

**Themes , Subthemes and Categories ( Teachers understanding, practices and contestations of play and learning )**

| THEME   | SUB THEMES-These will be the categories   |
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| Theme 1:<br>Teachers understanding of play and learning     | <p>T 1: <b>Play is all about having fun.</b> Whether, planned or free play, activities that a 3 – 4-year-old child finds enjoyable and fun to <b>do</b> is considered play. Children may <b>not realize it but through play they find themselves developing various skills</b> that they will continue to use throughout their lifetimes.</p>   |
| Subtheme 1.2<br>Teachers understanding of play and learning | <p>T 2: There are different types of play for children. Play is one of the best ways for kids to learn through because <b>during play, they are not only enjoying themselves</b>, they are improving their fine and gross motor skills, social skills when playing with other kids, sensory development, sequencing skills, problem solving skills, etc.</p> <p>T 3: <b>Play is what children love to do. Children like to play especially through abstract concepts.</b> While they are playing , they are learning. Their <b>subconscious</b> plays a role when they are playing. You cannot give a 3-4year old concrete objects at this age. They have no pencil control as yet. They rather love playing with objects like blocks and colorful objects, they love everything abstract. They are entertained through play.</p> <p>T 4: <b>Play is the work of children.</b> It consists of those activities performed for self-amusement that have behavioral , social and psychomotor <b>rewards</b>. It is child-directed and the rewards come from within the individual child, it is enjoyable and spontaneous ,Through the phenomenon of <b>play children develop and learn in activities in every area of the classroom</b>. Play affords children the ability to improve their language ,social, physical, math, science and thinking skills. The development and enhancement of these skills promote their self-esteem. <b>It allows children to use their creativity</b> while developing their imagination , dexterity and physical , cognitive and emotional strength. Play is important to</p> |

Commented [S1]: Play all about having fun

Commented [S2]: Play is a way of developing skills

Commented [S3]: Children play using abstract concepts like blocks

Commented [S4]: This practitioners understands that play is the work of children and should be child directed. It is enjoyable.

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|   | <p>health and brain development. In Cognitive development children who engage in pretend play tend to have high levels of interaction with others .It also encourages relationship building. Play should be meaningful and fun. It should be spontaneous, flexible and creative,</p>   |
| <p>Category<br/>1.2 a<br/>Developmental<br/>Domains</p> | <p>T1 Play is definitely essential to a child's development as it nurtures their mental growth, building a more confident being that is able to embrace learning with greater success in the future. Play teaches our children about social relationships, creativity, strategic thinking, problem solving, and much more. Through play, our children improve their motor skills, explore adult roles, invent new ideas, learn to work with their peers, and relieve stress. Play, as a mode of learning is said to be a great way to boost a child's self-confidence. Recent studies showed that children who learned to read early had no advantage over children who learned to read later when both were compared later in childhood, and in fact, children who read later had better comprehension specifically because their opportunities for more play improved their language development. Personally, yes, play is more important than learning, specifically in younger years, providing more opportunities to develop a confident child that will eventually excel in learning. Through play, children learn to work with others towards a shared goal, hereby developing their social skills. Through play, children learn to work through their own emotions, they express their feelings through play, by storytelling, through art or other activities. Play fosters cognitive skill, critical thinking and motor skill development. Having a child point out that they always have Storytime before naptime is an example of her using critical thinking. Children learn numeracy and literacy skills through playing with various toys and books and demonstrate their thinking as they talk about what they are doing. Play inspires creativity and</p> |

