

PERCEPÇÃO DO JOGO NA CULTURA TURKISH ¹

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Resumo: A finalidade principal do estudo era ganhar a consciência melhor de como os pais turkish percebem o jogo. Os participantes eram 340 mães que responderam a dois questionários que têm a característica de se terminar para uma de suas crianças quatro e cinco anos velhas. As respostas dadas por mães para cada pergunta jogo-relacionada foram avaliadas usando frequências e porcentagens. Os resultados mostraram que os pais turkish são playmates diretivos e controladores, e a maioria refletiu a opinião tradicional de que o jogo é para a criança não para adultos e de que os adultos podem se envolver como mestres. Os resultados, quando feito exame conjunto, mostram um retrato interessante de que as mães saibam o que fazer, mas de algum modo eram incapazes e saber como fazê-lo. Isto é provavelmente por causa das atitudes dos pais frente ao jogo.

Palavras-chave: jogo intergenerational; jogo; percepção do pai.

PERCEPTION OF PLAY IN TURKISH CULTURE

Abstract: The main purpose of the study was to gain better awareness of how Turkish parents perceive the play. Participants were 340 mothers of the nursery children who responded to two questionnaires, which have the feature of completing each other, for one of their children aged between four and five. The responses given by mothers for each play-related question were evaluated by using frequencies and percentages. Results showed that Turkish parents are directive and controlling playmates, and majority reflected traditional belief that play is for child not for adults and adults may involve in as a master. The results, when taken into account with together, made an interesting picture that mothers know what to do but somehow they are incapable how to do so. This is mostly because of the attitudes of parents toward play.

Key-words: intergenerational play; play; parent perception.

The phenomenon of play has been extensively investigated by many researchers in different disciplines from different aspects. The similar results in those research studies reveal that play is the main activity in childhood period (Eheart & Leavitt, 1985). We can classify the childhood plays as the play with toys, with peers and with adults (Liu Yan, 1996). Both traditional and contemporary theories concerning childhood play are generally interested in the plays children perform him/herself. They try to explain motivation and satisfaction of a child as individual. When they determine the impacts of factors on child

play, they usually focus on the cognitive and enthusiastic condition of the player, gender differences or where the play takes place. On the other hand, there are about 200 investigations in the literature focused on the effect concerning the adult-child play which the influence of play on child is a bit exaggerated (Goldstein, J. 1996). Also it is put forward that this influence caused to perceive one way communication from adult to child.

Two major theoretical frameworks have played a main role in shaping and organizing the research on play. For a long period, the dominant influence was clearly that of Piaget. In Piaget's view, changes in cognitive development provide the basis for changes in play. According to Piaget, play does not lead to further cognitive development. Play simply reflects the level of cognitive development that has been

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attained. This view of the relationship between play and development differs significantly from the view of Vygotsky (as in Saracho, 1995).

The second major influence was that of Vygotsky which somehow forms the triggering point of this fore-study. According to Vygotsky, the culture and its transmission through social interaction and communication plays a dominant role on this issue and adds that development of a child occurs in a social context. In the Piagetian tradition, play is viewed as an individual accomplishment. From the Vygotskian point of view, in contrast, even in solitary play, children are involved in socio-cultural activity as they use language, materials and social scripts and games (Rogoff, 1993).

Nicolopoulou's article (1993) which builds on the theories of Piaget and Vygotsky puts an emphasis on play as an important childhood cognitive activity that is inherently social and cultural.

When the culture is defined as the total of behaviors, activities and products that the child expresses him/herself (Onur, 1996), it can be declared that intergenerational play has an important role since it functions as a bridge between the cultures of the adults and the child. By means of intergenerational play, both adults and children may have chance to transfer their cultures to each other.

We can learn the child culture from the child with help of play; yet while this is easy to say and still a quite difficult proposition in practice, it seems that this difficulty is closely associated with attitudes of adults towards play. In other words, nowadays, there are still handicaps derived from attitudes of adults. Firstly, how the roles in play are perceived is important; that is, it should be understood that a play contains activities which everybody play different roles from the real life. . The study made by Wigington and Patton (1996) suggests that a parent who does not understand the importance of play may have interfering factor rather than interactive one while playing with her child. The most effective parent-child play appears to rely on the parent's playfulness rather than directiveness (Levenstein and O'Hara, 1993). If a father playing with his child takes a father role in a play, this is not a play for the child any more and most probably the child do not want to participate in this kind of interaction, and thus neither the existence of the roles nor the play can be uttered. Different generations, if

they step equally, can form a play which develop and satisfy both sides.

