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## Investigating the Effectiveness of Play in Easing Daily Home- To- School-Transition Process for Nursery Pupils at UDS-Early Childhood Centre

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### **Abstract:**

*This study investigated the effectiveness of play in easing the daily home to the school transition process for nursery pupils at University for Development Studies-Early Childhood Centre. The study employed a mixed design approach (qualitative and quantitative designs) to identify vital aspects of the process in helping to improve the daily home-to-school transition process for children. Ten children participated in the study for a period of two weeks. The children were observed, and their data recorded from 7am to 8am each morning. Informal interviews with ten (10) parents, five (5) teachers and two (2) administrators were conducted to find out more about children's home-to-school transition behaviour. The quantitative analysis was done with the use of SPSS and thematic analysis for qualitative data. It was concluded that: play is effective in smoothening children's transition, separation anxiety was the primary factor that caused poor transition, and that the use of play in school transition is obstructed by rigid school routines, inadequate play equipment and toys and teachers' attitude. It is therefore recommended that teachers and administrators should make provisions to allow children some time to play upon arrival at school before lessons begin, strategies such as window hugging and many others should also be employed to reduce the distress of separating children from their parents upon arrival to school in the morning.*

**Keywords:** Transition, play, behaviour, home-to-school, daily, early-childhood, UDS

### **1. Study Background**

Transition from home to school is the most critical and complicated process that children and their families must go through at the beginning of a child's education (Janus, 2000). This complication is due to the contrasts in the structure and routines that exist between the home and school (Rimm-Raufman & Sandilos, 2017; Hirst et al. 2011). The daily home to school transition process is very challenging for children, teachers and parents alike because the process comes with much tension and anxiety that must be managed to prevent stress and sets the path for children to succeed in school (Broström, 2000). It is therefore essential to plan and facilitate the children's daily transition with considerations on balancing parents expectations and excitement with children's anxieties and tension (Broström, 2000).

Children's behaviour of clinging to parents or guardians as well as crying at the sight of the school are possible signs of poor transition (Raising Children Network (Australia) Limited, 2016). They also added that children's wailing and sometimes intermittent sobbing at the sight of their parents or guardians, leaving the classroom or school premises are all signs of poor transition.

Several factors can affect transitioning from the home to the school for children; these may include separation anxiety, as children move away from parents with whom they have a deep attachment and connection (Hoffses, 2018). Hoffses also buttressed the disruptive effect changing from a familiar and flexible environment of home to one with relatively strict and rigid routines may have on children's transition. According to Pelco & Reed-Victor (2003) (as cited in Tours & Dennis 2015), the personalities of children may as well affect the children's ability to make the transition from home to school smoothly. From observation, it can be recognised that the use of teachers and or the school as threats of punishment in Ghanaian societies may subtly affect how children perceive the school and their willingness to go and stay there.

Poor transition causes children to acquire undesirable behaviours and attitudes that affect how they interact with other children in school (Child Australia, 2012). Children who exhibit some of these appalling behaviours as remnants of a

poor transition process may greatly disrupt instruction in class (Howard, 2014). Children's participation during classroom activities may also suffer immensely due to the high levels of stress as a result (Sims, 2008).

Effects of poor transition from home to school can severely affect children, teachers, parents and school routines and activities. This issue has necessitated suggestions from researchers and early childhood professionals on strategies that effectively facilitate and manage the transition process and its effects on children. Tours and Dennis (2015) suggested a variety of strategies for dealing with transition issues among children which include a play-based strategy known as "Arrival buddies". Also, Britto and Limlingan (2008) proposed play as a tool that could promote children's eagerness to go to school and learn; which could consequently facilitates children's transition. It is therefore clear that play has an important role in managing transition and its related issues.

### *1.1. Statement of Problem*

Nursery, as part of the pre-school programs, seeks to provide children with the opportunity to learn essential life skill as well as prepare them for future academic work. With a smooth daily transition from home to school, children will be eager and excited to come to school to learn and play with their friends.

However, mornings at pre-school premises are characterised by sad faces, crying and clinging to parents (Raising Children Network (Australia) Limited, 2016). These behaviours that are exhibited during the handover of child-care from parents or guardians to teachers cause stress in children and hinder their learning in school. Those behaviours may be attributed to poor transition or the employment of ineffective transition strategies.

