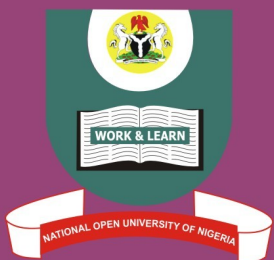


# ECE 103: PHILOSOPHY OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION



**NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA**

*Course Guide*

**COURSE  
GUIDE**

*Course Guide*

**ECE 103  
PHILOSOPHY OF EARLY CHILDHOOD  
EDUCATION.**

Course Developer            Dr. Obisanya S.  
School of Education  
National Open University of Nigeria  
Lagos

Course Writer                Nwokocha. V. N. (Mrs.)  
Abia State University  
Uturu.

Course Editor                Dr. I. O. Salawu  
School of Education  
National Open University of Nigeria  
Lagos

Programme Leader            Dr. I. O. Salawu  
School of Education  
National Open University of Nigeria  
Lagos

Course Co-ordinator         Dr. Osuji U.S.A  
School of Education  
National Open University of Nigeria  
Lagos



**NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA**

## *Course Guide*

National Open University of Nigeria  
Headquarters  
14/16 Ahmadu Bello Way  
Victoria Island  
Lagos.

Abuja Annex  
245 Samuel Adesujo Ademulegun Street  
Central Business District  
Opposite Arewa Suites  
Abuja

e-mail: [centralinfo@nou.edu.ng](mailto:centralinfo@nou.edu.ng)  
URL: [www.nou.edu.ng](http://www.nou.edu.ng)

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## **1.0 Introduction:**

This is one of the courses for learners in Early Childhood Education Programme. It is a 2 Unit course. It is also a compulsory course, thus, it requires your full seriousness.

### **What you will learn in this course**

## **2.0 The Course Guide**

The Course Guide tells you briefly what to expect from reading this study material and provides you information as to how to make the best from the material.

## **3.0 About the Course**

The course ECE 103 introduction to Philosophy of Early Childhood Education discusses specifically the meaning of philosophy, philosophy of pre-primary education, definitions and types of early childhood education, purposes of pre-primary education, the basic outlines of the National Policy on the implementation of pre-primary education in Nigeria. It also discusses the contributions of some leading philosophers to pre-primary education.

## **4.0 Course Aims**

The Course aims to provide an understanding and appreciation of the philosophy of early childhood education.

## **5.0 Course Objectives**

This Course sets to achieve some objectives. After going through this course, you should be able to

- i. Explain the meaning of philosophy
- ii. Define pre-primary/early childhood education
- iii. Distinguish between nursery and kindergarten education
- iv. Explain the purpose of pre-primary education
- v. Mention at least three philosophers that contributed to the development of early childhood education.

## **6.0 Working Through The Course:**

The course requires you to spend a lot of time in reading your course material. This is because you would come across some new terms,

concepts and ideas in education. However, to make for easy understanding and pleasurable reading, great efforts were put in its development. Each unit of each of the three modules start with an introduction followed by objectives, you are expected to achieve at the end of reading the unit and systematic presentation of the course contents. You are therefore advised to avail yourself the opportunity of attending the tutorial sessions where you would have the opportunity of asking questions, and interacting with other colleagues as well as the tutorial facilitator.

## **7.0 The Course Material**

You would be provided with the following materials

- i. Course/guide
- ii. Study Material.

In addition, the course comes with a list of recommended textbooks. You would find these materials valuable as supplementary reading materials.

## **8.0 Assessment**

Just like any other course you have registered for, you would be assessed in two ways. One, you are expected to attempt all the Tutor-Marked Assignments at the end of each study unit of the study material and submit them to your Tutorial facilitator for marking. This constitutes 40% of the total scores of the overall total mark of 100%. Two, you are to sit for a terminal examination at a date to be fixed and announced by the University. This constitutes the remaining 60% of the total score (100%).

## **HOW TO GET THE MOST FROM THIS COURSE**

One major advantage of a distance learning programme is that, the study unit replaces the lecturer. By this, you have the opportunity of working through specially designed materials at your own pace, time and place that suit your interest. It also affords you the opportunity to read through the specially prepared lecture materials instead of listening to a lecturer

Course Code	ECE 103
Course Title	Philosophy of Early Childhood Education
Course Developer	Dr. Obisanya S. School of Education National Open University of Nigeria Lagos.
Course Writer	Nwokocha. V. N. (Mrs.) Abia State University Uturu.
Course Editor	Dr. I. O. Salawu School of Education National Open University of Nigeria Lagos
Programme Leader	Dr. I. O. Salawu School of Education National Open University of Nigeria Lagos
Course Co-ordinator	Dr. Osuji U.S.A. School of Education National Open University of Nigeria Lagos



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**MODULE I****INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION**

Unit 1	Meaning and Definition of Philosophy
Unit 2	Philosophy of Early Childhood/Pre-primary Education
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**1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Philosophy is a very interesting discipline which helps man to pursue and acquire knowledge at the highest level. Its main function is the ability to assist man in solving problems confronting him. It deals with speculative and contemplative issues that are fundamental to human existence and yet not susceptible to definite knowledge. The essence of philosophy is in its approach, its application to particular sets of facts and its attempt to discover the significance of these facts and their relation to the rest of human experience.

In education, philosophy helps us to establish standards and formulate goals that help to set up signposts for the future. The philosophical stand point is applied to discover values and purposes, and the ideals towards which individual and group efforts can be directed. In this unit, the concept of philosophy, its branches and importance are going to be highlighted for you to will appreciate that philosophy is not merely a way of thinking, but a way of life.

## **2.0 OBJECTIVES:**

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

- ◆ define Philosophy
- ◆ differentiate between philosophy and philosophy of education.
- ◆ name the four branches of philosophy
- ◆ differentiate between logic and ethics.

**Self Assessment Exercise 1.1:** Attempt a description/ definition of philosophy

## **3.0 MAIN BODY**

### **3.1 MEANING/CONCEPT OF PHILOSOPHY AND PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION.**

Philosophy is the father of all branches of knowledge. It is concerned with clear and meaningful expression. It is the study of that which deals with the ultimate realities of the universe and the general courses and principles of those things that man observes and experiences (Farrant, 1982).

The word, philosophy, is a combination of two Greek nouns ‘philia’ meaning ‘Love or friendship’ and “Sophia” meaning “Wisdom”. Hence, the word philosophy is translated literally to mean “The love of wisdom”! Philosophy is the criticism of the fundamental beliefs in any man’s great cultural enterprises, science, art, religion, the moral life, social and practical activity.

It is the search for knowledge and understanding of the nature and meaning of the universe and of human life (Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary (1999). It is a discipline that inquires deeper into the problems of human existence beyond what the eye can see or what the ear can hear. The attempt to offer solutions to the above and other philosophical questions has given birth to philosophical theories and schools of thoughts. An individual’s philosophical outlook is his

particular interpretation of observed phenomena. The way he sees or views things is one's philosophy. Philosophy can be classified as follows:

- (a) Natural philosophy which concerns itself with the phenomena of nature;
- (b) Moral philosophy which deals with the principles of human conduct, and
- (c) Political philosophy which is concerned with economics and organisation of the society.

**Self Assessment Exercise 1.2:** What do you understand by term philosophy of education?

Philosophy of education deals with those general principles underlying the study of education. It seeks to discover values and purposes and the ideas towards the achievement of educational goals. Thus, it includes a critical examination of the methods and principles by which scientific knowledge is established within the chosen area of human activity.

Philosophy of education is a specialized area in education designed to give the clear analysis of educational concepts and general ideas in education concepts and ideas. Beside, philosophy of education speculates in the area of education by applying reasons to project certain ideals concerning education and suggesting ways of realizing those ideals. Philosophy is very much interested in reasoning i.e critical examination analysis of facts. It does not belief in speculative rather it has much interest in scientific reasoning.

### 3.2 Branches of Philosophy

Philosophy as a discipline has broad branches which include logic, ethics, epistemology etc and speculative philosophy which also includes; general metaphysics and metaphysics. For the purpose of this course, brief explanation will be given to the following.

### 3.3 Epistemology:

This is the branch of philosophy that concerns itself with the scientific study of knowledge. It is the science of validity or truth-value of human knowledge. Knowledge is knowing without doubt Epistemology is therefore a theory of certitude. Human knowledge is the general subject-matter of Epistemology. This aspect of philosophy does not aim at investigating the nature of the human mind and its facilities, rather it proposes to investigate the mind's activities which is designated by the term "knowledge". It is the function of Epistemology to submit our knowledge to critical examination and investigate the rationale ground

on which it rests, so as to discover whether we are justified in having the spontaneous conviction that our knowledge is valid and true in its claim to be a faithful interpretation of reality (Brittle, 1993).

Succinctly, Epistemology is concerned with questions about what minds work on, what their material is, other person's minds, events or history etc. It poses questions such as what is knowledge? What do we mean when we say we know? Are the objects what we really take them to be?

### **3.4 Ethics**

Ethics deals with the theory of morality. Some scholars refer to it as the practical aspects of philosophy because it studies the morality of human acts through the medium of natural reason. It is derived from a Greek word 'ethos' meaning custom or practice, a characteristic manner of acting. Ethics is therefore defined as a practical science investigating the existence, the basis and the concept of morality. It is a science of morality because it is practical, directive and prescriptive. It raises critical questions like: What ought to be a good or bad conduct? By what means can good moral upbringing be promoted?

### **3.5 Logic**

As an academic discipline. Logic is a science which treats the operations of the human mind in its search for truth. It is an act of reasoning and directs the operations of the mind in the attainment of truth. Logic can also be seen as a study of the methods and principles used to distinguish good or correct from bad or incorrect reasoning.

The aim of logic is to assist man in the attainment of truth, to avoid errors in our reasoning, and to identify common flaws in argument. The knowledge of logic assists man also to evaluate lengthy arguments and avoid logical fallacies.

It poses questions such as: What is an argument? What is the principles of argument? When is an argument weak or strong? Etc.

### **3.6 Metaphysics**

Metaphysics is a branch of philosophy which deals with those features of things that are hyperphysical, supersensible and immaterial. To Aristotle, it is a theological science because it had to do with the ideas of God and His attributes. It deals with realities which are beyond the physical properties. Metaphysics deals with knowledge at the highest level of abstraction. This is because metaphysical knowledge deals with what is universal instead of particular things. Therefore, metaphysics

can be seen “as the science of the ultimate principles and properties of real being (Uzoma 1996).

It does not take a particular kind of being as its object of inquiry as earlier stated, rather it studies material and un-material, actual or possible, real or mental and seeks to know its most general principles and properties. It’s scope includes everything about the world in general. Metaphysics asks critical questions such as: What is being? What is man? Is man matter or spirit or both? Is there life after death?

**Self Assessment Exercise 1.3:** State the functions of philosophy

### **3.7 The Importance or Functions of Philosophy**

Every mentally sound person applies philosophy in his everyday life. No enterprise can succeed without applying the principle of philosophy. Philosophy helps individuals or groups to develop an over all view and understanding of the universe and man’s place in it. This is done by extracting meaning from data produced by others and more definite areas of inquiry. It thus helps one to understand events around him. As a father of knowledge, philosophy is applied in every business enterprise (education industry inclusive) without which the enterprise collapses.

It serves as a facilitator to problem solving. This implies that philosophy assists man in resolving his numerous difficulties confronting him. For instance in education, one of the roles of philosophy is to clarify educational concepts and highlight what can be considered as the reason underlining the practices and activities in education.

It also helps in the logical analysis and clarification of meaning of words and concepts for Aristotle stated that for “discussion to be intelligent, it must begin with definitions of terms. Thus, the study of philosophy assists us to ensure clarity and understanding in human dialogue and assumptions. An enquiry is most likely to have a better focus if the concepts involved are qualitatively or quantitatively clarified. Hence Kent (1940) asserts that “concepts without precepts are empty, and precepts without concepts are blind, this means that it is through analysis that concepts are clearly perceived. Another function of philosophy to man is that it helps us to broaden horizon of our awareness. In other words it makes us to be more alive, discerning, critical and intelligent.

## 4.0 CONCLUSION

It can be observed that the importance of philosophy to both individual and groups cannot be over emphasized. It's knowledge is indispensable for the peaceful co-existence of man in this material universe, because it helps us to understand the meaning of life and the world view. It opens our horizon and exposes us to think and criticize constructively before taking decisions. Philosophy establishes truth and assists us to have reasons of what we claim to believe in. Finally, it deals with critical analysis of facts which guides us to face life challenges calmly or cheerfully.

## 5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, attempts have been made to explain the concepts of philosophy and philosophy of education. Four branches of philosophy namely Epistemology, Ethics, Logic and metaphysics were discussed, the importance of philosophy were also highlighted and conclusion made.

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT (TMA)

1. Define philosophy
2. List four branches of philosophy you have studied.
3. Explain these concepts to a lay man in your community (a) Ethics (b) Logic (c) Epistemology (d) Metaphysics.
4. Raise two questions from each of these concepts discussed.
5. Give two reasons why philosophy is necessary in any human enterprise.
6. What is philosophy of Education?

## 7.0 REFERENCES /FURTHER READINGS

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## **UNIT 2      PHILOSOPHY OF EARLY CHILDHOOD/PRE- PRIMARY EDUCATION**

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- 3.0 Main body
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  - 3.4 Philosophical foundation of childhood education
- 3.0 Conclusion
- 4.0 Summary
- 5.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment (TMA)
- 6.0 References /Further Readings

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Philosophy of childhood education stresses the need to adopt a wholistic approach to the education of the child. Developmental and educational psychologists all over the world have made it clear that pre-schools years are the formative period in the life of an individual. As a critical period, most concepts and basic principles of life are engrained in the children during these early years. Therefore the educational objectives that guide nursery education will be well planned and develop from the child's immediate environment. The philosophy of childhood education also seeks to establish the principles underlying this level of education, aims, purposes and methods which scientific knowledge has agreed within this level.

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

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

1. Explain the meaning of education
2. Describe at least three importance of education
3. Define childhood
4. Explain the philosophy of childhood education

**Self Assessment Exercise 2:1** – What do you understand by the term education?

### **3.0 MAIN BODY**

#### **3.1 CONCEPT OF EDUCATION**

Education is the light of the mind (Ajayi- Dopemu 1994). It is seen as a process through which an individual is admitted into the society by being taught what is worth while in order that the individual might play her part well in the society. Social scientists term it socialization or enculturation (The new Encyclopedia Britanica 1998). Farrant (1982) describes education as “the total process of human learning by which knowledge is imparted, faculties trained and skills develops”. It equips the young with skills for coping with the future.

There are two major diverse view about education namely; education as preparation for the future and education for immediate needs and interests of children. When emphasis is placed on socialization as the most important aim of education, it shows our concern for using education to produce good citizens. Hence education is regarded as a means of satisfying the immediate needs and interests of the child with the hope that these will take care of the future. Children are born without culture, education is designed to guide them in learning culture, molding their behaviour and directing them towards their eventual role in the society. Education can also be viewed as the process of inculcating the right attitudes, values, norms, abilities and skills in an individual to enable him be a functional member of the society he belongs, it is a powerful instrument devised by man for improving his lot. No wonder the National Policy on Education (2004:7) recognizes it as an instrument geared towards self realization, better human relationship, individual and national efficiency, effective citizenship, national consciousness, national unity, as well as towards social, cultural, economic political, scientific and technological progress”.

Sociologically, education is viewed as all the processes and means by which people using human ability to respond to and interact with the environment, pass on from one generation to another those aspects of their culture which they consider worth while. This definition recognizes the child as participating in his education through responding to, and interacting with the environment in this contest, ‘environment’ covers all the agents of education which includes – the home, with members of the family, outer society with elders and peers, the school and its entire environment.

#### **3.2 The Aims/Importance of Education**

According to Fafunwa (1997) “Education is the aggregate of all the processes by which the child or young adult develops the abilities,

attitudes and other forms of behaviour which are positive value to the society in which he lives” This implies that education is a vital instrument for transmitting worth while cultures in terms of continuity and growth and for disseminating knowledge either to ensure social control or to guarantee rational direction of the society. The aim of education is multilateral and the end objective is to produce an individual who is honest, respectable, skilled, co-operative and conforms to the social order of the day. Other values of education includes: providing pupils with minimum skills necessary for them to take their place in society. This implies that education assists children to develop a sense of belonging, participate entirely in family and community affairs, understand and appreciate the cultural heritage of the community at large.

