

PLAY IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION: AN EXAMINATION OF  
TEACHER ROLES DURING FREE PLAYTIME

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Approval of the Graduate School of Social Science

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## ABSTRACT

### PLAY IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION: AN EXAMINATION OF TEACHER ROLES DURING FREE PLAYTIME

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The aim of the study was to examine teacher roles during free playtime and the views on play in early childhood classrooms. In the study, qualitative method was used. The sample of the study is six preschool teachers who work in Public Schools in Kırıkkale. In the current study, data was collected from interview questions, vignettes and observation during free playtime in their classrooms. Five vignettes were read to the teachers to analyze what they would do in a situation like in the example. Teachers' reasons of behaviors were also asked at the end of the interviews. In order to investigate teacher roles during free playtime, each teacher was observed eight times in two months during free playtime. During the observations, teacher behaviors were recorded in terms of role descriptions categorized by Johnson, Christie and Yawkey in 1999, which are uninvolved, onlooker, co-player, stage manager, play leader and director / redirector. The findings of the study revealed that teachers valued the play in early childhood education because of its contributions to children and teachers as well. According

to teachers, play improves children's psychological wellbeing, cognitive and physical development of children. Moreover, using play in classrooms also make teaching activities easier by preparing children to the school environment. In the current study, teachers implied the importance of observation during playtime to understand children's inner world and know them better. Even though teachers' responses to the vignettes demonstrated that teachers would have various role types in classrooms, it was observed that teachers mostly presented some characteristics of precarious roles, which are uninvolved role and director / redirector role during the free playtime. On the other hand, although teachers believe the importance of observing children during playtime, any systematic observation was not conducted by teachers in practice.

**Key words:** Early childhood education, play, teacher roles, teacher participation

## ÖZ

### ERKEN ÇOCUKLUK EĞİTİMİNDE OYUN: SERBEST OYUN ZAMANINDA ÖĞRETMEN ROLLERİNİN ARAŞTIRILMASI

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Bu araştırmayla serbest oyun zamanı boyunca öğretmen rollerinin ve erken çocukluk eğitiminde oyuna ilişkin görüşlerin incelenmesi amaçlanmaktadır. Araştırmada nitel araştırma metodu kullanılmıştır. Kırıkkale'de bulunan üç ayrı devlet okulunda çalışan altı okul öncesi öğretmeni araştırmanın örneklemini oluşturmaktadır. Çalışma verileri, öğretmenler ile yapılan yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmeler ve serbest oyun zamanı sırasında yapılan gözlemler ile toplanmıştır. Yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmelerde oyunla ilgili sorulara ek olarak, öğretmenlere beş kısa senaryo örneği verilmiş; bu tarz bir durumla karşılaştıklarında ne yapacakları ve davranışlarının nedeni sorulmuştur. Serbest oyun zamanında öğretmen rollerini araştırmak için, her öğretmenin serbest oyun zamanı süresince davranışları iki ay boyunca toplam sekiz defa gözlemlenmiştir. Gözlemler sırasında, 1999 yılında Johnson, Christie ve Yawkey tarafından “Dahil Olmayan”, “Gözlemci”, “Oyun Kurucu”, “Katılımcı”, “Katılımcı Gözlemci” ve “Lider” olarak sınıflandırılmış olan öğretmen rol tanımları dikkate alınmıştır. Araştırma bulguları,



öğretmenlerin çocuklara ve öğretmenlere sağladığı çeşitli katkılardan dolayı erken çocukluk eğitiminde oyuna önem verdiklerini göstermektedir. Görüşme sonuçlarına göre, oyunun çocukların psikolojik sağlıklarını, zihinsel ve fiziksel gelişimlerini desteklediği öğretmenler tarafından belirtilmiştir. Ayrıca, sınıfta oyun kullanımının çocukları okul ortamına hazırlayarak etkinlik süreçlerini kolaylaştırdığı da belirtilmiştir. Öğretmenlerin oyun sayesinde çocukların içinde buldukları ruh halini anlayabilecekleri ve çocuğu daha iyi tanıyacağına yönelik görüşleri öğretmenler tarafından belirtilmiştir. Öğretmenlerin kısa senaryo örneklerine verdiği yanıtlar, öğretmenlerin oyun içerisinde çeşitli rollere sahip olacağını gösterse de, uygulamalar süresince yapılan gözlemlerde, öğretmenler çoğunlukla Dahil Olmayan ve Lider rol özelliklerini göstermiştir. Öğretmenlerin oyun sırasında çocuğu gözlemleyerek onu daha iyi tanıyacağını belirtmiş olmalarına rağmen, hiç bir öğretmenin sistemli gözlemler yaptığı gözlenmemiştir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Okul öncesi eğitim, Oyun, Öğretmen rolleri, Öğretmen katılımı



*To my mum,  
and to The Doctor.*

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## **CHAPTER 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

In this chapter, the background of the study was stated in section 1.1., the statement of the problem and the significance of the study were given in section 1.2 and 1.3. In section 1.4., the research questions of the current study were mentioned. At the end of the chapter, in section 1.5., definitions of terms used in the current study were mentioned.

#### **1.1. Background of the Study**

For decades, play has been observed in children's lives in different cultures and countries all around the world. With children, educators have to accept that children explore themselves and their environment they live in through play. According to Wood and Bennett (1997), children learn from their cultures, relationships, and roles through play. Einstein's famous words about play demonstrate the importance of play in exploration: Play is the highest form of research (Else, 2009). Dewey also focused on the exploration which is supplied by play in children's learning (Göncü, Abel, & Boshans, 2010). However, it does not mean that play and exploration is the same. The importance of play for young children's development and education has been mentioned and accepted by early childhood educators. It is seen as an important tool, which improves children learning (Bennett, Wood, & Rogers, 1997). It has been already stated by different theoreticians such as Rousseau, Froebel, Piaget and Vygotsky, that play is vitally important for children. In order to make adults understand, Rousseau emphasized the importance of play by describing

it as children's works (Joe L Frost, 2010). Rousseau also told that how adults care about their works, play is interesting for children as well.

However, in years, the main focus of children's education has been changed from play-based approach to more teacher-based education that focuses more in cognitive skills (Miller & Almon, 2009; Whitebread, Basilio, Kovalja, & Verma, 2012). Unfortunately, daily routines of preschools are filled with different academic activities and courses, which lead to a very limited time for leisure activities and unstructured play. In preschools, even playtime may not be involved in daily routines. Teachers and children try to complete worksheets and participate in some lectures like chess and English. As a result, children could not have time to play spontaneously (Miller & Almon, 2009).

Patte (n.d.) implied that children were not given enough time to play not only in schools but also at homes. According to him, children's unstructured play opportunities were limited. Bassok, Latham, and Rorem (2016) made a comparison about education in public kindergartens between the years 1998 and 2010. The findings revealed that kindergarten classrooms started looking more likely to the first grade of school because of the changes. They implied critical change in time spent for academic and non-academic content, using standardized assessment techniques, classroom organization and teachers' beliefs.

Similarly, the situation in Turkey is not much different than that around the world, in terms of play in preschool education. Preschool Education Curriculum in Turkey, which is prepared by the Ministry of National Education, also supports the effectiveness of play-based learning in early childhood. In the current curriculum, there is specific time for free activities and free play for children in daily schedule (MoNE, 2013). Moreover, in daily plans, there are play activities, which are integrated with science, literacy or mathematic activities. However, these kinds of plays are generally structured and teacher-directed, in which children are not free

to choose what they want to play and how they want to play. The types of play in classrooms would be affected by the participation of teachers. Although researchers discuss the effectiveness and usefulness of different types of play, both play types -structured and unstructured play, are important for children. Patte (n.d.) stated that in addition to structured plays, children should also be allowed to experience unstructured play. It was stated that unstructured play improves children's self-esteem and self-determination. Additionally, their cognitive understanding is advanced with unstructured play because it lets children discover their world on their own.

In addition to the importance of play, adult participation in children's play was emphasized by many play scholars (Chistie & Enz, as cited in Han, 2009; Johnson, Christie, & Yawkey, 1999). For example, Johnson et al. (1999) indicate that adult engagement make children believe their play is important, expand children's play duration and make it more efficient. According to Flear (2015), the importance of adults' participation to children's play is important because by the time adults join the play, it is supported and improved. Furthermore, Whitebread et al. (2012) also stated that the thoughts about the adults' participation to play is not something new, yet they have already been discussed by John Locke and John Amos Comenius.

Pursi and Lipponen (2018) focused on the toddlers' play and adults' participation to improve their connectedness. According to them, children with age 0-3 could not maintain their play for so long. Therefore, one of their research questions is to investigate adults' effect on toddlers' play. The findings revealed that when the adults join toddlers' play, they could start the play and then observe children to play on. In other words, their participation improved children connectedness to play by play signals. Even though they also create an environment for children to sustain their play, they respect children's individuality and their own motivation.

Loizou, Michaelides, and Georgiou (2019) also studied how early childhood teachers improve socio-dramatic play and use it. The main focus is the drama and its usage in education regarding of scaffolding. In the study, 17 in-service teachers who had drama education were videotaped. The findings demonstrated that using drama in education create an environment for teachers to provide material use and improve scenarios. They also emphasized that teachers used “teacher in-role” drama technique in videos, which let them to improve socio-drama. Furthermore, Trawick-Smith and Dziurgot (2011) also conducted a study regarding of Vygotsky’s ZPD. In their study, they observed teachers and their behaviors in play. In the study, teachers tried to understand what children need and respond regarding of their needs. The findings revealed that teachers “good-fit” responses sustain children’s play and improve their motivation.

## **1.2. Statement of the Problem**

As mentioned by different researchers all around the world, play is very important for young children’s development and education. Adults, who are generally teachers and parents, have important function in play to value it, extend its effectiveness and let children sustain their play efficiently. Even though, the noteworthiness of adult participation, especially teachers’ participation in play, has been written in the main books of play, preschool teachers’ awareness of their roles in free playtime is essential.

Some studies demonstrate that teachers may need more instruction about their roles in play (Moyles, Adams, & Musgrove, 2002; Wood, 2013). Moreover, they also suggest that more studies on teachers’ roles and what they can do to extend the play could be conducted. Nevertheless, there are some studies in Turkish context, which exhibits similar results. According to the study conducted in Turkish context by Tuğrul, Aslan, Ertürk, and Altınkaynak (2014), teachers may not be aware of the

play's power in early childhood education. It is also stated that they could not benefit from play in teaching process (Tuğrul et al., 2014).

On the other hand, implicating the play-based learning approach in preschools may be challenging for teachers. Some studies show that preschool teachers have difficulties and some barriers in applying play-based approach, which may be result in lack of knowledge on how to be involved in children's play (Badzis, 2003; Bennett et al., 1997; Wood, 2010; Wood & Bennett, 1997). Bennett et al. (1997) state that the only problem of applying play-based approach is not only lack of knowledge, but also lack of space and time and number of children per teacher, administrators' expectations and values of parent on play would also influence the quality of play in early childhood education.

As seen in the literature review, play has been studied for many years. There are great numbers of researchers in the field of early childhood education, who have focused on play in childhood. There are also some studies in which researchers focus on the beliefs, perceptions and perspectives of teachers about play, but they are not combined with their roles in free play. Moreover, studies about the relationships between adults and children in play and teacher roles in free play are limited. While the importance of interaction between adult and child and scaffolding children to improve their development, teachers' participation in different roles should be examined and encouraged. Therefore, in the current study, the preschool teachers' roles during playtime will be investigated along with their views toward free play in order to meet the needs of the literature for Turkish context.

### **1.3. Significance of the Study**

The importance of play and the relationships between adults and children during playtime has been mentioned by a lot of studies. In Early Childhood Education

Curriculum in Turkey, child-centered education is encouraged by Ministry of National Education. Moreover, it is also stated that children learn through play in early ages. In the curriculum, free activity time is allocated in daily schedules. However, there are not many studies demonstrating the effective use of that time, preschool teachers' roles and their knowledge about what they can do during free playtime. Additionally, administrators and teachers would not have knowledge about how they are involved in children education. They may really not be aware of the importance of free play and the needs of different roles that they have. In other words, teachers may not have enough knowledge that they are supposed to join in play or sometimes just observe the children.

In the current study, it is aimed to explain what preschool teachers think about the play and free play in early childhood education, what their views about using free play in educational settings. This way, preschool teachers' views about play can be analyzed to understand the current situation. Results of the study may give ideas to administrator of schools, policy makers and designers of preschool teacher education's curriculum to reassess their current policies. Trainings given in-service and pre-service teachers will be reconsidered at the end of the study.

Also with this study, preschool teachers may be aware of the differences –if any, between what they say they do and what they do in reality. At that point, preschool teachers' attention will be taken to their potential roles and what they can do during free playtime. Moreover, the results of the study make contributions to the literature because even though many teachers' perceptions about the play have been investigated, observations regarding their roles during free playtime have not been examined adequately. They will also revise their current practices and change their implications, if they deem necessary.

The third reason of conducting the current study is to demonstrate what preschool teachers do during free playtime or free activity time. It will give information about

the difficulties that preschool teachers have in practice, which may draw the attention of authorities and administrators. In-services trainings will be redesigned to broaden preschool teachers' horizons about the importance of play and their practices during free playtime.

#### **1.4. Research Questions**

In order to examine teachers' views about play and teacher roles during free playtime, the current study addressed the following research questions, which are given below.

1. What are the views of preschool teachers regarding of play?
2. What kind of roles preschool teachers take during free playtime?

#### **1.5. Definition of Terms**

The definition of the main terms used in the study are as follows:

***Play:*** In the literature, it is clearly seen that play is defined a lot of times by different people. As Else (2009) states, it is easy to understand what play is but difficult to define play because it has different characteristic features. However, according to Garvey, there are some main points involved almost in each of definitions like being enjoyable, intrinsic, spontaneous and voluntary (as cited in Brock, Dodds, Jarvis, & Olusoga, 2013, p.13).

In the current study, play is defined as any kind of structured and unstructured activities that children have fun, get pleasure, satisfy themselves, enjoy and intrinsically join.



***Free play:*** As in literature, free play in the current study is defined as any kind of unstructured activities that children intrinsically join, continue spontaneously and have fun.

***Free playtime:*** Free playtime is defined as the period which is allocated for children's spontaneous and unstructured play.

***Preschool:*** In this study, preschool refers to schools, which are designed for education of children 36 – 66 months (MoNE, 2014).

***Teachers' Roles:*** It is defined as a unity of permanent or characteristic of behaviors and actions in a particular situation. In the current study, term of roles is defined as preschool teachers' behaviors and actions towards children's play and the position they have in the classroom.

In the current study, teachers' roles are described below, as defined by Johnson et al. (1999).

Uninvolved: Teacher's participation and their attention to play have not been occurred.

Onlooker: During play, teacher watches children.

Stage Manager: Teacher is helper for preparing play setting and assistant when play is underway.

Coplayer: Teacher is active participant just as a play partner.

Play leader: Teacher is active participant in play in order to extend its content.

Director/redirector: Teacher who has over control on children's play by telling them what to do.



## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

In this chapter, the literature review about play is given. In the section 2.1., the development of play in history is mentioned. In section 2.2., early classical play theories and modern play theories are stated. Stages of play among children described by Piaget, Piaget and Smilansky and the importance of play for child development were mentioned in section 2.3. How play is in early childhood education in Turkey is stated in section 2.4. Views about play and teachers in play are implied in section 2.5 and 2.6.

#### **2.1. History of Play**

Play, which is seen generally among children, has occurred for a long time. It is most probably very fun for all the people. Even if defining play might look very simple, there is not exact definition of play. For decades, pioneers, educators, psychologists and sociologists have tried to define play, which can also be seen in the literature very often (Else, 2009; Sluss, 2005; Wood, 2013; Wood & Attfield, 2005). Freud (1975) states that it is kind of repetition leading to become master in life situations. Vygotsky (1980) defined play as a process that provides an environment for zone of proximal development. According to him, during play, children behave older than their age, which supports their development (1980). Moreover, he believed that children could turn their thoughts and ideas into actions and real situations (1980). Else (2009) states that regarding the different definitions of play, it can be explained as doing something we choose, and we want. Moreover,

according to her, play is also satisfying, challenging and empowering, which let people experience the risk and be active (2009). Isaacs (1993) defines play as a way to understand the world, which they live in (as cited in Sluss, 2005). Chazan (2002) related to playing and growing, which make people aware of their existence in life and make them feel alive (as cited in Wood & Attfield, 2005).

In the literature, there is a variety in definition of play; however, some features of play are common in most of them. According to (Isenberg & Jalongo, 2001), even though some definitions made by different researchers such as Pellegrini (1991) and Rubin, Fein and Vandenberg (1983), all their definitions include some specific characteristics of human behavior that can be seen as play –such as being voluntary, being instinctive, funny, and active involvement. Sluss (2005) states that play should be voluntary, symbolic, excused of external directions, and pleasurable activities which points to actions with active involvement of participants. Wood (2013) also mentions that play is fun and chosen by children, which focuses on process and requires active participation of players. Additionally, she states that to be chosen by children is not enough to describe play; it should be also child-initiated, which may be understood as doing intrinsically (Wood, 2013).

As stated before, play is in human lives for ages. According to Eliassen (2009), play was seen in different forms in the past. While play was seen as a natural survival technique between 30.000 and 10.000 BCE, in 2000s, it was seen as spending energy, time, skill and money (Eliassen, 2009) Understanding of play has changed in different cultures through time. Its influence on children's development has also been concerned by many people from Dewey to Piaget (Göncü et al., 2010).

Plato, who lived in 427 - 347 BCE, believed that one-hour play would give more information about someone than conversing with him or her for a year (Else, 2009). Akyüz (2007) implied that Ibni Sina also gave importance to the children's play and their early education. Maria Montessori also stated her thoughts about play by

saying that play is children's real job, through which they can learn. One of the most important philosophers, Plato, stated in his famous writing, *The Republic*, that he agreed with Aristotle's idea that play should be addressed to children's moral, ethical and practical development (Else, 2009). In years, importance given to play has increased and it is used in education. Salzmann (2012) described play as an inseparable part of children's education. Moreover, according to Salzmann, people, who could not play with children and have fun with them, should not be teacher for children (2012).

## **2.2. Play Theories**

Play has been studied for decades. From the last years of 19<sup>th</sup> century and beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century, so many theories have been suggested by people, which were categorized in terms of early classical play theories and modern play theories.

### **2.2.1. Early Classical Play Theories**

Early classical play theories were developed at the beginning of 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries based on the thoughts about the purpose and features of play. They were mostly based on philosophical views rather than scientific data or truths (Ellis, 2011). They also generally focus on the reasons of play rather than its content. However, Johnson et al. (1999) implied that due to providing an inside into the history of play and forming the basis of modern play theories, they are also important. Some of the classical play theories are explained below.

#### **2.2.1.1. Surplus Energy**

It was the theory created by Schiller and Spencer, who argued that play is a way that people spend their energy aimlessly. According to this theory, people have some energy to live. However, surplus energy left from surviving activities, should be consumed (Saracho & Spodek, 2003). According to them, children's needs are met by adults so they have more energy for playing (Johnson et al., 1999).

#### **2.2.1.2. Relaxation Theory**

Relaxation theory was suggested by Lazarus in 1883. According to this theory, contrary to surplus energy theory, play is an activity which lets people relax and feel better. After spending whole energy for surviving, people need to rest or play to fulfill energy again.

#### **2.2.1.3. Pre-exercise Theory**

It was theorized by Karl Groos. According to him, play is instinctive and prepare children for their future lives, and occurs both human and animals (Stanley, 1899). While animals exercise their hunting skills while they are young, children exercise their future roles like being mother or father through play –such as cooking or parenting (Johnson et al., 1999).

#### **2.2.1.4. Recapitulation Theory**

Stanley Hall suggested the Recapitulation Theory, which was based on Darwin's Evolution Theory. Contrary to Groos, Hall believed that children experience what ancestors have already experienced. According to Hall, similar to process of

mankind, play also develops from primitive plays to social play (Saracho & Spodek, 2003).

### **2.2.2. Modern Play Theories**

Modern play theories imply the importance of play in early childhood education through experimental research. They generally focus on the understanding play rather than the reasons of play. Modern theories are mainly classified as psychoanalytic and cognitive theories.

#### **2.2.2.1. Psychoanalytic Theories**

Psychoanalytic theory was theorized by Sigmund Freud and developed by Erikson in years. This theory supposed play is very important for children emotional development (Saracho & Spodek, 2003).

Freud believed that each behavior of human has a reason. Children can overcome problems they experience and gain new skills by reflecting their feelings that they are aware of or are not aware of while they are playing. Therefore, Freud believed that play reflects children's inner world like a mirror. Children overcome the difficulties they experienced through playing. If they do not play, they might not survive the traumatic events for whole life. Therefore, play is used as a therapy for treatment (Sevinç, 2005).

Erikson, who is also another psychoanalytic theorist, based on Freud's psychoanalytic theory but differed at some points. He believes that personality develops lifelong. From birth to the death, each people have predetermined stages, which they must succeed. He stated that thanks to play, children can solve the

conflicts they experience on each stage (J. L. Frost, Wortham, & Reifel, 2012). He also focused on the effects of play on identity development and importance of cultural and psychosocial stages on children's development. Playing in early childhood period prepare children learn new things and skills (J. Roopnarine & Johnson, 2005).

#### **2.2.2.2. Cognitive Theories**

Piaget, Vygotsky, Bruner, Bandura and Sutton-Smith were some of the theorists who studied the relationship between cognitive development and play (Johnson et al., 1999). Details about Piaget's constructive theory, Vygotsky's socio-cultural development theory and Bandura's social learning theory are given in order.

Piaget believe that children's play is related with their cognitive development and is a place where children demonstrate their knowledge and experience. According to him, intelligence develops because of the interaction between assimilation and accommodation continuously. He described play as assimilation, a place they practiced what they have already learned. For children, play provide an environment to improve their cognitive development by practicing things they have already learned because they actively involve play. Piaget focused on the two main importance of play for children. The first is strengthening knowledge that is already gained. The second is improving their self-confidence because there is no failure in children's play. While Piaget believes that through play children demonstrate their emergent symbolic development, Vygotsky states that play improves children's symbolic development.

Vygotsky focused on the relationship between socio-cultural environment and cognitive development. According to him, play is a process from where children's thoughts are restricted by the current situation to where they could free their



thoughts from limitations and restrictions (Bodrova & Leong, 2005). Vygotsky suggested that play is more than something that gives pleasure. Children reflect the society's rules in their make-believe plays. Therefore, each play has rules in itself. He also believes that play is very important for symbolic development. Moreover, children in play demonstrate behaviors above themselves, so they advance their cognitive development without anyone else (Bodrova & Leong, 2005).

Albert Bandura stated that children learn through observing and imitating what they see around them. He implied that through play, children interact with their environment and communicate with others. Therefore, play provide an environment for children to be social. Thanks to social interaction, children observe and learn new behaviors from their environment.

In the current study, teachers' views about play and roles they would take during free playtime was investigated. The study might be associated with the modern theories and especially with the cognitive theories. According to the cognitive theories, adults' participation is important for children learning process. In schools, children's learning and development should be supported and encouraged by teachers. Their learning settings can be enriched through qualified interaction between children and teachers. Moreover, as it was mentioned in theories, social interaction is important. Scaffolding should be provided by teachers while children are playing, when they can learn more. Therefore, teachers' roles during free playtime is important to be examined.

### **2.3. Play and Child Development**

In play literature, the development of the children on play is studied in various aspects. For instance, Piaget focuses on cognitive and maturation feature of children play while Parten pays attention to the social characteristics of it (Piaget, 1962;

Parten, 1932). The consensus on children's behaviors on play reveal that there are certain stages that the children pass through changes based on their age. It is worthy to note that the changes in children's play behavior do not occur immediately, it requires certain time. To be clearer, while at the beginning the children play on their own, as the time passes play requires social interactions (Cole & Morgan, 1968).

Piaget represents the three stages of play based on the development of mind and maturation (1962). According to Piaget, the first stage is the functional play stage (0-2 age) which corresponds to sensorimotor stage of cognitive development. The functional play starts as the child notices new movement (Cohen, 1993). In this stage, play involves the repetition of looking, sucking and grabbing behaviors. The child repeats these behaviors as s/he knows what s/he is doing and gets pleasure from it; therefore, the child tends to repeat these functional play behaviors. The very important thing in functional play is that the child senses his/her control over his/her environment. For instance, if the child recognizes that the sound comes out whenever s/he rings the bell, s/he enjoys this play as s/he becomes aware of his/her control on it (Morrison, 2012). Therefore, Piaget insists that the presence of functional play shows the development of motor ability of the child on certain behavior (Piaget, 1962). Also, the functional plays are important tools for the development of mind. The second play stage is symbolic play. This stage coincides the ages between two and twelve years; and shows the maturation of thinking. The very characteristic of the symbolic play is the ability of the child to imitate his/her environment. Symbolic play involves three phases based on the age.

The first phase corresponds to the ages between two and four. In this phase, the child imitates people around him/her, uses the things different than their usual usage by doing these the child symbolizes his/her world through play. However, the child imitates things with some distortions. This phase shows that the child has an ability to use imagination and his/her physical skills in play. For instance, the child can use an apple as a ball to throw or a bagel as a wheel. In the second phase of the symbolic

play (4-7 ages), the content of play becomes more realistic. In other words, play reflects the details of child's own life. Also, this phase is characterized as social play since the child starts to play with a partner. The child has an ability to understand what other people think as well. In the third phase which corresponds to the ages between seven and twelve, there are certain rules, roles and aims that are decided before play start. These features create a background for the next play stage. Finally, at the third stage- the formal play, the child sets ground rules for play. The difference from the previous phase is that in the formal play the child can understand that the aim of setting the rules is to minimize the conflicts. The importance of the formal rule is that the child acquires the concepts of organization, the society, partnership and being sensitive to others' thoughts.

