Lauren Frantz

Play

At a preschool that I have worked at there are a lot of activities that go on throughout the day. Some of them are adult-directed and others are children directed. The adult directed ones are usually curriculum based and there is something that the teacher is wanting the children to learn. For example they read a book to them about a flower outside and after the children get to draw a picture of their flower. Another example is every month the children have to draw what they think the look like in the mirror. At the end of the year they put them all together and see how much they have changed over the year. A child-directed activity is riding the bikes outside or climbing up the side of a playground set and sliding down the side. When I am there, the program has a lot of child-directed activities because it is the end of their day and they are waiting for their guardian or someone to pick them up. We have done activities where they start out teacher-directed but end up children-directed, such as when they are going to watch a movie and the children get to pick which one. The activity starts out with picking that they are watching a movie and the activity changes when the child gets to pick the movie.

 Based on my experiences with what I am seeing at my program site I have seen a lot of construction play. This is defined in our book by Henniger as making something out of materials available to them. The intellectual skills needed for building are a step above those required for functional play. This can be seen when you see children playing with a material and they make it into something else using their imagination. For example I see this when the children are giving blocks and they build buildings or race tracks out of them. I also have observed this when they are in the sand box, they are able to create almost anything they can think of by building it out of sand. They love to use the plastic shapes to mold the sand into anything they can think of. Also there were children trying to make a moat in the woodchips for the ants to crawl through. They were trying to get the ants to go where they wanted by making a space in the woodchucks for the ants to crawl though.

 The social type of play that I have observed in a preschool that I have worked at is cooperative play. This is a social play defined as children playing in groups as they did in associative play, but now the children demonstrate division of labor, working on a group project or cooperating to attain a common goal. Some of them are still at associative play which is children borrow and loan play materials and the group members are engaged in similar activities. These children are not playing with the other children in reaching a common goal but they are interacting with the other children using the same play materials. The children demonstrating in cooperative play are building a sand castle together and all wanting it to get as high as they can make it without falling over. Another example is when they are all playing on the play tower and some of them are guarding it and others are top telling the other people who can come up or not. The children engaged in associative play are playing in the sand or water box together and sharing the materials used in these areas but they are working on different projects. Also this can be not a desired type of play. Such as if the children come together to pick on another child. They have a common goal but the goal is not a desired one.

References

1. Michael L. Henniger, 2009, Teaching Young Children, An introduction, New Bakersville, Pearson Chapter 5, pg 131
2. Henniger, 2009, Chapter 5, pg 133