It equips children to acquire the basic skills needed for seeking further knowledge for themselves. It could be intellectual, physical, social or emotional skills. Education helps the children to understand, appreciate and promote the cultural heritage of the community at large. It is a key to character and moral training. These virtues are inculcated into the children by parents, siblings and the school, therefore, the training or education of children is more of co-operative effort in which members of each of the more inclusive groups must play a part.

**Self Assessment Exercise 2. 2:** What does the concept childhood mean to you?

### **3.3 Concept of Childhood**

The arrival of a child in a Nigerian family is a great occasion. The education of the child starts form infancy just as in any European or American society. The baby is fed regularly, mostly through breast feeding and weaned at the appropriate time. All societies train their children in toileting, eating, socialization and general behaviour. At this point the child is more close to the mother than the father and other members of the family. According to Piaget, this period falls within the pre-operational stages of Piagetian categorization of children’s intellectual development. It is the pre-school period of 3-5 years. Between the ages of 3 and 6 in some families, grand parents, parents, siblings, uncles, aunts and teachers become involved in the education of the child. They do this by sending them on errands, tell them stories, teach them obedient and respect for elders. Childhood education is all embracing and every social institution involves educational activities which lead to children to acquire behaviour – patterns, abilities and skills necessary for effective citizenship in the society in which they live.

Piaget categorized the stages of human growth and development into the following areas.

- (a) Pre-natal, 0 - Birth
- (b) Infancy, birth – 2 years
- (c) Early childhood - 2 to 5 years
- (d) Middle childhood, 6 – 8 years
- (e) Late childhood 9 – 11 years
- (f) Adolescence, 12 – 18 years

Early childhood/Pre-pre-primary education falls under 2 to 5 years. At this period, the child is mainly able to form mental pictures of things and uses symbol in an attempt to communicate. The child's reasoning at this age is neither inductive nor deductive rather he learns mainly by analogies. Childhood is the period during which much of the formal education of the child takes place. This stage entails taken into cognizance the needs, interest and aspirations of the child as an individual. This stage requires a well-planned and systematic stimulation of the child's reflexes and gradual introduction of the child to the rudiments of concrete operation. The school provides the child with the opportunity of interacting and co-operating with one another as they learn from their teachers and play with materials that are provided for them. This stage of education is fundamental to the overall learning of the child in the aspects of social, moral, motor-functions and intellectual. It facilitates the learning that occurs in the latter stage of child's life.

Research findings have shown that the early years of a child is more important than the later years in the development of sequence for building conceptual learning sets, interests and habit patterns. By the age of six, most children have already developed a considerable part of intellectual ability they will possess as adults. This period is very critical to the child's cognitive development as more than 50% of matured intelligence is developed before the statutory school age of six (Bloom, 1964). Generally, the first stage of childhood is highly influential in human life as confirmed by psychologists. Whatever happens to the child at this stage, determines to a great extent the quality of inputs into the formal education system. The stake holders in education – parents, teachers, the society, government etc should therefore take all possible steps to ensure optimal environmental condition for good interaction to stimulate the child. According to World Health Organisation (W.H.O) (1972:21-22)

*“When children are reared in homes where there is lack of conversational interchange, where parents do not interact positively with*

*children, and where there is lack of play opportunities, the development of language, intelligence and scholastic skill is likely to be impaired.*

Igboabuchi and Eze (1998) supporting this view, added that “When children are deprived initially stimulating and enriching environment, they may become victims of cognitive and heuristic deficit syndrome. All these assertions point to the need for providing well planned pre-school education for children in order to facilitate better learning cognitive skills development and healthy social development.

### **3.4 Philosophical Foundation of Early Childhood or Pre-Primary Education**

Generally, most educational practices are predicated on some philosophical principles or thoughts. Philosophy of education deals with speculative and contemplative issues in education that are fundamental for human existence.

Early childhood education refers to varied programmes initiative required for children from birth to pre-school age to make them thrive. These initiatives include early stimulation, nutrition and optimal interactive environment. In education, philosophy helps us to establish standards and formulate goals that help us to set up sign posts for their future. The philosophical stand point will be used to discover values and purposes and the ideals towards the achievement of the set goals and objects. It will include a critical examination of methods and principles for solving the problems of childhood. For instance there are beliefs that young infants have a number of developmental needs like protection, nourishments, defence against diseases and physical injury, emotional, psychological and social needs just to mention but a few. The philosophy of childhood education gives guidelines on how to achieve these objectives. It seeks to know those values, purposes and ideas towards which the child’s efforts can be directed.

Another crucial role of philosophy in childhood education is that it encourages education to be geared towards child-centredness. It focuses on vital aspects like educational objectives, methods, curriculum, environment and the role of the teacher in childhood education. This implies that childhood education should be active and relate to the interests and needs of the child. Child-centred education is the education where learning activities are determined by the child. It refers to the development of “the whole child” hence a wholistic approach to learning. It does not disregard any aspect of the child’s life. Education from this perspective is viewed as life itself rather than preparation for life. The practice of child-centredness in education is the function of

philosophy and this will help the child to grow in learning as he solves his current problems. Therefore, the pre-primary educational objectives should be developed from the child's immediate environment based on his experience of the environmental conditions so that he can relate his learning experiences to his daily experiences in his environment. Philosophy of education suggests that teaching should be done scientifically on developmental bases and measurable terms psychologically to motivate the child sufficiently to learn. The child's individual differences should be considered and teaching adopted to that effect. Socially, children should be exposed to interact with enriched environment – trained teachers, siblings, materials etc. to make them acquire social skills. All these philosophical ideas were the guiding principle that led to the establishment of pre-primary education.

#### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

An appropriate philosophical foundation of childhood education is that which caters for the social, emotional, intellectual and physical needs of the child. It should also advocate for child centred education which recognizes that the child as an individual has his own rights endowed with unique inalienable qualities. Educational objectives of the child should be formulated to take cognizance of the needs, interests and aspirations of the child. It's unfortunate, that in Nigeria, this level of education does not receive adequate attention it deserves. The guiding principles mapped out by National policy on Education are yet to be fully implemented.

#### **5.0 SUMMARY**

This unit has tried to explain the meaning and importance of education, the concept of childhood was discussed and the characteristics of children were pinpointed. The philosophy of childhood education was also highlighted.

#### **6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT (TMA)**

1. Mention four importance of childhood education
2. Define Education
3. Mention two importance of education?
4. Discuss the philosophical guiding principles of childhood education.

#### **7.0 REFERENCES /FURTHER READINGS**

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## **UNIT 3      CONCEPT AND TYPES OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION**

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- 6.0 References/Further Readings

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Childhood education has been identified as a foundation upon which the success or failure of other levels of education depends. This is predicated on many studies of children which revealed the importance of early years in physical, social, emotional and intellectual development. In Nigeria, nursery school has been widely misused. It is often used interchangeably with kindergarten or day-care. This unit will give an insight of what pre-primary or childhood education is and will also lead you to distinguish between nursery, kindergarten and day-care programmes.

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

It is expected that by the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- ◆ explain the meaning pre-primary education;
- ◆ list three types of pre-primary education ;
- ◆ define nursery and kindergarten schools;
- ◆ distinguish between nursery education and Day-Care services and
- ◆ outline the characteristics of pre-primary school children.

### **3.0 MAIN BODY**

#### **3.1 CONCEPT OF EARLY CHILDHOOD/PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION**

Early childhood/pre-primary education as contained in the National Policy on Education (NPE; 2004:11) is the education given in an educational institution to children prior to their entering the primary school. It includes the crèche, the nursery and the kindergarten". Encyclopedia America (1989:553) defines it 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 pre-primary education as the education given in an educational institution to children aged three to five plus prior to entering the primary education. It could also be referred to as varied programme initiative required for children from birth to pre-school age to make them thrive. These initiatives include early stimulation, nutrition and optimal interactive environment. Psychologists call this period nursery education or pre-operational period.

Pre-primary education is the first formal education children receives under the auspices of the teachers. It's main concern is with building the background of experience that will promote the later attainment of academic skills. Since the rest of the 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. On the contrary, any stimulation of this 'critical' period will greatly influence the child's success in life. Besides, the quality of inputs into primary school is determined at this stage.

Early childhood schooling can also be viewed as a gentle means of easing the problem of transiting them to child into daily school routine enable him mix with peers, and giving him experience of other adults. It therefore serves as a compliment to home and not a substitute. It helps in preparing the child for his future schooling and also assists him to benefit fully from his present stage of development by equipping him for future living. Developmental psychologists hold a consensual view that the first six years of life is critical in the development of the child. That by the age of six, most children have almost developed a considerable part of intellectual ability they will have as adults. They confirmed that the child's cognitive development has matured over 50% at this stage.

The starting point of this level of education sometimes varies with individual schools. Some might take it to be two years, others two and

half years. It requires early stimulation of the child for the formation of personality and social behaviour. They have wonderfully impressionable minds and these minds thus need to be well nurtured and developed from this early stage for future adjustment. The children at this stage have a number of survival needs to contend with in his new environment (School). For instance they need protection from extreme cold or heat which includes good building-classrooms, library, laboratories, furniture, instructional hardware and good playground for physical activities. They need sound nutrition (balanced diet) to enable them to be healthy and resist diseases. Also needed by pre-primary school children include defence mechanism against physical injury, emotion and support-love, care, affection etc. The easiest means of achieving these is by getting them through school interaction hence the need for enriched stimulating environment.

**Self Assessment Exercise 3.1:** Explain the term early childhood education

### **3.2 Types of Pre-Primary Schools**

In Nigeria all forms of pre-primary programmes-day-care, head-start/nursery, kindergarten, child development center, etc. are synonymously termed nursery education. Even though pre-primary education is an educational service provided to the young children before the statutory age of six for primary education, it has different forms:

### **3.3 Child Day-Care Centre**

According to the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (1999:296) Day-Care means respectively "Care for small children away from home, during the day" and, or "a place where small children are looked after while their parents are at work. They have some qualities of nursery and kindergarten schools, but most children could be below three years of age. The major aim in this type of institution is the great emphasis placed on the custodial care and protection for the children. They offer a very limited educational programmes. A good number of these centers provide care and security for children whose mothers work or and schooling etc. It is an institution that provides care for infants and young children of between one year to three years. It is a society's response to the adverse socio-economic conditions of some members.

In Nigeria presently, the proprietors of Day-Care centers are mainly private sectors like Army Officers wives, University Women Society, Churches and individuals. The Day-Care is not a school rather its main function is pre-primary custodian. According to (Encyclopedia

America, Vol. Viii 1980) the importance of Day-Care centers is that it trains young children in forming regular habits, give them some supervision in matters of health and teaches them to co-operate with their peers”

These centers are sustained through fees paid by the parents of the children. Although the main objectives is to provide good health and safety but attention is found to be in the economic aspects. The teachers/guidance of these centers have been indicated by studies to be mostly unprofessional. Most often retired mothers, school certificate holders are employed to take care of the children.

### 3.3 Nursery Education

The word-nursery, lexically means any place in which something is bred nourished or fostered. Nursery school therefore means a place set apart for educating young children with ages between three to five years plus. Akinola (2004:194) defines nursery education as “the education given to in an educational institution to children aged three to five plus prior to entering into primary school. To Meyers (1977) nursery schools are referred to as “institutions that offer educational programmes designed to meet the physical, social and emotional needs of two to five year old children. It is the earliest time a child is placed in the educational setting which constitutes a stimulating environment. In Nigeria, nursery school has been greatly misinterpreted. Most often it is used interchangeably with kindergarten or Day-Care. It is a downward extension of the educational programmes in the regular elementary school. Its philosophy maintains that the needs, interests and aspirations of the child ought to be given utmost consideration before all other things. The nursery period is of cardinal importance and should be planned very carefully and seriously indeed because children belong to the most privileged age range in the society and justice demands that their rights must be respected. Being an educational institution, the nursery school takes the whole child for its province, concerns itself with the physical, mental, social and emotional phases of child development, and specifically provides conditions that will contribute to the natural and progressive growth of the child’s facilities. It also trains the child to be physically sound, form desirable habits and stimulation of healthy mental and spiritual reactions to his social environments.

The values of nursery education are well documented (Bolton, 1976, Eluwa, 1985). These values include, among others, the fact that nursery school is a supplement for the home, it bridges the gap between home and formal education; it is a source of mental, physical and social enrichment for the child as well as a base for parental education in the proper understanding of the developmental needs of the children

(Maduabum in B.C. Emenogu et al. 1992). It affords children opportunities of knowing people outside their own family circle and forming relationships which are desirable. Nursery education makes it possible to care for children with special needs like physically handicapped children, children from poor environments, crowded homes, culturally deprived children etc. It creates opportunities for children to learn to use their bodies, it can also be used as a screening device for children's weakness such as poor sight and hearing defect, speech impairment etc.. Such weaknesses if detected earlier and treated will prevent the child from strains of formal education. In nursery school, the school provides the children with the opportunity of associating with other children, playing with them, competing with them, enjoying space and play equipment and having the professional care and educating influence of skilled teachers.

Nursery School can be classified according to the purposes they serve namely: Co-operative i.e providing intensive programme of parent's education as well as worthwhile educational experiences for the children. Some may serve as laboratories for research agencies or institutions, while some are sponsored by, and for children of special groups. There are yet nursery schools for children with special needs that cannot be provided for in a typical classroom.

However, pre-primary school children with experience and interaction have been found to possess the following characteristics: playful, naughty, fearful and noisy, initiative, loving, aggressive, disobedient, careless, selfish (egocentric), troublesome and full of psychic energy that make them restless. Because of their immature minds, they need to be provided with enriched environment so that they will be well occupied or busy than causing trouble. The main objective of nursery education is to foster growth of self esteem, social, emotional, physical and mental development, independence and preparation for regular school.

### **3.4 Kindergarten**

The kindergarten is German, meaning "garden of children" coined by Friedrich Froebel. It is a supplement to elementary school and it is intended to accommodate children between ages 4 and 6 years. Kindergarten school is a school for very young children who have finished their nursery school. It starts from where the nursery stops and enrolls children between 5 to 6 years prior to first grade of primary level. It is a transition stage from home to primary school.

In the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, the kindergarten (or intent schools) was an outgrowth of the ideas and practices of such great philosophers like

Robert Owen of Great Britain, J.H. Pestalozzi of Switzerland, Fredrich Froebel of Germany and Maria Montessori of Italy (Encyclopedia Britanica, Vol. V 1984). By then, it was a school for furthering the mental, social and physical development of young children by means of games, occupations etc that make use of their natural tendency to express themselves in action. The main stress at this stage is on the emotional and spiritual nature of the child, encouraging self-understanding through play activities and greater freedom. Froebel used the name kindergarten in his school to convey the impression of an environment in which children grow freely like plants in a garden.

In Nigeria, kindergarten and nursery schools have no distinction. They operate under one roof and share the same curricular. They operate five times a week Monday to Friday from 8am to 12noon. The proprietors are mainly private individuals and religious organisations whose aim focus is profit oriented, consequently, much effort is being made to develop Kindergarten curricular as regular initial phase of the school's instructional programme. In most advanced countries, kindergarten schools are part of public elementary schools. But in Nigeria, the Government has not accepted much proprietorship meanwhile, but they inspect, approve and register institutions where the required guidelines are met. As earlier mentioned, kindergarten schools are hardly distinguished from nursery and Day-Care Schools in Nigeria especially in the rural communities. Often times, we have such things as KG I, II and III in pre-primary schools.

### **3.5 School for Exceptional Children**

These types of institutions are schools specifically developed to meet the needs of the atypical children who need special care and attention. The entrance age is younger than three years. Special provisions are made for early diagnosis, treatment and guidance of these handicapped children. The teachers in these schools have special training which groans them to be caring and empathetic with the children. Most of these schools are still in the hands of private individuals and church organisations.

**Self Assessment Exercise 3.2:** Briefly explain five types of pre-primary education.

## **4.0 CONCLUSION**

Pre-primary or childhood education is a reality in Nigerian educational system. It is pertinent to note that in spite of the recognition of this level in the National policy on Education, the proprietorship still remains in the hands of private individuals and religious organisations.

There are proliferation of pre-primary schools, but one cannot be able to distinguish between day-care, nursery and kindergarten schools. Even though they have different objectives but they still operate in one roof.