In Turkish culture from past to present there are still constraints derived from attitudes of adults. Similar to Turkish Culture, play in some cultures is not an activity that adults enter into with children (Rogoff, Mosier, Mistry & Goncu, 1989) The idea of adults becoming playmates with children is seen ludicrous in these cultures (Rogoff, 1993).

In our culture, other common but wrong belief is that play prevents child from his studying, impresses the school success negatively. For this reason, many parents seem not to support child plays. Certainly this is the result of inadequate comprehension of the functions of play.

Surely the attitudes of adults regarding play influence both quality of interaction and direction of intergenerational play. While transmission of culture from adult to child for culturalization is emphasized, child culture and possibility of learning from child are ignored (Goldstein, 1996).

The main purpose of the study was to gain an awareness of how Turkish parents perceive the play. The study was conducted at two levels in order to strengthen the results of the present study. In the first part of the study a questionnaire was used to gather the information about the opinions of 340 participant mothers towards the child play. After analyzing the questionnaire the author decided to construct an additional new questionnaire to get information about the parents' relationships with their children developed by play in their daily life. Then, the author constructed the second questionnaire and administrated it to the same sample. The results of the study were given in order related to each conducted levels.

Method

Participants

Participants were 340 mothers of the nursery children. The reason why mothers participated in the present study was, in our culture, it is still the mother who responsible for the majority of the child's needs and activities. The majority of the participant mothers were middle SES and the educational level majority was elementary school (52.8 %).

Questionnaires

In the present study, two questionnaires which have the feature of completing each other were developed by the author. The questionnaires were evaluated by 4 judges and found appropriate.

The first questionnaire comprised of 5 questions was developed to gather the information about the opinions of participant mothers toward child play. The second questionnaire comprised of 11 multiple choice questions was constructed to reveal participant mothers' relationships with their children developed by play in their daily life.

At the beginning author visited four elementary schools located in Bursa to reach the mothers of the 4-5 years old children by means of their siblings who attended these four elementary schools. After getting permission from the schools, letters describing the aim of the research and including the first questionnaire were sent home with all the students who have a sibling aged between 4 and 5 years old. One week later 340 answered questionnaires returned back to classroom teachers. After analyzing the first questionnaire, the second questionnaire constructed by the author was sent home with all the students whose mother responded the first questionnaire before. Two weeks later, 303 questionnaires out of 340 were gathered satisfactorily.

Results

The first purpose of the present study was to examine how Turkish parents see and value the play, consistent with this purpose, the present study focused

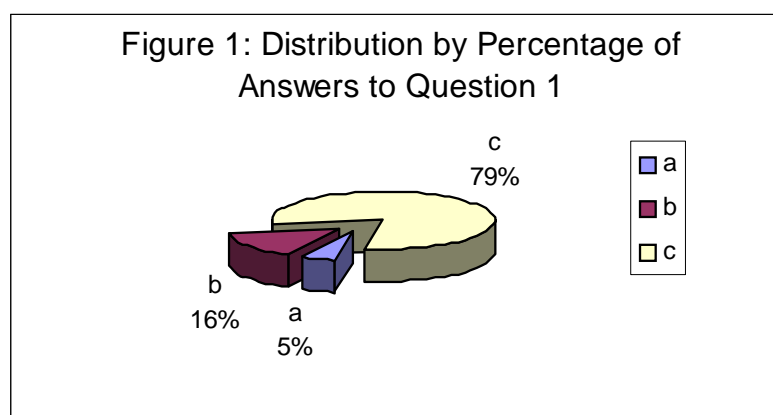
on the following five questions. The evaluation of responses to questions taking part in the first questionnaire was given together with interpretations for each.

The first question in the questionnaire is aimed to reveal how mother perceive the relationship between play and learning.

“Which of the following statements does reflect your opinion most?

