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Module 1

ECE 412 Management of Early Childhood Education Module I

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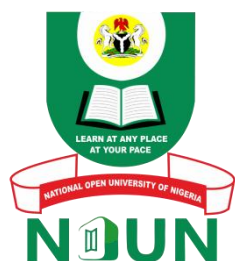
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Module I

Unit I Meaning and Definition of Early Childhood Education

1.0 Introduction

The early years of life are crucial and a growing child needs an enriched environment to develop academic skills through activities and direct instruction. Early childhood (education) provides a solid foundation for the holistic development of the child.

2.0 Objectives

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

- explain the meaning of early childhood education
- give an acceptable definition of early childhood education.

3.0 Main Content

3.1 Meaning of Early Childhood Education

The field of early childhood goes by various names in different countries as well as within individual countries where different stakeholders may use different terminologies. The early childhood refers to ages zero to five or six years. These years are very crucial for the growth and development of the child.

The terms attached to early childhood go beyond mere labels. They imply different purposes, pedagogical practices, forms of delivery as well as the varying social and economic status of the personnel involved.

3.1.1 Most Commonly Used Names for Early Childhood Education

- Early Childhood Education (ECE) is favoured by education authorities or others who are inclined to see early childhood from an education point of view. Learning is central to this tradition.
- Early Childhood Care and Education (ECE) is an expansion of ECE, with the care component added or it can be changed to early childhood education and care to keep the emphasis on education.
- There is Early Childhood Care (ECC) without the education component. In the developing countries, ECC tends to be associated with attention to the child's health, nutrition and hygiene, while in developed countries ECC is often understood as a social service for working mothers with young children.

Historically, ECC has also been associated with institutionalized social services for disadvantaged children whereas ECE has been considered a service devoted to early learning process.

Given the multifaceted nature of early childhood, the existence of several labels may be inevitable. The same term or name may be or can be interpreted in different social, cultural, and linguistic levels.

Despite the differences in name, the fundamentals are the same. These are:

- The ultimate concern of any childhood programme is the well-being and holistic development of the child.
- Regardless of the institutional setting, the programme should involve a developmentally-appropriate practice, which attends to health, nutrition, security and learning. In fact, as long as such a holistic approach is practised, the physical or institutional setting of the programme is of little importance.
- As children grow, they can move from one educational programme to another that may be named differently or located in different ministries.
- Provision of assessment methods and opportunities for promotion of active parental involvement in the child's early education programme.
- Early childhood programme staff develops relationships with families, which include providing appropriate information on community resources, social services, job training, and opportunities for parents to be involved in decisions about programme operations.

Self-Assessment Exercise I

1. Describe the term early childhood.
2. What are the most commonly used names for early childhood care?

3.2 Concept of Early Childhood Education

In the early years of the child, basic components of the home such as the parents, siblings, relatives, television and radio, physical environment of the home, various play materials and host of others are of paramount importance in the child's early education. Children experience life more holistically than any other age group.

Social, emotional cognitive language and physical lessons are not learned separately by the child in the early years. Adults are most helpful to young children when they interact in ways that indicate that the child is learning from the whole experience and not just part of that experience to which the adults give attention.

Adelodun (1992) posits that the mother especially, is the first educator of the child. The child learns through observation and imitation in most cases. These experiences are not organized but some parents are aware of the fact that the child needs to be engaged in order to enable the parents perform their own duties at home.

Early childhood education does not have to occur in the absence of the parent or primary caregiver. The term early childhood education is sometimes used to denote the education by someone other than their parent or primary caregiver.

According to National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), early childhood spans the human life from birth to age eight.

Maduewesi (1999) defines early childhood education or pre-school education as a semi-formal education arrangement usually outside the home whereby young children from about the age of three are exposed through play activities in a group setting to mental, social, and physical learning suited to their developmental age until mandatory age of government approved formal schooling.

In Nigeria, early childhood education programme is offered at Early Child Development (ECD) centres, day care centres, and play groups locally tagged *Jelesimi*, *Ota Okara*, *Ibviousukumehu* etc. in local dialects. They are usually for children aged zero to two and two to three years. The International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) regards it as pre-primary education or nursery school education and the normative age in principle is between three and five.

Early childhood education comprises the entire early childhood programmes including day care centres for children under three and kindergarten or nursery education for older children above three. Early childhood education or learning focus on children's learning through play.

Self-Assessment Exercise 2

Explain the term early childhood education and state the International Standard Classification of Education's (ISCED's) meaning of the term.

4.0 Conclusion

The unit above discusses the concept of early childhood and early childhood education. The terms commonly used for early childhood education were equally discussed.

5.0 Summary

In this unit above, you have learnt about:

- early childhood
- early childhood education

6.0 Self-Assessment Exercise

Analyze the fundamentals of early childhood education programme.

7.0 References/Further Reading

Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/early> Childhood Education.