## 5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, the meaning and definitions of pre-primary education have been explained, different types of pre-primary schools discussed together with the importance of each form of childhood education. Some of the characteristics of pre-primary school children were also highlighted.

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT (TMA)

1. Define Pre-primary education
2. Mention different forms of early childhood education
3. What are the objective of day-care schools and kindergarten?
4. Mention five characteristics of pre-primary school children

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## **UNIT 4 THE ROLE EXPECTATION OF THE PRE-PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHER:IMPLICATION FOR EFFECTIVE TEACHING AND LEARNING.**

### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main body
  - 3.1 Concept of pre-primary school teacher
  - 3.2 Expectations of pre-primary school teacher – teacher having special interest in children.
  - 3.2 Possession of school professional knowledge
  - 3.4 Teachers ability to create a conducive learning environment
  - 3.5 The Teacher as a Facilitator of Learning
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment (TMA)
- 7.0 References /Further Readings

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Psychologists, educationists and all other stake holders in education believe that the teacher has great influence on the way children learn. His role at this level of education is as important as mother to her children at home. The teacher plays a vital role as he helps to pattern what the children learn to suit their individual capacity, ability and interest. In order to make children learn, the teacher operates in multiple dimensions in his work, for instance, he imparts knowledge to the children, makes friends with them, control the environment, motivates, arouses interest, and find ways of engaging the children especially in the classroom situation. These essential dimensions form the basic contexts of the teacher's behaviour and, therefore remains a key resource and becomes indispensable in character formation of the pre-primary school pupils.

In this unit, attention is focused on the role expectation of pre-primary school teacher which involves his classroom behaviours professional strategies, which he uses and his whole personality with the intent of showing the effects of these in children's learning.

## 2.0 OBJECTIVES

It is expected that by the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- (a) Explain who a teacher is,
- (b) Outline the needs for special training for pre-primary school teacher
- (c) List out the roles of the teacher in inculcating knowledge to pre-primary children.
- (d) Give reasons why teachers should be models to their children.

## 3.0 MAIN BODY

### 3.1 CONCEPT OF PRE-PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHER

Who is a teacher? The term 'Teaching' stands for one who teaches especially one whose professional occupation is teaching. He is a person who has completed a professional curriculum in teacher education institution and whose training has officially recognized by the award of an appropriate teaching certificate. To Good (1945) in Emenogu et al (1992:86) "A teacher is a person who, because of rich experience or education or both in a given field is able to contribute to the growth and development of other persons who come intact with him. The combination of children education and teacher forms a strong link between children and education (Ajayi-Dopemu 1994).

The teacher has many roles to play in the upbringing of the child. As a source of resource, his main functions are to guide rather than direct learning, provide enriched educational environment that exposes the child to a variety of learning experience as that will help them unfold the hidden talents. He should therefore be honest, trust worthy, tolerant, broadminded, sympathetic, kind, faithful and disciplined. He should be able to give unconditional positive regards and care for the needs and attention of the children. He is the co-coordinating agent who ensures that teaching/learning is well organized and supervised. In other words, the teacher is seen in the background of learning activities as a guide encouraging and facilitating the protection of the child into prominence.

### **Role Expectation Of Pre-Primary School Teacher – Implication For Effective Teaching/Learning**

#### **3.2 Expectations of pre-primary school teacher – teacher having special interest in children.**

Personality traits of the teacher condition, modulate and promote certain responses from pupils. They motivate, direct, formulate pupils'

reactions in the classroom learning situation. Teachers of pre-primary school are faced with many challenges. The personality development of pupils at this stage is still immature. This level of education needs warmth and friendliness on the part of the teacher as these have great effect on children's learning.

The teacher should create an enabling environment whereby he can communicate with the children effectively and friendly i.e passing the messages across to the pupils in a cordial way. He has to spend a good deal of time explaining things, talking to them, be a good listener and ensuring that the pupils understand what he is saying and doing.

To surmount or cope with the mounting problems associated with children of pre-primary school, the teacher should be energetic and physically fit, patient, kind, caring, loving, but firm. He should be able to understand the child i.e have good knowledge of the child's mind and how it works. The teacher should create a happy atmosphere in the class and interact with them freely. He could do this by involving them in class discussions, talking with them, telling them short but interesting stories that are full of imagination, engaging them in drama and quiz.

He must be patient with them and guide their activities and behaviour. It is generally contended that when the teacher appears as the friend of the child, not as his enemy the child learns faster because he is co-operating. He learns with less fatigue, because there is not that constant strain of bringing back a reluctant and bored attention. His sense of personal initiative is cultivated instead of being diminished.

### **3.3 Possession of Sound Professional Knowledge**

A good nursery school teacher should be someone who would have insight into children. He must have a foundation of knowledge which is fully backed by an intellectual understanding. He should have a thorough study of educational psychology, sociology, history of education as well as philosophy of education in his training. These wealth of knowledge will equip him well to cope with the varieties of experience and queries of curious children and be able to work in their best interest.

The achievement of our pre-primary school objectives calls for specialist teachers based on the realization that children need to be helped by trained pedagogues if they are to develop their maximum potentials. It is however worrisome to note reports of using untrained and unqualified hands to handle the pre-primary children's education. (NERC, 1980; Eneasator, 1992; John – Nwosu and Okpara, 1995). This underscores the need to have professionally qualified and competent teachers in our

pre-primary schools to guarantee commitment of excellence. The academic training of the teacher will assist him to understand more fully his own personality, the demands of his profession and more ideas concerning the children under his/her custody. Academically, he/she must be a teacher who imparts knowledge with ease, create, build and facilitates learning. Besides interest in subject matter, good personality, perseverance, responsibility initiative, self-control, sincerity, humour, loyalty, good leadership amongst others have been found necessary qualities which a teacher of pre-primary education should possess. Professional training of the teacher will equip him to make him/her articulate about his/her work. This means that his/her knowledge as professional will guide him/her to explain to others the specification and description of the job etc. As a person with superior and richer experience, the teacher of pre-school children serves as a resource for the identification of significant problems and for mapping out modes of attack. He/she should encourage cooperation rather than competition among his/her pupils. It is disheartening to not that only few pre-primary teachers have both the academic, moral and psychological disposition to cater for these children in their formative years. The teacher has an onerous duty to perform in the early childhood education in order to guarantee future dedicated manpower. Such teachers as earlier indicated must be professionally trained and ready to devote themselves to the important assignment of training the young minds.

### **3.4 Teachers ability to create a conducive learning environment**

Teaching young children is one of the helping professions that needs dedicated practitioners. The early child-hood education profession needs happy, intelligent, energetic and creative teachers to guide the pupils in their character formation and intellectual development. The role of the teachers in this stage includes inculcating good habits and socialization of the children so that they can easily adjust to any environment they may find themselves in future. Psychologists and educationalists have confirmed that children learn by imitation the way the child perceives teacher determines his attitude to the subject the teacher teaches. Children learn more by imitation than they do by listening to a lesson. This calls for a teacher who is well responsible, seasoned and academically equipped to direct the children's programme. This in effect is saying that the teacher should feel well, think well and act well. Since the teacher is the main audio-visual aid that appears in every lesson, his image is highly important as he is memorable because he is associated with some emotional experiences. Children will like to remember that their teacher is warm, kind, honest, loving, fair, always punctual, neat, friendly, strict and proud and all these affect their learning. It is also necessary to point out that energy and flamboyance

in the teacher may stimulate the children's active participation and involvement in the material to learn. Children like to identify with their teacher, so teachers should be wise in what ever they do or say. A good teacher should be aware of what is entrusted to him/her and should work in the best interest of the children. He/she must be an example of good living. He/she must be self-dependent, able to use his/her initiative. He/she must communicate effectively to the children, have an ability to select his/her words correctly and think critically before talking. Unnecessary reprimands of the child by the teacher could effect the children's learning and their future life. The teacher should be aware that whatever he/she does, or say are being watched and copied by the little kids around. Therefore, he/she needs to be well disciplined and enrich himself with good manners.

### **3.5 The Teacher as a Facilitator of Learning**

The teacher is an inevitable factor in the children's development, that is, the teacher has the most fundamental, far-reaching and direct influence on the children. He knows his responsibility because he/she plans his/her teaching diligently – often far ahead of the day of the delivery. This enables him/her to reflect on the lesson and add final touches before the day of presentation. In planning he/she thinks of the pupils, their age and their environment. He/she thinks also about the contents, he/she wants to teach and searches for reference materials to guide them in the preparation of the lesson. All the strategies which the teacher employs in the classroom enhances the general atmosphere of life in the classroom thus encourages the children to learn optimally either individually or collectively.

Even though a conducive and stimulating learning environment is very vital for the nursery children yet the teacher remains the most important factor in the environment of learning because available instructional materials and children cannot educate unless the teacher gives directive and guidance.

**Self Assessment Exercise 4.1:** Based on what you have learned in this unit, explain the roles of a nursery school teacher

## **4.0 CONCLUSION**

A professional teacher is a person who has a thorough knowledge of his chosen subject area, has gotten the teaching attitude, and who has undergone a period of professional training. Such a teacher should have good personality traits, adequate knowledge of the subject matter and teaching methods. In pre-primary education, warmth and friendliness on the part of the teacher have been confirmed by

researchers to have great influence in children learning. Teacher-child relation influences interest or dislike in the subject and the way children learn. The teacher of pre-primary school should therefore have a sense of humor, show understanding of the children's problems, allow plenty of activity and at the same time maintain order in the classroom.

## **5.0 SUMMARY**

In this unit, attempts have been made to explain who a teacher is, which include that a good teacher should know more than he/she teaches and the best ways or methods of teaching the children. He/she must be disciplined and trained to behave in a reasonable way. He/she must be an effective communicator, and demonstrate warmth, friendliness, kindness and love to the children equally. The role expectation of the teacher was also discussed to include:- teacher being a model, a good facilitator of learning, having special interest to the children and possession of sound professional knowledge.

## **6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT (TMA)**

1. Who is a teacher?
2. Mention four qualities of a good teacher
3. Explain two role expectations of the teacher

## **7.0 REFERENCES /FURTHER READINGS**

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## **UNIT 5 CHARACTERISTICS OF PRE-PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILDREN AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS TO TEACHING**

### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main body
  - 3.1 Physical characteristics of pre-primary school children:- Implication for effective teaching/learning.
  - 3.2 Physical Characteristics of Pre-Primary School Children
  - 3.3 Social Characteristics of Pre-primary School children – implications for effective teaching and learning.
  - 3.4 Emotional Characteristics: Implications for effective teaching/Learning
  - 3.5 Intellectual/Mental Characteristics of Pre-primary School Children: Implications for effective teaching.
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor -Marked Assignment (TMA)
- 7.0 References/Further Readings

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Children are unique gifts from God. Parents and teachers often find it difficult to handle them especially when they lack knowledge of child's psychology. Many a time, they misunderstand them and term them "naughty and stubborn". Poor understanding of these children militate against their normal development and education. Piaget and many other psychologists have carried out series of studies that confirm that children undergo a series of developmental changes from birth to age of eighteen. Each level in their lives has special changes and characteristics that distinguish them from another level. This unit will highlight the characteristics of pre-primary school children and their implications for effective teaching/learning.

Normally, pre-primary school children are aged between 2-5 years. They are children normally found in pre-primary school. It is necessary and useful to provide some sign posts with which this age-range may be better understood in order that their lives may improve.

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

By the end of this unit, the student will be able to:

- (a) Explain the physical features of children in pre-primary school.
- (b) Define socialization
- (c) Mention four agents of socialization
- (d) Discuss ways a professional teacher can socialize pre-primary school children
- (e) Explain four changes in the children's intellectual development.
- (f) Define emotion and state five emotional changes that take place in pre-school children.

### **3.0 MAIN BODY**

#### **3.1 Physical Characteristics of Pre-Primary School Children**

At this stage, the children like to explore their environment, they observe adults in their activities and initiate them. They enjoy discovering new situations, they intuitively jump, climb, dance skip hop and run etc. they discover their limbs and in no time discover their use. They learn to control their body and seek to gain control of their environment. The children begin to speak simple sentences to express their thoughts. At this stage, the children prefer association plays and love self accomplishments. They are very active. By three years most of them are unable to wear their pants and stocks but by five years nearly all will be able to dress and undress themselves completely but cannot cope with shoe laces. They are very restless and get on the nerves of adults easily. By three plus, they can hold pencil normally. At this stage i.e 3 – 5 years, bowel and bladder movement are being controlled except the abnormal ones.

Biehler (1974) summed some of the physical characteristics among pre-school children as follows:

- (a) Pre-school children are extremely active and they enjoy activities for its sake;
- (b) Because of their active-oriented nature, they need frequent rest period which they themselves do not recognize;
- (c) They find it difficult in gazing at small object, therefore their eye-hand coordination is usually imperfect;
- (d) Although their bones are flexible and resilient, yet the bones that protect their brains are soft and fragile;
- (e) Pre-school children are of different sizes and strength, while some are bigger than others, some are also stronger than others. Most often, boys may be bigger, but girls are usually ahead of boys in particularly all other areas of development especially in fine motor skills. It will not therefore be surprising if boys are clumsy at manipulating smaller objects;

- (f) While handedness is established in most children, some may be left-handed while about 90% are right-handed.

**Self Assessment Exercise 5.1:** How do the physical characteristics of the child affect his/her learning?

### **Educational Implications Of Physical Characteristics For Effective Teaching And Learning In Pre-Primary School**

Every pre-school institution that is worth its salt, should provide adequate, free and self opportunities for children's play. This will help them learn how to share, interact and co-operate in team work. The school should provide variety of playing equipment for pupils use, this will help in the development of bones and muscles and keep them fit. Specific games should be organized for the children under strict supervision of the teachers to minimize accident. Children should be allowed to rest after strenuous exercise to avoid fatigue. All children book should be written with bold letters and teachers writing on the chalkboard should be bold and legible. This will minimizing children gazing at tiny objects.

Children with left-hand should be encouraged to use them instead of compelling them to change. Those who are physically handicapped should not be pitied rather they should be engaged in activities that suit their physical capability. The teacher should ensure that the able bodied ones should not laugh at the handicapped ones. If all these and others are strictly observed, the realization of the educational objectives will be easy.

### **3.2 Social Characteristics of Pre-primary School children – implications for effective teaching and learning.**

The pre-school age (3 – 5 years) is very important for social development. Psychologists refer to it as a period of behaviour modification or behaviour shaping. The pre-school children acquire knowledge through a process known as socialization. Socialization is the process by which the individual learns to conform to societal standards, customs, values and culture for smooth integration in the society. Children should be trained in the way they should grow and when they grow up, they will not depart from it. They pick up habits very fast at this stage and therefore should be assisted to meet their social needs. Habits like growing in love, self confidence, maintaining stable relationship, development of self control, have self responsibility and self consideration for others are worth while habits that the teachers should inculcate to the children for stable personality development that can help them take their rightful place in the society. The teacher can

achieve the above by being a model in these areas mentioned. He should interact freely with people, show love, concern and care to them etc.

Supporting the above view, Biehler and Snowman (1982) highlighted their observation of some social characteristics peculiar to pre-primary school children as follows.

1. Wanting to be treated as individual. For instance, when the child is at home he is treated as individual, but in the school, they are normally treated as a member of the group.
2. Pre-School children are often in dire need of parental care, love, protection, parents gratify the child's needs for good attention, love etc., but at school, they cut off from such parental attention.
3. Pre-school children are not yet capable of retaining particular friends even though they make friends easily they also lose them like wise. They are flexible socially and their favourite friends are often of the same sex if any.
4. They quarrel a lot, but their quarrels do not last long. They quickly forget and forgive each other. In the school, they quarrel over school materials and play tools. At this stage, they are beginning to be aware of sex roles in the society. They have at least a rudimentary ideas of behaviour that is considered appropriate for males and females. Pre-school children can excessively be inquisitive and ask a lot of questions and expect on the spot answers. Discipline at this level is largely external. They do a lot of things out of fear of punishment or to win approval from adults.

**Self Assessment Exercise 5.2:** What are the implications of social characteristics of pre-school children to learning?

