all.
- Physical play not only encourages healthy living habits, but results in better eating and sleeping patterns as well as developing self-confidence and physical competence. Physical play develops both fine and gross motor skills, as well as muscle control.

You must have realised that the different types of play can help children develop and practice some important values. What are these values?

### 2.6 Some Values and Qualities that Children Acquire through Play at the Pre-School.

The activities that you propose to children in your class everyday aim at promoting an integral development of the child as we have just seen above. Besides the acquisition of knowledge and skills by the children, an aspect that concerns us particularly in this handbook is the acquisition of moral values. We shall now examine the different types of moral values that children can develop and acquire while playing or through school-based activities.

**Sharing**
Children are in the egocentric stage when they join the pre-school. Through play, they will be encouraged to interact with other children, observe and imitate that type of behaviour that you as the educator and role-model, favour and encourage.

**Cooperation**
As the child grows, he will develop confidence, trust and friendship with other children. With the activities you promote, he will learn to collaborate with others, become involved in groups to play more elaborate games or produce more interesting work.

**Respecting and Accepting Others**
Just as children learn to share and cooperate with others, the respect for and acceptance of others is learned while interacting with others in the socialisation process. By accepting and showing respect for the children and their parents, you demonstrate that all people are worthy of being treated with dignity.

**Learning from Others**
Acquiring appropriate social attitudes will enhance learning by increasing the possibility of interaction with and learning from others. Young children are characteristically egocentric in a social sense. They are often unaware that others also view the world from a personal perspective and that others may not share their opinions. They must then defend their ideas, justify their opinions, clarify their thoughts, and solve their own problems.
Seeking and Giving Companionship
The pre-school, where children are encouraged to learn from others, to seek and give companionship, offers the emotional security that makes it possible for them to interact. Learning how to make and maintain friendship is a part of the social learning that should take place in the pre-school setting.

Anticipating Consequences of Actions
By encouraging children to interact, use language, and solve problems, you can guide them to take responsibility for their actions. Acting with forethought can be learned within the social framework of the pre-school.

Developing a Positive, Realistic Self-concept
Consideration for the emotional development of children is important not only in ensuring that their self-concept is positive and realistic but also in ensuring that they are able to develop cognitively. Children who are confident of themselves and are secure in their environment, are ready for new learning. Successful learning, in turn, enhances self-esteem.

You will agree that children with high self-esteem (feeling good about oneself, feeling ready to do better) are more enthusiastic, more willing to accept challenges, and more able to concentrate and to persevere. Your support is important to foster the natural development of self-esteem as children attempt to explore and master their own goals.

Accepting and Expressing Emotions in Socially Acceptable Ways
Children need to observe model behaviour that fosters the development of interpersonal skills. Everyday opportunities are offered to the children to deal with, and gain competence in living with other people. Talking about problems, fears, and concerns leads children to the understanding that emotions are common to all people. Your task is to help children to realise that all emotions are acceptable but some reactions to these emotions are unacceptable. Awareness of how to deal with and express emotions in a socially acceptable manner leads children to function independently and in cooperation with others. Within the safety of the pre-school environment, children can experience the natural consequences of their actions without loss of self-worth.

Accepting and Demonstrating Empathy
You are in an ideal position to provide a model and facilitate emotional development when you use patience to understand the personal point of view (egocentrism) of each child. While you can often describe your own points of view, pre-school children have difficulty in understanding the points of view of their peers or other educators. When children are secure and trust you, dialogue helps them to accept decisions even if they cannot understand them. As children receive empathy from their educator and peers, they begin to view themselves as worthwhile members of the group. They are more likely to express empathy towards others. Children possessing a sense of self-worth are then capable of showing sensitivity to others while maintaining their unique identities.

Accepting Challenge
When children are encouraged to think differently, to express different ideas, and to experiment, they develop a belief in their own abilities. Feeling secure in the classroom serves to increase their knowledge of themselves as unique and competent persons.

Personal stress that is related to insecurity may cause children to revert to easier and, less challenging tasks. Repetition and familiarity are comforting security aides. Some children may react by withdrawing into themselves or by resorting to physical aggression.

Emotionally secure children have the confidence to be curious and creative, to accept challenges, and to take appropriate risks.
Feeling Pride in Accomplishment
Children who have learned that their attempts will be accepted and encouraged will be more likely to try. Praise may lead to tentative feelings of success but may leave them still seeking other’s opinions to judge their own success. Ongoing encouragement that focuses the children’s attention on the importance of valuing their own attempts helps them develop personal pride. Children who can view their work and say, “I did it, I tried my best, and I like it” do not need an adult to say, “It is good”.

Developing Independence
Growth of independence can only occur when children are aware of available support and are willing to seek that support when needed. Dependence involving the healthy seeking of emotional support from others and the benefits of having trusting relationships with adults or other children is linked closely with self-confidence. You will agree that experience, practice, and role-playing are the basis for developing independence.

Enjoying Living and Learning
By treating children with respect, warmth, good humour, and dignity, you help them to become strong emotionally. It is this emotional strength that is the key to successful learning and finding enjoyment and appreciation in the world.