UNESCO Policy Briefs on Early Childhood. www.unesco.org/education/pdf

Unit 2 Historical Development of Early Childhood and Primary Education in Nigeria

1.0 Introduction

History is always associated with acquisition of facts concerning an event or occasion. Exposing students to the development and history of education will equip them with adequate knowledge on the transition and transformation in education of young children. Education in Nigeria today has been the result of a gradual process which dated back to the coming of Europeans. The European missionaries started formal education in Nigeria because evangelization was their primary objective. They needed to train people to read and write in order to help them to interpret the Bible and preach the gospel.

2.0 Objectives

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

- narrate the historical development of early childhood education
- discuss the evolution of primary education in Nigeria.

3.0 Main Content

3.1 Development of Early Childhood or Pre-Primary Education in Nigeria

What could be referred to as nursery education was that which was organized for the children of early missionaries and British colonial masters who were married and had children in Nigeria. But as Nigerians were educated and took different jobs with the missions and colonial government, they were acculturated to the life of their employers. This was evident in their mode of dressing, style of living, eating, career etc.

More importantly, they tried to send their own infants to early schools like their masters. Many of such schools were concentrated in towns and cities where the colonial masters or missionaries resided. Many of such schools were later established by wealthy Nigerians and missions (Fafunwa, 1974; Taiwo, 1980; Adedun, 1992). Having one's child in such schools was an evidence of literacy or wealth and therefore a privilege. Children of poor parents could not go to school no matter their age. Such children served as housemaids to the enlightened and wealthy parents.

In addition, they took care of the house and infants who had not started attending nursery schools when their mothers left for work. In some homes where there were no housemaids, women resorted to the use of nannies or grandmothers or mothers-in-law who helped in like manner.

Significantly, the introduction of the University Free Primary Education boosted the lives of the poor children and created more problems for the working mothers or rather, the wealthy parents who relied so much on housemaids. The housemaids were no more

available. At the same time, most aged women preferred better paid jobs than being nannies. So, working mothers had to think of a place to keep their infants till the close of work. This was the rationale for the rapid growth of nursery schools in Nigerian society.

This aside, it is interesting and pertinent to note that most young children today have exhausted the resources of the modern home long before they are six and some while they are only two. Their bursting curiosities, growing powers, increasing creative imaginations find less and less challenge in both physical and social environment.

Gans, Steder and Almy (1982) describe the modern middle-class home as one in which most food comes already prepared, clothing is seldom made and laundry is either sent out or done automatically. They further explain that such a home offers youngsters little opportunity for the manipulation and exploration that appear to be essential for their optimum development. Thus, the nursery school can, under many circumstances, supplement the home that cannot provide an environment completely appropriate to the young child.

Having realized all the roles of such an institution in the life of a child and in socio-economic development of a nation like ours, most parents now strive towards spending their hard-earned money on their children to acquire better foundation which subsequent levels of education will build upon. The government encourages the establishment of such schools when the minimum requirements for setting up of such schools in Nigeria are met. The control of pre-primary education lies in the hand of state governments. Thus, every state has its specific guidelines for establishing nursery schools.

3.2 Evolution of Primary Education in Nigeria

In 1842, formal education was introduced into Nigeria by the Methodist Missionary Society, Church Missionary Society, Roman Catholic Mission and the Baptist Mission. Prior to this time, the entity known as Nigeria existed in small units with an indigenous system of education called traditional education.

The aim of the missionary education was to evangelize and trade through the reading and teaching of the Bible. Hence, education was used as an instrument of converting people to Christianity and to train them for white-collar jobs (Boyd, 1960). The Church undertook the business of education not because it regarded education as good in itself but because it felt it could no longer do its own work properly without giving its adherents especially its clergy, as much of the formal learning as was required for the study of the sacred writings and for the effective performance of its religious duties.

In September 1842, the first primary school was established at Badagry by the Methodist Missionary Society. The establishment of the first primary school marked the existence of formal primary education in Nigeria. At the initial stage, the curriculum of missionary primary school consisted of singing, catechism, reading, writing, English language, arithmetic, later geography and culture were introduced in order to produce the work force needed by the British administration. The colonial government was not really interested in education and the smooth running of the primary education was left in the hands of the various missions until 1882.

By 1882, the first educational ordinance was promulgated. The aims of the ordinance were:

- to set a standard for education
- to provide grant-in-aid to schools
- provision of Board of Education to supervise the mission schools.

By 1861, the colonial government of British administration had been firmly established in Lagos. Missionary activities and the establishment of schools were more rampant in the Southern part of Nigeria than in the Northern part because:

- The North had a formal system of Qu'ranic education.
- Peasant farmers or cattle rearers in the North relied on their children's labour to survive.
- British political officers, chiefs and emirs opposed mission educational endeavours.
- There were no adequate facilities e.g. equipment and teachers, to enable them extend their educational activities to the Northern part of the country.

The above points also adversely affected the expansion and development of primary education in Nigeria.

