Enhanced Provision Of Safe Toys For Children Through Maintenance Practices By Parents In Anambra State: Implications For Childhood Education

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Abstract
This paper focused on maintenance practices parents adopt in enhancing the provision of safe toys for their children. Specifically, the paper determined the toy maintenance practices and enhancement measures parents adopt in the provision of safe toys for their children. It adopted a survey research design. Study area was Anambra State. Population was 15,956 teachers who are parents in the government registered nursery and primary schools in the area of the study. Multistage sampling technique was used to select a random sample of 320, respondents for the study. A questionnaire was used for data collection Means, Standard deviation and T-test were used for data analysis. Findings show, among others: that parents should teach their children to clean up their toys when they were done playing, perform a daily safety check of toys and play...
materials to ensure safety condition of toys and play materials for children. Based on the findings some parent-related enhancement measures were made, which include that parents should guide their children in the use of toys and provide play materials/toys that are easy to maintain for their children, among others.

**Keywords:** Maintenance, Parents, Practices, Provision, Safe, T

**Introduction**
A child is a young human being unable to help himself, that needs adult assistance and support to survive. A child is every human being below the age of 18 years (United Nations Convention, 1989). The National Child Welfare Policy of 1989 defines a child as anybody who is 12 years or below. However, a draft decree put into law has now set the age of the child in Nigeria as 18 years or below. Biologically, a child is a person between birth and puberty, or between the developmental period of infancy and puberty. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child defines a child as “a human below the age of 18 years unless under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier”. The Child Labor Prohibition and Regulation Act, 1986 defined a child as a person who has not completed 14 years of age.

Every child passes through different stages of patterned development in understanding the world around them. Therefore, as children pass through the different stages of development, the family and school as their socializing environment have great tasks, to ensure that the children develop into healthy personality through play and play materials. Heredity and environmental factors influence the development of a child. The development and growth of the child results from the influences of heredity and environment (Francesconi & Heckman, 2016; Keenan, Evans & Crowleys, 2016). It is from the child’s environment comes such factors that influenced growth and development among which play child environment, activities and materials are included. The child simultaneously discovers aspects of selfhood as he explores and manipulates objects through play (Piaget, 1962).

Play is a natural activity for every young child. It provides many opportunities for children to learn and grew physically, mentally, and socially (Souza & Verissimo, 2015). Goodson opined that if play is the child’s work, then toys are the child’s tools, and appropriate toys can help children in doing their work well. However, as far as children are concerned, toys for play are like tools for learning. All play materials influenced children’s development positively (Myoungsoon, 2016). When children are provided with safe and appropriate toys and materials, one will be thrilled at the abilities and talents these may unfold in them. Anyanwu (2014) advised that parents of young children should budget for toys and play things as they do for clothes and food.

Toys are items or any useful object in play situation, regardless of the way it’s used, (Burton, 2021). The American Consumer Affairs Division, ACAD, (2018) suggested that toys are fun and they help children learn about themselves, their environment and the people around them. Toys also play an important part in the education of the child and through play, children at every
stage learn about themselves, others and about how things work (Roopnarine & Davidson, 2015). However, while toys are meant to be fun and develop learning environment, not all toys are safe.

Safety, should be a major priority in the provision of toys for children (Aronson, 2013). Hollnage (2015) defined safety as those activities that seek either to minimize or to eliminate hazardous conditions that can cause bodily injury. Safe toys, therefore, are toys that have no risk of harming the child as he/she plays with them. Safety can save the life of children and parents, as well as prolong the life span of the toys. Parent should ensure their children’s play time is safe and toys used safely (U.S. Affairs Divisions, 2018). It is therefore, important that parents in Anambra State, as in other states, provide appropriate toys for their children.

Provision is the act of making available to somebody, something that he/she needs or wants (Martinez-Pujalte, 2019). Provision of safe toys to children involves careful considerations of certain factors such as improved toy maintenance practices and ways of enhancing the practices parents adopt in the provision of safe toys.