### **Educational Implications Of Social Characteristics Of Pre-Primary School Children To The Teacher**

In the light of the above social characteristics of pre-primary school children, teachers and counselors should:-

1. Take the place of parents in the school by loving, protecting and caring for the children entrusted into their care so that parents' absence will not be felt much.
2. Inculcate in the children how to be polite, obedient, respectful, courteous and relate well with one another.
3. Encourage the children to play, associate and work co-operatively on joint projects with others. The shy and loner ones should be given enough encouragement to integrate with others. Socio-

metric techniques can be applied to identify which play-mates a shy child would like to play with;

4. Allow the children to settle their differences on their own and only intervene if the quarrel gets off hand. The school should provide adequate and enough playground, play materials and instructional materials in school in order to minimize constant quarreling by kids. If this is done, the pupils will be able to satisfy their curiosity when they want to operate certain gadgets.

### **3.3 Emotional Characteristics: Implications for effective teaching/Learning**

Emotion according Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (1999:297) means "a strong feeling of any kind: love, joy, hatred, fear, jealous". Pre-primary children do have emotions. It could be pleasant or unpleasant but both play important roles in the life of children, and all of them contribute to the personal and social adjustments made by any individual. The pre-primary children are free in expressing their emotions. They can feel and express anger, rage, fear, love, guilt and sympathy, joy and excitement. They can change easily from one type of emotion to another. Teachers are vital instruments for assisting children to adjust well in life. Pre-school children are unable to hide their emotions, although they may not always express them directly.

They may express them indirectly through different activities such as crying, nail biting, thumb-sucking, silence, refusal to eat etc. It should be noted that emotions are involved in every activities of the child both at home and in school. If the school programme is suited to them and the teachers and other pupils are friendly, they will derive joy from school and look forward with pleasure to another school day, on the contrary, some features of the school may arouse anger and fear in the children. Teachers' coarsed voice, frown face etc may be sources of anxiety or resentment for the child in the school. At this stage, it has been observed that children also show sympathy or concern for others by crying with them, sharing what they have with them or by holding them and even cleaning their eyes and saying 'sorry'.

Emotion serves many purposes in the child's life, for instance, it can communicate feelings, make life pleasant, generate actions, bring discomfort to the child and the people around, disrupt mental activities, affects interactions and even results into habit formation. During this stage, children progress from simple self-control to an ability to initiate activities and carry them out (Emenogu in Maduewesi and Akahara 1996:70). It is the role and attitudes of the teacher towards the children activities that can help them to fulfill this sense of initiative. If the attitudes of the teacher is negative and discouraging it may lead to the

development of a sense of guilt and inadequacy by the children. The implication of this is that the children's activities, no matter how destructive and shameful they may seem to the teacher, should not be meted with outright condemnation. Rather, teachers should assist, correct and re-direct the children in more subtle way that would still allow the child enjoy the feeling of continuing their work. It is therefore necessary for teachers to know which forms of expression that will lead to good adjustment and poor adjustment of the pupils otherwise their children may develop both physical and psychological damage.

In summary, children tend to express their emotions both pleasant and unpleasant freely and openly e.g. crying, laughing, etc. They are easily irritated but forget easily. They have strong emotional attachment to their teacher especially an ideal teacher, they grow jealous of each other as they compete to be the darling of their teacher. Simple things disorganize them and make them angry e.g. when they are tired, hungry, denied love, care etc.

### **Educational Implications Of Emotion Characteristics To Effective Teaching And Learning**

To control these emotions, the pre-primary school teacher should provide the children enriched environment full of friendliness, love, care and consideration. He/she should take care of the emotional needs of the children. He/she can achieve this by being sensitive to emotions that arise in his/her classroom since the children have much regard for teachers, the teachers should endeavour to give the pupils much affection but must spread it evenly to every member of the class. He/she should accept the children as people who like himself/herself are creators with feelings i.e the teacher should feel empathies and sympathise with them and asks the children to imitate him/her.

Every pre-primary institution that is worth its salt should recognize the importance of play in the lives of children. It is a major characteristic of pre-school children and every pre-primary school teacher should try and convert every learning activity into play. Play appears early in life and its distortion seriously disturbs the social, emotional and cognitive development of the child. As much as possible teachers should provide adequate, free and safe opportunities for children's play, such play facilities and equipment should take into consideration the essential attributes that moderate the child's choice of preferred play objects.

He/she should control their fears by showing love and speaking softly instead of being harsh and reprimanding any move or interaction of the children. The teacher should be a good listener, cheerful, humorous when necessary amongst others. These acts will lead them through their

fears. If coarsed environment is created at this level, school phobia and anxiety may set in and could affect the later life. Provision should also be made for their snacks and recreation.

### **3.4 Intellectual/Mental Characteristics of Pre-primary School Children: Implications for effective teaching.**

Intellect depicts the power to integrate experience and the process of reasoning abstractly. According to Piaget, the pre-school years fall within the (2-7 years). This period is characterized by rapid development of language ability, and of the ability to represent things symbolically. Children have enormous skills in Language learning and they tend to talk too much. During this period, children progress rapidly from two-word utterances to more complex sentences that express prepositions more precisely. This is the age of acquiring large vocabulary.

At this stage, the children have the ability to represent concepts e.g objects, events, conceptual scheme etc by means of a signifier. Their imagination and inventiveness are at the peak and they children like to draw and paint things. Also formation of concepts of concrete objects is very active. Children at this level would represent a car with steering movement and a sound microphone with cupped fist while singing. The child major cognitive task is the conquest of symbol. The child fights with words and their actual objects and tries to differentiate between dream symbols and self-made up play and reality. He sees names as imbibing in objects and that an object may not have more than one name. In the process of describing a concept, the child may skip the important information while making use of indefinite terms. By the end of the pre-operational stage, the child begins to enter into concrete operational level where he can differentiate between symbols and their interests. Now internalization of concepts sets in. He begins to understand concepts of relative size, can select biggest and smallest from a given number of objects. Gradually, he starts to group and classify objects according to elementary relationships. Towards the end of this period, he starts quantitative thinking from counting actual objects.

### **Educational Implication Of Intellectual Development Of Pre-Primary School Children For Effective Teaching And Learning**

The school should provide reasonable and stimulating environment through which the child learns to develop basic conceptual skills necessary for life, have a reasonable linguistic repertoire for meaningful communication and grow intellectually. The stimulating environment should include play grounds with toys e.g baby dolls, custom for

playing, acting, encourage modeling and counting. For expression of feelings and representation, the teacher should provide water, sand, blocks, paints, pencils crayon etc. Furthermore, teachers should exercise patience in answering children's numerous questions and in conversing with them, by doing so, learning will naturally take place. Pre-primary school children needs a lot of exposure which involves what they could see leading to what they do which will eventually lead to what they know through experience. Teacher should then give the children enough time to interact with their rich environment in order to acquire skills, abilities, habits attitude for future living. He should encourage the spirit of imagination, inventiveness and appreciation in the children. This could be achieved by engaging them in constant drawing, molding, painting, dramatizing plays and stories. Danis (1960) confirmed that "provision of stimulating environment for pre-school children greatly improved their cognitive skill and abilities eventually leading to mark improvement in their intellectual development.

### Activity I

Re-arrange the following broad stages of human development to agree correctly with the years

- (a) Pre-natal - 2 years
- (b) Infancy - 2 – 5 years
- (c) Early childhood - 0 – birth.

## 4.0 CONCLUSION

Early childhood Education is the bedrock of the very existence and morality. It is a formative stage where habits both good and bad are formed. Bad fruits the society is reaping today dates back to bad seeds parents and teachers sowed during the children's formative stage. Childhood is the scene of man's beginning and a critical stage indeed. Teachers should be sensitive to children's unique characteristics at this level so as to direct and guide them properly for meaningful development of habits and virtues which will have a long life influence on their personal and social adjustment to their environment. Failure of proper socialization at this stage may lead to maladjusted individual which is a prey to various disorders.

## 5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, attempts have been made to discuss in details the physical, mental/intellectual, social and emotional characteristics of pre-primary school children. Their various implications to effective teaching and learning were also explained.

## **6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT (TMA)**

1. Mention four physical characteristics of pre-school children
2. What is socialization? Mention at least 2 agents.
3. Describe how you would inculcate the spirit of – Love, affection in your pupils.
4. List 2 mental characteristics of pre-school children
5. How would you as a trained teacher handle the following pre-school children in your class:  
(a) Inquisitive child (b) Restless child

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**MODULE 2****THE ORIGIN OF PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION IN NIGERIA**

Unit 1	An Historical Perspective and Challenges
Unit 2	Purpose and Needs of pre-Primary Education In Nigeria
Unit 3	Problems/Challenges of Pre-Primary Education
Unit 4	The Prospects of Pre-Primary Education in Nigeria

**UNIT 1 AN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE AND CHALLENGES****CONTENTS**

1.0	Introduction
2.0	Objectives
3.0	Main body
	3.1 Origin of pre-primary education: An historical perspective.
	3.2 The Importance of Pre-Primary Education
3.0	Conclusion.
4.0	Summary.
5.0	Tutor-Marked Assignment.(TMA)
6.0	References /Further Readings

**1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Pre-primary education which is also referred to as pre-school education comprises all forms of organized instruction given to children before they enroll for primary education. Mallinson (1975) identifies three basic divisions of early childhood education to include. Day-Care centers which takes care of children of working mothers who may be as young as less than 6 months, nursery which trains children to develop their manipulative audio, linguistic and aesthetic abilities through play and to become social beings by learning to interact with other children and kindergarten school which prepares children for entry and effective participating in primary education.

**2.0 OBJECTIVES**

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

- ◆ Trace the origin of pre-primary education in Nigerian

- ◆ Explain some importance of pre-school education
- ◆ Suggest and recommend ways of improving childhood education in Nigeria.

### **3.0 MAIN BODY**

#### **3.1 ORIGIN OF PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION IN NIGERIA: A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE**

The origin of pre-primary education dated back to early 1960 when the colonial officers were in-charge of governance in Nigeria pre-primary education was specifically for the children of colonial officers and the privileged few children. Recently, because of technological advancement and political consciousness there are proliferation of pre-primary schools with its challenges.

The nursery or pre-primary school is an educational arrangement for children aged between three and five years. It's major concern is intellectual growth in a developmental setting where social, emotional and physical growth also promoted. Pre-primary education is relatively a "late-comer" in Nigeria education scene. It was not in the original education scheme introduced in the country by Christian Missionaries in 1842 which started with primary schools and later extended to secondary school level. Pre-primary schools came into existence much later in some major Nigerian cities like Lagos, Ibadan, Zaria and Aba in Abia State. In the case of Aba, the foremost was Prince Day Nursery school, Eziukwu established in 1964 to provide nursery education for the children (aged 3 – 5 years) of the emergent Nigerian cities.

Afe (1992), traced pre-primary education back to the colonial days. Such institutions were few and for the children of colonial officers. The expatriate staff in the then big colonial establishments in Nigeria opened nursery schools for their children.

With independence in 1960, more white foreigners came into the country to work and so, more pre-primary schools were built. On the other hand, more Nigerian were educated and these elites wanted to emulate their white counterparts in sending their children to pre-primary institutions in major towns. In the same early 1960, the large agrarian society began to change and with it, an increase demand for education. Political consciousness, establishment of few industries among other factors stimulated population movement from rural to urban areas, also urbanization began to increase.

By 1976, the pressure for universal education makes the Federal Government to introduce the free education programme policy thus, the

practice of hiring house boys and house girls was no longer fashionable as those boys and girls started attending schools. Hence, the evolution of day-care centres.

Economically, the standard of living had improved with, and after independence and was on the upward swing. Additionally increased opportunities enabled thousands of Nigerians to travel, live and experience life outside this country, including that of early education for children. The above improvement together with increasing exposure to global international organisations and contacts such as UNICEF, UNESCO, UNDP, Child Hope, Association for Childhood Education International (ACEI) United Nation Declaration of Human Rights among others, broadened the perception of Nigerians about children's education and their needs. These contacts resulted in new improved realization of the importance of the early childhood and its potential for future education and development. They opened the eyes of Nigerians to the trends and policies in other countries regarding the education and care of young children. Hence the inclusion of pre-primary education in the National Policy on Education of 1981. Surprisingly, the government seems to be non-challant about pre-primary education. Fortunately, some individuals and churches have taken up the lead in getting the children of pre-primary age educated. Even though their efforts are laudable, yet the pre-primary institutions are not free of abuses.

Presently, the improvement in our knowledge of child development and better understanding of the growth of intelligence through research studies from renowned researchers in human development and intelligence like piaget, Bloom, Vicker Hunct etc We perceive that the nursery school years are precious and crucial years for laying the foundation for the overall development of the child. Hence the proliferation of nursery schools in both urban and rural areas.

**Self Assessment Exercise 1.1:** Take a historical trip of pre-primary education in Nigeria.

### **3.2 The Importance of Pre-Primary Education**

Pre-primary education are already explained earlier as education given to children from the age of three to five plus. In the traditional setting, it is a time when children stay close to their parents and learn from them. It is a vital and critical stage, because learning is mainly by imitation and very fast children at this time, play freely, build look etc. These play-activities are goal-oriented and are geared towards the building of self-discipline and work oriented. However useful these activities might be, they are no longer sufficient to equip our younger children for ever changing technological word of today (Acho 1992). Hence, there is the

need for constructive well organized learning offered by good pre-primary school to enable the children form good character, morals and habits.

One importance of early childhood education is that, it provides happiness, security and care for young children. Children at the pre-primary school age need these, especially at the time when their parents are at work. Parents will feel happy also and have peace of mind that their children are in safe hands while they are at work and that the children will enjoy playing with their mates and even learn at the same time.

Pre-primary education also serves as a source of development of good language and social habits. Pre-primary schools are social communities where children learn by observation, imitation and action. At this stage, they are given every opportunity to interact freely with their school environment. In the process, the children develop good language skills and habits as observed from their teachers. This will help them to behave well and live peaceful as adults in any environment they may find themselves. Pre-primary school also provides adequate medical services to the pupils. Most of the good pre-primary schools today made provisions for good medical departments in their schools. During the absence of parents, pre-primary school children would be given better care and attention than when left with house-helpers.

Early childhood education gives the children opportunity to develop science and technological knowledge. This vital knowledge requires special toys and gadgets which many parents may not be able to afford. Today, it is encouraging to note that, most pre-primary schools possess some of these gadgets, thereby availing the children the opportunity to learn with such materials. A good example is the “speak and spell” a computerized toy for learning languages.

Pre-primary education also helps in the cognitive development of children. With the play-oriented activities, children in their enriched environment are gradually introduced to the skills of formal education, like speaking, listening, reading and writing. These things are taught in pre-primary school to prepare the children for smooth transition to primary schools.

In Nigeria, the need for pre-primary education becomes obvious when we remember that many children of this age still live in the rural areas, and most parents are illiterate or have half education. The chances of reaping the benefits of this stage of development is to send these children in pre-primary schools age to where rich and stimulating environments are provided for them to acquire the above mentioned

knowledge. One vital point is that, a child must be exposed to the needs and aspirations he requires at a specific periods in his development. Once that stage passes, it is never possible to obtain it back. It is therefore necessary to send the children to pre-primary school where qualified teachers who have acquired enough experiences will help them to acquire all round development. It is wrong to leave the education of these children to their parents who neither possess the skills nor the method to handle their problems hence, the need to expose them to early childhood education from standard pre-primary schools.

**Self Assessment Exercise 1.2:** Justify the need for early childhood education in Nigeria.

#### 4.0 CONCLUSION

Pre-primary education started with the colonial officers during the early 1960. It became a prominent feature in the educational system in Nigeria during the early 1970's hence its inclusion in the National Policy on Education 1981. Some factors gave impetus to the increase in the establishment of pre-primary education. These include the dearth of house-helpers for working mothers, lack of security and care for children whose parents are workers or businessmen, recognition of the importance of early childhood education as a critical stage for character and habit formation among others. Today both the government and parents have acknowledged the need for pre-primary education hence the support for its existence in almost all the nook and crannies of every town in Nigeria.

#### 5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, the origin of pre-primary education has been traced to have started with the colonial officers. Later, the Nigeria elites who acknowledged the importance of early childhood education in the total development of the child sent their children to pre-primary schools. The importance of pre-primary education were also highlighted.