Throughout the nineteenth century, government's interest in education was mainly on supervision and provision of grants to assist schools. Around 1899 and 1900, government became more interested in education by establishing the first government school in Lagos. In 1901, the first government elementary school was opened in Benin (Ukeje, 1978). By 1912, the missionaries and government had become partners in educational development.

There was slow pace in the development of primary education in the country from 1912 to 1955. But by 1951 Nigeria was divided into three regions based on the revision of Richard Constitution for political administration. This made education the responsibility of regional governments.

The regions used the opportunity to enact education laws that served as the bedrock of their educational growth. The period between 1950 and 1960 was characterised by self-effort and actual conscientization on the part of the regional governments to bridge the gap between their political advancement and their educational backwardness. This period marked a significant breakthrough in the development of primary education in Nigeria. This was done by the:

- Regional government of West and East embarking on the Universal Primary Education (UPE) scheme.
- Affected regions earmarking financial backing of about 30 per cent or more of their annual budget on primary education.
- Abolition of fees.
- Increase in enrolment rate in primary schools.
- Training of more teachers.

The UPE in the Western and Eastern regions did not achieve much of a success. However, there were noticeable progresses in primary education in these regions. In the Northern region there was controlled expansion in primary education.

By October 1960, the educational pattern and development in Nigeria was characterised by partnership between government and voluntary agencies. Educational gap between the

North and South was widening and the inadequacy of the education provided both in quantity and quality was growing worse, while regional factors became quite noticeable (Aghenta, 1984).

Before independence, the federal government of Nigeria had set up the Ashby Commission to plan education for a post-independence Nigeria. Though the Commission's terms of reference excluded primary education, the Commission observed that "the primary schools already have places to supply the recruits the country will need in the late 1960s and early 1970s."

The reports of the Ashby Commission and the efficiency of Universal Primary Education in the South led to the establishment of the Old-Man Commission in 1961 by the North. The Commission came out with the following recommendations:

- Involvement of Local Education Authorities (LEA's) and Local Education Committees (LEC's) in the administration and control of schools.
- The establishment of Local Education Authorities. The government accepted these recommendations with moderations. The government on the basis of these recommendations accepted and modified its primary education.

The period, 1961-1975, witnessed reexamination of the existing primary school system and the operation of Universal Primary Education in Nigeria in order to ensure the proper implementation of the scheme. The re-examination exercise revealed that the North had quality primary education without implementing the Universal Primary Education schemes while the East and West regions achieved quantity in primary education through their operation of Universal Primary Education.

By the year 1965, Local Schools Boards were set up in the East working in conjunction with the local government councils. In 1966, the country experienced a civil war, which revealed the inadequacies and imbalances in the education system. By 1969, the military government organized the first National Curriculum Conference in the country, with the main aim of providing uniform and quality education for all.

In 1973, a national seminar was organised by the federal government to review and modify the recommendations of the 1969 national curriculum conference. The national seminar adopted the operation of the 6-3-3-4 system for Nigerians which served as the basis of the National Policy on Education (1977).

By 1976 the Universal Primary Education scheme was launched nationwide by General Yakubu Gowon. The scheme was launched during the oil boom period and was aimed at reducing the educational imbalances in the country. The country witnessed the creation of states during the civil war and this affected the management of primary education.

For instance, in the northern states, some of the states adopted the School Board System. The southern states operated bureaucratic centralization. For example, the ministry of education controlled schools while the Central and Local Schools Boards and Divisional or Local School Boards assisted in administering primary schools.

By 1977, the National Policy on Education was launched by the federal government of Nigeria as a way of clarifying the philosophy and objectives of education. In section 12, page 49, of the National Policy on Education, government specifies how primary education would

be financed. It reads “government’s ultimate objective is to make education free at all levels. The financing of education is a joint responsibility of the Federal, State and Local Governments.” Meanwhile, government and local communities will continue to share responsibility for financing education. “The traditional sources of revenue for educational establishments, including taxes, school fees, education levies or rates and sometimes donation will continue, but fees will no longer apply in the case of primary education. However, participation at local level for specific projects will be encouraged.”

In October 1979, there was a change in the leadership of the country; the military handed over power to a democratically elected government of Alhaji Shehu Shagari. The elected government was not really committed to the implementation of the Universal Primary Education and this affected the growth of primary schools in Nigeria. The period between 1979 and 1983 witnessed a great set-back in the development of primary education in Nigeria under the civilian rule as a result of the following:

- The 1979 Constitution placed the management and administration of primary education in the hands of local governments.
- Austerity measures were caused by the world economic recession.
- Lack of qualified personnel
- Political factor – The money voted for primary education depended on the whims and caprices of the political party in power in the local government areas as well as the relationship and type of officials in the locality.

