

NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA

# ECE 121



**Child Development**  
**Module 3**

# **ECE 121 (Child Development) Module 3**

**Course Developer/Writer**

Dr. (Mrs.). Modupe M. Osokoya, University of Ibadan, Ibadan

**Programme Leader/Course Coordinator**

Dr. Lucy Lawani, National Open University of Nigeria

Credits of cover-photo: Henry Ude, National Open University of Nigeria

**National Open University of Nigeria** - 91, Cadastral Zone, Nnamdi Azikwe Express Way, Jabi, Abuja, Nigeria



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# Unit I Personality Development and Acquisition of Identity

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## 1.0 Introduction

The various stages of child development have been our focus in the past ten units. Your attention has been brought to the development stages of children in the different types of development. In separate unit, we consider a type of Child Development process though as I had said earlier, we cannot really mark out a distinction between these types of development as we observe them in children. We have only been discussing them in this way just for clarity sake. You can always observe emotional characteristics in the social aspect of a child, so also you can observe motor development in intellectual (or cognitive) characteristics.

I am bringing personality Development out to begin this module, so that you link it with another aspect of child development as it affects children's education. As always said the distinction between the types of development is not really very obvious. We are going to treat personality development along with acquisition of identity in this unit. And in the module we take it, long with play, and giftedness in children. The child is now to be considered as a person. The personality of a person is something that establishes itself in a person over a period of time; this is why we regard it as a type of Development.

## 2.0 Objectives

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- define personality
- list and appreciate factors that affect personality development
- identify some stages of personality development
- name some of the various concepts that are used within the context to identify acquisition
- describe some concepts to identify acquisition like self-concept, self-esteem, and self-actualization
- outline the characteristics of a self-actualization of a person.

## 3.0 Main Content

### 3.1 Personality Development

The personality of an individual is a **dynamic** thing in the relationship of that individual with other people. It is **dynamic** because it is not static it can change because of one reason or another; though this is difficult, any way we won't bother ourselves in this course about whether it is difficult or not. The development of the personal characteristics of a child is greatly determined by the child's parent. But the funny aspect of this is that even the child's personal characteristics too also influence the parents behaviour. You can think on this and see whether you agree with it or not.

Let's now consider what we mean by personality development by first of all considering the definition of **personality**

### 3.1.1 What is Personality?

Personality refers to the uniqueness and the distinctive characteristics of person which makes the person different from another. Guildford, one of the great psychologists, defines personality simply as "a stable system of complex characteristics by which the life pattern of an individual may be identified."

There are so many definitions for their term 'Personality' but we will not want to bother you with them for now.

The personality of a person includes, the person's physical appearance, his role in life, the totalness of the person's qualities or attributes and the person's general habitude behaviour.

A person's personality is an integration (i.e. putting together) of the person's social, emotional, and mental qualities. It is the combination of self-concept, self-attitude, self-values, ambition and the behaviour disposition peculiar to an individual, which makes the person unique in his own way.

Personality is a growing and dynamic entity. Every child develops his personalities as he grows and interacts with his environment. The personality of a person can be derived in part through the type of person he is identified with.

For instance you can say a lot about person, though to some extent, by just knowing the type of person he associates with.

### Self-Assessment Exercise I

What is Personality?

### 3.1.2 Factors Affecting Personality Development

Personality Development can be influenced by the following factors.

#### Home

The foundation of personality is set in the home. The home provides a powerful formative influence on personality development in a child. The home provides the child with a sense of security, love, mutual respect for others, sharing responsibilities, feeling proud of one's parent and one's home.

The parent must not allow the older children to bully over (abusing or beating them for every wrong action) the younger ones, so that the two of them don't develop complex feeling. The young one will develop inferiority complex while the older one will develop superiority complex. The home must provide adequate guidelines of family value system but not unduly restricting the natural exploratory behaviour.

## **Cultural Factor**

A child who moved about with his parent, by visiting family friends or traveling or even going to schools comes in contact with people of different culture. The child learns this new culture along with his own with this he is able to improve upon his social skills and his personality. A person who is not exposed is sometimes refers to as having poor personality.

## **Love and Independence**

Love and Independence, is essential in making one a self-reliant personality. The feeling of love is a pleasant emotional feeling that facilitates growth and development in young children; it also brings about mental health in the life of an individual.

## **Crisis in the Life of Individuals**

The personality of a child can be affected by having crisis in his life. Such crisis like tragedies birth of a new child in the family, death of mother or father, serious illness, failure success etc. These may lead to over protection or even under protection.

## **The School**

The School provides a relatively objective basis for the development of a child's personality. The child finds his bearing among his mates, he is able to assess his capabilities. The school helps in this regard by providing and maintaining good student-teacher relationship, and healthy environment, also by avoiding unpleasant situations. The teacher helps by being democratic, friendly, and impartial with the students. The teacher should acknowledge and respect the achievement of the individual child in any school activities.