Parten has an important contribution to play literature. According to him, the child's play behaviors changes based on social development (Parten, 1932). Parten mentions that there are four stages in play development. The first stage is the solitary play. In this stage, the child play on his/her own without getting influenced by other children until the ages of two and a half or three. In the second stage - parallel play, even the child shares the same playground with other children, s/he continues to play by himself/herself. However, in the associative play stage, the child starts to interact with other children by playing together and sharing toys. Finally, in the fourth stage which is named as cooperative stage, the child engages in the group play and has a social communication with other children. There are some rules in play; therefore, the decrease in the egocentrism is observed.

Smilansky follows and develops Piaget's cognitive theory. The main focus of Smilansky is on the sociodramatic play and mentions the four stages of it (1968). The first stage is functional play. In this stage, the child practices the basic physical and linguistic skills. The second stage -the constructive play involves the characteristics that the child has an ability to construct things and use the tools apart from their usual usage. Also, the child starts to create an organization such as

planning play and the tools in his/her mind. Another characteristic of this stage is that the child can pay more attention to play compared to the previous stage. The third stage is the pretend/dramatic play. The child starts to imitate the things in his/her environment, those behaviors are named as dramatic play. By the help of ability of imitation, the child gets a role in play, and starts to behave according to his/her role. This stage also requires some cognitive development since the child has to recall or remember the things or people around him/her to imitate in play. The fourth stage is play with rules. In this stage, the rules of play are set before play starts. The very crucial characteristics of this stage is that the child gains control over himself/herself. The presence of rules requires that the child has to behave based on them. Besides the self-control, in play with rules stage, the child learns to take responsibility, concentrate and conceptualize the limits.

Play is seen as an important tool for young children learning and development. Its benefits on children whole development involving their cognitive, physical, social, emotional and language development have been mentioned in literature (Duncan & Lockwood, 2008; Else, 2009; Göncü et al., 2010; Sluss, 2005; Wood, 2013; Wood & Attfield, 2005). Additionally, there are plenty benefits of play on the language development (Hall, 2005; Orr & Geva, 2015), the social and emotional development (Ashiabi, 2007), the cognitive development (Griffits, 2005) and the physical development (Harding, 2005; Smith, 2005). Thanks to play, children develop fine and gross motor skills, problem solving skills and interaction with other people (Howard, 2010).

According to Burghardt (2005), play improves children's physical development by supporting body control and movement skills, social development by giving chance to experience social roles and emotional development by improving psychological well-being (as cited in Lester & Russell, 2010). Yavuzer (2007) implied that in addition to the fact that play gives pleasure to children, it also advances children's cognitive development with senses, neurons and muscles. Children also learn how

to use materials differently, how to solve problems, how to classify and draw conclusions in play (Goldstein, 2013).

Play and its relations with cognitive development is one of the most popular issues among play research. So many studies demonstrated the positive influence of play on children's cognitive development. Through play, children learn different strategies to solve the problem, think different and create new ideas. Their creativity and curiosity are also supported by play. In the article written by Bhagat, Haque, and Jaalam (2018), it was demonstrated that age-related play and self-play tools can be used to improve schematization in children, which advances their cognitive skills.

Çankırlı (2018) implied that children learn some specific features of items like shapes, colors or weights of items by comparing in play. In play, they also plan what they are going to do in the next step, which improves their cognitive development (Ertuğrul, 2016). Through play, children learn thinking, perceiving and making cognitive plans, which advances their abstract thinking. Ramani (2005) conducted a study with 76 children to examine the relationship between children's play and the problem-solving skills. It was concluded that play improves children's problem-solving skills and working with a group. Moreover, the results also demonstrated that early childhood education is important for children's problem-solving skills.

According to Levy (1984), play advances language development by promoting children to create and use different words to express their thoughts (as cited in Moyles, 1989). Sevinç (2005) stated that children's language development is supported in play, where children can try to express themselves. Moreover, play advances children's reading comprehension skills (Hoorn, Novrot, Scales, & Alvard, 2007). Moreover, taking different roles in play improves children's language development (Singer & Singer, 1998). According to the study conducted

by Weir (1962), it was observed that children use different language rules and structures while they are playing, which improves their language development (as cited in Johnson et al., 1999).

Leseman, Rollenberg, and Rispen (2001) implied that children's communication skills are developed during free playtime more than other activities. An experimental study was conducted with 12 children who were 48 – 54 months old by Ahioğlu (1999) so as to understand the effects of play on language development. The researcher made observations and took audio records of some children from each group, control and experimental, for two months. According to the findings of the study, there is statistically meaningful difference between pre-test and post-test results. The study demonstrated that symbolic play is important in advancing children's language development.

Physical development including gross and fine motor skills are also supported when children play. Through play, children's physical development is supported because while children make some movements like running, jumping or giving reactions to the actions. They use their muscles repeatedly while they were playing. Play contribute to development of motor skills, so children can learn how to use their muscles and body, which results in improving self-confidence (Sevinç, 2005).

As they play, children rearrange their worlds and control objects, which helps them to become either less scary or less boring (Burghardt, 2005; Sutton-Smith, 2003). Davaslıgil (1989) stated that children playing more are more social than children who did not play. Moreover, their creativity, vocabulary knowledge and expressive language are more advanced than other children. Some concepts in society like fair and unfair, good and bad or right and wrong are learned through playing because children experience, try and understand them while they are playing (Sevinç, 2005).

In addition to whole developmental benefits of play, it also gives pleasure to children. Children get fun and pleasure when they play. Children learn having fun by themselves in play (Arslan, 2000). According to Cohn and Frederickson (2009), experiencing pleasure and fun are beneficial for coping with negative situations (as cited in Lester & Russell, 2010). Wohlwend (2008) stated that play is used by children in order to build peer conversations and to have social interactions because children starts playing alone but then, they play with other children helping them to socialize. Children's social skills develop in play. Children's outdoor play and physical activities are also related with children's social development skills because they provide environments where children have to be in social conversations and interactions with others (Barbour, 1999; Hinkley, Crawford, Salmon, Okely, & Hesketh, 2008). Social play let children understand other people's perspectives and develop negotiation and problem solving skills (Coplan, Rubin, & Findlay, 2006).

Moreover, according to the study conducted Hinkley, Brown, Carson, and Teychenne (2018), outdoor play time favorably influences children's social skills. Wenner (2009) emphasized that having opportunity to play help children to deal with stress and anxiety because it improves social skills. It was also stated that children and animals who are deprived of play are more stressful (Wenner, 2009). In play, children also have opportunity to set up their rules and be free from the adults' rules, which makes them more relaxed. Having opportunity to decide which rules they have to obey in play develops children's self-confidence. By this way, children's identity development is also supported in play. They can express themselves and show their emotions and inner worlds through play (Ellialtıođlu, 2011).

Play supports children's whole development and provide an opportunity to create their own world with their rules. The relationship between children's play and many development areas were mentioned by (Broadhead, 2010). Children's play right is also protected with the Convention of Children Rights by United Nations. Right to

play is not seen different from the right to shelter or right to be protected. It had been highlighted by so many researchers from different countries that play is so important for children's education and healthy development and today it is accepted as a valuable activity and a right of children (Brooker, 2010). Therefore, play should be provided by governments to children from each socio-economic status or each nation. In education, play is involved in the curriculums and children have chance to play in schools.

#### **2.4. Play in Early Childhood Education in Turkey**

Early childhood education period is vitally important for children to learn new skills, form new habits and advance identity development in a healthy way. In order to develop as healthy and happy individuals, children should be given right opportunities at early ages, which provides them a healthy environment to grow up in. In the curriculum prepared by the MoNE (2013), the importance of play at early ages was emphasized. Myers (1992) mentioned that early childhood education provide an environment in which children maximize their potential (as cited in Katranci, 2017).

Through playing, children have the chance to be more social. They can communicate with peers and develop their vocabulary knowledge through play. Today, due to some safety issues, children generally have difficulties in finding the opportunity to play on the streets. Therefore, schools have vitally important role for offering play environment to the children. Kandır (2001) stated that kindergartens should provide planned and systemized play opportunities which are in compliance with the children's development level.

Play-based learning is supported by the Ministry of National Education (2013). They implied that early childhood education should be child-centered and play-



based. Hoorn et al. (2007) mentioned that teachers have a guidance role in child-centered pedagogies. Children should be supported by enriched play environment, which allows them to communicate with peers and teachers, because children learn everything they need by playing. Children can focus on something and give their attention to something in play. In environments where children do not have chance to play, children's creative thoughts do not develop and they learn less (Morrison, 2012).

In the curriculum (MoNE, 2013), there are different activities conducted in childhood education such as art, mathematics, science, movement and play. Play activities are classified as structured play, semi-structured play and unstructured or free play. Structured and semi-structured play are directed by mainly teachers. Teachers start structured play to make children meet some objectives and have active roles with children. Semi-structured play is started by the teacher with a specified purpose and continued by the children. Structured and semi-structured plays are conducted in terms of play and movement activities, integrated with other activity types.

In free play, children have opportunity to play in learning centers as they wish. Children's social, cognitive and emotional development are supported in free play time because they decide what they want, have fun on their own and control themselves (Morrison, 2012). In Turkish education system, free play time are the first activities of the day. At this time, children become ready to the other activities and get used to the school environment.

In early childhood classrooms, there are some learning centers like blocks, make-believe play, music, books, science and art centers (MoNE, 2013). Playing at these centers are called free play or unstructured play. Children play free at these centers on their own or with their peers as a group. While children are playing in these centers spontaneously, their creativity, expressing skills, responsibility taking and

problem-solving skills develop. These centers and free play time are crucial for children at early childhood period.

In the current study, teachers' views about play and their roles during free playtime are studied. Thus, related studies about views on play, play practices and teachers' roles in free playtime are given.

## **2.5. Views about Play**

There have been different studies focused on parents, in-service and pre-service teachers' perspectives on play. According to some studies (Badzis, 2003; Bennett et al., 1997; Dako-Gyeke, 2008; Vu, Han, & Buell, 2015), teachers perceive play as a valuable activity for children. Moreover, Wood and Attfield (2005) stated even if play is seen as a way of real learning, parents do not give enough importance to it.

A study conducted with parents and pre-school teachers demonstrated that teachers emphasized the importance of free play for the development of children. It was also concluded that teachers stated to let children have more time to play (Erden, 2001). Sandberg and Samuelsson (2005) examined teachers' play perceptions and attitudes in terms of gender. In the study, they made observations and interviews with 10 male and 10 female teachers. According to the study results, while female teachers preferred calm plays to improve children's social development, male teachers choose active plays to advance children's physical development. Additionally, it was also concluded that male teachers have more positive views towards play than female teachers.

In addition to parents' and teachers' perspectives, there are also some studies which demonstrate children's understandings of play. According to Wood and Attfield

(2005), children see teacher-directed activities as activities in which they have to sit. Moreover, some studies conducted in different countries and in Turkey demonstrate that children define a picture as a play when they see toys in it, define a picture as a work when they see a teacher in it.

Erşan (2006) conducted a research with 362 six years old preschool children in order to examine their perception about play and activity. In the study, children were continuously demonstrated some pictures involving play and activity time in classroom and asked what they see on the picture and whether it is an activity or play. At the end of the study, it was recorded that children described what they see as a play if there a toy in the picture; as an activity if they see real materials in the picture. Moreover, some pictures involving teachers were perceived as a play or activity by children. Even though there were toys on the picture, there was conflict among children when they saw a teacher in the picture, which resulted in perceiving the picture as activity. Results demonstrated that children's perception about activity and play depended on usage of real materials or toys and whether there is a teacher in the environment.

Furthermore, some studies conducted to compare cultural differences in perception of play (Van der Aalsvoort, Prakke, Howard, König, & Parkkinen, 2015; Wu & Rao, 2011). In the study conducted by Van der Aalsvoort et al. (2015), trainee teachers' perspectives on play characteristics and teachers roles were examined in four different cultures: German, Dutch, Wales and Finnish. According to them, the reason of the differences among the participants might be a result of the teacher education systems in their country. Thus, they implied the importance of teacher education curriculum in terms of play because they stated that teachers' perceptions and practices might be shaped regarding of the education they take. Wu and Rao (2011) investigated 10 Chinese and seven German kindergarten teachers' conceptions of play and learning. They selected six video clips from two kindergartens in China and two from German for teachers to watch. Teachers

watched the videos and they talked about video clips in group discussions. The findings demonstrated that teachers from different countries have different perspectives about the teachers' intervention to play and learning function of play. According to the researchers, differences might be result of different environment and preset beliefs coming from the cultures. Thus, they indicated the importance of people's beliefs in the culture should be considered before preparing a curriculum.

## **2.6. Teachers in Play**

Play should not only be recognized and respected but also promoted by adults (Unicef, 1989). Therefore, it is important to examine not only the teachers' views but also their practices of play. According to Vu et al. (2015), even though teachers believe that play is important for young children development and learning, they have difficulties in practices in terms of how to involve and expand children play. They also state that there is an important gap between the teachers' views about play and their practices observed during play time. This can be a result of the lack of preschool teachers' knowledge about what they can do during play time and how to join children play effectively (2015).

In the literature, research was conducted to examine teachers' practices in play and its influences on education. In order to examine practices in classrooms, interviews with teachers and observations in the classroom were done by the researchers. Some studies also demonstrated the importance of teachers' active involvement to play and play centers. Furthermore, the features of play and relationship between child-directed and teacher-directed activities were observed for 48 hours in the study conducted (Lobman, 2001). It was concluded that when the teachers arranged the play environments for children and supported their play, this had positive effects on them.

In 2003, a study was done by Demirdalç in Turkey with 95 preschool teachers in order to examine their skills of planning, practicing and evaluating play activities and skills of selecting and using toys via survey. At the end of the study, it was concluded that the teachers spent an hour for free playtime in daily routine and consider children's needs and attention to decide how much time children have time for play. Additionally, it was noted that the teachers considered educational purposes while they were planning the play activity.

Driscoll and Pianta (2010) also stated that teachers' active involvement in children's play advances their relationship with the children. They conducted a study focusing on banking time, which means that teacher and a child spend one-to-one time together. During that time, child-led play occurs, and teacher-child relationship is improved. In the study, they worked with 29 Head-Start teachers and 116 children. At the end of the study, the findings demonstrated that children and teacher relationship was improved through banking time, in which teachers' participation was seen.

There may be different barriers resulting from teachers' thoughts and influencing their practices. Kagan (1990) mentioned three different types of barriers:

- attitudinal barrier: Seeing play less important than academic learning or being hesitant to participate in play,
- structural barrier: Giving value to play but having less time and space for play,
- functional barriers: Resulting from different understanding of play in different context (as cited in Ashiabi, 2007).

Different understandings and reasons would influence practicing play in early childhood education classrooms.

Teachers' roles in play have been argued for years. Whether teachers should participate in children's play or not is an issue still being discussed. Vygotsky

emphasized the importance of catalyzer role of teachers. According to Vygotsky, adults' guidance is important for children education and development (1978). Vygotsky believed that so as to increase learning, adults should actively participate in play. Wood and Attfield (2005) stated that according to Vygotsky, teachers should be aware of their roles and what they should do because they should help children maximize their potential through zone of proximal development. On the other hand, it was stated that teachers have had some problems in understanding their roles in play (Moyles, 1989; Wood, 2010).

In the literature, some role descriptions were made in different sources. Wood and Attfield (2005) stated eight roles in order to lead teachers. According to them, teachers should be;

- a good planner to have balance in preparing child-initiated and teacher-initiated activity.
- a good observer to be aware of what is happening. Observer teachers are aware of what children need and know how to extend play.
- a good listener. Teachers should listen children by respecting their thoughts.
- a communicator. Teachers should understand children's expressions and body language via being in communication with them.
- able to influence children's enthusiastic level,
- able to supervise their physical and emotional environment,
- a co-player for children to improve them in their play,
- a researcher to advance quality.

Bennett et al. (1997) stated that there is an argument in the literature whether the teachers should intervene or not. People who support minimal intervention of the adults in children's play state that play is voluntary and instinctive action. Bruce (1991) believed that teachers should be catalyzers: They should follow the

children's play and extend it via offering new themes and suggestions. According to her, teachers can give advices and some materials to improve their play. Some people believe that play is derived by children and teachers should not intervene their play (Bennett et al., 1997). Teachers could take observation role without disturbing them. In 1992, Jones and Reynolds classified teachers' roles as stage manager, player, scribe, mediator, communicator and planner. Bennett et al. (1997) described three roles as provider, observer and participant.

Enz and Christie (1997) implied that the degree of teachers' participation in to play are effective. Johnson et al. (1999) state that in order to enrich children's play, adults have three different ways -which are providing sources, observation and participation in play. Adults' participation makes longer and more effective children play in terms of context and quality (Johnson et al., 1999). Moyles (1989) also implies the importance of adult participation in play to make it excellent but also difficult for teachers to practice it in real life. In the literature, there have been different studies conducted for decades in order to understand teachers' roles and related issues with their roles. Teachers' roles have also been defined differently in studies (Ashiabi, 2007; Hyvonen, 2011; Johnson et al., 1999).

According to Dau (1999) and Jones and Reynolds (1992), teachers have several roles in play, which are 'observer and recorder, stage manager and facilitator, mediator or participant in play' (as cited in Ashiabi, 2007, p.203). Additionally, Hyvonen (2011) uses three different categories for teachers' roles which are leader, alloweer and afforder. According to Hyvonen (2011), teachers' understanding of play influences their roles during playtime. Moreover, in the study conducted by Enz and Christie (1997), it was implied that teachers has six roles which are uninvolved, stage manager, co-player, interviewer, leader and director. They stated that while some roles that are uninvolved, director and interviewer influence children's play negatively, while the others -stage manager, co-player and leader, affect positively.

Johnson et al. (1999) divide adults' roles in children plays in two groups called facilitator and precarious roles. While precarious roles are involving play too little, named as uninvolved, or too much, named as director/redirector, and using play as an educational tool, named as instructor role; facilitator roles are called onlooker, stage manager, coplayer and play leader (Johnson et al., 1999).

In the current study, teachers' roles described by Johnson et al. (1999) are focused. According to them, rather than the amount of time adults spend in children play, how they interact with children is more important (1999). If teachers do not know how to interact with children, their involvement in play may influence their play negatively. Johnson et al. stated that if teachers have over control on children's play, they might destroy it. Precarious roles, which are uninvolved and director/redirector teachers, have either less involvement in play or more influence on it. While uninvolved teachers stay outside of play area and intervene in case of emergency, director/redirector teachers change play rotation by telling children what to do. Onlooker teachers stay close to play area and watch children play with verbal and nonverbal signs and mimics. Stage managers are involved in play as an assistant to enrich play content. In other words, stage manager helps to prepare play settings to increase tension in play when children are bored (Johnson et al., 1999). Coplayers are like play partners who have little roles in play. Johnson et al. (1999) told that they participate in play but do not play directly. The last facilitative role, play leader, is used to describe teachers who participate in play and direct it by interfering children's play. Play leaders may stay outside of play area or join play. However, play leaders have more influence on play rotation. It can be told that according to studies, most beneficial roles are the facilitative roles, which are onlooker, stage manager, co-player and play leader (Johnson et al., 1999). Teacher should facilitate play by getting involved in their play correctly.



In summary, it can be seen that play has been studied for decades in different disciplines from education to psychology. People who have discussed play in years have examined it in different ways. In addition to its value and meaning for children, its relationship with children education and development, the importance of play environment, quality of play, people's perception and views about play and adults' roles in play have also been argued for many years. In the current study, in addition to preschool teachers' views about play, their roles during free playtime in schools have been examined in terms of role types described by Johnson et al. (1999). During free playtime, if teachers take either facilitative or precarious roles will be examined.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **METHOD**

In this chapter, the information about the research design, research questions, research procedure, ethical issues and trustworthiness of the current study will be described in detail. Section 3.1. gives information about the study's design with selecting the research strategies depending on research questions and the purpose of the study. In section 3.2., information about the sampling and selecting participants are given. In 3.3., settings where data was collected were stated. In section 3.4. and in section 3.5., detailed information about the data collection tools and process were mentioned. In section 3.6., how collected data analyzed were implied. Information about the ethical issues and trustworthiness of the current study were given in sections 3.7. and 3.8.

#### **3.1 Research Design**

In studies, two main inquiry approaches are used: qualitative and quantitative. The main difference between the two approaches is mainly the way of collecting and analyzing data (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). In quantitative studies, standardized research tools are used to gather data by researchers from larger representative samples (Creswell, 2013). Both of the methods are useful regarding the purpose of the study. Although reaching large number of people in quantitative studies makes the research more reliable, qualitative studies have also different advantages. In qualitative study, researchers have a chance to observe the environment and make connections between findings and content, which enables them to take information

regarding of culture and environment. Additionally, in qualitative study, since the nature of qualitative study let researcher to change design in time, researchers are more flexible (Silverman, 2005).

The purpose of study is to examine the teachers' views about play, their responses to the vignettes and their roles during free playtime in practice. With this purpose, in the current study, following questions will be addressed:

1. What are the views of preschool teachers regarding of play?
2. What kind of roles preschool teachers take during free playtime?

Because of trying to have deeper knowledge about the views and practices of teachers during free playtime, qualitative method, which will provide richer and more detailed information about the context, is decided to be more appropriate for the purpose of the study. In terms of the purpose of the study which is examining the teachers' views about play, their responses to the vignettes and teacher roles during free playtime in practice, qualitative method was used. In qualitative studies, researcher could examine the views by doing interview and investigate roles by doing observations (Merriam, 2009). In order to have different sources in collecting data, in addition to interview questions and observation records, the researcher gave vignettes. In the current study, the researcher focused on views about play, teachers' reactions to the vignettes and their roles during free playtime.

Before conducting the study, the researcher reviewed the literature to develop interview questions and vignettes. After taking experts' opinions, interview questions were edited and finalized. Vignettes used in the current study were prepared regarding of the examples given by Johnson, Christie and Yawkey (1999). Observation form was prepared by the researcher with the experts' opinions. The whole process of the research was given in detail (See Figure 3.1.).

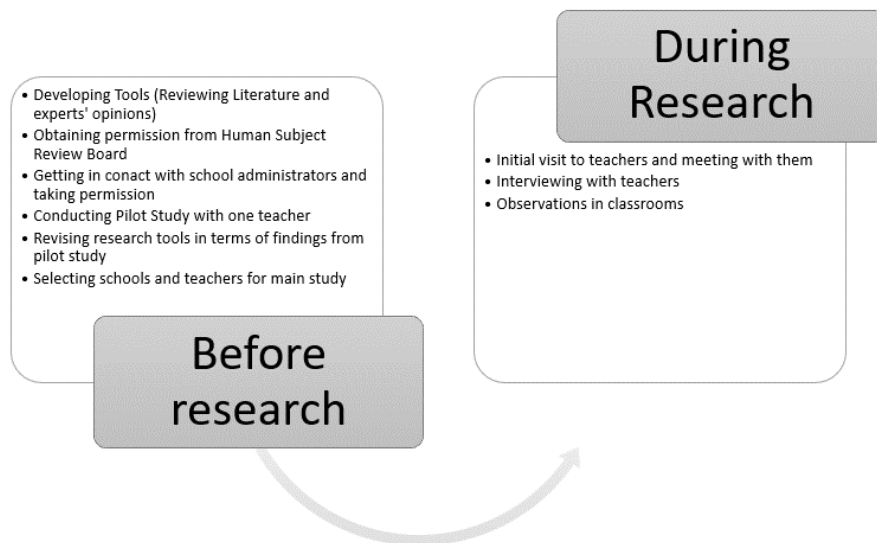


Figure 3.1. *The Process of the Research*

### 3.2. Participants

According to Punch (2009), while researchers can select their sample regarding of purpose of the study, feasibility of accessing to people should also be considered. It is stated that sample selecting in a qualitative research is made regarding of the study's purpose, research questions and settings (Creswell, 2013; Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyun, 2015). Depending on purpose of the study, accessibility of teachers, time and resource, while selecting the participants, purposive sampling was used in the current study. Additionally, typical sampling were used, which is seen as the typical one what is studied (Fraenkel et al., 2015). Three preschools in Kırıkkale, which represent the typical school setting, were selected and six teachers were observed for eight times. Two classrooms were selected from three schools. Schools were coded as School A, School B and School C. Teachers from each school were represented by the code of school and number of classrooms. For example, teacher A1 means that teacher from school A and classroom no 1.

Teachers were selected regarding of their playtime and their willingness to join the study. Two kindergarten teachers from each school were selected in terms of age groups they taught. All of the teachers were female. While three of the teachers were graduated from the department of Early Childhood Education, others were graduated from Child Development Department. All of them work in the public kindergarten which is free for all children. None of the teachers in the current study have taken course or seminar about play. Descriptive information about the teachers can be seen in the table 3.1.

Table 3.1.