There was unstable government in the country between the period of 31st December 1983 to 1985 and this greatly affected the development of primary education. During this period, the administration and management of primary schools was not uniform because various states came out with their own policies of administering, financing and controlling education. For example, in some states, fees were introduced in primary schools e.g. Oyo, Ondo and Bendel, now Oyo, Osun, Ondo, Ekiti, Edo and Delta States while in the northern states there was nothing of such.

In the year 1984, the Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Technology provided a uniform curriculum for all primary schools based on subjects. The National Primary Education Commission was established on 31st August, 1988. Between 1989 and 1990, the commission revised the subject curriculum and produced curriculum modules; each module consisted of all subjects and educational experiences for specified classes.

In the area of finance, according to the National Policy on Education (1977) “Education in Nigeria is no more a private enterprise, but a huge venture that has witnessed a progressive evolution of government’s complete and dynamic intervention and active participation”. Federal government of Nigeria is spending huge amount of money on education, particularly primary education.

In 1991 the federal government transferred the management of primary schools to the local government of each state of the Federation because of the following reasons:

- To ensure sound primary education.
- To make adequate provision for proper monitoring and supervision.
- Prompt payment of teachers’ salaries.
- To ensure that primary schools are closer to the people.

By 1992, the federal government has made it compulsory for all states of the federation to use mother tongue as medium of instruction. Between 1990 and 1995, there was a change in the educational policy. The change was from 6-5-4 to 6-3-3-4 system of education. This change did not affect primary schools.

The latest policy on primary education is the Universal Basic Education (UBE) launched in 1999 by the federal government by which primary and junior secondary education would be free to all children.

The goals of UBE, according to its blueprint are to:

- Universalize access to basic education
- Engender conducive learning environment
- Eradicate illiteracy in Nigeria within the shortest possible time.

Other objectives include:

- Development in the entire citizens, of a strong consciousness for education and a strong commitment to its vigorous promotion.
- Provision of free, compulsory Universal Basic Education for every Nigerian child of school going age.
- Catering for dropouts and out of school children and adolescents through various forms of education.
- Ensuring the acquisition of the appropriate level of literacy, numeracy, manipulative and life skills needed for laying the foundation for life-long learning.

In pursuance of the above objectives, the blueprint stated the following action plan:

- Additional number of pupils to be accommodated for UBE primary one class will be in the region of 1.12 million at the rate of 40 pupils per class.
- Teacher training in primary and junior secondary schools should be undertaken by the federal government.
- In the area of teacher recruitment and remuneration, the funding arrangements are:
 1. Primary schools – Local councils
 2. Junior secondary school – federal and states governments.

For the provision of infrastructural facilities, the cost is to be shared thus:

1. Primary schools – Federal government 75 per cent and state government 25 per cent
2. Junior secondary schools – federal government 25 per cent and state government 75 per cent.

Instructional and learning materials:

1. Primary schools – Federal government 100 per cent
2. Junior secondary schools – federal government 50 per cent and state government 50 per cent.

To achieve the above objectives, the government is adopting a wholistic approach to ensure success in the Universal Basic Education scheme and successfully laying a solid foundation for tomorrow's leaders.

Self-Assessment Exercise

What are the goals and objectives of UBE in Nigeria?

4.0 Conclusion

The unit above discusses the historical development of early childhood or pre-primary education as well as evolution of primary education in Nigeria.

5.0 Summary

In the unit above, you have learnt about the evolutionary trends of both pre-and primary education in Nigeria.

6.0 Self-Assessment Exercise

Highlight and discuss the factors that aided pre-primary education in Nigeria.

7.0 Reference/Further Reading

Quadri, K. (2001). *Introduction to Primary Education Studies*. Oyo: Tobistic Ventures.

Unit 3 Importance of Early Childhood Education

1.0 Introduction

The early childhood years represent a critical period for cognitive, social, and emotional development. It is during these years that children develop readiness for school and life.

2.0 Objective

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

- discuss the importance of early childhood education.

3.0 Main Content

3.1 Benefits of Early Childhood Education

Early childhood education is important because if the needs of children are not met in the early years of life it can lead to behavioural problems and various physical or mental disabilities in later life.

- Childhood education being holistic focuses on the intellectual, social, emotional, and physical development of children which is of utmost importance for the sound growth of children.
- Early childhood education encourages aesthetic appreciation. It also encourages independence and creativity by providing the child with sufficient opportunities for self-expression.
- Educating children in the early years will help them cope with the sudden step up on the concepts they will have to learn when they begin school formally and it gives them a head start over other children. It will help them to adapt and cope with new situation much more than their peers who did not undergo early education.

The basic building blocks for language, learning, and literacy are formed during early childhood education period before children get to primary school.

Socializing with their peers will further help them with language development and behavioural norms of social interaction, which will make them more confident and outgoing when they are older. Early childhood activities like reading, painting, outdoor activities and a lot of free play help in developing the eye hand coordination, and motor development, thus fulfilling the needs of physical development.