#### 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT (TMA)

1. The Origin of Pre-primary education was traced to have started by ----- (7mks)
2. Mention two reasons for the establishment of Pre-primary education in Nigeria. (8 mks)
3. Explain two importance of early childhood education (8mks)
4. Name any two international organisation that are interested in early childhood education. (7 mks) = (30 marks)

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## **UNIT 2      PURPOSES AND NEEDS OF PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION**

### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main body
  - 3.1 Purposes of pre-primary Education as stated in the National Policy on Education
  - 3.2 The needs/rationale for pre-primary education
  - 3.3 Analysis of the basic outlines of the National policy on the implementation of pre-primary education.
- 3.0 Conclusion
- 4.0 Summary
- 5.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment (TMA)
- 6.0 References /Further Readings

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

The Nigerian educational system derives mainly from the national philosophy that seeks to enhance dignity, worth and self actualization of every individual citizen. The developmental, approach to learning the whole child concept is based on the conviction that for the child to benefit maximally from learning he should be developmentally ready and as much as possible, balanced socially, physically, emotionally and intellectually. Thus the aim of pre-primary education is to assist the home from the age of three to get the child developmentally ready to face the challenges of primary education.

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

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

- ◆ Outline the purpose of pre-primary education
- ◆ Explain the need for pre-primary education
- ◆ Mention the types of teachers that teach in this level of education.
- ◆ Describe government efforts to improve pre-primary education

### 3.0 MAIN BODY

#### 3.0 THE PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Consequently in conformity with the set goals of pre-primary education as indicated in the National policy on Education (2004:11) The required purposes of early childhood education shall be to

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

The attainment of the above objectives calls for specialist teachers equipped with a cluster of in-dept knowledge of child's psychology and competence in the use of integrated approach to science and arts teaching consistent with the child's nature to structure learning well-planned, play oriented activities.

The purpose of the stated objectives can be summed into: Education for socialization and education for numerical and literacy. In the context of education for socialization, it refers to the expected informal education that will make the child to grow and become a citizen in his community. He/her learns through this medium how to respect elders and interact positively with members of his/her peer group. Moreso, the child learns to work with his/her peers, interacting cooperatively showing evidence of sympathy for one another and depending on one another for mutual community living.

Early childhood education is expected to prepare the child for pre-primary education. In this respect, the nursery school is expected to give the children the benefits of counting, reading and writing at rudimentary stage. Pre-primary education in Nigeria therefore does not only aim at looking after the children while their parents are at work, but also aims at laying a very solid foundation in the areas of intellectual, physical, emotional and social development of the children. This will in

later life help the child to get properly adjusted to the demands of adolescence and adult life.

The objective stated that adequate care and supervision be provided for the children while their parents are at work. The proprietors of pre-primary education are mainly private individuals and religious organisations who are profit oriented in management of pre-school. They have done much in giving security and care to children when their parents are away for work. But it is pertinent to note that most of their provisions are sub-standard. The buildings among other things are not in line with the Government specifications. It was discovered that the building facilities are grossly inadequate. Their location varies from ideal school to appealing centres in compounds, uncompleted buildings, makeshift buildings and garages. In most schools, libraries and laboratories are absent and where they are available, they are not adequately equipped. This situation may expose the children to poor environmental conditions whereby they may sneak out of the substandard buildings and incur injury or external attack especially these days where “kidnapping syndrome” is in vogue in every part of the country.

To inculcate the spirit of exploration of nature, environmental arts, music etc, it has been discovered that little provisions have been made for toys, swings, recreational facilities, language and arts theatres etc. This is because pre-primary education is at the discretion of private entrepreneurs. It is important to provide pre-primary school children with enriched environment and child care services such as nutrition, health and safety among other things. These will facilitate the achievement of the global objectives of pre-primary education stated in the National policy.

**Self Assessment Exercise 2:1** – Give three rationales for pre-primary education.

### **3.1 The Need/Rationale for Pre-primary Education**

Many renowned psychologists and philosophers have pointed out the need to provide children with sound basic education during the first few years of life. Nigeria also recognizes this by making provision for it in the National policy on Education. The Nigerian society chooses education as an instrument per excellence and a means for effecting national development. The policy was put in place to provide the legal framework for the education system. Basically the goal is, among other things, to ensure that every citizen has access to quality education, promote national consciousness and self-reliance through education process. Thinking in the same line, Obisanya, (2001) observed that

“within the last few decades, a series of international events notably, the 1989 convention of the Rights of the child, the 1990 Jomtien world Conference on Education for ALL and the 1990 world summit for children have given added visibility and impetus to basic education”. These developments explain the need for early child education to every child irrespective of tribe, race, religion, sex etc.

Okunrotifa (1977) noted that “an experience array of psychologists who have made intensive studies of intellectual growth and development of children have come with the conclusion that the period from birth to about age of six is of vital importance to the individuals future cognitive development. This period is the most influential to human life (Bloom 1964). It is very critical to the child’s cognitive development as more than 50% of mature intelligence is developed before the statutory school age of six years. Therefore, there is great need for early stimulation for the formation of personality and social behaviour since children learn by doing, they need to be involved in actual manipulation of their learning materials such as real objects, pictures, play toys, children’s books, creative material such as clay, play dough etc. He/she needs plenty opportunities to explore his/her environment and learn by experience.

It is pertinent to note that majority of the Nigerian pre-primary school children are not given opportunity/access to early childhood education. This is confirmed by SAPA (1993) report that “access for children in Nigeria to Day-Care centers and Pre-primary schools is still rather low, the report revealed that only 11% of children under six years of age have the benefit of some form of Day Care/Pre-primary education”. By implication, most pre-school children have been denied the opportunity to have early intellectual development which may affect the later development.

The challenges of the global trends, urbanization and industrialization have also altered culturally appropriate children patterns and practices. Because of this growing complexities of modern living, most homes are no longer able to carry out the role of caring for the children which were hitherto to performed traditionally by adult parents and siblings. The evolution of nursery and day-care centers is a remedy for bad social conditions prevailing in the society today. Before, young children were living in dirty environments, crowded homes, denied care, protection, good food, medical care, sleep etc. Early childhood education is now established to provide the children with good social and health services, emotionally and academically so that they can grow into healthy and intellectually alert children.

Other needs for early childhood education include – reducing the educational and social disadvantages suffered by children from homes

which are culturally and emotionally deprived. It provides the children with good social and health services, builds them up socially, physically, morally, emotionally and academically. This will help them to live effectively and adjust to any environment they might find themselves in future.

**Self Assessment Exercise 2.2:** Suggest another factor for pre-primary education.

Another crucial factor for establishing pre-primary education is that early childhood education effects a smooth transition from home to school. This is true because the objectives of early childhood education specified inculcation of social norms, spirit of inquiry and creativity, development of a sense of co-operation and team-spirit and learning good habits especially good health habits amongst others. This is obvious because pre-school children are exposed to these basic and fundamental ways of life. For instance good habits and manners are inculcated in them by way of learning to share with peers, team work, interacting co-operatively, showing evidence of sympathy for each other, playing with others, mode of dressing, greeting patterns, respect for elders etc. They also learn to read e.g recite poems, tell short and beautiful stories, dramatize, participation quiz competitions, and write and count. They are all exposed to enrich environment with varieties of teaching materials that will give them all round development.

Apart from providing a nice opportunity for intellectual development, early childhood education also caters for the health needs of the children. This includes provision of food service (balanced diet) formation of good health habits and protection from contagious diseases through the curricular activities of the programme.

Osanyim (1984) highlighted these factors to contribute to the need for pre-primary education in Nigeria.

1. The increasing necessity of mothers to go to work thus creating regular and unusual long periods of total separation from the child.
2. The rising cost of living especially in the urban centers.
3. The rapid involvement of a two-worker family system resulting in stress and tension in the home.
4. The increase tendency towards nuclear family system predominantly in the urban centers due to geographic mobility of labour.
5. The absence of multiple mothering that had provided for the development of trust and sense of security.

6. The scarcity of responsible and reliable domestic workers. These factors amongst others tend to account for the proliferation of nursery schools in various corners of the urban and rural areas.

Akinola, (2004:195) added that “the need for working mothers to leave their children in safe hands, the dwindling number of domestic hands, nannies and grand mothers and other factors led to the establishment of these institutions in urban and rural areas”. As maternal employment increases, fewer parents and other relatives are available to take care of the little children hence increasing number of parents desire to enroll their children in pre-primary education programme where they will be protected and learn at the same time.

### **3.2 Analysis of the Basic Outlines of the National Policy on the Implementation of Pre-primary Education.**

The government split out the following guidelines for the realization of the objectives as stated in the National Policy on Education (2004:11). Government shall:

- (a) establish pre-primary sections in existing public schools and encourage both community/private efforts in the provision of pre-primary education;
- (b) make provision in teacher education programmes for specialization in early childhood;
- (c) ensure that the medium of instruction is principally the mother-tongue or the language of the immediate community; and to this end will (i) develop the orthography of many more Nigerian languages and (ii) produce textbooks in Nigerian language;
- (d) ensure that the main method of teaching at this level shall through play and that the curricular of teacher education is oriented to achieve this; regulate and control the operation of pre-primary education. To this end, the teacher-pupils ratio shall be 1:25;
- (e) set and monitor minimum standard for early childcare centers in the country and;
- (f) ensure full participation of government, communities and teachers associations in the running and maintenance of early childhood education facilities.

It is regrettable that only a faction of Nigerian children benefit from head start’ programme. This is because the reality of government inability to participate at this level of education is opted for one of the policy implementation statement to encourage private effort in the provision of pre-primary education. While appreciating the handicaps facing government in this matter, it is disheartening that this encouragement is not such as to establish clear and firm standards and to

monitor them as a sort of quality control. The implication of encouraging private effectors in the provision of early childhood education is that this level of education is at the discretion of private entrepreneurs.

SAPA (1993) report revealed Federal, State and Local Government own less than ten percent (10%) of the existing day care centers and pre-primary institutions in Nigeria. The report further confirmed that “with the practice, it is very clear that pre-primary education is still not available to a majority of children especially those in the rural areas.

From the foregoing, it is an established fact that some of the existing nursery schools show that Government has not been able to make appropriate impact in the running of pre-primary education. This inability by government to live up to the majority of its own undertakings has naturally hindered the achievement of the objectives. Besides, since the pre-primary education is now actually a private rather than a public “enterprise”, the private proprietors are applying their own ingenuity, albeit inadequately. Thus the major problem confronting the realization of the thrust of pre-primary education have been based in government’s inability to provide the enabling basic features on which the purposes are predicted. In order to realize the objectives of nursery education in various states of the federation, there is an urgent need for a more direct government participation in the administration and supervision of the programme. The present situation where government only spells out the policy of nursery education and leaves its planning and implementation in the hands of a few private individuals and businessman is considered unsatisfactory, and may not facilitate the achievement of Educational objectives.

The policy makes provision for specialization in early childhood education in teacher education programmes. This policy has not been given attention. The teacher is a key element in the operations of the school system. If the school is to be an instrument of education, it must be well staffed with professional teachers who have an adequate grasp of what, who and how to teach. But it is disheartening that in most of our pre-primary schools today, most of the teachers are far from expectations because they are not specialists in pre-primary education. The training of teachers at the pre-primary level appears not be formalized, popular or made compulsory. Most of the pre-primary teachers have not even acquired any educational certificate!!!. They are only there because they are unable to secure a better job. There is an erroneous beliefs that any one can instruct at the kindergarten level. This belief is dangerous because a child who is wrongly or roughly handled at the pre-primary level of education may be inclined to hate the school system throughout a better part of his life. The pre-primary

school teachers therefore can be regarded as a special kind of teachers who should be knowledgeable about child psychology, philosophy of early children education etc. He/she should be honest, trustworthy, tolerant, broadminded, sympathetic, kind, faithful and disciplined. Certain category of teachers should be made to specialize in the area of pre-primary school education different from other levels of education. This will make it possible to staff nursery schools with professional teachers who know the content and methodology of nursery education.

Other strategies for the implementation of pre-primary education include: making available textbooks and reading materials for teachers and pupils at this level. As at present, not much efforts have been made to provide nursery textbooks in any of the Nigerian languages rather most of the textbooks were written in English and are secondly very scarce. The main language of instruction in pre-primary school is English Language as against the mother tongue or the language of the immediate community as stated in the National Policy of Education (2004) This process of learning is affecting the realization of pre-primary school objective as most pupils come from illiterate homes. The language of instruction is a complex matter which should be handled cautiously.

The policy also specified that the teacher pupil ratio shall be 1:25; and that the main method of teaching shall be play. These guidelines are not yet adhered to because of the private sector managing and directing pre-primary school education. It is necessary that the commissioning and production of suitable textbooks and reading materials be provided for children and the teacher pupil ratio be complied with. Because the proprietors are business oriented, seeking to make lucrative gain, the teacher pupil ratio in most of the pre-primary school is 1:45-50. This number is too large to be managed by qualified teacher if effective teaching and learning is to be realized. But a situation where majority of the teachers in pre-primary schools are unqualified i.e drop-outs, awaiting results or old retired teachers, not much will be achieved. It is pertinent to note that proprietors of nursery schools expose their children in the practice of recitation and regurgitation of rhymes and numbers instead of popularizing play as the main teaching method. Play lies at the heart of the curriculum for the nursery school. It makes a major contribution in the all round development of the child-physical, social, emotional and intellectual, children learn happily and faster with play. The teacher of pre-primary school should therefore make their teaching to be play-oriented.

#### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

Early childhood education has some philosophical principles which include preparing the children at this stage to form habits and characters that will guide them in future life. The purpose of pre-primary education is to provide what ought to be given to the children for their all round development. It is unfortunate that the government left the implementation of these objectives into the hands of private efforts with only guidelines and poor supervision. This has made the realization of these objectives impossible.

#### **5.0 SUMMARY**

In this unit, attempts have been made to discuss the purpose of pre-primary education and the rationale for its establishment. Further, efforts were made to critique the basic principles of the National policy on the implementation of pre-primary education.

#### **6.0 TUTOR -MARKED ASSIGNMENT (TMA)**

1. List out two purposes of pre-primary education as state on the National policy on education.
2. Mention three rationale for pre-primary education in Nigeria
3. Outline two prescriptions of government on the implementation of the objectives of pre-primary education.
4. What calibers of teachers teach in pre-primary schools presently in Nigeria.

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## **UNIT 3 PROBLEMS/CHALLENGES OF PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION IN NIGERIA – A WAY FORWARD**

### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main body
  - 3.1 Problems/challenges of pre-primary education in Nigeria
  - 3.2 Achievements in pre-primary education in Nigeria – current status
  - 3.3 Suggestions and recommendations for the improvement of pre-primary education in Nigeria.
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignments (TMA)
- 7.0 References /Further Readings

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Pre-primary education is of vital importance for the development of children in Nigeria. Children are the nations most precious assets. Their educational programme should be planned very carefully and seriously indeed as a principal and perhaps even the most important stage of education on which all other levels depend. Adequate attention should be given to educational facilities – buildings, furnitures, toys, textbooks etc and human resources that will be in operation towards the realization of pre-primary education. Government active participation in the provision of pre-primary education and proper encouragement by Government to private sector will go a long way to ameliorate the poor handling of pre-school children.

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

It is expected that by the end of this unit, the student should be able to do the following:

- ◆ Mention four problems facing the development of pre-primary education in Nigeria.
- ◆ Explain the calibers of people managing pre-primary schools in Nigeria presently.
- ◆ Specify which Ministry that handles early childhood education .
- ◆ Outline some suggestions and recommendation by researchers for the development of nursery education.

**Self Assessment Exercise 3.1:** Enumerate the major problems confronting pre-primary education in Nigeria.

### **3.0 MAIN BODY**

#### **3.1 PROBLEMS/CHALLENGES OF PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION IN NIGERIA.**

Administration of pre-primary school entails attending to the social and educational needs of pre-school children and effecting the desired balance between their social and educational needs. The school should always have a highly stimulating, entertaining and interesting package of programmes for nursery children. Such programmes would stimulate, arrest and sustain their interest in school and make them learn much without difficulties rather to learn with joy and amusements. A model pre-primary school should have the head-teacher and other teachers who are professionals in pre-primary education and health workers, security guard, labourer, library staff, typist, clerk/messenger.