*Descriptive Information about Teachers*

<b>Schools</b>	<b>School A</b>		<b>School B</b>		<b>School C</b>	
<b>Teachers</b>	A1	A2	B1	B2	C1	C2
<b>Age</b>	45	39	31	41	39	43
<b>Gender</b>	Female	Female	Female	Female	Female	Female
<b>Education Level</b>	Bachelor's degree	Bachelor's degree	Bachelor's degree	Bachelor's degree	Bachelor's degree	Bachelor's degree
<b>Years of Experience</b>	24	17	9	20	17	21
<b>Age Group</b>	4	3	4	5	5	3
<b>Number of Children</b>	18	15	20	21	22	19

### 3.3. Settings

Defining settings in qualitative studies is seen very important. According to Merriam (2009), defining settings helps to understand the study's boundaries (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The study was conducted in the public kindergartens which are in Kırıkkale, Turkey Kırıkkale is one of the cities in central Anatolia region. All kindergartens selected were located in the center of Kırıkkale, where socio-economic status is close to each other . six preschool teachers, two teachers from each kindergarten, were selected regarding of their age groups. two classes with three years old, five years old and six years old children were observed in the current study. Detailed information about the kindergartens as settings of the current study will be given. All of the schools serve 36-66 month old children curriculum prepared by Ministry of National Education (MoNE, 2013). The data was collected during the spring term from February to May in 2017.

32 staff, five of them administrators and 17 of them kindergarten teachers, worked in three kindergartens. Kindergartens were located in the center of Kırıkkale. Kindergartens were built a few years ago. While one of them has two floors, others have three floors. All of the schools have half-day dual education, between 08:00 am – 12:45 pm and 01:00 pm – 05:45pm. Number of children in the classrooms between 15 and 22. The details about the number of children in the classrooms were given in Table 3.1. Daily schedules in kindergartens were similar to each other because all applied the curriculum prepared by Ministry of National Education. All classrooms have greeting and free play time at the beginning of the day. After having breakfast or lunch, they have activity time. At the end of the activities, they have a period for assessment and packing up. At the end of the day, in the classrooms, farewell routines and free play are seen. Schedule for morning sessions and for afternoon sessions were given in Table 3.2. and Table 3.3.

Table 3.2.

*Schedule of Morning Classrooms*

<b>Morning Session</b>	<b>B2 – C1 – C2</b>
<b>07:45 a.m. – 08:45 a.m.</b>	Greeting and free play in the corners
<b>08:45 a.m. – 09:30 a.m.</b>	Breakfast and clean up
<b>09:45 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.</b>	Activity Time
<b>11:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.</b>	Assessment and packing up
<b>12:00 p.m.- 12:45 p.m.</b>	Farewell routines and free play

Table 3.3.

*Schedule of Afternoon Classrooms*

<b>Afternoon Session</b>	<b>A1 – A2 – B1</b>
<b>12:45 p.m. - 01:45 p.m.</b>	Greeting and Free Play in the corners
<b>01:45 p.m. – 02:30 p.m.</b>	Lunch and clean up
<b>02:45 p.m. – 04:30 p.m.</b>	Activity Time
<b>04:30 p.m. – 05:00 p.m.</b>	Assessment and packing up
<b>05:00 p.m. – 05:45 p.m.</b>	Farewell routines and free play

Kindergarten A is a three-floor building. The school was established in 2013. In the first floor, there is an information, officer room, one classroom; in the second floor, there is a room for school administrator, activity room and one classroom; in the third floor, there is one classroom and cafeteria and kitchen for teachers and children's use. In each floor, there are toilets for children. The kindergarten has an outdoor environment, which is almost 12 m<sup>2</sup>. In the Kindergarten, six teachers, an officer, a principal and two independent employers were working. 104 children were registered to the school.

Kindergarten B has two floors, including 15 classrooms with activity, chess room, cafeteria and play area. 12 teachers were working in the kindergarten B. There is a principal, an assistant principal and an officer in addition to employers. The school is one of the most crowded kindergartens in Kırıkkale, which has 303 children. Half-day dual education is implemented in the kindergarten. One classroom spends the whole day in the school as a club activity in the afternoon. The school was established in 2013.

Kindergarten C has three floors with four classrooms, a principal and two principal assistants and four teachers. The school was established in 2014. There is a cafeteria and a play room. 162 children were registered to the school. School has very small garden for children's play. Two of the teachers were working from 08:00 am to 12:45 pm; others worked from 01:00 pm to 05:45 pm.

### **3.4. Data Collection Tools**

Mason (2002) implies that data collection in qualitative studies is conducted through observation and interviews. Similarly to Mason's views, it is stated by different researchers that in qualitative studies, researchers are more willingly to use observations, documents and interviews rather than surveys (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007; Creswell, 2013). According to Merriam (2009), while conducting qualitative research, investigator aims to understand how people represent their world and their experiences. In order to address research questions in the current study, semi-structured interviews along with the vignettes and play time observations were used to gather the data.

In the current study, in order to analyze teachers' views about play and their roles in free playtime, semi-structured interviews before the observations were conducted



with six teachers. Semi-structured interview involves questions about play in daily routine of a classroom. Moreover, so as to acquire knowledge to what extend teachers support the free play during play time, five vignettes were represented to the participants for discussion.

Robson (2011) says that people’s sayings may be different from what they do in natural settings. Moreover, Merriam (2009) states that observation can be used to have more detailed records about some issues not being understood in interview. Therefore, so as to comprehend teachers’ roles in practice, observations was conducted as well. Initial visits to the classrooms and meeting with teachers, doing interview with teachers and observation schedule was summarized in Table 3.4.

Table 3.4.

*Data Collection Time Schedule*

<b>Schools</b>	<b>Class</b>	<b>Initial Visit</b>	<b>Interview</b>	<b>Observation Schedule</b>
Kindergarten A	A1	27.02-03.03.2017	06-08.03.2017	20.03.-12.05.2017
	A2	27.02-03.03.2017	06-08.03.2017	20.03.-12.05.2017
Kindergarten B	B1	27.02-03.03.2017	06-08.03.2017	20.03.-12.05.2017
	B2	27.02-03.03.2017	06-08.03.2017	20.03.-12.05.2017
Kindergarten C	C1	27.02-03.03.2017	06-08.03.2017	20.03.-12.05.2017
	C2	27.02-03.03.2017	06-08.03.2017	20.03.-12.05.2017

### **3.4.1 Semi-structured Interview**

In qualitative studies, while some of the researchers prefer to use interviews (Aras, 2016; Hyvonen, 2011; J. L. Roopnarine & Jin, 2012), others prefer to use questionnaires (Badzis, 2003; Lin & Yawkey, 2013; Storli & Sandseter, 2015). Although, interviews and questionnaires seemed to have similarities, they are different from each other. It is stated that so as to be able to reach participants' views, perceptions and experiences, interviews are one of the best research methods (Cohen et al., 2007; Mason, 2002).

In questionnaires, participants may not understand or misunderstand the questions because some of the questions may mean differently for each participant, which may lead to happen some problems. On the other, during interviews, respondents may give more detailed answers and ask whenever they cannot understand the question. Moreover, respondents may seem to be willing to participate in the study and motivated to answer the questions. Additionally, it let respondents share their ideas and thoughts freely, which might be beneficial for accessing in-depth knowledge about their views.

Therefore, in the current study, interview was used to examine preschool teachers' views about play. Because of the fact that interview may be seen as time-consuming by respondents, they may be bored during the data collection process. At that point, face-to-face individual interview method was used in order to evaluate respondents' mimics, feelings and answers well. Moreover, regarding of the study's purpose, in order to understand teachers' views about play, the researcher needs to interview with them before observation. Therefore, a one-to-one or face-to-face interview was seen more appropriate to have in-depth knowledge about their views. Interview was done with respondents in order to make us more knowledgeable or visionary about teachers' views about play.

For the current study, interview form was designed to examine the preschool teachers' views about play in preschool. Designing the interview form will be beneficial for researcher to organize thoughts and keep on studying regarding of purpose (Creswell, 2013). It was designed as semi-structured, which enable respondents to share their ideas between the borders of topic but also in open situation (Flick, 2014). During interviews, audio recording was done with the permission of the teachers, which let the researcher to focus on more mimics, intonations and eye contact (Lankshear & Knobel, 2004). Moreover, during interview, probes were used in order to promote interviewees' participation.

Interview questions and vignettes were prepared and organized with the help of three experts in early childhood education. In the first part of the interview, teachers' background information involving gender, experience, age, education level, number of children in their classroom and the age group were asked. In the second part of the interview, to get their thoughts about play in early childhood education, six questions were asked to them. The questions in the interview were revised regarding of experts' thoughts and opinions (see Appendix C).

### **3.4.2. Vignettes**

After taking interviewees' views about play, in order to examine the roles of preschool teachers during free playtime, vignettes were given to them. Vignettes were designed to examine what preschool teacher roles in free playtime might be. So as to prevent directing teachers to their roles in play, some situation examples in vignettes, which can be seen in each typical preschool classroom, are given to examine their responses towards the situation. Rather than asking the direct questions to the teachers about their roles in free play, the researcher indirectly tried to select their thoughts about what they do in a situation given in the vignettes.

Vignettes were described as the short description of a situation including both problematic or non-problematic examples (Miles, 1987). It was stated that vignettes have been used in educational studies with different purposes. Lampe and Walsh (1992) implied that vignettes were used as a tool to analyze people's behaviors and ethical concerns (as cited in Veal, 2002). It was also emphasized that they can be used as a research tool in qualitative studies (Miles, 1987).

In the current study, with the vignettes, the researcher aimed to analyze which roles they may take and what their reason might be. By this way, five vignettes were prepared by the researcher regarding of the examples given by Johnson, Christie and Yawkey (1999). First of all, all of the teachers were informed about this part. After the vignettes were read to early childhood educators', what they will do in the situation given in vignette and why they do were asked to them. The vignettes used in the current study were given in Appendix D.

### **3.4.3. Observation Form**

In addition to the semi-structured interviews, preschool teachers were observed in order to understand their roles during free playtime. In the current study, the researcher was interested in what they are doing during playtime and whether they interact with young children or not and how they do. In order to understand preschool teachers' practices in free playtime, observation is the most suitable method to gather data. Data about what kind of roles they have taken during free playtime and actions in classroom were collected via observing teachers in their natural environment.

Observation is described as a method in which researcher collect data in a natural and real situation (Cohen et al., 2007; Creswell, 2013). Similarly, observation allow

researcher to gather data first hand. On the other hand, as Robson's say, there might be some differences between what participants tell and what they do in practice, which can be understood through observation (2011). Observation might be useful method by the time what people say is differ from what they actually do (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). Moreover, some people may not be willing to answer all interview questions with detail. Therefore, they may be observed during implementation, which provide investigator to reach in-depth knowledge about context and situation. According to Creswell (2013), regarding observation and participation types, observation can be categorized under two titles, which are called participant and non-participant observations. Cohen et al. (2007) and Fraenkel et al. (2015) also indicate participant observation means observer engage in the activity settings that they observe, while non-participant observations means there is no interaction and engagement of researcher during observation.

In order to examine the roles of preschool teachers in free playtime with minimum effect an interpretation of investigator, the naturally non-participant observation is more suitable for the current study. On the other hand, if the researcher participates in the play and interact with children, teachers would be impacted and behave differently. Creswell (2013) states that recording everything what investigator observed is not possible. In preschools, children play some teacher-directed games or games with rules. However, at these games, teachers' roles are restricted and known as the director. Therefore, it was decided to observe only the time called as free playtime.

To Creswell (2013) and Glesne (2011), observation also requires a process description in order to prevent some misleading behaviors due to being in the classroom as a foreigner. In order to prevent these kinds of misleading, first observations were not used for general observation in order to be familiar with students, teachers and settings. Each teacher in classrooms were observed for eight

times. Two teachers for each day, one of which is in morning while the other one is in afternoon section, were observed and recorded.

During observation, researcher used observation form, which was designed before and taken expert opinion, in order to prevent me to lose in observation process. Observation form was designed in terms of adult roles categories described by Johnson et al. (1999). It involves 18 items, which described adult roles regarding of their behaviors. When teacher do not involve in children's play it is called as 'no involvement'. Onlooker means teacher have positioned close to children's play but there is no interaction with children. Stage manager is described as teacher position near to play area and take an active role in preparing play. When teacher participate in play as an active player but equal roles, it is called as stage manager. If teacher influence more children's play and change its rotation to extend it, it is called as play leader. On the other hand, director teacher has over control on children's play and re-director teachers use play as a tool for academic teaching by asking questions. Precarious roles are involving play too little, named as uninvolved, or too much, named as director/redirector, and using play as an educational tool, named as instructor role; facilitator roles are called onlooker, stage manager, co-player and play leader (Johnson et al., 1999).

In observation form, the description of setting, how many children and how many teachers we have in the classroom, preparation done by teacher before playtime and different behaviors observed were recorded. Additionally, when audio are used, more detailed and comprehensive information will be supported (Cohen et al., 2007). Due to not taking permission, video recording was not done. So as to prevent losing details during observation, each session was observed with one partner, who is from out of the classroom.

For eight weeks, random and unannounced classroom visits were done by the researcher. The focus of the observations is teachers' behaviors and roles they took

in free playtime. In the observation form, teachers' roles, described in the current study, and some behavior examples were included. Behaviors were observed in the period of 10 minutes until the end of the play time.

### **3.5. Data Collection Process**

After preparing the form, three experts' opinions from the field were asked. According to expert opinions, revisions were made based on their suggestions. In order to take required ethical measures, the researcher applied to University Human Subject Review Board to obtain permission for the current study. After taking the permission, a pilot study is done with one preschool teacher before conducting the main study. According to Savin-Baden and Major (2013), preliminary visits may be helpful for researcher to plan and schedule the research and tools. Moreover, conducting short-term pilot study may be preferred by the researcher in order to understand if their tools and data collecting methods are usable or not (Robson, 2011).

In the pilot study, researcher went to a preschool in center of Kırıkkale. After giving information about the current study, interview questions and observations were made during free playtime in a week. During the pilot study, the researcher tried to understand whether observation form was useful or not. While observing teacher, turning pages to write down the behavior in the appropriate role box and finding the appropriate role definition in the form was difficult for me. Therefore, it was decided to write teachers' behavior on an empty page with their time. For instance, the researcher divided the observation time to session with 10 minutes and wrote down the behaviors observed on an empty paper. At the end of the day, all behaviors regarding of the appropriate role definitions were categorized regarding of the roles. After conducting pilot study and revised the research regarding of the findings in the pilot study, some schools' administrators in the center of Kırıkkale were

connected. The main study lasted in three months in six different classrooms from three different kindergartens.

After getting necessary permissions from the school principals, the researcher decided to schools in which the current study was conducted. Two teachers from three different kindergartens (n=6) were selected. First of all, the researcher visited each teacher and met with them so as to introduce myself and what my purpose is. During the initial visits, the researcher gave the research information protocol and Ethical Permissions to them. Moreover, their questions about the researcher and the study were answered. The researcher explained who she is, where she works, what she would do in their classrooms and what purpose of the study is. The researcher visited the classrooms and spend some time there to be more familiar to children and teacher.

At the end of the week, researcher arranged an appropriate time for teachers to make interviews. Interviews with six preschool teachers from three different preschools were made. During interviews, audio records were taken with their permission so as to understand teachers' background, daily routines and their perspectives about play. In order to prevent their fears and prejudices, during interview, different listening techniques were used to promote them to speak more. Each interview sessions lasted in almost 40 – 60 minutes. At the end of the questions for their background and perspectives about play, vignettes were asked to teachers. Vignettes were used to understand teachers' possible behaviors in a situation which were given, which helps me to deduce their possible roles in free play. At the end of the interviews, the researcher informed the second part of the current study, which means that the researcher started observation after almost 10 days.

Two weeks after the interviews, observations sessions were started. So as to have deeper understanding about practices and views about play, scheduling the play in a daily routine and have more knowledge about play behaviors in a classroom,



observations were made. Each teacher was observed during eight times in two months. In order to reduce the possibility of influence their natural behaviors and disturb them, the researcher informed them about herself. The researcher explained them that she is a student of a university and need to conduct some research about children play. In order to make them understand, the researcher told them she has an assignment about children play, so, the researcher need to spend some time in their classroom with them and observe their play like what or how they play and how their teachers participate in their play, etc. After very short conversation with them, the researcher asked their permission orally.

The researcher observed two teachers in free playtime in a day. Due to not being in the classroom for whole day, the researcher had chance to observe only when teachers let children to play in the morning. Even though the fact that free playtime was planned to be in the first hour of the day in their daily plans, teachers may also let children to play at the last half hour of a day. Therefore, my observations started at 8:00 am to 12:45 pm in a classroom; 01:00 pm to 05:45 pm in another classroom. Although Merriam (2009) states that enough time spending for observation may change depending on the purpose of the study, in the current study, each teachers were observed eight times but their first observation records were not used in analyzing. In other words, in order to prevent the researcher's possible effects on teachers and children's natural behaviors, observation records taken during first sessions were not be used as the findings of research. Due to some problems in pilot study and so as to improve research reliability, each observation was also conducted one more person in the same classroom. At the end of the day, when the researcher finished the observation in that day, the researcher checked two observation records and transferred whole matched behaviors observed and wrote down as the appropriate role definition. The time between observation days in the same classroom was almost two or three days.

In a qualitative study, the researcher's role is also seen like a research tool. Researchers in a qualitative study collect data within the frame of their own personality or understand the environment from their worldview (Rossman & Rallis, 2003). Thus, reflecting own ideas and bias to a process in the research is seen as inevitable fact (Savin-Baden & Major, 2013). However, Delamont (2002) states that researcher should be aware of their roles' influence on the study to protect the reliability and the validity of the study. As a researcher, during the fieldwork in the classrooms for observation, the researcher tried to be balanced participant in classrooms. Balance participation is described by Savin-Baden and Major (2013) as observing with minimal interaction but very little involvement in some activities. According to them (2013), researcher stand to obtain more knowledge from participants in a distance for enough observation and collect data. However, as a researcher, the researcher did not join in classroom activities as an independent observer.

During the observation, if some children came to the researcher to ask some questions or anything happened in the classroom, the researcher only responded whenever they asked something from the researcher. Field notes were also taken during the observation, which includes children's questions or requests and teachers' responses, other adults' responses if there is.

### **3.6. Data Analysis**

Data analysis in a qualitative research ought to be done as early as possible before the end of data collection process (Robson, 2011). Therefore, data analysis was started as soon as possible after obtaining them. In the current study, data from interview questions, vignettes and observation records were taken. In order to organize the data, first of all, after making interviews with teachers, the researcher wrote the transcripts of audio records. Transcription is very important to decrease the invalid or unnecessary issues in interviews. Researcher tried to internalize what

participants tell in their interviews in order to remember what they have told when their practices were observed. In two weeks after the end of the interviews, transcription all the audio records taken during interviews were done. All audio records were named by different codes like Int-A1-01, demonstrating interview records of teacher named as A1, etc. to prevent some mistakes. the researcher used some numeric at the end of the name because during some interviews, the researcher had to stop recording and then start a new one. Therefore, those teachers had two audio records including whole interview process. When the researcher completed the transcription of audio records, coding technique, which is very common in analyzing qualitative studies, were used to analyze data (Fraenkel et al., 2015; Merriam, 2009; Savin-Baden & Major, 2013).

After making transcription of audio records, the researcher looked at the participants' responses to vignettes. Before observing their practices in free playtime, their responses towards vignettes provided me to have ideas and vision about their roles in free playtime. Therefore, transcription of audio records of responses to vignettes were conducted before observations. Regarding of their answers, their possible roles in free playtime were deduced. Coding was also applied in this process to analyze data from responses to the vignettes. However, in order to look at the data from larger perspective, the researcher did not finalize my coding and creating themes from interview and vignettes' data, the researcher waited finishing observation process.

During the observation, the researcher wrote down the teachers' behaviors with 10 minutes session. Except from me, each observation session was also done with one more person, who is also knowledgeable about the purpose of the study. At the end of the session, the researcher checked records written by me and another person in the classroom. the researcher analyzed observation records written by me and other person and we checked their inter compatibility. By this way, the researcher tries to provide my study's trustworthy. After checking the records, the researcher wrote

them clearly in terms of time gaps for 10 minutes. The researcher wrote as much as teacher's behaviors during the free playtime. Moreover, the researcher also tried to catch conversation between teachers and children or teachers and other adults coming from the outside.

After conducting observations, the researcher read teachers behaviors written during observations. Before creating themes regarding of teachers' roles defined by Johnson et al. (1999), she read the observation records and interview transcriptions so many time because as Robson's says (2011), getting familiar with the records may help to decrease the amount of irrelevant information. she analyzed the data in terms of themes about teachers' roles. In the current study, the researcher totally has 48 observation records from six teachers. Six of them were not used in analyzing process. 10 observation records, selected randomly, were analyzed by two experts from early childhood education. In order to reach an agreement, Miles and Huberman's inter-rater agreement formula was applied. According to them, reliability equals to number of agreements / number of agreements + disagreements (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The coefficient of inter-rater agreement was calculated as 85,5%. Two experts from the field also checked the records and decide which behaviors can be categorized under which role. Similarity between three researchers was examined in order to improve trustworthiness of the study. Records during free playtime were checked for a few times by the researcher.

At the end of the study, data collected from interviews and vignettes were coded together with thematic coding approach. At the end of data collection, the researcher also categorized all data collected from interviews and vignettes records. Based on the analysis of interview questions, four main themes were found by the researcher, which are the most favorite play, children's choices during free playtime, play in daily schedule and the importance of play. Themes about the teacher roles during free playtime were taken from the literature, which were described by Johnson et

al. (1999). Table 4.5. presents some major themes and categories related to teachers views about play and play in early childhood education.

Table 4.5.

*Major Themes Related with Teachers' Views on Play*

<b>Themes</b>	<b>Categories</b>
<b>The Most Favorite Play</b>	Musical Play
	Physically Active Play
	Make-Believe Play
	Others
<b>Children's choices during free playtime</b>	Object Play
	Educational Play
<b>Play in a Daily Schedule</b>	Play during Arrival Time
	Play during Activity Time
	Play during Departure Time
<b>Importance of Play for Children</b>	Social and Emotional Development
	Cognitive Development
	Physical Development
<b>Importance of Play for Teachers</b>	Understand Social Wellness
	Make Teaching Easier

### 3.7. Ethical Issues

The ethical issues are vitally important in social studies especially in collecting data and distributing the findings because of involving human as participants and the relationship between researcher and participant (Merriam, 2009). In order to relieve the difficulties of ethical issues, the researcher did something to enhance research with concerning principles of ethics. she applied to Middle East Technical University Human Subject Review Board to obtain approval of research ethics committee. During the application process, the committee asked me some documents involving information form of participants, research tools like questions asked in interview and research procedure in detailed. The approval from research ethics committee could be seen in Appendix E.

### **3.8. Trustworthiness**

Trustworthiness is very important issue in qualitative studies. In order to increase trustworthiness of a study, validity, reliability and generalizability are increased by applying some techniques (Merriam, 2009; Yin, 2009). Reliability means that consistency of data inferences while validity is described as meaningfulness and appropriateness of the inferences that the researcher based on the data (Creswell, 2013; Fraenkel et al., 2015). However, in qualitative research, trustworthiness is used to describe not only the instrumental validity and reliability, but also internal validity (Fraenkel et al., 2015). Trustworthiness of a qualitative study can be provided different ways but in the current study, the techniques mentioned below were applied.

In order to create trust with participants and teachers, the researcher spend time with them and understand their context and settings. Observation for at least two months in same classrooms makes the researcher more familiar with them and makes them internalize me more. During interviews, the researcher asked interviewee's

immediately after their responses so as to check whether they were understood correctly or not. The researcher used some sentences like ‘You said ....., is it right?’ or ‘You mean that .....,’ in order to avoid the doubts.

Moreover, in order to reduce the differences between researchers and researcher bias, almost all of the observations were conducted by one more person, which is called as external audit (Fraenkel et al., 2015). After observation records, records taken from observation were checked with them. Transferring the behaviors in terms of roles was also conducted with two different experts. At that point Miles and Huberman’s inter-rater agreement formula was used (1994). At that point, the researcher prevented the differences resulting from researchers’ bias or prejudices.

Creswell (2013) states that triangulation is one of the ways to improve trustworthiness of the current study. Triangulation is described as a technique, which depends on data collected not only from one method also from a lot of instruments (Cohen et al., 2007; Fraenkel et al., 2015; Merriam, 2009). Triangulation would be provided through observation, interviews and responses to vignettes. Data collection from interviews with responses from vignette, observations records were combined in the analysis provide methodological triangulation.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **FINDINGS**

In this part, findings of the current study are presented. Teachers' views about play and its importance and their roles during free playtime are demonstrated in section 4.1. In the first part, general views of teachers about the play and its importance, daily routines in their classrooms are presented. In section 4.2., teachers' reactions to the vignettes are reported. Teachers' observed roles during free playtime are mentioned in the section 4.3. Observation records were coded as Teacher Code-Week Number. In other words, A1-W2 means that the record was observed during the practices of teacher A1 in week 2. At the end of the chapter, in section 4.4., summary of whole finding in the current study is given. The research questions which were addressed by the current study are:

1. What are the views of preschool teachers regarding of play?
2. What kind of roles preschool teachers take during free playtime?

#### **4.1. Teachers' Views About Play**

In this part, teachers' views about the play in their classrooms and play's benefits will be demonstrated. In order to understand teachers' views about play and their play practices in the classrooms deeply, they were asked five open-ended questions in the interview. Teachers' responses were analyzed and interpreted regarding of these questions. The most favorite activities by children according to teachers' reports, children's preferences during free playtime, the most effective time for



children’s learning, and the importance of play were reported. The findings which had been taken from interview were coded as Teacher Code-INT. In other words, A1-INT means that the quotation was taken from the interview of teacher A1.