- To me, play and learning are the same thing
- To me, play is different from learning
- To me, play must be combined with learning

On examining answers, 270 mothers (79 %) reflected the view that play must be combined with learning, 54 mothers (16 %) stated that play is different from learning and only 16 (5 %) parents stated that both are the same (See Figure 1), because both statements of “play is different from learning” and “play must be combined with learning” are reasonably different expressions of the same thinking style. When evaluated as a whole, it can be concluded that majority reflected traditional belief that play is different from learning. Paley (as in Nicolopoulou, 1993) takes our attention to innovative early education and elementary education programs in which play allows children to be motivated to manage their own learning rather than simply receiving instruction. In Turkish elementary schools, because of the obligative and intensive content of curriculum, by parents and teachers, children are forced to spend most of their time for homework and additional readings. As a result, play is seen by teachers and parents like an activity which is preventing children's academic learning.

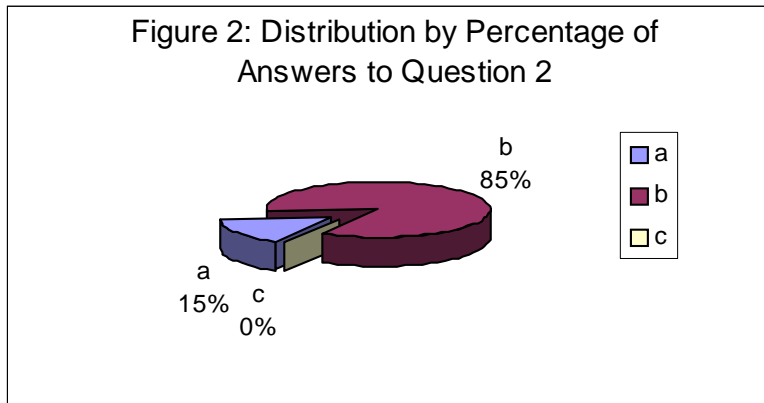


The second question in the questionnaire was prepared to obtain which one mothers give priority when both play and lessons are in question. “Which of the following statements does reflect your opinion most?”

- a. Everyday first play and then lesson
- b. Everyday first lesson and then play

c. Lesson in the week and play at the weekend

The answers to this question are in a position that supports traditional view. As it is seen in Figure 2, of 340 mothers only 52 (15 %) gave priority to play, while 288 mothers (85 %) agree with first lesson and then play. It can be said that parents in our culture overlook the reality of possible cognitive development caused by the play.



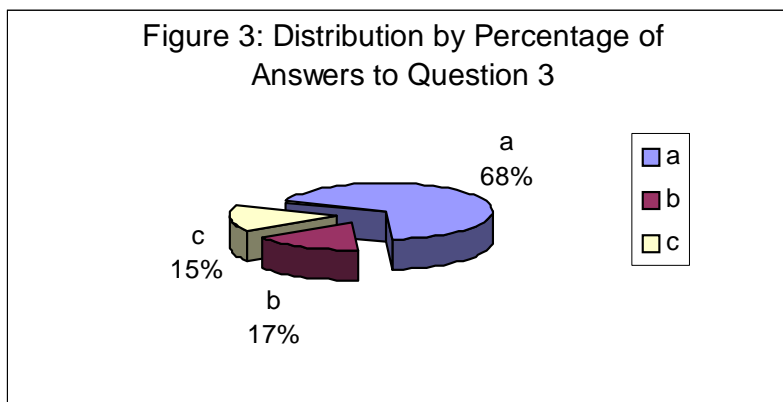
The third question in the questionnaire reflects the mothers’ opinions regarding possible environments that can influence social and emotional development of the child.

“Depending on the degree of significance, put in order the environments below that you believe having influence in social and emotional development of your child in order” (give numbers 1, 2, 3).

- a. Environment where my child plays with his/her friends
- b. Environment where my child plays with his/her family elders

c. Environment where my child plays with his/her toys him/herself

While 232 mothers (63 %) among the ones taking part in the investigation evaluated the environments where the child plays with his/her friends as having primarily significant, 58 (17 %) reflected the view that the environments where family elders participate in was primarily effective in the social and emotional development of child. 50 mothers (15 %) designated the environments where the child plays with toys as having influence on the social and emotional development of child (See Figure 3).