## **Self-Assessment Exercise 2**

Mention five factors that can have influence on a child's personality development.

## **3.2 Stages in Personality Development**

Erickson, a social psychologist, recognized and described the ego qualities of an individual which emerge in critical periods of development stages. We think we should tell you that there are many theories on personality and personality development, even the stages we are about to outline for you came out of one such theories. But we would not bother ourselves with such theories in this course. We are simply concerned with child development and the relevance of this to early childhood education. The eight stages are:

Basic Trust Versus Mistruths (0 – 18 months)

Autonomy Versus Doubt or Shame (18 months – 3 years) (c ) Initiative Versus Guilt (3 – 36 months)

Industry Versus Inferiority (6 – 12 years)

Identity Versus Confusion (12 – 18 years)

Intimacy Versus Isolation

Generality Versus Self-absorption or stagnation

Ego integrity Versus Despair.

The First four stage span through the childhood period of life, so let's briefly go through those ones:

### **3.2.1 Basic Trust versus Mistrust (0 – 18 months)**

In this period of the child's life, he develops basic trust or mistrust to others through his relationship with his parent, especially mothers. If the parents supply all his needs, feelings, sleep, relaxation etc., there would be social trust, and the child will not want the other to leave him, whenever she is far away, the child cries and show signs of undue anxiety. It is the degree of the parent-child relationship that will determine the level of trust. if the child does not develop such basic trust, it may lead to unhappiness and considerable personality difficulties in later years of life

The parent need to feel and care for the child and also help the child to build an affectionate and warm relationship. In this way the child will develop a healthy ego and personality.

### **3.2.2 Autonomy versus Doubt or Shame (18 months – 3 years)**

You will recall that this is the period when the child begins to do certain things by himself and master tasks. For example if a child builds up a house using cardboard, or designs a greeting card, if the child in this stage is made to feel that his independent efforts are faulty or wrong through parents or elders, ( Criticism), he will develop a personality of shame or doubt. But if the parent or other adults around commend his independent effort, the child will develop a personality of autonomy i.e. a feeling that he can survive alone.

### **3.2.3 Initiative versus Guilt (3 – 6 years)**

Children at this stage initiate actions, they don't wait for others to provide tasks for them. They ask for help if need be. If they receive encouragement from adults, they develop positive feelings and would avoid guilt. If their parents or other adults discourage and criticize or ignore their moves they develop a sense of guilt, and this can cause them to become over-controlled and excessively inhibited i.e not waiting to make further initiative moves again.

### **3.2.4 Industry versus Inferiority (6 – 12 years)**

At this stage children enjoy activities involving concrete objects e.g collecting and making of objects. If such activities or projects are approved by adults followed with worthwhile praises and reward, the child develops a sense of self-worth and positive feelings about becoming involved in activities. But if the activities are condemned, the child develops a feeling of inferiority and negative feelings about being involved in activities.

The conflict between industry and inferiority becomes strong especially if the child is competing with his mates or peers.

I will leave the explanation of the remaining 4 stages of personality and requisition of identity to when you begin to do psychology in full later in this programme.

Education of the child should be directed to “the development of the child's personality, talents, mental and physical abilities to the fullest. It is therefore necessary to have a developmental profile for each child and there is the need to be having periodic

measurements of the several dimensions of the development over time. Where a teacher or parent notice that the child is developing the negative personalities as described above, the next opportunity should be asked carefully to provide remedy so that the positive personality can be motivated. It means that if for instance you have abused a girl of say 9 years for not tying clothe well, when next she makes a similar move, make sure she is encouraged to the fullest so that the feeling of inferiority can turn to a personality of industry

Now try yourselves on the following self-assessment questions.

### **Self-Assessment Exercise 3**

1. Give the stages of personality development according to the Erickson's theory.
2. Mention 4 each of (a) positive (b) negative personalities that children between ages 0 – 12 years can develop.

### **3.3 Acquisition of Identity**

The development of an identity by a child forms an aspect of his development process. The child like any other human being, should be seen as a whole person and not as a separable parts or part of another objects or person. You will recall that when we were discussing emotional and psychological development, that the child between the age of 0-2 years, feels that he is the most important thing in the world. He would not mind knocking his head on the floor to draw attention to himself.

A baby is born with feelings and can communicate with the mother as early as the day the baby is born. He feels them other's touch, hears her voice and can communicate with his mother. This helps the baby to grow and develop, right from there, the child begins to develop an idea of who he is, i.e. his individual self or in closer term, his identity or a personality. Two key factors that play important role in the acquisition of identity of a child are the parent and the teacher. However, there are some terms which are usually used to describe individuals as he acquires his/her own identity. Some of these terms are self-discovery, self-concept, self-esteem and self-actualization.

I will briefly describe each of them for you.

#### **3.3.1 Self Discovery**

The young child's discovery of himself is an important event in the life of the young child. The teacher or adult taking care of such child should not allow the period to go without taking note of it.

