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Subject Area - Childcare

Child Development

A child's development is the process of growth of a child to teenage years, from dependency to increase independence. The early years of a child's life is essential for cognitive, social and emotional developments (Leo 3). Therefore, it is important that parents take every step necessary to ensure that children grow up in environments where their social, emotional and educational needs are met.

The development of a child most often occur in unpredictable stages. Although every child develops in a unique way, all children are expected to get influence by their environment at different age level. Children who are between the ages of 6 and 12 grow and mature at very different rates. It is normal to the children's growth. There can be big difference in height, weight and build among healthy children. Diet, exercise and genes are all factors. Some children begin puberty or are close to it before they are teenagers (Leo 3).

Children will start to become more and more independent from their parents. For example, they may rebel against their parents. They also will look outward that is to their friends, who are usually of the same sex. Peer approval becomes very important. This child may try new behaviors to be part of "the group." This can also be the time that parents or teachers recognize learning disabilities or behavioral problems in children (Bornstein and Genevro 1). These problems can get worse as time goes on, so it is important to get help when the children is still young.

Young children who grow up in environment where their developmental needs are not met are at an increased risk for delays of one or more areas, such as learning and language. Failure to invest time and resources during children's early years may have long term effects on the foster care and education systems (Bornstein and Genevro 1).

Early childhood is mainly refer to the period from birth through age five. A child's cognitive development during early childhood, which includes building skills such as pre-reading, language, vocabulary, and numeric, begins from the moment a child is born. Developmental scientists have found that the brain acquires a tremendous amount of information about language in the first year of life even before a baby can speak. By the time babies speak or understand their first words, they know what is the sounds of the language they use (Leo 34).

When young children are provided an environment which is rich in learning and literacy interactions and with many opportunities to listen to and use language for many times, they can begin to acquire the needed skills in their childhood years (Leo 34). A child who go to school without these skills will become a high risk of starting at the back and staying behind.

Therefore, parents are a child's first and most important teachers. A study showed that nearly 40 percent of young children are cared mainly by their parents. The Bush Administration believe that it is important to support parents and families in their most important task in life by raising their children through several means, including providing them information about early childhood development (Bornstein and Genevro 4).

A child's social skill is often a problems to many parents. A research shows that between 15 and 20 per cent of babies are

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born with an apprehensive temperament, and with reference to three quarters of these babies will grow up and become a shy child. That is 11 to 15 per cent of all children (Tacio 61). In this case, these shy children will have difficulties in interacting with others.

Also, some children do not like to go to school because they have no friends or it is a new environment for them. One fear that keeps children from enjoying school is that they do not know how to make friends at school (Lye Ching 44). It is always happen when a child do not has good social skills or when a child is about to start to attend a new school environment.

“Threatening behaviours like scolding, harsh comment or constant nagging will not help on improving the growing of a child,” says Swaminathan. “It may make a child become worse, turn the shyness into a serious social anxiety.” (qtd. in Tacio 61)

Parent protecting their shy child from social interaction is not the answer too. For example, some parents will answer for their children at the doctor’s office, even though the doctor is asking the question to the child. “Don’t just let him retreat, but encourage interaction whenever opportunities arise,” says Lau Lee Fang, a Singapore applied behaviour analysis therapist who works with children. (qtd. in Tacio 62)

According to Swaminathan gradual exposure to social situations can help a child deal with his or her fears and anxieties. For example, a mother bring her daughter to a party and introduce her to another child, and then suggest her daughter to show the child her doll to start the communication first. “Parents need to provide the child with opportunities to interact with people,” Swaminathan says. (qtd. in Tacio 61)

Team sports is an ideal setting in which to develop social skills like co-operation, compromise and leadership. “Discover why the child is not interested. If the child is good at sports but he or she is fearful that others will judge him, then encourage, but do not force the child to sign up,” advises anxiety expert Martin Antony. (qtd. in Tacio 62) The child may surprise himself and discover that he loves sports. Therefore, the child can build his self-confidence as well as social skills.

Moreover, parents can teach their child how to speak by practice speaking at home through ordinary conversations. The dinner table is the best place to do it. For example, parents should try open-ended questions like, “What should we do this weekend?” to see how their child will respond (Lye Ching 45). This lets a child to offer his own ideas without feeling stressed. Also, jokes will lighten up the conversation and mood for a child. This will encourage a child’s creativity and verbal expressions.

In addition, parents must be sure to practice talking with their children about their feelings. Children who have good social skills can put feelings into words. Parents can help a child to do this by giving him chances for speaking up his emotions. For example, parents should try to listen and sympathize, rather than minimizing their feelings.

Parents should also focus on the reading skills of their children. Many children in these days who do not read are struggle with vocabularies and understanding problems. These children have difficulties in learning the meanings of a word or remember the meanings of the word they have learn (Simmons and Kameenui 196). In this case, children will

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feel left behind when they go to school.

A good reader will start out ahead. A good reading skill is a key indicator of school success in Year One to Year Eleven. It means that what happen in the very early years has a lasting effect on learning (Simmons and Kameenui 197).

The more the parents reads, talks and sings to babies, the greater their foundation for vocabulary and understanding. The youngest ones are amazingly receptive to language (Culbreth 114). Toddlers will sit still to interact with books if their interest with questions like “who is that?” and “what else do you see?” (qtd. in Culbreth 114)

Preschool is the time for children to begin to learn the alphabets, and to become aware of the sounds that make up words that is an essential skills for reading which is known as phonemic awareness (Culbreth 114). Therefore, young school age kids need a lot of practice reading to and with their parents. Parents can try repeat reading to build fluency in their children. For example, parents read a passage and then let their child read one. This give their child's attention to punctuations and interesting words as they read the books (Culbreth 115).

