

Advocacy Paper: Integrating Art and Play Into the Classrooms

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Abstract

Integrating art and play into the school is very important. Art is very beneficial for children and can help them with imagination, creativity and even help them with the fine motor skills of physical, language, literacy, social and emotional development. Play based learning can also help children with such skills. Children tend to lose focus easily which is why incorporating Art and Play in early grades is important because it will allow them to focus and stimulate their minds.

Introduction

The topic of this essay is integrating Art and Play into the classroom. The concern is that children are sitting down for too long and they are not absorbing any of the information. Which is why more art and play should be implemented in the school curriculum. Children can get easily distracted especially if they don't understand what is being taught and sitting in a classroom for hours trying to make them understand does not help them learn. Children need space to be creative and Art and play will allow them to do that. With Art and Play children will be more interested and learn better. Most importantly this will help children develop motor skills such as Creativity, Problem solving, social and emotional and literacy. Some advocacy action to incorporate Art and Play into the classroom is to meet with the parents and principles to explain to them the benefits of art and play and inform them of a change in the curriculum. Also getting in contact with fellow educators and the department of education/ anyone who is in charge of changing the school curriculum so that children get more time for Art and Play.

Statement of the Problem

The main concern is that the children are sitting down for too long and they are not absorbing any of the information. Children tend to get distracted easily which is why art and play is important because it will keep them interested and it will help them be creative. Overall Art and Play are very important for all motor skills. By using Art and Play children will be able to enjoy the material more and understand better. This might affect the children and families because if children lose focus and get bored of what is being taught in the classroom, they might misbehave which will lead to the parent being frustrated and forcing the child to do work. However, forcing a child to do work is not helpful for the child, this does not help them learn. This might hurt the children in the long run because they are not learning how they are supposed to and might not develop the motor skills properly, which is why an intervention is needed as early as possible.

The Intervention that Is needed is having the teacher talk to the parents and principal about integrating Art and Play into the curriculum. This problem is the greatest In places where the children come from low income households. The reason is because families might not have enough money to get the child materials for art. Also the schools might not have enough funding to buy art supplies for the children. My target audience is parents, fellow educators and whoever is in charge of making a change in the school curriculum so that we can change and establish more Art and Play into the classrooms.

Research

Research suggests that Art and Play in the classroom is important for children to develop motor skills and learn better. The articles that will be using for this essay are “Supporting the development of creativity” by Laurel Bongiorno that explains the two different kinds of art and which one is best to teach children, “Equalizing opportunities to learn: A collaborative approach to language and literacy development in preschool” by LAURA B. RAYNOLDS, MARGIE B. GILLIS, CRISTINA MATOS and KATE DELLI CARPINI shows the creative way a preschool class turned their classroom into a museum incorporating art and play, “Academics vs. Play: The False Dilemma That Some Principals Face” by Shayna Cook and Abbie Lieberman . To further explain why Art and Play should be integrated into the classroom.

Article 1

Art is important because it helps children with their motor skills. There are two types of art: product art and processed art. Product art is when there is a right or wrong way of doing it; adults know what the final result looks like. Process art is when children can explore multiple materials. There is no right or wrong way and they are relaxed and focused. According to the article “Supporting the development of creativity” by Laurel Bongiorno the best art for children is Product art because it will help them develop motor skills that they need unlike process art. (n.d.) The reading states that “Product art offers children a few learning opportunities (following directions and developing small motor control) but does not offer the rich opportunities for cognitive, language, and social and emotional development open ended art experiences offer” (Bongiorno, n.d.). When practicing these types of art children also have different reactions to both. With product art children tend to get bored easily and might feel some type of way because

their art does not look like what they are being shown. According to Bongiorno, when practicing product art children might say things like “Can I be done now?” and “Is this right?” (n.d.). However when making process art children might be more interested and would like to keep working on the art. Some of the things children might say while practicing product art are “Can I have more time?” “Can I have more paper?” “Is there any yellow?” “I want to make another one” (Bongiorno, n.d.). The quotes show the proper way to teach art in the classrooms. The author's purpose for this article was to inform the readers of how to better support a child's creativity. I have selected this source because it shows all the benefits of children using art in the classroom. I believe we can learn a better way to teach art in the classroom so that children stay interested and learn better.