The discovery of self implies that the child is able to know himself and his worth, what he can do and what he cannot do. Self-Discovery goes in various phases. It forms the basis for the forming of a self-concept.



### 3.3.2 Self - Concept

This refers to the picture or image a person has of himself. It is the sum total of what a person believes about himself, and the importance he/she attaches to the beliefs. Self-concept can be positive or negative. A child who believes he is always solving mathematical problem correctly has a positive self-concept, while the one who feels that she/he can not do without the help of another person to do a task, has a negative self-concept.

### 3.3.3 Self-Esteem

Self-esteem has to do with how a person feels about himself, whether or not others will accept him or not. It is determined by the type of development the undergoes, i.e. closely tied to the child's family and environment or he child's background. When a child is listened to, taken seriously and genuinely cared for, the child's self-esteem will be high.

### 3.2.4 Self-Actualization

Self-actualization, is the desire to fulfill one's potentiality (i.e being able to do what you believe you can do). According to Maslow "what a man can be, he must be". The following are the characteristics of a self-actualizing child:

- The ability to tolerate uncertainty ( such a child will test what he is not sure of working).
- The ability to accept oneself and others for what they are (unconditional positive regard).
- Spontaneity in thought and behaviour (i.e being able to think or act fast immediately there is a problem, not fixing date or another time for thinking and /or acting).
- Problem centered rather than self-centered (think of problem at hand and not of self).
- Concern for the welfare of others
- Ability to consider life from an objective point.

A self-actualizing individual, tends to:

- work hard at whatever they do
- be honest and avoid pretences
- enjoy life
- try something new rather than sticking to the only secure and safe ways.

The joy of living is derived when an individual is healthy and has the vigour and vitality to want to achieve, this is necessary for the development of children. A healthy person can respond well to the rigours of life, to frustration, to disappointment and to the needs required in hard work

### Self-Assessment Exercise 4

1. Name 4 of the various concepts that are associated with the context of acquisition of identity.
2. Outline the characteristics of a self-actualizing person.

## 4.0 Conclusion

The personality of a person involves so many things put together. All these things include the person's physical appearance, his role in life, the person's qualities or attributes and the general habitual behaviour of the person. It also includes the person's social and mental qualities like self-actualization. All these when considered together makes a person unique. It is therefore necessary for teachers, who are supposed to be working along with a child's parents, to see to the proper development of these attributes of a person that combines to make the child's personality. We should educate children to be able to become someone with rich healthy personality.

## 5.0 Summary

In this unit, you have learnt about personality development in young children, factors affecting the development of personality and some stages involved in personality development. You have also learnt about acquisition of identity and some terms or concepts like self-concept, self-esteem, self-actualization that can be used to describe a person's acquired identity.

In the next unit we shall talk about 'play' and how play can also be used as a form of child development, that is in various aspects of development.

## 6.0 Self-Assessment Exercise

1. How can the teacher help a child to develop positive personality.
2. Identity can be acquired. Yes or No.

If yes, give an outline procedure of how a teacher can help a child in the primary 4 class develop a positive self-actualization identity.

## 7.0 References/Further Reading

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## Unit 2 Play

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### 1.0 Introduction

In the previous module in this course, you learnt that the growth and development of children are systematic and progressive. In the last unit, you also learnt about personality development in young children. This is an important background knowledge for this unit on the topic of "play". This is because as the environment of children become bigger, they face greater challenges to overcome. It has been confirmed by many experts that children learn quite a lot naturally, through play. Let us look at what you should learn in this unit.

### 2.0 Objectives

At the end of the unit you will be able to:

- discuss the meaning of play and state its functions
- outline the different types of play and their importance
- discuss the stages of play and list examples of play materials
- prepare a guide for selecting play materials
- outline condition for learning through play
- outline the roles of the adult in making play more meaningful.

### 3.0 Main Content

#### 3.1 Definition of Play

Play is the term used to describe any activity engaged in, for the enjoyment it gives without necessarily thinking of the end product. It is a fundamental characteristic of young children's development. Because play is such a natural part of children's existence, we tend to take it for granted.

##### 3.1.1 Some Features of Play

Many experts on the behaviour of children have shared the results of their studies on the concept of play.

They all agree that children's play has the following features: **Describing Features of Play**

- play is basically self motivated (it is intrinsic)
- play is free from external constraints
- play is carried out as if it is real with the full consciousness of the play,
- play is dominated by the player
- play involves the active involvement of the player.

## **Self-Assessment Exercise I**

1. Define play
2. Outline the features which are common to children's play.

### **3.2 The Functions of Play**

As you can see from the above features, play is truly like work to children. Later on in the unit, you will be able to understand the children's developmental stages in relation to their play. Now let us explore the values and benefits that children enjoy through play.

#### **Play aids growth**

Through play children develop their bodies, energies and skills. They learn to co-ordinate hand and eye; their muscles and limbs are strengthened through gross physical activities such as running climbing etc.