Commented [S5]: Play more important than learning

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|  | <p>builds self confidence in children. By playing, <b>they explore and learn to do many things by themselves</b>, gaining confidence. By using household objects and equipment, children can role play and assume a variety of roles, fostering creativity and imagination.</p> <p>T2: Play, with children is not only a form of fun and excitement. While they play they learn and <b>improve their skills to grow and learn</b>. They learn <b>problem solving and how to get along with others</b>. They also gain self-confidence when they see what they <b>have</b> accomplished once they are done building a tower for example or coloring in a picture or climbing a ladder etc. and this allows them to then engage in new experiences and environments</p> <p>T3: At this stage yes, play is more important. At this age of 3-4 years , they don't have a long concentration span. 4- year old's have a concentration span of about 4 mins. <b>Play activities helps in their concentration</b>. Through play , they learn. Children have a subconscious mind so for example if they are watching barney , they will learn the song. Yes, play is learning. Children love to play. There is no better way for a child to learn than learning through play. It is important to play educational games. It is vital to make learning fun. An example is ludo, children develop mathematical concepts through this game. Another game I love to play with my learners , is where I hide numbers and alphabets and we play hide and seek. In this way they are playing , learning and developing concepts. <b>Everything goes from concrete to abstract</b>. Through play children are learning. Children are developing through play. Children develop all their senses through play. Blocks assist with their sense of <b>touch</b> by feeling and holding it. I give my children activities where they feel different material. Through play , <b>their tactile skills are developing. Sensory skills are enhanced through play</b>.</p> <p>T4: Play is crucial in <b>a child's overall development than academic training</b>. It is also far more valuable for children's mental growth. Play allows children to use their creativity <b>while developing their</b></p> |
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Commented [S6]: Perception: Play improves skills and problem solving

Commented [S7]: Children develop through play-tactile, sensory skills. Play helps with concentration.

imagination,dexterity,physical,cognitive and emotional strength. Play is important to healthy brain development. It is through play that children at a very early age engage and interact in the world around them. Long -term impacts of play deprivation during early childhood development include isolation,depression,reduced self-control and poor resilience. Intergenerational play and family games are also in decline. Academic learning does not teach social skills. Structured and unstructured play teaches social skills. Time playing and moving outdoors has been proven to improve a person's emotional and physical well-being. Young children learn in quite different ways (than adults). They learn by comparing physical experiences, by interaction with other people and their own feelings. They learn an enormous amount through their imagination. Play is what pulls together the logical and creative parts of the brain. In an academic setting learn through play helps children learn and grow. As an educator I personally enforce play as a part of the learning process. As an educator I encourage guide learning but do so playfully and loosely with particular focus on the goals. When taking a play-based approach to combining different subjects, I've found that one can create an educational experience greater than the sum of its parts. Students learn critical thinking skills, develop their language abilities ,expand their range of knowledge and increase their social emotional awareness. All without realizing how much they are learning.

Play is far more powerful for children compared to learning, however than many parents realize it is actually the key to learning and develops key skills such as inquiry,expression,experimentation and teamwork. As an educator I love to see how children play. Its incredible to hear their ideas and learn about the new words they create. Its also fun to see how creative they can be as they put their imagination to use in learning about the world around them. Schools that use the Montessori education focus on encouraging children to learn through play.

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|  | <p>Play has five characteristics:1.) Gives the child a choice about what he or she wants.2.) Feels fun and enjoyable for the child.3.) Evolves spontaneously rather than giving kids a script to follow.4.)Is driven by intrinsic motivation.5.)Creates a risk-free environment where kids can experiment and try new ideas. Young children learn in quite different ways (than adults).Play is what pulls together the logical and creative parts of the brain.</p>   |
| <p>Category 1.2 b<br/>Playing is fun</p> | <p>T 1: Yes, most definitely. The most anticipated part of their day is free play. <b>Children love to explore and have fun doing so.</b> Children play instinctively and when they're playing, they are completely absorbed and concentrated and best of all, learning all the time.</p> <p>T 2: <b>Yes, they love play time. They find it exciting when they get to choose which form of play</b> they want to take part in and sit with <b>their</b> friends in a group. It is their time where they can choose what they want to do in the class. They enjoy fantasy play the most as well as play dough corner. They use the connect pipes as swords and guns and use the play dough to make yummy biscuits and cakes and even put them in the 'oven to bake'.</p> <p>T3: My children love to play.3-4-year old <b>enjoy</b> to play . They also love to sing. <b>They just love to play and learn. They find it exciting.</b> One of their favorites is fantasy play where they act and it helps to bring out their character.</p> <p>T4: Play is one of the main ways in which children learn and develop. It helps to build self-worth by giving a child a sense of his or her own abilities and to feel good about themselves. <b>Because it's fun, children often become very absorbed in what they are doing.</b> It also allows them to <b>express their unconscious experiences regarding their feelings about their life and things that are going on around them.</b> In addition, children enjoy play because it also assists with the ffg 1.)Language , 2.)Math, 3.)Social skill ,4.) Coping with stress. <b>Children enjoy free play</b> , from their early years and throughout the key stage. It plays a crucial role in their</p> |

