



**NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA**

**SCHOOL OF EDUCATION**

**COURSE CODE: ECE 313**

**COURSE TITLE: THEORIES AND PRACTICE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION**

# **COURSE GUIDE**

## **ECE 313: THEORIES AND PRACTICE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION**

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# COURSE GUIDE

## Introduction

I am delighted to welcome and introduce you to this course titled ECE 313 – Theories and Practice of Early Childhood Education. It is a two-credit unit course offered to 300-level students of the undergraduate degree programme in B.A. Ed Primary Education. In your 100 and 200 levels, you must have been exposed to Early Childhood Education and related courses. This course *ECE 313* will further stimulate your interest to learn more about Early Childhood Education.

This course guide has been specially prepared to introduce you to the course material and help you successfully complete the course. It provides vital information regarding the course: aims, objectives, course requirements, and course materials you will be using. It also has information on the study units as well as strategies for studying the course.

## Course Aims

The broad aim of this course is to take you through the theories of early childhood education and also expose you to understanding of the stages of child development in the dimension of physical, cognitive, social, emotional moral and language developments. To achieve this broad aim, the course will:

- (i) Introduce you to the origin of early childhood education from historical and philosophical perspectives.
- (ii) Expose you to the aims and objectives of early childhood education as expressed in the National Policy on Education
- (iii) Help you understand the concepts of growth and development and explain the basic principles underlying growth and development
- (iv) Expose you to the major theories of child growth and development
- (v) Expose you to how children develop physically at various stages of early childhood years
- (vi) Expose you to cognitive development of children at various stages of early childhood years
- (vii) Expose you to socio-emotional development of children at various stages of early childhood years
- (viii) Expose you to moral development at various stages of in early childhood years
- (ix) Expose you to how children acquire language at various stages of early childhood years
- (x) Explain the educational implications of the child's physical, cognitive, socio-emotional, moral and language development to early childhood education
- (xi) Help you understand types and characteristics of children with developmental anomalies as well as the causes of developmental anomalies

- (xii) Explain the contributions of some contemporary early childhood models to the development of early childhood education

## **Course Objectives**

By the end of this course you will be able to:

- (i) Explain the Concept of early childhood education
- (ii) Trace the historical background of early childhood education
- (iii) Discuss the philosophical basis for early childhood education
- (iv) List and explain the various early childhood education institutions
- (v) Differentiate between the concepts of growth and development
- (vi) Describe the principles of child growth and development
- (vii) Discuss factors that influence child growth and development
- (viii) Explain the major theories of child growth and development
- (ix) Identify and describe physical development at various stages of early childhood years (infancy, toddlerhood, preschool and primary school stages)
- (x) Identify and describe cognitive development at various stages of early childhood years from birth to eight years
- (xi) Identify and describe socio-emotional development at various stages of early childhood years
- (xii) Identify and describe moral development of the child at various stages of early childhood years
- (xiii) Identify and describe language development at various stages of early childhood years
- (xiv) Explain the educational implications of the child's physical, cognitive, socio-emotional, moral and language development to early childhood education
- (xv) Explain the difference in meaning between impairment, disability and handicap
- (xvi) Identify type and characteristics of children with developmental anomalies/disabilities
- (xvii) Explain the causes of developmental disabilities
- (xviii) Explain what to do to meet the educational needs of children with developmental disabilities
- (xix) Explain the contribution of Maria Montessori in the development of early childhood education
- (xx) Explain the contribution of Reggio Emilia in the development of early childhood education

## **Course Requirements**

To complete the course, you are required to read the study units as well as the references cited for each unit. You will also need to go through the exercises in each of the units. Please note that the exercises are not to test you but to make you recapitulate salient points discussed in each sub-unit. At the end of each unit, you will be required to submit written assignments for continuous assessment purposes. Also, at the end of the course, you will be required to write a final examination.

## Course Materials

The major course materials you will need for the course apart from the usual pens, pencil and notebooks are listed below:

- (i) Course Guide
- (ii) Study units broken down into 15 units
- (iii) Assessment file
- (iv) Relevant text books including the ones listed at the end of each unit

## Study Units

In this course, there are fifteen (15) units divided into three modules. The units and modules are listed below:

### **Module 1 Nature and Context of Child Development**

- Unit 1: Historical Background of Early Childhood Education
- Unit 2: Philosophical Basis for Early Childhood Education
- Unit 3: Concepts of Growth and Development
- Unit 4: Principles of Growth and Development
- Unit 5: Theories of Child Development

### ***Module 2 Stages of Child Growth and Development***

#### ***(From birth to eight years)***

- Unit 1: Physical Development at various stages of early childhood years
- Unit 2: Cognitive Development at various stages of early childhood years
- Unit 3: Socio-emotional Development at various stages of early childhood years
- Unit 4: Moral Development at various stages of early childhood years
- Unit 5: Language Development at various stages of early childhood years

### **Module 3 Developmental Anomalies and Contemporary Early Childhood Model**

- Unit 1: Types of Developmental Anomalies
- Unit 2: Causes of Developmental Anomalies
- Unit 3: Characteristics of Children with Developmental Anomalies
- Unit 4: Contribution of Maria Montessori to Early Childhood Education
- Unit 5: Contribution of Reggio Emilia to Early Childhood Education

## **Assessment File**

Assessment file for the course will be made available to you. In this file, you will find details of work that you will submit to your tutor for marking. The marks you obtain in the continuous assessment will count towards your final marks. You are expected to pass both the continuous assessment and the final examinations.

## **Strategies for Studying the Course**

Although you will be required to study these units on your own, arrangements have been for regular interactions with your tutor at the study center. The tutor is expected to conduct tutorials and useful discussion sessions with you and other students.

## **Presentation Schedule**

The dates to finish the course and to present each assignment will be announced to you later. You must keep strictly to all deadlines.

## **Summary**

This course guide is an overview of the ECE 313: Theories and Practice of Early Childhood Education. I wish you very exciting and rewarding studies through the course.

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## **MODULE 1: NATURE AND CONTEXT OF CHILD DEVELOPMENT**

This module introduces you to the historical as well as philosophical bases of early childhood education. As early childhood educators, you need to understand concepts, principles and theories of child growth and development to enable better understanding of your learners. The topics under this module are organized into five units as follows:

- Unit 1: Historical Background of Early Childhood Education
- Unit 2: Philosophical Basis for Early Childhood Education
- Unit 3: Concepts of Growth and Development
- Unit 4: Principles of Growth and Development
- Unit 5: Theories of Child Development

### **Unit 1: Historical Background of Early Childhood Education**

#### **CONTENTS**

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  - 3.1 Meaning of Childhood, Early Childhood, Early Childhood Education
  - 3.2 Changing Views of Childhood from the Medieval Period to the Present
  - 3.3 Origin of Early Childhood Education
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment
- 7.0 Reference /Further reading

#### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Many of us look back at our childhood with nostalgia. For some of us it is probably the period we enjoyed most. Why? Because we were well protected and taken care of. We were also allowed to do what we wanted as long as we did not harm ourselves. It is also the period we learn mostly through play and imitation.

Just pause for a moment; recall how you viewed yourself as a child. Also think about how you view children now. You might have noticed that your views of children then and now are different. You might have also noticed that how children are viewed in other societies is different from your own. This is an indication that people's views of childhood depend on time and location. To help you understand this issue further, this unit presents society's views on childhood and how the views changed from the medieval times to the present as well as the bases for such change. You are also going to learn how early childhood education originated. But first let us consider the meaning of childhood and early childhood education even though you have come across these terms in your 100 and 200 levels.

#### **2.0 OBJECTIVES:**

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

- Explain the meaning of childhood, early childhood, early childhood education
- Trace the changing views of childhood from the medieval period to the present
- Explain the basis for the changing views of early childhood education
- Trace the origin of early childhood education

### **3.0 MAIN BODY**

#### **3.1 Meaning of Childhood, Early Childhood, Early Childhood Education**

##### **What is Childhood?**

From our daily observations of children, we can define childhood as that period in our lives when we were free from responsibilities and depend on adults for protection and care. It is also the period we learn mostly through play and imitation. The childhood stage starts from birth and extends till puberty, usually between 10 years and 12 years. The childhood stage can be subdivided into two phases:

- i. Early childhood (birth-8 years)
- ii. Late childhood (8-12 years)

Society's ideas about childhood shift over time, and research has led to new understandings of the development that takes place in each stage. Childhood period has been universally acknowledged as a period when development of an individual is most crucial.

##### **What is Early Childhood?**

Early childhood is a time of bridge building. It is a time in a child's life when bridges are built between the shelter of home and the demands of the school; between play with a few neighbourhood friends and relationship with many children. It is that period of human development which falls between birth to eight years (birth-8 years). The time from birth to eight years is a critical period in the development of many foundational skills in all areas of development. This is the time when environmental enrichment or deprivation makes its greatest impact. Since development is proceeding at a very fast rate, unfavourable experiences such as lack of adequate food, health care, nurturance or stimulation, unhealthy living conditions and exploitative working conditions hinder development to a considerable extent. In the same way, favourable conditions foster development. The effect is long-lasting since the foundation of development in later years is laid at this age. It must be appreciated that development is not simply the result of mechanical acts of feeding and physical care, but rather of a feeling of total well-being that arises from growing up in a healthy atmosphere with love, warmth and opportunities for learning. Psychologists and educationists recognize this fact and made early childhood education an important subject of study since the rest of education system is built upon it. Any defect or impairment at this stage could go a long way in affecting the later intellectual ability and adjustment of the child.

It is a period marked with significant changes and reorganizations in the child's behaviour. At this period a lot of changes and progress are made in terms of learning, reasoning and in the child's social relationship with others. It is indeed the period the child gains a sense of self-worth, or lack of it, and confidence, or lack of confidence, as he experiences success or failure in everyday contacts.

## **What is Early Childhood Education?**

Early childhood education as contained in the National Policy on Education (NPE, 2004) is the education given in an educational institution to children prior to their entering the primary school. Maduewesi (1999) defines early childhood education as a semi-formal education arrangement, usually outside the home, whereby young children from about the age of three are exposed, through play-like activities in a group setting, to mental, social and physical learning suited to their developmental stage, until the mandatory age of government approved formal schooling. Several other terms used to describe early childhood education include nursery school, pre-primary and pre-school. Encyclopedia America defines early childhood education as “a form of education for children three to five years of age prior to their entry into the first elementary grade”. Akinola (2004) sees it as the education given in an educational institution to children aged three to five plus prior to entering the primary education.

### **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

- Explain the meaning of childhood
- What is early childhood
- In your own words, attempt a definition of early childhood education.

## **3.2 Changing views of childhood from the medieval period to the present**

In the middle ages children did not have a childhood as we perceive it today. Children worked alongside their parents at every early age to provide food and clothing needed for survival. It was not until Jean-Jacques Rousseau wrote the novel *Emile* (1762) that the development of the child was considered a separate stage in life. Rousseau's belief in nature and in the child's right to the period called childhood had a great impact on education. Rousseau believed in a natural approach to educating children that would permit growth without interference and restrictions.

The 18th century was regarded as the period of enlightenment. This is because it is believed that it was the era when humanity emerged from the darkness into a new age enlightened by reason, science and respect for humanity.

Rousseau's view of the child as 'Noble Savage' dominated this period. As a noble savage, he meant that the child should be educated not by coercion but by allowing him/her to follow an innate natural process of development. A popular saying then was 'nature wants children to be children before they are men'. The ideas of Rousseau on the child were carried into the 19th century. His ideas were expanded by Pestalozzi who posited that the natural development of the child is only possible when there is a harmonious development of all the faculties of the learner, the head, the heart and the hand. Froebel in turn was influenced by Pestalozzi. This led to his idea of the child as a 'flower in a garden' that should be allowed to grow freely as a flower in a garden. He was credited with the establishment of the first 'kindergarten' which really means 'garden of flowers'.

Studies of psychologists like Sigmund Freud and Jean Piaget also influenced views on the child. Freud for example contributed tremendously in the view of the child as 'welfare child'. Piaget believed that from birth humans are active learners who do not require external incentives and that development occurs in stages also changed views on the child and how he is taught. For example it is futile to teach young children abstract concepts when they have not yet reached the age to understand the concept.

International conventions also contributed to the changing views of childhood. For example the United Nations Declaration of human right affected how nations in the world view their children.

### **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

- Trace the changing views of childhood from medieval period to present

### **3.3 ORIGIN OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION**

#### **Ancient times**

It was reported that the ancients, the early Greeks such as Socrates (469-399 BC), Plato (384-347 BC), Aristotle (384-322 BC) and others before them, all spoke about the education of the child. So this concern has been with mankind for a long time. Plato believed that children should be educated by specially trained persons away from their parents from whom they should be removed early. These special teachers should avoid the use of force in teaching the children, and instead they should device interesting and amusing techniques. Thus, even Plato realized the value of play in childhood education. Aristotle suggested that young children should not be formally instructed before the age of seven and that parents should be heavily involved in teaching their young children. in the early Christian era, Quintillian (AD 35-95) emphasized in his educational classic-*institutes of oratory* the value of physical play in training the moral character and emotions of children. He advocated a free, permissive atmosphere and avoidance of the use of punishment at this time. So we see that the concern about the proper education of children have been with mankind for a long time.

Right up to the 15<sup>th</sup> century in Europe, it was believed that childhood lasted only during infancy and in his book, *centuries of childhood*, Philippe Aries (1962), used historical documents, art and novels to confirm this. He showed that from about the age of seven the child was looked upon as an adult and treated and dressed as such, and was expected to take the responsibilities of adulthood. The church deeply steeped in the doctrine of original sin, taught that the child was born in sin and therefore evil. He had to be redirected, constantly punished and corrected to make him fit for society. However, with the coming of the Renaissance and the reformation, by the 15<sup>th</sup> century, new ways of thinking were sawing and soon spread, touching all aspects of civilization, including the training of children. John Amos Comenius who lived in the first half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, was one of the best known Renaissance educators to influence Western thought regarding children. He was a giant in humanistic education that believed that young children should be educated through involvement in practical activities using concrete objects. These would train the senses and thus lead to true learning. He frowned at verbal teaching of children and to illustrate his philosophy produced the first picture book for young children called the *Orbis Pictus*, but it was in actual fact a curriculum guide for teachers on how to prepare humanistic and appealing lessons rather than continuing with formal instructional method. Comenius called for stress to be laid on sensory training and learning by doing, through the use of nature study. He designed a concentric circle curriculum which evolved and expended to accord with the child's level of maturity and experience. His humanistic philosophy was clearly enunciated in his educational treatise- *The Great Didactic*

As noted by several authors, it is difficult to pinpoint just when early childhood education began. According to Seefeldt and Nita (1998), early childhood education can be traced to the philosophers Plato (427-347 B.C.) and Aristotle (394-322 B.C.), who advocated that a child's education start well before age six, or to John Amos Comenius (1592-1670), a Czech educator and bishop who wrote *The School of Infancy* in 1638 and recommended that education begin on the mother's lap. Education for Comenius would be the same as play, as natural as life and growth itself.

However, many cite Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) as responsible for the birth of early childhood education. In his book *Emile* (1762) Rousseau stressed the importance of beginning a child's education at birth. He also believed that education should be based on the nature of children, not on adult's notions of what children are like or should be like. He said that since children passed through stages of growth, their learning experiences should be tailored to suit each stage. He advocated that the child's unique individuality should be recognized and respected, and he should be allowed to develop in an atmosphere which is open and unstrained. Rather than sending children to schools, he believed they should be raised in the country, with their education left up to nature. There unrestricted by the 'depravity' of adult society. Rousseau was opposed to strict lessons or strong discipline and believed that school should be based on children's interest.

Johann Pestalozzi (1746-1827) created schools based on this naturalistic philosophy. He held that education begins in the home through the child's play and sensory experiences. His school curriculum was based on children's natural development, and he believed they learn best through self-discovery. Johann Pestalozzi, a Swiss educator is considered the first childhood teacher. Influenced by Rousseau's perceptions of children and childhood, Pestalozzi established several schools for poor and orphaned children (Braun & Edwards, 1972).

In 1837, Friedrich Froebel (1782-1852) opened a school for children younger than six called the kindergarten, a German word meaning children's garden. After trying a number of occupations and teaching at several levels, Froebel concluded that the early years of life, those on which the foundations for later years was built, were the most critical. Froebel's kindergarten was designed to be a place where children could grow as naturally as flowers in a garden. Play, creative self-expression, sense perception, and harmonious living with one another formed the basis of the programme. Froebel presented children with gifts and occupations. Some of the gifts were balls, blocks, and cubes; and the occupations were paper folding, perforating paper, weaving and stringing beads. Songs, games, movement, dance and plays were also part of the gifts and occupation. All these formed the basis of the curriculum. Froebel's careful design and sequence of materials along with explicit directions for their use probably contributed to the successful growth of the kindergarten in the United States. The materials formed a kit that could be taken and adapted anywhere. Before long the idea spread to the United States. The German teacher, Friedrich Froebel, was in turn influenced by Pestalozzi. He visited Pestalozzi's school in Yverdon occasionally. Although he was unable to understand clearly what Pestalozzi was trying to achieve, he was able to develop his own philosophy of how children should learn and used his ideas to establish the first school with an organized curriculum for preschool children. Froebel created the kindergarten, or 'child gardens' because he believed that his classes were gardens for children rather than schoolrooms.

Wortham (2006) pointed out that the 1950's and 1960's brought a new group of psychologists and educators whose work focused on the Importance of the early years of childhood for later development and learning. Benjamin Bloom, Jean Piaget, J. McVicker Hunt and Jerome Bruner were some of the leaders of the period who emphasized the significance of the early years in child development. Many psychologists have found the first 5 years of life to be the most rapid period of development and the most significant in determining the courts of further development. They believe that deprivation during the preschool years could have serious consequences for both cognitive and affective development. Jean Piaget also believed that the nature of the experience provided a child during the early years could make a difference in the child's intellectual development. Piaget proposed that the child constructed knowledge through active interaction with the environment. The child proceeds through stages of cognitive development as an active initiator of learning, and responses to information depend on the level of understanding at that stage of development. Hunt (1961) further supported Piaget's proposal of the role of experience during the early years. He questioned the notion of fixed intelligence and suggested that early experiences were important for the development of intelligence.

**The Nigerian perspective:** According to Maduwesi (1999), the origin of early childhood education in Nigeria dated back to early 1960 when the colonial masters were in charge of governance in Nigeria. The earliest Nigerian beneficiaries of early childhood education were naturally those who associated with the missionaries. One can say that such schools have existed as long as western education has existed in Nigeria. Many Nigerians attach a great deal of importance to education. Even though it costs a great deal to keep a child in the nursery school, parents especially those who themselves never went to school think that money spent on child education is money well invested. This is partly because being deeply religious or should I say superstitious, and child conscious, providing for teaching the child is almost like a religious duty. The 1970's, those years following the Nigerian civil war were especially active in the growth of nursery schools all over the country in response to the increasing demand for such facilities. Many survivors of the civil war, especially in the former war zones in savoring their survival were ready to do for their children the best that was possible. And since generally it was believed that the nursery school gives a head start for primary education, there was a general scramble for nursery school places. There was also a competitive spirit abroad demonstrated by the uneducated nouveau-riche parents in their resolve to catch up through their children, with the educated class. Meanwhile in the process of post civil war rehabilitation, some Nigerian families among the educated frequently travel led to western European countries where they observed and imbibed the early education habits and practices of their hosts and on return required similar services in Nigeria. there was also a frowning awareness of new research findings relating to the delicate and crucial importance of the early years of life for learning. Some of these research findings were discussed at academic gatherings, others percolated through the Nigerian media to the citizens of Nigeria. All these added to the urgency of the need and demand for early childhood education institutions. In general the erroneous view is strongly held, that children who attend nursery schools are automatically superior academic achievers, over their peers who do not. It was, therefore a perfect setting for the great scramble for preschool places which started in earnest in the 1990's. Since the seventies and more particularly with the laundering of the Universal Primary Education (UPE) in 1976, there has been an atmosphere proclaiming the liberalization of educational opportunities, which has leaked down to the preschool level. A favorable financial situation in the second half of the 1970's, which was a period of wealth for many Nigerians, also supported the general atmosphere of liberality; so expensive preschool bills were no big problems for many parents. Also, many more women going out to work for repaid

employment, leaving their young children at home. It thus became increasingly desirable to have places or centers looking after preschool children. This gave further filling to the growth and increase of preschool services.

### **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

- Trace the origin of early childhood education in Nigeria

### **CONCLUSION**

Early childhood generally encompasses the first eight years in the life of an individual. The education given during these years of a child's life plays a very important role and helps in proper development of children. In this unit, you have been taken through the meaning of childhood and early childhood education. You have also been exposed to the views of childhood from the medieval period to the present time as well as reasons for the changing views of early childhood education. You did also learn how early childhood education originated.

### **SUMMARY**

You have learnt in this unit that:

- Childhood is that period when an individual is free from responsibilities and depends on adults for protection and care
- In the medieval period, children were perceived as little adults
- Over a period of time the views of childhood changed
- Changes in the views of childhood brought about the evolution of early childhood education
- Early childhood education originated from the early philosophers
- The history of early childhood education in Nigeria is traced to Christian missionaries who pioneered pre-school education.

### **TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

1. Briefly explain the concepts of childhood and early childhood education
2. Outline the changing views of childhood from the medieval period to present
3. What are the various factors that shaped the changing views of childhood?
4. Trace the historical background of early childhood education

### **REFERENCE/ FURTHER READING**

Barnett, W.S (2002). Early Childhood Education. In A. Molnar (Ed.), School Reform proposals: The research evidence. Greenwich, CT: Information Age Publishing, Inc.

Maduewesi, E. J. (1999). Early Childhood Education: Theory and Practice. Ibadan: Macmillan Nigeria Publishers Limited

National Policy on Education (2004). Federal Republic of Nigeria, Abuja, 4<sup>th</sup> edition

Seefeldt, C. and Barbour, N. (1998). Early Childhood Education: An Introduction. New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc.

Worham S.C (2006). Early Childhood Curriculum: Developmental Bases for Learning and Teaching. New York: Pearson Prentice Hall

## **Unit 2: Philosophical Basis of Early Childhood Education**

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- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment
- 7.0 Reference /Further reading

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

In our last discussion we have seen that Rousseau's view of the child dominated the 19th century and influenced Pestalozzi and Froebel. We have also seen that Froebel's view of the child as flower in a garden led to the establishment of the first kindergarten. In this unit, we shall be looking at the philosophical basis of early childhood education. Generally, most educational practices are predicated on some philosophical principles or thoughts, early childhood education is no exception. In this unit, we will examine the general aims and objectives of early childhood education from the point of view of the great educators and philosophers then we shall consider aims and objectives of early childhood education as expressed in the National Policy of Education. In addition examine types of early childhood education.

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES:**

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

- Discuss the general aims and objectives of early childhood education
- Discuss the aims and objectives of early childhood education as expressed in the National Policy on Education
- List and describe three types of early childhood education institutions

### **3.0 MAIN BODY**

#### **3.1 Aims and Objectives of Early Childhood Education**

The aims of early childhood education is better understood from the point of view of the great educators of the past (Comenius, Rousseau, Froebel, Pestalozzi, Dewey, Montessori etc) who

were concerned with the young child and his education. These great people have influenced early childhood education in the past and present. These pioneers of early childhood education gave considerable thought to determine the aims and objectives of education for the child. Although the aims of early childhood education identified by these educators reflected their spiritual values, religious beliefs and the social life of their time. Meller (1966) argued that the aims of contemporary early childhood education are not much different from those aims identified by them. We shall examine some of these great philosophers.

Comenius (1591 – 1670), in his book titled “*The School of Infancy*” and cited by Meller (1966) wrote that the aim of education are:

- (a) Faith and piety;
- (b) Uprightness in respect of morals;
- (c) Knowledge of language and arts.

Comenius, being a bishop of the Moravian Church was concerned about the quality of life of his generation. He believed that education can bring about improvement in the quality of life. He therefore, advocated for the education of all children, irrespective of their sex, and social status.

It has been said that JEAN JACQUES ROUSSEAU (1712-1778) was the father of child-centered education. He was a naturalist who postulated that children have a pattern of natural unfoldment, which they should be allowed to follow. He believed that the child is morally good but corruptible by the environment. Rousseau urged that the child be left alone as much as possible and given freedom to explore and experiences for intellectual, physical, social and cultural development. He said that since children passed through stages of growth, their learning experiences should be tailored to suit each stage, so that they fully flower during each stage. Rousseau’s ideas were distilled in his book *Emile*, the story of a tutor who tried to educate a boy, Emile, in a permissive atmosphere. According to him, the young child’s education should be guided by the spontaneous interest and activities of the child, not by adult preferences and ideas. He advocated that the Childs’ unique individuality should be recognized and respected, and that he should be allowed to develop in an atmosphere, which is open, unrestrained. Rousseau criticized the schools of his day for forcing children to sit for long hours at their desks memorizing facts from their books, which were meaningless and irrelevant to the child’s experience. Rousseau said ‘Nature means children to be children before they become men. If we deviate from this order, we produce a forced fruit, without taste, maturity or power of lasting; we make young philosophers and old children. Childhood has ways of seeing thinking and feeling peculiar to itself’. He was opposed to regimentation and harsh discipline in the education of children. This was in sharp contrast to the prevailing views of his day as shown by Charles Dickens in his book, *hard times*, where the conventional view of the child education was that all one needed to do was fill the empty vessel of the child’s mind with facts and figures.