These ideals are the expectations of every pre-primary education but due to some factors, pre-primary schools in Nigeria could not realize the objectives of early childhood education. Some of the problems include:

##### **(a) Lack of qualified teachers:**

When we talk of education of children, the next relevant issue in the sequence is the teacher. The combination of children education and teacher forms a strong link between children and education (Ajayi-Dopemu, 1994). The training of teachers at pre-primary level appears not to be formalized popular, or compulsory. Many nursery school teachers in Nigeria today are school dropouts or “awaiting results” while the most qualified are holders of TCII Certificates. In teaching young children, the teacher is undoubtedly the single most important factors who imparts the knowledge adequately to the children, but where qualified teachers are lacking, the children may be mishandled or misled. Nigerian government is yet to fulfill its pledge in realizing the objectives of making provision in Teacher Training Institutions for student teachers who want to specialize in primary education. The Grade Two Teacher Training Colleges are virtually being phased out in the country and there is no nationally prescribed pre-primary teacher education programme to cater for student teachers who wish to teach in pre-primary school. This lapse has made caretakers to operate pre-primary institutions.

For pre-primary, education to worth its salt in the selection of suitable staff, care must be taken to ensure that the persons so selected are keenly interested in the affairs and problems of pre-primary school age children. They should be expert in child psychology and have training in other areas of education, have appropriate temperament, patience, knowledge and skills required in nursery education. They should by their education in child psychology and training in other areas of education have appropriate temperament, patience, knowledge and skills required in pre-primary education. They should from time to time be exposed to orientation courses, seminars and workshops to update their knowledge and skills in the art and science of nursery education. Teacher/pupils ratio at this level should be 1:25 as prescribed by National Policy on Education.

**(b) Government Inability to Participate fully in Pre-primary Education:**

In spite of the Government efforts to include pre-primary education in the National Policy of Education, stating its objectives/purposes and also outlined the measures to be used in achieving them, it failed almost in all its prescription to assist the private sector in the establishment and management of pre-primary schools. Pre-primary education is mainly established and managed by private sectors (Individuals and Churches). The government only gives guidelines and sparingly supervises this level of education. They could not provide facilities, equipments and teaching aids to support the private sectors. This non-challant attitude has affected early childhood education adversely. The Federal Government of Nigeria should therefore widen its policy on Nursery education to include funding and supervision of pre-primary schools, as done in other levels of education. It can do this by participating actively in the establishment of pre-primary schools, assist the private sectors by giving them financial aids, instructional materials and other encouragements, ensuring that staff of pre-primary institutions are adequately trained and those in public pre-schools to enjoy good salaries, housing allowance, transport, pension and gratuity etc; designating some colleges of education or universities to create departments of pre-primary education for the production of nursery school teachers in the same way that technical teachers are produced in specialized colleges.

**(c) Space and Equipment:**

These include buildings (classroom, libraries, storerooms, offices and laboratories), furnitures and instructional hardware. A survey of some pre-primary schools situation in Anambra state as revealed by Eresimadu in Igboabuchi and Eze (1998) showed that the building

facilities are grossly inadequate; their location varies from ideal school to appealing centers in compounds, uncompleted buildings, makeshift buildings and garages. In respect of furniture, adequate furniture is absent, only few schools can boast of having adequate furniture. In most schools, mats, carpets and nylons are usually spread on the floor of the building for the children to sit on. The expectation of a model pre-primary school as regards building is that the premises should be accessibly well-located and well secured, have enough space for outdoor and recreational activities, have solid and well ventilated buildings with adequate toilets and urinary. Lack of the necessary facilities in pre-primary school at this level can affect adversely effective teaching and learning in pre-primary school, hence poor development of children.

**(d) Lack of sufficient teaching aids**

In education, the importance of instructional materials in the teaching/learning process cannot be over-emphasized. For the pre-primary school children, toys and games could be recognized as the best instructional materials appropriate for their education. Toys and games in pre-school age is one good method of making children learn with ease in contentment and active way rather than passive environment. But it is unfortunate that most of the pre-primary schools operate without adequate teaching aids, and some even don't have at all. Maduewesi, (1998:82) confirmed that "from discussion and interviews of pre-primary schools proprietors, their greatest sources of frustration are lack of strong backing from government or its agencies in terms of:

- well-uninformed, sound, consistent and firm professional advice;
- lack of affordable texts and/or culturally balanced reading materials;
- almost complete absence of teaching toys which have appeal to children which are functional and affordable;
- and generally high cost of paper materials, a great deal of which are good nursery school uses".

Dare (1981) pointed out that one of the outstanding chances needed in our Pre-primaries is towards greater child activity. She further stressed that more emphasis needs to be placed on children experimenting with objects in their environment. More time to be given to children to play with blocks, pegs etc. Even though, the need for instructional materials is evidences, many schools still lack it.

Other problems facing the development of pre-primary school in Nigeria include – poor methods of teaching, lack of proper supervision by the Ministry of Education Officials; wrong medium of instruction, lack of well-prepared modules to guide teachers amongst others.

**(e) Monitoring and Supervision:**

Monitoring refers to the activity of measuring progress in plan or project implementation (Fageyinbo, 2003). This is meant to ensure regular and thorough inspection and evaluation of manpower and materials in the pre-primary schools. This is in line with section 12 of the National Policy on Education where the state organ of Education are saddled with the responsibility of monitoring to see that the private organisation are following the guidelines on pre-primary education issued by the Federal Government in 1987 and revised 2004. The outcome of the state Ministry of Education's supervision of pre-primary education in Nigeria was revealed by Adenokun and Okhaware (1996). The study was aimed at looking into the compliance of proprietors/proprietresses in Kotangora Local Government with the provision in the guidelines issued by the Federal Government, these were the outcome.

- (a) Generally, the school environments are incompatible with the guideline.
- (b) Staff, though qualified, does not have specialized training in pre-primary education.
- (c) The playing facilities are grossly inadequate to allow a pre-scholar a conducive learning environment; and
- (d) Majority of the school possesses necessary statutory administrative and academic records, which are expected to be kept by pre-primary institution.

This finding revealed the inability of the state arm of government to properly monitor the pre-primary programme. The Ministry of Education makes more efforts to organize regular supervision of the pre-primary schools instead of inspection. Supervision is appropriate because it will help to guide the teachers and proprietors/proprietresses on what ought to be done to ensure total development of the children.

### **3.2 Achievements in Pre-primary Education in Nigeria: Current Status**

In the last few decades, a series of international events notably, the 1989 Convention of the Rights of the child, the 1990 Jomien World conference on Education for All, the 1990 World Summit for Children, among others have given added visibility and impetus to basic education (Obisanya, 2001). The main aim of these events was that developing countries and international agencies should confront the problem of illiteracy and educational decline by concentrating energies and investment in basic education, that is life-long and life wide education. Their initiative include early stimulation, nutrition, optimal interactive environment, affection, security and early learning through exploration

and discovering. These initiative according to them can start in the home and can mainly take place in specialized institutions such as Day-Care centers, pre-schools and in the communities.

These events have led to major reforms and innovations being introduced into the Nigerian education system recently. The reforms and innovations are in form of new directions of educational policy. These include administrative structure and educational contents. For example, there is greater involvement of Universal Basic Education (UBE) in pre-primary and primary education. Unlike its predecessor, the Universal Primary Education (UPE), the policy objectives of the UBE programme are to provide universal, free and compulsory education for all children from Early Childhood to Junior Secondary including special programmes for Nomadic population, out of school, non-formal education etc. Also pre-primary education which was at the discretion of private entrepreneurs now attract a measure of Government intervention in the crucial areas of encouraging training of care-givers and teachers standard curriculum development and supervision and quality control. In addition, early child-care Development and Education was adopted as basic component of the education.

Again, the launching of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) on the 30<sup>th</sup> of September, 1999 at Sokoto is a definite re-affirmation of Government's Commitment to the implementation of the Child Right Convention i.e providing relevant and qualitative education for all citizen without discrimination (Johnson 1999).

A component of the UBE Scheme, which is very important and constitutes the UBE's foundation is the education and care of the young children in early childhood stage and development. In the UBE programme, the following groups of children are to be given special attention.

- i. Children in rural communities and urban high density areas;
- ii. Mentally retarded and physically challenged children;
- iii. Children in specially difficult circumstances such as children in motherless babies homes, children of beggars, nomads and migrant fishermen (Federal Ministry of Education Master Plan 1993). These government efforts supports the fact that the provision of Early Childhood Education programme is not a mere slogan but reality.

Another important development in the pre-primary level is the concern of some international organisations and Non-Government Organisations (NGO). Many a time these organisations, like UNICEF, UNESCO, OMEP etc in conjunction with the Ministry of Education organize

workshops, seminars or conferences which address aspects of pre-primary education and which some of the proprietors and teachers attend. These workshops have gone a long way in improving the administration and teachers of pre-primary schools.

Since the inception of Universal Basic Education, Government has made frantic efforts to open some pre-primary schools to be attached under the same existing model primary schools and moreover, no fees is being paid. Even though not all the primary schools are involved, it is hoped that it will be incorporated into all the existing primary schools.

### **3.3 Suggestions and Recommendations for the Improvement of Pre-primary Education in Nigeria.**

1. Government should actively participate in the establishment of pre-primary education. Subsidized fees to be extended to private section of pre-primary education.
2. Government should give financial support to the proprietor by way of grants/loans for equipments. The government should also finance the provision of local toys and games for nursery education to enable proprietors to purchase them at cheaper rates, this will help them to bring down the high fees paid in such schools.
3. The Government should translate her intentions in the National Policy on Education into real action by making it mandatory for all tertiary teacher training institutions in the country to establish Departments of Pre-Primary Education where nursery teachers are trained. Such teachers should enjoy free sponsorship by Government. These institutions should make available courses in nursery methods leading to the award of National Certificate in Nursery Education.
4. The university experts should be encouraged by government to conduct researches in pre-primary education with a view of effecting necessary changes in the private sector of such schools.
5. All nursery schools should employ the services of health workers, social welfare workers, labourers, security guards and other support staff who help to take care of the children through their various activities.
6. The government in collaboration with international bodies like UNICEF, UNESCO; and NGO's should organize on regular basis short term courses, weekend seminars, conferences, in-service training and refresher courses in pre-primary education to update teachers knowledge and skills.
7. The Ministry of Education be requested to draw up and control the curriculum of all private pre-primary school to maintain standard and uniformity.

8. The Ministry of Education should spell out definite guidelines on the administrative procedures for all categories of pre-primary institutions and centers.

#### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

Nursery education in Nigeria has suffered much in the hands of private proprietors and government. Lack of government active participation in this level of education gave the private sector who are profit oriented the chance to manhandle the system. Most pre-primary schools lack qualified teachers, equipment, teaching materials and toys. Some operate under the trees, garages, warehouse, uncompleted buildings. These dissatisfying situation has directly and indirectly affected the proper development of the children, insecurity of the pupils inclusive. Any society or nation that treats children shabbily and does not recognize and address positively their needs and aspiration is dead because the future of a nation is determined by the type and quality of her children's development. It is therefore necessary that both government and private sectors should make adequate efforts to provide all that is needed for proper training of the children.

#### **5.0 SUMMARY**

In this unit, the problems/challenges of pre-primary Education in Nigeria were discussed with more emphasis on government non-challant attitude to pre-primary education, unqualified teachers to handle the children, inadequate accommodation and poor supervision by the Ministry of Education. The achievements currently made in the development of childhood education was highlighted while suggestions and recommendations were proffered.

#### **6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT (TMA)**

1. Mention four problems facing pre-primary schools in Nigeria. (8mks)
  2. Mention the calibers of people recruited to teach pre-primary school children in the absence of qualified teachers. (7mks)
  3. Which ministry is responsible for monitoring and supervising pre-primary education. (7 mks)
  4. Outline at least two suggestions and recommendations for improving pre-primary education in Nigeria. (8 mks)
- (30 marks)

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#### **UNIT 4 THE PROSPECTS OF PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION IN NIGERIA**

## CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main body
  - 3.1 The Mission of pre-primary Education in Nigeria
    - 3.1.1 The Vision of pre-primary Education in Nigeria.
    - 3.1.2 More Recognition for Pre-Primary Education
    - 3.1.3 Provision of Computer Facilities:
    - 3.1.4 Ethical Oriented Curriculum:
    - 3.1.5 Provision of Library Facilities
    - 3.1.6 Reading Culture:
    - 3.1.7 An Improved Supervision/Inspection:
    - 3.1.8 Human Capacity Building:
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment (TMA)
- 7.0 References /Further Readings

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

By now, you can discuss the various problems confronting pre-primary education in Nigeria. You would recall that such factors are traceable to government, proprietors as well as parents form the sources from which problems of pre-primary education are traced to. It is expected that we should proceed to have a cursory look into what becomes of this important section of our educational system in the nearest future. Our attention in this unit shall be devoted to this attempt.

**Self Assessment Exercise 4.1:** Suggest three things you foresee happening to pre-primary education in Nigeria between now and 2010.

### 2.0 OBJECTIVE

By the end of this unit, the student should be able to do the following.

- ◆ Explain the basic expectations of early childhood education.
- ◆ Mention some expectations of future nursery education (Vision)

### 3.0 MAIN BODY

### **3.1 THE MISSION OF PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION IN NIGERIA**

#### **3.1.1 The Vision of Pre-primary Education in Nigeria**

Having highlighted government policy with respect to early childhood education and some of the flaws in the prevailing practices, a number of questions arise. These include what are the future prospects of early childhood education in Nigeria? What do we intend to achieve as far as pre-primary education is concerned by the year 2010 and beyond? What vision do we have of the average Nigerian child who has been exposed to early childhood education?

#### **3.1.2 More Recognition for Pre-Primary Education**

Pre-primary education will have more recognition in future like other levels of education. The awareness of the importance of early childhood education as a critical stage where children form and develop habits have been created. Hence parents both literates and illiterates send their children to nursery schools to acquire all round development. It is perceived that in the nearest future more government and private owned nursery schools will be established. It is hoped that communities would be encouraged to set up nursery schools. These schools will be standard and will be established in both rural and urban areas. It is also envisioned that government owned nursery schools will be free to all citizens. This assertion is in line with the Nigeria National objectives of having “a land of bright hope of having and full opportunities for all citizens”. The privately owned nursery schools will still exist for those who can afford it.

In future the pre-primary education will be well co-coordinated and monitored in such a way that the children will be encouraged to attend the one nearest to their residence instead of the prevailing practice of parents sending children to nursery schools that are from their home because of the dissatisfaction with the ones nearest to the homes. The government would in future commit communities through the help of Parent-Teacher Association (P.T.A.) in the establishment of nursery schools and pre-primary schools will be established in every village. Because of the envisaged increase in number of pre-school children, more teachers will be trained to accommodate these children and their qualification will not be less than National Certificate of Education (NCE). School Certificate holders will be trained as care-givers.

#### **3.1.3 Provision of Computer Facilities**

Since the world is becoming computerized, it is envisaged that by the year 2010, exposure to computers would commence at this level of education. The teachers of nursery school children will be computer literate and part of their teaching will include exposure of these pupils to carefully designed computer programmes for toddlers. Presently, the government and proprietors should ensure that adequate computer toys and gadgets be provided to sensitize these children.

Before 2010, it is envisaged that the curriculum of pre-primary education will be well beefed to lay more emphasis on ethics, good habits especially health habits.

#### **3.1.4 Ethical Oriented Curriculum:**

The present generation of primary and post primary school leavers are not exhibiting the desired code of conduct because they were not properly trained for it during their pre-primary school age, hence the increase in societal ills. We are quite aware that respect for elders by the young is greatly dwindling. Able youths sit down during bus rides while the elderly ones struggle to maintain an erect position. This is because right from the pre-primary level our children were not properly educated in these ethical issues. It is therefore necessary that our children be taught to respect their elders, learn to listen to others without interruption, learn to wait for their turns and not to jump queues etc. These additions will be made to the prevailing curricular for pre-primary education.

#### **3.1.5 Provision of Library Facilities**

The nursery school children are filled with curiosities and imaginations and the present curriculum have been designed to cater for both manipulative and cognitive skills. The nursery schools of the future Nigeria children will have libraries filled with books written by experienced and specialist teachers on Nursery education. These books will be written in both English and the language of the children's immediate environment (mother tongue).

#### **3.1.6 Reading Culture:**

There is need to inculcate reading culture which is seriously lacking in our children as early as possible. Local materials will be more utilized in production of toys, Lagos, and other audio-visual materials for the children. Our future nursery education is also envisaged to serve avenues of ensuring healthy development of the children. This will be done as stated early by inculcating the right health habits at this early

age of their lives. Period tests of sensory organs such as eyes, nose, ears will be carried out by medical personnel and qualified nursery will be posted in every nursery school to assist teachers to maintain sound health habits in the children. Examination of nails, dressed and even bodies for rashes will be enforced.