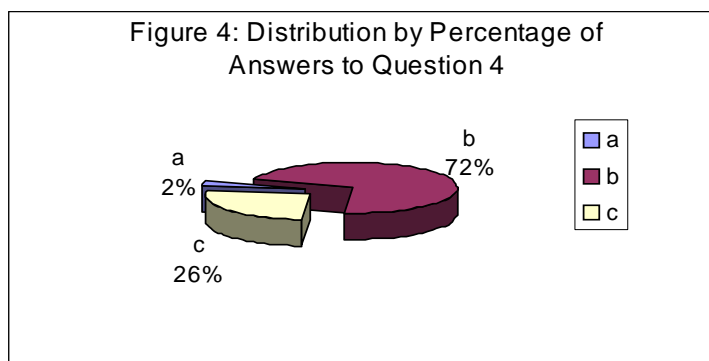
When evaluating answers given by mothers, it can be said that the impact of intergenerational play on children is not sufficiently taken into account. If the parents get the importance of intergenerational play, they catch the opportunity of entering the cheerful and creative world of children with them by slipping off roles concerning the real life. Intergenerational play may function for providing such environment.

The fourth question is prepared for determining the reasons behind playing of mothers with the child.

“Depending on the degree of significance, put in order the most common reasons why parents play with child (1, 2, 3).

- a. To detain the child.
- b. To communicate with child
- c. To educate the child.

While of mothers 242 (72 %) expressed their first reason to play with the child was to communicate with his/her, 90 of them (26 %) stated secondly to educate the child and 8 (2 %) explained to detain the child thirdly (See Figure 4). The results, when taken into account with third question, make an interesting picture that while mothers evaluate the environment where the child plays with his/ her friend as having primarily significant for child’s social emotional development, they appear not to know how to communicate with the child in play.



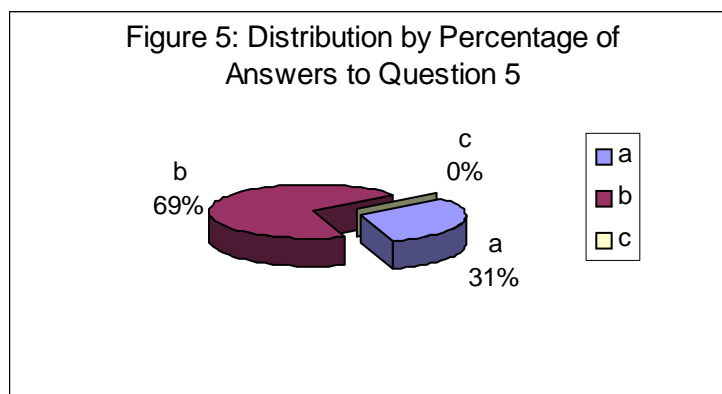
The last question in questionnaire was about selection of toys. However, the underlying goal was to determine indirectly how mothers perceive play.

“During choosing toys which criteria is primarily significant for you?

- a. Developing imagination and creativity of my child
- b. Helping development of mind of my child and preparation him/her for school skills

c. Providing detainment of my child him/herself for a long time

According to the results, it can be seen in Figure 5, of mothers 234 (69 %) for selection of toys used their first preference “b” as helping development of mind of the child and prepare him/her for school skills. The rest, 106 (31 %), chose “a” as their primary preference for developing imagination and creativity of the child (See Figure 5).



In respect of these results it can be told that today parents emphasize development of academic skills of their children more than their creativity.

The second purpose of the present study was to reveal parents' relationships with their children as developed through play in their daily life. 303 mothers out of 340 were responded to second questionnaire satisfactorily. Thus, the results were evaluated basing on that amount of data.

The distribution of mothers according to their educational level is shown in Table 1.

Table 1-The Distribution of Mothers According to Educational Level

Educational Level	Frequency	Percentage
Illiterate	30	9.6
Elementary School	160	52.8
High School	72	23.7
University	42	13.9
Total	303	100.0

Participant mothers completed the questionnaire comprised of 11 multiple choice questions. The author also searched that whether there was a positive relationship between educational level of parents and the quality of the interaction with the child would exist. The results did not support this prediction. It was not found any significant relations between them ($p>.05$). In this respect, the responses given by mothers for each item were evaluated by using frequencies and percentages as follows.

The distribution of the answers given by mothers to the question whether fathers instruct the child how to play is given in Table 2.

Table 2 - The Distribution of Answers Given by Mothers to the Question Whether Father Instruct His Child How to Play

Instruction	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	258	85.1
No	45	14.9
Total	303	100.0

Table 2 showed that % 84.5 of fathers instructed the child how to play.

