

ABSTRACT

An Investigation of Teachers' Perceptions of 'Play' as a Medium of Best Practices for 3-5 Year Old Children

Judith Joseph-Mc Nicolls

This study sought to investigate, explore, and describe the perceptions of four early childhood care and education (ECCE) teachers (one each from one government ECCE, one SERVOL-operated ECCE centre, and two private preschools) in the South Eastern Education District of Trinidad and Tobago about the role of play in the teaching and learning practices at four ECCE centres. Data were collected through interviews held with the participants, as well as through observations and document analysis. The findings suggested that although most of the teachers' perceptions about play were in keeping with best practices in ECCE, only some of the practices were employed and implemented with the children at their preschools, resulting in a gap between theory and practice.

Keywords: Perceptions; Play; Teacher attitudes; Preprimary teachers; Early childhood care and education; Trinidad and Tobago