### **3.1.7 An Improved Supervision/Inspection:**

It is expected that in future, the government should intensify its efforts in the aspect of school inspection and supervision in order to ensure that the required standards are maintained and teachers properly guided for the realization of pre-primary school objectives. These institutions will be properly funded and equipped by government. Education shall be free so that every Nigeria child should have access to education which is suppose to be a birth right and not a privilege.

### **3.1.8 Human Capacity Building:**

In service programmes, seminars and workshops will be made available to member of the staff for the improvement of the system. Fund should be available for research into improvement of education at the pre-primary level.

## **4.0 CONCLUSION**

The challenges of the twenty first century calls for the needs for our children to have a sound basic education at the pre-primary level. This is very important because, development psychologist and early philosophers have confirmed that childhood period is characterized by rapid development with long term influences on later life. The children require a great deal of attention, care, stimulating and encouragement. The desire to provide the children with early stimulation and encouragement for their optimum development is imperative because the society is becoming computerized and needs children that will face the challenges with ease.

## **5.0 SUMMARY**

In this unit, attempts have been made to discuss some expectations or vision of future pre-primary education by the year 2010 in Nigeria.

## **6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT (TMA)**

1. Discuss extensively what you consider as expected future innovations in the practice of pre-primary education in Nigeria.

## **7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READINGS**

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## **CONTRIBUTIONS OF SOME LEADING PHILOSOPHERS TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION**

Unit 1	Jean Jaeques Rousseau (1712-1778)
Unit 2	John Amos Commenuis (1592-1670)
Unit 3	John Heinrich Pestalozzi (1746-1827) & Montessori (1870-1952)
Unit 4	Frederich W. Froebel (1782-1852) & John Dewey (1959-1952)
Unit 5	Plato (427-348 BC) and Aristotle (384-322 BC)

### **UNIT 1 JEAN JAEQUES ROUSSEAU (1712-1778)**

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3.1.2	Educational implications of Rousseau to effective teaching/learning in pre-primary schools.
4.0	Conclusion
5.0	Summary
6.0	Tutor-marked Assignment (TMA)
7.0	References/Further Readings

#### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

The rationale for studying the contributions of leading philosophers to pre-primary education is of immense importance to the development of early childhood education. Their thoughts have been proved to be relevant even in our own times and society. Since education is a result of the accumulation of relevant knowledge, their ideas and thoughts would be a source of guide to teachers and planners of pre-primary education to improve the system. It is therefore expected that teachers should adhere to the principles of teaching and learning prescribed by Rousseau and ensure that children are assisted to have all round development-physical, social, emotional and intellectual without much difficulties.

## 2.0 OBJECTIVES

It is expected that by the end of this unit, the student should be able to:

1. Explain at least three principles of teaching as advocated by Rousseau
2. State what Rousseau is associated with in education.
3. Mention at least three educational implications of Rousseau's ideas for effective teaching/learning in pre-primary school.
4. Explain what Rousseau meant by given children freedom of learning.
5. Mention the name of Rousseau famous book

## 3.0 MAIN BODY

### 3.1 JEAN JACQUES ROUSSEAU (1712-1778)

#### 3.1.1 His Life

Rousseau was born in Geneva in the year 1712. He was brought up by his father as a result of his mother's early death. He was sent to a tutor who taught him Latin and inspired his life as a philosopher at his age of ten. At the age of twenty-five in the course of a serious illness, he picked interest and studies literature and science from there he became acquainted with French writers like Montague, the Port Royalists and Fenelon, and English writers like Addison, Pope and Locke.

A French advocate of philosophy of naturalism in education triggered off his writing in pre-primary education. His main contribution to educational theory is contained in his famous book called 'Emile' which stressed the importance of beginning education early. The message of the book was based on three major assumptions:

- (a) That the child is naturally good and will develop along good lines if left on his own;
- (b) That the adult society is bad and corrupt and therefore influences children who come into contact with it; and
- (c) That the socio-political apparatus in the society affects the educational system.

The book 'Emile' was the name of an imaginary boy. The boy, Emile, in order to avoid the corrupting influence of the society was taken away from society and made to grow up in a natural setting where the society would not contaminate him. In this state of nature, the child, at infant and childhood stages was allowed freedom to romp and play at will with objects and things. Through that, he acquired knowledge of virtue and truth through

his own experience, and develops habits, emotions, needs and curiosities. To him, he stressed the need for starting child's education at birth and that children should be allowed to develop naturally rather than preparing him for life. Rousseau's fundamental concept was that self perception is the only true foundation of human knowledge. He postulated that children proceeded through natural stages of growth and therefore their learning experiences should be tailored to suit each stage. He advocated for child-centred education, that children should never be forced to learn anything which is of no interest to him. He was of the opinion that the child's emotion should be appealed to and considered in all teaching process. He therefore emphasized that children should be taught through amusement. Rousseau believed that the child is an innocent being and should be encouraged to enjoy and learn by observation and play. He advised pre-primary school teachers to love their pupils, respect their individual nature, guide and advice them sympathetically. He stressed the need for the teacher to consider past experience before proceeding to the new lesson. This is pertinent because of the individual differences among the learners. The child's readiness should determine the content of lesson and teaching methods to be adopted in teaching the children.

**Self Assessment Exercise 1.1:** List the salient features of J. J. Rousseau's philosophy.

### **3.1.2 Educational implications of Rousseau to effective teaching/learning in pre-primary schools.**

The concern and interest in pre-primary education have their roots in the thoughts of early philosophers like Rousseau. He was one of the early educators who initiated influences of the development of the child physically, socially, mentally and emotionally from birth. He expressed sentiments on the importance of the child's early education in character formation. He was conscious of the young children's susceptibility to environmental experiences and their influences on the course of development. Rousseau therefore, suggested that teaching should be child-centred and the methods of teaching to be activity oriented so as to create amusement and joy to the children. His ideas are strictly adhered in the Nigerian education system where proprietors/proprietresses of pre-primary schools are given the guidelines by ministry of education to provide sufficient teaching materials that are attuned to the natural tendencies of children, hence inclusion of teaching methods like – play-method, activity method, project method, experimental, story-telling method to mention but a few in pre-primary school curriculum. The play-way method he advocated makes learning easy and interesting

because children learn by doing and at the same time solve their problems. Teachers are advised not to force the child to learn rather teach every lesson with play and activity.

Rousseau also placed much emphasis on the freedom and liberty to pursue learning. Children should not be forced to learn without their willing cooperation. His principle is that normal child activities provide the natural means of development, that the content and method of education ought to be attuned to the child's natural growth, and that education should focus attention on, and be responsive to the changing needs, interest and ability of children as they develop. To him, unnatural conditions have created unhappy results and man's negligence of the way nature has left him in chain. Education therefore provided to the children should take cognizance of their age of comprehension instead of stuffing the children with materials that are uninteresting and of no value to their age. This may lead to children alienation from school. Instruction must be made to fit the child's level of understanding and his stage of development, cognizance should also be taken of their immediate experience and group instruction should be preferred to private instruction because it exposes the children to other children's ideas and promote social learning.

Rousseau was credited with having identified and classified the values and attitudes which is still guiding and directing the thoughts and actions of human beings past and present in the world, Nigeria inclusive.

**Self Assessment Exercise 1.2:** What are the implications of Rousseau's philosophy to early childhood education?

#### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

The study of the leading philosophers and their contributions were of utmost importance to the development of early childhood education. Rousseau, a great educational reformer provided good principles that will assist teacher to realize the educational objectives. He believed that children's early education is of utmost necessity and should start with the reconstruction of the society. Besides, education can only be possible in an ideal state devoid of constant conflict and corruption. His fundamental concept was that self perception is the only true foundation of human knowledge and therefore stressed the need for allowing children to develop naturally without force.

#### **5.0 SUMMARY**

In this unit, discussion has been made on the life of Jean Jacques Rousseau, a great philosopher and an education reformer. To him, human inequalities are attributed to environment and education. Best education is possible in an enriched environment of ideal state, hence the first step in children's education is the reconstruction of the society. He believed that children are naturally sound morally but can be corrupted by their environment, he therefore emphasized that normal child activities provide the natural means of development and that the education of the child should be attuned to it.

His educational ideologies were also pinpointed and its implications to effective teaching/learning in pre-schools were also highlighted.

## **6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT (TMA)**

1. Explain at least three principles of teaching as advocated by Rousseau
2. Rousseau is associated with \_\_\_\_\_ education.
3. Mention at least three educational implications of Rousseau's ideas for effective teaching/learning in pre-primary school.
4. What does he meant by given children freedom of learning?
5. What was the name of Rousseau famous book?  
(6 marks each = 30mrks)

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## **UNIT 2 JOHN AMOS COMMENIUS (1592-1670)**

### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main body
  - 3.1 John Amos Commenius – His life as a philosopher
  - 3.2 Commenius Guidelines to Teachers
  - 3.3 Educational implications of John Commenius Contributions to the development of pre-primary education.
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment (TMA)
- 7.0 References /Further Readings

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

John Amos Commenius was one of the leading philosophers who contributed much in the development of all levels of education especially the pre-primary education. He believed that early education is necessary for the character, moral and good habits formation of children. He provided many guidelines for teachers for effective teaching and learning in the school. He advocated the use of concrete objects and sensory training in education – hence activity – oriented programme was prescribed in children learning.

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

At the end of this unit , the students should be able to do the following:

- ◆ Mention two ideas of Commenius on development of pre-primary education.
- ◆ Mention when Commenius was born
- ◆ Mention two of his book in pre-primary education.
- ◆ Explain two guiding principles of Commenius to teachers.
- ◆ Mention two educational implications

### **3.0 MAIN BODY**

#### **3.1 JOHN AMOS COMMENIUS (1592-1670). HIS LIFE AS A GREAT PHILOSOPHER.**

Comenius was born at Nivnitz in Moravia Czechoslovakia in 1592. He was an educational reformer and theologian. He was a bishop of the Moravian church who showed interest in humanistic educational practices. His poor educational background awakened his interest in education.

In 1616, he became the master of the school of the Moravian Brethren at prerau and this gave him the opportunity to put his thoughts into practice. In Poland, he taught and reorganized the gymnasium of Lissa. His principles for the guidance of education were explained in a book called “the Great Didact” which he translated to Latin and published in 1657. John Comenius in the Great Didact advocated the mother school for the first six years of life. He outlined four stages of education, namely infancy, childhood, boyhood and youth, each with a duration of six years. He also advocated for the establishment of four types of schools namely, mother school. Vernacular school, Gymnasium or Latin school and university. The mother school should impact in a child the rudiments of knowledge necessary for life. He believe that the acquisition of knowledge emanated from activities followed by reasoning. He strongly believed in the effectiveness of the age of concrete objects and sensory training in educational activities. He resented verbal teaching if true learning were to result. The mother school takes care of those years between the ages of 1-6years. The vernacular schools which is for children age 6 – 12 years should give instructions on those things that may be of use to them throughout their life. The curricular for this stage should include; reading, writing, arithmetic, singing, history, geography, arts, morality and religion. The school of gymnasium should expose the children to acquire knowledge of four languages and foundation should be laid for the arts and science while the university should give instructions on all branches of human knowledge.

Comenius wrote his first picture book for children in 1658 called the famous “Orbis pictus” meaning the word in pictures. In it, he emphasized the importance of learning through experience. He strongly believed in the effectiveness of the use of concrete objects and sensory training in educational services. The book also provided a guide for teachers to prepare humanistic and appealing lessons rather than continuing with formal instructional methods of imparting knowledge.

Comenius made remarkable mark in childhood education by writing series of other graded textbooks for school use. These books include “The school of Infancy” a text for pre-primary school age (1-6 years), six books for the vernacular school (6-12 years) and a text on introduction to Latin called “The Janua Leriguarum Reserata” (The door of the language unlocked). These achievements made the Swedish governments to honour him by commissioning him to prepare text books for their schools.

Comenius served as a linked between the old and the new ideas in the contributions of leading philosophers to education.

**Self Assessment Exercise 2.1:** What are the contributions of Comenius to the practice of pre-primary education?

His major contributions are summarized as follows:

- (1) Human intellect to be developed so that man can study nature and God. Education to be a birth-right not a privileged since it is an instrument for achieving one’s potentiality.
- (2) Learning should be activity oriented - use of concrete objects and sensory training in educational activities. This will develop the child’s imagination and creativity.
- (3) Medium of instruction should be mother tongue.
- (4) Psychology of the child should be considered in determining the content and the purposes of education.
- (5) The curriculum of pre-primary to include reading, writing arithmetic, singing, history, geography, arts, morality and religion – hence in the course of study presented in his “school of infancy” first published in German in 1633, contained simple lessons in objects, taught to know stones, plants and animals; the names and uses of members of the body; to distinguish between light and darkness; colours; the geography of the cradle; the room, the farm, the street, and the field; trained in moderation, purity and obedience, and taught to say the Lord’s prayer. He further emphasized that the pre-primary school curriculum should consist of elements of literacy and numeracy.

### 3.2 Comenius Guidelines to Teachers

1. Children are usually curious and willing to learn provided they see the immediate purpose by doing so.
2. He advocated that the learning of children should be without tears, blows or concern.
3. Children to be exposed to learn through the senses. All aids to learning are to be used, through drawing, painting, pictures etc.

4. Memory work should be little, and even then the passage to be committed to the memory, must first be clearly understood.
5. Instruction must be made to fit the child's level of understanding and his stage of development.
6. Subjects should be graded according to progressive degree of newness and difficulty. Learning should start from known and go progressively to the unknown.
7. Great attention has to be given to the drawing up of syllabus of study to achieve "horizontal unity" and "vertical unity".
8. Classrooms should be well lit, clean, pleasant and well furnished with education decorative, pictures and other learning aids so that the atmosphere of learning is attractive.
9. The school should be made a house of joy, not a place of torture. It should be located in beautiful surroundings with good scenery and a quite atmosphere.
10. The whole educational structure must be carefully graded so that the children are grouped according to the stage of development and taught according to the method appropriate to the level of understanding. (Akinpelu, J.A. 1984).

Understanding and applying the philosophical ideas of the leading philosophers like commenuis on pre-primary education will go a long to improve the education system. Commenius guidelines for teachers will always remain relevant, valuable and a source of inspirations to any pre-primary teacher for the improvement of himself and the education system any where.

### **3.3 The educational implication of Commenius guidelines to teachers to the development of pre-primary education.**

Children are priceless gift of God to any society or nation Ilorah (1998 207). They constitute the most valuable resources any nation or society has. A considerable body of research (Bloom 1964; Bruner, 1966; Olatunji 1986 and Gbadamosi, 1993) has demonstrated that the period from birth to about the age of six is of vital importance to the all round development of the child especially the child's future cognitive development and personality. This period, otherwise known as the pre-school period caters for the interests of nursery schools, kindergarten and day-care centers. It therefore deserves proper attention by adhering to the guidelines prescribed by leading philosopher like Commenius to enable children learn with easy.

In the Nigerian scene, Fafunwa in his view on pre-primary education was influenced by the ideas propounded by renowned educators of the Western world. Fafunwa's real ingenuity lies in his immense ability to blend western nursery education practices with the African concept of

child care (Aladejana and Alao, 1993). Because the major focus of the renowned educators was the nursery or kindergarten, the common elements contained in their tradition are very useful and relevant in the Nigerian education system. The proprietors, head teachers and staff of pre-primary schools should be guided by these time-honoured elements for effective education and socialization of children in their custody.

Some of these implications include:

1. Teaching at pre-primary school level aims at inculcating scientific culture in the child and laying a sound science foundation for intellectual development during the first six years. Teachers in this level of education should be aware of this and in a very practical sense, shift from a monopolist of knowledge to an organizer and orchestrator of learning opportunities. Accordingly, the teacher should provide an optimal supportive environment for the child through many varied encounters with concrete materials like toys of different types and other familiar objects that expose the child to rudimentary concepts and phenomena as motions, equilibrium, sound, weights, colours, shapes to mention a few. Play, thus becomes the fundamental way of learning in the pre-school system (Duruojaiye, 1977). This is in line with National Policy on Education stipulation that the main method of teaching in pre-primary institution shall be through play; worthy to note is the culture of the learner. Studies, (Ogunniyi, 1988, Maduabum 1995) assert that for education to be meaningful and functional for any society, it must relate to the cultural needs and environment of the people since pre-primary education takes care of children under six years of age, it implies that it prepares the pupils for smooth transition from pre-school to primary school. Education at this level should be child-centred. The environment of learning of the child, the content or materials to be used in teaching and methods of teaching should all be to the interest of the child. As Comenius rightly advised that “the school must be made a house of joy, not a place of torture”. This implies that the school should in all respects, look like a home. All members of staff should show a lot of love, affection and concern to the children. Such help to them would make them to learn naturally and in a relaxed mood. The environment of the child should be educative and serve as a resource for learning within the classroom and even at the playground, there should be sufficient aids to generate curiosity which leads to learning.