The distribution of the answers given by mothers to the question whether mothers instruct the child how to play is given in Table 3.

Table 3 - The Distribution of the Answers Given by Mothers to the Question

Whether Mother Instruct Her Child How to Play

Instruction	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	258	85.1
No	45	14.9
Total	303	100.0

Table 3 showed that % 85.1 of mothers instructed the child.

The distribution of the answers given by mothers to the question what child does when she/ he stays at home in week is given in Table 4.

Table 4-The Distribution of the Answers Given by Mothers to the Question What Child Does

When She/ He Stays At Home In Week

What Child Does in Week	Frequency	Percentage
Watching TV	150	49.5
Playing Outdoors	3	2.0
Playing Indoors	150	49.5
Total	303	100.0

Table 4 showed that % 49.5 of the child played at home and % 49.5 watched TV whereas only % 2 of the child played outdoor during the weekday.

The distribution of the answers given by mothers to the question what child does when she/ he stays at home during the weekend is given in Table 5.

Table 5 - The Distribution of the Answers Given by Mothers to the Question What Child Does

When She/He Stays at Home in Weekend

What Child Does in Weekend	Frequency	Percentage
Watching TV	84	27.8
Playing Outdoors	38	12.4
Playing Indoors	181	59.8
Total	303	100.0

Table 5 showed that % 59.8 of the child played at home, and % 12.4 of child played outdoors, and % 27.8 watched TV in weekend. In accordance with the results given in Table 4, percentages of watching TV decreased from % 49.5 to % 27.8 and the percentages of playing outdoors increased from % 2.0 to % 12.4 during the weekend.

The distribution of the answers given by mothers to the question what mother does when her child is playing in week is given in Table 6.

Table 6-The Distribution of the Answers Given by Mothers to the Question What Mother Does When Her Child Is Playing in Week

What Mother Does in Week	Frequency	Percentage
Shopping	18	5.9
Cooking	193	63.6
Watching TV	36	11.8
Play	56	18.4
Total	303	100.0

Table 6 showed that the most frequent behavior of mothers was cooking (% 63.6) and the least frequent was shopping (% 5.9) when their child was playing during the weekday.

The distribution of answers given by mothers to the question what mother does when her child is playing in weekend is given Table 7.

Table 7 - The Distribution of the Answers Given by Mothers to the Question What Mother Does When Her Child Is Playing in Weekend

What Mother Does in Weekend	Frequency	Percentage
Shopping	9	2.9
Cooking	124	49.0
TV	84	27.7
Play	86	28.3
Total	303	100.0

Table 7 showed that % 39.0 of mothers prepared meal, %28.3 of mothers played with their child, and %27.7 of mothers watched TV, %2.9 of mothers do shopping during the weekend.

The distribution of the answers given by mothers to the question how many hours father plays with his child in week is given in Table 8.

Table 8 - The Distribution of the Answers Given by Mothers to the Question How Many Hours Father Plays With His Child in Week

Given Time to Play	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 2 hrs	242	79.9
Between 2-4 hrs	48	15.8
Between 4-6 hrs	10	3.3
More than 6 hrs	3	1.0
Total	303	100.0

Table 8 showed that the most frequent time given by fathers to play with the child was less than 2 hours (% 76.2 of) and the least was more than 6 hours (%1.0.) during the weekday.

The distribution of the answers given by mothers to the question how many hours mother plays with her child in week is shown in Table 9.

Table 9 - The Distribution of the Answers Given by Mothers to the Question How Many Hours Mother Plays With Her Child in Week

Given time to play	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 2 hrs	231	76.2
Between 2-4 hrs	56	18.5
Between 4-6 hrs	8	2.6
More than 6 hrs	8	2.6
Total	303	100.0

Table 9 showed that the most frequent time given by mothers to play with his child was less than 2 hours (% 76.2) and the least was more than 6 hours (% 2.6) during the weekday.

The distribution of the answers given by mothers to the question how many hours father plays with his child in weekend is shown in Table 10.