JOHANN PESTALLOZI (1746-1826): Pestallozi was a Swiss educator who was extensively influenced by Rousseau. He had in his theory expressed strong belief in the child’s capacity to learn for himself through living according to Nature. He strongly believed that “life educates”, and this he practicalised in the Swiss Orphanages and schools where he worked, stressing that the hand, the heart and the head must all be integral part of the school curriculum. He held the view that children should be taught not just intellectual facts, but also the practical arts, by

loving teachers who cared for and were ever attentive to children's needs. He considered pre-school education a supplement to education at home and in his book, *Leonard & Gertrude*; he discussed how Gertrude a mother taught her children. Pestalozzi's theories included moving from the concrete to the abstract, using objects and materials to help children learn rather than requiring them to learn by rote and to memorize information. Sensory education and oral language development were emphasized. In one of his letters, written in 1818 as cited by Meller (1966), Pestalozzi said:

*We must bear in mind that the ultimate end of education is not perfection in the accomplishments of the school, but fitness for life; not the acquirement of habits of blind obedience and of prescribed diligence, but a preparation for independent action..... Thus, education, instead of merely considering what is to be imparted to children, ought to consider first what they may be said already to possess, if not as developed, at least as an innate faculty capable of development.*

FRIEDRICH FROEBEL (1782-1852): Froebel's writings on the aims of early childhood education were greatly influenced by his strong religious beliefs. He based his theory on his own childhood experiences and on what he learnt from working with children. Many parents and teachers who accepted Froebel's principles of early childhood education have been greatly inspired in their work with children. In his book "*the Education of Man*", written in 1826, Froebel wrote that the aim of education is to teach man to become an intelligent and thinking being, growing into pure and unsullied self-consciousness and a free representation of inner law of divine unity. In his autobiography, he also wrote that the fundamental aim of his educational work is to stir up, to animate, to awaken and to strengthen the pleasure and power of the human being to labour uninterruptedly in his own education. Froebel's mystical religious approach led him to advocate the use of play and specially designed toys for toddlers and children under six years of age, in classes, which he named kindergarten or child's garden. He called for the training of women as teachers in these kindergartens.

Dewey (1859 – 1952) applied scientific approach to the concept of education. He studied the behaviour of the children in his school, and using scientific approach, tried to determine the best way to make provision for their education. Like Pestalozzi, Dewey was concerned with the child and the type of knowledge and experience, which adults expect the child to acquire (Meller, 1966). Through his work with children, Dewey discovered that learning in early childhood takes place better if practicalised. He therefore advocated that the project method of learning should precede the study of separate subjects in early children education. However, unlike the other educators, Dewey was not specific in his formulation of the aims of education.

From the works of these great educators we can deduce that the general aims of early childhood education are geared towards:

- (a) the preparation of the child for life.
- (b) the spiritual and moral development of the child,
- (c) helping the child to live fully at each stage of development, so that there will be self-fulfillment of each stage leading to full preparation for the life of maturity.
- (d) providing for the full growth and development of the child at his own pace and interest and introducing him to the store of knowledge which will enrich his adult life.

- (e) providing a free and stimulating learning environment that would enable the child to develop his potential to the maximum.

The general objectives of early childhood education can be classified into two, long term objectives and short term or immediate objectives. Evans (1975) observed that long term objectives are general and abstract in nature, while short term objectives are usually more specific in nature. However the inter-relationships between short term and long term objectives are very obscure. This has led to some differing views among early childhood educators as to what should constitute the objectives of early childhood education. Kohlberg and Mayer (1972) for example see the objectives of early childhood education as developmental in nature and should therefore be conceptualized in terms of intellectual and moral development. They therefore suggested that Dewey's (1916) cognitive-development and progressivism should serve as the major source of educational objectives for early childhood education. Havighurst (1972) on his own part argued that the objectives of early childhood education should be based on "developmental tasks". His position seems to be a middle of the road approach between "the theory of freedom", which allows the child to develop at his own pace and "the theory of constraint", which depends on social restraint that enables the child to conform to a "responsible" adult role. Kagan (1972) on the other hand sees "adaptability" as the main objective of early childhood education. From his point of view, adaptability emphasizes autonomy, self-reliance and the development of the child's "reading competence, quantitative skills, ability to write coherently and skill in discriminating effective from ineffective arguments". Kagan emphasized that early childhood education should cultivate in children "basic motivational characteristics such as a wish to be intellectually competent, a positive expectancy for achieving intellectual competence and a strong personal identity.

In spite of the differences in opinion among early childhood educators on the objectives of early childhood education, Evans (1975) observed that there is more agreement among early childhood educators than disagreement on the general long-term objectives. The long-term general objectives of early childhood education are tailored to help the child:

- (a) develop his potential to the maximum,
- (b) develop independence in judgment,
- (c) develop critical thinking ability,
- (d) develop personal initiative and responsibility,
- (e) develop respect for the rights and properties of others.

From the foregoing, it seems that early childhood educators have not come to agreement on what should constitute a universally acceptable short term and long term objectives of early childhood education. It therefore does appear that the objectives of early childhood education will be better defined within the context of the objectives of education of specific countries than within a universal or global context.

### **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISES**

- Compare Froebel's views on the aims and objectives of early childhood education with that of Dewey

### **3.2 Objectives of Early Childhood Education as expressed in the Nigerian National Policy on Education**

Compared to the United States, Britain, Germany and France (to mention a few) the history of early childhood education in Africa and particularly Nigeria is very recent. The history of early childhood education can be traced to Christian missionaries who were said to have pioneered pre-school education. It was however not until the late 1970's that the Nigerian government realized the importance of early childhood education and included it in its National Policy on Education (NPE, 1977, revised 2004).

In the National Policy on Education, government defined early childhood education or pre-primary as *“the education given in an educational institution to children aged 3 to 5+, prior to their entering primary school”*. It includes the crèche, the nursery and the kindergarten. The objectives of early childhood education or pre-primary education as listed in the National Policy on Education directly reflect Nigeria's philosophy of education which is “based on the integration of the individual into a sound and effective citizen and equal educational opportunities for all citizens of the nation”.... (NPE 2004 revised). The objectives of early childhood education in Nigeria are to:

- (a) effect a smooth transition from the home to the school;
- (b) prepare the child for the primary level of education;
- (c) provide adequate care and supervision for the child while their parents are at work (on the farms, in the market, offices etc.);
- (d) inculcate social norms;
- (e) inculcate the child the spirit of enquiry and creativity through the exploration of nature, the environment, art, music, and playing with toys etc;
- (f) teach co-operation and team spirit;
- (g) learn good habits, especially good health habits; and
- (h) teach the rudiments of numbers, letters, colours, shapes, forms, etc, through play. (FME 2004).

From the articulated objectives we can rightly see the future of the philosophy of pre-primary education. Accent is placed on child adjustment, safety and mental skills. The implication is that staff and equipment have to be adequate to uphold the philosophy and to achieve the objectives. (Maduwesi 1999). Guidelines for operating nursery schools and the supervision of existing ones between them should ensure that only those, which meet the specified standard and uphold the philosophy, should operate. The proliferation of nursery schools as it is at present shows that government is not controlling the establishment of these schools as was proposed in the National Policy on Education. The future of pre-primary education in Nigeria, though uncertain at present appears to be bright because the demand for such services is growing. What is likely to happen is that as mothers become better educated and better informed they would become more selective in their patronage, choosing only those nursery schools that have specific benefits for their children. This would lead to healthy competition.

### **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

- Discuss the aims and objectives of early childhood education as expressed in the National Policy on Education

### **3.3 Types of Early Childhood Education Institutions**

Available literature on early childhood education reveals that there are three types of early childhood education. These are:

- (a) Day Care education
- (b) Nursery School education
- (c) Kindergarten education.

We will now carefully examine these types of early childhood education.

#### ***(a) Day Care Education***

Day Care Education is an early childhood educational programme for children of ages 2 years and below given in day care centres and homes. Traditionally, day care centres and homes are places where children of age 2 years and below are kept and looked after by nannies. They are centres or homes where children of working class mothers are looked after while their mothers are at work. The children are normally dropped in the morning by their mothers on their way to work, and picked later in the day or after office hours. The children are taken to the center along with their daily feeds and clothing.

Most day care centres or homes operate half-day programmes. Because of the age of the children who attend day care centres and homes no emphasis is placed on formal teaching and learning. The major activity that goes on in such centres and homes revolve around meeting the physical needs of the children. Thus, most staff of day care centres and homes are untrained nannies. Their major work includes feeding the children when hungry, changing their nappies, putting them to bed and other activities that centres around the physical and emotional needs of the child in the absence of the mother.

Evans (1975) however observed that times are changing in the traditional function of day care centres and homes. Many countries and especially in the United States is gradually giving way for a broad services approach. According to Evans, it is now very common, especially in the United States to hear people talk of Developmental Day Care Centres instead of just “Day Care Centres”.

In Nigeria for instance, day care centres and homes have gone one step forward by bringing some basic educational services to their traditional function of meeting the physical and emotional needs of children in their custody. The educational activities however centre around simple language development. If you visit some of the day care centres for example, you are likely to hear Nannies teaching the children simple things like the names of objects, words like food, water, come, sit down, stand up, mummy, daddy and so on. As a result of this development many day care centres now employ semi-literate Nannies. Presently in Nigeria most of the day care centres and homes are operated by private individuals and they are therefore profit oriented.

#### ***(b) Nursery School Education***

Nursery education is an early childhood educational programme offered to children of ages three-to-five years. In Nursery school, individual children are provided with a variety of learning activities, materials and experiences suitable to their level of development and developmental needs.

Nursery school education is probably the most prevalent form of early childhood education dating back to the early part of this century (Lefrancois, 1980).

In Britain, the first Nursery school was established in London in 1912 by Margaret McMillan (Onwaka, 1963). In the U.S., public nursery schools were first established in 1919 (Mayer, 1960). In Nigeria Nursery Education can be traced back to the colonial days when pre-school education was the exclusive preserve of the colonial officials. Today, Nursery schools are found all over the place. Such schools are found on the campuses of our colleges and universities, in churches, mosques and homes. Some are commercially operated while others are non-profit.

In Nigeria, however, a greater percentage of nursery schools are operated by private individuals and organizations and therefore profit-oriented. Some nursery schools admit three to four or to five-year-old children; others admit only four year old children. Thus in some nursery schools, children spend up to three years before going to primary school while in others, children spend only two years before going to primary school. Some operate full day programmes, but most of them operate half-day programmes for five days in a week. In essence, variation in the operation of the programme is a rule rather than the exception. In theory, the objectives of all the nursery schools existing in Nigeria are not grossly different. On the other hand, the actual procedures of running the schools are not uniform.

In spite of the differences in the operational procedures of the so many nursery schools most operators of nursery education recognise and keep to the importance of basic socialization, and the child's physical health needs. In most of these schools, emphasis is placed on fantasy-play to promote sensory-motor and emotional development. Nursery school educators have long realized that it is only through organized and free play that a child learns to know himself and his capabilities, and the realities of his social existence (Evans, 1975). Play also provides children the medium through which aesthetics and self-expression activities may be expressed.

Apart from the responsibility nursery schools assume for the physical well-being of children, they are also concerned with their social and intellectual development. Consequently the curriculum of most nursery schools consists of group activities such as games, dances, singing, listening to stories, colouring, cutting, and other activities that the teacher may initiate (Lefrancois, 1980). This means that there should be good rapport between the teacher and each child to foster self-confidence, and be comfortable with self. This will help the child to feel secured. Therefore the teacher-child relationship is a critical factor in nursery schools (Farwell, 1958).

However, a visit to most nursery schools around the country will reveal that classes are over crowded and with very few teachers. Such conditions are not healthy for children's development. It was suggested that nursery groups should not exceed twenty (20) children, for four-year old and not more than fifteen (15) children per group, in a room for two and three-year-olds. This assumes further that at least two teachers should be available for constant supervision within such groups.

Apart from preparing the children for formal primary education, nursery school education is of immense benefit to them in the area of social development. Walsh (1931) observed that nursery education helps beneficiaries to become more confident of themselves, more spontaneous, less inhibited, more independent, more self-reliant and more interested in their environment compared to pre-school children who did not receive nursery education.

### (c) *Kindergarten Education*

The word "Kindergarten" is a German word for "garden of children" and thus portrays the original analogy of children as garden plants to be nurtured carefully.

The idea of Kindergarten can be traced back to the philosophy of Frederick Froebel (1782–1852). Froebel’s interest in the education of the pre-school child and the training of young, single women to teach young children were contributions of lasting importance to the concept of Kindergarten (Evans, 1975). Froebel established his first school for young children in Germany in 1837 (Heffernan, 1960). The school was child-centred. Froebel’s child-centered orientation greatly influenced his successors and provided, at least in theory, the backbone of modern nursery and kindergarten education (Evans, 1980). The concept of kindergarten as a matter of regular public school experience however, was not formalized until several years after Froebel’s death.

In the United States, the first Kindergarten school was established in Water town, Wisconsin in 1855 (Omwake, 1963). In Nigeria Kindergarten education is an integral part of Nursery education and its history can be traced to the colonial days. Kindergarten education was generally restricted to five-year old children, and they spend one year in activities in readiness for formal primary school education. According to Evans (1980) most Kindergartens operate half-day sessions. Like in the Nursery schools, the teacher-children ratio is very important. Class groups of over twenty five children are directly antithetical to the principle of individual differentiation, which is very basic to the general philosophy of Kindergarten education.

Although the objectives of Kindergarten education may vary in their specific terminology from school to school, there are certain general growth objectives that are common to all. These include sociability, aesthetics, sensory-motor development, and achievement motivation. Headley (1965) also suggested that some of the functions of Kindergarten education are to assist children achieve the followings:

- (i) Friendliness and helpfulness in relationships with other children.
- (ii) Greater power to solve problems based on individual activities and group relationships.
- (iii) Respect for the rights, property, and contributions of other children.
- (iv) Responsiveness to intellectual challenge.
- (v) Achievement of good sensory-motor coordination.
- (vi) Understanding of concepts necessary for the continued pursuit of learning.
- (vii) Responsiveness to beauty in all forms.
- (viii) Realization of individuality and creative propensities.

While the breadth and abstractness of these goals have created room for great programme variations among Kindergarten schools, a common unifying aspect of the programme among all the personnel of Kindergarten programmes is their commitment to the positive and total growth of children. Also while the general activities prescribed by Kindergarten curricula may be similar across all such schools, their emphasis to pre-academic training varies. Headley (1965) observed that 50 percent of a typical Kindergarten day is devoted to specific creative activities (art work, model building etc), music (singing, listening and rhythmic activities), and language based activities (story telling and listening, poetry, “group discussion” such as show and tell, and question-answer activities). The remaining 50 percent of the time is shared among activities such as self-care, free play and rest. The flexibility of Kindergarten curriculum thus enables a resourceful teacher to infuse daily activities with ample doses of basic language, mathematics, science and social studies concepts.

## **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

- Briefly explain the major functions of a Day Care Centre.
- List five objectives of Kindergarten Education.

## **CONCLUSION**

The philosophy of early childhood education means much more than just teaching young children certain skills and facts. The philosophy is the type that strives for total development of the child. It entails the child's physical, mental and spiritual growth; his feelings, attitudes and relationships with others; his character and personality. It is also concerned with the child as an individual possessing certain innate tendencies, or activity. An appropriate philosophical foundation of early childhood education is therefore that which caters for the social, emotional, intellectual and physical needs of the child

## **SUMMARY**

This unit examined the philosophical basis of early childhood education highlighting the aims and objectives of early childhood education both in general terms and as expressed in the National Policy on Education. An attempt also made to describe three types of early childhood education institutions. In the next unit you will learn about the concepts of child growth and development.

## **TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

1. List some of the social and intellectual activities Day Care children are engaged in. How do these activities help them in their development?
2. List the long term general objectives of early childhood education as identified by Evans (1975).
3. What according to Kagan (1975) constitute the main objectives of early childhood education?

## **Activity**

Visit at least five early childhood educational institutions in your local government areas and identify the policy framework of their operations

## **REFERENCE/ FURTHER READING**

Durojaiye, S.M. (1977) Practical Methods for Nursery Schools. Ibadan, Oxford University Press.

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## **Unit 3: Concepts of Growth and Development**

### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main content
  - 3.1 Meaning of Growth and Development
  - 3.2 Distinction between Growth and Development
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment
- 7.0 Reference /Further reading

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

As a teacher it is important for you to know the child that you teach. The knowledge of the child would include knowing the child's growth and development patterns. It is thorough understanding of the growth and development of the child that would enable the teacher to make education more meaningful to the child.

The human being is never static rather he is undergoing constant changes.

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES:**

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

- Define growth and development
- Distinguish between growth and development

### **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

#### **3.1 Meaning of Growth and Development**

The concepts of growth and development are commonly used among psychologists and educationists. The two terms 'growth and development' are often used interchangeably but are they the same? They don't mean the same thing but one cannot occur without the other. Both refer to changes and processes are interrelated and inter-dependent on each other. Growth refers to quantitative changes that occur in an individual i.e. increase in bodily dimensions such as height, weight, size. Growth is an increase in the size of an organism or individual. Growth takes place on a daily basis in an individual or organisms due to cell division and combination. For growth to occur, the cells needs plenty of food and supply the necessary energy and materials for building up new protoplasm. The cell division that takes place during the growth of an organism is known as mitosis. When the cell reaches its maximum size stops growing. As a child gets older, he/she increases in body structure, the size and structure of internal organs and the brain increase which enables the child to do more work. Growth is measurable and

occurs in stages. The stages of human growth include infancy stage, childhood, adolescence stage, adult stage.

Development therefore is qualitative changes that occur in an individual. Development is defined as a progressive series of orderly coherent changes leading towards the goal of maturity. It refers to changes in ability to function. Ajoku (2006) citing Zanden (1978) defined development as a progressive sequence of orderly, coherent changes. Progressive according to Hurlock signifies that the changes are directional leading forward rather than backward. Orderly and coherent suggest that there is a definite relationship between a given stage and the stages which precede or follow it. The progressive series of changes occur as a result of maturation and experience. This means that development includes growth and ability to perform certain functions. Development is the progress an organism makes towards maturity. There are different aspects of development. These include physical development, social development, cognitive development, emotional development. Growth and development are a function of chronological age.

Although developmental change runs parallel with chronological age, age itself cannot cause development. The basic mechanisms or causes of developmental change are genetic factors and environmental factors. This will be discussed in detail in the next unit under the topic '*factors influencing growth and development*'. For now bear in mind that genetic factors are responsible for cellular changes like overall growth, changes in proportion of body and brain parts, and the maturation of aspects of function such as vision and dietary needs. Because genes can be "turned off" and "turned on", the individual's initial genotype may change in function over time, giving rise to further developmental change. Environmental factors affecting development may include both diet and disease exposure, as well as social, emotional, and cognitive experiences. However, examination of environmental factors also shows that young human beings can survive within a fairly broad range of environmental experiences.

### **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

- Explain to a secondary school student the meaning of growth and that of development

### **3.2 Distinction Between Growth and Development**

Growth and development are most often used interchangeably, that is, people use them to mean the same thing whereas they are not very closely related. Growth and development both involve changes. However, development goes beyond the physical changes associated with growth to include other important abilities such as thinking, feelings and other aspects of human behaviors. It therefore, means that growth provides the platform on which developmental changes are based.

The following are identified by Falaye (2009) as the attributes of growth:

- Growth brings about observable changes in the physical characteristics such as height and weight. It should be noted that growth is observable and can be quantified that is, it can be measured. For example, changes in the height and weight of a newborn baby can easily be observed, particularly by the mother. The increase in the height and weight can be measured using a meter rule for height and a weighting balance or scale for the weight.

- Growth varies from one individual to another; this means that each individual grows at his or her own rate. This explains why people of the same age may be physically different in terms of height and weight.
- Growth comes in stages i.e. pre-natal stage, infancy stage, childhood stage, adolescence stage, adulthood, old age
- Growth stops at a certain stage in the life of an individual. This occurs when the rate at which new cells are produced and added is lower than the rate at which old cells die. In the youthful age, growth rate increases more rapidly and physical changes are easily observed, whereas, the middle age appears to be in equilibrium when increase in growth is no longer conspicuous. That is, the rate at which new cells are added seems to be the same as the rate at which the old ones die and are removed from the body. Adults and old people therefore appear not to grow at this stage.

The following are the attributes of development:

- Development cannot be directly observed, however, it can be measured indirectly. For instance, a teacher cannot directly observe an intelligent learner, nor determine the learner's level of intelligence through direct observation, but the teacher can measure the level of intelligence of the learner indirectly using different types of tests. The level of intelligence can thereafter be inferred from the learner's score in the tests.
- Individuals develop at different rates.
- There are aspects of development i.e. physical development, cognitive development, socio-emotional development, language development
- Changes in development are associated with growth; this implies that development cannot be separated from growth. For example, child's intellectual ability will not develop if the brain has not grown.

### **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

- Give two distinctions between growth and development

### **CONCLUSION**

### **SUMMARY**

In this unit, you have learnt the meaning of growth and development and that both growth and development involve changes but while growth involves quantitative changes, development involves qualitative changes. In the next unit we shall consider factors influencing growth and development. Also, we shall be looking at the principles of growth and development.

### **TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

1. Growth and development involve changes but in different context, discuss?
2. As a teacher explain to your students three distinctions between growth and development

### **REFERENCE/ FURTHER READING**

## **Unit 4: Principles of Growth and Development**

### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main content
  - 3.1 Factors influencing Growth and Development
  - 3.2 Basic Principles of Child Growth and Development
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment
- 7.0 Reference /Further reading

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Several factors interact to influence the growth and development of the child. These factors come into play right from the period of conception and modify the growth and development of the individual through out life. In unit three, the concepts of growth and development and their distinction were discussed. This chapter discusses factors [heredity and environment] influencing growth and development as well as the principles of growth and development.

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES:**

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

- Discuss factors influencing growth and development
- Explain the basic principles of growth and development

### **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

#### **3.1 Factors Influencing Growth and Development**

##### **Heredity**

Heredity deals with potentialities or traits that are transferred from parents to their offspring at conception. Such traits could be physical (weight, height, skin color, etc.), mental, social, and so on. The traits are carried by the genes. The genetic make-up of individuals varies; this is the reason why children born by the same parents may be different physically and mentally. While some are short, light in complexion, fat or brilliant; others may be tall, dark in complexion, thin or dull. Brief discussions on key terms as they relate to heredity are necessary. Such terms as genes, types of genes, chromosomes, genotype and phenotype are discussed below.

##### **Gene**

The gene is the unit of inheritance. It determines the nature of a character that is inherited by an individual from the parents. Genes could be dominant and recessive.

*Dominant Gene:* These are genes that exert greater control on the characteristics of individuals.

*Recessive Genes:* Recessive genes are those whose influences have been blocked by the dominant genes.

### Chromosomes

These are thread like structures on which the genes are located. Chromosomes occur in pairs, one from the mother and the second one from the father. Each chromosome is made up of protein units with Di-oxy-ribo-Nucleic Acid (DNA). Wound round it. The DNA is a spiral, double helical structure. The double helix makes it easy for division and multiplication to take place. The DNA provides the biochemical basis for the transmission of genetic material.

*Genotype:* The genotype or genetic make-up is the sum total of the genes that an offspring inherits from its parents. The genotype sets the limits within which characters can vary.

*Phenotype:* This is the character an individual actually expresses. It is influenced by the interaction between the individual genotype and the environment. For example, the child may inherit genes for heavy weight, but the actual weight is determined to the extent to which the child is fed with good diets. If the child is fed with nourishing food, he or she may grow big, if not, even though the child possesses genes for heavyweight, he or she may indeed look thin.

Characters that are inherited are determined by the genes. An organism that has two sets of chromosomes is known as a diploid organism, and it has two copies of each gene. Gametes are produced in reproductive organs by (meiosis) cell division. During cell division, the number of chromosomes in a cell is halved. The gametes therefore contain one set of chromosomes that is one copy of each gene. During sexual reproduction, the gametes of a male and a female fuse to form zygotes. Each zygote receives one set of chromosomes from the gamete of each parent. Hereditary characters are then transmitted from parents to offspring through the gamete.

### **Environment**

The environment consists of all the factors in the surroundings of the child that affect him or her. It is the totality of other experiences the child is subjected to after the genetic materials would have been transferred from the parents to the child. The concept of environment is very broad; it includes the physical environment (temperature, humidity, light, wind, e.t.c.), socio-environment (the family, peers) and home environment, (care and support provided). Others include school, religious influences and nutrition. These influence the child's growth and development before, during and after birth.

Heredity and environment interact to shape the growth and development of every individual. They are responsible for the differences observed in physical characteristics (height, weight, and color), cognitive traits (intelligence), emotion (feelings). For example, two individuals that have similar hereditary traits but are nurtured in different environments will grow up showing clear differences in their characters, whereas individuals brought up in the same environment may not develop the same way if their genetic make-up differs. No hereditary characteristics can reach its fullest development without the influence of the environment. Similarly, environment cannot bring about any modification in genetic traits, if in the first instance; such traits have not been inherited from the parents.

## **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

Write short notes on the following

- Genes
- Chromosomes
- Phenotype

### **3.2 Basic Principles of Child Growth and Development**

Growth and developments are governed by certain principles. These principles provide an understanding of human growth and developmental process. Some of the principles are examined below according to Falaye (2009).

Growth and development are complex: the processes involved in growth and development are very complex. It is difficult to pinpoint the exact time growth and developmental processes take place. For example, the exact time a matured sperm fuses with a matured ovum in the process of fertilization is not known. As a result of this uncertainty, only a time range is given. Furthermore, the stages involved in growth and developmental processes are closely interrelated such that it is difficult to demarcate the boundaries between one stage and the other.

Growth and development are sequential: growth and development are orderly. They do not happen haphazardly. That fertilization takes place only if an egg cell is present in the oviduct when sperms arrive. The egg is implanted in the uterus after fertilization. Also, a baby sits before standing, it stands before walking. The sequence of events is similar in all children.

Growth and development have different rates and occur in phases: the growth and development of various parts of the human body do not take place at the same time. The rate of growth varies from one period to another. There are periods of rapid, and those of slow growth. Similarly, organs and systems have different rates and phases of development. For example, growth is very fast in early years of life (1-2 years) thereafter it slows down until adolescence when it shoots up again. It stabilizes during adulthood and stops at old age. This is referred to as the principle of asynchronous growth.