However, most parents in Anambra State are not concerned with providing a comfortable and enjoyable environment to their children; they also do not give attention in identifying the play needs of their children (Olaitan and Akpan, 2013). It has also been observed that in Anambra state parents provide toys, arbitrarily, to their children, without proper consideration of the vulnerability and safety of these children in the face of such toys (Dike, 2016). They also lack information about the enhancement measures and improved maintenance practices they should adopt in the provision of safe toys, for their children. Hence the need for this study, to investigate the improved toy maintenance practices and enhancement measures parents adopt in the provision of safe toys for their children aged 1 – 8 years. Healthy children are the pride of their parents and the nation, because they will only develop as they should, physically, emotionally, socially and intellectually when they are healthy and free from emotional stress. This can be achieved through the improved maintenance practices and enhancement measures of stimulating play materials and safe environment for their children’s play, exploration and discoveries.

Toy maintenance is the act of keeping toys in good condition by checking and repairing it regularly. The need for toy maintenance arises in order to prevent, minimize or solve problems occurring from the regular use of the toys. Hart (2013) opined that each used toy presents its problems. It is, therefore, useful that parents should examine their children’s toys and play things from time to time to be able to detect when they show signs of deterioration. Seidman (2016), In the same vain, noted that since toys are among the first things a child considers his or her own, parents should encourage children to assume responsibility by demonstrating how to use and care for their toys to avoid hurting themselves with unsafe toys. It is worth noting that protecting children from unsafe toys is the responsibility of every parents. Careful toy selection and proper supervision of children at play is still and will always be the best way to protect children from toy-related injuries (U.S. Consumer Product Safety, Commission, (CPSC) 2017). Consequently, Parents need to monitor their children properly, to ensure that they indulge in healthy and safe plays. However, protecting your child from the usual dangers of play time will only inhibit his growth, American Academy of Pediatrics 2018, remarked. In considering our children’s interests
and asking what they would want to play with, one of the most important things to keep in mind is the age recommendations for the toys of our children. In addition, following age recommendations is important to help keep our kids safe, for example, by avoiding toys with small parts and checking hazards for younger children. This will help parents avoid buying a toy that would not hold the child’s attention and get him easily frustrated (CPSC, 2017).

Regrettably, it has been observed that parents provide toys that are detrimental to their children without proper consideration of the danger and safety of these children, in the face of such toys (Orji 2013). One of the report has it that most parents in Anambra state are not concerned with providing a comfortable, enjoyable and safe play environment for their children (On wurah, 2012). Similarly, Mbachi et al., (2020) has it that parents in Anambra State do not pay required attention in identifying the safe play needs of their children. Supporting this statement, (Eke et al., 2014) also alleged that Nigerian parents generally, Anambra state inclusively lack basic information about enhancement measures and improved maintenance practices needed for the provision of safe toys for their children. These have led to high prevalence of unsafe and hazardous toys among children within the area (Ogunyemi & Ragpot, 2015; Okoro et al. 2015). Anambra state being one of the economic epicenters of the country, is characterized with a busy and rowdy lifestyle of densely populated people going about their business activities (Ekesiobi & Dimnwobi, 2020, Lady Franca, 2016). Poor toy maintenance culture appears to be a major challenge within and around Anambra state due to these prevalent reasons. Again, some opinions claim that most of the observed behaviors among parents within the study area could be due to the fact that most of the parents are merchants who leave, their homes very early in the morning and return late in the evening due to the nature of the native of their business within the environment (Madichie & Nkamnebe, 2010), and consequently, have little or no time for their family.

Moreover, providing positive toy guiding principles for parents in relation to improved toy maintenance and enhancement skills are needed to lengthen handling life of toys and reduce waste among the parents in Anambra state. Nevertheless, there has been a dearth of reliable information on the strategies for improved toy maintenance practices and enhancement measures for safe toys. Hence, the need for this study is to determine the guidance principles parents should adopt in maintaining and further improve the good quality, value or status of their children’s toys as they provide play materials to their children in Anambra state. This study, therefore, will be of immense benefit to parents, teachers of nursery and primary schools, caregivers, motherless babies’ homes and day care centers. The findings of the study will provide the beneficiaries with information on improved toy maintenance practices and enhancement toy measures for the provision of safe toys by parents in Anambra state. The findings will also be geared towards equipping parents in Anambra state with proper skills and knowledge which will enable them make wise decisions and proper management of their children’s play materials/toy needs.