In light of the above problem, this research seeks to study the effectiveness of play as a daily home-to-school transition strategy.

### *1.2. Study Objectives*

This study seeks to:

- Examine the effectiveness of play as a daily home to school transition strategy.
- Ascertain some home factors that cause the poor daily home to school transition.
- Determine school factors that may affect the use of play in facilitating daily home to school transition.

### *1.3. The Concept of Play in an Early Childhood Setting*

According to Bateson (2012), play activities are as a result of the excess energy children have due to them no participating in life sustaining activities. This definition presents play as a non-productive activity that is solely meant to expend children of their energy. O'Neil (2018) would however disagree as he defines play as a way children learn about the world. O'Neil also sees play as important recipe for children's lives, learning, growth and creation. Goldstein (2012) also defined play as those activities that children select and partake in by themselves. Goldstein's definition implies that play is any activity or set of activities that children choose for themselves based on their own motivations. Gray (2017) calls out the dichotomy in the concept and nature of play. This dichotomy reveals the complexity of play that contrasts the simplistic activity that adults observe children engaging in.

### *1.4. Stages of Play Development*

Mildred Parten in 1932 presented six stages of play development which are accepted by researchers and professionals to be the best description of how play develops in children till date. It shows from birth how children's play evolves. These stages of play development included;

#### 1.4.1. Unoccupied Play

Nathan (2005) considers unoccupied play as children not engaging in play. Gill (2016), on the other hand, describes this stage as involving a purposeful movement of children's body. Gill explains that the seemingly uncoordinated movement of parts of children's bodies could be aimed at being fun for the child.

#### 1.4.2. Independent or Solitary Play

At this stage of children's play development, they play alone or at a distance from other playing children (Isenberg, 2009). Children's play at this stage could be very active or very quiet, depending on the temperament of the particular child.

#### 1.4.3. Onlooker Play

At this stage, children watch other children play but do not join in (Isenberg, 2009; Nathan, 2005; Sussman, 2012). According to Gill (2016), children observe and learn how the activities are performed as well as how to participate.

#### 1.4.4. Parallel Play

Here, children play alongside or near other children but do not interact (Isenberg, 2009; Kyle Rymanowicz, 2015; Sussman, 2012). Children at this stage could be using the same toys and equipment but will be engaged in different activities (Gill, 2016). Conversely, Encourage play (2015) points out that children may be paying attention to other children playing around them though they may not be interacting with each other.

The study however concentrated on the last two stages below because of their relevance to the population of the study;

#### 1.4.4.1. Associative Play

This is the fifth stage of play development according to Parten. According to Heidemann and Hewitt (2014), children in this stage may play together with the same toys or equipment but will not collaborate. According to them, children may perform the same activities or built the similar structures independently as the borrow ideas from each other.

#### 1.4.4.2. Cooperative Play

play in this stage is characterised by a common goal (Heidemann & Hewitt, 2014). Children may share and perform different roles to reach a predetermined target as a team (Nathan, 2005). As indicated by Heidemann and Hewitt, children may also take turns to perform the same activity which involves active interacting or collaboration with one another.

### 1.5. Types of Play

Heidemann and Hewitt (2014) suggested three general types of play. Within each of these types of play, other examples can be categorised. An example is the sixteen types of play proposed by Hughes (2004) which can individually be placed under one or more of the of the types of play suggested by Heidemann and Hewitt. Below are their types/categories of play:

#### 1.5.1. Play with Objects

This describes a category of play that involves manipulating and using objects in real or make-believe during play. These include all play activities that involving building with Legos, moulding with clay, as well as playing with assorted objects and materials in a real or imaginary manner.

#### 1.5.2. Social Play

This encompasses all the types of play that include interaction with others. These types/categories are similar in content to the stages of play proposed by Mildred Parten. This type/category focuses on the social aspect of play as opposed to the materials or objects used in play.

#### 1.5.3. Socio Dramatic Play

Christie (1982) (as cited in Heidemann & Hewitt, 2014) described sociodramatic play as the highest level of the types of play because it is a hybrid between play with objects and social play. This type of play according to Heidemann & Hewitt prepares children generally for life by building their understanding of concepts, developing their social skills as well as improve their creativity.