#### 4.1.1. The Most Favorite Play

Teachers were asked which activity is the most enjoyed for children and preferred by them. When their responses were analyzed, the codes were arranged under seven categories. All of the teachers stated that musical play ( $n=8$ ) like musical chairs and “Freeze Dance Game” are the play children like very much. Most of the teachers mentioned that children enjoy in the play where they are physically active ( $n=6$ ). Some teachers implied that children get fun mostly in Drama ( $n=4$ ) and in play ( $n=2$ ). Other play including table works or play with rules were mentioned by teachers ( $n=4$ ). In order to see detailed information about the teachers’ responses to the children’s favorite play, see Table 4.1.

Table 4.1.

#### *The Most Favorite Play of Children*

<b>Categories</b>	<b>Codes</b>
<b>Musical Play</b>	Musical Chairs ( $n=3$ )
	Musical Play ( $n=3$ )
	Freeze Dance Game ( $n=2$ )
<b>Physically Active Play</b>	Competitive Games ( $n=3$ )
	Survivor ( $n=1$ )
	Racing Tracks ( $n=1$ )
	Ball Games ( $n=1$ )

Table 4.1. (Continued)

<b>Make-Believe Play</b>	Drama (n=3)
	Free Play (n=1)
	Puppets (n=1)
<b>Others</b>	Play with rules or table works (n=4)
	Any Kind of Play (n=2)

\*Some Teachers gave more than one answer

Some of the quotes as examples are given below.

Musical play (n=8) were mentioned by all teachers as children's most loved play.

Some of the quotes can be seen:

C1-INT

Freeze Dance Game; they like this musical play much more than the other play.

B2-INT

They like to play musical chairs or freeze dance game

C2-INT

Children have a lot of fun in musical play and circle play.

Teachers (n=6) stated children's attention on play which they are physically active. Some teachers' comments are shown below:

B1-INT

They like games like Survivor. For example, we build tracks in the classroom, they crawl under the tables. We put pins around, they jump over them, pass between them and they try to hit the targets. They love those games.

B2-INT

Maybe calmer play does not attract children very much, they prefer games with action more.

Make-Believe play (n=5) was stated by teachers to be as one of the children's choices.

A1-INT

They love drama play, they like to be charged with. They all want to take charge. Drama is children's favorite play.

C2-INT

They love the puppet too, if you add a tone to it. One of my children brought a Nasrettin Hodja tale. It was quite long, but it was very interesting for them. For example; when I make the sound of the donkey and reflect on the things like Nasrettin Hodja and his neighbor's laughter, the children burst out laughing.

Some teachers (n=6) implied that children's most favorite play is playing with rules or table works.

B2-INT

I don't want to limit it to a single play. Their interest changes according to the activity in our program. One day, they enjoy the art event; the other day, the drama story can be more pleasing to them.

#### **4.1.2. Children's Choices During Free Playtime**

Teachers were asked what children do during free playtime. Teachers responded that children prefer object play (n=15). Some teachers expressed that children choose playing with blocks (n=7), cars (n=3), Legos (n=3) and books (n=2). The other play observed by teachers was stated as educational play (n=8). Playing with

educational toys (n=5) and playing with play-dough or drawing activities (n=3) were stated by teachers. For detailed information, see Table 4.2.

Table 4.2.

*Children's Choices During Free Playtime*

<b>Codes</b>	<b>n</b>
<b>Object Play</b>	Play with Blocks (n=7)
	Play with Cars (n=3)
	Play with Legos (n=3)
	Play with Books (n=2)
<b>Educational Play</b>	Educational Toys (n=5)
	Drawing, playing with play-dough (n=3)

Some explanatory statements are given below.

Playing with different materials during free playtime is emphasized by Teachers. Teachers stated that children prefer playing with blocks and Legos (n=10). Cars and books were stated as the materials children choose to play in playtime (n=5).

A2-INT

As you can see, they usually try to play in the dramatic play center.

C2-INT

Rarely, a few children go to the story corner.

B1-INT

For example, boys take these big wooden blocks and build garages, build cars. They have more playgrounds.

B2-INT

Children love to play with Legos in free time.

Educational Play (n=8) was one of the implied play choices reported by teachers.

A2-INT

One of my group is calm, they play with toys at the table.

C1-INT

Girls usually play with play dough and they paint sometimes. The ones who love painting paint.

#### **4.1.3. Playtime in Daily Schedule**

All of the schools in the current study applied the Early Childhood Education Curriculum which was prepared by Ministry of National Education in Turkey. Their daily routines start and finish around at the same time. All schools ( $n=3$ ) selected for the current research starts with greeting and free playtime until lunch or breakfast time. Afterwards, teachers and children made some activities such as Turkish Language, Art, Mathematics, Science, Movement or field trips at the activity time. At the end of the day, all the teachers ( $n=6$ ) assess the day with children and tidy up the classroom. Before leaving the classroom, children have chance to play spontaneously. However, teachers prefer to let children be in activities which has calming effect on children like reading a book, playing with memory cards or drawing.

A1-INT

There are many who want to paint at the time of arrival. But I don't allow it. Because children's wrists get tired at the time of painting. I want them to spend their free time with toys. There are some who give children playdough, but I personally prefer children to play with toys and puzzles.

B1-INT

If there is a literacy activity after performing the playing activity, we are doing the literacy activity or relaxing activities according to the time left. Because when it is time to go, they lose their attention and they start to get active. And since they're starting to be more energetic, we're trying to keep them away from running so they don't sweat. It's a very difficult time near our check-out time. If we are going to do literacy activity, painting activity or memory play, we prefer games that we can play while sitting.

By the time teachers were asked about their daily routines in the classroom, it could be understood that play is used whole day. Regarding of teachers' reports, play is mostly used in three different times in the classrooms.

#### **4.1.3.1. Play during Arrival Time**

In each classroom observed, greeting time, before having breakfast or lunch, was used as a free playtime for children. At the beginning of the time, they use play as a tool which makes children ready to learn from activities. Each teacher stated the importance of playing spontaneously at this time. As they mentioned in the interview, they believe that children spend their energy by playing. According to teachers ( $n=6$ ), children would become more peaceful after playing for a while.

Therefore, all of the teachers ( $n=6$ ) indicated that they let children play free at least half an hour before start learning activities. Children can play spontaneously from arrival time to the breakfast or lunch time.

A1-INT

We have a free time activity after arrival time and after the clothe changing time. In the free time activity, children play with toys of their choice, with friends of their choice, in groups or individually.

B1-INT

Since the arrival and departure times of children are different, we provide free time activity when we first arrive. The children gather, throw away the energy of that day, relax, relieve their

longings with friends. If we don't have a very busy schedule for the day, I let them play until lunch time. Then we tidy up toys before dinner, and then we go to dinner.

#### C2-INT

After free time, we wash our hands. We go to breakfast. The time after breakfast is our time of silence. Every morning, children come, after the free time activity, we have breakfast, then we do art activity, then story activity, then we do read and write activity, then playing time and music.

#### 4.1.3.2. Play during Activity Times

According to the teachers ( $n=6$ ), play is also used as a tool for teaching some concepts during activity times. As they mentioned, after children have lunch or breakfast, teachers emphasized that they start doing Turkish Language, Mathematic or science activities which are integrated with structured play. Teachers indicated that, during these times, they use play materials to teach some specific abilities. Lego, Play-Dough, Blocks or some specific play materials are given children to teach new skills or to improve a skill that was taught before.

For instance, teachers ( $n=2$ ) stated they use Lego to teach pattern or children could exercise by playing with Lego.

#### B1-INT

For example, we can teach the pattern in a more relaxed and fun way by saying what will come after red while playing Legos rather than just saying it. Learning through playing is more effective and permanent.

#### A1-INT

Children have the chance to use all the materials in the classroom in free time. We have materials about numbers, we have puzzles. We have a puzzle of a Turkey map. These materials are good for the children's education.

#### **4.1.3.3. Play during Departure Time**

Before going home, children have time for playing and relaxing. Some of the teachers (n=2), during that time, indicated that they ask some riddles while waiting to go home. Play-Dough, drawing and card games are some of the most preferred activities at this time.

A1-INT

They love riddles. I ask them riddles. Even at check-out time, we spend our time with riddles. They want us to ask riddles to them. Then we give them some play dough.

Teachers (n=2) also reported that in a daily routine, they try to spend time to do something what children want. By this way, one of them emphasized that they gave importance to children's choices and wishes.

A1-INT

We give them time to paint freely. We care about children's wishes. Then we do something in line with their wishes, if there is an activity they didn't do, we do it in line with the wishes of children.

#### **4.1.4. Importance of Play**

In order to understand teachers' views about the importance of play, they were asked to describe its benefits for children and teachers. Teachers' responses to the questions were analyzed and interpreted. The findings about the value of play for children were coded and categorized under three titles. Some Teachers issued the play's benefits on children's social and emotional development by telling improving peer relations (n=4), learning to share (n=3), improving self-confidence (n=3) and abreacting (n=5). Teachers (n=8) focused on play's value on improving



children’s cognitive development. Advancing physical development (n=5) was also emphasized as the value of play for children.

Teachers’ responses to the question about value of play for teachers were coded and analyzed under two categories. Understanding social wellness (n=7) were implied by the Teachers. Lastly, play was seen valuable because of it makes teaching easier (n=9) in classroom. The details about the findings including codes is demonstrated below (see table 4.3.).

Table 4.3.

*The Importance of Play*

	<b>Categories</b>	<b>Codes</b>
<b>For Children</b>	Social and Emotional Development (n=17)	Improve Peer Relations (n=4)
		Learning to share (n=3)
		Improve Self-Confidence (n=2)
		Relaxing (n=3)
		Help to express one’s feeling (n=5)
	Cognitive Development (n=8)	Learning by experiencing (n=2)
		Learning Social Rules (n=2)
		Learning to eat (n=2)
	Physical Development (n=5)	Learning to do domestic works (n=2)
		Develop Psychomotor Skills (n=5)

Table 4.3. (Continued)

<b>For Teachers</b>	Understand Social Wellness (n=7)	To understand the psychological well-being of the child and inner world (n=3)
		Opportunity to know the child (n=4)
		Teach something (n=5)
	Make Teaching Easier (n=9)	Make ready children to school and learning environment (n=4)

\*Each teacher gave more than one answer

Play's importance for children's social and emotional development (n=17) were emphasized by the teachers.

**A2-INT**

Play have many advantages. During the playtime, the children blow off steam and relieve stress.

**B2-INT**

For example, at the beginning of the semester, a child was very quiet, passive and withdrawn. He wasn't communicating with me or his friends. He was coming in the morning, sitting on the couch, just observing. But after a while, gradually, with the encouragement of me and his friends, he began to join the games and communicate more easily. He got more social.

**C2-INT**

The child's self-confidence is improving. He's learning to trust. He says I can do it. You reassure him/her. If you don't support him/her in the game, if you say you can't, child would have trust issues. Then he would just saying I can't. If you encourage him/her, if you say you are doing better today, then his/her self-esteem develops more.

**C1-INT**

Children learn to share through play.

Physical development (n=5) were implied as one of the benefits of play for children.

B2-INT

Play also helps the children's psychomotor development.

C1-INT

Especially in track games, children learn to walk in balance and to jump more balanced.

Some teachers (n=8) implied the importance of play by focusing on its developmental value on children's cognitive development.

B1-INT

We're playing role games. Children learn by playing a role. They learn the role of the mother, the role of the father, the role of the child, a profession, a doctor or a nurse. They use the tools, take their roles as models and they feel their role.

B2-INT

The play develops children physically and mentally.

Teachers implied the importance of play to understand children's psychological wellness (n=7).

A1-INT

The play reveals the child's daily life. He/she usually gives out what he/she lives in the play. He/she gives his inner world out through play.

C1-INT

While playing, children can express feelings they don't tell each other.

Teachers emphasized that play makes teaching easier, which was stated one of the most value of play for teachers (n=9).

A2-INT

We can easily switch to other events. The play makes the transition to events very easy.

C1-INT

The play is very effective. Children's world is play, it's their everything, really. Whether it's a Turkish language event or a science event, making it all a play makes the child a different world. That way they get more into it. You can teach the child how to have breakfast by illustrating breakfast as a play.

## **4.2. Teachers' Reactions to The Vignettes**

In order to examine teachers' tendency to the roles during free playtime, they were read to five vignettes and asked to how and why they would behave at the similar situation as in the vignette. Rather than asking directly which types of roles they would take in free playtime, vignettes were used to deduct their potential roles from their reactions. Before starting observations, teachers' reactions to the vignettes were examined at the end of the interview questions. Regarding of teachers' reactions to the vignettes, their behaviors as their reports could be categorized under uninvolved (n=14), stage manager (n=5), onlooker (n=4), play leader (n=3), director/redirector (n=3) and co-player (n=1). These categories were described regarding of the role types created by Johnson, Christie and Yawkey (1999). Teachers' reactions to each vignette were reported in detail below.

### **4.2.1. Vignette 1**

*The children are playing make-believe play for a few times. After a while, their interest in game decreases and they are distracted. What do you do in such a situation? Why?*

In vignette 1, most of the teachers (n=4) stated that they will help children to set up a new play, which they would like to join voluntarily. They believe children can be bored while they are playing a same game because of their ages. Therefore, rather than suggesting some relating themes to improve the current play, they let children to start different play. They believe that children could not be happy in a game, which they do not want to play. Moreover, they also emphasized that children are free to choose with whom and which materials they play. While most of the teachers did not mention about participation to children's play, one of them (A2) emphasized she could join play so as to improve children's play. A1, who is the oldest teacher among teachers, indicated to ignore the play and do nothing because she does not have to do something to improve children's play.

Some explanatory examples are given below:

A1-INT

Children don't have to continue to play, they can leave it where they're fed up. Not all of them play from beginning to end. I'm not trying to keep the play going either. Because they don't have to.

B1-INT

I ask them why they finished playing. It's natural for them to lose interest in playing. The child may be bored. I ask what we can do and what he/she wants to play. I certainly don't let him/her sit idle. I lead him/her to different people or to different games. If he/she doesn't want to do it, I ask what we can do. It is normal for them to be distracted because they have played the game for a long time. That's what their age requires. At first, I see what they're going to do after the play without reacting. If they set themselves up, it's okay, but if they don't, then I'll redirect them to another game according to their interests.

#### **4.2.2. Vignette 2**

*The children are playing grocery. Some of them are vendors, others are customers. Then, at the point where they have to pay, one of the children asks, 'what are we*

*going to use as money?' The other child says "We can use them instead of money" by taking the parts of the Lego. What do you do in such a situation? Why?*

As a response to the vignette 2, some of the teachers (n=3) were more willingly to ignore how children use the material. A2 indicated to let children to use a material with a different purpose. A2 and C2 stated that children should be allowed to use everything whatever they want. B1 stated that she allows children use which material they want. She does not care about the materials' intended use because it reflects children's creativity.

Contrary to their idea, a teacher (n=1) stated not to let children use a material with a different purpose. She indicated to cut some papers in a form of real money and gave them to children play with them, which makes their play more realistic.

On the other hand, some teachers (n=2) preferred to take stage manager role by letting children play how they wish. However, they also ask questions about the different materials they can use so as to improve their play. Teachers did not refer anything joining children's play.

Some quotations from teachers are demonstrated below:

A2-INT

They can use what they want. If the children saw Lego as money, I would not tell them to not use Lego as money. That would make them unhappy.

A1-INT

I give them money made of from paper. I do it to make it more visual since the real money is made of from paper.

C1-INT

He's using Lego as money, that's his idea. I ask but what else can you use? Think about it in class. What can you use for money? So,

if I interfere, if I direct him, he would not be himself anymore. But I offer an alternative, I direct the child that way: Your friend used that Lego as money. So, what can you use differently? What do you think the money is? What can we use as money in class?

### 4.2.3. Vignette 3

*Some of the children lie down at the book corner at playtime and talk to each other about the characters in the books. What do you do in such a situation? Why?*

In the vignette 3, most of the teachers (n=4) took onlooker role by letting children play with books during playtime because they stated that children are all free to select the materials they play. Moreover, they also emphasized they sit near to children to observe and to listen what they read and what they talk about. The reason why they choose to listen children's conversations is to understand children's inner world.

Some teachers (n=2) were not willingly to do something in this situation. They responded that they prefer to uninvolved children's play by ignoring it because each child can play with whoever or whatever they want. Whereas A1 indicated she totally ignores the situation, C1 wish to take children in to play by allowing them to do firstly.

Some of the examples from teachers' reports are given.

B1-INT

I would let them because it's their free time. If he/she wants to read books, he/she will. After all, free time is when each student plays his or her own choice. Not every student play Lego or house. If he/she likes to spend time with the students in books section, then I would watch them I would try to observe what they learn from the books.

A1-INT

We use all kinds of material in our game clock. They can also use stories. When they're sitting at the table, someone opens something; tells a friend. I don't do anything, I don't intervene because I don't see the need. If he asks me anything, I'll answer.

#### 4.2.4. Vignette 4

*Children decide to build 'Toy Shop' and bring all the toys in the class to the shop. For this reason, they collect all the toys in the playground. What do you do in such a situation? Why?*

When the responds of teachers are examined, it could be indicated that most of the teachers are willingly to have passive roles about joining the children's play. Some teachers (n=2) responded to the vignette by telling children to do or not to do. She directs children about which material they play in a certain game. They gave importance to the intended use of materials. They stated that some educational toys or structured materials could not be used in make believe play. On the contrary, some teachers (n=2) indicated that they ignore the play materials that children use while they are playing. They mentioned children are free to choose materials in their play, but they should be informed to tidy up them at the end of the play.

On the other hand, lastly, some teachers (n=2) were seen to be more willingly to participate in children's play. Both teachers wish to advance play by joining. However, whereas B2 would be under children's guide in their play, B1 would advise some new themes to improve the play. In other words, sometimes, B1 demonstrated willingness to the leading children's play. B1 indicated that She made role distributions among the children, B2 only emphasized she participated to play with children.



Some of the quotes are demonstrated below.

A2-INT

I explain what they can use there, what they can use in different places. For example, I don't allow them to use jigsaw puzzles, number toys for house playing. I mean, I don't allow them to collect any toy if it is going to be a problem when one is missing. Other than that, I would tell them which toys that they can play in the game.

C2-INT

They can collect. They can mess around. They can use what they want to use, then they can put it back in place. They're free.

#### **4.2.5. Vignette 5**

*Some of the children play games, which they run in the classroom and can be dangerous enough to damage each other physically. What do you do in such a situation? Why?*

In vignette 5, all of the teachers (n=6) have potential to take uninvolved role by stating that they warn children not to run in the classroom. Verbal warning is the first choice of teachers, but it is also indicated that if it is required, physical intervention could be observed, which means teacher asks the child to come near to her. Teachers remind children to the classroom rules involving not running in the classroom because of the potential risks for physical injuries. According to teachers, children could harm themselves or other children while they are running in the classroom. By the time one of the children is disturbed, parents might react over. A teacher (n=1) stated that children should be taught about the situations they can be harmed. By the way, they can learn how to behave and play in order to protect themselves. On the other hand, parents' reaction and complaint from them is the most common reason that teachers mentioned.

Some explanatory examples could be seen below.

#### B1-INT

I particularly intervene in this type of situations. I would be afraid in case they push each other in the windows or on the top of the seat. When they throw toys, I have to intervene. First of all, I warn the students what the consequences of their behaviors may be, but if they continue to do so in the same way, I would try to direct their interest to a different play they will love, or I would intervene physically.

#### C2-INT

I warn the children before they start playing. I tell them to not run too fast, look in front of them while running, I warn them to beware of their friends. I warn them about the consequences like they can suddenly hit the table, their head may hit the window. I tell them if they continue their game by being careful with their steps, by running calmly, they will get better results. Sometimes minor accidents happen suddenly at the entrances and exits, but I would like to inform the children in advance.

Until this part, research findings were demonstrated regarding of the data from interview and responses to vignettes. In addition to importance of teachers' views and thoughts, their practices are also required to be investigated. The discrepancy between teachers' views and practices should be explored because there could be some factors influencing their behaviors. Therefore, the findings gathered from observation of teachers' practices during free playtime is given in the next part.

### **4.3. Teachers' Roles During Playtime**

In order to understand teachers' roles during free playtime, six teachers were observed eight times in the current study. Teachers' observations were done during their free playtime. Teachers' behaviors were recorded through using observation record list, which was designed by the researcher regarding of six roles definitions, which were described by Johnson, Christie and Yawkey (1999). They were

analyzed and categorized under these role definitions. During the observations, six types of teacher roles were recorded by the researcher. Uninvolved behaviors (n=6) were one of the most observed role types among teachers. Most of the teachers (n=5) demonstrated onlooker behaviors among free playtime. Stage Manager behaviors (n=4), Co-Players (n=5), play leader (n=3) and director / redirector (n=6) were recorded by the researcher.

Each teacher was observed during their free playtime for eight times. Total times they were observed were between 330 – 410 minutes for the current study. The difference in observation times among teachers is due to the difference in the time allocated to free play. Children attending afternoon sessions have more time for playing because they could come earlier and play till lunch. However, in the morning sessions, children could not come so early; thus, their playtime was decreased. During the observations, it was recorded that each teacher demonstrated different role types. (see Table 4.4.).

Table 4.4.

*Detailed Information of Observation Times*

<b>Teachers</b>	<b>Sessions</b>	<b>Observed Times</b>	<b>Observed Role Types</b>
A1	Afternoon	370	3
A2	Afternoon	410	6
B1	Afternoon	385	6
B2	Morning	330	5
C1	Morning	344	5
C2	Morning	357	4

Teachers’ observation results regarding of the role types described by Johnson, Christie and Yawkey (1999) will be given in the next part. After describing each

role in terms of literature, teachers' behaviors during free playtime were categorized under characteristics of each role and given with explanatory examples.

#### **4.3.1. Uninvolved**

Behaviors under uninvolved role type was described as the situations where teacher's participation and their attention to play have not been occurred. Uninvolved behaviors were analyzed and reported under eight categories. During the observations, it was observed that all of the Teachers (n=6) had a greeting duty, which made them responsible from greeting to children and parents in the basement floor. Therefore, because of their duty, they might not be in the classroom almost 30 minutes in free playtime. Some of the teachers (n=5) might use mobile phone to talk with some parents or just to do something with mobile phone for a few minutes. Taking pictures of children while they were playing was also observed. Sometimes, teachers (n=6) responded children with very short answers, which may show that teacher did not want to be in conversation. Care giving (n=4) was reported during the playtime. Preparation to the further activities were seen among all teachers' observations (n=6). Talking with other adults like interns and other teachers (n=6) and doing paper works (n=4) were observed during free playtime. Issuing some warnings (n=6) and tidying up the classroom environment (n=4) were reported as the behaviors in playtime by the researcher. In order to understand which characteristics were demonstrated by which Teacher, see Table 4.5.

Table 4.5.

*Characteristics of Uninvolved Role*

<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>A1</b>	<b>A2</b>	<b>B1</b>	<b>B2</b>	<b>C1</b>	<b>C2</b>
<b>Welcoming children outside the class</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Using mobile phone</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	-	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Ignoring the play</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Preparations for other activities (photocopying, drawing, cutting)</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Talking with other adults in the classroom (interns, parents)</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Paper Works (daily plan preparations)</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	-	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	-
<b>Issuing warnings (physical and verbal)</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Tidying up the class</b>	-	-	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	-

Welcoming children outside the classroom, ignoring the play, preparation for other activities, talking with other adults in the classroom and issuing warnings were some characteristics observed among all teachers.

Ignoring children's' play, giving very short answers and responses to children's questions and not concerning their complaints were observed (n=6). Focusing on children self-care needs were observed among some teachers (n=4). During the playtime, it was also recorded that teachers (n=6) spend some time by preparing

something for further activities. Most of the teachers (n=5) used the playtime as a preparation for some activities like national celebrations, projects or exhibitions.

Checking daily plans, tidying up shelves and tables (n=4) were also observed behaviors among teachers during free playtime. Taking precautions and warning children verbally to prevent possible dangers (n=6) in the classroom were recorded by the researcher during the observations. In order to clarify some characteristics, some explanatory examples from observed behaviors are given in the next table (Table 4.6.).

Table 4.6.

*Some Explanatory Examples for Uninvolved Role*

Characteristics	Some Explanatory Examples for Uninvolved Role
<b>Ignoring the play</b>	<p>A2-W7</p> <p>Emir says he put on a big round plastic ring on the back of his car, and asks do you know why I put it on? Then, he says I put it on to make my car stronger. Teacher did not response to him.</p>
	<p>B2-W3</p> <p>When one of the children's athletes came out, teacher came over to the child and said let's put your athlete in, and then teacher corrected child's athlete.</p>
<b>Preparations for other activities (photocopying, drawing, cutting)</b>	<p>A1-W8</p> <p>The teacher was out of the classroom. He/she stated that the reason for him/her being out of the classroom was to take the photocopies that he would use in the activity and to prepare the homework. When the teacher went</p>

Table 4.6. (Continued)

	<p>out, the voice of the children in the classroom increased. The play of the children became more active and some of them started to run in the classroom.</p> <p>C2-W7</p> <p>The teacher brought the missing materials for the exhibition to be held at the school to the classroom and prepared them together with some children she chooses. At this time, while the other children continued their playing, the teacher sent the curios ones who came to see what they were doing back to the game.</p>
<p><b>Issuing warnings (physical and verbal)</b></p>	<p>B2-W2</p> <p>The teacher moved some tables in the classroom to avoid any accidents while the children were playing.</p>
	<p>A2-W4</p> <p>One of the children stepped on the trash can. The teacher warned the child from his seat and said that he would break down the trash can. The boy stepped off.</p>

#### 4.3.2. Onlooker

Onlooker teachers' behaviors were defined as positioning near to play area and watching children's play; making some verbal and nonverbal comments or approvals while observing children's play. Moreover, onlooker teachers ask questions about what children do in their play while they are sitting near to the play area. Teachers behavior under onlooker role type were analyzed and described

under five categories. In this role, teachers totally quietly watch children's play by sitting near to the play area. Some (n=5) also sat her chair for a while to observe children play. Moreover, some nonverbal clues were conducted by Teachers (n=2). Making verbal comments were demonstrated by most of the Teachers (n=5). Sometimes, teachers replied some questions asked by children or some complaints (n=3). Teachers (n=6) asked questions to children about their play in this role but generally, they did not involve or join the play. They were out of the play. Teachers (n=6) took onlooker role by also watching children's play sitting near to the play area (See Table 4.7.).