The principle of cephalo-caudal development: the word ‘cephalo’ means head and ‘caudal’ means tail. The principle of cephalo-caudal development therefore means that growth and development proceed from the head region to the tail region. This explains why the head region is always well developed before the tail region. The embryo is a typical example. The embryo’s head is bigger and develops faster than the tail. Similarly, the forelimbs, which are closer to the head region, develop before the hind limbs.

The principle of proximo-distal development: ‘proximo’ means central part, while ‘distal’ stands for periphery. This principle means that growth and development start from the central part of the body towards the periphery. For example, internal organs in the trunk region grow before the limbs. Also in the growth of the limbs, the forelimbs (arms) grow before the hind limbs (legs). For the forelimbs, the humerus (upper arm) grows before the lower arm; this is followed by the wrist after which the palm grows, and finally, the fingers. Similarly, for the hind limbs, the thigh grows before the ankle, followed by the foot and then the toes. The principle of ‘proximo-distal’ development shows that behaviour follows a sequence from

general to specific unselective to highly selective, concrete to abstract and known to unknown. The principle of cephalo-caudal and proximo-distal; developments are jointly called the principle of directional pattern, meaning that growth and development follow a directional pattern

Principle of interrelationship in growth and development: There is interrelationship of different aspects of development. All aspects of development occur simultaneously in an individual. Children do not develop physically in isolation from their social, emotional, and cognitive development. Each aspect of development will greatly influence other areas of development (Berk, 1991). When a child is born as the child is developing physically, he/she is also developing mentally, socially, and emotionally.

Principle of continuity and discontinuity in growth and development: in the growth and development of human beings, patterns of continuity and discontinuity can be observed. There are periods of growth spurts, plateau and regression. A typical example is the genitals, which are rudimentary at birth but grow very rapidly in adolescence through adulthood. They regress in functions at old age. However, as Falaye (2009) noted there is no consensus of opinion among psychologists on the principle. While some are of the opinion that the growth and development pattern is gradual and continuous, others feel that developmental changes are spontaneous.

Growth and development maintain individual differences: growth and development preserve the uniqueness of individuals. In spite of the various experiences people are similarly exposed to, basic differences in individuals can be observed. This explains why no two individuals are exactly the same, even identical twins.

Growth and development lead to death: growth and development lead to death. Growth starts at conception. Under normal circumstances, the individual that is born grows old and will eventually die as body cells and tissues degenerate gradually leading to death.

### **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

- Explain the principle of cephalo-caudal development
- Explain the principle of proximo-distal development

### **CONCLUSION**

A thorough knowledge of child growth and development is vital to the effective teaching and understanding of the child. You have learnt the factors that influence growth and development. In addition, you learnt basic principles of growth and development.

### **SUMMARY**

This unit explores the role of heredity and environmental as factors that influence growth and development and how they interact to shape the growth and development of every individual. You also learnt that growth and development are governed by certain principles including the principle of

- Complexity of growth and development
- Orderly sequence of growth and development

- Variation in rate of growth and development
- Directional growth and development
- Continuity and discontinuity of growth and development
- Wholesomeness of growth and development
- Individual differences in growth and development

The next unit examines the theories of child development

### **TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

1. Discuss the influence of heredity and environment on child growth and development
2. Explain five principles of growth and development

### **REFERENCE/ FURTHER READING**

Falaye, F.V. (2009). Aspects of Human Development and Learning. Ibadan: Ibadan University Press

## **Unit 5: Theories of Child Development**

### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main content
  - 3.1 Behaviouristic Theory
  - 3.2 Maturationist Theory
  - 3.3 Constructivist Theory
  - 3.4 Psychoanalytic Theory
  - 3.5 Psychosocial Theory
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  - 3.7 Ecological Systems Theory
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- 5.0 Summary
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### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

In the last unit you learnt about factors influencing growth and development, and principles of growth and development. In this unit we shall examine the theories of child development. As you know, the field of child study has advanced, psychologists have developed different theories on the nature of development and on the influence of such theories regarding how children develop and learn. Early childhood educators need to understand the theories of development. From different theories you will grasp how development in one area interrelates with development in another area.

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES:**

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

- Identify and explain seven major theories of child development
- Compare and contrast any two of the theories of child development

### **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

#### **3.1 Behaviouristic Theory**

Theorists such as Ivan Pavlov, John Watson, B.F. Skinner, and Albert Bandura contributed greatly to the behaviourist /environmentalist perspective of development. Behaviourists believe the child's environment shapes learning and behavior and that human behavior, development, and learning are thought of as reactions to the environment. Behaviourist theory is based on the nurture theory of development and had its roots in the philosophy of John Locke, who viewed children as arriving in the world as a blank slate. The slate would be 'written on' by those educating the child through a series of rewards and effective use of 'punishment'.

Behaviourist theory stemmed from the work of Ivan Pavlov, the Russian psychologist who determined that animals could learn new physiological responses to the environment through stimuli. Pavlov used the process of conditioning to teach a dog to salivate at the sound of a bell by ringing the bell each time food was offered. Because the dog salivated each time the food was offered, it became conditioned to salivate each time the bell rang, even when food was no longer offered (Santrock 2002). Later, behaviourists applied the stimulus-response (S-R) theory to children and their development. For behaviourists, the critical factors in growth and development are the environment and the opportunity to learn. Learning is continuous, results from the reward system in the environment. The direction of behaviour is shaped through control of the learning environment and the individual's experiences.

Through B.F. Skinner's work, behaviourist theory was applied to parenting and schooling. Skinner proposed that if the environment is arranged to facilitate the desired behaviour and expectations are set for that behaviour, then the child will be influenced to use the appropriate behaviour. Adult rewards for appropriate behaviour will strengthen or condition the behaviour. According to Skinner, because all behaviour is learnt it can be shaped or modified. Strategies for behaviour modification are based on reinforcement. When appropriate behaviours are rewarded, the behaviour is reinforced, and chances that the behaviour will be repeated are increased. Punishment is used to discourage the reoccurrence of an undesirable behaviour. However, punishment affects unwanted behaviours only temporarily and should be used infrequently. Parents and teachers of young children have found the concept of positive reinforcement helpful in managing behaviour. Praising the young child for an appropriate behaviour is more effective than reinforcing a behaviour that the adult wants the child to stop using. For example, if a parent buys a toy to stop his two preschoolers from fighting, he may find himself faced with inappropriate behaviour the next time the children are shopping with him. The children have learnt that the parent will reward them for misbehaving. Appropriate behaviour should be strengthened through positive reinforcement.

Not all learning results from this direct conditioning. Behavioural theorists have expanded the nature of learning to include imitation and observation. Albert Bandura carried out series of experiments to show that children learn through observation. Thus a child can learn a new behaviour by imitating another child who is using the behaviour correctly.

## **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

- Discuss the relevance of behaviouristic theory to child development

### **3.2 Maturationist Theory**

The maturationist or nativistic theory was advanced by the work of Arnold Gessell. Maturationists believe that development is a biological process that occurs automatically in predictable, sequential stages over time (Hunt, 1969). Maturationist theory regards development as the inevitable unfolding of events determined internally by the forces of genetics and the neuro maturational processes directed by the genes. This perspective leads many educators to assume that young children will acquire knowledge naturally and automatically as they grow physically and become older (Demarest, Reisner, Anderson, Humphrey, Farquhar, & Stein, 1993).

The early observations of children that were made in an effort to understand their development were led by G. Stanley Hall. Observation of children and subsequent descriptions of babies and young children were expanded by many researchers; however, Arnold Gesell, a student of G. Stanley Hall, is credited with establishing norms for the ages at which behaviors emerged in young children. Arnold Gesell collected data on the effects of maturation in children and subsequently explained development and learning based on his theory of maturation. Gesell believed that learning occurred as a result of the individual child's biological timetable. Biological readiness, rather than any influence of experience, was the predominant factor in the child's ability to learn (Weber, 1984). Gesell's descriptions of children's maturity levels and readiness for learning at chronological ages informed curriculum developers on how to design curriculum for different grade levels. In addition, some of the general principles of growth developed by Gesell remain important today. For example, Gesell explained that growth proceeds from the head to the tail (cephalo-caudal) and from the body to the extremities such as the hands and feet (proximodistal). While Gesell made important contributions to the field of early childhood education, his data on developmental norms may not be appropriate for application to the diversity of children today. More over, Piaget's cognitive developmental theory in later decades better described individual cognitive development than did chronological age. The role of the environment on cognitive development also was not addressed in Gesell's maturational theory. Nevertheless, there is a continuing influence of maturational theory reflected in the unfortunate practice of evaluating a child's readiness for placement in kindergarten or first grade in elementary schools. This practice follows the belief that some children are ready for school while other lacks the needed maturity (Wortham 2006).

## **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

- Discuss the relevance of behaviouristic theory to child development

### **3.3 Constructivist Theory**

Constructivist or interactionist or cognitive developmental theorists maintain that both biological and environmental factors affect human development in a reciprocal manner. But these theorists differ in their focus on specific aspects of development

The constructivist perspective was advanced by theorists such as Jean Piaget, Maria and Lev Vygotsky. Although their work varies greatly, each articulates a similar context of learning and development. They are consistent in their belief that learning and development occur when young children interact with the environment and people around them (Hunt, 1969). Constructivists view young children as active participants in the learning process. In addition, constructivists believe young children initiate most of the activities required for learning and development. Because active interaction with the environment and people are necessary for learning and development, constructivists believe that children are ready for school when they can initiate many of the interactions they have with the environment and people around them. Let us look at Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky's theories.

**Jean Piaget:** Piaget's work has extended our understanding of how cognition develops. Piaget's studies of cognitive development led him to propose that children have different levels of understanding at different ages. According to him, the child has an active role in development. Unlike maturational theory which proposes that biological readiness controls the ability to learn or behaviourist theory which suggests that the environment shapes behaviour and learning, constructivist theory holds that the child's interaction with the environment and cognitive organization of experiences result in intelligence. The emphasis of this theory is on the child's thought processes when learning is occurring.

Piaget proposed a stage theory to explain how a child progresses from one stage of cognitive development to the other. Piaget believed that knowledge is acquired and changed overtime when the child takes in new information. Through the process of assimilation and accommodation, the child not only acquires new knowledge but reorganizes existing knowledge. The child is said to construct knowledge hence the constructivist theory. As the child progresses through stages of development, cognitive styles of organizing and structuring knowledge change. The child's mode of quality of thinking is different in each stage.

In the early childhood years, the child moves through the sensorimotor and preoperational stages of cognitive development. The sensorimotor stage begins at birth and continues until about two years. The infant acquires information by acting on the environment using physical actions and through the five senses: touch, taste, smell, hearing, and sight. They utilize skills and abilities they were born with, such as looking, sucking, grasping, and listening, to learn more about the environment. In the preoperational stage of cognitive development which begins at age 2 to 7 years, a major milestone is the ability to use symbolic thinking. The child becomes increasingly adept at using symbols, as evidenced by the increase in playing and pretending. In this stage, the child is controlled by perception. A preoperational child is able to use an object to represent something else, such as pretending a broom is a horse. Role playing also becomes important during the preoperational stage. Children often play the roles of "mommy," "daddy," "doctor," and many others at this stage. According to cognitive developmental theorists, the early childhood years end when the child moves from the preoperational to the concrete operational stage of development (age 7-12). In the concrete operational stage, the child is able to use logical thinking, can conserve and can learn using symbols.

**Lev Vygotsky:** The work of Lev Vygotsky, Russian psychologist, is also classified as constructivist because Vygotsky, like Piaget, also believed that children construct knowledge. Whereas Piaget proposed that children construct knowledge from interaction with the environment, Vygotsky believed that social interaction plays a significant role in learning. For

Vygotsky, both physical and social interactions are necessary for development. The adult plays an important role as social mediator. The social environment includes the child's family, school, community, culture- all the social contexts that are reached by the child. Cultural differences affect the way the child thinks, as do the structures of the individual family. The child shares mental processes within the social context and learns by sharing experiences through interacting with others. Also in contrast with Piaget, Vygotsky believed that learning leads to development. While Piaget proposed that the child's level of thought and stage of development control mental abilities, Vygotsky argued that learning must occur for development to advance. Vygotsky conceptualized the relationship between learning and development through his zone of proximal development. He believed that development is a continuum of behaviors. The development of behavior has two levels: what the child can perform independently (independent performance) and the level that the child can achieve with help (assisted performance). The zone of proximal development describes the continuum between assisted performance and independent performance. Assisted performance includes the help of the adult or peer. The teacher assists the child's acquisition of independent behaviour by helping the child directly or indirectly. As the child makes progress in achieving at the independent level, the zone of proximal development also moves higher. The behaviors that the teacher uses to assist the child to support learning and development are termed scaffolding. The teacher provides instructions, materials in the environment and other experiences to support the child and enable the child to acquire competencies and continue to move to new competencies (Wortham 2006).

Constructivist-influenced schools and educators pay a lot of attention to the physical environment and the curriculum of the early childhood classroom. Kindergarten classrooms often are divided into different learning centers and are equipped with developmentally appropriate materials for young children to play with and manipulate. Teachers and adults have direct conversations with children, children move actively from center to another, and daily activities are made meaningful through the incorporation of children's experiences into the curriculum. At home, parents engage their young children in reading and storytelling activities and encourage children's participation in daily household activities in a way that introduces such concepts as counting and language use. In addition, parents may provide young children with picture books containing very large print, and toys that stimulate interaction (such as building blocks and large puzzles). When a young child encounters difficulties in the learning process, the constructivist approach is neither to label the child nor to retain him or her; instead, constructivists give the child some individualized attention and customize the classroom curriculum to help the child address his or her difficulties.

Another point of difference between Piaget and Vygotski is that while the former posits a stage theory, Vygotsky did not support stages at all, asserting instead that development was a process.

Today, most researchers have come to understand child development and the learning process as articulated by the constructivists. However, this view has not been widely translated into practice. Many kindergarten teachers and parents still believe that young children are not ready for school unless they can recite the alphabet, count, and have the ability to follow instructions from adults.

## **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

- Compare and contrast Piaget's and Lev Vigotsky's viewpoints of constructivist theory to child development

### **3.4 Psychoanalytic Theory**

Sigmund Freud's (1856-1939) psychoanalytic theories of human personality concerned emotion, motivation, and personality development. He viewed children as having sexual energy which is biologically determined, and that environmental factors determine how this energy is invested and how children grow. According to Freud, child development is described as a series of psychosexual stages. He outlined these stages as oral, anal, phallic, latency period, and genital. However, all except genital stage fall within early childhood years.

Freud believed that sexual energy is the force that influences children's behaviour and that children progress through a series of psychosexual stages. The oral stage (birth-1 year) reflects the infant's need for gratification from the mouth. An infant's eating, sucking, spitting, and chewing are not only a need to satisfy hunger, but also provide pleasure. The anal stage (2-3 years) reflects the toddler's need for gratification from the rectal area. The phallic stage (4-5 years) reflects the child's gratification from the genitals. The latency stage (middle years) is a repression of sexuality ending during the adolescent years.

If these psychosexual stages are completed successfully, the result is a healthy personality. If certain issues are not resolved at the appropriate stage, fixation can occur. A fixation is a persistent focus on an earlier psychosexual stage. Until this conflict is resolved, the individual will remain "stuck" in this stage. For example, a person who is fixated at the oral stage may be over-dependent on others and may seek oral stimulation through smoking, drinking, or eating

Children move from one stage to the next partly as a result of physical development, but also because parental expectations change at each stage. Changes and expectations result in conflicts in the children as they are torn between seeking gratification and meeting parental expectations that require denial of that gratification. As these pleasure urges are repressed, anxiety develops and children develop mechanisms to relieve that anxiety. In normal development, children gain control of inner conflicts and reduce anxiety by using some of these defense mechanisms.

In his psychoanalytic theory, Freud proposed that personality development is composed of the instincts of id, ego, and superego and that these three components control the child's innate drives to release sexual energy through oral gratification, warmth, love, pleasurable body sensations and elimination of body wastes. The id is the instinctive structure that infants possess and which drives them to seek satisfaction. As they come in conflict with reality, as they grow and develop, the ego, the rational part emerges. Finally, the superego, or moral or ethical part, develops. If the child's instincts are not under- or over gratified by parents, the child will progress naturally through oral, anal, phallic, latent, and genital stages (Morrison, 1988; Santrock, 2002).

According to Freud, personality is mostly established by the age of five. Early experiences play a large role in personality development and continue to influence behavior later in life.

### **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

- How will knowledge of psychoanalytic theory help the teacher to understand child development

## **Psychosocial Theory**

Erik Erikson, a student of Freud, developed his theory of psychosocial development based on Freud's work. Erikson proposed that the child's personality development is strongly determined by social context such as the family and school and that the individual's interaction with environmental influences within eight life stages. Erikson believed that the individual's adaptation at each developmental stage determines personality growth. The resolution of the conflict at each stage determines the course of personality development. In each stage it is necessary to positively resolve the life crisis at that stage if the next stage is to be resolved successfully. In the early childhood years, the child progresses through the stages of trust versus mistrust, autonomy versus shame and doubt, initiative versus guilt and industry versus inferiority. Psychosocial theory helps parents and teachers understand young children's emotional and social needs and how adults can support positive outcomes in the child's development. The following is Erikson's stages of psychosocial development in the early childhood years and describes important adult behaviour that affects the child's resolution of each stage.

### **Psychosocial Stage 1 - Trust vs. Mistrust**

- The first stage of Erikson's theory of psychosocial development occurs between birth and one year of age and is the most fundamental stage in life.
- Because an infant is utterly dependent, the development of trust is based on the dependability and quality of the child's caregivers.
- If a child successfully develops trust, he or she will feel safe and secure in the world. Caregivers who are inconsistent, emotionally unavailable, or rejecting contribute to feelings of mistrust in the children they care for. Failure to develop trust will result in fear and a belief that the world is inconsistent and unpredictable.

### **Psychosocial Stage 2 - Autonomy vs. Shame and Doubt**

- The second stage of Erikson's theory of psychosocial development takes place during early childhood and is focused on children developing a greater sense of personal control.<sup>2</sup>
- Like Freud, Erikson believed that toilet training was a vital part of this process. However, Erikson's reasoning was quite different than that of Freud's. Erikson believed that learning to control one's body functions leads to a feeling of control and a sense of independence.
- Other important events include gaining more control over food choices, toy preferences, and clothing selection.
- Children who successfully complete this stage feel secure and confident, while those who do not are left with a sense of inadequacy and self-doubt.

### **Psychosocial Stage 3 - Initiative vs. Guilt**

- During the preschool years, children begin to assert their power and control over the world through directing play and other social interaction.

- Children who are successful at this stage feel capable and able to lead others. Those who fail to acquire these skills are left with a sense of guilt, self-doubt and lack of

#### **Psychosocial Stage 4 - Industry vs. Inferiority**

- This stage covers the early school years from approximately age 5 to 11.
- Through social interactions, children begin to develop a sense of pride in their accomplishments and abilities.
- Children who are encouraged and commended by parents and teachers develop a feeling of competence and belief in their skills. Those who receive little or no encouragement from parents, teachers, or peers will doubt their ability to be successful.

#### **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

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#### **Social Development Theories**

John Bowlby proposed one of the earliest theories of social development. Bowlby believed that early relationships with caregivers play a major role in child development and continue to influence social relationships throughout life. John Bowlby is best known on Attachment Theory. He devoted extensive research to the concept of attachment, describing it as a "lasting psychological connectedness between human beings" (Bowlby, 1969). Bowlby shared the psychoanalytic view that early experiences in childhood have an important influence on development and behavior later in life. Our early attachment styles are established in childhood through the infant/caregiver relationship. In addition to this, Bowlby believed that attachment had an evolutionary component; it aids in survival. "The propensity to make strong emotional bonds to particular individuals is a basic component of human nature" (Bowlby, 1988).

Bowlby believed that there are four distinguishing characteristics of attachment:

1. **Proximity Maintenance** - The desire to be near the people we are attached to.
2. **Safe Haven** - Returning to the attachment figure for comfort and safety in the face of a fear or threat.
3. **Secure Base** - The attachment figure acts as a base of security from which the child can explore the surrounding environment.
4. **Separation Distress** - Anxiety that occurs in the absence of the attachment figure.

During the 1970's, psychologist Mary Ainsworth further expanded upon Bowlby's groundbreaking work in her now-famous "Strange Situation" study. The study involved observing children between the ages of 12 to 18 months responding to a situation in which they were briefly left alone and then reunited with their mother (Ainsworth, 1978).

Based on these observations, Ainsworth concluded that there were three major styles of attachment: secure attachment, ambivalent-insecure attachment, and avoidant-insecure attachment. Main and Solomon (1986) added a fourth attachment style known as disorganized-insecure attachment.

**Characteristics of Secure Attachment:** Children who are securely attached generally become visibly upset when their caregivers leave, and are happy when they return. When frightened, these children will seek comfort from the parent or caregiver. Contact initiated by a parent is readily accepted by securely attached children and they greet the return of a parent with positive behavior. While these children can be comforted to some extent by other people in the absence of a parent or caregiver, they clearly prefer parents to strangers.

Parents of securely attached children tend to play more with their children. Additionally, these parents react more quickly to their children's needs and are generally more responsive to their children than the parents of insecurely attached children. Studies have shown that securely attached children are more empathetic during later stages of childhood. These children are also described as less disruptive, less aggressive, and more mature than children with ambivalent or avoidant attachment styles.

**Characteristics of Ambivalent Attachment:** Children who are ambivalently attached tend to be extremely suspicious of strangers. These children display considerable distress when separated from a parent or caregiver, but do not seem reassured or comforted by the return of the parent. In some cases, the child might passively reject the parent by refusing comfort, or may openly display direct aggression toward the parent.

**Characteristics of Avoidant Attachment:** Children with avoidant attachment styles tend to avoid parents and caregivers. This avoidance often becomes especially pronounced after a period of absence. These children might not reject attention from a parent, but neither do they seek our comfort or contact. Children with an avoidant attachment show no preference between a parent and a complete stranger.

**Characteristics of Disorganized Attachment:** Children with a disorganized-insecure attachment style show a lack of clear attachment behavior. Their actions and responses to caregivers are often a mix of behaviors, including avoidance or resistance. These children are described as displaying dazed behavior, sometimes seeming either confused or apprehensive in the presence of a caregiver. Main and Solomon (1986) proposed that inconsistent behavior on the part of parents might be a contributing factor in this style of attachment. In later research, Main and Hesse (1990) argued that parents who act as figures of both fear and reassurance to a child contribute to a disorganized attachment style. Because the child feels both comforted and frightened by the parent, confusion results.

### **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

- Describe John Bowlby's contribution to social development theory

### **3.5 Ecological Systems Theory**

Urie Bronfenbrenner (1917-2005) developed the ecological systems theory to explain how culture and the child's environment affect how a child grows and develops. He labeled different aspects or levels of the environment that influence children's development, as the microsystem, the mesosystem, the exosystem, and the macrosystem. The child resides at the center of the systems [see figure below]. Interaction with the systems expands as the child develops and moves increasingly into the environment. The microsystem is the small, immediate environment the child lives in. Children's microsystem will include any immediate

relationships or organizations they interact with, such as their immediate family or caregivers and their school or daycare. How these groups or organizations interact with the child will have an effect on how the child grows; the more encouraging and nurturing these relationships and places are, the better the child will be able to grow.

The mesosystem reflects the interactions between the elements of the microsystem. It describes how the different parts of a child's microsystem work together for the sake of the child. For example, if a child's caregivers take an active role in a child's school, such as going to parent-teacher meetings and attending their child's inter-house sport competition, this will help ensure the child's overall growth. In contrast, if the child's parents disagree on how to best raise the child and give the child conflicting lessons when they see him, this will hinder the child's growth in different channels.

The exosystem level includes the other people and places that the child may not interact with often but still have a large effect on the child, such as parents' workplaces, extended family members, the neighborhood, mass media, etc. For example, if a child's parent gets laid off from work, that may have negative affects on the child if her parents are unable to pay rent or to buy groceries; however, if her parent receives a promotion and a raise at work, this may have a positive affect on the child because her parents will be better able to give her her physical needs.

The macrosystem reflects the culture of the larger community in which the child lives. It is the largest and most remote set of people and things to a child but which still has a great influence over the child. The macrosystem includes things such as the cultural values, the economy, wars, etc. These things can also affect a child either positively or negatively.

### **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

- Explain the influence of microsystem and mesosystem environment on child development

### **CONCLUSION**

You have been taken through various theories of child development. Each of the theories involves a different way of approaching child development. Maturational theory focuses on physical and intellectual development, whereas psychoanalytic and psychosocial theories are concerned with social and emotional, or personality development. Behaviourist and social learning theories focus on intellectual and personality development. Each of the theories has relevance for child development and learning, however, none offers a complete explanation for all aspects of development (Seefeldt and Barbour 1998).

### **SUMMARY**

In this unit, you have learnt the major theories of child development. You have learnt that for behaviouristic theories the critical factors in growth and development are the environment and the opportunity to learn. For maturationists, they believe that development is a biological process that occurs automatically in predictable, sequential stages over time. Constructivist theorist proposed that children construct knowledge from interaction with the environment. Psychoanalytic theory is of the view that sexual energy is the force that influences

children's behaviour and that children progress through a series of psychosexual stages. Psychosocial theory proposes that the child's personality development is strongly determined by social context such as the family and school and that the individual's interaction with environmental influences within eight life stages and that the individual's adaptation at each developmental stage determines personality growth. Social development theory believes that early relationships with caregivers play a major role in child development. Ecological systems theory explains how culture and the child's environment affect how a child grows and develops. Each of the theories involves a different way of approaching child development. Maturational theory focuses on physical and intellectual development, whereas psychoanalytic and psychosocial theories are concerned with social and emotional, or personality development. Behaviourist and social learning theories focus on intellectual and personality development. Each of the theories has relevance for child development and learning, however, none offers a complete explanation for all aspects of development (Seefeldt and Barbour 1998).