### 1.6. Importance of Play

Allowing children to play provides them with the opportunity to develop all areas of their development (Isenberg, 2009). Literature provides several benefits that playing can have on children's development. Ginsburg et al. (2007) and Isenberg proposed similar lists of the importance of play with semantic differentiation. Some of the importance of play to children's development they offered are:

- Play developing brain function in preparation for academic activities.
- Sociodramatic play improves the creativity and imagination of the children.
- Manipulative and exploratory play develops children's creativity, critical thinking and problem-solving skills.
- Outdoor play improves children's physical well-being, motor development, coordination and curbs childhood obesity.
- Collaborative play develops children's language and literacy skills by providing them with the opportunity to express their thoughts naturally.
- Play also builds children's social skills and enables them to understand and manage their emotions.

### 1.7. Transition in an Early Childhood Setup

Transition is defined as a process whereby a person has to adapt to a new environment (Secretariat of National Aboriginal and Islander Child Care (SNAICC), 2014) ( as cited in Krakouer et al., 2017). The process of transition allows for children to make the psychological adjustments that enable them to fit well in their new environment or situation. According to Krakouer et al. transition is a holistic process because it requires the collaboration of all stakeholders during children's movement from home to school as well as their movement from one educational environment, program or level to another.

### 1.8. School Readiness as a Type of Transition

Numerous studies have been done on the subject and process of educational transition due to its significance. These studies examine the different types of educational transition programs in different countries. For the sake of this study, transition will be discussed under home to school transition, otherwise known as school readiness because of its relevance especially to pre-schooling.

Pekdogan and Akgul (2016) defined school readiness as children's level of psychological and emotional ease as well as their academic preparedness with which children enter formal schooling. Isenberg (2009) however views school readiness as the set of programs that aims to prepare children for formal education. According to Maxwell and Clifford

(2004) (as cited Pekdogan & Akgul, 2016), school readiness provides children with opportunities and skill that facilitates their transition in addition to preparing them for academic work. School readiness focuses on specific skills and competencies that promote children's transition to formal education (Commodari, 2016; Pentimonti, Justice, & Kaderavek, 2014) (as cited in Guarnera et al., 2017). Pekdogan and Akgul (2016) mentioned some areas or competencies that need to be prepared in pre-school children to make them ready for school. The areas they suggested include language and pre-literacy skills, pre-number and mathematics skills, social skills, motor skills and self-care skills. Lemaire et al. (2013) add that, pre-school provides an environment in which the hidden talents and abilities of children may be identified and developed before their entry into formal schooling. The above definitions views school readiness as an educational program or a set of attitudes, skills and knowledge that enables children to cope in school.

### *1.9. Effectiveness of Play in Transition*

Play in transition is very important to children's positive adjustment. It serves as a distraction and can be used as a strategy to help wean children temporarily of their attachment to their parents or caregivers. Krakouer et al. (2017) view play-based therapy as an effective strategy in supporting the transitioning of children who have experienced trauma during the process. According to Isenberg (2009), play can provide the needed support in assisting children during the transition process. His position also affirms that insufficient access to safe spaces and equipment for children to play could be a contributing factor to poor school readiness for them.

### *1.10. Home Factors That Causes Poor Transition*

Isenberg (2009) mentioned several factors that cause poor transitioning in children. However, the two below are those that are related to the home. Isenberg posits that when children are unable to cope without their parents, they build up separation anxiety and tension, making the transition process more tedious. He added that the lack of understanding of the importance of school transition programs prevents parents from investing and consequently reduces their involvement in the process, causing transition problems. Another home-related cause of poor transitioning identified by Isenberg is the socioeconomic level of the family. Children from low-income families may not be able to benefit from school readiness programs or may not be able to afford the resources required for such programs. In such situations, children go into formal school without the prerequisite skills needed to cope and succeed.

### *1.11. School Factors That Affect the Use of Play in Home to School Transitions*

Parrish et al. (2009) identified several factors that affect children's activity in school. These factors, as they explained, influence when and how the children play in terms of quality of play materials, accessibility to play materials, motivation to play and safety-related issues. The factors they listed included the following: availability and adequate time to play; weather and facilities to protect children from the weather; size and nature of the playground; quantity, quality and appropriateness of play materials and of equipment. They also added teachers' involvement and their provision of adequate motivation to children as well as the gender of the child as factors that can affect children's play in schools.