Article 2

Like previously mentioned, incorporating art into the classroom is important but so is incorporating play. The article “Equalizing opportunities to learn: A collaborative approach to language and literacy development in preschool” by LAURA B. RAYNOLDS, MARGIE B. GILLIS, CRISTINA MATOS and KATE DELLI CARPINI, Demonstrates how to incorporate both art and play into the classroom. In the article a preschool classroom is turned into a museum: “Inspired by the museum, we value beauty and an uncluttered feel. Along with the children, we create intellectually stimulating environments that enrich and reflect their learning” (Raynolds et al., 2019). Creating a museum allowed them to be creative by using the materials they had to make things they would find at a museum. For example, “Using materials like boxes and contact paper, the children and teachers constructed related environments—like a mini rainforest and a polar landscape—in the classroom” (Raynolds et al., 2019). However, creating

this museum did not only allow them to be creative by using art but also by being able to play. The children were in control and each had different roles pretending they were in a real museum, as the reading states: “When the teachers became participants in the children’s play, the complexity of the environment increased, the children sustained their curiosity, and the children expanded their knowledge of how cafés operate” (Raynolds et al., 2019). This quote shows that children can learn from play. The Article explains, art and play can really help children learn.

Article 3

Play can also help with children's motor skills. Play can help children develop social, physical, and cognitive skills. “Academics vs. Play: The False Dilemma That Some Principals Face” by Shayna Cook and Abbie Lieberman, 2017. For example the reading states that “Guided play helps children learn to solve problems, persist through challenges, build vocabulary skills, and gain background knowledge in many content areas.” (cook & Lieberman, 2017). The problem is that principals only want to focus on academics. The reading states “But the majority of principals felt pressured to limit play time in pre-K, kindergarten, and the early grades to focus on academics.” (cook & Lieberman, 2017). The reading then continues to explain that principals should be required to have some kind of childhood training before becoming principals of an elementary school because there is often a disconnect between what the teacher believes is good vs what the principal believes is good. The reading states “To be strong early education leaders, principals need better preparation, professional development, and support from districts and states.” “often a disconnect between what teachers and their principals view as good teaching.” (cook & Lieberman, 2017). The author's purpose for this reading is to inform the readers the hard decision that some school principals have to make on whether or not Play is the best thing to add

to a childhood classroom. I selected this article because it shows that even though the principals see the effectiveness of play based learning they still prefer not to incorporate it into the classrooms. I believe we can learn from this reading principals need better preparation in order to be an early childhood leader and help the children based on their needs.

Small advocacy action

Small advocacy action would be to have the teachers incorporate more art and play into the classroom. To incorporate more things that will help the children be creative and stimulate their growth. The teachers will have a 1hr meeting at the beginning of the school year with parents and principals to explain the effect of incorporating art and play into the classrooms. Also, making an afterschool program for the children to continue supporting them outside of the classroom that will take place twice a week.

Large advocacy action

Large advocacy action would be gathering fellow educators and people who work at nearby schools so that we as educators can discuss the problem. After discussing the problem we will go to anyone who is in charge of making a change in the curriculum whether it be the superintendent or board of education, ask them to incorporate more art and play time into the curriculum as well as provide art supplies for the schools that are underfunded. Lastly, also ask the board of education to open a community program where the children can go on the weekends

like Saturday where they can just spend the day making more art, maybe have people that can come in and talk about art and famous art pieces throughout history, and take them to museums.

Commentary

This topic impacts me as an early childhood educator because when becoming a childhood educator I would like to incorporate Art and Play into the curriculum. As can be seen children can definitely learn a lot by art and play based Learning and can stimulate their minds. This issue is personally meaningful to me because I believe Art and Play can really make a difference in early childhood education. As stated before it can really make a difference in children's learning such as helping them with physical, language, literacy, social and emotional development which is very important. Lastly, as a future childhood educator it is our job to advocate for what we believe is best for the children and their education.

Works cited

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