Good readers have better vocabularies. From Year Three on, children need to learn about 3000 new words a year that is eight new words a day. It takes at least four exposures to make a word on their own (Culbreth 115).

To improve a child's word power, parents can try to spend more time with their children, such as tell stories about the past, present, and future, encourage play, and read a variety of books (Culbreth 114). At dinnertime, parents can tell a story about their childhood or ask about a future school event. Moreover, according to child development expert Sue Bredekamp, it is an essential way for children to improve their language skills (Simmons and Kameenui 198). Through reading a variety of books that include picture books, stories with rhymes, science or history books that give cool new information. And parents will engage child in unlimited conversations about what they read together.

Besides that, good readers are able to preview and summarize the story of a book. As parents begin a new book, they should spend a little time with the cover, suggests Francis Alexander of Scholastic Education. Read the title, look at the illustration and ask their child what he or she thinks the book is about. Every few pages or so, ask the child to retell what has happened; ask what might happen next (Culbreth 115).

The library day is the best day of school for many children. So, parents should bring their children to the library as often as possible. Children will search for their favourite books and read for many times that they are able to read it on their own. Being a good reader could make all the difference in the world to children's future. Decades of research showed that enjoying reading and reading well are the biggest factors in a child's school success (Culbreth 113).

As a result, prepare children to be a good reader is one of the greatest gifts parents can give to their children. Children who often struggle over words and have trouble understanding words will find a little fun in the process. In a study of American Year Five students, the most passionate readers spend more than fifty times as many minutes a day reading for pleasure comparing with less fluent readers. At the end of the year, the better readers had read more than two million more words, this creating more and more knowledge to the children (Culbreth 115).

A child's behaviour is always cause by their own parents. Children who grow up in an environment where they always

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get scolded by their parents are often found to have aggressive behaviours. For example, a parent teaches her eight-year-old daughter to do spelling. When her daughter made the same mistake for three times, the parent started to yell at her. Through this incident, the children will lose her confidence and start to follow what her parents did to her (Spicer 109).

Another bad behaviour is that some children are never learnt to be self-sufficient. It is because they have never been expected to be. Nowadays, parents want more than anything else to make their children happy. They have been sacrifice everything to make sure that their children are happy. These parents spend a lot of fortunes on their children as if they are made of money (Dalton 98). For example, they set up a birthday party to their children as if they were princes or princesses. In this case, it is similar to giving their grown up children expensive cars and excessive clothing allowance. Therefore, children will start to take it for granted and want more from their parents (Dalton 99).

As California psychologist Wendy Mogel points out in *The Blessing of a Skinned Knee*, today's parents seems to care very much about their children feeling good and often forget to teach them about doing good (Dalton 98). One obvious characteristic of children who have been given too much thing is that they have no sense of sympathy for others, although they have a great concern for themselves. These spoiled children will make bad roommates, bad friends, and even bad spouses. This will become a serious problem to the society.

In order to change a child's aggressive behaviour, parents need to be more patient to them. In a 1999 study show by psychologists Harvey Mandel and Harold Minden at York University in Toronto, patience topped the list of skills parents thought they needed. Also, impatience is the number one attitude they did not want to pass on to their kids (Spicer 109).

For Freda Martin, a psychiatrist and founding director of the Gail Apple Institute in Toronto, being patient is often a choice. Parents choose to pay attention because they know it is important. For example, a parent waiting at the door while her preschooler is struggling to tie his shoes because she know that mastering his skills will help him gain confidence (Spicer 109). But, Martin says, "You shouldn't have to wait for ever." Parents can just pick up their child and his shoes, and tell him, "It's time for us to go now" without losing patience and getting angry (qtd. in Spicer 109).

Rather than getting angry, parents should learn how to manage their feelings. So, learning to be more patient is a good skill that parents can use in the moment when they are about to lose control.

Another way to improve a child's behaviour is through communications. Parents who communicate more with their children starting from young will decrease the chances of children doing rebellious things. Parents who often communicate with their children are able to tell his or her problems. Therefore, these children will not get any wrong advice from their peers or outsiders.

Also, parents should never try too hard on their children, such as sacrificing personal time, friendships and their own interest to make their children happy. They should teach their children to learn to appreciate whatever they have now starting from young age. Parents must never buy everything demand by their children or giving too many advantages to them.

Therefore, a parent's attention is essential to improve a child's behaviour. It is important for parents to focus on their children's needs and teach them not to become takers.

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In a summary, parents must pay attention to their kid's communication abilities, understanding abilities, and manner. Firstly, a kid's communication abilities can be improved by experiencing public circumstances. That is giving them the opportunity to speak to the public. Also, becoming a member of outside activities will help kids to learn how to communicate with others. Parents must also teach their kids the way how to speak at their house. Communication ability can help kids to overcome anxiety and fear in the public.

Secondly, parents can improve a kid's understanding abilities through reading books and studying with them. Parents who read with their kids are able to question them about what was happening in the story. Also, parents need to take their kids to the library regularly. It motivates their kids to read as many books as possible. Reading can improve a kid's knowledge and word power.

Thirdly, parents can develop their kid's manner by controlling their own temper. Parents should not yell or scold at their kids. It will create low self-esteem and inherit this behaviour to their kids. Parents also need to create conversations between their kids. They can ask questions about how they feel or be a good listener to them. Plus, parents must not spoil their kids by buying expensive stuff for them. They need to teach their kids to learn to be more self-contained.

In conclusion, as fathers and mothers, they must pay attention to the growth of their kids since they are the upcoming age group. My opinion is that every parent must keep an eye on their children's development and growth. There will be disabilities and behavioural problems in children if there is a lack of care and love. Thus, parents play an important role in leading their children to the success of their lives.

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