

Abstract

Doctoral thesis in its theoretical and practical parts focuses on the free play of children in a kindergarten and its development in a group of 2,5 – 4 years old children. The theoretical part provides a deeper understanding of play, especially with 2 – 4 years old children, and lays a foundation for the research.

The practical part, based on two observations (in the span of one year and half a year) of free play of two homogenous groups of children, monitors the development of play and finds out, how the quality of play changes with individuals as well as the group. This part follows the process of incorporation of the child into the play group, influence of gender of the child on the choice of a toy. Then it focuses on the course of pretend and role plays of 2,5 – 4 years old children. It monitors which themes of plays and which roles children choose and how active children are in the play with the children of similar age. The main method of the research is observation.

The conclusion from the outcome of the research shows importance of free play for a preschool child and the changes in its course and confirms the influence of free play in the process of early secondary socialization. It discusses also possible practical use of the observations for further work of a kindergarten teacher.

Key words:

toy, older toddler, younger preschool age, need of a play partner, free play, role of a teacher, socialization, gender role, kindergarten environment in a foreign language, pretend play, role play, role in the play, free play observation, collective play.