### **TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

1. Discuss and compare the influence of psychoanalytic and psychosocial theories on child development
2. Describe the major tenets of ecological systems theory
3. Different theorists suggest that children normally progress through various stages of development. Name some of the theorists and describe the stages they discuss
4. How can knowledge of theories of child development help explain stages of development in children from birth to age eight?

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### **MODULE 2: STAGES OF CHILD GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT (FROM BIRTH TO EIGHT YEARS)**

As you are already aware, the years from birth to age eight are described as the early childhood years. This period of life is most significant in terms of development. Development is more rapid during this period than during any other period in the life span. Understanding how infants and young children develop physically, cognitively and socially and how they acquire language and literacy is necessary for adults who are rearing, providing care for and planning

learning experiences for children during this period. Early childhood is a time of tremendous growth across all areas of development. The dependent newborn grows into a young person who can take care of his or her own body and interact effectively with others. Every child is a unique person with an individual temperament, learning style, family background, and pattern and timing of growth. There are, however, universal, predictable sequences of growth and change that occur during the first eight years of life. As children develop, they need different types of stimulation and interaction to exercise their evolving skills and to develop new ones. At every age, meeting basic health and nutritional needs is essential. Genetic factors play a major role in determining the growth rate, and particularly the changes in proportion characteristic of early child development. However, genetic factors can produce the maximum growth only if environmental conditions are adequate. Poor nutrition and frequent injury and disease can reduce the individual's adult stature. Conversely, but the best environment cannot cause growth to a greater stature than is determined by heredity.

In this module we shall discuss how children (from birth-8 years) grow and develop physically, cognitively (mentally), socially, emotionally, morally and how they acquire language. Each aspect of development is treated under the following developmental stages: infancy stage (birth-one year), toddlerhood stage (one-three years), preschool stage (three-five years), and primary school age (five-eight years). External indicators of development, such as changes in height and weight, are more noticeable than internal indicators such as thinking and emotional skills. Therefore we shall rely on As a result, our child development series focuses on the work of four theorists: Erikson, Kohlberg, Piaget, and Bronfenbrenner, to explain the more subtle changes that occur inside a child's mind with regard to cognitive, moral and emotional development.

It also describes how the developmental stages affect the way in which the child learns. The work of developmental theorists, as described in module 1 unit 5, applies to explanations of development in this module. The topics under this module are organized into five units as follows:

- Unit 1: Physical Development at various stages of early childhood years
- Unit 2: Cognitive Development at various stages of early childhood years
- Unit 3: Socio-emotional Development at various stages of early childhood years
- Unit 4: Moral Development at various stages of early childhood years
- Unit 5: Language Development at various stages of early childhood years

## **Unit 1: Physical Development**

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- 5.0 Summary
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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Physical development means the changes in size and use of the muscles and skeletal structures for movement and other activities. As a child grows from birth, certain changes in appearance and size can be noticed. These include increase in height, weight and use of the parts of the body for different activities. For instance, at birth, a child is only able to make feeble (gentle) movements like kicking of legs. Within weeks, the child is able to turn the head and eyes towards the direction of something interesting. In a few months as the child changes in size, such movements become more active and purposeful. Indeed, change in activity is the striking thing about infancy and can be described in stages according to the age of the child. At every stage of physical development of the child, there is need to provide the right kind of stimulation, environment and care to help the child develop properly. In this unit, we shall learn more about the physical development of the child from birth to eight years and how to assist the child.

## **2.0 OBJECTIVES:**

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

- Define physical development
- Identify and describe the physical development of the child at various stages of early childhood years from birth to eight years
- Explain the educational implicational of physical development for early childhood education

## **2.0 MAIN CONTENT**

### **3.1 Physical development at the Infancy Stage (birth-one year)**

The infant's physical development is rapid, although there are great variations in rate and style. At birth, infants have a grasping reflex. At first they grasp and release things they accidentally touch as they wave their arms and legs about. These movements become refined as they gain control over eye, hand and leg muscles and movement. They are also learning to raise their heads, arch their bodies, and flex their legs. At two to five months, babies can be propped up in a sitting position. By four to six months, they roll over, and between six and eight months, they can sit up unattended. Crawling and creeping usually begin between seven and ten months. Some babies will begin to stand when held by the adult and take their first steps alone around eleven to twelve months. By their first birthday, they triple their birth weight and acquire mobility skills that include crawling, standing and walking.

Rapid physical growth is intertwined with other types of development, because now the baby can use hands, eyes, ears, mouth and body to explore and test the environment (You will recall what we discussed in module 1 unit 4 about the wholesomeness of growth and development). The infancy period is Freud's oral stage of development, where the greater part of children's energy is spent exploring the world through oral activities like tasting, biting and spitting. The infant learns to sit, crawl, stand, and perhaps walk. Fine motor development allows the child to

explore and manipulate toys and other objects by putting them in the mouth and performing actions that permit learning the physical properties. The baby is very interested in his or her body while practicing motor skills such as rocking on hands and knees or clapping. The child may begin to feed him- or herself and imitates the physical actions of other family members.

Over time, they learn to move their body parts voluntarily to perform both gross (large) and fine (small) motor skills. Gross motor development is also referred to as the large muscle development. It involves the ability of the child to throw and catch such things as balls, bags, pillows and other objects. It also relates to the child's ability to run, jump, climb, walk, push, pull and do all other activities that require the movement of the body. In general, babies begin developing motor skills from the center of the body outward and from head to tail. They learn to control their head and neck before they learn to maneuver their arms; they learn to maneuver their arms before they learn to manipulate their fingers.

Educational implications: Babies' senses can be stimulated in many ways: listening to caregivers speaking, looking at different objects and colors, and playing with toys that have different textures. Babies literally need touch and affection from caregivers in order to grow and to thrive properly. Babies who do not receive appropriate touch and affection may ultimately have developmental problems.

Teaching children about healthy lifestyles and promoting a positive body image is vitally important at this age.

### **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

- Name seven gross motor skills and five fine motor skills that a child can perform at the infancy stage

### **3.3 Physical development at Toddlerhood Stage (one-three years)**

Toddlers start to walk between twelve and fifteen months and usually retain a wobbly gait until eighteen months. By the end of two years, they are able to walk without assistance and run. They develop climbing skills and can climb up and down stairs, holding onto the railing and advancing the same footstep at a time. They can grasp pencil and crayons to scribble. Hand preference (left/right handedness) starts to emerge about this time. Toddlers, if permitted can do some parts of dressing themselves and like to try. Children at this stage become interested in the whole process of the bodily function of elimination. Toddler hood reflects the Freudian anal developmental stage and Erikson's stage of autonomy (see module 1 unit 5). Freud suggests that the energy children expend at this stage is related to the anal area and is manifested by their fascination with their ability to hold on or to let go, thus beginning control over bodily functions.

In their first 2 years, infants and toddlers achieve more physical growth and development than in any other period of their childhood. During the second year, they practice and refine mobility skills. Motor development proceeds in proximodistal development i.e. from the center of the body out to the fingers. Cephalocaudal development emerges from top of the body down to the legs. Fine and gross motor developments are controlled through biological maturation and stimulation and opportunities for physical activities. Teething begins at about 7 months and is completed at 3 years, when the full set of baby teeth has erupted. Bladder and bowel control are not achieved until age 2 and half years or 3 years.

Motor development is the development of the ability to control and coordinate the movement of the various parts of the body.

### **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

- Mention six physical skills a child of two years can perform

#### **3.4 Physical development at Preschool Stage (three-five years)**

As previously pointed out, the preschool age is the period prior to entering into primary school. As children move from toddler hood to the preschool years, they begin to lose their chubby appearance. Their bodies become more proportional as they get taller and thinner. In a slower rate of growing, they gain about three pounds a year and grow approximately two and a half inches. Preschoolers have an extremely high energy level. Children at this stage become agile at climbing, running, and jumping. They acquire some mastery-marked time climbing of stairs to using alternative feet when both ascending and descending. Preschoolers gain more fine motor control to develop skills in drawing, cutting, coloring, and pasting. They can put on and remove some clothing items and they enjoy using their developing fine motor skills to become independent. Indoor and outdoor play environment can provide opportunities for practice of motor skills. They are constantly on the move outdoors as they ride tricycles, move up and down play structures, learn to pump a swing and run in the play ground while pretend playing. Rough and tumble play occurs particularly in boys (DiPietro, 1981), whereas girls are more likely to enjoy using fine motor skills in for example, scribbling or playing with puzzles. When playing outdoors, boys are more active than girls and use more space in their play. Girls are more likely to prefer indoor play using fine motor skills in manipulative or art activities (Wortham, 2006).

Educational implication: Teachers and caregivers can facilitate physical development by providing daily opportunities for gross motor play both indoors and outdoors. In addition to providing space and equipment for gross motor exercise, Many manipulative toys attract preschoolers to engage in fine motor activities. Teachers and caregivers need to provide a selection of puzzles, small construction toys, and art media that will entice young children to work with fine motor skills. They should provide support and encouragement through activities that permit the child to enjoy the process.

### **SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

- Describe the physical development of preschool stage

#### **3.5 Physical development at primary school age (five-eight years)**

During the primary years, children vary greatly in height and weight. They gain better control of their bodies as they continue to refine their gross and fine motor skills. They can hop, skip, climb, jump, run and dance and depending on their social and cultural context some begin participating in sports like bicycling. Their fine motor skills are developed so they can write, although not necessarily on the line or in a restricted space. Letters are not uniform and reversals are still common.

Educational implication: Children at the primary school years need opportunities for running, jumping, bicycling and learning sports.

**SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

- Briefly describe the physical development of a seven year old child

**CONCLUSION**

Physical development is more rapid during the early childhood years than during any other period in the lifespan. In this unit you have learnt how children develop physically during the early childhood years from birth to eight years. You have also learnt how the changes occur at different stages of development during this period starting from infancy stage, toddlerhood stage, preschool stage and primary school stage. Early childhood educators need to understand the stages of physical development in order to know what is expected as the child passes through the various stages.

**SUMMARY**

In this unit you have learnt the physical developmental characteristics of the child from birth through eight years of age. The following table summarizes what you have learnt in the unit:

**Summary of physical development of children from birth to eight years of age**

<b>Physical Development</b>	
Infant Birth - 1 yr	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Explores the world through the five senses.</li> <li>- At two months, eyes can fixate and baby can look around.</li> <li>- By four months head controlling muscles develop and can hold up head.</li> <li>- Can grasp objects and let go at six months.</li> <li>- First tooth appears around seven months.</li> <li>- Sits well alone, can turn and recover balance (six to eight months).</li> <li>- Starts to crawl at six months and to creep at nine to ten months.</li> <li>- May begin walking.</li> </ul>
Toddler 1-3 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Begins to develop many motor skills.</li> <li>- Teething continues to about eighteen months, all twenty teeth by 2 years.</li> <li>- Large muscles develop. Can crawl well and stand alone</li> <li>- Starts to walk about fifteen months</li> <li>- Fine motor skills develop. Starts to use spoon, scribbles with crayon</li> <li>- Hand preference starts to emerge.</li> </ul>
Preschool 3-5 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Expansion of physical skills.</li> <li>- Walks stairs with alternating feet.</li> <li>- Can climb, run, jump</li> <li>- Expanding fine motor skills</li> </ul>
Primary school age 5-8 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Can skip, hop, climb</li> <li>- Greater control of fine motor skills. Beginning to use tools, such as toothbrush, saws, scissors, pencils, hammers, and needles for sewing.</li> <li>- Handedness well established</li> <li>- Beginning to lose teeth (six years).</li> </ul>

## **TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

1. What do you understand by physical development
2. Describe the pace of physical development between the ages of 3 and 5
3. Explain briefly the educational implication of physical development for early childhood education

## **REFERENCE/ FURTHER READING**

### **Unit 2: Cognitive Development**

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  - 3.3 Implication of cognitive development for early childhood education
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
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### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Young children are not only growing physically, but they are also growing cognitively [mentally]. Cognitive development refers to the inner process and products of the mind that lead to knowledge. It includes all mental activities, namely remembering, symbolizing, categorizing, problem solving, creating, fantasizing and even dreaming. Cognition is an integrated set of reasoning ability that develops together: and can be applied to any task. Major cognitive advances take place as children act directly on the physical world, discover the shortcomings of their current ways of thinking and revise them to create a better fit with external reality. Cognitive development of a child is the same as his mental and intellectual development.

This unit contains a description of the child's cognitive development from birth to age eight and also describes how the developmental stages affect the way in which the child learns.

We are going to base our discussion on Jean Piaget's cognitive development theory as a way to explain the stages of the child's cognitive development. Piaget proposed a stage theory to explain how a child progresses from one stage to the other. Cognitive development involves changes in cognitive process and abilities. In Piaget's view, early cognitive development involves processes based upon actions and later progresses into changes in mental operations.

When teachers and caregivers understand the stages of cognitive development of the child, they will be able to look for avenues to provide learning experiences to help the child.

## **2.0 OBJECTIVES:**

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

- Define cognitive development
- Identify and describe the cognitive development of the child at various stages of early childhood years from birth to eight years
- Explain the educational implications of cognitive development for early childhood education

## **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

### **3.1 Cognitive development during infancy stage (birth-1 year)**

The infant is at the sensorimotor stage of Piaget's cognitive development. During this stage, infants learn about their world by interacting with it through their senses [touch, taste, smell, hearing, and sight]. Piaget maintained that children at the sensorimotor stage are relying on behavioural schemata as a means of exploring and understanding the environment. Schemas are categories of knowledge that help us to interpret and understand the world. For example, a child may have a schema about a type of animal, such as a dog. If the child's sole experience has been with small dogs, a child might believe that all dogs are small, furry, and have four legs. Suppose then that the child encounters a very large dog. The child will take in this new information, modifying the previously existing schema to include this new information.

The child learns that he is separate from his environment and that aspects of his environment—his parents or favorite toy—continue to exist even though they may be outside the reach of his senses. The child understands the environment purely through inborn reflexes.

The understanding of objects also begins during this time and children begin to recognize certain objects as having specific qualities. A child might realize that a rattle will make a sound when shaken. They also understand object permanence. That is, they understand that objects continue to exist even when they can't see them.

Educational implication: It is important for caregivers to keep babies' environments clear of dangerous objects such as small objects or poisonous substances. As babies actively make sense of the information they take in through their senses, this process has an actual effect on the quality of their brain development. Babies that are properly stimulated, cared for, and loved actually develop better than babies who are neglected. Babies literally need touch and affection from caregivers in order to grow and to thrive properly. Babies who do not receive appropriate touch and affection may ultimately have developmental problems. Babies' senses can be stimulated in many ways: listening to caregivers speaking, looking at different objects and colors, and playing with toys that have different textures.

Oswalt [2008] suggests that teaching for a child in this stage should be geared to the sensorimotor system. Caregivers can modify behavior by using the senses: a frown, a stern or soothing voice—all serve as appropriate techniques

### **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

- Describe specific behaviours that indicate cognitive development of an infant child

### **3.2 Cognitive development during toddlerhood stage (1-3 years)**

At the toddlerhood stage, the child enters the early part of preoperational stage of cognitive development, hence preoperational in thinking, that is, they can use symbolism or pretending. They are able to represent object and events mentally. However, they are controlled by their perceptions. They focus on appearances. They are also limited in that they center on one characteristic at a time and see things from their own egocentric point of view. Symbolic thought allows the child to mentally picture things that are not present. Young children who have achieved symbolic function can use art experiences especially scribbling, to represent things in their environment, such as houses, trees, flowers and people. Symbolism also allows them to engage in pretend play. Egocentrism in this sub-stage results in the child's inability to distinguish between his own perspective and the perspective of another child or adult. In play, the child assumes that other children share his feelings and thoughts. The child may have difficulty relating to another child's ideas or emotions that are different from his own. Children in the symbolic function sub-stage also believe that inanimate objects are alive and capable of action. Thus, they are likely to think for example, that clouds are propelling themselves in the sky. They might also believe that a rock or tree can take action or cause something to happen.

During this stage children are extremely egocentric, meaning they cannot perceive the world from others' viewpoints.

For example, children in the Preoperational stage can understand that a picture of a shiny red fruit represents an apple, even though a real apple is not in front of them. However, the Preoperational child's abstract thinking skills are not fully developed, so they still sometimes rely on concrete evidence to learn.

### **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

- Describe cognitive development at toddlerhood stage

### **3.3 Cognitive development during preschool stage (3-5 years)**

At the preschool stage the child enters the preoperational stage of cognitive development. Children also become increasingly adept at using symbols, as evidenced by the increase in playing and pretending. A preoperational child is able to use an object to represent something else, such as pretending a broom is a horse. Role-playing also becomes important during the preoperational stage. Children often play the roles of "mommy," "daddy," "doctor," and many others at this stage.

Piaget also believed that Preoperational children have a style of thinking characterized by Egocentrism, i.e. the inability to see the world from someone else's point of view. According to

Piaget, children with Egocentrism explain situations from their own perspective and understanding. Piaget used a number of creative and clever techniques to study the mental abilities of children. One of the famous techniques **egocentrism** involved using a three-dimensional display of a mountain scene. Children are asked to choose a picture that showed the scene they had observed. Most children are able to do this with little difficulty. Next, children are asked to select a picture showing what *someone else* would have observed when looking at the mountain from a different viewpoint. Invariably, children almost always choose the scene showing *their own* view of the mountain scene. According to Piaget, children experience this difficulty because they are unable to take on another person's perspective.

Another well-known experiment involves demonstrating a child's understanding of **conservation**. Conservation is a person's ability to understand that certain physical characteristics of objects remain the same, even if their appearance has changed. In one conservation experiment, equal amounts of liquid are poured into two identical containers. The liquid in one container is then poured into a different shaped cup, such as a tall and thin cup, or a short and wide cup. Children are then asked which cup holds the most liquid. Despite seeing that the liquid amounts were equal, children tend to choose the cup that appears fuller. Piaget conducted a number of similar experiments on conservation of number, length, mass, weight, volume, and quantity. Piaget found that few children showed any understanding of conservation prior to the age of five.

Educational implication: Learning environment has to be stimulating and conducive to children's needs of exploration, experimentation, observation and pleasure. The provision of such stimulating environment allows children to learn concepts and skills necessary for life through play. The child should be moved gradually towards understanding the concepts of class, time, space, quality as they develop from the pre-operational to concrete operational stage. The child needs to be exposed to music, moulding, drama and colouring in order to develop creativity. As long as the child is exposed to many educational materials and experiences, skills are developed and the child is being prepared for primary school.

### **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

- What do you understand by egocentricism?

### **3.4 Cognitive development during primary school age (5-8 years)**

Between the ages of 5 and 8, children move from the preoperational stage of cognitive development into the concrete operational stage. Some current researchers disagree with Piaget's position that concrete operations occur at about age 7 and have demonstrated that some children can achieve conservation at much earlier age. As young children make the transition to concrete operations, the quality of their thinking changes. They cease evaluating situation based on perception and begin to use logic and mental operations to understand their experiences. The ability to conserve is the central characteristics that signals the child's achievement of the concrete operational stage. Whether the conservation activity involves number, mass, length, volume or any other type of quantity, the child who can conserve understands that the physical appearance, of something does not change its quantity.

Between the age of 4 and 7, the preoperational child enters the intuitive thought sub-stage, when primitive reasoning begins. The child's thought process is changing from one symbolic

thinking to intuitive, or inner thinking. The child can organize objects into primitive collection but is unable to use categories of classification in a consistent manner. As a result, the child might start organizing an array of objects by a color or move to arranging by shape or size. This primitive system of organizations caused by centration. The child tends to center or focus on one characteristics or attribute. Two attributes cannot be considered at one time. As a result the child may change from one attribute to another when trying to organize a group of objects. Once the child is able to move beyond centering levels of thought characteristic of the concrete operational stage-such as classification and seriation-can emerge (Berk, 2001; Santrock, 2002). John Flavell has studied cognitive development for many years. He is particularly interested in preschoolers' understanding of mental experiences. Flavell has found that preschoolers have limited understanding about thinking and introspection. For example, 4 year olds believe that the mind is capable of using many thought in many directions at once. Likewise, they might be unaware of their own ongoing thought activities (Flavell & Hartman, 2004; Lillard & Currenton, 1999). Although preschoolers have acquired some basic knowledge about mental experiences, there is much more for them to learn. Children between the ages of 2 and 5 need opportunities to explore. Parents and caregivers can provide experiences for cognitive development through excursion nearby environment as well as trips of longer books, picture and concrete materials related to concepts in their world. Activities with materials combined with conversation facilitate their process of sorting out and internalizing information and ideas.

Children in this sub-stage of development learn by asking questions such as, "Why?" and "How come?" Piaget labeled this "intuitive thought".

Educational implication: In teaching a child at this stage, giving him the opportunity to ask questions and to explain things back to you allows him to mentally manipulate information.

### **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

- Briefly describe the cognitive development of a preschool child

### **3.5 Implication of Cognitive Development for Early Childhood Education**

In Maduewesi [1999] the following implications are identified:

- a) When to teach: Piaget states that cognitive structures are developed in an invariant sequence, that is to say that the course of cognitive development is the same for all children, though the ages at which they develop or attain particular structures, may vary with intelligence and the social environment. This suggests that curriculum sequences can be designed with children's changing cognitive status in mind. If curricula do not take account children's level of conceptual development, learning would be insufficient. According to Piaget, a child is ready to develop particular concept when and only when he has acquired the schemata that are necessary. Nigerian parents, especially the more educated ones who tend to push their young children too early into primary school should note the implication of their action. Knowledge and skill taught at the right time stand a good chance of being mastered and used maximally.
- b) Teaching methods materials: Piaget's theory suggests that teaching methods and materials should be consistent with children's level of cognitive development.
- c) Social interaction with peers: Peer interactions become important with respect to cognitive development when the child is able to assimilate the views of others, which

differ from his own. Thus, peer interactions are important from the time the child enters school as an effective way of generating cognitive conflicts which force the child to evaluate his own thinking and concepts during, for instance role playing, games and group play. Peer pressure is a factor in reducing egocentric behaviour.

- d) School Practice: As much as possible, actual objects should be provided for the child to use, otherwise representation of objects. Plenty of opportunity and encouragement for exploration and experimentation should be provided. Asking of questions should be encouraged while relevant and logical answers must be provided. These enable the child's horizon to extend and accommodate experience and greater interaction with the environment. All these stimulate the development of new structures and enriched cognitive growth.

### SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

- As a teacher what advice can you give a parent who is considering sending her under aged child to primary one

### CONCLUSION

In this unit you have learnt how children develop mentally during the early childhood years from birth to eight years. You have also learnt how the changes occur at different stages of development during this period starting from infancy stage, toddlerhood stage, preschool stage and primary school stage. Development during each period has its own competences. Learning experiences provided by caregivers for each period need to complement the individual characteristics of each child. Understanding how to match development with learning experiences is the key to successful schooling in preschool and primary grades.

### SUMMARY

In this unit you have learnt the cognitive development characteristics of the child from birth through eight years of age. The following table summarizes what you have learnt in the unit:

#### Summary of cognitive development of children from birth to eight years of age

Cognitive Development	
Infant Birth - 1 yr	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Discriminate mother from others very early.</li> <li>- Later discriminate familiar faces from strangers (five to eight months).</li> <li>- Explores world through looking, mouthing and grasping.</li> <li>- Between six and twelve months beginning of object permanence</li> <li>- Becomes increasingly curious about surroundings.</li> </ul>
Toddler 1-3 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Achieves symbolic function</li> <li>- Ascribes human quality to inanimate objects</li> <li>- Object permanence completed by end of period.</li> </ul>
Preschool 3-5 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Beginning problem-solving skills</li> <li>- Adept at using symbols</li> <li>- Egocentric thinking persists.</li> <li>- Begins to sort out fantasy from reality.</li> </ul>
Primary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Beginning of conservation of amount, quantity, length</li> </ul>

school age 5-8 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Knows most colors.</li> <li>- Recognizes one can get meaning from the printed word.</li> <li>- Interested in conclusions and logical ends.</li> <li>- Reads well and really enjoys reading (seven to eight).</li> </ul>
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## **TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

1. What do you understand by cognitive development
2. Describe the cognitive development of children from 3 to 8 years
3. How does knowledge of cognitive development inform what learning experiences to include for children aged 5-8 years

## **REFERENCE/ FURTHER READING**

Seefeldt, C. and Barbour, N. (1998). *Early Childhood Education: An Introduction*. New York: Prentice-Hall, Inc.

Worham S.C (2006). *Early Childhood Curriculum: Developmental Bases for Learning and Teaching*. New York: Pearson Prentice Hall

### **Unit 3:        Socio-Emotional Development**

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### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

The development of a child's ability to feel, express feelings and relate to others is referred to as socio-emotional development. Socio-emotional development embodies two different but related developmental aspect of the child. These are: the social development which has to do with the child's ability to relate to others and acquire socio-cultural attitude, and emotional development which has to do with the child's ability to feel and react to feelings. The combination of these two results in the personality of the child.

The foundation of the personality of the child is laid at the early childhood years. It is during the early years that the child learns and develops skills that would help him/her control his/her feelings and get along with others.

Although children differ in temperament and behavior, the basic psychological needs of children in the early childhood years are similar, and all children go through certain stages or characteristics which are recognizable and sequential.

Socio-emotional developmental needs of children change as they grow older, and different experiences and activities are needed for different age levels. Knowledge of the needs and characteristics of children at the different ages is very essential for the planning of appropriate experiences that would promote their socio-emotional development.

There is a great deal of research on the social-emotional development of children. John Bowlby proposed one of the earliest theories of social development. Bowlby believed that early relationships with caregivers play a major role in child development and continue to influence social relationships throughout life. In addition to Bowlby's social development theory, we shall rely on Eric Erickson's psychosocial theory to explain the child's socio-emotional development.