**Commented [S8]:** Children love free play , they have fun and explore

**Commented [S9]:** Enjoy choosing play activities, love fantasy play and play dough

**Commented [S10]:** Find play exciting. Favourite is fantasy play.

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|   | development children love outdoor play. Outdoor play is considered a natural way for children to be healthier and physically active.   |
| Theme 2:<br>Teachers practices of playful learning<br>Subtheme 2.2:<br>Teachers practices of playful learning<br>Category a:<br>Playful learning Activities | <p>T1: Allowing children to embrace activities that encourage learning through play may involve a certain amount of planning. One needs to understand that there are various means of play and each child is unique in their approach to play. Firstly, always ensure a safe, appealing environment and be sure to provide age appropriate resources and equipment to the child. Focus on activities that will be easily achieved and build a child's self-confidence to motivate him/ her to do more. The environment can be changed to suit the child's needs always ensuring that play is safe, challenging, inclusive and fun. Observe and adapt play to suit individual needs, allowing play to be led by the child, intervene to enforce boundaries whenever necessary and participate in play at the appropriate times. It's also important to take note of a child's personality and pair them off with other children who will encourage their strengths and not their weaknesses. For example: for a child who is struggling to engage it is recommended that he is paired off with a calm and supportive personality. Observe, communicate and listen to children while they are playing in order to assess how you can best improve on them in future.</p> <p>T2 : Playing with a ball or outside play improves their gross motor skills. Playing with play dough, kinetic sand, or water play enhances their sensory skills. Playing with blocks, coloring in a simple picture, threading, etc, enhances their fine motor development. There are many other ways in which children play and learn at the same time.</p> <p>T3: I engage them by using the appropriate tools and equipment. Everything is done from concrete to abstract. I assist them in</p> |

Commented [S11]: Focus is placed on adapting activities according to the needs of the child

Commented [S12]: Incorporate activities for gross motor, fine motor and sensory skills.

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|   | <p>engaging them in activities such as spooning, water activities, clay and blocks. Through these play activities ,they are <b>learning</b> and developing hand eye coordination.</p> <p>T4: Sometimes engaging toddlers and preschoolers might seem as complicated as 'herding cats. Not only do they have tons of energy but they also very opinionated. How do you engage a child whose favorite word is "NO" and favorite question is "WHY" ? Believe it or not , it can be done !<b>The key is to use their energy and opinionated nature to your advantage.</b> These are different ways to help harness the energy of young learners.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Keep it short – the average attention span of 3-4-year-old is around 8-10 min. Because young children can't focus for too long .It is important to make the most of the time you have.</li> <li>2. Make it hand on-young children love to get their hands on everything. Touch is one of the ways they experience the world.</li> <li>3. Get moving -parts of their body are connected.</li> <li>4. Repeat it -Repeating information helps children learn and helps them build their confidence.</li> <li>5. Involve Rhythm -adding rhythm is another way to help children take in information.</li> <li>6. Offer guidance</li> <li>7. Give them a task to do</li> <li>8. Tell a story</li> <li>9. Use four-color makes learning exciting!</li> </ol> |
| <b>Category b:</b><br><b>Choice of toy/activity</b> | <p>T1: When planning any activities for children, <b>yes children's choices are important to a certain extent</b> to create a positive interest and to encourage participation in the activity. It is vital to <b>ensure</b> that your activity grasps the interest of your child to encourage positive interaction.</p>   |