Table 4.7.

*Characteristics of Onlooker Role*

<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>A1</b>	<b>A2</b>	<b>B1</b>	<b>B2</b>	<b>C1</b>	<b>C2</b>
<b>Positioning near the play area and watching children's play</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	-	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Positioning near the play area and making nonverbal approvals and signs</b>	-	<input type="checkbox"/>	-	<input type="checkbox"/>	-	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Positioning near the play area and making some verbal comments</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	-	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Positioning near the play area and replying the questions and complaints</b>	-	-	-	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Positioning near the play area and asking questions about children's play</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	-	<input type="checkbox"/>



Some of the teachers (n=5) made some verbal approvals or comments to children's play without joining the play. Teachers replied the questions and answered the complaints (n=3) while they were sitting on the chair. They did not attend the play. Teachers who asked questions about the ongoing play and children's choices were observed during free playtime (n=5). At these situations, teachers did not play with children. Some explanatory examples from observed behaviors were given on the table 4.8.

Table 4.8.

*Some Explanatory Examples for Onlooker Role*

<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>Some Explanatory Examples for Onlooker Role</b>
<b>Positioning near the play area and making some verbal comments</b>	B1-W3 In free playtime, he/she goes to a child who is painting, asks questions about what the child is painting and comments on how beautiful the child have painted.
	B2-W6 As the teacher sat at the table, one of the children came and asked if he could play with the puzzles in his hand. The teacher replied, saying that you can play, of course, but play at the table.
<b>Positioning near the play area and replying the questions and complaints</b>	C1-W3 Teacher is sitting at the table watching children play. When one of the children comes to complain about his/her friend, the teacher sends the child back to playing, saying don't come to me to complain about your friends.

Table 4.8. (Continued)

<p><b>Positioning near the play area and asking questions about children’s play</b></p>	<p>A2-W5</p>
	<p>One of the children said we're locking us all up here, and the teacher asked why. He/she said because our brothers are dead.</p>
	<p>B2-W2</p>
	<p>While the teacher was watching children play, he/she ask to the child who was playing with the blocks what was he/she doing with them? After the child's reply, the teacher said, “Hmm, OK”.</p>

### 4.3.3. Stage Manager

In Stage Manager role, teachers assist in preparing children’s play and setting. They take active roles in organizing the play setting and improving the ongoing play. If children need help about the ongoing play, teachers in the stage manager role support them, but they do not join the play actively. Moreover, they also give some advices to improve children’s play. In the current study, teachers’ observed behaviors were categorized under three characteristics of stage manager role. During the observations, only two teachers fully demonstrated stage manager characteristics as seen in the table 4.9.

Table 4.9.

*Characteristics of Stage Manager Role*

<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>A1</b>	<b>A2</b>	<b>B1</b>	<b>B2</b>	<b>C1</b>	<b>C2</b>
<b>Responding children's material requests</b>	-	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	-	-	-
<b>Assisting play organization and play setting</b>	-	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	-	-	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Suggesting new themes to extend ongoing play without joining it.</b>	-	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	-	<input type="checkbox"/>	-

By the time children do not know how to use a material or they need additional materials in their play, teachers (n=2) gave some materials to children. Moreover, they also informed children about the usage of material even if they did not ask. Teachers (n=2) helped some children who could not join one of the ongoing play or set up their own play. At these times, teachers asked some questions why they did not play and assisted children by advising different play opportunities, but they did not attend the play. When children could not move on their play, teachers (n=3) suggested new themes to improve it. They offered some ideas about the material they use, the environment they play and play theme. Some explanatory examples from observed behaviors were given on the table 4.10.

Table 4.10.

*Some Explanatory Examples for Stage Manager Role*

<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>Some Explanatory Examples for Stage Manager Role</b>
<p><b>Responding children's material requests</b></p>	<p>A2-W3</p> <p>A child who could not put on the puppet asked for the teacher's help. The teacher took the puppet and showed to the child how to do it. The child then continued to play by himself.</p>
<p><b>Assisting play organization and play setting</b></p>	<p>B1-W2</p> <p>The teacher walked over to a child who did not play in the classroom and held the child in his arms and asked him/her why he/she was not playing. The teacher said, 'Why are you sitting idle, you shall play too.' He tried to lead the child to the playground.</p>
<p><b>Suggesting new themes to extend ongoing play without joining it.</b></p>	<p>C1-W5</p> <p>Three children were playing with wooden blocks. After the blocks are stacked, the children were taking down the stack. One of them got bored and sit on the carpet and started to watch around. The teacher called out to the child who gave up the game and said, "Come on, make a road from the blocks, make a house from them." He/she tried to lead the child back into the game.</p>

#### 4.3.4. Co-Player

Co-Players in free playtime have active roles in children’s play. Teachers join children’s play but do not direct or influence the ongoing play. Teachers take the roles what children ask from them. In other words, they would choose the roles in the play regarding of children’s requests. Teachers who take co-player role in free playtime follow the play and let children lead the play. Without waiting for any need, teachers spontaneously decided to attend the on-going play. In the current study, characteristics of co-player role were categorized under three categories. Teachers went to the play area and sat on the floor to join play (n=1). Even though she just only sat on the carpet and did not do anything to play with children, some children sidled up to her. They hug the teacher and kissed her. Some Teachers (n=4) went to play with children without waiting any demands from them. On the other hand, sometimes, teachers (n=3) participated children’s play after children had come to them and asked something. Characteristics of Co-Player teachers observed during eight times among the Teachers were given below (see Table 4.11.).

Table 4.11

*Characteristics of Co-Player Role*

<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>A1</b>	<b>A2</b>	<b>B1</b>	<b>B2</b>	<b>C1</b>	<b>C2</b>
<b>Sit down in the play area</b>	-	<input type="checkbox"/>	-	-	-	-
<b>Play with children without any demands from them</b>	-	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	-
<b>Join play after children’s demands</b>	-	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	-	<input type="checkbox"/>	-

Teacher (n=1) sat in the play area, especially where children play. While children were playing, teachers went to the play area and sat down on the floor. Then, some children gathered around her. Teachers (n=4) asked children to play together. Even if the first attempt was done by the teacher, they were just co-players while children were playing because they did not tell something to direct or guide their play. Some teachers (n=3) decided to play with children for a while after children came and wanted her to play with them. Teachers joined the play with children's demands. They did what children want them to do in the play. Some explanatory examples from observed behaviors were given on the table 4.12.

Table 4.12.

*Some Explanatory Examples for Co-Player Role*

<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>Some Explanatory Examples for Co-Player Role</b>
<b>Sit down in the play area</b>	<p>A2-W7</p> <p>Teacher sits on the carpet while children were playing. The child makes cookies and brings it to the teacher to taste, the teacher tastes it and says it was super. And another child says to teacher I'm going to bake you pastry. The teacher says I would love it too. Emir says that I will make minty strawberry pastry. Emir makes the pastry and gives it to the teacher. The teacher asked is this what the minty donut is. Yes, he says, it is the green one. The teacher says it's beautiful.</p>
<b>Play with children without any demands from them</b>	<p>B1-W7</p> <p>The children who used the toys as steering wheels raced among themselves. The teacher joined their play as if he/she was driving a car while passing through the area.</p>

Table 4.12. (Continued)

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	C1-W3
<b>Join play after children's demands</b>	Two girls were playing house. The teacher was sitting at the table. One of the children brought him/her a plate and said I brought you a cake. The teacher acted like eating it and said it was delicious. The child said enjoy it and walked away.

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#### 4.3.5. Play Leader

Play leader role was described as joining in and becoming active Teachers in children's play with making use of more influence. Play leaders attempt to enrich and lengthen play by offering new play themes. They also ask questions to extent play. However, the main condition in this role is joining the play actively. As a play leader, in addition to having active roles in play, they also directed or led the play. In the current study, behaviors of play leaders were categorized under three characteristics. During the observations, some teachers (n=3) were willing to play with children. They attended to the play without waiting a request or question from children. Their comments influenced and changed the ongoing play. Teachers (n=2) introduced new play themes to facilitate the ongoing play and have active roles in the play. Moreover, teachers (n=2) also provided new materials to improve the play by joining in it. Asking question about to play and giving some helpful hints to advance ongoing play was also one of the characteristics of play leaders (n=3). Detailed information about the characteristics of play leader teachers observed in the current study were given on the Table 4.13.

Table 4.13.

*Characteristics of Play Leader Role*

<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>A1</b>	<b>A2</b>	<b>B1</b>	<b>B2</b>	<b>C1</b>	<b>C2</b>
<b>Suggesting new play themes to extend and joining in it</b>	-	<input type="checkbox"/>	-	<input type="checkbox"/>	-	-
<b>Introducing new materials and props to extend play</b>	-	-	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	-	-
<b>Having role in play and asking helping questions about the play to facilitate it</b>	-	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	-	-

Some teachers (n=2) improved the play by suggesting different themes or different views. In these situations, there were no requests from children to teacher for playing with them. Sometimes, teacher was volunteer to join in children's play. So as to facilitate the ongoing play, teachers introduced new props to children. Giving new materials to children and setting up play together was one of the behaviors observed among teachers (n=2). Moreover, some (n=3) gave helpful hints and asked questions about the play while they were playing together. Some explanatory examples from observed behaviors were given on the table 4.14.

Table 4.14.

*Some Explanatory Examples for Play Leader Role*

<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>Some Explanatory Examples for Play Leader Role</b>
<b>Suggesting new play themes to extend and joining in it</b>	A2-W5 The teacher asks one of the children to give tea to his/her friend. The child says okay and gives tea to a friend. Then, the teacher asks if we should give another



Table 4.14. (Continued)

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	friend a cake, and after the child brings the cake to his/her friend, then the teacher says we should give some food to cats, they might be hungry too.
	B2-W5
<b>Introducing new materials and props to extend play</b>	The children were playing basketball. However, when all of the children tried to throw the ball, the game did not continue and there was a discussion among the children. The teacher lined up some of the children in front of the basket and gave the others a ball of yarn. Some of the children threw balls into the basket, while others threw a ball of yarn to each other. The teacher joined them and played together.
	B1-W3
<b>Having role in play and asking helping questions about the play to facilitate it</b>	When one of the children was playing with one of the math materials, he/she got bored for not being able to do it. The teacher went to him/her and taught him/her how to play. Afterwards, the teacher joined the play and kept it going.

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#### 4.3.6. Director / Redirector

Director / redirector teachers were defined basing on two main behaviors. First of without joining the play. Directors / redirectors take children's attention to something in the real world while they are playing. They were outside of the play area to tell children what to do all, they tell children what they should do or not to do while they are playing. Teachers decide the main rules of the play, but they are

out of the play. The second one is using play as an academic teaching tool. In the both behaviors, Teachers generally directed children or not to do. In the current study, one of the most observed role types of teachers is being director / redirector. From beginning to the end of the observation, teachers almost each week demonstrated director / redirector role. In this study, characteristics of director / redirector role were classified under six categories. Generally, they (n=4) warned children about how to play. Warnings about the content about the play like what they should play were also observed (n=5). Warning about the play materials (n=5) such as play with which materials or how to play with a material were seen among the observations. Some verbal issues about where they should play (n=2) and tidying up the classroom (n=6) were some characteristics of director / redirector teachers. Finally, using play as a teaching tool (n=5) was one of the most observed behavior among the Teachers. Details about the characteristics of director / redirector teacher were given (see Table 4.15.).

Table 4.15.

*Characteristics of Director / Redirector Role*

<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>A1</b>	<b>A2</b>	<b>B1</b>	<b>B2</b>	<b>C1</b>	<b>C2</b>
<b>Warning about how to play (quietly or calmly, etc.)</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	-	-	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Warning about the content of play</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	-
<b>Warning about the materials</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	-	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Warning about the play environment</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	-	-	<input type="checkbox"/>	-	-
<b>Warning to tidy up</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Using play as a teaching tool</b>	-	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	-	<input type="checkbox"/>

One of the characteristics is that teachers told children is how they should play. Playing quietly or calmly was some of the most recorded warnings of teachers (n=4). They warned children in different times with the words like 'Be quiet', 'play little bit quieter', 'do not make noise', etc. Moreover, by the time children did something different from playing during that time, teachers (n=5) stopped their dance or whatever they did after a while because they believed that children should spend their time for playing. Teachers also told something about content of the play, which influenced how children played. Using some materials with different purposes was not seen appropriate by some teachers. When children used pieces differently or misused, they warned children and informed them about how they should play with those materials. Occasionally, they (n=5) warned children about how to play the materials. For instance, when children used puzzle pieces wrongly, they told children to play appropriate to material's purpose. Teachers also told children which materials they should play. One of characteristics observed among the teachers (n=6) that teachers told children to tidy up the classroom. They implied at the end of the playtime to clean up the classroom and finish their play. In order to make children tidy up the toys, they used different techniques. Some specific games like musical games to make children tidy up the classroom were used. Sometimes, some of them also cleaned up the classroom with children. Moreover, playing without messing up the environment was also one of the warnings done by teachers. During the free playtime, teachers (n=5) talked with children about the real life and made connections between their play and their daily lives. When they observed something related with their environment, teachers used it and talked about it with children while they were playing. However, it happened generally children were playing with structured materials. While children were playing, the teacher told something about real life and real experiences related with what children play. They used free play as a teaching method spontaneously. In other words, they used free play as a teaching tool. Some explanatory examples from observed behaviors were given on the table 4.16.

Table 4.16.

*Some Explanatory Examples for Director / Redirector Role*

<b>Characteristics</b>	<b>Some Explanatory Examples for Director / Redirector Role</b>
<b>Warning about how to play (quietly or calmly, etc.)</b>	<p>C2-W7</p> <p>As the children were playing loudly, the teacher warned the whole class, saying “play quietly”.</p>
<b>Warning about the content of play</b>	<p>B1-W4</p> <p>The teacher closed the chair dance video which was playing on the smart board. Then he/she said, “that’s enough dancing for today, we can continue later”.</p>
<b>Warning about the materials</b>	<p>B1-W8</p> <p>While the children were playing different war games with the chess pieces, the teacher said that they should not play with them like the way they played. He/she said the pieces should be played on the chessboard. Then they brought the pieces and the chessboard, and they placed the pieces on the chessboard.</p>
<b>Warning to tidy up</b>	<p>A1-W7</p> <p>The teacher said to children that playtime is over, you shall tidy up now. And then, he/she finished the playtime.</p>

Table 4.16. (Continued)

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<b>Using play as a teaching tool</b>	A2-W2 The teacher asks the child playing with the train, “Did you ever get on the train?” The child said yes, and then the teacher said, “Tell me how a train moves?”. He/she kept asking questions about trains and that way he/she gave information about trains to all of the children.
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#### **4.4. Summary of the Results**

##### **4.4.1. Summary of Teachers Views about the Play**

When teachers were asked about the most favorite play of children, their responses were categorized under four groups, which are musical play, physically active play, pretend play and others. Teachers told that children like mostly play with music such as musical chairs and freeze dance play and play which they actively participate in such as competitive games, survivor and racing tracks. Pretend play like drama and puppets were also implied as one of the most favorite children’s plays. Finally, according to teachers’ responses, some table play was also described as favorite.

By the time teachers were asked what children do during free playtime, their responses were categorized under two groups which are educational play and object play. According to teachers’ responses, children play with cars, blocks, Legos and

books. Moreover, some of the children preferred playing with educational toys, which involves table play and some drawing activities.

It was mentioned by all teachers that play was used at three different times in their daily routines. First of all, teachers used free play at the beginning of the day as a transition in order to make children readier to the school and activities. Teachers stated that children who come to the school and start the day by playing become more open to give their attention to the later activities which are more academical. The second usage of play in the daily routine is at the activity time. At this time, teachers used structured or semi-structured play so as to teach something or integrated with other activities like art, science or mathematics. The third one is at the end of the day, which was categorized as play at departure time. At this time, teachers stated that they let children play after completing all other activities before leaving the classroom. At the end of the day, children want to play. Thus, teachers used structured or semi-structured play or sang songs until children left to the school. Sometimes, they also let children play free at the centers.

Teachers' opinions were asked about the importance of play for teachers and for children. In the lights of findings, it could be concluded that play is important for children because of its benefits on three main developmental area, which are social and emotional development (n=17), cognitive development (n=8) and physical development (n=5). Regarding of the teachers' responses, it could be reported that play is important for teachers due to its benefits on understanding children's social wellness (n=7) and making teaching easier (n=9). Teacher stated that play advances children's relations with their peers and their self-confidence. Moreover, children learn sharing with friends. They can express their feelings and be more relax through play. Teachers also implied that children's cognitive development is supported in play because children learn by experiencing while they are playing. Furthermore, they learn social rules and do domestic works in play. The positive effects of play on children's physical development is the last category mentioned

by teachers, in which teachers mainly stated its influences on fine and gross motor skills. All teachers are aware of the importance of free play. They argue that free playtime is important for children. While emphasizing the importance of the play, the teachers emphasized that the play does not only facilitate academic outcomes but also contributes to the social and emotional development of children during the playtime. When teachers were asked the importance of play for teachers, their responses were grouped under two categories. First of all is that play helps teachers to understand children's social and psychological wellness. Children can demonstrate their feelings in play and teachers could understand them by observing their play. Moreover, by this way, teachers have opportunity to know children deeply. The second one is that play allows teachers to make teaching easier. Teachers mentioned that using play to teach something makes it easier. Moreover, when children play before doing some activities involving academical knowledge or requiring more attention, they could give their attention easy. Thus, play makes learning activities easy and better.

#### **4.4.2. Summary of Teachers' Reactions to the Vignettes**

In order to understand teachers' role during free playtime, teachers were asked how to react some vignettes given to them. At the end of the interview questions, five vignettes were read by the researcher to the teachers and how and why they react in such an example. Regarding of the teachers' reactions to the vignettes, the findings reveal that teachers tend to have different roles in the situations which were given to them. Teachers' responses to the vignettes were categorized under categories, which are uninvolved (n=14), stage manager (n=5), onlooker (n=4), play leader (n=3), director/redirector (n=3) and co-player (n=1).

To the vignette 1, in which there is loss in children's interest to the play, while most of the teachers stated they help to set play environment but did not join in children's play, one of the teachers told she would ignore, and one told she join their play to

improve their theme. As a response to the vignette 2, in which children used different materials for something else like using Lego as money, three of the teachers told they ignore children's play, two of them ask questions about the material to improve play but would not join. A teacher stated that she would explain which materials they could use in the play. To the vignette 3, in which children read books in free playtime, teachers responses demonstrated that they had tendency to have passive roles. Some teachers (n=4) implied that they would observe children's play and listen to their conversations, others stated they would ignore what they are playing. Responses to the vignette 4, in which children use whole toys to build toy shop, were different. While some teachers (n=2) ignore children's play, some (n=2) told they would explain which materials they can play with in that play. Moreover, two teachers told that they would join and play with them but one of them let children lead the play and join as a co-player. As a response to the vignette 5, in which children's unwanted physical behaviors like running in the classroom are observed, all teachers stated they would not let children play in case of insecure positions. To sum up, when teachers' responses to the vignettes were analyzed, it could be stated that they would generally have tendency to take uninvolved roles, in which they ignore children's play and make warnings about safety issues. Stage manager role, in which teachers help in setting play environment and ask questions to children to improve their play without joining play, was preferred by teachers. Teachers' responses to the vignettes demonstrated that they would take onlooker role (n=4), in which they observe children's play and listen their conversations, play leader role (n=3), in which teachers participate children play and lead it , and director /redirector role (n=3), in which teachers make explanations about the materials and their usage. Joining children's play as a co-player is the role, which teachers' responses were categorized. The findings from the responses to the vignettes, it could be understood that teachers told they would have different roles in different vignettes but mainly they preferred to be uninvolved to children's play.



#### **4.4.3. Summary of Teachers' Roles in Play**

In the light of the findings, it could be concluded that Teachers preferred diverse roles including uninvolved, onlooker, co-player, stage manager, play leader and director / redirector during the observations which takes more than 330 minutes per each teacher. As an uninvolved teacher, they demonstrated eight different characteristics: that are welcoming children outside the class, using mobile phone, ignoring the play, preparing other activities, talking with other adults in the classroom, doing paper works, issuing warnings and tidying up the classroom. All teachers showed more than 700 behaviors under uninvolved role characteristics during the observations. As an onlooker teacher, teachers (n=6) watched children's play, made some nonverbal approvals and signs, made some verbal comments, replied the questions and complaints and asked some questions to children while they were staying out of the play frame. Overall, onlooker role behaviors were taken by teacher 300 times. As a stage manager in free playtime, Teachers (n=4) demonstrated three characteristics which are responding children's material requests, assisting play organization and setting and suggesting new play themes without participating the play. Stage manager role behaviors which were observed during the observations were 45. Observed behaviors of co-player and play leader characteristics was between 40 to 50. Co-player role type was observed with three different categories among the Teachers (n=4). While a teacher sat down in the play area, some Teachers (n=4) played with children without waiting their demands. Joining play after children's demands was also seen among Teachers (n=3). As a play leader, Teachers (n=3) joined the ongoing play and suggested new themes, gave new materials to children and some beneficial hints to extend the play. As a director / redirector teacher (n=6), six characteristics were analyzed regarding of the observation records, which are warning about how to play, warning about the content of the play, warning about the materials, warning about the play environment, warning to tidying up and using play as a teaching tool. Behaviors observed under director / redirector role characteristics was 186, which one is the secondly most observed role at overall.

During the observations, teachers' observed behaviors were categorized under some characteristics in terms of role types. On the Table 4.17, information about which teacher demonstrated how many categorized behaviors under role characteristics was given.

Table 4.17

*Number of Behaviors Observed in terms of Role Characteristics*

<b>Teacher ID</b>	<b>Uninvolved (n)</b>	<b>Onlooker (n)</b>	<b>Stage Manager (n)</b>	<b>Co-Player (n)</b>	<b>Play Leader (n)</b>	<b>Director / Redirector (n)</b>
<b>A1</b>	183	26	-	-	-	43
<b>A2</b>	152	74	16	25	36	35
<b>B1</b>	90	31	9	17	8	25
<b>B2</b>	121	71	-	7	15	25
<b>C1</b>	98	33	12	9	-	26
<b>C2</b>	123	65	8	-	-	32
<b>Overall</b>	767	300	45	58	59	186

In summary, in Table 4.17., it could be seen that teachers preferred mostly precarious roles, which are uninvolved and director / redirector. Facilitator roles, which are onlooker, stage manager, co-play and play leader, were observed quiet few. According to Johnson et al. (1999), the balance of roles is important. They implied the roles in a continuum line, on which roles from too less involvement to too much involvement. According to them, extremist roles on continuum line which are uninvolved and director / redirector roles are undesirable. Moreover, the roles in the middle of the continuum line of Johnson et al. (1999), which are onlooker, stage manager, co-player and play leader, are stated more influential for children

development and effective play. However, in the current study, the findings demonstrated that while the uninvolved and director/redirector roles were observed mostly in the current study, the roles in the middle of continuum line, which are onlooker, stage manager, co-player and play leader, were not observed mostly.



## **CHAPTER 5**

### **DISCUSSION**

In this chapter, the conclusion of the current study and the discussions in terms of related studies will be given. After briefing the whole process of the study and discussion about the findings regarding of the literature in sections 5.1. and 5.2., implications for in-service teachers, administrators, policy makers and program developers will be presented in section 5.3. At the end, limitations of the study and the recommendations for the further studies will be mentioned in 5.4.

#### **5.1. Discussion**

The purpose of the study is to understand preschool teachers' views and practices about play and their roles during playtime. The study was conducted by using qualitative approach through which data was collected from the interviews and the observations. All teachers have the same educational level but their experiences in the field were different. In the study, six teachers were selected from three different public schools at the center of Kırıkkale, in which the same curriculum prepared by Ministry of National Education was used. After selecting teachers as participants for the current study and meeting with them, the researcher started making interviews with them. In order to examine teachers' views about play and their roles, interview questions and vignettes were asked to the teachers. After taking teachers' permissions, interviews were recorded and then coded. Two weeks later, teachers' observations were started. Due to having more detailed information about teachers' roles, the researcher observed each teacher for eight times during free play time. Observation records taken at the first week were not used in analysis. Before

conducting the study, all the ethical permissions were granted, and all teachers and administrators were informed about the purpose of study. So as to increase trustworthiness of the study, data was collected from different tools at different times. Furthermore, Data analysis was done by different people in the field of early childhood education. The findings of the current study should be analyzed and discussed by considering that they had been collected from six teachers who live and work at the same socio-cultural region.

In the current study, three teachers were in morning session, who starts day at 07:45am and ends 12:45pm. Other teachers were in afternoon session, who starts at 12:45pm and ends 05:45pm. It was stated that teachers have an hour for greetings and free play in the corners. Children joining afternoon session generally arrived between 12:30pm and 01:00pm. Thus, they had around 45 minutes for free play in the corners. The process observed in the schools is appropriate to curriculum (MoNE, 2013). However, children in morning sessions came to the school around 08:15pm, which resulted in having less free playtime in the corners. On the other hand, teacher in the morning session might also have come to the classroom late. Therefore, children in the morning session could not play at whole time separated for free play at centers. Moreover, teachers working in the morning also could not spend so much time in the classroom during free playtime, which led to less observation records of teachers in the morning sessions.