#### **Play offers freedom of action and speech**

Children enjoy freedom to choose, their own activity. Because play is free from external limitations children are able to use their initiative. Where there is adequate space available, they are also free to explore their environment.

#### **Play provides an imaginary world a child can master**

Children use any material in the home, garden or school to create their imaginary world. Using old clothes and other forms of equipment they role-play various personalities and situation. This period of imaginative play is a vital part of their development and learning. Play in this way gives children a chance to digest experiences and come to terms with reality

#### **Play has element of adventure**

Children are naturally curious and have a very great desire to learn as they discover new things. Play can provide satisfaction to children's curiosity and adventurous nature.

Through play they learn new concepts and understand the world in which they live.

#### **Helps concentration**

Children's interests are further enhanced during play. Therefore learning through play helps to prolong the concentration time-span of children. This is a useful study skill for future academic activities.

#### **Play encourages language development**

There is no way a child will be engaged in a play activity that he/she will not have the need to communicate. Even when he/she is engaged in solo play, the child will still need to think, name objects, and share his/her experiences with others. Of so doing the child's vocabulary is increased and his ideas expanded to promote his/her language development.

### **Play is revitalizing**

Children are refreshed and revitalized after enjoying a time of satisfying session of play.

### **Play helps to make learning more permanent**

Children learn easily when their interest is aroused. One of the points describing play is that it is self-motivating and engrosses the full attention of the player. As a result a learning activity that is presented to children through play will capture their attention and make it easier for them to learn.

### **Play Promotes socialization**

Through play children are able to develop the skills essential for socialization such as co-operation, friendship, consistency, rendering help to others and so on.

### **Children have the right to Play**

Article 31, section 1 of the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) has been ratified (i.e. signed) by many national of the world, including Nigeria. This confirms that the knowledge about the importance of play has reached a high level world-wide.

## **Self-Assessment Exercise 2**

In this exercise, try to imagine that you are watching a video clip on children's behaviour.

**The Imaginary Scene:** A group of healthy and happy 3-5 year old children are in a fairly spacious school garden. There is no obvious adult presence, but there are various equipment such as frames, ladder, big cartons, boxes, old tires and a bench under a tree. There are some large picture cards of animals on the bench. There are also sand through, and a small vegetable patch.

I. In the given imaginary scene, what are the children doing? Try to put the points down in your notebook.

Compare your points with those on the last page of this unit.

Describe the functions of play under their main headings.

**Joke Box:** The red-head lizard made a successful high jump without being hurt. He looked around to see if there was someone to praise him. When there was none to praise or clap for him; he raised himself up, he nodded his head three times and said to himself: 'Well done! Well done!'

## **3.3 Different Types of Play and their Importance**

One educational philosopher, by name, R.F. Dearden, highlighted on the fact that there are many activities that can be referred to as play because they have the features of play. However, not all of them are play in the context of children's development. He summarized them into about six groups.

Let us now see how these will help us to know how to make children's learning more functional.

### 3.3.1 Types of Play

These are:

**Gross Physical Activities:** as in running, climbing, jumping, pushing, pulling, rolling, swinging, sliding, crawling, walking, dancing and most adults' sports and games. This type of play is basically an out-door play.

**Manipulative Activities:** as in moulding, blocks or bricks play, clay work play, tearing, squeezing, blowing, fixing, dismantling, building.

**Dramatization or Impersonation:** as in role-playing, imitating, representation (using toys or other objects to represent a personality, an animal or a place), fantacising.

**Rule-governed Activities:** as in some adult's games and sports; i.e. football, Ludo, Monopoly, Ayo, Scrabble, Marble balls. This type of play is sometimes called social play.

Verbal Catches and **Teasing:** as in riddles and jokes, slogans, jingles, stories, rhymes and songs.

**Childhood Tricks and Pranks:** as in surprises, unseeing naughtiness.

You will appreciate the significance of the different types of play when we look at the stages of play in the next segment of this unit. Then, you will be able to notice that, children's functional play also follow the human developmental patterns which you studied in previous units. We will be referring to the aspects of development, such as physical development, cognitive, emotional and social development. It will be very important for you to understand children functional play in that context. This is because you need to apply the knowledge in your teaching practice.

### Self-Assessment Exercise 3

Describe six types of play

### 3.3.2 Stages in Play Development

In your study on the development of the growing child, you will remember that the point was made that development is a step-by-step change in the child. When you carefully observe children, it is possible to see the changes in the way they talk, think and do things.

These kind of changes brought about by development, can also be seen in the children's play pattern. As their ability to interact with the environment, increase, so the pattern of their play changes. Let us see how this point is proved by one expert named Hurlock, E. B. (1981).

This expert believes certain play activities are common at particular stages for all children. He suggests that children's play activities can be grouped under four main headings.