## **2.0 OBJECTIVES:**

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

- Define socio-emotional development
- Identify and describe the socio-emotional development of the child at various stages of early childhood years from birth to eight years
- Explain the educational implication of socio-emotional development to early childhood education

## **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

### **3.1 Socio-emotional development during infancy stage [birth-1 year]**

Infants are intensely social, and their social development starts early. Newborns are able to distinguish faces and will gaze up at the caregiver who returns the gaze. Infants' first social interactions are extended as parents and other caregivers respond to their gazes, vocalizations and movements as if they intended to communicate. Some babies as early as three weeks smile and frown in imitation of the adult's expression. They can distinguish their mother's voice very early and respond to it. By six months, they like being played with. At about six to ten months, the once-social infant may suddenly become wary of strangers.

The baby enjoys increasing social interactions with others. Babbling, smiling and making gestures such as waving are used to initiate and respond to social encounters. The baby also uses gestures and tone of voice to communicate wants and needs.

Infants demonstrate emotional development when they cry from pain or discomfort. Crying is differentiated to indicate hunger, wetness, and cold. Babies show their emotions by kicking, arm waving and making facial expressions as they begin to hug, kiss and chew or even bite on

something to show their affection. They also show their fear or dislike for people or things by cringing, pulling away or biting. Emotions are temporary and change suddenly.

A key moment in early childhood socio-emotional development occurs around one year of age. This is the time when attachment formation becomes critical. The emotional tie between infant and parent or caregiver is called attachment. A positive attachment is crucial in the social and emotional development of the infant and toddler. Attachment theory suggests that individual differences in later life functioning and personality are shaped by a child's early experiences with their caregivers.

Because infants are in a stage of trust versus mistrust [see Erickson's psychosocial theory module 1 unit 5], adults can enhance a positive outlook and confidence by providing a dependable, consistent environment in which they can flourish. Babies need to experience continuity and security in their daily lives that will allow them to become explorers and discoverers.

### **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

- Describe the process of attachment formation at the infancy stage

### **3.2 Socio-emotional Development during toddler stage [1-3 years]**

The child has interest in watching other children. He had earlier played alone, but now begins parallel play and is still shy towards strangers. He tries to resist adult influence, is self-assertive especially among peers.

Erikson (1963) defines the stage as one of autonomy, emphasizing the social aspects of development. Children want to move out and let go of their secure environment, but they still want to cling to that security.

Socialization skills develop during this period from a meager sense of self to separating self from others. At eighteen months toddlers begin to separate themselves from others and by two they have even become rather possessive of their toys, parents and things that are their own. They are happy to play by themselves and can be quite self-absorbed. Toddlers will obey commands but they're often distracted by the motor activity involved. The toddler wants to do things by him/herself but in a safe way. By two, toddlers are ready to give up their mother as a playmate and are delighted to play beside a child of their own age. This play tends to be side-by-side rather than social with each child having his or her own toys and playing happily without interacting, but enjoying the company of another child.

One year olds seem rather amiable, whereas eighteen month olds begin to resist events and two year olds express strong wishes and preferences. Emotional development is uneven during this time. Emotions go from one extreme to another. Toddlers can be exuberant one moment, laughing or showing affection and the next moment hitting and kicking. Suddenly the eighteen months old will not let his mother out of sight. By two years there are often a great many 'nos' as well as negative behaviour and willfulness. Other emotions are beginning to develop. Toddlers begin to show pity, sympathy and a growing sense of caring. Two year olds don't like to see another cry, and will often put their arms around the baby they have just walloped.

saying, 'don't cry, don't cry'. At eighteen months there is no sense of guilt, but by two, a child may have a look of being sorry.

According to Erickson, toddlers in the autonomy versus shame and doubt stage (ages 1 to 3 years), either develop the confidence to try new things; or become unsure of their abilities and withdraw from initiating new activities. Engagement in or withdrawal from new activities depends on the type of support and nurturing the child received from caregivers.

## **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

- Briefly describe the socio-emotional development of the child at toddlerhood stage

### **3.3 Socio-emotional Development during preschool stage [3-5 years]**

As young children leave toddlerhood behind, they also begin to mature in their ability to interact with others socially. We get ideas regarding the social behaviour of the preschool child from the theories of Erikson and Piaget. After the age of two, young children's social horizon begins to expand, some are taken to day-care centers, others to nursery schools may begin to visit friends and relatives and to interact more with neighbors. The child at this age requires more social reassurance and assume the social roles of interacting with peers, which are called for in the social atmosphere in which the child now increasingly finds himself. This is a period of self-assertion, especially about the age of four and adults whether as teachers or caregivers, should recognize this social need for recognition and so provide the child the opportunity for recognition. Piaget's theory of cognitive development describes the egocentric nature of behaviour of the pre-operational child aged approximately 2-7. a major feature of this egocentrism is the child's inability to take another person's point of view and to imagine how other people would feel. An obvious implication is that the child is self-centered and makes himself the beginning and end of social needs and interests. Play behaviour is dominated by individual interest but this reduces as the child grows older when he or she begins to accommodate others more willingly as he or she learns to appreciate and need others' company. Friendship is very limited initially and of the same sex. Rivalry and competition develop as the children begin to value social recognition and so compete for limited adult approval. Egocentrism certainly generates a great deal of friction as the child struggles to keep everything for himself and becomes frustrated since the friction helps to disintegrate egocentrism forcing the child to accommodate others view, needs and wishes. Generosity as a behaviour trait, which was non-existent now begins to appear so does role taking which is a direct experience in being other people. A closer more detailed examination of the pre-school child's social behaviour may reveal the details as follows.

From ages three to five, growth in socio-emotional skills includes the formation of peer relationships, gender identification, and the development of a sense of right and wrong. Taking the perspective of another individual is difficult for young children, and events are often interpreted in all-or-nothing terms, with the impact on the child being the fore-most concern. For example, at age five a child may expect others to share their possessions freely but still be extremely possessive of a favorite toy. This creates no conflict of conscience, because *fairness* is determined relative to the child's own interests.

Ages 3-5: At three, he is unwillingly to share anything with others, but gradually begins to accept suggestions. He identifies with the mother in a kind of we-feeling, occasionally the three year old likes to play the baby but one can see imitative behaviour developing. By age three and half, he is beginning to develop friendship with peers and at the same time discriminates against others who do not belong. By the time he is four and half to five, he is maturing and shows this behaviour in mothering younger siblings such as showing the three year old where to sit or explaining to the newly arrived nursery school child how things are done. The child of this age is more obedient and sociable and he consciously goes out seeking sweet and pleasant.

From ages three to five, growth in socio-emotional skills includes the formation of peer relationships, gender identification, and the development of a sense of right and wrong. Taking the perspective of another individual is difficult for young children, and events are often interpreted in all-or-nothing terms, with the impact on the child being the fore-most concern. For example, at age five a child may expect others to share their possessions freely but still be extremely possessive of a favorite toy. This creates no conflict of conscience, because *fairness* is determined relative to the child's own interests. Between ages five and eight, children enter into a broader peer context and develop enduring friendships. Social comparison is heightened at this time, and taking other people's perspective begins to play a role in how children relate to people, including peers.

During the initiative versus guilt stage (ages 3 to 6 years), young children either develop a healthy sense of eagerness to tackle new tasks, join in activities with peers, and try things without the help of adults; or they develop a too-strict sense of self control and guilt related to their actions, and approach the world timidly and fearfully.

### **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

- As early childhood educator, how would you explain to parents the socio-emotional development of their 4-year old children

### **3.4 Socio-emotional development during primary school age (five-eight years)**

Children within this age range are entering the stage that Erikson called industry versus inferiority. Achievement and social acceptance become important parts of the child's life. If the child feels successful and achievement is a rewarding effort, then he develops a sense of industry. To the contrary if the child feels unsuccessful, unpopular and that he cannot succeed in achieving, then a sense of inferiority develops. Children's positive or negative self-images are affected by whether they are successful in social interactions.

This first year primary school child has become so socialized that he watches the mother's face moods and strives hard to be good, is ready to comply if this would promote harmony, especially with significant adults. With peers, he insists on being first in everything, is developing close same age, same sex friendship and at the same time discriminating against the opposite sex, sometimes describing them as strange.

Between ages five and eight, children enter into a broader peer context and develop enduring friendships. Social comparison is heightened at this time, and taking other people's perspective begins to play a role in how children relate to people, including peers.

Fives and sixes become increasingly social as they start to school. At this time many children will come in more contact with children from different cultures. How they form friendships and their ability to work in small groups instead of independently will initially depend on their previous experiences.

### **3.5 Implications of socio-emotional development for early childhood education**

The teacher who understands the social needs of the preschool child strives to help him or her out of the social restrictions imposed by egocentric thought earlier on. Social play and group practices should be encouraged also sharing and consideration for needs of others. Opportunity for wholesome social learning can be provided through, imitation of and reinforcement by significant adults, especially teachers and parents, observing and identifying with and trying to copy models, group activities. It should be noted that

- The teacher is more likely to teach desirable social behaviour by modeling it than by preaching. The research work of Bandura emphasizes the value of imitation in learning social behaviour.
- Because young boys are more likely to imitate male models than female ones, it is advisable to have male teachers in the nursery school at least as volunteers and occasional visitors.
- Socially desirable behaviours should be strongly and always reinforced to encourage their repetition.

It should be emphasized that the nursery school provides ideal opportunity to teach social skills at a time when they can be learned easily and last throughout the lifetime. Many of the features of the war against indiscipline such as taking turns in a queue, being patient, developing aesthetic sense and habits, learning cleanliness, which adults now find burdensome to learn, can be built into the routine and curriculum of every nursery and primary school in Nigeria, so that the children learn them painlessly at an impressionable age growing up and seeing them as natural practices of life. Taking turns or waiting until it is one's turn means that the child realizes or is made to realize that others have needs just like him or her. Engaging in role-play helps children to assume other people's position and or points of view. This literally opens their eyes to how others feel and live. Other important social skills include learning to be generous, helping others, discovering the value of co-operation, friendship, developing behaviour appropriate for one's sex.

The nursery school teacher should fully note that social skills and social competence are learned during the preschool period through

- Identifying with and emulating models, which they admire.
- Reinforcement, which encourages and discourages certain types of social behaviour.

We can summarize the important social skills which the nursery school should foster to include the following: learning to be generous, developing empathy, recognizing other's right and feelings, awareness that helping others creates good feelings, the joys of friendship, developing sex-appropriate behaviors among others.

Many children are not able to keep to the same thing for very long periods, but when they are interested they can concentrate on the same activity for reasonably long periods and resist distraction. However, some children never appear able to concentrate on anything or to settle down. Such children need help and the nursery school teacher can help such children to successful and satisfactory emotional development, by doing the following:

- Helping reduce frustration. Children's needs should be satisfied as fast as possible. They are usually impatient and their needs are urgent, but when the attending adult is sympathetic and attentive, such needs can be attended to promptly so the child feels valued and well cared for. It reduces frustration.
- The attending adult be she a nursery school teacher or paren, can verbalize the frustrated child's frustration to help the child know that others understand and feel with him or her, such as 'Uzo, it hurts to have your favourite doll burned in the fore, doesn't it? I am sorry, I know how sad you feel'. This described the child's feelingd helps the child express such feelings.
- The nursery school teacher should recognize emotional upset and try to treat it before it reaches the climax. There are usually many warning signs apart from crying such as reverting to less mature behaviour, hair twisting, nail biting, sighing deeply, thumb sucking, lethargy and withdrawing from activities. All the above are indicative of stress and should be so recognized, so that the child can be helped.
- The teacher or caretaker should know what to do when the child is emotionally upset. Short-term treatment is to comfort the child and then plan for a more long lasting solution. A quiet voice helps to calm the child down so also holding him close while using comforting words.
- Handling the emotional upset child. There are three feelings, which are experienced by the child when the mother leaves him in a strange place; they are grief, fear and anger. The teacher may recognize the first two but not the last and yet the nursery school teacher should be aware of this, so as to help the child overcome this through.

## CONCLUSION

In this unit you have learnt socio-emotional development during early childhood years from birth to eight years. You have also learnt how the socio-emotional changes occur at different stages of development during this period starting from infancy stage, toddlerhood stage, preschool stage and primary school stage. Development during each period has its own competences. Learning experiences provided by caregivers for each period need to complement the individual characteristics of each child.

Social and emotional development are significant during early childhood years because children have a need to become competent in social and learning interactions. In this unit you have learnt socio-emotional development during the early childhood years from birth to eight years. You have also learnt how socio-emotional changes occur at different stages of development during this period starting from infancy stage, toddlerhood stage, preschool stage and primary school stage.

## SUMMARY

In this unit you have learnt the socio-emotional developmental characteristics of the child from birth through eight years of age. The following table summarizes what you have learnt in the unit:

### **Summary of socio-emotional development of children from birth to eight years of age**

<b>Socio-emotional Development</b>	
Infant Birth - 1 yr	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Intensely social.</li> <li>- Attachment formation becomes critical</li> <li>- Recognizes mother or significant caretaker.</li> <li>- Like being played with</li> <li>- Begins to be wary of strangers.</li> <li>- Imitates actions of others.</li> <li>- Differentiates crying because of discomforts such as being hungry or wet.</li> <li>- Shows emotions of happiness, anger, distress, fear</li> <li>- By six months shows affection by kissing and hugging</li> <li>- By nine to fourteen months angry expressions increase.</li> </ul>
Toddler 1-3 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Self assertive among peers</li> <li>- Self-absorbed play /parallel play begins</li> <li>- Imitative behaviour becoming more elaborate.</li> <li>- Amiable at one year but by 18 months might be quite changeable in moods.</li> <li>- Negative -says no emphatically</li> </ul>
Preschool 3-5 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Becoming more social.</li> <li>- Moving from parallel play to beginning associative play.</li> <li>- Beginning of independence.</li> <li>- Imaginary playmates</li> <li>- Less negativism.</li> <li>- Beginning of phobias and fears that may continue until age five.</li> </ul>
Primary school age 5-8 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Develops ensuring friendships</li> <li>- Peer groups begin to form.</li> <li>- Less selfish. Able to share. Wants to please.</li> <li>- Still enjoys and engages in fantasy play.</li> <li>- Sense of humor continues.</li> <li>- Begins to control emotions and is able to express them in socially approved ways (five years).</li> <li>- Sense of humor expressed in riddles, practical jokes</li> </ul>

### **TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

1. Briefly explain what you understand by socio-emotional development
2. Discuss in detail the type of socio-emotional behaviour expected of children at Primary school age
3. Discuss the implications of socio-emotional development for early childhood education

### **REFERENCE/ FURTHER READING**

Maduewesi, E. J. (1999). Early Childhood Education: Theory and Practice. Ibadan: Macmillan Nigeria Publishers Limited

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## **Unit 4: Moral Development**

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### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Morality, according to Oswalt (2008) is our ability to learn the difference between right or wrong and understand how to make the right choices. As with other aspects of development, morality doesn't form independently from the previous areas we have been discussing. Children's experiences at home, the environment around them, and their physical, cognitive, emotional, and social skills influence their developing sense of right vs. wrong.

Lawrence Kohlberg (1927-1987) described three stages of moral development which described the process through which people learn to discriminate right from wrong and to develop increasingly sophisticated appreciations of morality. He believed that his stages were cumulative; each built off understanding and abilities gained in prior stages. According to Kohlberg, moral development is a lifelong task, and many people fail to develop the more advanced stages of moral understanding.

Piaget believed in two basic principles relating to moral education: that children develop moral ideas in stages and that children create their conceptions of the world. According to Piaget, "the child is someone who constructs his own moral world view, who forms ideas about right and wrong, and fair and unfair, that are not the direct product of adult teaching and that are often maintained in the face of adult wishes to the contrary" (Gallagher, 1978, p. 26). Piaget believed that children made moral judgments based on their own observations of the world.

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES:**

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

- Define moral development
- Identify and describe the moral development of the child at various stages of early childhood years from birth to eight years
- Explain the educational implication of moral development to early childhood education

### **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

#### **3.1 Moral Development during infancy stage [birth-1 year]**

The child at the infancy stage is amoral i.e. neither moral nor immoral. The child is not guided by any moral standard as to know when to conform and when not to.

#### **3.2 Moral Development during toddler stage [1-3 years]**

Between the ages of 2 and 5, many children start to show morally-based behaviors and beliefs.

#### **3.3 Moral Development during preschool stage**

Between the ages of 2 and 5, many children start to show morally-based behaviors and beliefs. Many young children also start to show empathy-based guilt when they break the rules. According to Kohlberg, young children at this age base their morality on a punishment and obedience orientation. Much like Piaget, Kohlberg believed that young children behave morally because they fear authority and try to avoid punishment. In other words, little kids follow the rules because they don't want to get in trouble. Most young children can understand the difference between "good" and "bad" behavior, and this understanding provides the basis for more complicated moral thinking in the future.

#### **3.4 Moral Development at age five-eight years**

According to Piaget, children at this stage see the world through a Heteronomous Morality. In other words, children think that authority figures such as parents and teachers have rules that young people must follow absolutely. Rules are thought of as real, unchangeable guidelines rather than evolving, negotiable, or situational. As they grow older, develop more abstract thinking, and become less self-focused, children become capable of forming more flexible rules and applying them selectively for the sake of shared objectives and a desire to co-operate

Children between the ages 5 and 6 typically think in terms of distributive justice, or the idea that material goods should be fairly shared. In other words, everyone should get his or her exact "fair share."

By ages 6 and 7, the ability to differentiate between moral rules, social norms, and personal choices matures, and children can take more circumstances and possibilities into account when thinking about the ramifications of different behavior.

#### **Implication of moral development for early childhood education**

Oswalt (2008) stated that while most facets of child development have both internal factors (temperament, genetics, and characteristics) and external factors (environment and social influences), and that morality is largely developed through external factors. Children's environments exert influence on their moral development in many different ways. Adult and peer modeling, family and societal values, religious values and beliefs, and parenting practices can all play a part in shaping morality.

Some moral behaviors are passed on by way of verbal stories or structured lessons, such as religious parables or classroom teaching activities. However, more commonly, moral behavior is learned through direct observation and imitation. Children carefully watch the behavior of their caretakers, parents, other adults, and older children. If they see Uncle Dan being helpful to neighbours, they'll be more likely to be helpful to others as well.

Parenting practices and daily discipline have a huge effect on a child's developing sense of morality. Children who receive fair consequences every time they break a rule will learn to connect their choices with consequences. For example, if Daisy gets in trouble only periodically for taking change out of Mommy's coin jar, Daisy may learn that stealing is sometimes okay. However, if Daisy learns that she will get fair consequences every time she takes money from Mom's coin jar, she will understand that stealing is never okay. Furthermore, she will learn a lesson (hopefully) that she will carry forward as she matures into a responsible and moral young woman.

Children are developing a conscience and an understanding of moral rules of behaviour. Teachers who use positive guidance techniques and model appropriate behaviours are more successful in helping children internalize rules of behaviour than if they criticize and punish.

## CONCLUSION

### SUMMARY

In this unit you have learnt the moral development of the child from birth through eight years of age. The following table summarizes what you have learnt in the unit:

#### Summary of moral development of children from birth to eight years of age

<b>Moral Development</b>	
Infant Birth - 1 yr	- Amoral (neither moral nor immoral)
Toddler 1-3 years	- Begins to experience guilt. - Beginnings of formation of conscience (two years).
Preschool 3-5 years	- Intentional lying may begin - Between 2 & 5 years starts to show morally-based behaviour
Primary school age 5-8 years	- Learns right from wrong. - Develops a conscience at five, but actions seen as all good or bad. At six acceptance of rules develops and often a rigid insistence that they be obeyed (at least by others)

### TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Explain the meaning of moral development
2. Briefly describe the moral development of children aged birth to eight years
3. Explain how caregivers can foster moral development during early childhood years

## REFERENCE/ FURTHER READING

Oswalt, A. (2008). Early childhood moral development. Retrieved from [http://www.mentalhelp.net/poc/view\\_doc.php?type=doc&id=12769&cn=462](http://www.mentalhelp.net/poc/view_doc.php?type=doc&id=12769&cn=462) (accessed 09 May 2010)

### Unit 5: Language Development

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#### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Language is the most awesome of universal human achievement. Language is essential as a medium for social interaction. Using language is a part of human behaviour that makes man different from all other animals. This is because language is used as a tool by which we make our ideas, wishes, feelings, motive, and problems known to our fellow men.

Language can be defined as ‘ a system of vocal conventional signs characteristic of the interaction of one or more communities of human beings (Kluckolm, 1972). It is also defined as the body of words and combination of words used in common by a nation, people or race for the purpose of communicating their thoughts [Maduewesi, 1999]. It is language that distinguishes human behaviour from that of lower animals so that with the acquisition of language the young child can legitimately claim to be a functional member of the human race. Learning to talk and to understand other people’s speech is one of the most complex things a child has to do. The importance of language development in a child cannot be overestimated. A major part of his/her learning, at home, in school and from the mass media, etc. depends on language which is the basis of all social communication. Transmission of culture from one generation to another as well as functioning of the social structure - all depends upon language.

Language is a powerful tool to enhance cognitive development. Using language allows the child to communicate with others and solve problems. Children from varying background seem to learn to speak at about the same age because all humans are genetically 'wired' to learn language and that exposure to language triggers this development. A normally developed child will possess a Language Acquisition Device to learn a new language. Language Acquisition Device (LAD) is a genetic set of language processing skills that enable children to understand the rules governing others' speech and to use these in their own speech. In this Unit, we are going to look at language development from birth to eight years.

## **2.0 OBJECTIVES:**

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

- Define language development and the importance of language to children in early years
- Identify and describe the language development of the child at various stages of early childhood years from birth to eight years
- Explain how care givers can foster language development in children

## **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

### **3.1 Language development at Infancy Stage [birth-1 year]**

The process of language development at the infancy stage is as yet not fully understood, but it is known to pass through certain stages, preceded by the preverbal /pre-linguistic speech stage because usually children do not begin to speak before they are a year old. But during this first year, they engage in a wide range of vocalization - crying is the first of these. From birth till end of the first month, the newborn engages in what has been called undifferentiated crying, that is, the adult listener cannot differentiate between cries of hunger, pain, fear, or general unhappiness. The second month shows the child developing differentiated crying - crying that is more distinguishable to the adult for example crying which can be interpreted as due to hunger, wetness or tiredness. At 3 months, the child begins cooing - a series of soft vowel sounds that seem to be produced when the baby is relaxed and contented. They also make gurgling sounds, which involve consonant sounds as well as vowel sounds. During this first year, they also become aware of the speech of those around them and sometimes stop their own sounds to listen to others speaking. Babbling also starts and reaches its peak at about the age of six months. During babbling, especially in the second half of the first year, the infant begins to produce phonemes - the fundamental sound units of a language. Babbling, unlike cooing is highly structured and is made up of consonant and vowel sounds combined in syllables like 'di' and 'ka'. Through interaction with adults, the child begins to eliminate progressively sounds that are not in the language of the parents while progressively elaborating those in the language. Thus, babbling enables the child to begin to acquire the language of his or her particular society. During the later part of the babbling stage also, the child begins to make repetitive sounds such as baba baba or mama mama, sometimes called lallation. It should be noted that during babbling, the child does not produce sound in order to communicate, but rather he is playing with the articulatory organs. In general, babbling sets the stage for producing communicative language sounds. From about nine months the child begins to string sounds together to produce word, repeating the same sound patterns. At the same time, he also begins to vary the pitched volume of vocalization - just as in real speech. Language scholars have established that there are distinct differences between the sounds of crying, cooing and babbling.

The last stage of the pre-linguistic speech phase commences about age 10 months. This is the stage of vocal imitation and comprehension of adult speech sounds. From now on the child becomes able to distinguish and respond differentially to the words of adults. Though the gestures rather than the words might give a clue to the meaning [Maduewesi 1999]. At about the end of the first year, the child speaks the first meaningful words. Once this has taken place, there is rapid increase in vocabulary. Use of single words or holophrastic speech for many

types of meaningful communication is gradually extended at about 18 months to combinations of two and three word utterances

### **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

- Describe the language development of an infant from the moment the child is born to one year old

### **3.2 Language development at Toddler Stage [1-3]**

As the child moves into the second year, he begins to go beyond the single word sentences to use combinations of 2 or more words. This shows that the child realizes that words and word intonation convey meaning. But there is still considerable difference from the adult speech. This has been called telegraphic speech in the sense that the child usually leaves out articles, auxiliary verbs and the like. For example mommy book. Studies have shown that at age 2, some children have up to 250 words in their vocabulary, though they may not use some of them. After the age of 2, young children move beyond telegraphic speech in that they are able to use longer and more complete sentences. They are learning morphological rules. This is evidenced by their use of plural and possessive forms of nouns and verb endings although they make errors in the use of rules, such as overgeneralization. In syntax or sentence construction, children learn the proper word order for asking questions. Their sentences become more complex as they expand their vocabulary and expressive speech. They are gradually able to use negative sentences. At about 3 years of age, young children begin to understand and use rules of conversation. They are able to talk about things that are not present; consequently, they can use language as they engage in pretend play or talk about imaginary people and things. Over the first three years of life, children develop a spoken vocabulary of between 300 and 1,000 words, and they are able to use language to learn about and describe the world around them.

### **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

- Describe the process of language development of a toddler

### **3.3 Language development at preschool Stage [3-5]**

By three years the child is beginning to use complex sentences, including relative clauses, although still perfecting various linguistic systems. By five years of age the child's use of language is very similar to that of an adult. From the age of about three, children can indicate fantasy or make-believe linguistically, produce coherent personal stories and fictional narrative with beginnings and endings. It is argued that children devise narrative as a way of understanding their own experience and as a medium for communicating their meaning to others. The ability to engage in extended discourse emerges over time from regular conversation with adults and peers. For this the child needs to learn to combine his perspective with that of others and with outside events and learn to use linguistic indicators to show he is doing this. They also learn to adjust their language depending on to whom they are speaking..