Muthoni (2016) also identified the diversity of needs and complexity of physical challenges, wrong perception of children with physical challenges, negative attitude towards disabled children as factors that affect the provision of play activities for children with physical challenges. Some other factors mentioned related to the provision of enough quality play materials which have already been discussed above.

### *1.12. Research Design*

This research is designed and modelled as an action research. This design was chosen because the outcome of the study is to help improve the daily home-to-school transition for a particular group of children (Cohen et al., 2007). This design enables better participation of the children during the study and produces knowledge and information that can be acted upon (Bame Nsamenang & Tchombe, 1995).

### *1.13. Population and Sampling*

The studied group are nursery two (2) children of the University for Development Studies, Early Childhood Centre located in the Sagnarigu district of the Northern Region of Ghana. They include five (5) boys and five (5) girls with an average age of four (4) years. Due to the design of the study, the entire class participated in the study. Ten (10) Parents, five (5) teachers and two (2) administrators were the major respondents of the study. Because of the importance of their contribution to the study, the purposive sampling technique was used to select all the 17 respondents; the teachers, administrators and parents who partook in the study.

### *1.14. Research Instruments*

#### *1.14.1. Observation*

The primary source of information during this study was from observation. This was the best way to collect behavioural or nonverbal information such that the participants are unable to influence or adulterate the information gathered (Cohen et al., 2007). The behaviours of the children were observed and recorded from 7 a.m. to 8 a.m. every day during the entire study period. Five (5) researchers were involved in the observation with the help of the classroom teacher. Time sampling was used to record the actual times of child's school arrival and start of appropriate transition behaviour; observation starts immediately a child arrives in school. The arrival time is recorded and the time the child

begins to exhibit the desired behaviour is also recorded. The difference between arrival time and show of desired behaviour is recorded as the transitioning time.

#### 1.14.2. Informal Interview

Informal conversational interviews, as described by Patton (1980) (as cited in Cohen et al., 2007), were used. Interviews provided the opportunity for more probing questions to be asked about the reasons for children's behaviour upon arrival to school in an informal and unstructured manner. In lieu of more structured interviews or questionnaires that are time-consuming, informal conversations were used because of their versatility.

The teachers, administrators, guardians and parents were informed about the purpose of the study, and the need for them to participate in the research. They were promised of utmost confidentiality of information and assured that data gathered will be used only for academic purposes. All the respondents were contacted, questioned and responses during the session recorded and transcribed.

#### 1.14.3. Data Collection

Data for the research was collected within two weeks – from the 13<sup>th</sup> May to the 24<sup>th</sup> May 2019. The study was done in the third term of the 2018/2019 academic year.

#### *1.15. Procedure*

##### 1.15.1. Pre-Intervention Stage

The daily home-to-school transition behaviour of the children was observed for the first week of the third term without play upon their arrival at school. It was noticed that it took children an average time of thirty (30) minutes to adjust in class and/or school. The adjustment behaviours that were accepted as marks a successful adjustment included: children ceasing to cry and beginning to play or interact with others. The time it took the children to exhibit the above-mentioned positive transition behaviours were set as the benchmark for assessing the effectiveness of the intervention.

##### 1.15.2. Intervention Stage

The days for implementing the intervention within the two weeks designated for the intervention stage were alternated. This was to reduce the influence of the children's permanent excitement or otherwise from previous week's experiences. Children were made to play on alternate days upon arrival to school in the morning. The time it took each child to begin to show positive transition behaviour was recorded from the time of their arrival at school. The play days during the first week were slated on Monday, Wednesday and Friday. These days were alternated for the second week with play days now scheduled on Tuesdays and Thursdays. On the first day of the observation, children were made to play board games, legos in the classroom under the supervision of the researchers and the classroom teacher. The following day, children were made to play football on the field while they are observed. Again, on the third day of the first week, the children were made to play either in the classroom or on the field depending on their interest. This same procedure was used during the other days of the observation.

##### 1.15.3. Post Intervention Stage

After each day for the two weeks, the average times it took the children to stop exhibiting negative transition behaviour were recorded and results compared between the intervention and non-intervention days.