“Child is the father of the man”. Simply put, this is the significance of the early childhood days. Let us examine the scientific and psychological basis for this aphorism.

The seeds of a man’s character and personality are laid during the childhood stage. We are used to thinking of the child as a miniature adult’. But that is not true. In fact, it is the adult who is the fully developed version of what he was when he was a child. Every adult owes his character and personality to his early childhood days.

The importance and significance of the early childhood days can never be over emphasised. There are striking continuities in personality development from early childhood to adulthood. The early childhood learning and education cannot be reversed. The best that the adult can do would be to further build on the character and personality traits that he has acquired during his childhood, by acquiring the right skills and knowledge. But he cannot change those basic traits.

Self-Assessment Exercise

How does early childhood affect adulthood?

3.2 Scientific Proposition of Early Childhood Education

Let us examine what science has to say about those early childhood days. This will help us understand why those years are so significant, so critical and so paramount in a person's life.

There is evidence from neuroscience to endorse the significance of the early childhood phase. Neuroscience teaches that when a child is born, his brain is a mass of tissues. But based on the stimulus that he gets from his environment, certain connections (neural pathways) get formed; certain connections do not get formed. The connections that get formed during early childhood (specifically the first three years) will remain throughout life. These form his recurring patterns of thoughts, feelings and behaviour. It also says that if a connection is not formed during the first three years, then it will be almost impossible to acquire it at a later stage.

For example, if a child is in an environment where parties are the order of the day, then the child is likely to grow up to be an extroverted adult. However, if during his early childhood phase, the child has not formed the neural pathway of extroversion, then it will become very difficult to acquire it when he grows up to be an adult. This clearly establishes how much the adult's character and patterns of thought, feelings and behaviour are decided during the early childhood stage.

3.3 Psychological Proposition of Early Childhood Education

Psychology and the study of the subconscious teach us that when a child is born it has some instincts and is a psychic being. It goes through some sensitive periods in its early development during which it absorbs wisdom from the environment. No one can explain how. It has only been observed that it does happen.

Moreover, psychology has shown how certain adult disorders and patterns of behaviour are rooted in early childhood experiences. Therapies such as regression have proved this. The cure for such disorders for the adult is also dependent on regressing back to the childhood phase and treating the source of the disorder.

There are quite a few personality researches that have been done to investigate this question. Longitudinal research is the only way such personality continuums can be meticulously tested. They are hard to conduct but they are the only guaranteed way of checking if this childhood to adulthood continuum exists at all. Such longitudinal researches have also proved the same thing. What the child acquires during the early childhood stage is enduring and recurring throughout his life.

So there we have it, childhood lays the foundation for adulthood. The seeds are sown during childhood. The adult only harvests what has been sown. It is very important to sow the right seeds during the early childhood stage. This can be done through early childhood education.

4.0 Conclusion

In this unit we have explored the importance of early childhood education, particular attention was given to scientific and psychological proposition of the benefits of early childhood education.

5.0 Summary

In the unit above, you have learnt that early childhood education is pertinent in overall development of the growing child.

6.0 Self-Assessment Exercise

Identify the importance of early childhood education.

7.0 References/Further Reading

Akinbote, R.O., Oduolowu, E.A. & Lawal, B.O. (2001). *Pre -Primary and Primary Education in Nigeria*. Ibadan: Stirling-Horden Publishers.

Doodles, P. (2008). *The Importance of Early Childhood Education*. Andover, USA: Helium Inc.

Unit 4 Types of Early Childhood Education Programmes

1.0 Introduction

Early childhood education programmes come in many forms depending on the belief of the educator or parent. Early childhood programme often accepts children between the ages of zero to six years depending on the country's educational policy.

2.0 Objectives

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

- identify various types or forms of early childhood education
- state the various principles of early childhood education programme
- discuss the purpose of primary education
- list the needs of school children.

3.0 Main Content

3.1 Various Forms of Early Childhood Education

Early childhood education services are provided using a variety of service delivery models that can be grouped into the following six broad categories.

Centre-based-care

- This comprises services aimed primarily at 0-5 year olds provided in a centre. It must be licensed by the Ministry of Health whatever ages being served by the programme. The license must indicate state approval to serve those typically referred to. These are crèche, pre-schools, or nursery schools and play groups.
- Educational programmes at these centres are operated by private individuals and groups, religious organizations and some public tertiary institutions.
- Educational, care and recreational programmes are provided based on the developmental needs, interests and experience of each child.
- Centres typically operate for at least eight hours per day on normal working days, for a minimum of 48 weeks per year.
- A mixture of qualified and unqualified teachers and other staffs are usually employed.

Home-based care or family day care

- This is the type of care provided by a close relative such as child's grandparent, aunt, or uncle either in the home of the relative or that of the child.
- The state does not regulate this type of home care.