By age five, a child's vocabulary will grow to approximately 1,500 words. Five-year-olds are also able to produce five-to seven-word sentences, learn to use the past tense, and tell familiar stories using pictures as cues.

As prosocial awareness develops, 4 year olds are able to understand others' feelings or needs expressed in conversations. Four year olds can also vary their speech style when talking to different audiences, such as younger children, peers, or adults (Gleason, 1988). Word meanings develop continuously. Young preschoolers use environmental contexts to understand the meaning of new words. Locative expressions such as 'on' and 'under' emerge between ages 2 and three, but others, such as 'beside' and 'between' take longer to understand and use. Santrock reported that between the ages of 1 and 5, the child learns an average of five words per day. Development in writing and reading or literacy, is also an important area between the ages of 2 and 5. Literacy is important in the infant and toddler years and is encouraged when parents and other caregivers share books, stories and pictures with babies. When parents point out labels on a food product, indicate why they are making a grocery list, or explain how they can find a telephone number in the directory, they are helping develop the child's understanding of the functions of reading and writing (Pressley, 2001). Building on oral language development with books and environmental print, preschool children develop strategies for becoming literate. When parents and teaches talk with children about things the children are interested in and take them on outings that will expose them to new experiences and information, they are helping the child build conceptual foundation and language that is later used in reading and writing (Morrow, 2000). As a result of their experiences, children gradually come to understand that point, nor just picture, gives meaning to books. They come to recognize print and gain knowledge of the spacing between words and that individual letters are used to form words (Field & Spangler, 2000).

### **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

- Describe four important children's behaviours that mark language development at the preschool stage

### **3.4 Language Development at primary school age [five-eight years]**

Children are refining and extending the language learned in the preschool years. By five years of age the child's use of language is very similar to that of an adult. That is they have learned how sentences are structured and how words are used to communicate meanings. After age 5, the rate of acquisition of new word meanings accelerates. However they are still confused by the meanings and usages of some words, children can be described as having metalinguistic awareness. This allows them to enjoy jokes and riddles and the ambiguous use of words. By age eight, children are able to demonstrate some basic understanding of less concrete concepts, including time and money. However, the eight-year old still reasons in concrete ways and has difficulty understanding abstract ideas.

### **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

- What do you understand by "metalinguistic awareness"

### **CONCLUSION**

As children develop from one stage to the next, they need different types of stimulation and interaction to exercise their evolving skills and to develop new ones. Not all children will

develop at the same speed or in any of the same patterns in many other children. They will individually find their own speed and learn their own patterns in time.

## SUMMARY

In this unit you have learnt the language development of the child from birth through eight years of age. The following table summarizes what you have learnt in the unit:

### Summary of Language development of children from birth to eight years of age

Language Development	
Infant Birth - 1 yr	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Vocalization in form of -cooing, gurgling, and babbling (2 to 4 months).</li> <li>- Lallation</li> <li>- First mama or dada appears (six months).</li> <li>- Waves bye-bye.</li> </ul>
Toddler 1-3 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Rapid growth of language. Knows 300 to 1000 words.</li> <li>- Responds to simple requests.</li> <li>- Has vocabulary between twenty and fifty words.</li> <li>- Develops two to three word sentences.</li> <li>- Uses telegraphic speech</li> </ul>
Preschool 3-5 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Rapid language growth /uses complex sentences</li> <li>- Talks in a monologue (Three years)</li> <li>- Has mastered about 90% of phonetics and syntax of language but still may over generalize verb tenses, plurals, pronouns (four years).</li> <li>- Use of language similar to that of adult (five years)</li> </ul>
Primary school age 5-8 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Very articulate (more than 2500 word vocabulary)</li> <li>- Has metalinguistic awareness which allows them to enjoy riddles/ jokes</li> <li>- Can express self orally and in writing, even rather poetically.</li> </ul>

## TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. What is language development
2. Describe eight specific behaviours that mark language development as children develop from infancy stage to eight years old
3. Explain how caregivers can foster language development during early childhood years

## REFERENCE/FURTHER READING

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### **MODULE 3            CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENTAL ANOMALIES AND CONTEMPORARY EARLY CHILDHOOD MODEL**

There are certain stages in development that all children go through, such as sitting, standing, walking, etc. These stages are reached approximately at the same age by most children and are called milestones. These serve the important function of indicating whether the child is growing normally. Any deviation outside the normal development shows an anomaly in the particular area of functioning. This module introduces us to childhood developmental anomalies highlighting types, causes and characteristics of children with developmental disability. In the module we shall also study the contribution of two contemporary early childhood models to the development of early childhood education. The topics under this module are organized into five units as follows:

- Unit 1:            Types of Developmental Anomalies
- Unit 2:            Causes of Developmental Anomalies
- Unit 3:            Characteristics of Children with Developmental Anomalies
- Unit 4:            Contribution of Maria Montessori to Early Childhood Education
- Unit 5:            Contribution of Reggio Emilia to Early Childhood Education

#### **Unit 1:            Types of Developmental Anomalies**

#### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0    Introduction
- 2.0    Objectives
- 3.0    Main body
  - 3.1    Meaning of the terms: impairment, disability, handicap
  - 3.2    Dimensions of physical disability
  - 3.3    Dimensions of mental disability
  - 3.4    Dimensions of socio-emotional disability
  - 3.5    Visual, Hearing and Speech impairment
- 4.0    Conclusion
- 5.0    Summary

- 6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment
- 7.0 Reference /Further reading

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

The time from birth to eight years is a critical period in the development of many foundational skills in all areas of development. If you reflect a little, you will find that there are six areas which are crucial to one's normal functioning. A difficulty in any one of these can lead to a problem in adjustment and requires some extra effort on the part of the person to cope with it. A child or a person who experiences difficulty in one or more of these areas of functioning is a special child. Can you identify these areas? They include movement, intelligence, socio-emotional relationships, others are vision, hearing, communication

We shall discuss each of these areas in details. Please note that early identification of special needs is a key to a child's successful development. If special needs are not identified early, children may go through years of failure. This failure can create a poor self-concept, which may compound the disability. To identify special needs, we need to understand normal development in children. The "Stages of child development" described in module 2 has provided us with knowledge of normal developmental pattern in children. When a problem is suspected, observe the child closely. Any unusual behaviour such as social, emotional, visual or physical development could suggest a possible special need. For example, earlier detection of hearing deficits sometimes leads to correction of problems before serious language impairments occur.

## **2.0 OBJECTIVES:**

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

- Explain with examples the meaning of the terms: impairment, disability, handicap
- List and discuss the various types/dimensions of physical disabilities in early childhood years
- List and describe the various types, degrees and classifications of mental disabilities
- List and discuss the various dimension and examples of socio-emotional difficulties in children in early years
- List signs of visual, hearing, and speech disabilities in children in early years
- Mention causes of visual, hearing, and speech impairment in children in early years

## **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

### **3.1 Meaning of the terms: impairment, disability, handicap**

You may have heard some of the following terms used interchangeably impairment, disability and handicapped. However, each of these terms has a specific usage and meaning. We tend to use all the three as having the same meaning. It is important to understand the difference among them because that will also influence our attitudes towards children who have these difficulties.

Impairment refers to a diseased or a defective tissue or a part of it. For example, if the cornea (white part) of the eye becomes dry and wrinkled, then it has become defective and is impaired. If during childbirth the child did not get enough oxygen, some brain tissue may have been damaged. This is impairment. If the tissue of the foot becomes diseased causing rot to set in, it has become impaired. A birthmark is also a defective tissue.

Disability refers to the absence of a particular part of a body or organ, or a reduction in function of some part of the body. If the cornea becomes dry and wrinkled, as happens in deficiency of Vitamin A, then the child will gradually lose sight. So the impairment of the cornea has led to disability. A person, who because of damage to some part of the brain finds it difficult to control the muscles required for speech, has a disability in communication. The person, whose foot has to be amputated because gangrene (an impairment) has set in, will have a physical disability. However, a birthmark is not a disability because it does not prevent the person from carrying out some function. Similarly, if a person has had some minimal damage in the ear but this does not affect the ability to hear, then the impairment of the ear has not caused a disability. The point that is emphasized here is that impairment may or may not lead to a disability.

Handicap implies the problems of the impaired or disabled person when interacting with and adapting to the environment. By environment we mean not only the physical environment but also the social environment i.e. people around us and our relationships with them. Think of a person who is extremely aggressive, loses his/her temper often and finds it difficult to get along with most people. Is this person not handicapped in his/her social relationships. If the blind person has some difficulty in going about the daily business of life, in forming relationships, in acquiring an education and subsequently a vocation, then the disability has resulted in a handicap. However, if she faces no problem or has only a minimal difficulty, she is not handicapped even though she has a disability. You may have seen physically disabled people plan a trip to far places. Of course, they may need some special equipment or the help of people close to them. But they are able to do most of the things that other people do. Would you call them handicapped? The birthmark on a person's face is a handicap if one wants a career in a film. However, the impairment does not affect a person in functioning normally and is therefore not a handicap. Handicap has to do with the effects of the disability or impairment. If the effect is minimal, then the person finds it relatively easy to adjust to the impairment or the disability. This is what we have to aim for - to reduce the effect of the disability as much as possible, so that the person does not feel handicapped.

It becomes evident then that impairment or disability may lead to a handicap in some areas but not in others. A blind person has a handicap in mobility, particularly in unknown territories, but has no handicap when it comes to singing.

### **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

- State whether you agree or disagree with the following statements. Give reasons for your answer
  - (a) An impairment always leads to a disability ( )
  - (b) A disabled child is handicapped in all areas of functioning ( )
  - (c) A disabled child can be helped to improve his or her level of functioning ( )

### **3.2 Dimensions of Physical Disabilities**

When we talk about individuals with physical disability, we refer to all those who have physical limitations in organs such as limbs, bones, joints, or muscles. It also refers to individuals who have health problems which limit their ability to lead a normal, healthy life, e.g. convulsions or fits. Not being able to move like most others, can affect a child's life in many ways. It is possible that some children who have difficulty in movement can move around with the use of sticks or crutches or a wheelchair. Others may not be able to move at all and are completely immobilized. All the children for whom normal movement is not possible are special children, since they need some special equipment to help them overcome or reduce their difficulty.

There are two major categories of physical disabilities.

- (i) **Muscular skeletal disability:** this is defined as the inability to carry out distinctive activities associated with movements of body parts due to muscular or bone deformities or diseases. E.g. arthritis, club foot, muscular dystrophy - a disease in which the muscles responsible for voluntary movement of the body progressively weaken and degenerate, until they can no longer function
- (ii) **Neuro muscular disability.** This is defined as the inability to perform controlled movements of affected body parts due to diseases or disorder of the nervous system / due to damage to the brain or the spinal chord. E.g. cerebral palsy, poliomyelitis, convulsions/fits
- [iii] Others that are caused due to illness and disease and have an effect in the general health and also due to accidents

Educational implications

As you would have understood from reading the unit, for children who have only physical impairment, the curriculum and educational goals will be the same as for physically normal children. They may however require special guidance to train in skills like using the toilet, dressing, feeding and movement. For children who have handicap in addition to physical limitations, for example mental retardation, you will have to modify the activities in keeping with their level of intellectual functioning. Depending upon the extent of the handicap, the child may benefit more from attending a special school rather than a regular preschool center. While it is necessary to look for appropriate people or agencies for specific advice for children with physical disabilities, it is important to remember that if given ample opportunity to develop socially, emotionally and educationally in as normal a fashion as possible, many children with physical handicaps can make healthy adjustments to their disabilities and become contributing members of the society.

### **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

- Distinguish between neuro muscular disability and muscular skeletal disability

### **3.3 Dimensions of Mental Disability**

Mental retardation is a term used when a person has certain limitations in mental functioning. These limitations will cause a child to learn and develop more slowly than a typical child.

Mental disability is a condition that slows down mental and physical growth. It is not an illness or disease, but a condition due to inadequate development of the brain. Children who have this condition are called mentally retarded. A child can be born mentally disabled or become mentally disabled, during or after birth. Just as the child's body grows and develops in a manner appropriate to her age, the mental abilities also expand in accordance with age. The rate of development of the mental abilities of the child is known as her mental age. In normal children, the age in years and mental age go together. If a child is described as having normal mental development it means that she has the same level of mental abilities as the majority of normal children of that age. But in a mentally retarded child, there is slowing down in the development of the mental abilities and the mental age is lower than chronological age. For example, a child who is slower than a normal child to walk, eat, talk and to reach other milestones of development. A mentally disabled child who is five years old may act, talk, and behave like a three year old. Some mentally disabled children grow faster as compared to others like them. But development of all mentally disabled children is slow as compared to normal children of their age. One way of knowing that a child is retarded is that development in many areas of functioning would be affected. Development in many areas would proceed slower than what is expected of a child of that age. Some of the areas that are usually affected are:

- i. The mentally disabled child has difficulty in communicating with others, both through speech and action. In fact a retarded child learns to speak later than other children. the child has poor vocabulary and has articulation problems. The speech may be unclear and therefore, may be incomprehensible to the listener.
- ii. Motor Development: there is a lack of coordination in gross and fine motor movements. The milestones of motor development are delayed.
- iii. Self Care: the child with mental retardation takes longer to learn to look after her own daily needs such as eating, dressing, and going to toilet.
- iv. Social Skills: the mentally disabled child finds it difficult to deal with other people. She develops the skills of interacting with other children and adults through training and conscious effort.
- v. Self-direction: there is a lack of direction in retarded children's actions. They may do something without purpose, such as rock themselves while sitting or carry on doing something for no reason.
- vi. Health and Safety: many of these children require help from others to look after their health and safety even after they are grown up. Some people with mental disability cannot be left alone in a place which is not safe, even when they are adults.
- vii. Academic Work: generally, when children do not learn to read and write at the expected age, we consider that their mental development is slow for their age. Some may never be able to attend formal school due to their mental limitations, while others may take longer compared to their age mates, to complete primary level education. There is a wide range of abilities even among children we call retarded.
- viii. Leisure and Work: mentally retarded children are often unable to use recreational facilities and other opportunities for enjoyment. They may also lack the initiative to take up work independently. They are easily distractable and therefore tend to be careless. Therefore, they require the assistance of family members, neighbors or social workers.

Reading through the above description of areas of limitations may give one the impression that mentally disabled children cannot do anything. This is not true at all. They are capable in many

ways. Besides, all children with mental retardation will not have difficulty in all these areas. Also, the extent to which development will be affected in these areas varies from child to child, this will depend on the child's degree of retardation. The level of retardation may vary from high to low. It is what is meant in the above sentence that 'there is a wide range of abilities even among children we call retarded'.

Degree of mental retardation:

Broadly, mental retardation is divided into three categories based on the level of intellectual and social functioning of the child. a child may have mild, moderate, severe or profound degree of mental retardation.

- i. Mild retardation: when the mental ability of the child is more than half but less than three-fourths of that expected of her age, she is mildly retarded. For example a girl of 10 years having mental abilities and behaviors of a 6-7 year old.
- ii. Moderate Retardation: mental development is more than one fourth but less than half of what is expected for that particular age, the child is said to be moderately retarded. For example, a child 12 years having mental abilities of 4-5 years.
- iii. Severe and Profound retardation: when the mental growth is a little less than one fourth of that expected for a particular age, the retardation is severe. Beyond that it is called profound retardation.

Mental retardation is a term used when a person has certain limitations in mental functioning and in skills such as communicating, taking care of himself or herself and lack of social skills. These limitations will cause a child to learn and develop more slowly than a typical child. Children with mental retardation may take longer to learn to speak, walk, and take care of their personal needs such as dressing or eating. They are likely to have trouble learning in school. They will learn, but it will take them longer than expected.

We all have come across individuals who tend to forget instructions frequently, with whom we have to talk simply, who do not seem to understand what is going on around them, and who cannot, beyond a certain point, learn any new thing. If we depict the attribute of intelligence as a range, then we find that some of us are extremely intelligent, most of us are average in our intellectual capacity and some of us are below average. The children who are below average in intellectual functioning will find it hard to meet the demands that everyday living calls for. They have special needs. Perhaps they find it difficult to manage money, fail to understand simple instructions or concepts and have to be helped to deal with day-to-day situations. One way of finding out whether a child falls in the problem end of the attribute of the intelligence is to see whether or not she functions as one would expect of children of her age.

Classification of mental retardation: A system for identifying retarded children was provided by the test developed by Binet and Simon in Paris about 1900. There were subsequent revisions of the test by Terman and his colleagues at Stanford University in 1916, 1937 and 1960. The mentally retarded children are generally classified.

- (i) idiots
- (ii) imbeciles
- (iii) morons.

(iv) dull normal.

It is evidenced from research findings that using intelligence tests, the ‘idiots’ have IQ ranging between 0 to 25, ‘imbeciles’ 25 to 50; ‘morons’, 50 to 75 and ‘dull normal’ 75 to 90 [note: a normal child had an IQ of 100].

However, it is advised that labelling human beings with negative terms has psychological implications, and for educational purposes, the retarded have been classified as: Educatable Mentally retarded (EMR: Morons); Trainable mentally retarded (TMR: Imbeciles) and profoundly retarded (idiots). The following table summarizes the classification

Classification of mental retardation

Negative terminology	Positive terminology	IQ
Idiots	Severely or profoundly retarded	0 to 25
Imbeciles	Trainable mentally retarded	25 to 50
Morons	Educatable Mentally retarded	50 to 75
Dull normal		75 to 90

### SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE

- With examples explain what mental retardation means

### 3.4 Socio-emotional disability

You remember reading that socio-emotional development refers to how we relate to others in our day to day living, the relationships we form with people, and our emotional ties. As you know, some individuals find it easy to form relationship with others- they are well liked, respected and sought out. Most of us have our share of ups and downs. As you must have noticed, we use difficulty rather than to disability for socio-emotional aspect because it manifests in behavioural terms.

Behaviour difficulties in a child are a cause of concern to the parents as well as to the educator. A child with a behaviour difficulty may find it difficult to be accepted and liked by other children. The difficulty may come in the way of the child being able to form relationships with others; it may cause her to develop a low self-concept and may even hamper learning. Therefore, it is necessary that you help the child over come it. Sometimes it may become difficult to identify whether or not a child has a behaviour difficulty because different people may view and interpret the same behaviour differently. To judge whether or not a child has a behaviour difficulty, one would need to observe the child in different situation over a period of time.

Whether or not a particular problem behaviour can be termed serious would depend on three factors:

- i. its frequency: does it occur very often?

- ii. its intensity: when it occurs, does it express forcefully?
- iii. its duration: does it occur over several weeks or more?

High frequency, high intensity and long duration of a behaviour difficulty in the child would render it serious. For example, if a preschool child cries sometimes in response to distress, and becomes quiet when soothed, it is not a problem behaviour. But if she cries in response to almost every situation of anxiety and continues to cry for a long time despite effort to soothe, it is a sign of an emotional problem in the child. Some examples of behaviour difficulties include:

- i. temper tantrums: The child expresses anger by screaming, throwing things around, and throwing her/himself on the floor. Some may bite or hit themselves
- ii. Enuresis commonly called bed-wetting. When a child is between 5 and 6 years of age and still wets at least twice a month for about six months, we can say that the child has enuresis.
- iii. Withdrawn behaviour
- iv. Aggressive behaviour: this is the opposite of withdrawn behaviour. The child is more assertive and quarrelsome than is desirable. Common ways in which children express aggressive behaviour are hitting, kicking, pinching, spitting at others, using bad language, teasing, etc.
- v. Stealing
- vi. Hyperactivity: children with hyperactivity are not simply overactive. They suffer from low attention span and they act without thinking.
- vii. Fears and phobias: a phobia is an extreme reaction towards an object or person that cannot be categorized as a fearful stimulus. E.g. if a child shows fearful behaviour towards a chair in the house, it will be a phobia.
- viii. Autism: a rare condition that forces a child not to relate with others

While managing these problems

- i. do not use physical beating to discipline the child
- ii. do not shame the child in front of other children
- iii. do not lock the child up in a room

The textbooks use terms such as ‘behaviour disorders’, ‘behaviour problem’, ‘emotional problems’ or ‘behaviour deviations’ to refer to socially unacceptable behaviours. We will use the term behaviour difficulty, as it is a more child-friendly term. In order to decide as to which of the behaviors are unacceptable and require intervention, we need to agree on the criteria that should be used to see a particular behaviour as difficult. There are two reasons why a child’s behaviour would be seen as unacceptable and we would say that the child has a behaviour difficulty. These are:

- It has a negative effect on the child’s development and adjustment.
- It interferes with other people’s rights.

### **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

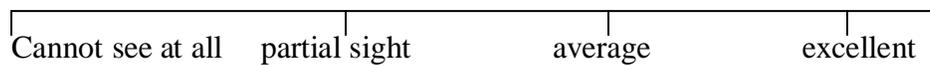
- Mention six examples of childhood behaviour difficulties

### **3.4 Visual, Hearing and Speech Impairment**

## Visual impairment

What are the things that will be affected the most if one has no vision? Primarily, one's ability to move around and reading and writing. In other words vision is important for learning in the home and in the classroom. All of us vary in our visual acuity. Some of us have excellent eyesight, being able to read even distant signs. Most of us have average eyesight and can function well without the use of spectacles. The people who have less than average eyesight may be able to correct it by using corrective lenses. But as the visual ability falls still further that even glasses do not help much, then the person begins to have a problem. When the eyesight is so low that objects which most people can see 200 feet away have to be brought to 20 feet before the person can see them, then the person is legally blind. Such people can read, but only when the print is very large. They have partial sight. Then there are some people who cannot see at all.

Thus we can see that visual activity falls along a range from those with very good eyesight to those who cannot see at all.



It is when the child's eyesight falls so low that she cannot read normal print and some special means have to be devised to help her read, that she is considered a child with visual impairment.

Visual impairment means having difficulties with one's vision. It refers to all levels of vision loss. It is the consequence of a functional loss of vision rather than the eye disorder itself. The visually impaired are made up of:

- (i) the blind.
- (ii) the low vision.
- (iii) the partially sighted.

## Signs of visual impairment

The following are some symptoms of visual impairment.

- The child rubs the eyes excessively
- The child shuts or covers one eye, tilts head or thrusts head forward in an attempt to see better
- The child experiences difficulty in reading or in other work requiring close use of the eyes
- The child blinks more than usual
- The child becomes irritable when doing close work and complains of pain, dizziness and nausea
- The child holds things close to the eyes when examining them
- The child finds it difficult to see distant things clearly

- The child frowns or squints eyelids together when looking at something
- The child tends to confuse letters of a similar shape
- The eyes appear red rimmed and swollen
- The child complains that the eyes feel itchy and scratchy
- Crossed eyes or those that are not straight
- Confuses letters and words which look somewhat alike. For example, children with I impaired vision often confuse the letter “b” and “p”, “a” and “e”.
- Skip letters words or lines while reading.
- Writing is unusually small, large, or poorly written. Impaired vision tampers with proper eye hand co-ordination. In such a case, the writings formed are written with difficulty and are therefore irregular or uneven.

If any of the above signs are noticed, the child must be referred to an ophthalmologist. The presence of one or more of these signs does not always mean that the child has a visual impairment, but the child has to be referred for further evaluation before one can say so.

### **Causes of visual impairment**

#### **(a) Causes due to condition of the eye**

1. **Albinism:** Inherited condition resulting in decreased pigment, which causes abnormal optic nerve development.
2. **Cataracts:** Opacity or cloudiness of the lens. Because light cannot pass through the lens, vision is affected. Children with cataracts may have reduced visual acuity, blurred vision, poor colour vision, or light sensitivity.
3. **Coloboma:** A birth defect which causes a cleft in the pupil, lens, retina or optic nerve. It can result in reduced acuity and field loss if the damage extends to the retina.
4. **Glaucoma:** Increased pressure in the eye due to blockage of normal flow of fluid in the eye. A child with glaucoma may also have peripheral field loss, poor night vision, and light sensitivity.
5. **Strabismus:** A muscle imbalance resulting in the inability of both eyes to look directly at an object at the same time.

#### **(b) Causes not due to any condition of the eye**

**Cortical visual impairment** is due to damage to the visual cortex of the brain or the visual pathways which results in the brain not adequately receiving or interpreting visual information. Children with cortical visual impairment often have cerebral palsy, seizure disorder, and developmental delays as a result of the damage to the brain. They may exhibit inattention to visual stimuli, preference for touch over vision when exploring objects and difficulty visually discriminating objects that are placed close together or in front of a visually complex background.

## SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISES

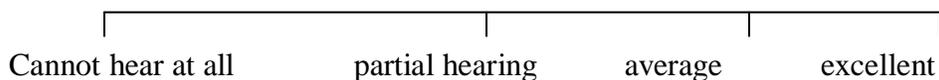
1. What is visual impairment?
2. List three types of visual impairment.
3. List five causes of visual impairment.

### Hearing impairment

Hearing impairment simply refers to all levels of hearing loss. It implies a total or partial loss of ability to perceive acoustic information. A hearing loss limits case of acquisition of a communication system, which further influences development of interactions with others, and the ability to make sense out of the world. Hearing impairment is a generic term that includes hearing disabilities ranging from mild to profound, thus encompassing children who are deaf and those who are hard-of-hearing.

When we speak of a person with normal hearing, we generally mean that he or she has enough hearing to understand speech. Assuming that listening conditions are adequate, a person with normal hearing can interpret speech in everyday situation without relying on any special devices or technique.

This sensory channel is equally important for optimal growth and development. If a child cannot hear, it becomes very difficult for her to learn to speak. It is also possible that she may never learn to speak at all. We can depict the sense of hearing along a range, just as in case of vision. At one end are those few of us who have an acute sense of hearing, being able to detect sounds that most would not even notice. A few of us cannot hear any sound at all. This is the other end of the range. In between these two ends are individuals with different levels of hearing. Most of us are average.