#### *1.16. Data Analysis*

Both qualitative and quantitative analysis techniques were used to examine the data that was gathered throughout the study. Thematic presentation of transcribed responses was used to analyse qualitative information. The qualitative analysis was used to examine data on the school factors that may affect the use of play in facilitating daily home to school transition as well as home factors that cause poor daily home to school transition. However, quantitative analysis was also used to examine data on the effectiveness of play as a daily home to school transition strategy. This involved the comparison of average transition times for children on intervention and non-intervention days.

#### *1.17. Ethical Consideration*

The following were done to meet ethical standards during the study:

##### 1.17.1. Discussion with Parents, Guardians, Teachers and Administrators

The purpose of the study was discussed with all the key participants of the study; parents and guardians of the children of nursery two of the UDS-ECC individually, teachers and administrators. Suggestions and concerns were recorded and factored into the study appropriately.

##### 1.17.2. Signing of Consent Forms

After the discussions, parents and guardians as well as teachers and administrators who were targeted for the study were asked to sign a consent form granting their permission. They were to consent to full participation; disclosure of full information and they are at liberty to withdraw from the study when they deem it necessary without having to provide reasons.

## 2. Data Presentation, Analysis and Discussion

### 2.1. Effectiveness of Play as a Daily Home to School Transition

|               | Intervention Days | Non-Intervention Days |
|---------------|-------------------|-----------------------|
| C1            | 2.20              | 9.60                  |
| C2            | 1.25              | 21.88                 |
| C3            | 1.20              | 16.44                 |
| C4            | 1.20              | 7.89                  |
| C5            | 1.20              | 7.67                  |
| C6            | 3.40              | 27.11                 |
| C7            | 1.60              | 36.75                 |
| C8            | 1.00              | 8.33                  |
| C9            | 1.80              | 23.33                 |
| C10           | 1.00              | 34.44                 |
| Total Average | 15.85             | 193.45                |

Table 1: Combined Average Transition Times for the Two Weeks  
(These Were Recorded In Minutes and Seconds)

Table 1: Above shows the average transition times for each child throughout the entire study period. It shows how long on the average it took the children to stop exhibiting negative transition behaviour. The following formulae were used to calculate the average transition times for each child on both intervention and non-intervention days:

Average transition time for a child on intervention days =  $\frac{\sum(\text{transition times of the child on intervention days})}{\sum(\text{intervention days})}$

Average transition time for a child on non-intervention days =  $\frac{\sum(\text{transition times of the children on non-intervention days})}{\sum(\text{non-intervention days})}$

A comparison between the average transition times on intervention and non-intervention days show a significant difference for each child as illustrated in Table 1 above. The individual averages of the children were summed for intervention and non-intervention days to get their total average transition time. The results showed 15.85 minutes and 193.45 minutes for intervention and non-intervention days, respectively. The results imply that it took the children collectively an average 177.60 minutes less to transition or discontinue negative transition behaviours on the intervention days.

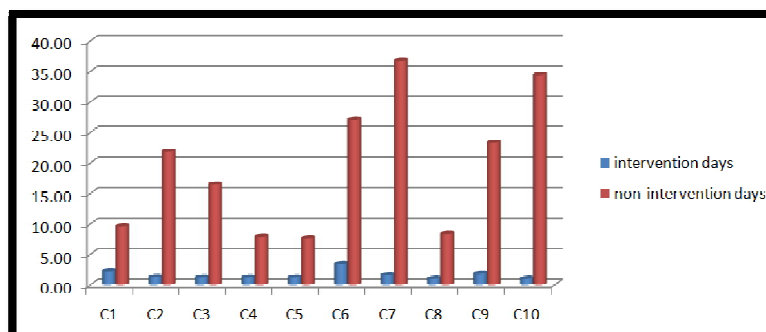


Figure 1: Comparison of Transition Times for Intervention and Non-Intervention Days for Each Child for the Two Combined Weeks

Figure 1 is a graphical presentation of the comparison of the transition times for each child. It shows how each child's average transition times compare on intervention and non-intervention days.

