

GUIDELINES FOR THE DESIGNING OF EARLY CHILDHOOD  
PROGRAMMES FOR THE URBAN LOW INCOME GROUPS  
IN THE CITY OF COLOMBO

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By

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of the present study is to identify the limitations in concept formation, language, motor, manipulative development and social, emotional adjustment in Pre-school children of 4 - 5 years of age of the urban low income group of Colombo city.

Two hypothesis were tested. The first hypothesis was that there is no significant difference in concept formation, language, motor, manipulative development and social, emotional adjustment in pre-school children aged 4 - 5 years of the low income group of the urban slums and those pre-school children aged 4 - 5 years of the higher income earners (mostly professionals) of the city of Colombo. The second hypothesis was that there is no significant difference in the parental involvement and preparation of children for school, in basic skills needed for Grade I in the homes of the low income group and in the homes of the upper income group in the city of Colombo.

The sample was selected from one age group - ie. 4 - 5 year old children, both girls and boys. No attempt was made to have an equal number of boys and girls. The total number of children was 120, drawn from five pre-schools. Sixty children from the urban low income group were selected from three outstanding slum areas of Colombo city. Sixty children from the upper income group (mostly professionals), comprised the other group. These children had been in the pre-schools for one year and were in the second year which

was their final year in the pre-school when the study commenced. The pre-test was conducted at the beginning of the year and the post test after eight months in their final year at the pre-school. In addition to the pre-school variables, the home environment of the children was studied in relation to the stimulation and preparation for Grade I.

The data obtained in this study was analysed and the discussion focussed on the outcome of the hypothesis that were tested. The study showed that the children of the low income group were backward in their language development, finer manipulative skills, and to a certain extent in concept formation.

The data pointed to the need for quality improvement in the areas of teaching and learning for children of the low income group particularly in the basic skills needed for Grade I. An enrichment programme of study and guidelines for teachers were drawn up to help these children as well as pre-school teachers who are engaged in teaching in the slum areas of Colombo city.