There are three major types of hearing losses:

- i. **Conductive loss.** This occurs when something goes wrong with the outer or middle ear, impeding sound waves from being conducted or carried to the inner ear.
- ii. **Sensorineural loss** This occurs when damage to the inner ear or the auditory nerve impedes the sound message from being sent to the brain.
- iii. **Central auditory processing disorder** Although there is no specific damage to the ear itself, the neural system involved in understanding what is heard is impaired. Children with central auditory processing disorder may have normal hearing as measured by an audiometer (device used to test hearing levels), but they often have difficulty understanding what they hear.

Depending on the degree of loss, hearing impairment is categorized into the following:

- (a) Mild loss (20-40 dB) – the person hears in most settings but would have difficulty hearingfaint or distant speech

- (b) Moderate loss (40-60 dB) – the person might have problem in hearing group conversations or when there is background noise or have difficulty in hearing conversational speech beyond 3-5 feet
- (c) Severe loss (60-80 dB) – the person misses all but very loud speech, will not be able to hear loud sounds beyond a distance of a foot
- (d) Profound loss (80 dB or more) – the person is unable to hear speech except a loud shout

### **Signs of hearing impairment**

Signs or symptoms of hearing impairment are when:

- The child has frequent colds and sore throats
- Fluid runs from the ears
- The child does not follow simple directions
- The child understands your speech only after few repetitions
- The child does not respond to being called from another room
- The child uses only gestures to communicate
- The child tunes the T.V./radio abnormally loud all the time
- The child loses interest more easily because she misses out on spoken information
- Difficulty in following instructions. In our ignorance we may label such a child as lazy or shy.
- Failure to startle at loud sounds.

### **Causes of hearing impairment**

#### 1. Genetic factors

This may be autosomal dominant or autosomal recessive hearing loss. In autosomal dominant hearing loss, one parent who carries the dominant gene for hearing loss and typically has a hearing loss passes it on to the child. In this case, there is at least a 50% probability that the child will also have a hearing loss. The probability is higher if both parents have the dominant gene (and typically both have a hearing loss) or if both grandparents on one side of the family have hearing loss due to genetic causes.

In autosomal recessive hearing loss, both parents who typically have normal hearing, carry a recessive gene. In this case, the probability of the child having a hearing loss is 25%.

- 2. Prolonged exposure to noise at above 100 describes or exposure to explosive blasts, damaging the ear-drum.
- 3. Other causes of congenital hearing loss that are not hereditary in nature include: parental infections, illnesses or conditions occurring at the time of birth or shortly thereafter.
- 4. Obstruction in the outer ear due to excessive wax or foreign bodies.

## **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISES**

1. What is hearing impairment?
2. List three types of hearing loss.
3. List five causes of hearing impairment.

### **Speech impairment**

Speech refers to one's ability to understand others and make oneself understood. We rely primarily on words for communication. So individuals who have a difficulty in speaking have a communication problem.

Speech impairment entails difficulty in articulating words. A speech impaired child has difficulty learning how to produce clear intelligible speech. Speech impairment means difficulty using the body parts and muscles needed for speech. Some children cannot speak at all while some can speak but with great difficulty, having to stammer or stutter. In some cases, the child's speech and hearing are normal, but there is some damage to the part of the brain responsible for understanding language. Such a person will also have difficulty in communication. As in visual and hearing aspects, we can depict people's abilities in communication along a range, thus:

- Cannot communicate at all
- Experience difficulty in communicating
- Average
- Can communicate effectively

### **Types of speech impairments**

#### **1. Phonological impairments**

This type of impairment occurs when a child cannot pronounce or use some sounds correctly. For example, when children leave out sounds at the end of words. They would say "ca" for "cat".

#### **2. Articulating impairments**

This occurs when a child cannot make a particular speech sound. This may be caused by a problem in the mouth or nose structures that are used during speech such as cleft palate, or they may be caused by an abnormality in the function of the muscles or nerve involved in the production of speech, such as cerebral palsy.

### **Causes of speech impairment**

The following are some of the causes of speech impairment.

- (i) Brain tumour
- (ii) Children who are born with physical conditions such as cleft lip and cleft palate that make it difficult or impossible to learn to speak.
- (iii) Injury to the muscles needed for speech.
- (iv) Side effects of medication (drugs)
- (v) Emotional or psychological problems

## SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISES

4. What is speech impairment?
5. List and describe two types of speech impairment.
6. List five causes of speech impairment.

## CONCLUSION

In this unit, you were taken through to understand the difference in meaning between 'impairment', 'disability', and 'handicap', as these terms are often used interchangeably. You also learnt types of developmental disabilities in the area of physical, mental and socio-emotional as well as vision, hearing and speech. Under physical, mental and socio-emotional disabilities, you were further taken through their various categories and dimensions. Under vision, hearing and speech impairment, you learnt their various categories, signs/symptoms, and causes.

## SUMMARY

In this unit, you learnt that impairment refers to a diseased or a defective tissue or a part of it, while disability refers to the reduction in function of some part of the body as a result of the impairment and that impairment may or may not lead to a disability. Handicap, as you learnt, implies the problems of the impaired or disabled person when interacting with and adapting to the environment. Handicap has to do with the effects of the disability or impairment and that disability may or may not result in handicap. In the unit you also learnt about various categories and dimensions of disabilities:

**Under physical disability**, you learnt there are two major categories: muscular skeletal inability to carry out distinctive activities associated with movements of body parts due to muscular or bone deformities or diseases disability and neuro muscular disability inability to perform controlled movements of affected body parts due to diseases or disorder of the nervous system or damage to the brain or the spinal chord

**Under mental disability**, you learnt that mental retardation is a term used when a person has certain limitations in mental functioning and that the degree of mental retardation include mild, moderate, severe or profound mental retardation. As well as the classification of mental retardation

- (i) Profoundly retarded (idiots) have IQ ranging between 0 to 25
- (ii) Trainable mentally retarded imbeciles (imbeciles) have IQ ranging between 25 to 50
- (iii) Educatable Mentally retarded (morons) have IQ ranging between 50 to 75
- (iv) Dull normal have IQ ranging between 75 to 90

**Under Socio-emotional disability**, you learnt that to judge whether or not a child has a behaviour difficulty, one would need to observe the child in different situations over a period of time and that the factors of frequency, intensity and duration determine whether or not particular problem behaviour is serious. Examples of behaviour difficulties that you learnt

include temper tantrums, enuresis, withdrawn behaviour, aggressive behaviour, stealing, hyperactivity, fears and phobias, autism.

**Under Visual impairment**, you learnt that it means having difficulties with one's vision and that it refers to all levels of vision loss. You also learnt that the visually impaired are made up of the following categories: the blind, the low vision, and the partially sighted. You also learnt the signs and symptoms of visual impairment and the need to refer the child to an ophthalmologist for proper evaluation if suspected to exhibit one or more of the signs. Some of these signs include rubbing the eyes excessively, covering one eye, tilting head or thrusting head forward in an attempt to see better, experiencing difficulty in reading, holding things close to the eyes when examining them, frowning or squinting eyelids together when looking at something, confusing letters of a similar shape, itchy and scratchy eyes. Thereafter you were taken through the causes of visual impairment which include the following albinism, cataracts, coloboma, glaucoma, strabismus, and that cortical visual impairment is due to damage to the visual cortex of the brain or the visual pathways which results in the brain not adequately receiving or interpreting visual information.

**Under hearing impairment**, you were introduced to three major types of hearing losses which include conductive loss, sensorineural loss, and central auditory processing disorder. You learnt the various degrees of loss that they are categorized into mild loss, moderate loss, severe loss, and profound loss. You also learnt the signs or symptoms of hearing impairment and that they include: having frequent colds and sore throats, fluid running from the ears, not following simple directions, not responding to being called from another room, using only gestures to communicate, tunes the T.V./radio abnormally loud all the time, losing interest more easily because she misses out on spoken information, failure to startle at loud sounds. You learnt about the causes of hearing impairment which include genetic factors (autosomal dominant and autosomal recessive hearing loss), prolonged exposure to noise at above 100dB or exposure to explosive blasts damaging the ear-drum, head injury (accident), obstruction in the outer ear due to excessive wax or foreign bodies.

**Under speech impairment**, you learnt two types of speech impairments namely phonological impairments and articulating impairments. You also learnt that the causes of speech impairment include: brain tumour, being born with physical conditions such as cleft lip and cleft palate that make it difficult or impossible to learn to speak, injury to the muscles needed for speech, side effects of medication (drugs),

In the next unit, you will learn about the causes of developmental disabilities

## **TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

1. With examples explain the meaning of the followings terms: impairment, disability, handicap
2. List and describe the major types of physical disability
3. List the various degrees and four classifications of mental retardation
4. List eight behaviour in children that can be classified as behaviour difficulties
5. List at least ten signs that indicate that the child may be experiencing some difficulty in seeing
6. List 10 signs which may indicate that the child is having some problems in hearing

7. List 10 signs which may indicate that the child is having some problems in speech
8. Mention causes of visual, hearing, and speech impairment.

## **REFERENCE/ FURTHER READING**

India Gandhi National Open University, DECE 3, Children with Special Needs

### **Unit 2: Causes of Developmental Anomalies**

#### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main body
  - 3.1 Genetic Factors
  - 3.2 Environmental Factors
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment
- 7.0 Reference /Further reading

#### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Children develop physically, intellectually, and socially in unique ways. One child may be reading at four years of age but be unable to run without stumbling. Another may be able to manipulate blocks, climb stairs, or get enough to set a table for four. Another of the same age and gender might have difficulty completing any of these tasks. As noted in module 1 unit 4, development is affected by both genetics and environment. Some characteristics are a matter of genetics. Chromosomes, the physical carriers of hereditary material, govern development and are responsible for some differences. Heredity alone doesn't account for the wide diversity among individuals. Infants are born into a social, physical and emotional environment which affect the development of many traits and characteristics. You will recall that Urie Bronfenbrenner describes environment as an entire ecological system consisting of microsystems, mesosystems, exosystems and macrosystems.

#### **2.0 OBJECTIVES:**

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

- State the genetic factors that cause physical disability, mental disability, socio-emotional disability
- State the environmental factors that cause physical disability, mental disability, socio-emotional disability

#### **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

### **3.1 Genetic factors that cause developmental anomalies in children**

**Under physical disability –**

**Under mental disability**

In module 1 unit 4 you have read that at the time of conception, genes are transmitted from the parents to the child. The genes contain the codes of development which enable an individual to develop from the single fertilized ovum in the mother's womb. It is possible that certain defects are also transmitted by the parents to the new child through the genes. This means that one or both parents have a defective genes that causes retardation. Fortunately the chances of a couple having defective genes that result in mental retardation are rare. In fact, with scientific research it has been possible to identify conditions under which such defects occur. Hence, mental retardation due to such factors can be prevented. If there is history of mental retardation on either side of the parents, then they should go in for genetic counseling before having a child. This will enable the couple to know what the chances are of their conceiving a healthy baby.

Another possibility is that the process of cell division at conception becomes defective and the child thus conceived has a defect, even though the parents did not have it. An example of this condition is Down's Syndrome. The child has a defective chromosomes which results in specific physical features as well as mental retardation. The child has slanting eyes and a short flat nose, a round head and face, short broad fingers, rough skin on the palm.

**Under socio-emotional difficulty–**

#### **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

- Describe how genetic factors can cause mental disability

### **3.2 Environmental factors that cause developmental anomalies in children**

**(A). Under physical disability**

**Prenatal (before birth) factors**

Damage to the developing fetus during pregnancy can lead to physical disabilities. This can happen due to:

- Poor health of the expectant mother
- Inadequate consumption of nutritious foods during pregnancy, particularly during the first three months.
- Intake of medicines without the doctor's recommendation during pregnancy, particularly during the first three months. Some drugs to control morning sickness have been known to cause physical defects.
- Pregnancy before 20 years or after 35 years.

If the expectant mother takes care of these aspects, many of the physical disabilities can be prevented. .

## **Perinatal (during birth) factors**

Complications during delivery can lead to physical disabilities in the child. Expectant mothers who:

- Are less than 4' 10 in height.
- Have a very narrow pelvis.
- Have a history of prolonged labour in previous childbirths
- Have a big baby.
- Have had bleeding before childbirth.
- Have a poor nutritional and health status.
- Have more chances of complication during delivery.

Physical disability in the child may also occur due to

- Lack of oxygen to the child's brain during delivery.
- Use of instruments to help the childbirth.

## **Postnatal (after birth) factors**

- (i) Accident during the early stages of development.
- (ii) Disease/illness: Infection such as polio or measles
- (iii) Environment: There are numerous factors in home and society, which lead to the manifestation of unusual behaviour. Maladjustment is one of the unusual behaviour a child can manifest. Research studies have established beyond doubt that children who come from homes either by death of parents, divorce, separation, physical or mental handicaps of parents are more maladjusted than children from more stable homes. Children from broken homes do not get the affection, love, sympathy and security from parents. They are, therefore, emotionally disturbed.
- (iv) Deficiency of adequate calories, proteins and vitamins in the child's diet can lead to physical disabilities

## **(B). Under mental retardation:**

1. **Problems during pregnancy:** Mental retardation can result when the baby does not develop inside the mother properly. For example, there may be a problem with the way the baby's cells divide as it grows. A woman who drinks alcohol or smokes cigarette may have a baby with mental retardation.
3. **Problems during birth:** There are women who have difficult childbirth and this can lead to mental retardation. If the pregnant woman is in pain for 24 hours without the baby being born, if the child's head has been pressed excessively during labour, if the baby had to be delivered by using instruments and these have caused damage to the brain, if the baby did not cry soon after birth, If a baby has problems during labour and birth, such as not getting enough oxygen – these conditions can cause brain damage thus resulting in mental retardation.
4. **Health problems:** Diseases like whooping cough, measles or meningitis can cause mental retardation. Injury to the head due to a fall, sever physical punishment can be equally risky and should be avoided. Damaging infections contracted during pregnancy or at birth can cause mental retardation.

5. **Environmental toxins:** Exposure to a variety of environmental toxins such as lead or mercury can cause mental retardation. It can also be caused by extreme malnutrition (not eating right) and not getting enough medical care.

### **C. Under socio-emotional disability /maladjustment:**

The child's family has a tremendous influence on her behaviour and personality. Child rearing practices in the family, the immediate neighborhood, the larger community and the society are also an important part of the child's environment. Factors and people within these can also be the causes of behaviour difficulties in the child.

The family setting: while most families contribute to the emotional well being of their children in some cases the family itself becomes a cause for the child's problems. For example if there is conflict among family members especially between the mother and the father, the atmosphere in the home can become disturbing and affect the child negatively. If a rift in the family, the child can sense it. Such situations can cause tensions to the child and she may develop symptoms such as speech defects, withdrawal from people and poor concentration in work. As you know, child-rearing practices play a major role in determining the child's personality. They can be the cause of behaviour difficulty in the child. The personality of the parents plays a significant role in their methods of child-rearing. As a mother who is highly anxious as she worries a lot about simple matters is likely to convey this anxiety to the child in the way she handles her. She may get unduly upset when the child wets her bed or does not finish her feed. In her anxiety, she may punish the child in an inappropriate manner. When such situations occur often, they are very likely to have a negative effect on the child and this gets reflected in the child's behaviour. Similarly, a father who does not like crying children, may refuse to hold the baby when she is crying or scold her very loudly. The child may become tense every time the father comes near her and a healthy. The family may also be responsible for behaviour problems in children through the kind of values the members hold and practice. If the adults resort to lying and cheating in their work, the children are bound to see that as the acceptable way of getting work done. Hence, if eight year Ayo lies to the teacher that he could not finish his school work at home because he was unwell, he is doing what he saw his father do with somebody else.

Developmental changes as causes:

It may sound strange, but it is true that the child's stage of development itself can be behind the difficulties being shown by the child. This is because each stage in a child's development has its own needs, tasks and hazards. At each stage of development, the child has to adjust and cope with these situations. When children find it difficult to meet these demands, their tension gets reflected in some difficulties in their behaviour. Sometimes children can solve these themselves while at other times they need help.

The important thing is to understand that a given environmental problem does not result in the same symptoms in all the children exposed to it and a given symptom in different children, such as hostile behaviour, can result due to different reasons. When a child shows a behaviour difficulty, your role is to identify what is causing it and treat the cause.

### **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

State whether you agree or disagree with the following statements

- (a) If a child shows some unacceptable behaviour sometime, we can say that the child is showing a behaviour difficulty ( )
- (b) Sometimes when a child is not able to with the demands placed on her during different stages of development, it may get reflected as a behaviour difficulty ( )
- (c) Child rearing practices can be the cause of behaviour difficulties ( )
- (d) Polio, fits and musculo-skeletal conditions affect the mental ability of the child ( )
- (e) Children affected with musculo-skeletal conditions and disabled due to accidents and diseases should attend special schools ( )

## CONCLUSION

In this unit, you have learnt about genetic and environmental factors that cause developmental anomalies in children. You also learnt environmental factors that cause developmental anomalies in children. The genetic and environmental factors learnt were considered under physical disability, mental disability, and socio-emotional disability.

## SUMMARY

The following table summarizes what you have learnt in this unit, while in the next unit will expose you to the characteristics of children with developmental anomalies

### Summary genetic and environmental factors that cause developmental anomalies

Genetic factors that cause developmental disability			Environmental factors that cause developmental disability		
Physical Disability	Mental Disability	Socio-emotional	Physical Disability	Mental Disability	Socio-emotional Disability
No link of genetic factors to physical disability	One or both parents have defective genes that cause mental retardation	No link of genetic factors to socio-emotional disability	-Prenatal factors -Perinatal factors -Postnatal factors -Damage to the developing fetus	-Problems during pregnancy -Problems during birth -Health problems -Environmental toxins	-Child rearing practices in the family -The immediate neighborhood -The larger community -The society
	The child has a defective chromosomes which results in mental retardation				- Developmental changes

## **TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

1. List and describe three environmental factors each that can cause physical disability during the prenatal, perinatal, and post natal periods
2. List and describe two genetic and two environmental factors that cause mental retardation
3. Prepare a presentation of not less than three pages to educate your community on how to prevent the occurrence of developmental disability in children

## **REFERENCE/ FURTHER READING**

1. India Gandhi National Open University, DECE 3, Children with Special Needs

### **Unit 3: Characteristics of children with developmental anomalies**

#### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main body
  - 3.1 Characteristics of children with physical disability
  - 3.2 Characteristics of children with mental disability
  - 3.3 Characteristics of children with socio-emotional disability
  - 3.4 Educational implications: Meeting the educational needs of children with developmental disabilities
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment
- 7.0 Reference /Further reading

#### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

In the last unit, you studied the causes of developmental anomalies. In this unit, you will be taken through characteristics of children with developmental anomalies.....

#### **2.0 OBJECTIVES:**

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

- Mention five characteristics of children with physical disability
- List and explain five characteristics of children with mental disability
- Mention five characteristics of children with socio-emotional disability
- Discuss how to meet the educational needs of children with developmental disabilities

#### **3.0 MAIN CONTENT**

##### **3.1 Characteristics of children with physical disability**

- (i) Disorder of movement and posture.
- (ii) Lack of coordination of other parts of the body.
- (iii) Loss of consciousness, convulsive movement.
- (iv) Stiffness of the neck and rigidity of the spinal column.

### **3.2 Characteristics of children with mental disability**

Many mentally retarded children look like other children, particularly those who are mildly retarded. Hence, to know whether a child is retarded, many factors have to be taken into consideration.

**Child's appearance:** The child's head may look too small or too large for his/her size. Some children will have slanting eyes, a narrow forehead and a protruding tongue. Other children may have a dull expression in their eyes or even appear to be hearing on many occasions. Severely and profoundly retarded children stand out from the rest, due to their appearance.

**Child's behaviour:** Generally, a preschool age child with mental retardation will have some of following characteristics.

- i. The child has very little speech. Even if it is present, she will speak using only a few words or short sentences such as 'Joy doll' instead of saying 'Joy give me the doll'. The speech sound would not be very clear.
- ii. The child does not understand instruction easily; this has to be repeated to make her understand.
- iii. Poor ability to pay attention to a task at hand is one of the characteristics. The child may be fidgety, irritable and restless. She will also tend to forget something just recently learnt.
- iv. The child may not have acquired complete bladder and bowel control.
- v. Children with mental retardation do not play actively with older children, unless helped to do so. Some of them may avoid company. They do not show initiative and imagination when playing. Their play is likely to be repetitive.
- vi. There may be problems of management of behaviour. Children may show behaviors such as unprovoked aggression, temper tantrums, stubbornness, withdrawn behaviour or resistance to new situations.
- vii. The child will have difficulty in learning.
- viii. Jerky and uncoordinated movements. Poor balance, which is seen as the child frequently trips, bumps into people or drops things
- ix. Difficulty in moving both arms at the same time.
- x. Difficulty in crossing the mid-line of the body. For example, the child will have difficulty in using her right hand to pick up a toy placed to the left of her body.
- xi. Difficulty in skills or movements involving fingers and wrists. For example the child cannot button, hold a pencil properly or use scissors.
- xii. Difficulty in eye hand coordination, which is shown when the child tries to do activities like pasting, catching a ball etc, and in jerky eye movements when she watches a moving object.

- xiii. There may be problems of management of behaviour. Children may show behaviors such as unprovoked aggression, temper tantrums, stubbornness, withdrawn behaviour or resistance to new situations.
- xiv. The child will have difficulty in learning.

### **3.3 Characteristics of children with socio-emotional disability**

#### **Symptoms of Emotional Disturbance:**

- (i) underdeveloped conscience.
- (ii) lack of empathy.
- (iii) failure to take responsibility for behaviour.
- (iv) internationality – characterized by the violation of socially acceptable rules and norms.
- (v) poor school attendance.
- (vi) extreme timidity and anxiety.
- (vii) excessive nail biting.
- (ix) thumb sucking., biting the lips, scratching the nose, pulling or twisting the hair.
- (x) excessive shyness.

#### **Educational implications:**

#### **Meeting the educational needs of children with developmental disabilities**

##### **Children with physical disability**

- For children who have only physical impairment, the curriculum and educational goals will be the same as for physically normal children.
- For children who have other handicaps in addition to physical limitations, for example, mental retardation, you will have to modify the activities in keeping with their level of intellectual functioning. Depending upon the extent of the handicap, the child may benefit from attending a special school rather than a regular school.
- While it is necessary to look for appropriate people or agencies for specific advice for children with physical disabilities, it is important to remember that if given ample opportunity to develop socially, emotionally, and educationally in as normal a fashion as possible, many children with physical handicaps can make healthy adjustments to their disabilities and become contributing members of the society

##### **Children with mental disability**

- Mental retardation is not mental illness. Children with mental retardation learn in the same way as other children, but the learning takes place slowly. Therefore, instruction and training take longer.
- Children who have mild and moderate degree of retardation can be taught along with other children without much difficulty. Severely and profoundly retarded children will benefit more from instruction in a special school.

## **Children with socio-emotional difficulty**

It is important to remember that the child cannot be directly blamed for the problem. There is usually some underlying factor that causes the problem behaviour and if that factor is identified and treated, the problem behaviour can be controlled or minimized. Strategies for managing behaviour problems include

- Observe carefully the circumstances of the child's unacceptable behaviour
- Try to understand why the child behaves as he/she does
- Set a reasonable goal for improvement based on the child's immediate needs and developmental level
- Plan to work towards the goal in small steps, always rewarding good behaviour and ignoring bad behaviour, use concrete rewards
- After the child's behaviour has improved, gradually move towards a more natural way of relating with the child
- The important point to remember when modifying the child's behaviour is to be consistent in your response. Avoid the use of punishment as this will certainly aggravate the problem

## **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

- Describe the strategies that a caregiver can use to manage children with behaviour difficulty

## **CONCLUSION**

In this unit, you learnt about the characteristics of children with developmental anomalies with focus on those with physical, mental and socio-emotional disabilities.....

## **SUMMARY**

In this unit, you have learnt that children with physical disability tend to show the following characteristics: disorder of movement and posture, lack of coordination, loss of consciousness, convulsive movement, stiffness of the neck, and rigidity of the spinal column. You also learnt that children with mental disability tend to show certain characteristics some of which are that the child's head may look too small or too large for his/her size, slanting eyes, a narrow forehead and a protruding tongue, dull expression in their eyes, poor ability to pay attention to a task, may show behaviors such as unprovoked aggression, temper tantrums, stubbornness, withdrawn behaviour or resistance to new situations, difficulty in skills or movements involving fingers and wrists, difficulty in moving both arms at the same time, difficulty in learning. You equally learnt that children with socio-emotional disability tend to show the following characteristics: underdeveloped conscience, lack of empathy, failure to take responsibility for behaviour, internationality, poor school attendance, extreme timidity and anxiety, excessive nail biting, thumb sucking., biting the lips, scratching the nose, pulling or twisting the hair.

In the next two units being the last in this course, we shall discuss two contemporary early childhood models, Maria Montessori and Reggio Emilia, and their contribution to early childhood education.

## **TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

1. List five characteristics of children with physical disability
2. Mention and describe five characteristics of children with mental disability
3. List five characteristics of children with socio-emotional disability
4. Imagine that you are working as an educator in a child care centre. A mother of a severely retarded six-year old child comes to you for help. She has totally given up hope in her child. She is depressed and does not think her child can do anything. What advice would you give to the mother?
5. Imagine that you are a teacher in nursery school. One child in the school throws a tantrum whenever he wants to get his way. You have called her parents for a discussion. When you ask them as to how they deal with the child's behaviour, they replied: "oh! When he does something like that, we do as he wants. It is so much simpler to agree with him. At least there is peace after that". How would you respond to the parents' statement?
6. Observe a child of between ages 3 and 5 whom you are suspicious of having mental retardation. Write a 1-page report of your observation giving reasons to support your claim

## **REFERENCE/FURTHER READING**

1. India Gandhi National Open University, DECE 3, Children with Special Needs

### **Unit 4: Contribution of Maria Montessori to the Development of Early Childhood Education**

## **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main body
  - 3.1 Brief History of Maria Montessori

Basic Ideas in Maria Montessori's Educational Philosophy

Maria Montessori's Model of early childhood education

Merit and Demerit of Montessori method
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment
- 7.0 Reference /Further reading

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

How have classical and contemporary theories of development informed some examples of quality early childhood programmes today? How have the developers of these models conceptualized programmes of high quality for young children? In the next two units, two early childhood programmes will be described, beginning with the Montessori approach.

