

Simple Play Activities for Behaviour Modification

Maqsud Ahmed

As a Physical Education teacher, it is obvious that I will endorse play activities both in the field and off it for the physical and mental health and wellbeing of students. But along with this, there are numerous other behavioural patterns that can be modified when demonstrated using simple play activities. I am sharing some of my experiences.

Sitting in a group

To make children understand the importance of discipline in everyday living, it is best to adopt an experimental approach so that children can weigh the positive and negative aspects of activities and situations and arrive at conclusions on their own.

The children in my primary and upper primary classes had the habit of sitting in a group and making noise. I explained to them several times that if they flock together their hands will collide and their handwriting will be affected. Also, not everyone will be able to read what is written on the blackboard clearly.

When they did not comply with what I told them, I decided to engage them in an activity to drive this point home. I made the children stand in a group and gave each one of them a ball. I placed a target at a short distance away from them and asked them all to hit it with their ball at the same time. Only two balls hit the target. There were twenty-one children in the group.

With the help of a play activity, I successfully delivered a message about the negative impact of sitting in a group in class. After this, children always sat at a distance from each other in class and that too without my having to tell them.

Making noise in the classroom

Children making noise in the classroom is a common problem in every school. One day, I noticed that when children of classes II and III came to the playground to play, they were making less noise than they make in the classroom.

I stood before them and told them that I would tell them a story and no one should talk or make noise throughout the story – from start to finish. I began telling the story and students started to talk among themselves. I finished telling the story and then I began asking each one of them to retell the story. Some knew half, some knew even less, and some did not know the story at all!

I told them how they disturbed others and missed the explanation of topics in class when they were always busy talking with each other. After this, they began to sit quietly during class and also kept quiet and listened attentively when I explained the rules and skills of a game in the playground.

In summary

Group games in school reveal a lot about children and how they view themselves. Sometimes a little guidance from teachers can transform a child completely. There was a young boy in my class who I noticed was very good at controlling and guiding a group of students in the classroom during group activities. But if I asked him to lead the children on the playground, he would hesitate and even start stammering.

One day, while the students were playing *kabaddi*, I asked him to guide a few students in the game. Gradually, I increased the number of students in his group. He became a leader without realising it. I discussed this with the Principal and we gave him the opportunity to conduct the primary school assembly. He read a speech on leadership in the assembly without stammering. After a week, we had a combined assembly for primary and upper primary classes and this boy conducted it with no fear or hesitation. We are continuously seeing him improve and become a more confident person.

There are numerous ways in which we can help children modify their behaviour, gain confidence and overcome their fear or shyness by using simple play techniques. Many children have a fear of facing

a group or gathering. They hesitate to come in front and face the class or the school assembly. It is the

job of a teacher to sense the feelings of each child and help him or her with sensitivity and tact.



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The agency of the child provides the setting for the adult caregiver and the child to jointly explore the world, share linguistic and rational tools, and acquire methods of endowing things with value and meaning. The child's playful exploration of the world, by seeing, hearing, grabbing, tasting things when accompanied by an adult, results in an interactive exchange of knowledge, values, meanings and modes of using the objects around.

C N Subramaniam, Play and Education - Some Points to Ponder, p 03.