### 2.2. Causes of Poor Daily Home to School Transition

| Cause                       | Tally | Percentage |
|-----------------------------|-------|------------|
| Parents/guardian leaving    | 5     | 5.10       |
| Wanting food                | 2     | 2.04       |
| Wanting money               | 2     | 2.04       |
| Injuries                    | 1     | 1.02       |
| Wanting to be With Siblings | 1     | 1.02       |
| Not in the mood for school  | 2     | 2.04       |
| No response                 | 85    | 86.73      |
| Total                       | 98    | 100.00     |

Table 2: Causes of Poor Daily Home to School Transition

The causes of poor daily home to school transition were gathered through informal interviews with parents and guardians. The researchers also interacted with the children to ascertain their reasons for displaying undesired transition behaviour. The causes found were grouped into seven categories, as illustrated in Table 2 above. Parents leaving or children not wanting to part with parents was the highest recorded reason for negative transition behaviour at 5.10 per cent. Children demanding food, money or not being in the mood to come to school, all tied at 2.04 per cent. The rest of the recorded causes were injuries and children wanting to be with their siblings, most of whom attended a different school. The majority of the times, no reasons were given, or children did not exhibit negative transition behaviours at all because there were intervention days. These amounted to 86.73 per cent. There were three reasons for the many "no response". Firstly, parents who are in a hurry to leave would instead not give a reason than to take part in a time-consuming discussion about the child's behaviour. Secondly, parents honestly were not aware of the reasons for the misbehaviour of their wards; therefore, they cannot tell. Finally, parents may also refuse to divulge information because they deem their occurrences at home to be private.

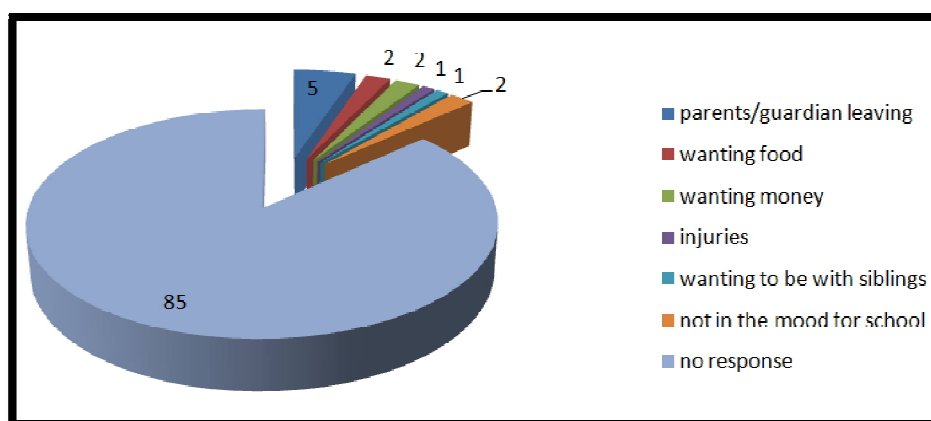


Figure 2: Causes of Poor Daily Home to School Transition

Figure 2 above illustrates pictorially the causes of the poor daily home to school transition as recorded during the study.

### 2.3. School Factors Affecting the Use of Play in Facilitating Daily Home to School Transition

Administrators and teachers of the UDS-ECC were asked to give their opinion on the possible challenges of implementing play as a daily home to school transition strategy. Their opinions which were mainly derived from their observation of the two-week study period were generally classified into three main themes. These are typically agreed on by Parrish et al. (2009) and Muthoni (2016) in their studies on factors that influence children's activity and factors that influence the provision of play and learning materials for children with physical challenges respectively. From interviewing the teachers and administrators of the UDS-ECC, the factors that were mentioned included school routine, availability of appropriate play equipment and environment and the attitude of teachers.

#### 2.3.1. School Routine

The administrators of the school had some concerns with how the intervention or playtimes would fit into the school routine. They highlighted that finding slots to fix morning playtime appropriately was difficult. This difficulty according to existing studies is due to the rigid structure and predetermined nature of the school day or school activities (Wildenger, 2011; Krakouer, Mitchell, Trevitt, Kochanoff, & Children, 2017; Yorke & Atta, 2012).

The following were responses during an interview to support the argument:

##### 2.3.1.1. Administrator One

We need to deliberately slot play in the routines of the regular curriculum. It is important and must not be seen as an extra-curricular activity.