**Commented [S13]:** Learning hand eye co-ordination, spooning and water activities

**Commented [S14]:** Childrens choices taken to a certain extent only

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|  | <p>T2: Yes, I do. With a class of 7 children I try to identify what each child enjoys most and set the play activities accordingly. By doing this I know that no child will get bored during play time or feel left out while the other learners enjoy. I also encourage the learners to take part in different play activities and try to make each activity fun and exciting.</p> <p>T3: You have to consider their choice . I have to consider and see if they will enjoy it. The environment is set up according to the age of the children. Equipment is chosen age appropriately. Activities are not monotonous. I have to continuously change play and learning activities so that the children don't get bored. Once they have mastered a certain activity we move on to the next. The equipment used for these activities are set up. The activities chosen are activities that are fun for children.</p> <p>T4 : Firstly, giving children choices help them feel like they have some power and control over what they do, and it's a step in growing up. Everyone likes to have choices in things they do. Also, to understand play we must first understand the importance of the environment in the eyes of the children. Some people may see the environment as insignificant but for educators it is something that needs to be considered a high priority. A well-arranged environment should enhance children's development through learning and play. The way the physical environment is designed and configured influences how children feel, act and behave. The physical environment allows growth and development through activities and materials in defined areas. Descisions about how the classroom or physical environment is arranged will also depend on the philosophy and goals of the teacher. Depending on a teacher objectives, the room arrangement and placement of instructional materials will differ, however certain essential features will need to be in every classroom. For example, my belief is that children become more literate through participating in a board range of activities that include read-aloud and group reading .Given this I</p> |
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**Commented [S15]:** Activities chosen according to what each child enjoys

**Commented [S16]:** Activities are chosen age appropriately and are not monotonous



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|  | ensure that my classroom has a comfortable library area , where my children can access many literally materials without asking.   |
| Category c :<br>Setting up of<br>the play<br>learning<br>environment | <p>T1: A learning environment is where a child feels safe and secure to explore and at the same time, it also needs opportunity for an adult to comfortably observe, guide and supervise. To set up a play learning environment, one needs to ensure that the following aspects are included. Space is important to allow the child to move around comfortably and freely. Resources and equipment should be easily accessible, safe and appeal to a child's interests and needs. I would use resources that would make the child comfortable in his/her setting. For example, a soft, responsive environment where a child is comfortable with the textures around him/her. Be sure that it is not an environment that they have difficulty conforming to, like hard uncomfortable surfaces etc. Use resources that lead to open ended play opportunities. Children use these resources in so many ways that we wouldn't even anticipate. Observe and you may even find ways of adding or eliminating resources as you go along. One can introduce items that will further encourage various skill development.</p> <p>PR 2: I set up the environment in a way where most of the equipment like blocks, puzzles, play dough, beading activities etc. are easily accessible for the children. The children know that play dough and puzzles for example should be played with at the tables and blocks and other building activities should be laid with on the carpet. We've also set up a little reading corner with story books and a little art corner with all the art equipment.</p> <p>T3: I prepare the play learning environment the day before. So every day after the children leave I set it up for the next day. Equipment is chosen very carefully according to each child's abilities and needs. All the equipment is set up in trays which is put</p> |

Commented [S17]: Space , resources and a safe environment needed

Commented [S18]: Structured set up with equipment accessible for children

Commented [S19]: Structured and prepared environment

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|   | <p>in shelves. The children are free to choose any activity that they wish to play. The environment is very prepared. There is also a jungle gym outside which they play on with supervision.</p> <p>T 4: A play -learning environment should be a place where children can let their imaginations run wild. One should aim to encourage this in many ways as possible. A writing station where they draw pictures and color/paint. A well-arranged environment should enhance children's development through learning and play. Physical environment should be designed on how children feel , act and behave. Creating a library – it is essential for the classroom library to have a large rug to sit or lay on and a bookcase filled with age -appropriate books. Structured play area-It is important to create an area for structured play and unstructured play. Structured play is consists of tables , chairs , several shelving units, Toys that are sorted into bins. Unstructured play area should include toys that causes your child to really use his imagination. Play areas should be safe !</p> |
| <p>Choice of picture<br/>Category : Guided play</p> | <p>T1: Picture 4 – Children with an Educator in a playgroup in this particular picture a specific learning experience has been set up to achieve specific outcomes. Learners learn best by doing. Hands on learning at preschool means that children are active participants throughout the day, exploring the materials, playing inside and outside, following their curiosities, and discovering things on their own and with each other in group tasks. Their teacher acts as a facilitator, not by telling them what to do, but by simply asking questions that challenge them to think creatively and deeply.</p> <p>T2:Picture 4 where the educator is with the children in a play group because when you involve your child in active playing or learning they learn more than when it only includes audio or visual learning</p>   |