### **The Baby Stage (0 -1 year old)**

He describes this stage as the *Exploratory Stage*. At this stage, babies play consists of looking at people and attempting to grab any object held in front of them. Thereafter, with gradual development of control of their hands and arms muscles they can grab, hold and even examine things within their reach. Free spontaneous play is typical of children between the ages of 3 months to about 2 years. Because the children depends more on their senses (that is: sight, listening, touch, taste, feeling) it is important to provide toys to stimulate their total development.

### **Toy Stage (1 -6 years)**

Children's toys play increase in the first year. By the time they are 3 years old their play has developed from merely exploratory to a more definite handling and use of toys. As they increased in intellectual development they see their toys as toys and use them so. From 3 -6 years their play begin to appear more creative in form. The increase of their experience and skill make them to use dramatization and impersonation more in their play. Through the development of their ability to imagine children use every equipment or objects available to dramatize and produce an extension to their play.

### **The Stage 6 -8 year (The school child)**

By the time children are in school, their experience in play has increased. They are more active and constructive in their activities. At this stage children are also interested in games, hobbies, sports and other more mature forms of play. This makes them more social in behaviour. The more reason why, most social development clubs for young children enroll them from age 6. This stage also marks the formal school age of many nations.

### **Daydream Stage (8- 10 year) Late Childhood**

As children approach puberty (Late childhood) they begin to lose interest in the play activities they formerly enjoyed. They begin to spend more time daydreaming. They become very open to new information, skills and techniques to answer many questions bothering them. They are at another transition in their lives. They need support and truthful understanding.

You will notice that the area of our concern only covers stages I -III. So, pay particular attention to them.

### **Self-Assessment Exercise 4**

Discuss the four stages of play

### **3.4 Learning through Play**

Up to this point you have been exposed to the functions and values of play. This is because in order to make children grow and develop well, parents, teachers and caregivers, must allow them to play and ask questions. However, you know as well as I do too, that the spontaneous, unstructured play of young children need to be structured to make learning more effective to them. Although we do say often that learning and play are the same to children. However, making play functionally relevant depends on adults.

### 3.4.1 The Play Way Method

Play is natural to children and involves their personal experience. You have read in the previous segments that children learn best by doing. More so, when their interest is aroused; you will find children paying attention and concentration for considerable longer periods.

The success of the play way method depends very much on the following condition

- Well planned activities both for indoors and outdoors
- A loving, understanding and very resourceful adult (parent, teacher or caregiver)
- An adequate supply of play materials and toys.
- Safe and secure space
- Long uninterrupted periods of time
- Daily routine

The babies need:

- Encouragement and approval
- Clean and safe play materials and toys
- The company of a grown-up to play with them-usually to spark their curiosity and encourage when needed love to be given the privilege to play alone.

### 3.4.2 The Role of the Adult

Your role in helping children to learn from their play includes the following:

- Provide the children with a safe, ordered, stimulating environment with adequate facilities, objects and materials for exploration which are appropriate for their age and experience
- Observe children and note the appropriate time to present any particular activity
- Act as a role model, children will imitate you.
- Encourage children
- Play with the children. Talk with them and encourage them to ask questions
- Observe the children's progress and prepare report.

### Self-Assessment Exercise 5

Discuss play as a means of learning

### 3.4.3 Selection of Toys and Play Materials

You have seen throughout this unit that children's developmental stages influence their understanding and the way they interact with materials and toys at play. As a result you should remember that merely providing toys is not what will make children's play functional for learning. There is need for careful selection based on the ages of the children, their developmental stage and the relevance to the learning activity. As a result I consider that you will find it useful if you are able to select the play materials and toys effectively.



## 4.0 Conclusion

Children learning depend on their maturation and it is important to be able to provide what they need at each stage. If we give them materials that are unsuited to their age and ability they become bored and frustrated. We can avoid frustrating them if we understand their behaviour and the things we can do to help them. In that way will be able to help them live a full healthy and useful life.

## 5.0 Summary

In this unit you have learned about "play", an important aspect of young children's behaviour. You should know that as children play it is possible to observe them and detect quite early the strength and weaknesses in their development for necessary interventions. In the next unit we shall look at the characteristics of Giftedness in young children.

## 6.0 Self-Assessment Exercise

1. Discuss the four stages of play.
2. Give examples of play materials and toys.
3. Discuss play as a means of learning.

## 7.0 Reference/Further Reading

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## Unit 3 The Characteristics of Giftedness in the Young Child

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### 1.0 Introduction

In Module two (2) of this course, all the six units there treated the various types of development in young children. In our discussion on cognitive (Intellectual) development you learnt that children attain intellectual development in stages and that some children attain some stages faster than others. You can briefly go through the unit on cognitive development again, especially the section on stages of intellectual development. In the last unit, here in this module 3, you were told that 'play' is another way of developing children. There we stressed that the process of play is more important than the end result (product), because through play, children learn a lot either directly or indirectly.