**Purpose of the Study**
The main purpose of the study was to investigate the toy maintenance practices and care of parents in Anambra state, with a view to evolving the enhancement strategies parents should adopt in providing safe toys for their children. Specifically, the study identified:

1. Toy maintenance practices adopted by parents in the provision of safe toys for their children aged 1 – 8 years in Anambra State.
2. Ways of enhancing the practices parents adopt in the provision of safe toys for their children aged 1 – 8 years in Anambra State.

**Research Questions**

1. What toy maintenance practices do parents adopt in the provision of safe toys for their children aged 1 – 8 years in Anambra State?
2. What are the ways of enhancing the practices parents adopt in the provision of safe toys for their children aged 1 – 8 years in Anambra State?

**Hypothesis**

H01: one null hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance by the study. There is no significant difference between the main responses of two groups of teachers namely, nursery and primary school teachers who are parents, on the ways of enhancing the practices parents adopt in the provision of safe toys for their children.

**Methodology**

**Design of the Study:** Survey design was preferred for this study because it gathered information from the parents regarding the toy maintenance practices and enhancement measures adopted by parents in the provision of safe toys for their children, aged 1-8 years in Anambra State.

**Area of the Study**

The area of study is Anambra State. Anambra is a State in south-eastern Nigeria. It is located within the coordinate 6.2209°N, and 6.9370°E. It has over 33 million residents. (Anambra State Government-Light of the Nation 2021). Anambra State has one of the lowest poverty rates among 36 States of Nigeria and FCT. The State is the third most commercialized States in Nigeria behind Lagos and Kano State. Its boundaries are formed by Delta State to the West, Imo State to the South, Enugu State to the East and Kogi State to the North. This may have accounted for the arbitrary provision of toys, lack of adequate knowledge of toy maintenance practices and enhancement measures to protect the kids from dangers in the provision of safe Toys for children in Anambra State.

**The Population of the Study**
The population of the study was made of married female teachers in nursery and primary schools who are also parents in Anambra State. This population comprised of 1,519 nursery school teachers and 14,437 primary school teachers in the government registered nursery and primary schools (Anambra State Ministry of Education: Universal Basic Education Commission, July, 2004). Therefore, the target population was 15,956. The subjects for the study aged 25 years and above, and had 5 – 10 years of teaching experience with N.C.E. and B.ED degree qualifications and above.

Sample and Sampling Technique for the Study
The sample size was 320 respondents, comprising of teachers who are married and are parents were randomly selected from the 12 nursery and 22 primary schools considered. Multistage sampling techniques was adopted in the selection of the sample for the study because large population is involved over a wide geographical region. Three educational zones, were randomly selected at the first stage, out of the six educational zones in Anambra State. Each of the three educational zones selected has three Local Government Areas (L.G.As). In the second stage, one local government area was randomly selected from each of the three educational zones, using equal proportional allocations. In the third stage, a total of 12 nursery and 22 primary schools were randomly selected from the three L.G.As. Finally, in the fourth stage, all the teachers who were married and parents in the 12 nursery and 22 primary schools considered for the study were selected as part of the sample, giving a total of 56 nursery and 264 primary school teachers. This give a sample size of 320 respondents for the study.

Instrument for Data Collection
Questionnaire was used for data collection. It was developed based on the literature reviewed and research objectives. The questionnaire was divided into two major sections (A and B). Section A sought information on the personal data of the respondents while section B is based on a 5 – point scale and has 35 items grouped into 5 clusters to answer the two research questions which were developed to correspond to the specific objectives of the study. The instrument was face-validated by two experts in Childhood Education, University of Nigeria, Nsukka. The reliability coefficient of the instrument was estimated using Cronbach – Alpha reliability index and the coefficient of the internal consistency was estimated at 0.81.

