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Early Childhood Education

PARENTS' BELIEFS AND ATTITUDES ABOUT A PLAY CURRICULUM  
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Parents select the type of school and curriculum they think best for their children. Some factors influencing their school choice include practicality, location, affordability, and previous experience with the school. Knowledge and understanding of the various components of early childhood curricula enhance the ability of parents to choose a curriculum best suited for the child.

The purpose of this study was to unfold vital information pertaining to parents' beliefs and attitudes about a play-based curriculum through qualitative methods, including interview, narrative, and observation. Commonalities, differences, and emergent themes in the responses of parent participants were analyzed.

Initial findings revealed structure, socialization, and reputation as the three overriding themes. The participants shared these common threads as a reason for choosing Commercial Preschool. They explained that their children needed a structured environment as an introduction to education. A concern with the ability to socialize with peers echoed among all participants, and the reputation of Commercial Preschool assured these parents that their needs would be met.

Additional analysis uncovered a deeper theme: preparation. The participants focused intently on their children's future and preparation for "real school," for college, and for life. All participants stated that their children would need structure in order to be able to sit and perform well at the next level of education. Success at this early level would help prepare them for college, which would prepare them for successful lives. Attending preschool would assist in preparing their young children to interact with others.

The final theme to emerge was fear. Parenthood is fraught with fear—fear that the child will be unprepared for school, unable to matriculate at a reputable college, unable to engage in a successful career, unable to live a good life. Such fears drove their early education choices.