Commented [S20]: Teacher acts as a facilitator not telling them what to do - scaffolding

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|  | <p>or being alone. Teachers can guide the children and children tend to listen more to teachers rather than their own parents. A play group is a great way for children to learn because there are many skills which they benefit in and they learn a lot with their teacher and their friends.</p> <p>T3: For me pic 2 stands out. It is so important that parents play with their child. It creates a sense of bonding between parents and child. It is very important for parents to encourage their children , play with them and have fun with them. Parents need to praise their children and engage/interact with them It helps children develop.</p> <p>T4: Picture 2</p> <p>Parents playing with their child while children do need time to play alone and with other children without adult intervention. I believe that playtime with parents is very beneficial to a child's learning and development. Children crave time with parents. It makes them feel safe, secure and special. I strongly encourage parents to play with their children on a regular basis. This should include one to one with each child and group time with all the adults and kids in the home. In pretend play let the child develop the theme. Get into their world. Let them go with it. Ask Questions. Play along , be silly along with them and have fun ! Play outdoors, play games, silly wacky kid games.</p> |
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Commented [S21]: Teacher guides children-vygotsky

Commented [S22]: Parents needs to interact and praise their children as it assists in development.

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| Theme 3 ;<br>Contestation<br>between play<br>and learning | T1: Learning is best achieved if younger children are given the opportunity to build the necessary skills required to do so first. Personally, in my opinion play is an essential and critical aspect to improve learning. So, play is equally as important in nurturing a confident and successful learner. I always be encouraging to allow children the opportunity to derive many of its great benefits. Play |
| Subtheme<br>3.2 :   | offers a less stressed approach to learning and children thrive when  |

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| <p>Teachers' views regarding the contestations between play and learning</p> | <p>they can enjoy a sense of achievement in a fun and productive way.</p> <p>It is much easier for children to explore and attain skills by means of play. Recent studies showed that children who learned to read early had no advantage over children who learned to read later when both were compared later in childhood, and in fact, children who read later had better comprehension specifically because their opportunities for more play improved their language development</p> <p>T2 : Both are important because when children play, they learn at the same time. We believe children learn through play as well.</p> <p>Learning is part of life and play is part of what children do. Children can learn colors, shapes, numbers, sequencing, etc. all through play. Play is not only beneficial to children's physical development but to all forms of development in children.</p> <p>T3: At this stage yes. At this age of 3-4 years , they don't have a long concentration span. 3-4- year old's have a concentration span of about 4 mins. Play activities helps in their concentration. Through play , they learn. Children have a subconscious mind so for example if they are watching barney , they will learn the song. Learning is important. Everything has its time, depending on each age group. Different developmental levels need to be reached at its particular time and age. All activities are done from concrete to abstract. Children learn by feeling , by movement , and more play and learning. Through play children are learning.</p> <p>T4: Play is crucial in a child's overall development than academic training. Play is far more powerful for children compared to learning, however than many parents realize it is actually the key to learning and develops key skills such as inquiry,expression,experimentation and teamwork. As an educator I love to see how children play. Its incredible to hear their ideas and learn about the new words they create. Its also fun to see how creative they can be to see how creative they can be as they put their imagination to use in learning about the world around them. Schools that use the Montessori education focus on encouraging children to learn through</p> |
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**Commented [S23]:** Emphasizes the importance of play, an educator who understand what play means

**Commented [S24]:** Importance actually placed on development more than play itself

**Commented [S25]:** Emphasizes that playful learning takes place from concrete to abstract. Concentration span is minimal so play helps children concentrate. Play more important at 3-4 years .