Method of Data Collection
The researchers administered the questionnaire to the teachers who are parents by hand. The teachers returned the completed answered questionnaire to the researchers. A total of 320 copies of the instrument were distributed by hand but 317 were completely filled and returned. This represents 97.325 percentage result.

Method of Data Analysis
Data were analyzed using means and standard deviation. The hypothesis was tested at 0.05 level of significance using t-test. A mean of 3.50 was used as the basis for decision making for the specific purposes, while any item with a mean below 3.50 was considered as a non-toy maintenance practice/enhancement measures adopted by parents. A mean value above the decision rule of 3.50 are agreed as toy maintenance practices/enhancement measures adopted by parents in Anambra State.

Results

Table 1: Mean Responses of Nursery and Primary School Teachers on Toy Maintenance Practices Parents Adopt in the Provision of Safe Toys for their Children

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Toy maintenance practices parents adopt in the provision of safe toys for their children</th>
<th>$\bar{X}$</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Remark</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Toys are checked regularly for any damage</td>
<td>3.60</td>
<td>1.09</td>
<td>Adopted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Toys are not allowed to remain out doors overnight</td>
<td>4.22</td>
<td>0.86</td>
<td>Adopted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Toy that are damaged beyond repair are discarded or replaced promptly.</td>
<td>3.87</td>
<td>0.99</td>
<td>Adopted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Children are taught to put their toys safely away in their right places after use.</td>
<td>4.23</td>
<td>0.77</td>
<td>Adopted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Toys manipulated and put in the mouth by children are cleaned after use.</td>
<td>4.08</td>
<td>0.981</td>
<td>Adopted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Plastic toys are washed as activities with the children may attract some harmful bacteria that may reside on the surface of the toy.</td>
<td>3.89</td>
<td>0.964</td>
<td>Adopted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Storage containers and shelves are labeled with bright colors, words or pictures for easy identification.</td>
<td>3.72</td>
<td>1.15</td>
<td>Adopted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Toys are aired after each use before storage</td>
<td>3.60</td>
<td>1.16</td>
<td>Adopted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Special containers and shelves are kept for toy storage.</td>
<td>3.71</td>
<td>1.003</td>
<td>Adopted</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$\bar{X}$ = Mean, S.D = Standard Deviation, N = No. of Respondents = 317.

Table 1 reveals that all the 9 items had their mean values above the decision rule of 3.50. This implies that the respondents agreed to all the 9 items as the improved toy maintenance practices parents adopt in the provision of safe toys for their children aged 1-8 years. The toy maintenance practice that states that parents should teach their children to put their toys away safely in right places after use recorded the highest mean of 4.28. The values of the standard
deviation range from 0.86 to 1.16 which indicates that the opinions of the respondents do not vary much from the mean and from each other, and there was no much variations in the responses of the nursery and primary school teachers who are parents.

Table 2: Mean Responses and t-test Results of Nursery and Primary School Teachers on Parent-related Enhancement Measures Adopted by Parents in the Provision of safe Toys for their Children

