

Learning environment and play observation:

S1:

- Every classroom has its construction area, construction play takes place indoors.
- The school has a good variety of construction toys – wooden blocks, LEGO and open-ended toys and materials.
- Materials are stored in the classroom in different containers. Most of the materials are accessible, however, some are stored on shelves at height.
- The older children know where all the toys are. Both boys and girls engage in construction play whether that be individually or in a group. The children take part in this daily.
- The teacher promotes construction play by having daily construction periods and external people with construction toys come in to engage with the children.
- The children appeared to be between stage 4-7; observed bridging, patterns of dramatic play and real-life structures.
- The stages of play cohere with the age of the children.
- Problem-solving did occur to a certain extent. The children understood how the blocks worked. They planned structures and replanned them when they fell over. One girl was very driven and built a large construction. She checked the construction by building higher and if it fell, she would redo it by trying a different plan.
- The children preferred the wooden blocks, they did not massively like the open-ended materials, and they did not use the LEGO. Later they discovered some open-ended materials and started putting the toys in the boxes.

S2:

- There is no dedicated construction area, the toys and materials are packed in containers.
- Construction play mostly takes place indoors.

- The type of materials that the construction area has is wooden blocks, large LEGO, Small Lego, sensory toys, and toy animals. Only small amounts of construction material.
- The materials are stored in containers in the classroom.
- The materials are not very accessible, the teacher has to unpack the materials.
- The children know where the materials are, but they are unable to access them on their own.
- Both boys and girls are involved in the construction play, however, the boys prefer the construction toys.
- The children get 1 hour 30 minutes to play with the construction materials.
- The teacher promotes construction play by scheduling set play sessions.
- The children are showing levels between stage 3-7, they are mainly building different patterns and structures that symbolise real-life buildings.
- The stage of the construction play coheres with the children's ages. 4-5 years bridging, patterns and real-life structures occurred.
- Problem-solving did occur, the children knew they wanted to build a castle, the children started working together to achieve this. Two boys started building together, the children however did not check their constructions.
- The children only play with the wooden blocks. There is group and individual play. The boys and girls prefer to play separately.

S3:

- There is no dedicated construction play area, the children have to play on the carpet.
- Construction play mostly takes place indoors.
- The play area has a fair number of wooden blocks, a few large LEGO, sensory material, and toy animals.
- The construction materials are stored in the classroom in different containers.
- The materials are not very accessible, they have to ask the teacher if they want to play with the materials.

- The children know where all the materials are stored, but they are not accessible.
- Both genders like this form of play.
- The children have daily scheduled construction play sessions.
- The teacher promotes this form of play by scheduling daily construction periods for the children.
- The children vary between stages 2 – 6 and they mainly build enclosures for the toy animals and then dramatic play takes place with the toy animals and wooden blocks.
- The children mainly play in stage 3 where they build a lot of enclosures.
- Some of the children understand the problem given to them, they plan by trial and error, building different constructions, none of the children checked their constructions.
- One of the boys did not engage in any form of play, he only observed the other children while they played. Later on, he packed some bottles.
- The children liked playing with the toy animals and they rarely played with the open-ended materials.

S4:

- There is no dedicated construction play area, all the materials are stored in containers.
- Construction play usually takes place outdoors.
- There is a small number of wooden blocks, large and small LEGO, toy animals and no open-ended materials.
- All the materials are stored in the classroom in containers.
- The children have to ask the teacher if they want to play with any of the materials.
- The children know all the materials are stored in containers.
- There is only one girl in the class, and she usually prefers to play with other toys.
- Construction play is promoted by a daily construction play period and the teacher gives the children examples of what they can build.

- The stage of play varies between stage 1- 4. Piling, knocking down, stacking, and bridging occurred.
- The children's building development ends at stage 4.
- One boy showed problem-solving skills, he started planning and building with another boy. The constructions were only carried out halfway and not checked.
- Only two boys started building together on construction. The other children just played around.

S5:

- Construction play takes place on the carpet or at the children's desks where they do 6 bricks constructing.
- This form of the play takes place both indoors and outside.
- There is a variety of wooden blocks, big and small LEGO, toy animals, jungle toys, boxes, lids, and toilet rolls.
- The construction materials are stored in the classroom, so are displayed and the rest is stored in containers.
- Even though the materials are in containers they are still easily accessible.
- The children know where the materials are.
- Both genders enjoy and participate in construction play.
- There is a daily opportunity for the children to play with the construction toys, in the mornings and afternoons.
- The teacher promotes construction play by being actively involved during the sessions.
- The children are building between stages 1 – 3, piling, towering, and building small enclosures.
- Unfortunately, the age of the children does not cohere with the stages of their building. The children only seem to want to pile the blocks on top of each other.
- It seems that the children do not show problem-solving skills. No planning took place, the children only piled the blocks. They only wanted to carry and pile the blocks. No constructions were checked.

- All the children wanted to play with the toy animals. Some children started building with the big LEGO. The children did not want to play with the boxes or any other open-ended materials.

S6:

- The school has a small indoor construction area and a large outdoor construction area.
- The construction play area had a big variety of toys and materials, wooden blocks, large and small LEGO, boxes, trucks, train sets, road construction, wild animals, plastic bottles, and toilet rolls.
- All the materials are stored in the classroom in containers.
- The materials are not very accessible, they have to ask the teacher.
- The school is small, so the children know where everything is.
- Both boys and girls enjoy and take part in construction play.
- The children have daily opportunities to play with the materials.
- The teacher puts in an effort by providing fun construction toys for the children.
- The children are mainly building between stages 3 – 7 and the age of the children cohere with their building stages. Patterns begin to show, bridging, vertical and horizontal play.
- The children showed problem-solving skills. They planned the constructions together and build them with the boxes. They checked the constructions by putting toys on top of the construction.
- The children played in English and their home language is Afrikaans. They split up into groups and played together, not next to each other. Only one boy played alone. They did not mix up the materials. the children did not want to play with the open-ended materials.