

INTRODUCTION

Early childhood period is a vital stage in the life time of human being that forms the child's attitudes and tendencies. It outlines the growth of children's body, socialization process and emotions as being provided to them by the education, health and social elements of the surrounding atmosphere. These periods start from 2 to 6 years old (*Pipes and Trahms, 1997*). Further pediatric health promotion is based on the belief that, if children learn the value of wellness early, it will become their way of life (*Whelsell et al., 2000*). Preschool years are the most significant in a child's life for the development of thinking skills. During this time, language develops very fast, children begin to understand symbols and socialization (*Debord, 1996*).

Health promotion during childhood is vitally important because it is a critical period of the life span that the learning of health – related behaviors, attitudes, values and perceptions takes place. Behaviors learned during these early years provide the basis for healthy related behaviors during adulthood (*Tylor & Forster, 1996*). It was reported by *Allender (1998)*, all children, wherever they are born, need adequate care which includes love, nutrition, cleanliness, sleep, health care, immunization, safe living environment and knowledgeable caregivers.

Preschool years have long been recognized as a critical period in a child's development. The children's cognitive, physical, emotional and social skills can develop tremendously based on the practice of age appropriate activities in schools and most importantly, at home with parents. Also children's values, attitudes, and self – esteem are shaped by the examples of their parents and caregivers (*Whitt, 2002*).

As stated by **Wong & Wilson (1997)**, the preschool period prepare the preschoolers for their most significant change in life style, enterance into school, their control of bodily systems, experience of brief and prolonged period of separation, ability to interact cooperatively with other children and adults, use of language for mental symbolization and increased attention span and memory which make them ready for the next major period of school years.

Caregivers are considered important people in the preschooler's life. They can systematically do to provide children with rich and rewarding experiences during the period of growth and development. Also they develop enjoyable and educationable activities that develop the children's interests, social competence, emotional health and cognitive skills. Meanwhile, to carry out their role effectively, caregivers must see themselves as equal partners with professionals in planning and implementation programming for the child. They should be aware and confident in their role so as to make sure that the program plan is appropriate and effective (**Youngblut 1998 & Bush 2001**).