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|  | <p>meaningful play. Play has five characteristics:1.) Gives the child a choice about what he or she wants.2.) Feels fun and enjoyable for the child.3.) Evolves spontaneously rather than giving kids a script to follow.4.)Is driven by intrinsic motivation.5.)Creates a risk-free environment where kids can experiment and try new ideas. Young children learn in quite different ways (than adults).Play is what pulls together the logical and creative parts of the brain.</p>   |
| Children's' experiences of play and learning in the playroom and on the playground | <p>T1: There are various learning areas in the playroom to facilitate a number of approaches to learning. Playroom rules assist with using all areas safely and effectively. Play based materials such as puppets, blocks, fantasy play, costumes and toys add more play opportunities to the playroom/classroom. Young learners are concrete learners who learn by doing, so including various learning resources like puzzles, books, toy cars, art materials etc. facilitate active learning. Guessing games, hide and seek and solving puzzles and discussions helps to practice and review concepts in class. Music and movement are also an essential part of our daily routine which most children enjoy thoroughly. Kids need play breaks and time is always too short on the playground. Lots of learning takes place outside too. From gross motor activities to fun in the sandpit creating and exploring, we often get involved with our children in free play activities whilst outside. Learners are taught safety first at all times as they run and explore their surroundings. My favorite outdoor activity would be obstacle courses encouraging gross motor skill development. Fun and games is our greatest tool both inside of our classroom, as well as outside on the playground.</p> <p>T2: Playroom learning starts off with free play where children enhance their fine motor skills, problem solving, social skills,</p> |

Commented [S26]: Concrete learners inside , gross motor skills develop outside

sensory development etc. Learning numbers with flashcards and using their fingers to count. Learning shapes and colors with visual learning as well as during free play. Using work sheets to color in, visual perception to identify size, color, odd one out, etc. And story book time. Playground learning includes mainly gross motor as well as some fine motor development. Climbing up the ladder, jumping, running, kicking a ball, etc. all helps in developing their gross motor skills.

T 3: In the playroom children learn to share as they participate in many group activities. Learning takes place in a more structured manner and fine motor skills are developed through play and learning activities within the playroom. Respect for each other is encouraged. Each child respects each other's time with the teacher and they respect each other's tasks.

In the playground all the children are together and they are developing and learning through different activities outside. They learn different skills when playing on the jungle gym. When children are outside they are happy, noisy and enjoy it even more than inside. They develop gross motor skills through playground activities

T 4 :In the playroom, different methods of learning through play helps nurture children's imagination and allows them a sense of adventure. Through this they learn essential skills such as problem solving, working with other, sharing and much more. It also helps them to develop the ability to concentrate. Development of fine and gross motor skills is also developed as each child learns at his own level and from each other.

When you watch children play on a play-ground you can see learning taking place. Through cause and effect, they adjust their position and they throw in a way that gives them a fun, concrete experience to learn. For example, every time a child tries to shoot a ball through a basketball hoop they are accidentally learning about math and physic concept. Children develop physical skills like balance and motor co-ordination.

Commented [S27]: Playroom – problem solving skills  
Playground-Gross motor skills

Commented [S28]: Playroom- fine motor skills, more structured  
Playground-Gross motor skills, children enjoy it more on the playground than in the playroom.

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| Risky play | <p>T1: Yes, movements that are often associated with risky play, include activities such as, swinging, climbing, rolling, hanging, sliding. Swinging on fast speed swings, climbing high up ladders to get to the top of jungle gyms, hanging from monkey bars and sliding down high slides all pose injury risks to children. These are not only fun for children but also essential for their motor skills, balance, coordination, and body awareness. Children who do not engage in such movements are more likely to be clumsy, feel uncomfortable in their own body, have poor balance, and a fear of movement.</p> <p>T2: Not really. Because children learn through every aspect of life and they grow through experience... If they don't experience something they will never know what to expect out of a situation.</p> <p>T3: Yes, some outside activities on the jungle gym may be risky. You need supervision. A child cannot be left all alone by themselves. Equipment that is not dangerous needs to be chosen. Constant supervision is very important. Children like to put things in their mouth, they need to be supervised. You cannot let children play with scissors on their own.</p> <p>T4: Risky play is when children engage in activities such as sliding, jumping from heights, climbing, balancing and hanging upside down. Risk-taking benefits the child because it helps them build essential skills for their development. For example, their confidence, self-regulation and independence. It is also essential for their motor skills, balance, co-ordination and body awareness. Sometimes in risky play children may wonder what will happen if I do this? Will I fall off or stay on? How high can I go? Children push their boundaries and challenge themselves to do things without help from an adult.</p> |

Commented [S29]: Outdoor activities-risky, but they are needed

Commented [S30]: Children learn through all activities so no play is risky. They need to participate in all play.

Commented [S31]: Constant supervision is needed particularly for outdoor activities