According to the results of the study, it could be stated that, play is seen important for children and teachers in terms of different functions of play. In her study, Rogers (2000) stated some functions of play are recorded in kindergartens, which are therapeutic, transitional, learning, development, recreation and pragmatic functions. In the current study, play's support for children learning and development was stated by teachers. Due to its positive influences on children's whole development, it was valued. Moreover, as a transitional function of play, teacher stated that children become readier to the school when they come from

home. Furthermore, therapeutic function, which means through play children get rid of their anxiety and fear, which was also stated in psychoanalytic theories. Moreover, it was accepted as valuable for teachers by reason of providing opportunity to advance children both psychologically and academically. The function of classroom management was also implied by teachers in the current study.

Similarly, to the results of the current study, Boyer (1997) stated that researchers studied play implied the importance of play for children whole development and their learning. They also focused on play improves children's academical success and their creativity. Vu et al. (2015) stated that teachers agreed on the importance of play on children development, but they do not know how their roles in play. Therefore, they studied the in-service teachers' views and practices of play before and after giving a training to them. According to them, the result of that teachers give value to play for children development is similar to the results of studies in the literature. However, they also mentioned that teachers had not had more knowledge about their roles in the play before training. After getting training, teachers' participation to the play demonstrated incline. In the literature, it was also mentioned that teachers accept that play is beneficial for children physical, cognitive and social and emotional development (Santer, Griffiths, & Gooda, 2007). Furthermore, Özdemir and Ramazan (2014) and Tekin and Tekin (2007) examined teachers' perceptions about play, in which they found teachers describe play as valuable and important for children learning and development.

The findings of the study demonstrated that teachers perceived play so important for children's whole development and children education. According to teachers' responses, they believe that children's psychological and social wellness could be understood by observing their free play. However, when their practices were observed, it could be seen that teachers could not observe children's play at whole time because of some duties. Rather than watching children's play, observing it and

joining their play, they do their duties at free playtime. Teachers' participation to play is quite controversial still but it is important issue for Vygotsky's zone of proximal development. According to Baumgartner, Marin and Muchacka (as cited in Whitebread et al., 2012), teachers do not have to join children's play but have to provide materials and environment for children's play. On the other hand, according to Hoorn et al. (2007), children could reach their maximum development level through play. Therefore, at this time, adults' support should be provided.

In the current study, it was observed that teachers demonstrated each role but they mainly took precarious roles which are uninvolved and director / redirector roles. Johnson et al. (1999) stated that precarious roles involves too much participation to direct or redirect the play rather than to improve it or no involvement to children's play and ignoring it. In the current study, all teachers had greeting duty during free playtime because children need to be met on the door by teachers. Moreover, it was also observed that teachers might talk with other adults including parents at this time. By the time parents brought their children, teachers talked with them. Some teachers also used mobile phone to take children's pictures and share them with their parents. Ignoring children's play while they were playing was seen among people very commonly. Teachers do their paper works, making preparations to further activities and tidying up the classroom are some of the popular observed behaviors of the teachers. Additionally, when they give attention to children's play, they focused on safety issues by warning them verbally. If physical intervention is required, after warning children, teachers take them away from the play environment and talked with them. Similar to the current study, Logue and Harvey (2010) studied the preschool teachers' view about active play and practices in classrooms so they conduct a study with 98 teachers . They examined the views and practices of teachers about physical play especially for rough-and-tumble play. In their study, differences among attitudes towards boys and girls were mentioned by Logue and Harvey. Boys' physical play took more interventions of teachers than girls' physical play. They also found a similar finding to the current study, which is that teachers stopped the play when they see a potential of safety problem in the classroom.

On the other hand, teachers might also give too much directions to children's play. They made warnings about what they should play, how they should do, with whom they could play and which materials they could play with. In the current study, teachers, without joining children's play, warned children about the content of play. They made some comments and warned children to play differently. Usage of play materials was also one of the observed behaviors among teachers. Teachers told children which material they should play. Furthermore, some teachers also told children to play at different center in case of that they made noise in play or they play in front of the classroom door. On the other hand, while children were playing, some teachers used it as a teaching tool, which was categorized under this role. By the time teachers heard a conversation of children while they were playing, they made connections between issues in play and in real life. These behaviors were observed mostly among teachers who also gave more attention to children's play even if they did not play with them. Similar to the results of the study, Fleer (2015) also stated that teachers mostly were out of the children play. In the study, conducted by Kontos (1999), it was found that teachers might use play as to gain some goals, so they have active roles in play. Kontos videotaped the free playtime of 40 teachers from 22 Head Start classrooms and coded them. At the end of the study, it was stated that teachers mostly prefer to have enhancer and stage manager roles. On the other hand, it was also mentioned that teachers' role in play purposed to teach something children through play. In the current study, teachers also used play to teach some concepts during free playtime. Aras (2016) carried out a study to understand teachers' roles during free playtime. In that study, Aras focused on teachers' perceptions and implications during free playtime. Similar to the current study, it was stated that teachers in the study used play as a teaching tool during free play.

In the current study, even though they were not observed as much as precarious roles, facilitative roles were taken by teachers. Teachers in the current study, took roles which are onlooker, stage manager, play leader and co-player. After teachers



completed their duties and paper works, they sometimes positioned near to the play area and observed children while they were playing. It was also stated by Fleer (2015) that sometimes teachers support or improve children's play, but generally they did not engage it. One of the other roles observed in the current study was onlooker. As an onlooker teacher, each of them observed children's play however, they did not do something to improve or affect play. They also made some comments and gave answers to children who came to them for ask something. Systematic observations of children might give information about children's wellbeing, current position and some developmental issues about them (McAfee & Leong, 2011). Teachers could take some notes about children's behaviors and conversations which give clue about their developmental level. However, in the current study, it was not recorded that teachers took systematic notes while they were observing children's play. Stage manager was another role type observed among teachers in the current study. It was observed that teachers assisted children's material requests. By the time a child need help to use a puppet, teacher demonstrated her how to use it after her ask for help. They also assisted children's play environment, but they did not involve their play. Participating children's play, observing it and extending by advising different themes are described as a crucial role of teachers (J. L. Frost et al., 2012; J. Roopnarine & Johnson, 2005). Teachers participated to children's play in the current study as a co-player and play leader. Both of the role types were observed very rarely when it is compared to other roles. As a co-player teacher, she sat down on the play area and be in their play. When children came to them and gave a cup, they moved on playing with them. However, they did not lead the play, only did what children asked from them.

Similar with the results of Howards' research, which demonstrated that adults could extend children's play and operate them without disturbing their freedom (as cited in Whitebread et al., 2012), teachers, who took co-player role in the current study, also improved children's play and made it longer. By the time teachers joined children's play actively, children could maintain their play longer. Finally, some teachers as play leaders participated children's play and suggested new themes.

They sometimes directed children's play by giving some suggestions. They led the play by introducing new themes and new materials. By the time children's play stopped, it could be effective to move it on. However, sometimes, children might have given up their preferences in play and did what their teachers told. Similar to the current study, Trawick-Smith and Dziurgot (2011) conducted a study about teacher-child play interactions in terms of Vygotskian and non-Vygotskian scholars. They videotaped for four or five times in 20 weeks during free playtime. Eight teachers' and 32 children's videotapes and interactions were analyzed. Moreover, they also made an interview with eight teachers to understand the observed behaviors deeply. They have found that teachers used the reminders or hints, so they influence children's play directly and indirectly.

When adults' participation was observed in the classrooms, it was reported that children came to around the teacher. Although the teacher only came to sit in the play area, children took her to their play by asking some questions or giving some materials. When the teacher attended to children's play, children from other centers came to the teacher by leaving their ongoing play. Similarly to the current study's results, Whitebread et al. (2012) also stated that when adults take a role in play like organizing play, children's motivation and participation to play increase. However, on the other hand, children's tendency to play with peers might decrease (Whitebread et al., 2012).

On the other hand, by the time teachers did not care about children's play by focusing on different works, children's play was influenced. It was recorded that when teachers join the play, they extend it which causes longer play time. Similarly, Hakkarainen, Bredikyte, Jakkula, and Munter (2013) examined the adult play guidance and children play development. They have found that when adults guide children in play, their play could become more complex and beneficial for children development. Therefore, they argued that as a part of their jobs, teachers should join children's play. However, it was stated that children could not improve their play

and move it to the next stages without adults' participation (Hakkarainen et al., 2013).

The results of the study could demonstrate that teachers had to use free playtime as a time gap when they could do paper works, write activity plans and make preparations for the upcoming activities. Therefore, it can be concluded that additional time for teacher should be provided to them so as to complete their duties. If they have more time free, they might spend free playtime by observing children's play and joining them. Similar with the current study, in the study conducted by Aras (2016), it was found that teachers spend time by doing paper works during free playtime. Therefore, she also emphasized the importance of additional time for teachers to complete their works, which let them to focus children's play during free playtime.

It was also recorded that free playtime was used to practice folkloric dance for the year-end performances. At those days, teachers could not let children play a lot. National celebrations are important, but children's play right also should not be taken from them. Even though children could have chance to play later, teachers again focused on preparing these celebrations. For instance, one of the teachers were collecting paper tissues and arranging them, so she could not give attention to children's play. Even if children came to ask her play with them, she had to send children away from her. Thus, it could be stated that, generally, teachers did not make detailed or systematic observations during free playtime or participating children's play. While teachers were focusing on doing their paper works, they might lose children's play, their questions and wishes from them. When children did not get teacher's attention, they went away from them. The influences of lack of time on teachers' practices about play was mentioned by Lam (2018). In the study conducted with seven teachers, it was found that one of the important factors influencing their practices of play is lack of time.

In the light of study findings, it could be stated that teachers warned children when they run or jump in the classroom. Some movements, which may threaten children's security, were tried to be stopped by teachers. Their main reason to stop children running in the classroom or some movements like that is parents' reactions. On the other hand, it was also recorded that teachers took children's pictures while they were playing. There might be some additional reasons why they preferred to uninvolved children's play. They might not feel well when they play with children. On the hand, teachers might not describe themselves as playful. Thus, they would prefer to take uninvolved roles, which makes them out of children's play.

However, this issue has been handled in terms of societies' requirements and current positions. In other words, according to Whitebread et al. (2012), due to the fact that children have more settings and time for free play in Denmark, some experts in Denmark argued the necessity of more structured and teacher-directed plays in children education. But then, in France, where children are supposed to involve more structured play, experts support the idea of free play opportunities to let children select what they want.

In Turkey, according to teachers' responses, they let children be in unstructured play, structured and semi-structured play. Like the balance between these types of play offered to children, the balance between taking precarious roles and facilitative roles are important (Johnson et al., 1999). Some of the features of good teachers were stated in the literature as being observer, communicator and good listener. Therefore, while children were playing, teachers should observe their play and listen to their conversations carefully. Teachers need to know when they should stay behind and when they should join children's play, the frequency of involving children's play and how to do so are important issues. Consequently, the balance between roles teachers take should be provided, which was also recommended in the literature (Whitebread et al., 2012).

On the other hand, when teachers' responses to the interview questions and vignettes and their behaviors during free playtime were considered, it could be stated that there is a difference between their views and practices. Although teachers' responses to the vignettes demonstrated they would have different role types, especially including onlooker, stage manager, play leader and co-player, in practice, they mostly have uninvolved and director / redirector roles. Differences between teachers' views and practices were not only found in the current study. Lam (2018) examined the teachers' perceptions about play based learning and their practices in Hong-Kong. The study was conducted with seven preschool teachers in Hong Kong. The study findings demonstrated that even though teachers perceived play as an important tool for children learning, they could not use it well in process because of lack of knowledge, time and space. Therefore, their perceptions and practices might differ from each other.

## **5.2. Conclusion**

The findings of the current study demonstrated that all the participants believe the importance of play because of its different functions. All teachers focused on its developmental and learning function, which improves children learning and whole development. Teachers also focused on play's transitional functions because they implied that children can move on the other activities easier while they are playing. Therapeutic function of play was also known by the majority of teachers. In the current study, while teachers stated learning and development functions and therapeutic functions are the value of play for children, transitional and classroom management functions of play was mentioned a reason of play's importance for teachers.

In the current study, it could be told that teachers' responses to the vignettes were quite different from their practices. Majority of teachers stated they would have different role types from precarious and facilitative roles but in practice, they

demonstrated mostly precarious roles' characteristics during free playtime. Rather than observing and joining play sometimes, teachers preferred to be out of the play. On the other hand, one of the teachers valued the play but she stated that teachers do not need to have facilitative roles in children's play. Thus, she mostly took uninvolved roles.

Another finding of the current study, teachers stated the importance of observation while children are playing because they believe that they could understand children's inner world through their play. However, it could be told that none of the teachers made systematic observation and take note during free playtime. Paper works, making preparations for further activities and conversation with other adults took their time, which might prevent them to observe children's play.

Furthermore, teachers mainly joined the play in case of that children run or jump in the classroom. Majority of the teachers stated that children might get harmed so their parents also would react it. Therefore, teachers firstly warned verbally then made physical intervention to children behaviors if required. By the time teachers finished their works, some of them joined children's play for a short time. On the other hand, they might sit on their children and observe children. However, it was not a systematic observation.

One of the important findings of the current study is about the influence of teachers' participation to children play. By the time teachers had active roles in children play, children mainly surrounded her and wish to play with her. However, teacher could get other children's attention also to play by asking some questions, leading play and giving some theme suggestions. It could be told that teachers' balanced participation to play enriched and extended children's play. On the other hand, even though teachers did not join in play, observing children's play is so important because they could understand children's physically and psychologically wellbeing.

### **5.3. Implications**

The current study was conducted to examine teachers' views about play and their roles in practice during free playtime. The findings of the study might offer some implications for people who work with and work for children such as teachers, administrators, policy makers, and program developers.

The current study would have implications for administrators and policy makers because they could understand teachers practices during playtime and reconsider the things they ask from teachers. According to the current study, teachers spent their time mostly doing paper works and preparation for further activities. Moreover, they also use free playtime for preparing for celebrations or demonstrations. Thus, rather than joining or observing the play, they mostly had uninvolved role during the observations. Administrators and policy makers would think about the importance of teachers' responsibilities while they ask something from teachers. It means they might consider the priorities and make decisions about them. Additional staff for assisting teachers in these issues might be helpful to increase teacher-child relationship during free playtime. It could also be stated that teachers may need more time to do their paper works and preparations to activities and share their ideas with their colleagues and administrators.

On the other hand, teachers have greeting duties in schools. Therefore, they have to wait children and parents out of the classroom while children were playing. In order to create an environment in which teachers observe and join children's play, having additional staff for greeting parents and children might be beneficial for schools. During free playtime in daily routines, meeting with parents and talking with them were also observed during the observations. However, by doing this, parents might prevent their children have effective interaction with their teachers at that time.

Therefore, parent meetings might be arranged at some certain times, so they would not take teachers' time during free playtime. Parents also can be informed about the importance of free playtime and teacher-child interaction at this time. By this way, they also might care about the interaction during free playtime.

Furthermore, the current study results might also demonstrate that teachers actually might not know what they should do during free playtime. Preschool teachers might not have knowledge what they are expected to do, if they should join in play or not, how to join and when to join in play. Issues about teachers' participation to free play and what they are expected to do during that time might be handled in pre-service and in-service teacher trainings. In these trainings, the importance of systematic observation of children's play might be explained to teachers. Moreover, via these trainings, teachers might have knowledge about how their too much / less or balanced participation to children's play influences it.

Finally, even though people stated the importance of play and children should have more time to play, the observations results demonstrated that they could not do what they believe and support due to some reasons mentioned by them. Extreme busyness, their schedules, parents' expectations, responsibilities given by administrators or any other factors not to be told in the current study might be seen as valid reasons by all people or they even actually might be.

To sum up, in-service and pre-service teachers should be informed about what they are expected to do while children are playing, how to do and when to do so; importance of their participation to play and the requirement of their observation while children are playing because in the literature, it was stated that some trainings influenced teachers behaviors in play (Vu et al., 2015). Finally, in the lights of the findings, the ideas were offered to the administrators and policy makers to think about.



#### **5.4. Limitations of the Study and Recommendations for Further Studies**

In order to investigate the early childhood teachers' views about the play and their roles in free playtime, the current study was carried out with six early childhood teachers in three kindergartens in the same area. All kindergartens, where teachers were working, are public schools and apply the same curriculum prepared by Ministry of National Education in Turkey. Therefore, even though teachers' views might differ from each other, their practices might have to be in the frame due to the schools' policies and curriculum. Rather than selecting participants only from public schools, participants from private schools would be added as well. In private schools, children and teachers spend more time in school because of full day curriculum. Teachers and children stay in the school for whole day; so, teachers have more time to do paper works and stay with children. Additionally, compare to the public schools, private school settings might be well-equipped. Whether classroom equipment influences teachers' roles in play or not might be examined. Whether what administrators wait from teacher and school settings affect teachers' roles or could be analyzed through this way.

In the current study, six teachers' interview transcripts and observation records were used to understand their roles in free playtime. However, after observations, teachers' practices have not been shared with them to understand the reasons of their behaviors. So as to have deeply understanding of the behaviors, an interview after observations would be conducted with teachers. By this way, the researcher might have knowledge about why teachers take that role at the certain situations. By the time they did not involve children's play, they might have thought it as an unnecessary action. In order to understand why teachers, take those roles, interviewing with them after observation and discussing some specific examples from their classrooms might be beneficial. Moreover, in the further studies, different teachers with increased number from different regions would be selected.

The researcher from wider environment might provide more data to the researcher. Different cultures might affect teachers' behaviors in classrooms. In the current study, all teachers were selected in the central region of Turkey. Even in Turkey, teachers might demonstrate different roles during free playtime in terms of the culture they grow up and they work in. In order to understand this, teachers from different backgrounds might be selected. On the other hand, all teachers in the current study were female. Males' teachers view and practices would be examined as well.

Additionally, teachers' views and their practices were investigated only, and schools' policies and administrators' views might also influence teachers' practices in playtime. Thus, administrators' views and school policies might be studied in the further studies. Moreover, teachers' consideration regarding of children's safety issues would be mentioned in the current study. Therefore, parents' views about play and what they expect teachers do in free playtime will be investigated in the further studies. The data in the current study was collected during three months in the spring term before some national and year-end celebrations. Due to the fact that teachers were responsible of demonstrating some projects, they had to prepare children to these celebrations. They spent their time to prepare especially in free playtime, which might influence their practices. In the further studies, observation data might be collected from different times of the year. The spring term, especially the months of March, April and May, might be busier than other months because teachers and children were supposed to make preparations for end-year celebrities. Therefore, data collection would be done in different months like October, December, February and April. By this way, the changes among teachers' role selection in year would be seen.

Furthermore, the number of vignettes were limited to five. If the number of vignettes could be increased and varied, teachers' observations might be conducted in terms of their reactions to the vignettes. It means rather than observing behaviors

all time, events similar to the vignettes might be recorded. By this way, if teachers' reactions and their reasons to behave like that were suitable or not might be analyzed. In addition to teachers' roles during free playtime, if they take the right role at the certain times and intervene or ignore the play would be examined.

Finally, due to limitations of the time and sources, only teachers' behaviors were observed and their roles in free playtime was investigated in the current study. In the further studies, children's play behaviors and child-teacher or child-child interactions in free playtime regarding of teachers' roles would be explored. In other words, whether teachers' roles are effective in teacher-child or child-child interactions and children's play preferences would be studied.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A: VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION FORM

#### ARAŞTIRMAYA GÖNÜLLÜ KATILIM FORMU

Bu araştırma, ODTÜ öğretim üyelerinden Yrd. Doç. Dr. Serap Sevimli Çelik ve ODTÜ Okul Öncesi Öğretmenliği yüksek lisans öğrencisi Meryem Gülhan tarafından yürütülmektedir. Bu form sizi araştırma koşulları hakkında bilgilendirmek için hazırlanmıştır.

##### **Çalışmanın Amacı Nedir?**

Bu çalışma ile okul öncesi eğitim kurumlarında oyuna yönelik

##### **Bize Nasıl Yardımcı Olmanızı İsteyeceğiz?**

Araştırmaya katılmayı kabul ederseniz, sizlere ilk bölümünde demografik bilgilerin sorulduğu ve ikinci bölümünde ise dış mekan oyunlarına karşı tutumlarınızın, bilgi ve yeterlilik düzeylerinizin sorulduğu açık uçlu anket formu dağıtılacaktır.

##### **Sizden Topladığımız Bilgileri Nasıl Kullanacağız?**

Araştırmaya katılımınız tamamen gönüllülük temelinde olmalıdır. Görüşmede ve gözlemlerimizde sizden kimlik veya belirleyici hiçbir bilgi istenmemektedir. Cevaplarınız ve gözlemlerimiz tamamen gizli tutulacaktır, sadece araştırmacılar tarafından değerlendirilecektir. Katılımcılardan elde edilecek bilgiler toplu halde değerlendirilecek ve bilimsel yayımlarda kullanılacaktır. Sağladığımız veriler gönüllü katılım formlarında toplanan kimlik bilgileri ile eşleştirilmeyecektir.

##### **Katılımla ilgili bilmeniz gerekenler:**

Çalışma, genel olarak kişisel rahatsızlık verecek sorular içermemektedir. Ancak, katılım sırasında sorulardan ya da herhangi başka bir nedenden ötürü kendinizi rahatsız hissederseniz cevaplama işini yarıda bırakıp çıkmakta serbestsiniz. Böyle bir durumda çalışmayı uygulayan kişiye, çalışmadan çıkmak istediğinizi söylemek yeterli olacaktır.

##### **Araştırmayla ilgili daha fazla bilgi almak isterseniz:**

Bu çalışmaya katıldığınız için şimdiden teşekkür ederiz. Çalışma hakkında daha fazla bilgi almak için ODTÜ öğretim üyelerinden Yrd. Doç. Dr. Serap Sevimli Çelik (E-posta: [ssevimli@metu.edu.tr](mailto:ssevimli@metu.edu.tr)) ve ODTÜ Okul Öncesi Öğretmenliği yüksek lisans öğrencilerinden Meryem Gülhan (E-posta: [gulhanmeryem@gmail.com](mailto:gulhanmeryem@gmail.com)) ile iletişim kurabilirsiniz.

*Yukarıdaki bilgileri okudum ve bu çalışmaya tamamen gönüllü olarak katılıyorum.*

(Formu doldurup imzaladıktan sonra uygulayıcıya geri veriniz).

İsim Soyad

Tarih

İmza

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## APPENDIX B: OBSERVATION FORM

Serbest Oyun Zamanı Öğretmen Rollerini Gözlem Formu									
Gözlem Tarihi	Seans								
Öğretmen ID	Serbest Oyun Süresi (Dk)								
Oyun Öncesi Hazırlık	Yok	Var	Oyun öncesinde hazırlık varsa neler olduğu buraya belirtiniz.						
	Rol	10'	20'	30'	40'	50'	60'	Açıklama	
1 Sınıf içinde devam eden oyunu görmezden gelir	Dahil olmayan								



<b>2</b>	Oyun zamanını sonraki etkinliklere hazırlık yapmak için kullanır, kağıt işleriyle uğraşır, diğer yetişkinlerle sohbet eder,	Dahil olmayan							
<b>3</b>	Zamanını 'koşma', 'itme' gibi sözel uyarıları kullanarak geçirir .	Dahil olmayan							
<b>4</b>	Ara bulmak ya da çocukların güvenliğini sağlamak için önlem alır, müdahale eder	Dahil olmayan							

<b>5</b>	Çocukları oynarken Oyun alanına yakın bir bölgede durarak (oyuna dahil olmadan), gözlem yapar.	Gözlemci							
<b>6</b>	Oyun alanına yakın bir bölgede durarak (oyuna dahil olmadan) çocuklara sözel ve sözel olmayan yorumlar yapar	Gözlemci							
<b>7</b>	Zaman zaman çocuklara oyunda ne yaptıklarıyla ilgili sorular sorar (Oyuna dahil olmadan ya da oyunu bölmeden)	Gözlemci							

<b>8</b>	Oyuna dahil olmadan Oyun alanının etrafında çocukların oyun kurlmalarında yardımcı olarak aktif rol alır	Oyun Kurucu						
<b>9</b>	Oyuna dahil olmadan Oyun alanının etrafında çocukların materyal isteklerine yanıt verir ve oyunu kurgulamalarına yardım eder.	Oyun Kurucu						
<b>10</b>	Oyunu organize etmede yardımcı olur	Oyun Kurucu						

<b>11</b>	Oyuna dahil olmadan Oyun alanının etrafında çocukların devam eden oyunlarını genişletmek için temaya uygun önerilerde bulunur	Oyun Kurucu							
<b>12</b>	Cocukların oyununa katılır ve aktif bir katılımcı olur	Katılımcı							
<b>13</b>	Oyunda küçük roller alır ve oyunun akışını takip ederek çoğu zaman çocukların öncülük etmesine izin verir	Katılımcı							

<b>14</b>	Büyük ya da küçük roller olarak çocukların oyununa katılarak aktif bir katılımcı olur fakat oyunu genişletecek yeni temalar önermek için etkili ve amaçlı adımlar atar.	Katılımcı Gözlemci					
<b>15</b>	Çocuklar kendi oyunlarını başlatmak için zorlandıklarında ya da oyun duraksamaya başladığında, yeni oyun materyalleri ya da konu sunar	Katılımcı Gözlemci					
<b>16</b>	Oyunda rol olarak çocuklara yardımcı olabilecek önerilerde bulunur, sorular sorar ya da ipuçları verir	Katılımcı Gözlemci					

<b>17</b>	Oyun alanının dışında kalarak, çocuklara oyun oynarken ne yapmaları gerektiğini söyler	Lider							
<b>18</b>	Oyun alanının dışında kalarak, çocukların ilgisini oyuna gerçeklik katacak sorular sorarak akademik içeriğe yönlendirir. Oyunu akademik bilgiyi öğretmek için kullanır.	Lider							

## APPENDIX C: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Aşağıda bulunan görüşme soruları Okul Öncesi Öğretmenlerinin oyun ve serbest oyun zamanına yönelik inanışlarını ölçmek için oluşturulmuştur. Sorular öğretmenlere yarı yapılandırılmış şekilde birebir sorulacaktır.