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES:**

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

- Narrate Maria Montessori's life history
- Describe the basic ideas in Maria Montessori's model of early childhood education
- Explain the contribution of Maria Montessori in the development of early childhood education
- Discuss the merits and demerit of Maria Montessori's method

### **3.0 MAIN BODY**

#### **3.1 Brief History of Maria Montessori (1870-1952)**

Maria Montessori, whose method has become equivalent to education in the preschool years, was born in Italy in 1870. She was the first woman to receive a medical degree from the university of Rome. While working for her medical degree, Montessori became interested in mentally retarded children and developed teaching materials and methods to facilitate learning. Thus, began her fame as an educator. She was convinced that education rather than physical or mental treatment was the remedy for their retardation. On being successful with them, she tried new materials and methods and worked with normal children. She argued that if retarded children could progress by the use of her methods, one could do much more for normal children in a properly designed educational environment. She put her ideas to test while working with slum children of Rome in 1907, employing the teaching materials she had fashioned and her success in this was a turning point in her career. She gave up her medical practice for traveling, lecturing, establishing schools and teacher training colleges and conducting training courses.

Some professional predecessors whose work and ideas helped and inspired Maria Montessori included Itard, a French physician; Seguin, Itard's student and Jacques Rousseau, a philosopher and educational theorist; Pestalozzi, an educational thinker; and Friedrich Froebel, an educational thinker and practitioner who was the father of kindergarten. As Maria Montessori studied the work of these and other scholars, she noted the persistent emphasis on the child's ability to realize his /her potential if he or she is properly guided and directed. She diligently studied child psychology, anthropology and philosophy and thus developed a method of scientific observation of children. Such well-known scholars as Freud, Piaget & Erikson acknowledged her contribution in early childhood education. In 1907 her method was explained in a book the 'Montessori Method'. Three key elements - the Child, the Directress (Teacher) and Prepared Environment were presented as the focus of the approach. They form a unity in the education of the child.

#### **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

- List at least four sources through whom Maria Montessori's work was inspired

#### **3.2 The basic ideas in Maria Montessori's educational philosophy**

##### **The Child**

Like Froebel, she believed that education must help in the complete unfolding of the child's individuality. Suitable environment should be provided so that the child may grow and develop her potentiality. She said: 'the school must permit free, natural manifestations of the child if he is to study in a scientific manner'.

She was against material rewards and punishment. According to her, material rewards are unnatural incentives and punishments lead to forced efforts on the parts of the child. Therefore, she believed that the development that comes with their help will also be unnatural.

She believed that every child is unique and the rate of progress is also different for each child. Collective methods of teaching crush the child's individuality, she treated each child as a separate individual and recommended that the child should be helped and guided in a manner that helps in proper growth and development. Thus the teacher's strategy must be geared to each child's developmental level, interests and needs. Montessori shifted the emphasis from teaching to learning. She believed that self-education is true education. It was important to help the child to learn rather than making her acquire information through formal studies.

The first six years of life is the most crucial period of a child's life when the teacher can capitalize on the natural energy of children.

Montessori asserted that the senses are the gateways of knowledge. On their training and development depends the acquisition of knowledge throughout life. She pointed out that the senses are very active during the early years and a lot of learning takes place during this period.

She also attached importance to motor and physical development as a part of the early education of children. She believed that fostering motor development would facilitate other activities like writing and drawing.

### **The Prepared Environment**

The prepared environment focuses on an organized and coordinated set of materials and equipment calculated to aid significant learning in the child. The environment is prepared based on the child's need, it is well ordered physically and conceptually to give meaning and relevance to the child's world. The following should be provided within the prepared environment:

- Freedom of movement: Everything is tailored to the child's size, needs and interest to enhance movement.
- Order and structure: The learning materials have to be well-ordered, well-kept and presented in such a way to lead to greater refinement and control
- Reality and nature: The young child should be free to explore nature and to observe the harmony and order revealed in nature. Reality is practicalized with the use of tools and other equipment by the children in their daily classroom activities.

### **The Teacher**

Montessori replaces the word teacher by the word directress, as she thinks that the function of the teacher is to direct and not to teach. The motto of the directress should be: 'I must diminish, to let you grow'. She suggested that a teacher should care for the child like a gardener who cares for plants, so that the natural growth of the child is properly guided in the process of unfolding itself. The directress should have an intimate knowledge of the mind and

character of each child. The teacher is more a resource person and catalyst for progress who generates emotional support, helpfulness and consideration for the child. The teacher is expected to construct each child's individual learning activities to enable him to progress at his own rate. The teacher is discouraged from comparing one child with another. It is her responsibility to see that learning materials are carefully arranged that she is not given to authoritarian teaching, which is capable of producing failure, rebellion and aggression. Montessori condemned the use of "don'ts" as a means of enforcing discipline. She recommended experimentation as a way of observing children's reactions to various materials. Thus, those that are poorly received by children are discarded and withdrawn. The teacher has to be a model in all things for children to copy; in temperament, language, and organization. In order to imbue children with order the teacher must herself be orderly and attractive, she must always maintain dignity. Everything must be well-organized, clean, attractive and good repair and well kept. The teacher should seek to motivate the children through the use of enticing, interesting and stimulating activities. The teacher must not interrupt the child with praise, comments or special assistance. She must refrain from creating dependency relationships with children as is practiced in conventional nursery and kindergarten schools. Rather a strong relationship should exist between the child and the learning material rather than between the child and the teacher as is the case in traditional nursery situations.

### **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

- Briefly describe the three key elements in Montessori's method

### **3.3 Maria Montessori's Model of early childhood education**

#### **The curriculum**

The Montessori curriculum is divided into three primary components: motor education, sensory education and language or intellectual education. The classroom is described as a prepared environment with carefully sequenced and structured materials for the child to be introduced to by the teacher followed by the opportunities to select materials in independent work.

**Motor education:** The Montessori classroom is organized with the intent that children are free to move about during the day. Fine motor skills are developed through the many sensorial materials as well as work in the area of practical life. All the curriculum components-sensorial, mathematics, language, and practical life are focused on concrete objects and activities that use fine motor skills and a sense of order. In the practical life curriculum, children learn such tasks as washing tables, pouring materials, sweeping and polishing shoes which involve the primary movements of everyday life, self care, management of the household, manual work, gymnastic exercises and rhythmic movements as categories of the motor education.

**Sensory education:** Manipulative or didactic materials are used for sensory education. The sensorial curriculum includes a large number of sets of materials that promote seriation, classification, and conservation activities in a variety of media. The materials are sequenced according to difficulty with control of error being a primary objective. In addition to a set of cylinders that vary in dimension and height, sensorial materials include the cube tower, broad stair, long rods, color tablets, binomial and trinomial cubes and constructive triangles.

Language or intellectual education: The sensorial materials are part of intellectual education and vice versa. The teacher engages in careful pronunciation of words as he or she talks to the children. Likewise, when giving lessons in the use of concepts or materials, the teacher consistently uses words for physical dimension such as large, small, thick, thin, when introducing and conducting further lessons using didactic materials. The three-part lesson also exemplifies how the teacher uses language in a consistent manner to guide the child. In a three-part lesson, the teacher first shows and names a concept or material. In the second part, the teacher asks the child to 'show me' or 'give me' the material being learned. Finally, in the third part of the lesson, the child is asked to name the material being learned. For example, when learning the concepts of large and small, the teacher would first say, 'this is the small ball'. Next the teacher would say 'show me the small ball'. Finally the teacher would ask the child to name the small ball. Writing and reading activities and material are also carefully sequenced by difficulty. Preparation for writing includes exercises to develop fine motor skills in preparation for learning to write. At the same time, exercises to establish visual-motor understanding of alphabet letters and how to form them are introduced. Finally, exercise for the composition of words to include sounding out letters in a word and writing the words are introduced. Materials used for reading and writing includes sandpaper alphabet letters, movable alphabets for spelling and writing materials such as papers, pencils. After the child is familiar with the alphabet and can spell and write words independently, reading and writing are expanded to writing sentences and reading simple books (Orem, 1966).

### **The concept of children's house**

Children's house is the name given by Montessori to a school for young children. The original Montessori house consisted of a set of rooms for intellectual work, for individual play and sleep, a clubroom for games and music, a dining room, a dressing room, a garden. The activities organized in the house for children aim at their all round development. Montessori developed her own educational materials, borrowing from Foebel and Seguin. The Montessori system of education relies heavily on these educational materials and apparatus. The materials are mainly of three types: those for training of senses, those that teach practical skills, and those that help children to adapt themselves to the needs of school life.

Montessori activities are arranged in a series from easy to difficult. The emphasis is on encouraging the child to discover and understand concepts by herself. For example, experience with building blocks of different shapes and sizes gives opportunity to perceive length, breadth, and thickness. Arranging cylindrical pieces of the same height but different diameters in an order of increasing diameter helps children to understand concept of relative size. Similarly, at first the children associate words with their sensory experience and gradually they acquire a descriptive vocabulary. Among other activities are fastening and unfastening buttons, hooks, and laces. Putting the articles in a room in order, setting the table, moving chairs quietly.

Special emphasis has been in her teaching strategy to read and write. Her educational apparatus provides for properly graded and correlated exercises that lead to reading and writing.

She has provided practical exercises in her school, which enable children to learn habits of cleanliness and order. The students learn the lesson of dignity of labor and self help by attending to their needs themselves.

Social values are also stressed in the children's house. Children serve lunch, eat together and later clean the plates. Many other activities are also performed cooperatively.

The Montessori system is child-centered. The child is free to choose the activity she desires. Yet, there is structure with freedom. The educator structures the activities so that their performance leads to a certain development, but that is all she does. The child is free to proceed through the activity at her own pace. The activities are challenging as well as interesting. Individualized teaching is the focal point of the Montessori method i.e., teaching strategy is evolved individually for each child, based on her needs and interests. This enables the child to progress at his or her own pace and promotes optimal development. Her method is a reaction against collective teaching.

Montessori did not approve of fairy tales for children, as she felt that these tend to confuse children and hinder them in the process of adjusting themselves to the real world.

### **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

- Briefly outline the major components of Montessori's curriculum

### **3.4 Merit and Demerit of Montessori method**

#### **Merit of the Montessori method**

Montessori ushered in a new era in early childhood education. She writes: 'today there stands forth one urgent need- the reform of methods in education and instruction, and he who struggles towards this end is struggling for the regeneration of man'. To her the child was god. Many preschools today are based on the Montessori method. Others, while they have not adopted her approach totally, use the educational materials in one form or the other. The child centeredness of her method, the freedom given to the child, the relatively few constraints on leaning yet the presence of a person to guide the child, helps in the total development of the child. While her stress on realistic methods of teaching through the senses and through concrete experiences is reminiscent of Pestalozzi and Foebel, her method of education gives freedom to the child and is more individualistic in nature.

#### **Limitations of the Montessori method**

There is a key reliance on the educational apparatus and materials. Beyond a point, this limits the child as well as the teacher. The child's expression is limited to what is possible with these materials. The pupil is expected to do different types of exercises with the help of the apparatus and the teacher also has to teach through the didactic apparatus, with the result that the free expression of the children is limited as is the work of the teacher. Also Montessori equipment is very expensive. Individualizes teaching, which is the hallmark of her method, requires that the educator work with a fewer number of children. This is not always possible in our preschools. The teacher in Montessori system takes care in keeping records of the height, skull and limbs of each individual child. She hardly observes temperament and other emotional traits.

### **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

- Briefly discuss two merits and two demerits of Montessori method

## **CONCLUSION**

Although her methods and techniques were formulated many decades ago, Maria Montessori still remains today the single best source for practical ways in which to stimulate the mental development of the pre-school children. In this unit, you were exposed to the contribution of Maria Montessori in the development of early childhood education, focusing on her brief history, basic ideas in her educational philosophy, her model of early childhood education, as well as merit of her educational method.

## **SUMMARY**

In this unit, you have learnt that:

- Maria Montessori was medical doctor who became interested in mentally retarded children and developed teaching materials and methods to facilitate learning. She reckoned that education rather than physical or mental treatment was the remedy for mental retardation. On being successful with them, she tried new materials and methods and worked with normal children and created a learning environment through her approach called the ‘Montessori method’.
- She believed that education must help in the complete unfolding of the child’s individuality and that a suitable environment should be provided so that the child may develop her potential
- Three key elements - the Child, the Directress (Teacher) and Prepared Environment are the focus of the Montessori method
- She held that the method of instruction must be geared to each child’s level of development, interests and needs
- She was against material rewards and punishment and regarded the first six years of life as the most crucial period of a child’s life and that the teacher can capitalize on the natural energy of children as their senses are very active during the early years and a lot of learning takes place during this period. She also attached importance to motor and physical development as a part of the early education of children
- The primary components of Montessori curriculum are: motor education, sensory education and language or intellectual education.
- The Montessori system of education relies heavily on educational materials and apparatus comprising those for training of senses, those that teach practical skills, and those that help children to adapt themselves to the needs of school life
- The Montessori system is child-centered and the child is free to choose the activity he/she requires
- The role of the teacher is to provide children with suitable opportunities to think for themselves

## **TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

1. Trace the antecedents of Maria Montessori’s interest in early childhood education

2. Describe in detail the basic philosophy in Maria Montessori's early childhood education
3. Describe the main features of Maria Montessori's system of education
4. Discuss ways Montessori method has contributed to development of present day early childhood education in Nigeria. Which aspects of her method would you recommend, and why?

## **REFERENCE/ FURTHER READING**

1. Wortham S.C (2006). Early Childhood Curriculum: Developmental Bases for Learning and Teaching. New York: Pearson Prentice Hall
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## **Unit 5: Contribution of Reggio Emilia to the Development of Early Childhood Education**

### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main body
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  - 3.3 Reggio Emilia's Model of Early Childhood Education
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
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### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

In the last unit, you learnt about the contribution of Maria Montessori to the development of early childhood education. In this unit, you will learn about Reggio Emilia model and how it contributed to early childhood education.

### **4.0 OBJECTIVES:**

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

- Trace the evolution of Reggio Emilia early childhood education model
- Describe the basic ideas and principles of Reggio Emilia educational philosophy
- Explain Reggio Emilia's model of early childhood education

### **3.0 MAIN BODY**

#### **3.1 The evolution of Reggio Emilia model of early childhood education**

Early childhood care education in Italy has a long history that began as charitable and religious centers for infants and preschool children in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. After 1867, Froebel's kindergartens began to have an influence followed by progressive educators at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. During the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, preschool education was controlled by the Catholic Church. It was not until the end of World War II that parent-run schools within municipal systems were established.

The evolution of the Reggio Emilia preschool model was initiated in the days immediately after the end of the World War II in 1945. In the following months, Loris Malaguzzi and local parents established the first school in a war-torn country without resources. Bricks were salvaged from bombed houses, and the first buildings were constructed by the parents. From these first tentative efforts, the system of Reggio Emilia schools was established. In the first years, educators and parents worked to develop the program based on projects designed by the teachers. After Malaguzzi visited the Rousseau Institute in Geneva, Switzerland, the schools began to reflect Piaget's theory and perception of children's cognitive development. Despite ongoing struggles for many years with the Catholic Church over how schools would be administered, in 1967 all the parent-run schools came under the administration of the municipality of Reggio Emilia and 1972 the rules and regulation developed to govern the parent-run schools of Reggio Emilia were passed by the city council. This milestone marked acknowledgement of the Reggio Emilia approach after 10 years of development. In the past 30 years, the schools of Reggio Emilia have continued to evolve and develop. The model has been influenced by the work of contemporary theorists and writers that include Urie Bronfenbrenner, Lev Vygotsky, Erik Erikson, Howard Gardener and Jerome Bruner. The model has gained international recognition, and visitors have traveled from all over the world to experience and understand this model for early childhood education.

The Reggio Emilia model was first conceptualized using Piaget's theory of cognitive development. The child's development in quality of thinking helped in designing the school in which children are active learners. However, as Reggio Emilia educators continued to study Piaget's perception of constructivism, they had some concerns about his approach. They felt that Piaget's theory isolates the child and undervalues the adult's role in promoting cognitive development. They were also concerned about social interaction and that cognitive, affection, and moral judgment were described as parallel tracks. Therefore, in addition to understanding and incorporating Piaget's theory, model developers incorporated Vygotsky's work. They were particularly interested in Vygotsky's theory on how thought and language work together when the child is forming ideas and making a plan of action. Further, they were interested in Vygotsky's zone of proximal development, the distance between the child's current capacities and the child's level of potential development. The contributions of these two thinkers and others mentioned earlier guided the evolution of the Reggio Emilia model. The theoretical bases of the Reggio Emilia model are focused on how the young child learns. Reggio Emilia schools used the term 'active education' using Piaget's description of cognitive development as a process of ongoing adaptation to the environment. The schools are considered by Malaguzzi as amiable because they encourage movement, inter-independence and interaction. Emphasis is placed on the relationships between teachers, parents and children in the active process of learning.

## **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

- Identify six eminent personalities that guided the evolution of Reggio Emilia model

### **3.2 The basic ideas and principles in Reggio Emilia's educational philosophy**

The Reggio Emilia model can be described in terms of eight principles (Cadwell, 1997)

1. The child as protagonists: children are strong and capable. All children have preparedness; potential, curiosity and interest in constructing their learning, negotiating with everything their environment bring them. Children, teachers and parents are considered the three central protagonists in the educational process.
2. The child as collaborator: education must focus on each child in relation to other children, the family, the teachers and the community rather than on each child in isolation. There is an emphasis on work in small groups. This practice is based on the social constructive model that supports the idea that we form ourselves through our interaction with peers, adults, things in the world and symbols
3. The child as communicator: this approach fosters children's intellectual development through a systematic focus on symbolic representation, including words, movement, drawing, painting, building, sculpture, shadow play, collage, dramatic play and music which leads children to surprising levels of communication, symbolic skills and creativity. Children have the right to use many materials in order to discover and communicate what they know understand, wonder about, question, feel, and imagine. In this way, they make their thinking visible through their many natural 'languages'. A studio teacher, trained in the visual arts, works closely with children and teachers in each school to enable children to explore many materials and use a great number of languages to make their learning visible.
4. The environment as third teacher: the design and use of space encourage encounters, communication and relationships. There is an underlying order and beauty in the design and organization of all space in a school and the equipment and materials within it. Every corner of every space has an identity and a purpose, is rich in potential to engage and to communicate, is valued and cared for by children and adults.
5. The teacher as partner, nurturer, and guide: the teachers facilitate children's exploration of themes, work on short and long term projects and guide experiences of joint, open ended discovery and problem solving. To know how to plan and proceed with their work, teachers listen and observe children closely. Teachers ask questions; discover children's ideas, hypotheses and theories; and provide occasions for discovery and learning.
6. The teacher as researcher: teachers work in pairs and maintain strong, collegial relationships with all other teachers and staff; they engage in continuous discussion and interpretation of their work and the work of their children. These exchanges provide ongoing training and theoretical enrichment. Teachers see themselves as researchers preparing documentation of their work with children whom they consider researchers. The team is further supported by a pedagogical coordinator who serves a group of schools.
7. The documentation as communication: careful consideration and attention is given to the presentation of the thinking of the children and the adults who work with them. Teachers commentary on the purposes of the study and the children's learning process, transcriptions of children's verbal language, photographs of their activity and representation of their thinking in many media are composed in carefully designed

panel or books to present the process of learning in schools. The documentation serves many purposes. It makes parents aware of their children's experience. It allows teacher to better understand children, to evaluate their own work and to exchange ideas with other educators. Documentation also traces the history of the school and the pleasure in the process of learning experiences by many children and their teachers.

8. The parent as partner: parent participation is considered essential band takes many forms. Parents play an active role in their children's learning experience and help ensure the welfare of all the children in the school. The ideas and skills that the families bring to the school and even more important, the exchange of ideas between parents and teachers favor the development of a new way of educating, which helps teachers to view the participation of families not as a threat but as an intrinsic element of collegiality and as the integration of different wisdoms.

In keeping with these principles, the Reggio Emilia's contribution in the development of early childhood education will be discussed in terms of the environment, the role of teachers, the role of parents, the role of the child, the curriculum and assessment.

### **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

- Explain three principles of Reggio Emilia preschool educational philosophy
- Explain the importance of the child's role in Reggio Emilia as described in the eight principles of the model

### **3.3 Reggio Emilia's Model of Early Childhood Education**

**The environment:** Reggio Emilia schools are developed to encourage social and cognitive development. The physical environment is planned to facilitate interactions between children as well as between teachers and parents. The main common space, a piazza, is surrounded by areas used for different purposes that open to the piazza. An important space is the atelier, described as a workshop or studio, which is used to work on projects and to explore new and familiar materials and tools. In addition, each age group has a large classroom with a mini-atelier attached. Glass is used extensively to connect interior spaces as well as create continuity between the indoor and outdoor environment. There are also spaces where children can spend time alone. The arrangement is designed to facilitate constructive exploration of materials and for work on projects and themes. A major purpose of the space is to display and document the children's work.

**The role of the teaching staff:** There are three adult roles in Reggio Emilia; the atelierista, the pedagoga and the teachers. Adults in each of these roles interact with the children, parents and community and each other. The atelierista uses a background in art to work with children in the atelier as they engage in painting, drawing, working with clay, and using other techniques and materials. The atelierista helps children communicate and represent what they are learning in their project work. The atelierista also talks daily with pedagogisti and teachers to help them understand the children's artwork and how they learn. The pedagogisti are responsible for coordinating communications with parents and visitors as well as engaging teachers in new advances in theory and practice. The pedagogisti serve as facilitators for the exchange of ideas between teachers both within a school and among different schools. The teacher's role is to work with the children. Teachers focus on children's work rather than as

instructors to the children. Teachers and children are equally involved in the progress of work, materials and techniques being used, and ideas being explored. Classroom teachers work with the atelierista as partners in facilitating children's work. They work as partners in the exchange of ideas of how to further children's work with materials and discussions.

**The role of the child:** A major portion of children's time is spent on project work. They use art materials to represent what they understand and how they are using creativity to reconstruct knowledge. These representations and communications have been described as the languages of children. In addition, to project work, children engage in all types of spontaneous play, blocks, acting out plays, and outdoor play. Some children also engage in art activities during free play periods. Children spend much of the day interacting and socializing with classmates and adults.

**The curriculum:** The curriculum of Reggio Emilia is described as emergent. That is, the teachers do not plan objectives and learning activities in advance. Rather they first study the characteristics of the children as well as their aptitudes, needs and interests. In addition, the staff meets weekly to continue sharing knowledge of the children in their planning. In planning the curriculum, teachers lay out general educational objective. They formulate hypothesis of what could happen based on their knowledge of the children. The relationships between children, parents, the community, and culture are also considered. Based on children's backgrounds and interests, curriculum themes or projects are initiated. Thereafter the processes of interactions with children and adults, observation and documentation of children's work and discussions among all the participants to include staff members, parents and children are used for ongoing planning and implementation of the curriculum. Children are equal participants in planning the curriculum and evaluating the progress of the work. Each project can start from a suggestion, a child's idea or a significant event.

**Assessment:** Much has already been said about documentation, the record of children's work, products of projects or themes are reflected in the children's artwork. In addition, ongoing discussion between staff members and the children provide continuous assessment of the curriculum and the children's progress. Teachers and atelieristas keep daily anecdotal records of what the children are doing and the steps that will be taken in guiding the children through further efforts. The display of children's work on the walls of the school plus discussions and written information form the assessment of children's progress as well as self-evaluation by children and teachers.

## **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

- Describe the major tenets of Reggio Emilia model of early childhood education

## **CONCLUSION**

The Reggio Emilia system of education has been succinctly described as a collection of schools for young children in which each child's intellectual, emotional, social, and moral potentials are carefully cultivated and guided. The principal educational vehicle involves youngsters in long-term engrossing projects, which are carried out in beautiful, healthy, love-filled setting (Wortham, 2006). The Reggio Emilia has been of interest to educators from many countries. The approach has been implemented in the United States for over a decade. In this

unit, you were exposed to Reggio Emilia model and how it contributed to the development of early childhood education, with focus on the evolution of Reggio Emilia model, the basic ideas in Reggio Emilia model, and contribution of Reggio Emilia's model to early childhood education.

## **SUMMARY**

In this unit, you have learnt that

- The evolution of the Reggio Emilia preschool model was initiated in the days immediately after the end of the World War II in 1945. the first buildings were constructed by the parents. in 1967 all the parent-run schools came under the administration of the municipality of Reggio Emilia and 1972 the rules and regulation developed to govern the parent-run schools of Reggio Emilia were passed by the city council. The model has been influenced by the work of contemporary theorists and writers that include Urie Bronfenbrenner, Lev Vygotsky, Erik Erikson, Howard Gardener, Jean Piaget, Leu Vygotsky
- The Reggio Emilia model can be described in terms of eight principles: the child as protagonists; the child as collaborator; the child as communicator; the environment as third teacher; the teacher as partner, nurturer, and guide; The teacher as researcher; the documentation as communication; the parent as partner
- Reggio Emilia model contributed to the development of early childhood education in terms of the environment, the role of teachers, the role of parents, the role of the child, the curriculum and assessment.

## **TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

1. Trace the evolution of Reggio Emilia early childhood education model
2. Describe the six basic principles of Reggio Emilia educational philosophy
3. Describe the main features of Reggio Emilia system of education

## **REFERENCE/ FURTHER READING**

Wortham S.C (2006). Early Childhood Curriculum: Developmental Bases for Learning and Teaching. New York: Pearson Prentice Hall