

Promoting book corner at Early Childhood Development Centers (ECDC) at Mihinthale

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Abstract

Creating a Book Corner provides amazing opportunities for children to have interactive reading experiences. Ultimately these experiences give confidence children to become independent and confident readers. Early childhood determines a human being's future wellbeing, learning capacity, economic success and social participation. Hence, early childhood (birth to 5 years) (Early Child Developmental Standards for Sri Lankan Infants and Toddlers) Preschool children usually attend ECDC to gain companionship with other children and to learn to adjust to people outside the home. This institute must understand the needs of children and provide services to meet their development of various skills such as growth and development, language and literacy, intellectual development, physical development, social and emotional development etc. Early literacy refers to how familiar children are with the concept of reading and writing before they really learn to read and write. To display books and make materials available is not enough to promote a book corner in ECDCs. Based on this research, when promoting the book corner in the ECDC at Mihinthale, training was provided to the teachers in various methods and activities relating to language development. All ECDC teachers were trained through a one day workshop consisting of several activities, presentations and video clips. After 6 months the researcher visited preschools which had already established book corners. 28 teachers from 32 ECDCs joined the workshop. Current status of the book corners and the activities at ECDC centers were obtained through questionnaire distributed among all the teachers. Results show that all ECDC centers have book collections. In 90% of ECD centers book collections are kept in book cupboard or small boxes. This means that a child does not have ready access to books. The research observed that after training, the ECDC teachers were able to select books for the centre more judiciously. It also showed that those children knew how to handle books better, and were aware that books were a source of stories and information. Teachers were also now able to design different types of activities to promote language development through the use of a wide range of picture books, songs, poetry, finger plays, puppets and crafts. Recent developments have had a considerable impact on teachers in encouraging and organizing programmes for children in the form of story time using the various types of resources mentioned above. Such programmes develop the skills of listening, asking, questions, learning new words and concepts, engaging in dramatic plays, interacting with one another and helping to gradually increase their attention spans. Interaction between a child and the teacher is also facilitated by prompting the child to say something about the book, evaluating the child's response, expanding the child's response by rephrasing and adding information to it and repeating the prompt to make sure the child has learned from the expansion.

Key words: *Book Corner, Early Childhood Development Center, Early Literacy*