Occasional care

- Comprises services usually provided at a centre on an hourly or sessional basis for short period or at irregular intervals, for parents who need time to attend to appointments, take care of personal matters, undertake casual and part time employment, study or have temporary respite from full time parenting.
- Centres providing these services usually employ a mix of qualified and other staff.

Pre-school or nursery schools

- This Consists of services provided by qualified teachers on a sessional basis in designated preschools. Pre-school programmes or curricular may also be provided in the centre-based day care centres and other setting. These services are primarily aimed at children in the year before they commence full time schooling.
- The nursery school in Nigeria often accepts children between the ages of 3-6 and prepares the child for entry into primary school.

Outside school hours-care

Comprises services provided for school aged children (primarily 5-12 year olds) outside school hours during term and vacation. Care may be provided on free days such as midterm or when school finishes early.

Other services

Comprise of government-funded services to support children with additional special needs or in particular situation.

3.2 Principles Underlying the Guidelines for Early Childhood Education Programmes

The principles underlying the development of early childhood programmes are as follows:

- The basic elements in early childhood programmes are the same, regardless of their location, funding source and or purpose.
- Early childhood education programmes are designed to meet the needs of children and families within their community as well as reflect the strength of the staff.
- Developing and maintaining quality early childhood education programmes is a collaborative effort requiring many partners and stakeholders, including early childhood professionals, administrative staff from public and private establishments, representatives from institutions of higher education medical, mental health, nutrition, human services, and child care organizations.
- Early childhood education programme improvement is most effective and long-lasting when staff voluntarily engages in systematic process of self-appraisal and identifies changes that are needed in order to bring about and maintain a high level of quality.
- All staff that implement quality early childhood education programmes will be recognised for their hard work, commitment and achievement.
- Family and early literacy are integral components of quality early education programmes.

Self-Assessment Exercise I

Describe three or four forms of early childhood education that you know.

3.3 Primary Education

Primary education is the first stage of compulsory education. It is preceded by pre-school or nursery education and is followed by secondary education. Primary education is the most popular level of education in Nigeria and other parts of the world. This is because it is available everywhere in both developed and developing countries as well as in urban and rural areas.

In most countries, it is compulsory for children to receive primary education, though in many, it is the right of parents to provide it. Notably, the word “primary” means “first”, it could also be referred to as the “originator”. But can one really say that primary education is the first level of education? No, because we still have nursery or pre-primary education.

Primary education is the first formal level of education where government has direct control and interest especially with respect to the development of curriculum, recruitment and payment of teachers’ salaries, enrolment of pupils, provision of facilities, equipment, among other things.

You should recall that government does not have direct interest or control over the pre-primary school establishment. Different words such as elementary, basic, fundamental and universal education have been used in different places and times to mean primary education. Thus, as a result of this, primary education will be generally described as the education given in an institution to children between the ages of 6 and 11 plus.

The duration of primary education varies from country to country. Nwagwu (1981) points out that in some countries it is four years some five, some six, some seven and some eight depending on their system of education.

In Nigeria, primary education lasts for six years; but in countries like Ghana and Kenya primary education lasts for eight years. Also the entry age into primary school varies from country to country, but it is generally accepted that children should begin primary education between the ages of five and seven years.

Whatever the disparity in the duration of primary school in different countries, there are usually some physiological, psychological as well as sociological reasons for fixing either the entry age or duration. It is thus believed that children at six years of age will have developed physiologically and psychologically to be less dependent on their parents and more able to take care of themselves. Their brain now allows for higher learning and copes adequately with the rigour of school life. The muscles and other systems are well developed to perform the actions that are essential for life and effective interaction with their environment. Not only these, they have acquired enough language skills for the organised school learning and other immediate needs and interests.

Primary education is provided in schools where the child will stay steadily advancing classes until they complete it and move on to high school/secondary schools. Children are usually placed in classes with one teacher who will be primarily responsible for their education and welfare for that year. This teacher may be assisted to varying degrees by specialist teachers

in certain areas. The continuity with a single teacher and opportunity to build a close relationship with the class is a notable feature of the primary education system.

3.4 Purpose of Primary Education

The primary school is a place where the child gains the fundamental knowledge, skills, thoughts, feelings, and actions which are considered necessary for all citizens regardless of social status, sex, and ability.

An adequately planned and well-executed primary education programme will eradicate illiteracy and ignorance in the society. This in turn will make it easier for the people to be governed, as a literate society is often relatively easier to govern than an illiterate society.

An effective primary education will not only awaken the intellectual powers of the products but also their social and economic attitude. After primary education, it is expected that an individual would be able to read doctors' prescriptions as well as instructions on perishable items with particular reference to dosage expiry date, other information which could be harmful or beneficial on the products.

We are all aware of the terrible but preventable damage done by quack doctors in the society as a result of illiteracy and ignorance.