In all these processes of play and in development of intelligence or cognitive ability in children it is easy to observe that some children are exceptionally brighter than the others. This specific attribute of some children's-Giftedness which is of course, natural, is the focus of this unit. How do we identify such children, what do we mean by 'Giftedness' and how do we help them to develop this trait of Giftedness in them. It is believed this aspect of children's life should interest us in our discussion on child development in general.

### 2.0 Objectives

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- describe certain concepts like intelligence, genius and creativity
- restate government policy statements on giftedness
- identify giftedness easily in young children
- name the characteristic attributes of giftedness
- link giftedness to attributes like intelligence, genuity, and creativity
- appreciate the criteria for identifying gifted young children
- describe how the gifted young child form relationship
- assist the gifted child.

### 3.0 Main Content

#### 3.1 Some of the Concepts Related to Giftedness

There are some terms which we would not like you to mix up with giftedness, truly they are related to giftedness, and sometimes they are used when describing giftedness in children, some of these terms like cognitive ability you have come across when we were talking about Intellectual development. Cognitive ability has to do with thinking tendency. The other terms are intelligence, genuity (a Genius) and creativity).

### 3.1.1 Intelligence

If a person solves a particular problem more quickly than another person, we say the first person is more intelligent, thereby implying that the former person has something to a greater degree than the latter. It is this 'something' that is called intelligence. Intelligence is therefore a kind of mental or cognitive ability which is applied in problem solving. Intelligence is also referred to as the reasoning ability of individuals. These reasoning abilities are of many types, namely understanding relations (getting the relationship between two or more things), understanding of sequence or series, completing patterns on the basis of symmetry, and meaningful asymmetry permutations and combinations, drawing inferences, understanding logic, verbal ability etc.

Intelligence therefore, can be regarded as a combination of some psychological traits. If these traits could be measured with valid instruments, then intelligence can be calculated from the measurement. Also intelligence can be measured on its own with the use of appropriate instruments. Anyway, this does not concern us for now.

If intelligence is actually measured well, then we can categorize some people (or children) as more intelligent, some of average intelligence while others are less intelligent.

### 3.1.2 Genius

Genius implies the creation of something new, some major expansion of knowledge or of human sensitivity, something new, some kind of special achievement beyond expectation of a competition.

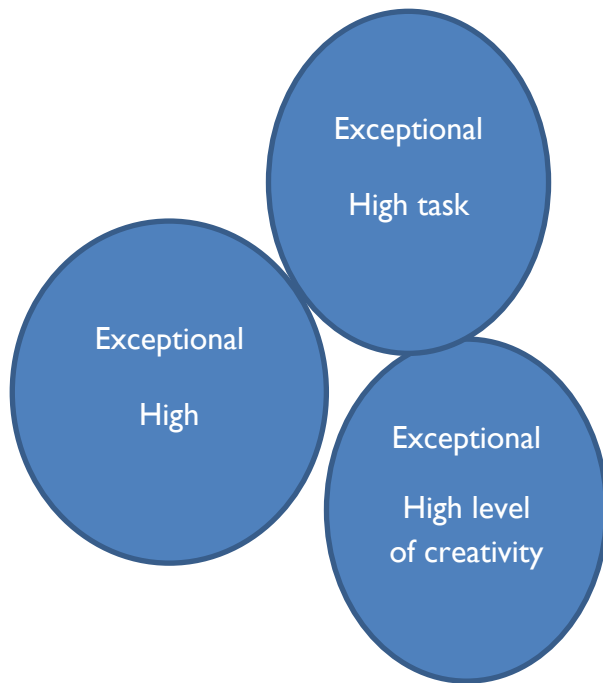
Like what is so exceptionally good, beyond expectation considering the normal condition. For example a primary 2 child who accidentally come across a primary 4 mathematical question and with little or no explanation is able to solve some of the problems that an average primary four will still have to think and think. The child can be called a genius.

### 3.1.1 Creativity

Creativity simply involves development of something new and unique. However, there have been many definitions given by experts in the area of psychology and education, Mackinnon, in his book, said

*Creativity is the ability to bring something new into existence, while for others it is not ability but the psychological processes by which new and valuable products are fashioned. For still others, creativity ranges all the way from the notion that creativity is simple problem solving to conceiving it as the full realization and experience of all in an individuals unique potentials.*

Creativity is indeed an issue with many faces according to another experts Renzalli. The diagram below shows the interdependence of three "clusters" of behaviour traits, as it is represented in a three-ring model. This means that it is the combination of high ability, high level of creativity and high task commitment that makes a child a creative child.



**Fig. 1: Three three-ring model of creativity**

### 3.1.3.1 Basic Characteristic Elements of Creativity

So as not to confuse creativity with some attributes, here are the features of creativity:

- Creativity is a process and not a product i.e. it is not what comes out but how much work and the steps taken to get it.
- The process is goal directed or meant for a purpose may be for personal benefit or for social group.
- It leads to the production of something new, different and therefore unique Creativity come from divergent thinking whereas conformity and everyday problems comes from convergent thinking
- The ability to create depends on the acquisition of accepted knowledge.