2.7 Summary
In this chapter, we have examined how play remains the most appropriate pedagogical method while teaching young children. Children enjoy playing. They cannot stand still. They will seek any opportunity to play. They are never tired when it comes to play an interesting game. They are curious to learn more about things that they don’t know and expect much from parents and educators. Educating children in the pre-primary setting is not an easy job. As educators, you have to be very creative and analytical to be able to utilise play to transmit and emphasise on the different attitudes and implicit character that a child can form and develop.

Moral education is intangible. It forms part of the hidden components in a game that makes it interesting, attractive and enjoyable. The child, when exposed to such experiences, will assimilate the moral values unconsciously and will develop them in his character and personality.

In the first part of the handbook we have studied the theoretical basis showing the appropriateness of play to impart moral values during early childhood. In the next part we shall analyse, in practice, how simple games can be used for this purpose.
“Character may be manifested in the great moments, but it is made in the small ones.”

Phillip Brooks
Part II
Practical Application

Introduction
In this part of the handbook, we shall examine four games. The games have been designed by a team of educators for pre-school children. They are: Classification Game, Identification Game, Star Game and Matching Faces Game. The games have been tested in some pre-schools and the response of educators and the reaction of children were very enthusiastic.

Aim
The aim of this section is to enhance your knowledge and analytical skills on activities that you currently perform with children in your classes. Through the examples proposed, you will have creative ideas that will empower you to design new games according to the needs of children.

Learning Outcomes
Our objectives in proposing these practical activities are to:
- enhance your analytical skills, which will help you in your interaction with children;
- enhance your creative skills, which will help you in the adaptation of existing games to the needs of children;
- help you to create new games according to the objectives you have set.
Game 1
Classification Game

The game consists of a board and a set of ten cards. The board is divided into two columns, one side for good actions and the other for bad actions. The cards show actions or behaviours that are meaningful to the child, which are performed either in the proper way or in an inappropriate way.

Value Chart

[Diagram showing examples of actions on the left (X) and the right (✔) columns.]

- Example actions:
  - Good actions: planting a tree, feeding animals, reading a book.
  - Bad actions: throwing trash, vandalizing property, breaking rules.
Aim
The aim of the game is to raise the child’s ability to distinguish the most appropriate actions and behaviour.

Objectives
The objectives of the game are for the child to develop:

- observation and classification skills;
- communication skills;
- the ability to interact with peers and develop appropriate social skills;
- psycho-motor coordination;
- appropriate moral values.

Target & Duration
This game is appropriate for children aged 3 to 4 years and can be played in groups of 6. The duration of the game will depend on the educator’s creativity and will last for around 20 minutes.

Procedure
1. The educator explains the game, the rules and the objectives to the children.
2. The cards are scattered on the table and the board is placed on the wall. Each child waits for his turn, takes a card, observes the picture and explains the content of the card to the group.
3. The educator and the other children ask the child whether the action/behaviour is appropriate or not (a rhyme can be devised for the question).
4. The child will have to explain why this action/behaviour is appropriate or inappropriate.
5. The educator will give further explanations on the situation described in the card;
6. The child is requested to place the card on the board;
7. The group congratulates the child (a song is devised by the educator for this purpose).

The value chart can be placed on the wall of the classroom. Children will have the opportunity to become familiar with the situations and will be encouraged by the educator to adopt the appropriate actions and behaviour. Every month, cards with new situations will be introduced and the chart re-actualised.

The educator can support this activity with storytelling, role-play or drawing.

The Benefits of the Game for Children
This game will:

- stimulate children’s skills of observation and discrimination;
- initiate the development of thinking skills;
- reinforce manipulative skills;
- enrich their knowledge about everyday situations;
- help children to solve simple dilemmas;
- develop moral reasoning to identify right actions/methods from wrong ones;
- help children to assimilate moral values such as sharing, respecting peers, abiding by instructions, cooperation, waiting for their turn.
Game 2

Identification Game

The game consists of a board (30 cm x 30 cm) with a caterpillar of a dozen legs drawn upon it and pieces of string 30 cm long. The educator will select a word relevant to the child showing a state, an action or a concept (for example “partager”, “aimer”, “jolie”). Each letter of the selected word is placed on a leg of the caterpillar. Afterwards, a hole is made under each leg.

An example of the board with a caterpillar
Aim
The aim of the game is to initiate the child to abstract concepts qualifying behaviour, attitudes or state. The child will process the graphical representation of the word only and he is not required to write the words or to learn alphabets but to recognise the pronunciation of the word and its meaning.

Objectives
After having played this game, children will be able to:
- recognise abstract concepts that are relevant to them;
- enhance their vocabulary enabling better interaction with their environment;
- become more sensible to moral values;
- have psycho-motor coordination to thread the string in the holes;

Target & Duration
This activity is appropriate for children of upper pre-primary, aged 4 to 5 years old. The game can be played in groups of six children. The duration is around 15 minutes. This will depend on the creativity of the educator.