A well-structured primary education programme can also provide necessary supporting staff for various qualified personnel and professionals in every sector of the society. Primary education produces the unskilled workers services that are needed in every organisation in the society. Such as gardeners, cleaners, messengers, drivers. In essence, a good primary education will enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of every category of unskilled labour which constitute the bulk of the labour force in any society. That is why primary education should be made accessible to all citizens irrespective of their home background or special need.

The promotion of good physical and mental health is also another purpose of the primary school. It is expected that the primary school leavers should have training in the fundamental habits of exercise, cleanliness, eating and sleeping.

3.5 Needs of Primary School Children

Before a child can grow well and learn effectively in the school, certain needs are to be met. These needs are in the following order.

Personal Needs: The child needs love, security, attention, food, good health, recognition, motivation in terms of encouragement and praise.

Educational Needs: The child needs various educational materials suitable for manipulation, active interaction and participation within educational environment, sense of belonging, and adequate learning assistance.

Vocational Needs: The teacher needs to emphasize and explain the role of each vocation carefully to allow the child develop interest in a particular vocation as subjects such as agricultural science, elementary science, home economics/domestic science, social studies, should be handled with care by experienced teachers.

These needs if adequately met, contribute effectively to the all round development of the child. Therefore, the needs require the teachers' tutelage, identification and supervision.

Self-Assessment Exercise 2

1. What are the purposes for primary education?
2. Identify the needs of a school child.

4.0 Conclusion

This unit highlights the types of early childhood education and the principles underlying the guidelines for the establishment of early childhood programmes.

The concept of primary education and the needs of school children were also discussed.

5.0 Summary

In this unit, you have learnt:

- the various forms of early childhood education programme
- the principles underlying the guidelines for early childhood education programmes
- the concept and importance of primary education
- the needs of a school child.

6.0 Self-Assessment Exercise

Identify the general principles that underline childhood education.

7.0 References/Further Reading

Arizona Early Childhood Consortium. www.ade.state.az.us.

Akinbote, O., Oduolowu, E. & Lawal, B. (2001). *Pre-Primary and Primary Education in Nigeria: A Basic Text*. Ibadan: Stirling-Hordin Publishers (Nigeria) Limited.

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Unit 5 Child Indices

1.0 Introduction

Children change visibly and behaviourally from birth through childhood to the onset of young adulthood. A considerable amount of changes/events happen as children pass from babyhood into middle childhood. Some of the striking events or those that are judged to be important are called milestones development. If adults understand a little about why children behave as they do, they will be able to respond to them more freely. There is need for us as teachers to know about the growth and development so as to understand children's behaviour much better. An attempt to watch out for these milestones brought about child assessment/child study.

- Word study
- Indices
- Assessment
- Milestones
- Development
- Child study

Indices: A standard by which the level of something can be judged.

Assessment: The ongoing process of gathering, analyzing, and reflecting on evidence to make informed judgments.

Milestones: Important events in the development of something

Development: The process of gradually becoming bigger, better, stronger or more advanced.

Child Study: The process of observing the children in order to have a good knowledge about their needs, interest and problems.

Developmental Assessment: A process which allows one to understand a child's competencies and to design learning environments which will help a child to grow to his/her developmental potential.

2.0 Objectives

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

- define child assessment
- state the purpose of child assessment
- list the methods of child assessment
- list developmental milestones in children.

3.0 Main Content

3.1 Child Assessment

Child assessment as an early education programme is the process of observing, recording and otherwise documenting the work children do and how they do it.

This information is used as a basis for a variety of educational decisions that affect the child, including planning for groups, individual children and communicating with families.

Appropriate assessment methods are essential if programmes are to provide curriculum and experiences that are age appropriate, developmentally appropriate, and culturally sensitive.

Child assessment addresses all areas of development and learning – physical, social, emotional, linguistic, creative, and cognitive and will include a variety of methods and processes.

3.2 Purpose of Child Assessment

Children's growth in all developmental spheres should be routinely assessed. Appropriate assessment of children forms the basis for programme planning and implementation, communicating with parents, and identifying children with special needs. Assessment information is used to plan and revise curriculum and goals for the class and for an individual child. Information about each child's growth and development is systematically collected and recorded throughout the programme cycle.

Assessment of the child will provide important indices of his/her overall physical health, and information on access to basic health care and also increase awareness on basic safety, fitness and health care needs of the child.

3.3 Assessment Methods

Developmentally appropriate assessment is an on-going process. Useful information about the child may be gathered at any developmental stage by using either of these approaches.

The teacher decides on which type of method to be used. Such methods include:

- Interview
- Observations
- Anecdotal note
- Rating scales/checklist parent information/home visits
- Cumulative records
- Appropriate standardized tools.

Interview: It can be structured or unstructured. Parents are asked questions about child rearing practices, the nature and extent of interaction with their child, discipline method and the amount of time spent with the child.

Observation: Observation is a very useful tool in assessing the child especially his/her affective behaviour because most indices of this behaviour cannot be assessed by other

means. Teachers' observation must be unbiased. It may be naturalistic or under controlled conditions.