##### 2.3.1.2. Administrator Two

I am fully aware kids love to play most times, if we can get them more play time on regular basis, they will love to come to school all times

#### 2.3.2. Availability of Appropriate Play Equipment and Environment

Both the teachers and administrators recognised that the majority of play equipment in the school were not really used by the children. This meant that just a few of the equipment were actually being used during play. There was therefore the concern that children might quickly get bored with the few remaining toys and find no fun using them sooner or later.

The following were responses during an interview:

### 2.3.2.1. Teacher 1

The centre should consider getting the kids lots of play materials, adequate and varied for their use. They sometimes fight over the few that are available and interest them.

### 2.3.2.2. Teacher 2

Management should work on expanding their playground and also bringing in more play equipment. Children learn through play, so when there is more play equipment available, I am sure they will come to school willingly

### 2.3.3. Attitude of Teachers

Another challenge that was observed was the attitude of the teachers and caregivers towards the implementation of the intervention. It was gathered that teachers saw play activities as extra work that came with no corresponding compensation. They seemed to console themselves with the knowledge that children while children portrayed undesired behaviour during the beginning of each term, eventually they would learn to deal with the pressures of coming to school without any formal help or support.

The following were responses during an interview session:

#### 2.3.3.1. Teacher 2

The time table does not allow for extensive play. The children are only allowed time to play during break. This makes it difficult for we the teachers to use play as a learning tool.

#### 2.3.3.2. Administrator 1

Teachers seem not to want to supervise the children to play on the field. They see it as more work without pay. Aside the break periods, the kids are seldom allowed to play.

## 3. Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

### 3.1. Summary

The study aimed to investigate and attempt to ease the stress of the daily home to school transition process for children by employing play. It is important because children's transition to school from home is a very stressful process for all parties (Broström, 2000). The study used a mixed design approach (qualitative and quantitative designs) to identify vital aspects of the process in helping to improve the daily home-to-school transition process for children of the UDS-ECC. A total of ten children from nursery two-class participated in the study for a period of ten school days or two weeks, on the premises of the school. During the study period, the children were observed, and their data collected from 7am to 8am each morning. Also, informal interviews with the parents were used to probe into the reasons for peculiar behaviours children portrayed upon arrival. The data collected was analysed by comparing averages of the transition times for days when the intervention was implemented to those on days without the interventions. Frequency analysis was also employed in ranking the home factors that affected children's transitioning process.

### 3.2. Conclusions

The following conclusions were drawn from the study given the information it revealed about the daily transition process of children of UDS-ECC:

- Play is a useful tool in relieving the stress of daily home-to-school transition on the nursery two children of UDS-ECC. From the analysis of the data collected during the study, it was realised that it took the children an average of 177.60 less to adjust to school collectively. These differences in transition times between intervention and non-intervention days provide significant evidence of the effectiveness of using play to improving the daily home-to-school transition process for children.
- The most significant home factor that causes poor transition is the separation of children from their parents or guardians at the school premises. From the study, it was realised that 5.10 per cent of the time, children exhibited poor transition behaviour because they were being separated from their parents. Though the figure seems small, it is the highest response recorded for the reasons for poor transition. It should, however, be stated that a significant number of times during the study, no response was registered as a reason for poor transition behaviour. Also, due to some constraints, follow-ups could not be made to probe into the reasons for the poor transition behaviours exhibited by the children.
- The major constrains for using play as a transition strategy is its interference with school's morning routines, inadequate play equipment and toys and teachers' attitude. During interview sessions with teachers and administrators of the school, it was pointed out that the play sessions were disrupting the already planned school routine. Setting aside times for children to play upon arrival to school interfered with the flow of the activities of the school. It was also pointed out that, though the intervention worked, certain times children got into fights with each other over play equipment and toys because of their inadequacy. Teachers also complained about the implementation of the intervention. Their concerns were that it was extra work for them, and they were afraid they might not be compensated for it.

### 3.3. Recommendations

- Administrators and teachers should make provisions to allow children some time to play upon arrival at school before lessons begin. It will help alleviate the daily stress of transitioning to school by children, teachers and parents.
- Teachers should be motivated to include play in their morning activities with children.
- School readiness programs should be planned effectively to help children manage their separation anxiety when leaving their parent to come to school.
- Strategies such as window hugging and many others should be employed to reduce the distress of separating children from their parents upon arrival to school in the morning.

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