### 3.1.3.2 Characteristics of Creative Children

Many psychologists have agreed that a creative child shows the following characteristics:

- Over-reaction physically and/or mentally
- Annoying curiosity
- Forgetful and absent minded
- Good sense of humour
- Doesn't participate in class
- Won't join scouts (because their activities are too much of routine)
- boys among them read in room while their friends rough it out with sisters. Playing; creative girls too are also fond of staying in one corner reading or meditating.
- Enjoys nature and outdoors
- Mind wanders too much

- Friends think to be slightly unusual
- Sensitive
- Likes to work by himself
- Grows to an imaginative man
- Loves to read
- Daydreams, gets lost in thought
- Daydream at times watching others
- Feels left out of things
- Good only in science subjects or good only in arts and music.

Looking closely at the behaviours outlined, you will see that a creative child will likely not be popular in school since he'll like to work by himself, "doesn't participate in class", forgetful", absent-mindedness". Being unpopular in class may lead to their problems of adjustment in the school.

### **Self-Assessment Exercise I**

1. Mention 3 human traits that are related to Giftedness.
2. Briefly describe each of the traits.

### **National policy statement with Respect To Giftedness in Children**

Section 8, on special education sub-section 81 of the 1998 revised edition of the National Policy on Education states

*"There are also the specially gifted and talented children who are intellectually precious and find themselves insufficiently challenged by the programmes of the regular school.*

Section 84 (a) states that of education

*the Federal and States shall in collaboration with appropriate bodies, provide special programs for gifted children.*

The National policy emphasizes the need to identify the exceptional students, and an, example of such is the Gifted children. These gifted children can be identified right from the early childhood education. The policy also emphasizes that this set of children should have right to the type of relevant education.

The policy in part, admits that some children are gifted intellectually precious and they find themselves insufficiently challenged by the programme of the normal school. The children like this may take to stubbornness and a pathy. Government has already directed that all children including the gifted must be provided for, under the educational system.

The objective of the government is to provide opportunity for the exceptionally gifted children to develop at their own pace in the interest of the nation's economic and technological developments. Considering the way "exceptionally gifted" is stressed in the policy statement, it shows how important government is aware of the fact that some people are gifted and yet some are more gifted (exceptionally gifted).

Nigeria as a country is concerned with how she (as a country) can tap the potentials of the people especially the youth to produce most of the needs from raw materials by encouraging creativity in the youth that constitute a large proportion of the population. With this there is increased support for scientific and technical education. At the same time, there is the need to pay special attention to the children that show leading disability or the opposite that always perform far above the average performance.

To ensure that such children are not wasted away or later be counted as "wasted generation" therefore, we as teachers and adults in general, we need to give such children in our care "special attention". But before this, how do we identify a gifted child?

### **3.3 The Concept of Giftedness**

#### **3.3.1 Criteria for Identifying Giftedness in Children**

Giftedness in children can be identified by using the following criteria:

- He is superior to his age-mates in traits other than capacities that are purely physical; and physiological (normal) functioning of the body system). .
- He possesses the intellectual powers and qualities essential for success with advanced education and training in general or in the specialty.
- His superior developmental maturation is reasonably consistent from the early years of life to maturity.
- His unusual abilities may be general or specialized, his superior traits may be single or multiple. .
- The traits and abilities in which he shows superiority are those that predict unusual achievement or productivity in areas of high social value.

But before one can use these criteria to ascertain whether a child is gifted or not, the child must first be identified through his special type of behaviour, or what we call characteristics of gifted children.

#### **3.1.2 Characteristics of Gifted Children**

According to S. Kirck in his book "Educating Exceptional Children" he stated the following characteristics by which the gifted children may be identify

- They possess high intelligence quotient which is much higher than those of their mates. (Intelligent quotient is a measure of intelligence).
- They are often alert mentally, physically and psychologically and respond to situations quickly. In other words they are very smart at doing things.
- They often ask difficult or previously unthought - or crucial questions i.e. as pupils they usually ask such questions that the teacher might not have planned for, yet reasonable and meaningful questions.

They are generally highly creative and original in their ideas.

- Unlike the earlier view of gifted as being unable to adjust to life with others, they are friendless and unhappy children, no, gifted children or individuals are socially mature, get along well with peers and they show fewer behavioural problems.

- They read far ahead of others, learn easily and quickly and perform difficult mental tasks easily and they usually finish their studies earlier than the non-gifted children
- They reason logically and clearly, recognize relationship and comprehend faster than others.
- They are aware of many things in and outside their environment.
- They are good in many subject areas because they possess high cognitive abilities-above others in their group.

## Self-Assessment Exercise 2

1. What criteria will you use to determine whether a young child in your class is gifted?
2. What are the characteristic behaviour of gifted children?