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Parent-related enhancement measures</th>
<th>$\bar{X}_1$</th>
<th>$\bar{X}_2$</th>
<th>$\bar{X}_g$</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>t-cal</th>
<th>Sig. (p-value)</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Parents should: guide children in the use of toys</td>
<td>4.24</td>
<td>4.02</td>
<td>4.13</td>
<td>0.96</td>
<td>2.03</td>
<td>0.04</td>
<td>Measure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>use toys to stimulate and help development in their children.</td>
<td>4.19</td>
<td>4.15</td>
<td>4.17</td>
<td>0.93</td>
<td>0.26</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>NS, Measure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>make children’s play time a fun to them.</td>
<td>3.49</td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td>3.59</td>
<td>1.17</td>
<td>1.24</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>NS, Measure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>provide enough resources for the children’s toys/play items</td>
<td>4.06</td>
<td>3.95</td>
<td>4.01</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td>1.12</td>
<td>0.27</td>
<td>NS, Measure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Improvise toys for children when possible</td>
<td>4.12</td>
<td>4.07</td>
<td>4.09</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td>0.55</td>
<td>0.583</td>
<td>NS, Measure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>attend seminars, workshops and other enlightenment programmes on child development</td>
<td>4.12</td>
<td>4.14</td>
<td>4.13</td>
<td>0.697</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>863</td>
<td>NS, Measure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>provide play materials/toys that are easy to maintain</td>
<td>4.12</td>
<td>4.14</td>
<td>4.13</td>
<td>0.697</td>
<td>0.17</td>
<td>0.863</td>
<td>NS, Measure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>shop wisely for toys and watch for quality with minimum costs</td>
<td>3.92</td>
<td>3.97</td>
<td>3.96</td>
<td>0.97</td>
<td>0.307</td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td>NS, Measure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>never provide hazardous toys for children</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.17</td>
<td>4.09</td>
<td>0.86</td>
<td>1.32</td>
<td>0.189</td>
<td>NS, Measure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Remove toys with strangulation risks for babies</td>
<td>4.14</td>
<td>4.32</td>
<td>4.23</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td>1.42</td>
<td>0.158</td>
<td>NS, Measure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>keep older children’s toys out of the reach of younger children</td>
<td>4.43</td>
<td>4.28</td>
<td>4.38</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>1.52</td>
<td>0.13</td>
<td>NS, Measure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>follow the safety guidelines in providing toys for children</td>
<td>4.10</td>
<td>3.96</td>
<td>4.02</td>
<td>1.02</td>
<td>1.11</td>
<td>0.27</td>
<td>NS, Measure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>select suitable play and play materials for children</td>
<td>4.18</td>
<td>4.07</td>
<td>4.12</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td>1.276</td>
<td>0.203</td>
<td>NS, Measure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>provide toys based on environment condition</td>
<td>4.24</td>
<td>4.01</td>
<td>4.13</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td>2.36</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>S, Measure</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

http://www.webology.org
$\bar{X}_1$ = Mean responses of nursery school teachers, $\bar{X}_2$ = Means responses of primary school teachers, $\bar{X}_g$ = Grand Mean, S.D. = Standard Deviation of the grand mean, $n_1$ = number of respondents (nursery school teachers) = 55, $n_2$ = number of respondents (primary school teachers) = 262, Significant level ($p$ – value) = 0.05, S= significant, NS = Not Significant, DF= Degree of Freedom = 315.

Table 2 shows that all the 14 items had their mean values above the decision-making rule of 3.50. This implies that respondents agreed that all the items are the parent-related enhancement measures parents adopt in the provision of safe toys for their children. The values of the standard deviations also showed that the respondents do not vary much with the mean and from each other.

Table 3: Mean Responses and t-test Results of the Nursery and Primary School Teachers on Children-related Enhancement Measures Adopted in the Provision of Safe Toys for their Children

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Children-related enhancement measures</th>
<th>$\bar{X}_1$</th>
<th>$\bar{X}_2$</th>
<th>$\bar{X}_g$</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>t-cal</th>
<th>Sig. (p-value)</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Children should be instructed on how to care for their toys.</td>
<td>4.27</td>
<td>4.32</td>
<td>4.30</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>0.47</td>
<td>0.64</td>
<td>Ns, Measures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Select toys that are interesting and suitable for them</td>
<td>4.32</td>
<td>4.50</td>
<td>4.41</td>
<td>0.59</td>
<td>2.42</td>
<td>0.02</td>
<td>S, Measure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Should be taught to be safety conscious</td>
<td>4.34</td>
<td>4.31</td>
<td>4.33</td>
<td>0.67</td>
<td>0.36</td>
<td>0.72</td>
<td>NS, Measure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Children should be encouraged to enjoy playing with toys</td>
<td>4.07</td>
<td>4.47</td>
<td>4.27</td>
<td>0.67</td>
<td>3.99</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>S Measures</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 reveals that all the 4 items had their mean values above the cut-off point of 3.50. This indicates that the respondents agreed that these 4 items listed in Table 3 are the children-related enhancement measures parents adopt in the provision of safe toys for their children. The values of the standard deviations, as well, imply that the opinions of the respondents are not far from the mean and each other.

