

F-03 **A STUDY OF THE EFFECT OF PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF
THOUGHT AND PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP IN TWO SELECTED GROUPS OF
CHILDREN OF AGE 4-7 YEARS**

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The purpose of this study was to experimentally test the effect of pre-school education on the development of thought and personal relationships in two selected groups of children in Sri Lanka and to see if pre-school children were at an advantageous position when they enter Grade I. The first hypothesis was that pre-school education had no significant effect on the cognitive development of children. The second and third hypotheses were that pre-school education had no significant effect on the emotional adjustment and acceptable social behaviour of children. The fourth hypothesis was that pre-school education did not facilitate readiness to formal schooling. The fifth hypothesis was that pre-school children from affluent homes did not differ significantly from children from non-affluent homes with regard to the benefit they get from pre-school education. Pre-post designs were utilized to test these hypotheses and the subjects were administered tests which measured their cognitive development, emotional adjustment, acceptable social behaviour and readiness to formal schooling. 41 subjects formed the experimental group and 55 non-pre-schoolers formed the control group. In addition to the pre-school variable, the home environment of the child was studied in relation to socio-economic status, child rearing practices and parent participation.

There were significant differences between the experimental and control group in relation to cognitive development, acceptable social behaviour, emotional adjustment and readiness to formal schooling, but there were no significant differences between the affluent and poorer groups in relation to the benefits they got from pre-school education.