İsim Soyisim:

Eğitim Durumu:

Yaş Grubu:

Meslekteki Tecrübe Yılı:

<b>Okul Öncesi Öğretmenlerinin Serbest Oyun Zamanına Yönelik İnanışları Birebir Görüşme Soruları</b>	
<b>1</b>	Bir günlük rutininizi anlatır mısınız?
<b>2</b>	Çocukların en çok eğlendiği ve en çok öğrendiği zaman dilimi/etkinlik nedir?
<b>3</b>	Çocukların en çok severek oynadıkları oyunu anlatır mısınız?
<b>4</b>	Serbest oyun zamanında çocuklar neler yaptığından bahseder misiniz?
<b>5</b>	Serbest oyun zamanının çocuğun gelişimi ve eğitimi için hangi açılardan önemli olduğunu düşünüyorsunuz?
<b>6</b>	Serbest oyun zamanının eğitimci için hangi açılardan önemli olduğunu düşünüyorsunuz?

## APPENDIX D: VIGNETTES

Aşağıda bulunan kısa senaryo örnekleri Okul Öncesi Öğretmenlerinin serbest oyun zamanında karşılaşılabilecekleri durumlardaki davranışlarını ve bu davranışlarının nedenlerini ölçmeye yönelik oluşturulmuştur. Öğretmenlerin senaryolara verdikleri yanıtlardan oyun zamanındaki rollerine yönelik çıkarımlar yapılacaktır.

<b>Okul Öncesi Öğretmenlerinin Serbest Oyun Zamanında Karşılaşacakları Örnek Durumlardaki İnanışlarını Ölçmeye Yönelik Kısa Senaryolar</b>	
<b><i>Kısa Senaryo 1</i></b>	Çocuklar uzun bir süredir evcilik oyunu oynuyorlar. Bir süre sonra oyuna karşı olan ilgileri azalıyor ve dikkatleri dağılıyor. Böyle bir durumda ne yaparsınız? Neden?
<b><i>Kısa Senaryo 2</i></b>	Çocuklar bakkalcılık oyunu oynuyorlar. Bazıları satıcı, bazıları ise müşteri oluyor. Daha sonra ödeme yapmaları gereken noktada çocuklardan birisi ‘para olarak ne kullanacağız?’ diye soruyor. Diğer çocuk lego parçalarını alarak ‘bunları para yerine kullanabiliriz’ diyor. Böyle bir durumda ne yaparsınız? Neden?
<b><i>Kısa Senaryo 3</i></b>	Çocuklardan bazıları oyun zamanında kitap köşesinde uzanıp kitaplardaki karakterler hakkında birbirleriyle konuşuyorlar. Böyle bir durumda ne yaparsınız? Neden?
<b><i>Kısa Senaryo 4</i></b>	Çocuklar ‘Oyuncakçı Dükkanı’ yapmaya ve sınıftaki oyuncakları da bu dükkana getirip satmaya karar veriyorlar. Bunun için oyun alanındaki bütün oyuncakları topluyorlar. Böyle bir durumda ne yaparsınız? Neden?



<b><i>Kısa Senaryo 5</i></b>	Bazı çocuklar sınıf içinde koşarak ve birbirlerine fiziksel anlamda zarar verebilecek şekilde tehlike yaratabilecek oyunlar oynuyorlar. Böyle bir durumda ne yaparsınız? Neden?
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## APPENDIX E: HUMAN SUBJECTS ETHICS COMMITTEE APPROVAL

UYGULAMALI ETİK ARAŞTIRMA MERKEZİ  
APPLIED ETHICS RESEARCH CENTER



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08 MART 2017

Konu: Değerlendirme Sonucu

Gönderen: ODTÜ İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu (İAEK)

İlgi: İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu Başvurusu

Sayın Yrd. Doç. Dr. Serap Sevimli ÇELİK;

Danışmanlığını yaptığınız yüksek lisans öğrencisi Meryem GÜLHAN'ın "*Okul Öncesi Öğretmenlerinin Oyun Zamanı Süresince Aldıkları Roller ve Serbest Oyuna Yönelik İnanışlarının İncelenmesi*" başlıklı araştırması İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu tarafından uygun görülerek gerekli onay **2017-EGT-024** protokol numarası ile **08.03.2017 – 30.11.2017** tarihleri arasında geçerli olmak üzere verilmiştir.

Bilgilerinize saygılarımla sunarım.

PROF. DR. CANAN SÜMER

İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu Başkanı

Prof. Dr. Mehmet UTKU  
İAEK Üyesi

Prof. Dr. Ayhan Gürbüz DEMİR  
İAEK Üyesi

Yrd. Doç. Dr. Pınar KAYGAN  
İAEK Üyesi

Prof. Dr. Ayhan SOL  
İAEK Üyesi

Doç. Dr. Yaşar KONDAKÇI (4.)  
İAEK Üyesi

Yrd. Doç. Dr. Emre SELÇUK  
İAEK Üyesi

## APPENDIX F: TURKISH SUMMARY / TÜRKÇE ÖZET

### GİRİŞ

#### **Problem Durumu ve Çalışmanın Önemi**

Dünya genelinde farklı araştırmacılar tarafından da bahsedildiği gibi; oyun, küçük çocukların gelişimi ve eğitimi için çok önemlidir. Öğretmenler ve ebeveynler, oyuna değer verme, oyunun etkinliğini artırma ve çocukların oyunlarını verimli bir şekilde sürdürmelerine izin verme konusunda önemli bir işleve sahiptir. Özellikle öğretmenlerin oyuna katılımı başta olmak üzere, yetişkin katılımının kayda değerliği literatürde belirtilse de, okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin serbest oyun zamanlarındaki rolleri konusunda farkındalıkları önemlidir. Bazı araştırmalar, okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin oyundaki rolleri hakkında daha fazla eğitime ihtiyaç duyabileceğini göstermektedir (Moyles, Adams ve Musgrove, 2002; Wood, 2013). Ayrıca, öğretmenlerin rolleri ve oyunu genişletmek için neler yapabilecekleri konusunda daha fazla araştırma yapılabileceği öne sürülmüş ve benzer sonuçların Türkiye bağlamında yapılan bazı araştırmalar tarafından da sergilendiği görülmüştür. Tuğrul, Aslan, Ertürk ve Altınkaynak (2014) tarafından yapılan araştırmaya göre, öğretmenlerin oyunun erken çocukluk eğitimindeki gücünün farkında olmayabileceği belirtilmiştir. Ayrıca, öğretim sürecinde öğretmenlerin oyundan faydalanmadıkları da ifade edilmektedir (Tuğrul ve ark., 2014).

Anaokullarında oyun temelli öğrenme yaklaşımını uygulamak öğretmenler için zor olabilir. Bazı araştırmalar, okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin oyun temelli yaklaşımı uygulamada zorluklara ve bazı engellere sahip olduğunu göstermektedir. Bu duruma sebep olarak; öğretmenlerin, çocuk oyunlarında nasıl yer alacağına dair bilgi eksikliği yaşadığının da gösterilebileceği belirtilmiştir (Badzis, 2003; Bennett ve ark., 1997; Wood, 2010; Wood & 2010). Bennett, 1997). Bennett ve ark. (1997), oyun temelli yaklaşımı uygulamadaki tek sorunun bilgi eksikliği değil; aynı zamanda alan ve zaman eksikliğinin, öğretmen başına düşen çocuk sayısının,

yönetici ve ebeveynlerin oyundan beklentilerinin ve oyuna verdikleri değerin de etkili olabileceğini belirtmiştir. Araştırmacıların, öğretmenlerin oyun hakkındaki görüşlerine ve algılarına odaklandıkları çalışmaların olduğu görülse de yetişkinlerin oyundaki rolleri ve çocuklar arasındaki ilişkilerle ilgili yapılan çalışmaların sınırlı olduğu belirtilmiştir (Aras, 2010). Yetişkin ve çocuk arasındaki ilişkinin geliştirilmesi için, öğretmenlerin farklı rollerle oyuna katılımlarının incelenmesi ve teşvik edilmesi belirtilmiştir (Loizou, 2019).

Türkiye'de Okul Öncesi Eğitim Müfredatında çocuk merkezli eğitim, Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı tarafından teşvik edilmektedir. Ayrıca, çocukların erken yaşlarda oyun yoluyla öğrendikleri de belirtilmiştir (MEB, 2013). Müfredatta serbest oyun zamanı için günlük programlarda özel bir zaman dilimi ayrılmıştır. Öğretmenlerin, serbest oyunun önemi ve bu süreçte kendi rollerinin neler olduğuna dair farkındalıklarının olup olmadığı önem arz etmektedir. Yetişkin rolünün ve serbest oyunun öneminin farkında olmayan öğretmenler bu süreci etkili bir şekilde değerlendiremeyebilir.

Bu çalışmada okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin serbest oyun zamanı sırasındaki rolleri, literatürün gereksinimlerini karşılamak için oyuna yönelik görüşleri ile birlikte incelenecektir. Birçok öğretmenin oyun hakkındaki görüşleri araştırılmış olsa da, serbest oyun zamanı sırasındaki rolleriyle ilgili gözlemler yeterince incelenmemiştir. Bu çalışmayla birlikte okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin serbest oyun zamanı süresince aldığı roller ve yaptıkları işler incelenip, idarecilere de öğretmenlerin rolleri hakkında bilgi verecektir.

### **Araştırma Soruları**

Mevcut çalışmada aşağıda verilen araştırma soruları ele alınmıştır.

1. Okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin oyunla ilgili görüşleri nelerdir?
2. Okul öncesi öğretmenleri serbest oyun zamanında hangi rolleri almıştır?

## **Çalışmada Yer Alan Terim Tanımları**

Bu çalışmada yer alan temel terimlerin tanımları aşağıda verilmiştir:

*Serbest Oyun:* Literatürdeki serbest oyunun tanımı, çocukların kendiliğinden katıldığı, kendiliğinden devam ettirdiği ve eğlendiği her türlü yapılandırılmamış aktivitedir.

*Serbest oyun zamanı:* Serbest oyun zamanı, çocukların kendiliğinden katıldığı yapılandırılmamış oyunlarına ayrılan süre olarak tanımlanır.

*Anaokulu:* 36 - 66 aylık çocukların eğitimi için tasarlanan eğitimi veren kurumları ifade etmektedir (MEB, 2014).

*Öğretmen Roller:* Belirli bir durumda kalıcı olan davranışları veya davranışların karakteristik birliği olarak tanımlanır. Mevcut araştırmada öğretmen rolü; okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin çocuk oyunlarındaki davranışları ve sınıftaki konumları olarak tanımlanmaktadır. Johnson ve ark. (1999) tarafından gruplandırılmış olan öğretmen rolleri bu çalışma kapsamında kullanılmıştır.

*Dahil Olmayan:* Öğretmenin katılımının olmadığı ve oyunun tamamen yok sayıldığı davranışlardır.

*Gözlemci:* Oyun sırasında öğretmenin oyun alanı dışında bulunarak çocukları gözlemlediği davranışlardır.

*Oyun Kurucu:* Oyun devam ederken, öğretmenin oyun alanından uzak bir şekilde oyunun devam etmesinde yardımcı olduğu ve çeşitli önerilerde bulunduğu davranışlardır.

*Katılımcı:* Öğretmenin oyun alanında çocukların oyununa dahil olduğu ancak oyunu çocukların yönetmesine izin vererek çeşitli öneriler sunmadığı davranışlardır.

*Katılımcı Gözlemci:* Öğretmenin oyun alanında bulunarak oyun içeriğini genişletmek için önerilerde bulunduğu ve çocukları yönlendirdiği davranışlardır.

*Lider:* Öğretmenin oyun alanının dışında bulunarak oyuna katılmadan, çocuklara ne yapacaklarını söylediği, onların oyunlarını kontrol ettiği ve oyunu çeşitli eğitim amaçları için kullandığı davranışlardır.

## **Oyunun Tarihi**

Yıllar boyunca, eğitimciler, psikologlar ve sosyologlar oyunu tanımlamaya çalışmıştır (Else, 2009; Sluss, 2005; Wood, 2013; Wood & Attfield, 2005). Freud (1975), oyunun yaşam koşullarında ustalaşmaya yol açan bir tür tekrar olduğunu belirtir. Vygotsky (1980) ise oyunu yakınsal gelişim bölgesi için ortam sağlayan bir süreç olarak tanımlar. Ona göre, oyun sırasında çocuklar yaşlarından daha büyük davranırlar ki bu da onların gelişimini destekler (1980). Ayrıca Vygotsky, oyun sayesinde çocukların düşüncelerini ve fikirlerini eylemlerle birlikte gerçek durumlara dönüştürebileceğine inanmıştır (1980). Oyunun çocuk gelişimi üzerindeki etkisi ise Dewey'den Piaget'e kadar birçok öncü isim tarafından vurgulanmıştır (Göncü ve ark., 2010).

## **Bilişsel Oyun Kuramları**

Piaget yapılandırmacı teorisi, Vygotsky sosyo-kültürel gelişim teorisi ve Bandura sosyal öğrenme teorisiyle birlikte bilişsel gelişim ve oyun arasındaki ilişkiyi incelemiştir (Johnson ve ark. 1999). Piaget, çocuk oyunlarının, çocuğun bilişsel gelişimiyle ilgili olduğuna ve çocukların bilgi ve deneyimlerini sergilediği yer olduğuna inanmaktadır. Ona göre zeka, özümleme ve uyumsama arasındaki etkileşimle sürekli gelişir. Oyunu, zaten öğrendiklerini uyguladıkları bir yer olarak tanımlar. Çocuklar için oyun, daha önce öğrendikleri şeyleri uygulayarak bilişsel gelişimlerini iyileştirmek için bir ortam sağlar; çünkü aktif olarak oyun oynarlar. Piaget, çocuklar için oyunun iki temel önemine odaklanmıştır. Bunlardan ilki, zaten kazanılmış olan bilgiyi güçlendirmektir. İkincisi ise, çocuğun kendi oyununda başarısızlığı deneyimlemediği için özgüveninin desteklenmesidir. Piaget, oyun yoluyla çocukların ortaya çıkan sembolik gelişimlerini gösterdiğine inanırken, Vygotsky, oyunun çocukların sembolik gelişimini geliştirdiğini belirtmiştir. Sosyo-

kültürel çevre ve bilişsel gelişim arasındaki ilişkiye odaklanan Vygotsky'e göre ise oyun, çocukların düşüncelerinin sınırlamadan ve kısıtlamadan kurtulabilecekleri mevcut bir süreç olarak sadece zevk veren bir etkinlikten çok daha fazlasıdır (Bodrova ve Leong, 2005). Çocuklar toplum kurallarını, kendi oyunlarına yansıtırlar. Bu nedenle, her oyunun kendi içinde kuralları vardır. Ayrıca oyunun sembolik gelişim için çok önemli olduğu, oyun sayesinde çocukların kendilerinden daha büyük bireyler gibi davranışları sergilediği ve böylece bilişsel gelişimlerini kendi kendilerine geliştirdiğini vurgular (Bodrova ve Leong, 2005).

### **Okul Öncesi Eğitimde Oyun**

MEB (2013) tarafından hazırlanan müfredatta, oyunun önemi erken yaşlarda ima edilmiştir. Çocuklar oyun süresince akranlarıyla iletişim kurabilir ve kelime bilgisini geliştirebilirler. Günümüzde bazı güvenlik sorunları nedeniyle çocuklar sokakta oynama fırsatı bulamamışlardır. Bu nedenle, okullar çocuklara oyun ortamı sunmada hayati öneme sahip bir role sahiptir. Kandır (2001), anaokullarının çocukların gelişim seviyesine uygun planlı ve sistemli oyun olanakları sunması gerektiğini belirtti. Oyun tabanlı öğrenme, Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı (2013) tarafından desteklenmektedir. Erken çocukluk eğitiminin çocuk merkezli olması ve oyun temelli olması gerektiği Milli Eğitim Müfredatında belirtilmiştir. Müfredatta (MEB, 2013), oyun etkinlikleri, yapılandırılmış oyun, yarı yapılandırılmış oyun ve yapılandırılmamış veya serbest oyun olarak sınıflandırılır. Yapılandırılmış ve yarı yapılandırılmış oyun esas olarak öğretmenler tarafından yönetilmektedir. Öğretmenler, çocukların bazı hedefler kazanmasını ve çocuklarla aktif rol almasını sağlamak için yapılandırılmış oyun başlatır. Yarı yapılandırılmış oyun, belirli bir amaç için öğretmen tarafından başlatılır ve çocuklar tarafından devam ettirilir. Yapılandırılmış ve yarı yapılandırılmış oyun, diğer aktivite türleriyle bütünleşmiş oyun ve hareket aktiviteleri bakımından gerçekleştirilir. Serbest oyunda çocuklar, öğrenme merkezlerinde istedikleri şekilde oynama şansına sahipler. Çocukların sosyal, bilişsel ve duygusal gelişimi, serbest oyun zamanlarında desteklenir; çünkü çocuklar ne istediklerine karar verirler, kendi başlarına eğlenirler ve kendilerini kontrol ederler (Morrison, 2012).

## **Oyun ve Öğretmen**

Ebeveynlere, öğretmen adaylarına ve öğretmen adaylarının oyun hakkındaki görüşlerine odaklanmış farklı çalışmalar yapılmıştır. Bazı çalışmalara göre (Badzis, 2003; Bennett ve ark., 1997; Dako-Gyeke, 2008; Vu, Han ve Buell, 2015), öğretmenler oyunu çocuklar için değerli bir etkinlik olarak algılar. Ebeveynler ve okul öncesi çocuk öğretmenleri ile yapılan bir araştırma, öğretmenlerin serbest oyunun çocukların gelişimi için önemli olduğunu belirttiğini göstermiştir. Ayrıca öğretmenlerin çocukların daha geniş zamanla oynamasına izin verdikleri bulunmuştur (Erden, 2001).

Oyunun öneminin bilinip bunun kabul edilmesine ek olarak yetişkinler tarafından da desteklenmesi gerektiği vurgulanmıştır (Unicef, 1989). Bu nedenle, öğretmenlerin sadece görüşlerini değil aynı zamanda oyun uygulamalarının da incelenmesi önemlidir. Vu ve ark. (2015), öğretmenler oyunun küçük çocukların gelişimi ve öğrenmesi için önemli olduğuna inanmasına rağmen, oyunu nasıl dahil edecekleri ve genişletecekleri konusunda uygulamalarda zorluk çektiğini belirtmiştir. Ayrıca öğretmenlerin oyunla ilgili görüşleri ile oyun süresince gözlemlenen uygulamaları arasında önemli bir fark olduğunu, okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin oyun sırasında neler yapabilecekleri ve çocuk oyunlarına nasıl katılabilecekleri konusundaki bilgilerinin eksikliğini bir sonucu olabileceğini belirtilmiştir. Driscoll ve Pianta (2010) ayrıca öğretmenlerin çocuk oyunlarına aktif katılımlarının öğretmen ve çocuklar arasındaki ilişkiyi geliştirdiğini belirtti. 29 öğretmen ve 116 çocuk ile yaptıkları çalışmanın sonunda bulgular, öğretmenlerin katılımının görüldüğü, çocuk ve öğretmen ilişkisinin geliştiğini göstermiştir.

Öğretmenlerin çocuk oyunundaki rolleri bu oyunlara katılıp katılmaması gerektiği hala tartışılmaktadır. Vygotsky, öğretmenlerin katalizör rolünün önemini vurguladı. Vygotsky'ye göre, yetişkinlerin rehberliği çocukların eğitimi ve gelişimi için önemlidir (1978). Vygotsky, öğrenmeyi artırmak için yetişkinlerin oyuna aktif



olarak katılmaları gerektiğine inanmaktadır. Vygotsky öğretmenlerin kendi rollerinin önemi hakkında bilgi sahibi olmaları gerektiği, yakınsal gelişim alanı ve iskele kurarak çocukların potansiyelini en üst seviyeye çıkarmalarında yardımcı olabileceklerini belirtmiştir (Wood ve Attfield, 2005). Diğer taraftan öğretmenlerin oyundaki rollerini anlamada bazı problemleri olduğu da literatürde belirtilmiştir (Moyles, 1989; Wood, 2010).

Literatürde serbest oyunda öğretmen rollerine yönelik farklı tanımlar bulunmaktadır (Bruce, 1991; Bennett ve ark., 1997; Enz ve Christie, 1997). Enz ve Christie (1997), öğretmenlerin oyuna katılım derecelerinin oyun için etkili olduğunu belirtmiştir. Yetişkinlerin çocuk oyunlarına katılımı, bağlam ve kalite açısından çocuk oyunlarını daha uzun ve daha etkili hale getirdiği vurgulanmıştır (Johnson ve ark. 1999). Johnson ve ark. (1999) çocuk oyunlarında yetişkinlerin rollerini destekleyici ve istikrarsız roller olarak adlandırılan iki gruba ayırmıştır. İstikrarsız roller, çok az ya da hiç katılımın olmadığı veya çok fazla yöneten, lider davranışların sergilendiği ve öğretici rolün dahil edildiği, oyunu bir eğitim aracı olarak kullanıldığı davranışları içerirken; destekleyici rolleri; gözlemci, oyun kurucu, katılımcı ve gözlemci katılımcı olarak adlandırılır (Johnson ve ark. 1999). Bu çalışmada Johnson ve ark. (1999) tarafından yapılan rol tanımları üzerinden öğretmen davranışları gözlemlenmiştir.

## YÖNTEM

### Araştırma Yöntemi

Bu araştırmanın amacı, öğretmenlerin oyunla ilgili görüşlerini, Kısa Senaryo örneklerine verdikleri yanıtları ve serbest oyun zamanı sırasındaki rollerini incelemektir. Serbest oyun süresi boyunca öğretmenlerin görüş ve uygulamaları hakkında daha derin bilgi sahibi olmaya çalışmak nedeniyle, bağlam hakkında daha zengin ve daha ayrıntılı bilgi sağlayacak nitel araştırma yönteminin, araştırmanın

amacına daha uygun olacağına karar verilmiştir. Nitel araştırmalarda araştırmacı görüşme yaparak görüşlerini inceleyebilir, gözlem yaparak rolleri araştırabilir (Merriam, 2009). Veri toplamada farklı kaynaklara sahip olmak için, görüşme sorularına ek olarak, Kısa Senaryo örneklerine verilen cevaplar ve gözlem verileri kullanılmıştır. Araştırmayı yapmadan önce, araştırmacı görüşme soruları ve kısa senaryo örnekleri geliştirmek için literatürü gözden geçirmiştir. Uzman görüşlerinin alınması sonrasında görüşme soruları düzenlenmiştir.

Örneklem seçimi yapılırken çalışma amacının, araştırma sorularının ve araştırma ortamının düşünülmesi çeşitli kaynaklarda belirtilmiştir (Creswell, 2013; Fraenkel, Wallen ve Hyun, 2015). Araştırmanın amacına bağlı olarak, öğretmenlerin erişilebilirliği ve araştırmaya ayrılması gereken zaman göz önünde bulundurularak amaçlı örnekleme kullanılmıştır. Kırıkkale Merkez ilçeye bağlı olan üç bağımsız ana okulu seçilerek bu okullarda görev yapan ve çalışmaya katılımda istekli olan 6 anaokulu öğretmeni serbest oyun süresinde 8'er defa gözlemlenmiştir. Seçilen okullar A, B ve C olarak kodlanırken, okullarda çalışan öğretmenler A1, A2, B1, B2, C1 ve C2 olarak kodlanmıştır. Katılımcıların hepsinin cinsiyeti kadın olup, üniversite mezunu olarak devlet anaokulunda Okul Öncesi Öğretmeni olarak çalışmaktadır.

### **Okul Ortamı ve Katılımcılar**

Bu araştırmaya, her anaokulundan iki öğretmen olacak şekilde toplamda altı anaokulu öğretmeni çalışmaya katılmıştır. Okulların tamamı MEB tarafından hazırlanan 36-66 aylık çocuklara yönelik müfredatı uygulamaktadır. Veriler 2017 yılı Bahar döneminde şubat ayından mayıs ayına kadar olan süreçte toplanmıştır.

Anaokulu A üç kattan oluşan ve 2013 yılında kurulan bir okuldur. Birinci katta, bir personel odası ve bir sınıf; ikinci katta, yönetici odası, etkinlik odası ve bir sınıf; üçüncü katta bir sınıf, yemekhane ve mutfak bulunmaktadır. Her katta çocuklar için

tuvaletler bulunmaktadır. Anaokulu 12 m2 olan bir bahçeye sahiptir. Anaokulunda, altı öğretmen, bir memur, bir müdür ve iki personel çalışmaktadır. 2017 Bahar döneminde okulda toplamda 104 çocuk okula kayıtlıdır. Bu okuldan çalışmaya katılan öğretmenlerin ikisi de üniversite mezunudur ve oyuna yönelik hiçbir ek eğitim almamıştır. A1, 45 yaşında ve alanda 24 yıllık bir deneyime sahiptir. Öğretmen A2 ise, 39 yaşında ve 17 yıllık deneyime sahiptir.