Table 4: Mean Responses and t-test Results of the Nursery and Primary School Teachers on Government-related Enhancement Measures in the Provision of Safe Toys for their Children
Table 4 shows that the two items (item nos. 1 and 2) had their mean values greater than the decision rule of 3.50, showing that the respondents agree that the two items – issue policies restricting shock or thermal hazards in electrical toys (item no. 1, $\bar{X} = 4.24$) and issue policies/laws limiting the amount of lead in toy paints (item no. 2, $\bar{X} = 4.02$) are the government–related enhancement measures parents adopt in the provision of safe toys for their children.

Table 5: Mean responses and t-test Result of the Nursery and Primary School Teachers on the Industry-related Enhancement Measures Adopted by Parents in the Provision of Safe Toys for their Children.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Industry-related enhancement measures</th>
<th>$\bar{X}_1$</th>
<th>$\bar{X}_2$</th>
<th>$\bar{X}_g$</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>t-cal</th>
<th>Sig. (p-value)</th>
<th>Remarks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The toy industry should put warning labels on children toys and play materials</td>
<td>4.20</td>
<td>4.33</td>
<td>4.26</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>1.48</td>
<td>0.14</td>
<td>NS, Measures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Make toys that children cannot swallow</td>
<td>4.33</td>
<td>4.31</td>
<td>4.32</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td>0.29</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td>NS, Measure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Be safety conscious in designing and production of toys.</td>
<td>4.01</td>
<td>4.23</td>
<td>4.12</td>
<td>0.87</td>
<td>2.14</td>
<td>0.034</td>
<td>S, Measure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Limit string length on crib and play pen toys to reduce risk of strangulation</td>
<td>3.99</td>
<td>4.16</td>
<td>4.08</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>1.84</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>NS Measures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Large toy manufacturers should aid in providing toys for nursery and primary schools</td>
<td>3.99</td>
<td>4.13</td>
<td>4.06</td>
<td>0.724</td>
<td>1.701</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>NS, Measure</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Supply appropriate information on toys, e.g., age, safety warnings and cautions.

Table 5 reveals that all the 6 items (item nos. 1-6) had their mean values above the cut-off point of 3.50. This indicates that the respondents agreed that these 6 items listed in Table 5 are the industry-related enhancement measures parents adopt in the provision of safe toys for their children. The values of the standard deviations clearly indicate that the opinions of the respondents are not far from the mean and close to each other. It is also observable in Tables 2, 3, 4 and 5, that the responses of the nursery and primary school teachers had little or no variation. This is evident by the small magnitude of the standard deviations.

Discussion of Findings
The result of this study indicates nine toy maintenance practices relevant for the provision of safe toys for children in Anambra State. They all recorded high mean responses for toy maintenance practices parents adopted. This finding is consistent with the views of Hart (1977), Oyeleye (1992), Seidman (1994) and the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission who had opined, that it is helpful, parents examine their children’s toys and play materials from time to time to be able to detect when they show signs of deterioration. Oyeleye (1992) remarked, that good grooming does not end with keeping nails, skin and hair in good condition but also in keeping all toys and play materials for children clean, fresh, and in good repair. Further still, the opinions of Rettig (1998) are upheld by the findings of this study. He suggested that toys that are manipulated and put in the mouth by children, be cleaned after used to reduce the possibilities of germs and infections being spread to other children.