Table 10 - The Distribution of the Answers Given by Mothers to the Question How Many Hours Father Plays With His Child in Weekend

Given time to Play	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 2 hrs	168	55.4
Between 2-4 hrs	84	27.7
Between 4-6 hrs	35	11.6
More than 6 hrs	16	5.3
Total	303	100.0

Table 10 showed that the most frequent time given by fathers to play with his child was less than 2 hours (%55.4), and the least was more than 6 hours (% 5.3) during the weekend.

The distribution of the answers given by mothers to the question how many hours mother plays with her child in weekend is shown in Table 11.

Table 11 - The Distribution of the Answers Given by Mothers to the Question How Many Hours Mother Plays With Her Child in Weekend

Given time to play	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 2 hrs	144	47.5
Between 2-4 hrs	125	41.3
Between 4-6 hrs	22	7.3
More than 6 hrs	12	4.0
Total	303	100.0

Table 11 showed that the most frequent time given by mothers to play with her child was less than 2 hours (% 47.4), and the least was more than 6 hours (% 4.0) during the weekend.

The distribution of the answers given by mothers to the question who accompanies with the child when she/ he plays is given in Table 12.

Table 12 - The Distribution of the Answers Given by Mothers to the Question Who Accompanies With the Child When She/He Plays

Who Accompany With the Child	Frequency	Percentage
Mother	64	21.1
Father	18	5.9
Together	70	23.1
Siblings	102	33.7
Grand parents	9	3.0
Friends	40	13.2
Total	303	100.0

Table 12 showed that the most frequent accompanies of child was siblings (% 33.7) and the least was grandparents (% 3.0).

Discussion

The purpose of the present study was twofold. The first purpose was to examine the point of view of Turkish parents and how they evaluate the play. The second purpose of the present study was to reveal parents' relationships with their children developed through play in their daily life. As a whole, the main purpose of the study was to gain better awareness of Turkish parents perceive the play. Results revealed that in our culture the significance of both child and parents being together in a playing environment is not understood adequately. Parents who play a role as a manipulator will inhibit sociability by simply taking all the fun out of play activities. In Turkish culture from past to present there are still handicaps derived from attitudes of old-aged parents. The most dominant belief is that play is for child not for adults and adults may involve in only as a master. According to this traditional belief, because of the anxiety of upsetting their authority, parents prefer to dominate and guide their children by saying what should be done during playtime. The results supported this interpretation that both mothers and fathers are directive and controlling playmates (% 84.5 of fathers and % 85.1 of mothers instructed the child how to play). In fact, as many researchers (Bettelheim, 1987; Mc Donald & Parke, 1984) have noted that the parents who fully participates in play because of personal involvement has a perfect understanding of how important play is and this participatory attitude is very different from being involved only as a parent.

The results appear to enlighten the interpretation that mothers know what to do but somehow they are incapable of how to do so. Results revealed that mothers spent their time by doing housework especially by cooking and that no special time for interaction was left for their child. They represent good models for being housewife but not emotional or social interactional models. Within the scope of the present study, it can be explained by modeling. It can be said that mothers used to encounter similar models in their past and these kinds of mother models are common in our culture. Also it is

appropriate to mention speculations about forming communication, it can be said that no matter how much young parents know what to do by the help of media and educational programs they can't perform it in daily life anyway. Thus it can be concluded that modeling can have more dominant place in an individual's life. This interpretation was supported by Bandura (1977) who believes that the vast majority of the habits we form during our lifetimes are acquired by observing and imitating other people.

The results of the study, when this perspective is taken into account enlightened two points. One of them was why children spent most of their time by watching TV and playing by themselves at home. The other was why the given time to play by parents was so limited. In fact, by means of intergenerational play parents would forget stresses that they experience in all day long, and they also would communicate with their child in a lovely atmosphere.

Within the limits of the present study it can be said that the impact of intergenerational play on children is not sufficiently taken into account by Turkish parents.

In Turkey, because of the unstable economic conditions, education is seen the most effective means of welfare. That's why Turkish parents form gradually high expectations toward school performance and success. Results supported this traditional view that participant mother (85%) agreed that lesson should take the first place in child's life.

As a result it can be concluded that we can learn or try to learn the culture that educate children or child culture only by a healthy communication between parents and child. This requires primarily acceptance that play is one of the most effective ways of communicating with children. It is important that in order to remove difficulties in the child and adult cultures in a certain amount, adults exist not out of, but to the contrary within this process as an active agent, which is a basic characteristic of intergenerational play.

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