Anaokulu B, etkinlik sınıfı da dahil olmak üzere toplamda 15 derslik, satranç odası, yemekhane ve özel oyun alanı içeren iki katlı bir binadır. B anaokulunda 12 öğretmen çalışmaktadır. Öğretmenlere ek olarak, bir müdür, bir müdür yardımcısı ve bir memur bulunmaktadır. Okul, 303 kayıtlı çocuk sayısı ile Kırıkkale merkezdeki en kalabalık anaokullarından biridir. Yarım günlük eğitim akışı uygulanmaktadır. Okul içerisinde sadece bir grup bütün gün okulda kalarak, öğleden sonra kulüp faaliyetlerine katılmaktadır. Okulun kuruluş yılı 2013 olarak belirtilmiştir. Çalışmaya katılan öğretmenlerde B1 ve B2'nin yaşları sırasıyla 31 ve 41; alandaki tecrübeleri ise 9 ve 20 yıldır.

Anaokulu C, bir müdür ve iki müdür yardımcısı ve dört öğretmen ile oluşan kadrosuyla üç katlı bir binadan oluşmaktadır. Okul 2014 yılında kurulmuştur. Bir yemekhane ve bir oyun odası vardır. Okula kayıtlı öğrenci sayısı 2017 yılı Bahar döneminde 162 çocuk olarak belirtilmiştir. Okulda yarım günlük eğitim akışı uygulanmaktadır. Çalışmaya katılan öğretmenlerden C1 39 yaşında ve 17 yıllık tecrübeye sahipken, C2 de 43 yaşında ve 21 yıllık tecrübeye sahiptir.

## **Veri Toplama Araçları ve Süreci**

### *Görüşme Soruları*

Bu araştırmada, okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin oyunla ilgili görüşlerini incelemek için görüşme formu tasarlanmıştır. Görüşme soruları ve kısa senaryo örnekleri erken çocukluk eğitiminde üç uzman yardımı ile hazırlanmış ve düzenlenmiştir.

Görüşmenin ilk bölümünde öğretmenlerin cinsiyet, deneyim, yaş, eğitim düzeyi, sınıflarındaki çocuk sayısı ve yaş grubunu içeren bilgiler sorulmuştur. Görüşmenin ikinci bölümünde ise okul öncesi eğitimde oyuna yönelik düşüncelerini almak için, öğretmenlere altı soru sorulmuştur.

### *Kısa Senaryo Örnekleri*

Öğretmenlerin serbest oyun süresinde alabilecekleri rollere yönelik görüşlerini incelemek için araştırmacı tarafından beş kısa senaryo örneği okunmuş, bu durumlarda öğretmenin ne yapacağı ve neden yapacağı sorulmuştur. Çalışmada kullanılan kısa senaryo örnekleri Johnson, Christie ve Yawkey (1999) tarafından verilen örnekler doğrultusunda hazırlanmıştır. Gözlem formu araştırmacı tarafından Johnson, Christie ve Yawkey tarafından tanımlanan rol tanımları doğrultusunda hazırlanmış, uzman görüşleriyle düzenlenmiştir.

### *Gözlem Formu*

Okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin serbest oyun zamanı sırasındaki rollerini anlamak için gözlem formu kullanılarak gözlemler yapılmıştır. Gözlem sırasında araştırmacı, önceden tasarlanmış ve uzman görüşü alınan gözlem formunu kullanmıştır. Gözlem formu, Johnson ve ark. (1999) tarafından oyunda öğretmen rol tanımlarına uygun olarak tasarlanmış ve 18 maddeden oluşmaktadır. Öğretmenin çocukların oyununa dahil olmadığı davranışlar “dahil olmayan” rol olarak tanımlanmıştır. Gözlemci, öğretmenin çocuk oyununa yakın bir yerde bulunup çocukların oyununu gözlemlediği ancak etkileşim kurmadığı davranışlardır. Oyun kurucu, oyun alanının yakınında bulunan öğretmenin hazırlık süresinde oyunu yönlendirmesi ancak oyuna katılmamasıdır. Öğretmen aktif bir oyuncu olarak oyuna katıldığında ancak oyunu yönlendirecek bir katılımı olmadığında katılımcı olarak adlandırılır. Eğer öğretmen oyuna katılıp, oyunu etkileyecek ve genişletecek yorumlarda bulunuyorsa katılımcı gözlemci olarak adlandırılır. Son olarak, öğretmenin çocuklara oyun içinde neler yapacağını / yapmayacağını söylemesi ve oyunu akademik öğretim amacı olarak kullanması lider olarak tanımlanmaktadır. Gözlem

formunda ortam tanımı için, sınıfta kaç çocuk ve kaç öğretmenin olduğu, oyun öncesi öğretmen tarafından yapılan hazırlık olup olmadığı kaydedilmiştir. Her öğretmen serbest oyun zamanı süresince sekizer defa gözlemlenmiş ve bu gözlem verilerinden ilk hafta toplanan veriler analize dahil edilmemiştir. Sekiz hafta boyunca araştırmacı tarafından rastgele sınıf ziyaretleri yapıldı. Gözlemlerde öğretmenlerin serbest oyun zamanlarında oynadıkları roller ve davranışları bulunmaktadır.

### **Veri Analizi**

Bu çalışmada görüşme sorularından, kısa senaryo örneklerinden ve gözlem kayıtlarından elde edilen veriler kullanılmıştır. Görüşmelerin bitiminden iki hafta sonra, görüşmeler sırasında alınan tüm ses kayıtlarının transkripsiyonu yapılmıştır. Araştırmacı ses kayıtlarının transkripsiyonunu tamamladıktan sonra, çalışma sonunda nitel çalışmaları analiz etmede çok yaygın olarak kullanılan tematik kodlama tekniği ile verileri analiz etmiştir (Fraenkel ve diğerleri, 2015; Merriam, 2009; Savin-Baden ve Major, 2013). Görüşme sonrasında öğretmenlere sorulan kısa senaryo örneklerine verdikleri yanıtların transkripti araştırmacı tarafından yapılmış, Johnson ve ark. (1999) tarafından belirtilen rol tanımlarına uygun şekilde gruplandırılmıştır. Görüşmelerden iki hafta sonra araştırmacı gözlemler için sınıflara gitmiştir. Gözlem yaptıktan sonra, araştırmacı gözlemler sırasında yazılan öğretmen davranışlarını belirlenen rol tanımlarına uygun şekilde gruplandırmıştır. Bu çalışmada araştırmacı, altı öğretmenden toplam 48 gözlem kaydına sahiptir. Bunlardan altı tanesi analiz sürecinde kullanılmamıştır. Rastgele seçilen 10 gözlem kaydı, araştırmacıya ek olarak iki okul öncesi eğitimini uzmanı tarafından da analiz edildi. Miles ve Huberman'ın değerlendiriciler arası anlaşma formülü uygulanarak %85,5'lik bir oranda güvenilirlik sağlanmıştır.

## BULGULAR

### Öğretmenlerin Oyuna Yönelik Görüşleri

Öğretmenlere çocukların en çok sevdikleri oyun sorulduğunda, cevapları müzikal oyun, fiziksel olarak aktif oyun, rol yapma oyunu ve diğerleri olmak üzere dört kategoriye ayrılmıştır. Öğretmenlere çocuklar serbest oyun süresindeyken tercihleri sorulduğunda, veriler eğitsel oyun ve nesne oyunları olarak iki grup altında kategorize edildi. Öğretmenlerin verdiği cevaplara göre, çocuklar arabalarla, bloklarla, Legolarla ve kitaplarla oynuyor. Ayrıca, çocukların bir kısmı masa oyunu ve bazı çizim etkinlikleri içeren eğitici oyuncaklarla oynamayı tercih etmektedir. Günlük rutinlerinde oyunun üç farklı zamanda kullanıldığı tüm öğretmenler tarafından belirtilmiştir. Öğretmenler güne başlarken serbest oyun zamanına yer verdiklerini belirtmiştir. Öğretmenler, okula gelen ve güne oyun oynayarak başlayan çocukların akademik olarak etkinliklere daha açık olduğunu belirtti. Oyunun günlük rutindeki ikinci kullanımı aktivite zamanıdır. Bu zaman diliminde oyun öğretmenler tarafından eğitim aracı olarak kullanılmaktadır ve diğer etkinliklerle bütünleştirilmiştir. Gün sonunda ise çocukların okuldan ayrılmadan önce serbest olarak oyun oynadıkları öğretmenler tarafından belirtilmiştir. Öğretmenlere, oyunun öğretmenler ve çocuklar için öneminin önemi soruldu. Bulgular ışığında, oyunun, çocuklar için sosyal ve duygusal gelişim (n = 17), bilişsel gelişim (n = 8) ve fiziksel gelişim (n = 5) olmak üzere üç ana gelişim alanına sağladığı faydalar nedeniyle önemli olduğu sonucuna varıldı. Öğretmenlerin cevaplarıyla ilgili olarak, oyunun, çocukların sosyal refahını anlamadaki (n = 7) ve öğretimi kolaylaştırmadaki (n = 9) faydaları nedeniyle öğretmenler için önemli olduğu söylenebilir. Oyunun öğretmenler için önemine yönelik verilen cevaplar iki kategori altında toplanmıştır. Oyunun çocukların sosyal ve psikolojik sıhhatlerinin anlaşılmasına yardımcı olması öğretmenler tarafından önemli olarak belirtilmiştir. Çocuklar oyundaki duygularını gösterebilir ve öğretmenler oyunlarını gözlemleyerek onları anlayabilir. Ayrıca, bu sayede öğretmenler çocukları derinlemesine tanıma olanağına sahiptir. İkincisi, oyunun öğretmenlerin öğretim etkinliklerini kolaylaştırmalarını sağlamasıdır. Öğretmenler, bir şeyi öğretmek için

oyun kullanmanın bunu kolaylaştırdığını belirtti. Ayrıca, çocuklar akademik bilgileri içeren veya daha fazla dikkat gerektiren bazı etkinlikleri yapmadan önce oyun oynadıklarında etkinliğe daha kolay odaklandığı öğretmenler tarafından belirtilmiştir.

### **Öğretmenlerin Kısa Senaryo Örneklerine Yönelik Söylemleri**

Öğretmenlerin kısa senaryo örneklerine tepkileriyle ilgili olarak; bulgular, öğretmenlerin kendilerine verilen durumlarda farklı rollere sahip olma eğiliminde olduğunu ortaya koymaktadır. Öğretmenlerin kısa senaryo örneklerine verdiği yanıtlar, dahil olmayan (n = 14), oyun kurucu (n = 5), gözlemci (n = 4), katılımcı gözlemci (n = 3), lider (n = 3) ve katılımcı (n=1) olarak kategorilere ayrılmıştır. Öğretmenlerin kısa senaryo örneklerine verdikleri tepkiler analiz edildiğinde, genellikle çocukların oyunlarını görmezden geldikleri ve güvenlik sorunları hakkında uyarıda buldukları dahil olmayan rol tanımına uygun davranabilecekleri söylenebilir. Öğretmenlerin oyun ortamını düzenlemede yardımcı olduğu ve çocuklara oyuna katılmadan oyunlarını geliştirmek için sorular sordukları oyun kurucu rolünün öğretmenler tarafından tercih edildiği görülmektedir. Öğretmenlerin kısa senaryolara verdiği yanıtlar, çocukların oyunlarını gözlemledikleri ve konuşmalarını dinledikleri gözlemci rolünü alabileceğini de göstermektedir. Kısa senaryo örneklerine verilen yanıtlardan elde edilen bulgular, öğretmenlerin farklı kısa senaryolarda farklı rolleri alacağını söyleyebilecekleri ancak temel olarak çocukların oyunlarına katılmamış olmayı tercih ettikleri anlaşılıyor.

### **Serbest Oyun Zamanında Öğretmen Roller**

Bulgular ışığında, her öğretmenin minimum 330 dakika süren gözlemleri sonucunda dahil olmayan, gözlemci, oyun kurucu, katılımcı, gözlemci katılımcı ve lider gibi farklı rolleri tercih ettikleri sonucuna varılabilir. Tüm öğretmenler, gözlemler sırasında dahil olmayan rol özellikleri altında 700'den fazla karakteristik özelliği gösterdi. Öğretmenler çocukların oyunlarını izlemiş, bazı sözel olmayan

onaylar ve işaretler yapmış, bazı sözlü yorumlar yapmış, soruları ve şikayetleri cevaplamış ve oyun çerçevesinden uzak dururken çocuklara bazı sorular sormuştur. Genel olarak, gözlemci rolü karakteristik özellikleri öğretmenler tarafından 300 kez gösterilmiştir. Serbest oyun süresinde oyun kurucu olarak, Öğretmenler çocukların materyal isteklerine cevap verip, oyun kurmada yardımcı olan ve oyuna katılmadan yeni oyun temaları belirleyip ve önerdiği üç karakteristik özellik gösterdi. Gözlemler sırasında gözlemlenen oyun korucu rol karakteristik özellikleri 45 olarak belirlenmiştir. Gözlemci ve katılımcı gözlemci karakteristik özellikleri 40 ile 50 arasındadır. Öğretmenlerin hepsi çok fazla müdahalenin bulunduğu lider rol tanımına ait karakteristik özellikleri sergilediler. Oyunun nasıl oynandığı, oyunun içeriği, oynanan materyaller, oyun ortamı, oyun içeriği hakkında uyarılar yaparak çeşitli karakteristik özellikler göstermişlerdir. Öğretmenler aynı zamanda oyunu bir öğretim aracı olarak kullanmıştır. Lider rolü özellikleri altında gözlenen davranışlar, en çok gözlenen ikinci rol olarak 186 karakteristik özellik kaydedilmiştir. Gözlemler boyunca, öğretmenlerin daha çok istikrarsız rolleri tercih ettiği, kolaylaştırıcı rol davranışlarını daha az sergilediği görülmüştür.

## **TARTIŞMA VE ÖNERİLER**

Bu çalışmanın sonuçlarına benzer olarak, Boyer (1997), oyun üzerinde çalışılan araştırmaların, oyunun çocukların tüm gelişmeleri ve öğrenmeleri için önemli olduğunu vurgulandığını belirtmiştir. Vu ve ark. (2015) öğretmenlerin çocuk gelişiminde oyunun önemi konusunda ortak fikir beyan ettikleri, ancak oyundaki rollerinin nasıl olduğunu bilmediklerini belirtti. Bu nedenle, hizmet içi öğretmenlerin kendilerine bir eğitim vermeden önce ve sonra oyun hakkındaki görüş ve uygulamalarını incelediler. Onlara göre, öğretmenlerin çocukların gelişimi için oyuna değer vermesi literatürdeki çalışmaların sonuçlarıyla benzerlik göstermektedir. Ancak, öğretmenlerin oyundaki rolleri hakkında daha fazla bilgiye sahip olmadıkları ve eğitimlerden sonra, öğretmenlerin oyuna katılımlarında artış olduğu da belirtilmiştir. Literatürde öğretmenlerin oyunun çocukların fiziksel,



bilişsel ve sosyal ve duygusal gelişimine yararlı olduğunu kabul ettiği de belirtilmiştir (Santer, Griffiths ve Gooda, 2007). Ayrıca, Özdemir ve Ramazan (2014) ve Tekin ve Tekin (2007), öğretmenlerin oyuna değer verdikleri ve çocuk gelişim için önemli olduğunu vurguladıklarını belirtmiştir.

Öte yandan, gözlemler boyunca öğretmenlerin daha çok oyun dışında kalmayı tercih ettiği ve oyunu eğitim aracı olarak kullandığı görülmüştür. Öğretmenler ağırlıklı olarak dahil olmayan ve lider rollerin karakteristik özelliklerini sergilemiştir. Çalışmanın sonuçlarına benzer şekilde, Fleer (2015), öğretmenlerin çoğunlukla çocuk oyunlarının dışında olduğunu belirtmiştir. Kontos (1999) tarafından yapılan çalışmada, öğretmenlerin bazı hedefleri kazanmak için oyunu kullanabileceği, dolayısıyla oyunda aktif rol oynadıkları bulunmuştur. Çalışmanın sonunda öğretmenlerin daha çok oyun kurucu ve lider rolleri almayı tercih ettikleri belirtildi. Öte yandan, öğretmenlerin oyundaki rolünün çocuklara bir şeyleri oyun yoluyla öğretme amaçlı oldukları da söylenmiştir. Bu çalışmada öğretmenler boş zamanlarında bazı kavramları öğretmek için oyunu kullandıkları belirtilmiştir. Aras (2016) serbest oyun süresi boyunca öğretmenlerin rollerini anlamak için bir çalışma yaptı. Bu çalışmada, Aras öğretmenlerin serbest oyun zamanı sırasındaki davranışlarına odaklanmıştır. Mevcut çalışmaya benzer şekilde, araştırmadaki öğretmenlerin oyun oynamayı serbest oyun sırasında bir eğitim aracı olarak kullandıkları belirtilmiştir.

Bu çalışmada, öğretmenler tarafından kolaylaştırıcı rollere ait karakteristik özellikler de gözlemlenmiştir. Bu çalışmada öğretmenler; gözlemci, gözlemci katılımcı, katılımcı ve oyun kurucu gibi rollere ait karakteristik özellikleri göstermiştir. Öğretmenler görevlerini ve çalışmalarını tamamladıktan sonra, oyun alanının yakınında bulunarak veya oyun oynarken çocuklar gözlemlemiştir. Fleer (2015) tarafından, bazen öğretmenlerin çocuk oyunlarını desteklediğini veya geliştirdiğini ancak genel olarak katılım sağlamadıklarını belirtmiştir. Bir gözlemci öğretmen olarak, çocuklar oyun oynarken öğretmenler gözlem yaptı, ancak oyunu

geliştirecek veya etkileyecek bir şey yapmadılar. Ayrıca bazı yorumlar yaptılar ve bir şey sormak için kendilerine gelen çocuklara cevap verdiler. Çocukların sistematik bir biçimde gözlemlenmesi, çocukların mevcut durumu ve varsa bazı gelişim sorunları hakkında bilgi verebilir (McAfee & Leong, 2011). Öğretmenler, çocukların davranışları ve gelişim düzeyleri hakkında ipucu veren konuşmalar hakkında bazı notlar alabilir. Ancak, bu çalışmada öğretmenlerin çocuk oyunlarını gözlemlerken sistematik notlar aldıkları kaydedilmemiştir. Oyun kurucusu bu çalışmada öğretmenler arasında gözlenen bir başka rol tipi idi

Öğretmenlerin oyun alanına gelmesi ve oyuna katılması durumunda çocukların öğretmen etrafında toplanıp onunla oynamaya çalıştığı gözlemlenmiştir. Her ne kadar öğretmen oyun alanına oturmak için gelse de çocuklar bazı sorular sorarak veya bazı materyaller vererek onu oyunlarına dahil ettiler. Öğretmen çocuk oyununa katıldığında, diğer merkezlerden çocuklar devam eden oyunlarını bırakarak öğretmene geldiler. Mevcut çalışmanın sonuçlarına benzer şekilde, Whitebread ve ark. (2012) yetişkinlerin oyunda rol almaları durumunda, çocukların motivasyonlarının ve oyuna katılımının arttığını ancak diğer yandan, çocukların akranlarıyla oynama eğilimini düşürebildiğini belirtmiştir (Whitebread ve ark., 2012).

Çalışmanın sonuçları, öğretmenlerin serbest oyun zamanında evrak işlerini ve etkinlik planlamalarını yaptığı görülmüştür. Öğretmenlere görevlerini yerine getirmeleri için başka bir zaman diliminin ayrılması doğrultusunda, öğretmenler serbest oyun zamanında çocukları gözlemleyerek vakit geçirebilir ve oyunlarına katılabilirler. Mevcut çalışmaya benzer şekilde Aras (2016) tarafından yapılan çalışmada öğretmenlerin boş zamanlarında kâğıt işlerini yaparak vakit geçirdikleri görülmüştür. Bu nedenle, öğretmenlerin çalışmalarını tamamlamaları için daha fazla zaman vermenin önemini vurgulanmış ve bu da serbest oyun süresi boyunca çocukların oyunlarına odaklanmalarını sağlayabileceği belirtilmiştir.

Serbest oyun zamanının, yılsonu, 23 Nisan gösterileri gibi çeşitli etkinlikler için çalışma zamanı olarak kullanılması gözlemler süresince kaydedilmiştir. Öğretmenlerin bu tarz etkinlikler üzerine çalışmaları yapmak için bu zaman dilimini kullanmıştır. Öğretmenlerin oyunla ilgili uygulamalarındaki zaman eksikliğinin etkileri Lam (2018) tarafından da bahsedilmiştir. Yedi öğretmenle yapılan çalışmada oyun uygulamalarını etkileyen önemli faktörlerden birinin zaman eksikliği olduğu tespit edilmiştir.

Öte yandan, öğretmenlerin görüşme sorularına verdiği yanıtlar, kısa senaryo örnekleri ve serbest oyun süresindeki davranışları göz önüne alındığında, görüşleri ve uygulamaları arasında bir fark olduğu söylenebilir. Her ne kadar öğretmenlerin kısa senaryo örneklerine verdikleri yanıtlar farklı rol türlerine sahip olacaklarını gösterse de uygulamada çoğunlukla dahil olmayan ve lider rolleri vardır. Öğretmenlerin görüşleriyle uygulamaları arasındaki farklılıklar benzer şekilde Lam tarafından da belirtilmiştir (2018). Lam, öğretmenlerin oyun temelli öğrenme hakkındaki algılarını ve Hong Kong'daki uygulamalarını incelemiştir. Çalışma bulguları öğretmenlerin oyunu öğrenen çocuklar için önemli bir araç olarak görmelerine rağmen, bilgi, zaman ve alan yetersizliği nedeniyle bu süreci iyi kullanamadıklarını göstermiştir. Bu nedenle algıları ve uygulamaları birbirinden farklı olabildiği belirtilmiştir.

### **Sınırlılıklar ve Öneriler**

Bu çalışma kapsamında gözlem yapılan okulların hepsi devlet okulu olarak Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı tarafından belirlenen müfredatı uygulamaktadır. Ancak, özel okullarda, çocuklar ve öğretmenler okulda tam gün eğitim akışı nedeniyle daha fazla zaman geçirirler. Öğretmenler ve çocuklar okulda bütün gün kalırlar; bu nedenle öğretmenlerin evrak işlerini yapmak ve çocuklarla vakit geçirebilmek için daha fazla zamanı olabilir. Ayrıca, devlet okullarıyla karşılaştırıldığında, özel okullarda sınıflar daha iyi donanımlı olabilir. Sınıf ekipmanlarının öğretmenlerin oyundaki rollerini etkileyip etkilemediği incelenebilir. Yöneticilerin öğretmen ve

okul ortamlarında ne beklediğinin öğretmenlerin rolünü etkileyip etkilemediği de incelenebilir.

Bu çalışmada, öğretmenlerle gözlem sonrası bir görüşme yapılmamış, davranış nedenleri üzerine görüşülmemiştir. Davranışları derinlemesine anlayabilmek için, öğretmenlerle gözlem sonrası görüşme yapılması nedenleri anlamada daha etkili olabilir. Bu çalışmadaki tüm öğretmenlerin cinsiyeti kadındı. Erkek öğretmenlerin görüşleri ve uygulamalarının da incelenmesi farklı sonuçlar verebilir.

Öğretmen görüşlerine ek olarak, yönetici ve ebeveyn görüşleri de öğretmen davranışlarını etkileyebilir. Bu yüzden, onların görüşlerinin de incelenmesi ileriki çalışmalarda düşünülebilir. Ayrıca öğretmenlerin çocukların güvenlik meselelerine ilişkin düşünceleri bu çalışmada ele alınacaktır. Bu çalışmadaki veriler, sadece bahar döneminde toplanmıştır. Yıl sonu gösterilerine hazırlanmak için daha çok zaman ayırmaları gerektiği için öğretmenlerin bu dönemdeki davranışları etkilenmiş olabilir. Başka çalışmalarda gözlem verilerinin farklı zamanlarda toplanması önerilebilir.

## APPENDIX G: THESIS PERMISSION FORM / TEZ İZİN FORMU

### ENSTİTÜ / INSTITUTE

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Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü / Graduate School of Social Sciences	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
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Enformatik Enstitüsü / Graduate School of Informatics	<input type="checkbox"/>
Deniz Bilimleri Enstitüsü / Graduate School of Marine Sciences	<input type="checkbox"/>

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Bölümü / Department : Okul Öncesi Öğretmenliği / Early Childhood Education

### TEZİN ADI / TITLE OF THE THESIS (İngilizce / English) :

Play in Early Childhood Education: An Examination of Teacher Roles During Free Playtime /  
Okul Öncesi Eğitimde Oyun: Serbest Oyun Zamanında Öğretmen Rollerinin İncelenmesi

TEZİN TÜRÜ / DEGREE: Yüksek Lisans / Master  Doktora / PhD

1. Tezin tamamı dünya çapında erişime açılacaktır. / Release the entire work immediately for access worldwide.
2. Tez iki yıl süreyle erişime kapalı olacaktır. / Secure the entire work for patent and/or proprietary purposes for a period of two years. \*
3. Tez altı ay süreyle erişime kapalı olacaktır. / Secure the entire work for period of six months. \*

\* Enstitü Yönetim Kurulu kararının basılı kopyası tezle birlikte kütüphaneye teslim edilecektir.  
A copy of the decision of the Institute Administrative Committee will be delivered to the library together with the printed thesis.

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