The result also indicated the twenty-six enhancement measures adopted by parents in Anambra State in the provision of safe toys for their children identified, from the findings of the study. They are categorized, thus, fourteen parent-related, four children-related, two governments – related and six industries – related enhancement measures. The finding of this study is consistent with the views and recommendations of U.S Consumer Product Safety Commission, CPSC, (2005), America Academy for Pediatrics (2000), Lichenstein (2004) and Davis (2001) which suggested that literacy programmes and services should be organized for parents for teaching new skills and guidelines for the provision of children’s safe toys. They further remarked that parents need to know the appropriate age of the child, in order to make informed decisions in selecting
toys for their children. Nevertheless, significant difference was observed in the mean responses of the nursery and primary school teachers on two parent–related, two children–related. One government–related and one industry–related enhancement measures.

The observed differences do not imply, in any way that the enhancement measures identified, in this study are not considered appropriate by parents in Anambra State in the provision of safe toys for their children, but this may be attributed to the fact, that these respondents have little or no knowledge about the role of toys in the development of the child, and thereby, lack information and knowledge about the enhancement strategies parents should adopt and the improved toy maintenance practices in the provision of safe toys for their children. As a result, they fail to provide adequately, for the toy needs, its care, maintenance, and enhancement practices in the provision of safe toys for their children. However, the other teachers with higher responses, have the right knowledge, attitudes and skills about their children’s toy needs, its improved care, maintenance practices and the importance of enhancement measures in the provision of safe toys for their children in Anambra State.

Conclusion
Toys and games are fun and important tools for child development, but the importance of keep children safe from accidents while they play cannot be overstated. Therefore, safety becomes a major priority in childhood education programmes. Unsafe toys and materials can put children at risk for injury or illness. For this reason, checking toys and materials for safety and identifying unsafe toys becomes very imperative in childhood education. After you have bought safe toys it’s also important to make sure children know how to use and maintain them. It is essential that parents think of safety when they choose use, and check their children’s toys and other play equipment in the childhood program. The best way to do this, is by supervising the children as they play. If you have any doubt about a toys safety, err on the side of caution and do not allow your child to play with it, as it is truly better to be safe than sorry.

The study conclusively, revealed 9 toy maintenance practices adopted by parents in the provision of safe toys for their children aged 1-8 years; 26 ways of enhancing the practices parents adopt in the provision of safe toys for their children aged 1-8 years in Anambra State. Significant difference was recorded for two, out of the fourteen parent – related enhancement measures identified, parents adopt for the provision of safe toys for their children, two, out of the four children-related enhancement measures identified, adopted by parents; one, out of the two government-related enhancement measures, identified, and five out of the six industry-related enhancement measures identified, adopted by parents in the provision of safe toys for their children aged 1-8 years in Anambra State.
These measures, if adopted will enhance the provisions of safe toys for children, increasing the good quality, value and status of the children’s play materials into a more desirable and excellent condition for usage. Finally, the study will provide optimum condition for effective learning for sustainable family living amid threatening socio-economic challenge.
Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. Family literacy programmes and services should be organized for parents and caregivers to provide them with the required information, knowledge, attitudes and skills needed for proper care, maintenance and enhancement practices in the provision of safe toys for their children.

2. Public awareness campaign programmes should be carried out by the government to educate parents on the general guidelines to keep in mind as they care and maintain their children’s toys, so as to align with the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) standards for the provision of safe toys.

3. Parents and caregivers should be taught how to use the daily safety checklist to inspect their children’s toys and play materials to guard against playing with harmful materials/equipment, as it is truly better to be safe than sorry.

4. Government should establish, follow and enforce a policy for the cleaning, sanitation, care and maintenance of all toys within a child care facility to keep children and employees as safe from germs as possible.

5. Parents should endeavor to adhere to all the improved toy maintenance practices identified, to reduce possibilities of contracting contagious diseases, as well as having durable and lasting toys/play items for their children.

6. The Government through the Ministry of Commerce and Industry under the trade unions should help to package the identified improved maintenance and enhancement practices needed by parents for the provision of safe toys for their children into training instruction manual.

7. Inclusion of improved toy maintenance and enhancement practices in the school curriculum under first aid and safety education by the government.

References


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