Procedure
1. The educator presents the activity, the rules and the objectives to the group of children.
2. A number of boards are prepared and the educator distributes one to each child.
3. Each child shows his card to the educator and his friends. The educator pronounces the word and helps children to pronounce the word.
4. The educator explains the meaning of the word. She may refer to a story or an event for a better comprehension.
5. Children thread in the card in the holes coinciding with the letters.
6. The activity can be extended with songs, role-play or drawing.

The Benefits of the Game for Children
This game will:
- stimulate children’s skills of observation and discrimination;
- initiate the development of thinking skills;
- reinforce manipulative skills;
- enrich their knowledge about everyday situations;
- help children to solve simple dilemmas;
- develop moral reasoning to identify right actions/methods from wrong ones;
- help children to assimilate moral values such as sharing, respecting peers, abiding by instructions, cooperation, waiting for their turn.
Game 3

Star Game

The game consists of a board with a game path with a number of squares that lead to a winning square. The squares, of different colours, represent good actions, bad actions or rest. Children will have to move along the board with a dice and follow the instruction on the square they find themselves on.
Aim
The aim of the game is to help the child discriminate between good and bad actions and develop positive moral values.

Objectives
After playing the game, the child will be able to:

- distinguish between good and bad actions;
- develop social skills necessary while playing in groups;
- develop the proper attitudes and values.

Target & Duration
The game is appropriate for children of 3-5 years. It can be played in groups of four under the guidance of an educator who will read the instructions to them. The game will last for around 15 minutes.

Procedure
1. The educator explains the game, its rules and objectives to the children.
2. The children sit around the board and get ready to start the game. They will observe the board and the educator will verify if they have well understood the rules. Each child chooses his counter (of different colours).
3. Each child waits for his turn, throws the dice and accedes to the board if he scores 6.
4. The child proceeds on the board and abides by the instructions according to the number scored with the dice.
5. The educator reads the instructions and gives appropriate explanations to the children.
6. Children proceed in the game and the first one who succeeds in reaching the last square, wins the star and becomes the Star Citizen. He is congratulated by the whole group and has the right to fix the golden star (a pin) during the day.

The game can be repeated on a weekly basis so as to arouse children’s interest. The board can be adapted to different situations where the educator wishes to impart rules and values to children.

The Benefits of the Game for Children
This game will:

- stimulate children’s skills of observation and discrimination;
- initiate the development of thinking skills;
- reinforce manipulative skills;
- enrich their knowledge about everyday situations;
- help children to solve simple dilemmas;
- help children to identify right actions/methods from wrong ones;
- help children to assimilate moral values such as sharing, respecting peers, abiding by instructions, cooperation, waiting for their turn.
Game 4  
**Matching Faces Game**

The game consists of a board with a snake carrying different faces with different facial expressions of sadness and happiness, and two puppets representing a happy face and a sad face. Children will have to sing a song and use the happy puppet to represent the happy face of the snake and the sad puppet to represent the sad face.
Aim
The aim of the game is to provide children an opportunity to discriminate between the states of mind of people and their moods.

Objectives
After playing this game, children will be able to:
- distinguish between the different emotional states, of a person: happiness, sadness, anger;
- understand why people’s moods change;
- develop positive attitude and values;
- improve their vocabulary in English.

Target & Duration
The game is appropriate for children of 3-4 years, can be played in groups of five and will last for around 15 minutes.

Procedure
The song:

Smiling faces, smiling faces going to school, going to school.
Keep us very happy, keep us very happy
Everyday, Everyday.

Crying faces, crying faces going to school, going to school.
Keep us very sad, keep us very sad
Everyday, Everyday.

1. Use the stick puppet to teach the song in English, using simple words to show the facial expressions.
2. Afterwards, children are given the ‘friendly colourful Snake’ to carry on with the activity of matching the appropriate facial expressions.

Educators may extend the activity with stories or role-plays.

The Benefits of the Game for Children
This game will:
- stimulate children’s skills of observation and discrimination;
- initiate the development of thinking skills;
- reinforce manipulative skills;
- enrich their knowledge about everyday situations;
- develop language skills;
- help children to assimilate moral values such as sharing, respecting peers, abiding by instructions, cooperation, waiting for their turn.
Conclusion

Children are growing up in a rapidly changing world. They have less time and opportunity to play than those of previous generations. Theorists, regardless of their orientation, agree that play occupies a central role in children’s lives. They also suggest that the absence of play is an obstacle to the development of healthy and creative individuals.

Play is a dynamic and constructive process through which the child will learn and develop his potential. This constitutes the most essential method through which children learn to understand and adapt to their environment and culture. In the developmental process of children we have to take into consideration three fundamental factors:

- they are curious;
- they are eager to learn;
- they love to play.

The early childhood period is a very critical one as the basis of all the domains of development, intellectual, social, emotional, language and moral, need to be stimulated and regulated for the development of a healthy and honest person. Play is the unique method to impart knowledge and values to children.

The purpose of this handbook for you, pre-school educators, is to accentuate your knowledge on the importance of play during early childhood and to enhance your skills in the creative utilisation of play to impart moral values since early childhood. This material has been developed in line with the mandate of the ICAC to assist in enhancing the school curriculum so as to educate children about the dangers of corruption.

Good luck!
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