Home visit: The child's behaviour at home or his relationship with parents can also be assessed by visiting the home. It is another naturalistic method which may be structured or unstructured.

Anecdotal records: Anecdotal records are useful tools in assessing the child. Anecdotes are informal records kept by the teacher or other agencies on the learner. A good anecdote gives complete information on an event, the date, and situation. It also shows the age, sex, neighbourhood, origin, health status and action of the child. It is important that the events should be recorded factually without any prejudice and bias.

Rating scale/checklist: This refers to a list of descriptive words or phrases against which the teacher can check and rate the child's behaviour, ability and progress. The child can be rated on characteristics such as honesty, fairness, obedience, attentiveness and so on.

Cumulative records: Keeping records of the child's activities progressively makes reports more accurate than other approaches. Cumulative records show the trend and growth pattern of the child. Cumulative record consists of the following information.

- Full name of the child
- Date and place of birth
- Sex
- Name, address and occupation of parents or guardian
- Medical information such as hospital records, physical abilities or abnormalities, emotional and social adjustment
- Personality trait of the child
- Special aptitude demonstrated by the child.

Appropriate standardized tools

These are tools that have been determined by the programme to be valid and reliable for the background characteristics of the child/children to be tested. They provide developmental information specific to the area of concern and measure what the test is intended to measure. Some assessment instruments are copyrighted and require specific levels of training to administer.

The standardized measure may provide a more complete index of children's physical health and motor skill development.

An example of this is Vineland Adaptive Behaviour Scale (VABS) that measures four specific domain and eleven 'sub domains'.

- Communication (receptive, expressive and written)
- Daily living skills (personal, domestic, and community).
- Socialization (interpersonal relationships, play and leisure time and coping skills)
- Motor skills (gross and fine skills).

Self-Assessment Exercise I

1. What do you understand by child indices?
2. Describe three or four methods of obtaining valid information about a child.

3.4 Developmental Milestones in the Child

During the initial years of life, children experience unparalleled growth and development.

Development milestones are the specific physical and mental abilities such as walking and understanding language.

Milestones are the major focus of child developmental stages in their life. An example of this would be eye hand coordination, which includes a child's increasing ability to manipulate objects in a coordinated manner. Increased knowledge of age specific milestones allows parents and other caring adults to keep track of appropriate development of the child.

The early childhood stage (2-6 years) of development is fun and exciting for both the child and the parent. During this time, a child goes through many physical, cognitive and social changes.

Physical Development

- Growth rate slows down: the average child in this stage grows 2 1/2 inches in height and 5-7 pounds per year.
- Body fat declines during preschool years.
- Boys have more muscle while girls have more fat.
- Gross and fine motor skills progress rapidly. Gross motor skills include running, skipping and jumping. Fine motor skills include turning pages of a book and learning to write and draw.
- The most important physical development during early childhood is the brain and nervous system growth.
- The average preschool child requires 1700 calories per day. Well balanced meals are important in this stage because their diet affects skeletal growth, body shape and susceptibility to disease.

Cognitive Development

- From 2-7 years of age, children form stable concepts and mental reasoning begins to develop.
- From 2-4 years, children develop symbolic reasoning (the ability to picture an object that is not present).
- Egocentrism starts out strong in early childhood, but weakens.
- Magical beliefs are constructed.
- From 4-7 years of age, the child develops intuitive thought (the use of primitive reasoning skills and wondering "why").
- Starting school is a major landmark for children of this age range.

Social Development

As children seek greater autonomy, temper tantrums sometimes appear, though often subside with age. Discipline and style of parenting is an important developmental influence.

The child develops a sense of self around the end of the second year.

- Initiative appears: the child starts making things happen.
- Conscience appears: the child knows right from wrong and is often afraid of being caught doing something wrong.
- Gender identity develops through biological and social influences. Social influences include parents, peers and media sources.
- Morality develops, influenced by role models. Peer relations develop, children often want to dress, talk and act like their friends.
- Social development of a child in the early childhood stage is influenced by the type of parenting, economic status of the family and family structure.

Self-Assessment Exercise 2

1. What is developmental milestone?
2. Why is it important to focus on the developmental milestone of the child?

4.0 Conclusion

This unit discusses child assessment, purpose of child assessment, various assessment methods and developmental milestones in children. From this discussion, we can see that assessment result can identify both the well developed and least well developed skills of children. In other words, assessment provides information needed to plan programmes and curriculum that will promote each child's progress.

5.0 Summary

In this unit, you have been exposed to the concept and purpose of child assessment. The unit also highlighted the various developmental milestones in children.

6.0 Self-Assessment Exercise

1. Mention and discuss two child assessment method
2. What are the purposes of child's assessment?

7.0 Reference/Further Reading

Orukotan, A.F. & Oladipo, S.A. (1992). *Fundamentals of Pre-Primary and Primary Education*. Lagos: Beulah Publishers.