## 3.2 Educational Provision for the Gifted Children

Just as we need to give special attention to the not-so-good or disabled children in a class, so also you need to pay special attention to a gifted child. If gifted children are not helped to exercise their genuity, power and brain on something worthwhile, they can become restless, stubborn or even unruly. They need to be challenged constantly else they will even look down on the teacher.

For gifted children, enrichment is obviously helpful particularly where primary schools are flexible enough to incorporate this in the daily activities.

Integration, i.e. teaching them along with non-gifted children, should be practiced with them. This is in line with the provision of the National Policy which states that Integration is the most realistic form of special education since gifted children are expected to live in the society along with others.

Interpretation will boost the morale of the gifted, It has been noted that the criteria on which separation had been previously based was not clear enough or not competent administrative setting, it is often ethnically based and may lead to violation of civic right of the child.

As Kirk had said in his book; Gifted children are children with high-level intellectual powers in productive and evaluative thinking. According to him they have the tendency to become future leaders, future problem -solvers, innovators (bring up new things), evaluators of culture, if they are provided with adequate educational experiences. The gifted child has the superior ability to deal with fact, relationships or ideas (cognitive skills), and reasoning abilities. These children, if well-developed can help in the economic and technological development of the country.

Integration of gifted children with non-gifted is being advocated as a means of providing a more stimulating environment for allemandes. It will also reduce costs. From the ethical points of view it is necessary to have them together; the gifted children will also serve as motivator to the non-gifted children. They only need to be given more exercises and activities to expend their energy on.

Integration of all categories of children. It is believed, will also help to remove monotony of method of teaching.

In the Nigerian context, some people think of the gifted children as being at a disadvantage. Actually if the gifted children are not helped to develop their special talents (gift) they become useless, and will truly be at a disadvantage. The Nigerian society needs to develop and utilize the talents of the gifted members of the society especially children.

Though there is that dilemma whether or not to create separate primary school or schools for the gifted like the secondary school or such children in Suleja, Niger State, established by the Federal Government. Some people believe that to single out some students for special treatment or training is to give advantage to some and create an elite intelligentsia i.e. special set of genius. Yet if ability is the major consideration, and not some other factors, like family position; we will really be developing and utilizing needed resources for technological growth of the country. The debate is still on.

One F. Iyayi in an article in the Daily Times wondered how a gifted children programme is elitist" He also wondered how gifted child could be identified in a village school where there are no facilities compared to a school attended by the children of elites. In addition, Span of

Holland, a founder of the European Council for Gifted children observes that the concept of talent (gift) should not only be by intelligence test alone but some other things like self-control.

Span of Holland concludes that "therefore special schools fail to achieve the desired effects as they deprived children of their natural social motivation. We know as well that gifted pupils benefit most from homogenous (same type) ability grouping. But in the process some pupils are labelled "better: " than others, then the tendency to succeed sets in all the children will now have more pressure and zeal to succeed, this plays a 'significant" role in society. Although there is lack of agreement on one strategy, we believe that individualized instruction combined with some joint classroom activities with other pupils may best serve both the very good and the not so good groups.

Towards successful and even implementation of integration, there is the urgent need to provide guidelines and ensure that appropriate curricular changes are completed.

Teachers will need to be very systematic for the changes required ensuring the successful integration. For example, teachers should be willing to modify their teaching practices to accommodate the requirement of these gifted children. The teachers should not show sign of not welcoming the additional burdens that such children may place on them, like having to read deeper to prepare for their kind of question and preparing extra learning activities and exercises for them.

### **Self-Assessment Exercise 3**

1. Do you think that gifted children should be put in separate school? Give reasons for your opinion
2. What are the advantages of integrating the gifted and the non-gifted in the same class?



## 4.0 Conclusion

A gifted child is a child who is different from other normal children. The child is exceptionally brilliant among his mates and shows some special qualities and characteristics.

The child therefore needs special teachers or teaching materials and special attention and materials to be used to help him develop the natural special endowment. If the child is not given special attention like more exercises and more challenging work he will not be able to operate adequately within the same environment that has been prepared for the "normal" child of his age. Note that a gifted child can be a girl or a boy.

## 5.0 Summary

In this unit, we have been talking about the characteristics of giftedness in young children. We started by clarifying certain terms like Intelligence and creativity which are used in describing giftedness in children, which may also be confused with giftedness. The criteria that can be used for identifying gifted children were considered, along with the characteristics of a gifted child. How a gifted child may be helped to develop is also highlighted.

In the following unit, we shall focus attention on school readiness, how a child can be prepared for school, and what the teachers need to do to promote school readiness in children.

## 6.0 Self-Assessment Exercise

1. Discuss giftedness in general
2. What criteria would you use to determine whether a young child in your class is gifted or not.
3. State three National policy statement concerning the education of gifted children.

## 7.0 References/Further Reading

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