The pre-school stage falls within the formative years of the child when good character and morals together with good habits and

attitudes can be successfully planted in the minds of the children. The learning by discovery (heuristic) method is a very important attitude to be cultivated, enough materials to be provided for the children to generate exploration, creativity and self-activity such devices encourage 'auto education' propounded by Maria Montessori.

#### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

The contributions of John Comenius to pre-school education are still relevant to the present school system. His guidelines encouraged the type of education that should satisfy the child's natural urge for self-expression, thus teaching should mainly involve creative self-activity.

#### **5.0 SUMMARY**

In this unit, the life of John Amos Comenius as an education reformer was discussed, his suggestions on the need to start early in the education of children were pointed. The guidelines prescribed by Comenius to teachers in the overall education of children were all outlined and the educational implications of Comenius guidelines in teaching pre-primary children were highlighted.

#### **6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT (TMA)**

1. Mention two ideas of Comenius on development of pre-primary education. (8 mrks)
2. When was Comenius born? (7 mks)
3. Mention two of his book in pre-primary education. (7 mks)
4. Explain two guiding principles of Comenius to teachers. (8 mks)

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## **UNIT 3      JOHN HEINRICH PESTALOZZI (1746-1827) AND MARIA MONTESSORI (1870-1952)**

### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main body
  - 3.1 Pestalozzi (1746-1827)
  - 3.2 Educational Implications of Pestalozzi to pre-primary Education in Nigeria
  - 3.3 Maria Montessori (1870-1952)
  - 3.4 Educational implications of Montessori to Pre-primary Education
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment (TMA)
- 7.0 References /Further Readings

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Education as a human enterprise aims at inculcating the necessary attitudes, values, norms, abilities and basic skills in the child to enable him participate effectively in the society to which he belongs. Pre-primary education is the foundation of other levels and desires adequate planning and implementation. The early philosophers made a lot of useful contributions to the development of pre-primary education. Their ideas are still valuable since the National policy of education accepted most of their suggestions.

In this unit, the ideas and philosophy of Pestalozzi and Montessori will be discussed and their educational implications highlighted.

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

It is expected that by the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- ◆ Describe Pestalozzi and tell us when he was born?
- ◆ Mention two of his philosophical ideas to pre-primary education?
- ◆ Describe was Maria Montessori and what was her profession?
- ◆ Mention two of her ideologies toward the development of pre-primary education

- ◆ Explain two educational implications of both Pestalozzi and Montessori in pre-school education.

### 3.0 MAIN BODY

#### 3.1 JOHN HEINRICH PESTALOZZI 1746-1827

##### **His Life:**

John Pestalozzi was a Swiss Philosopher, an ardent admirer of Rousseau in his concept of natural Education. Born in Zurich in 1746 he was the second son of the three children in a middle class family. He was a prolific writer and wrote on the social, political and philosophical aspects of life. In his efforts, he sought a way to make education more functional and meaningful to the children. This was demonstrated in his important book Leonard and Getrude, where he showed how Getrude the wife of a village mason, taught her children through concrete things found in the home. His methodology was based on the principles “I will”, “I can”. He believed that his success was the result of his determination. They learnt Arithmetic by counting steps and things with motherly talks and discussions, she trained their minds and character. Getrude encouraged the children to observe carefully all things around them like the action of fire, smoke and water. Pestalozzi wanted to show in this way that the school should be like a home where learning and instruction have their foundation in parental love and that teaching and learning should start with things and not with words. Pestalozzi criticized the teaching method that expects too much from the child, and emphasized the encouragement of the development of originality and imagination in children.

Pestalozzi, like his admirer Rousseau, was a naturalist who strongly believed that every child has some hidden talents that unfold as he grows up to become an adult. He advanced a new idea in the area of method to be adopted in the pre-primary education. In his view, the mind grows in three marked stages from infancy to adulthood viz:

- (a) the stage when sense impressions are vagues;
- (b) the stage when vague impressions get extinct;
- (c) the stage when distinct impression turn clear

Pestalozzi believed that the child be encouraged to gain knowledge through his own sensory experience that is education of the child at this level should involve experiencing of things (i.e sense impressions) which the child sees, handle or make direct acquaintance with objects. To Pestalozzi, a lesson is considered suitable to a pre-primary class if it awakens interest and self-activity of the learners. He view the right order of learning to that which proceeds by gradual steps from simple to

complex, near to far and known to unknown. The children begin with learning to count things around them and recognizing what each number means, from this learning of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division will be learnt easily. Also in language, the fundamental things to be done are the elementary sound (letters), syllabus, words, then sentences.

He contends that education must harmonize with the nature and concept of all subjects at this level, any topic to be taught at pre-primary school level, must be reduced to the minimum element and gradually build up step by step for instance, in learning of numbers.

Pestalozzi advocated that children should receive from their parents and teachers both instruction and discipline for the development of their potentials. The teacher should direct the process of natural growth and prepare the children for their roles in the society while the family should furnish the model for the ideal school. He also suggested that the society should aid the growth of the children by providing equal educational opportunities for every child. He emphasized the need for moral virtue which is vital to the individual's constructive role in the society. He held the view that nature alone does not give social, moral or intellectual knowledge nor skills and good behaviour. Rather he advocated for a healthy and supportive environment to be created by both home and school for the development of young children. Cognizance of the above contributions/suggestions of Pestalozzi, the philosophy of Nigerian education as specified in section I of the National Policy on Education (2004:11) is based on "the integration of the individual into a sound and effective citizen and equal educational opportunities for all citizens of the nation at all levels, both inside and outside the formal school system". The quality of instruction at all levels, therefore has to be oriented towards inculcating, among other values, the promotion of the emotional, physical and psychological health of all children. Inculcation of such values and virtues cannot effectively be implemented without a conducive learning environment.

An important by-products of Pestalozzi's reforms according to Esmonu (2005:39) was the acceptance of his ideas by the state and the gradual transfer of the schools from church domination to a Government supported institutions for the training of its future citizens. Pestalozzi's ideas and contributions have positive effects in the management of pre-primary schools in the Global World and especially in Nigeria.

### **Self Assessment Exercise 3.1:**

- i. Where was Pestalozzi born?
- ii. List two ideas of Pestalozzi about pre-primary education.

### **3.2 Educational Implications of Pestalozzi's Contributions to Pre-primary Education in Nigeria.**

Developmental and educational psychologists the world over have made it clear that pre-schools years are the formative period in the life of an individual. This implies that most concepts and basic principles of life are ingrained in the child during these early or childhood years. Equally, behavioural scientists, Bower (1978); Schaimberg and Smith (1982), have stressed the importance of a healthy and supportive environment on the all round development of the child. Pestalozzi in his contribution emphasized that both home and school should endeavour to provide enriched environment that will stimulate learning. This is necessary because (Scarr-salapalek, 1975; Skeels, 1966) confirmed that "IQ scores can be dramatically increased when young children are placed in enriched and safe environment". This implies that environment can promote or hamper growth and development. The teacher should provide conducive physical environment consisting of objects with which the children interact with objects with (non-living elements), provision of enough space for play, learning materials such as books, toys and other resources that aid learning. He should provide enabling social environment where children will feel free to interact with peers and teachers since the children form their habits, beliefs, attitudes at this level, good interaction among them and their environment forms the basis of social environment.

The climate of the school should be based on controlled democracy which produces children that are well behaved and high achievers due to good teacher – pupils relationship evidenced by discussions, supervisions and exemplary leadership in the school.

Pestalozzi believed in considering the age of the learner in planning his programme, and that lessons should be sequential, children to learn from known to unknown. This implies that the teacher should facilitate his lesson by splitting the units of work in small bits for easy comprehension by the children. Their past experience in the content area to be learnt should be known and revised before proceeding to new concepts. When children learn from known to unknown and simple to complex, learning will be easy, but on the contrary, the children may be alienated from school. To achieve this, teachers should provide concrete objects and make lesson practical. Every child should receive equal opportunity in participating in the lesson. Teacher to asks series of question to lead the children to learn.

The government should ensure that education is free at this level and compulsory so that every child will enjoy education at this level.

### **3.3 Maria Montessori (1870-1952)**

Maria Montessori was one of the earliest pioneers of nursery education she was born in Chiaravelle Ancona Province, Italy on August 31, 1870. After graduating from the University of Rome as the first woman in Italy to obtain medical degree in 1896, she worked in the University's psychiatric clinic. There she became interested in the education of mentally challenged children.

Montessori believed strongly that education rather than physical or mental treatment was the remedy for their ailment. In 1906, she started work with children living in slum area in Rome. She made initial successes in her educational work with mentally challenged children and consequently opened in 1907 "a case de Bambti" (Children's House) in slum district of Rome. She enrolled neglected children aged 3 to 6 years. The mental and social development of these children in this direction amazed observers and soon attracted international attention. She proceeded by writing many texts about her methods and conducted many courses and workshops in many countries. The Italian physical – educator, Maria Montessori, originated the method of education that bears her name "Montessori method" which many proprietors over the world use for their schools name.

Montessori's apparent success in her kindergarten experiment, made her give up her medical practice and took to traveling, lecturing, establishing schools and teacher training colleges and conducting training courses. Onibokun et al. (1987:29) observed that Montessori felt that children did not learn because of bad teaching methods. She felt that teaching methods adopted by teacher should arouse and sustain the interests of children, give them the opportunity to work alone and to experiment and practice whatever they learn in school in their activities at home. Her method was a system of education and a philosophy of human development and learning. In this method, Montessori believed that a child of three, four and five has one intuitive aim of self-development. Because of this, she organized her classroom around a carefully prepared physical environment with child-size furnishing and a variety of multi-sensory, manipulative and self-correcting learning materials. Thus Lazerson in his comments on kindergarten schools observed that "the Montessori classroom emphasized personal hygiene and good manners. Children learn to keep themselves clean, set and serve a table and use knives and forks to foster this, Montessori radically altered the learning environment. She developed moveable child-sized furniture, desks, and wash-basins. She developed her own tools for

learning-didactic apparatus which presented the child with problems to be solved.

The teaching aids which she referred to as didactic materials include dressing frames, movable alphabet letters, command cards, rough and smooth boards, finger prints and clay. Teaching, she believed should progress always from simple to complex and from the concrete to abstract. Children should be involved in representative games like arranging and rearranging of sets of materials with freedom given for every child to find out what is of interest to him. This method requires a professionally trained teacher to prepare the environment, observe carefully and subtly guide every child as he works with the material at his own pace. This exposure gives the child the joy of discovering and learning on his own and also enshrine the spirit of self-confidence and self-discipline that will help him to live well and adjust to his environment in the society.

Montessori also believed that parents have an important mission in the upbringing of their children. They alone can and must save their children. Their conscience must feel the force of the mission entrusted to them; for in their hands lies positively the future of humanity, life. The influence of Maria Montessori nursery education was very overwhelming in the continental countries of Europe. Its basic principles of self-motivated learning is applicable at any stage/level of education since the late 1950's, private Montessori pre-primary schools have increased greatly in the United States and this approach focused mainly on socially deprived children. Present day educational practices implied by such terms as open classroom, learning center, programme instruction, ungraded schools etc. took its root from Maria Montessori's concepts.

### **3.4 Educational Implication of Montessori's Philosophy on Childhood Education.**

Montessori believed that education rather than physical or mental treatment was the remedy for the mentally challenged children's ailment. She hence suggested child's self-development by the provision of enriched educative environment. This implies that school environment especially for pre-school children should have a variety of equipment and learning materials that help children establish neuro-muscular co-ordination and gain control over their bodies.

A suitable pre-school environment should consider the need and characteristics of the children. Pre-school children are characterized by curiosity as such, the pre-school environment must provide opportunities for children to explore and apply their natural curiosity.

The teacher should make every necessary efforts to provide a variety of suitable equipment that will motivate the children to develop their hidden powers. This must be properly guided and supervised. According to Durojaiyi (1979), “failure to learn with some basic materials at any early age may prevent learning with more advanced materials which are built on them”. Therefore enriching the pre-school with materials and basic but concrete objects are of prime importance, since these materials constitute the child’s environment and represent in the special way the child’s world, and how he perceived it.

From the view of Montessori, the pre-school can be defined as a structured environment in which learning and growing occur naturally. This implies that the school for pre-children should be in a well conducive environment, well programmed and primarily suit the educational and developmental needs of the children. By this assertion, school environment should be well enriched socially, emotionally, intellectually and physically.

#### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

The challenges of the twenty first century calls for the needs for our children to have a sound basic education at the pre-primary level. Efforts were made to highlight the contributions of Pestalozzi and Montessori to the development of pre-primary education. Both believed that children should be guided to learn with concrete concepts to help them obtain all round development. They stressed the need for an enriched educative environment socially, physically and intellectually. To Montessori, the provision of conducive/stimulating environment during this crucial and sensitive period will give the children the opportunity of learning gradually on their own for self-development and discipline.

#### **5.0 SUMMARY**

In this unit, efforts were made to explain the philosophies and contributions of both Pestalozzi and Maria Montessori. Pestalozzi’s principles on his famous book “Leonard and Getrude” were highlighted to include teaching the children using step-by-step methods. He emphasized that the school should be like an ideal home where love, care and concern are showed to the little children. He criticized the method of teaching which expects much from the children and encouraged the natural approach to the education of pre-school children.

Maria Montessori on her part believed that proper education is the best treatment for the mentally challenged children than physical treatment, hence her advocacy for enriched stimulating environment with adequate

suitable instructional materials of various type for young children. She was of the opinion that the teacher should give guidance and supervision to the children as they explore their enriched environments. She believed that self-life will help the child to be self-equipped and discipline to face life challenges. She also believed that parents have important mission in the upbringing of their children, and therefore should create enriched environment in their homes too for effective natural and guided learning of their children. The educational implications of both educational reformers were pin-pointed for teachers use.

## **6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT (TMA)**

1. Who was Pestalozzi and when was he born?
2. Mention two of his philosophical ideas to pre-primary education?
3. Who was Maria Montessori and what was her profession?
4. Mention two of her ideologies toward the development of pre-primary education
5. Explain two educational implications of both Pestalozzi and Montessori in pre-school education.

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## **UNIT 4 FREDERICH W. FROEBEL (1782-1852) AND JOHN DEWEY (1859 – 1952)**

### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main body
  - 3.1 Friederich W. Froebel (1782-1852)
    - 3.1.1 Froebel’s Educational Ideologies
    - 3.1.2 Educational Implication of Froebel’s Ideology to Pre- primary education.
  - 3.2 John Dewey (1859 – 1952) His Life:
    - 3.2.1 Educational Implication of John Dewey’s Philosophy of Early Childhood Education.
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment (TMA)
- 7.0 References /Further Readings

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

The founding fathers of pre-primary education based the education of the child on the total development of the child. These advocated for a “wholistic” approach to the education of the child. To them education of the child is viewed as life itself rather than a preparation for life. They suggested that the educational objectives should be developed from the child’s immediate environment based on his experience of the environmental conditions. The teachers at this level of education should encourage the pupils to learn by doing and not by memorization. This should be achieved by teachers ability in creating an enabling school environment that will stimulate and motivate the child to unfold his hidden talents.

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

It is expected that by the end of this unit, you should be able to do the following:

- ◆ Name two contributions of Froebel to pre-primary education
- ◆ Mention two ways a teacher can provide conducive rich environment in his classroom.

- ◆ Describe is John Dewey and Mention two of his contributions to the development of childhood education.
- ◆ Compare the contributions of John Dewey and Froebel to pre-primary education.
- ◆ Mention two methods advocated by John Dewey in teaching pre-primary school children.

### **3.0 MAIN BODY**

### **3.0 FRIEDERICH W. FROEBEL (1782-1852)**

#### **3.1.1 Froebel's Educational Ideologies**

Friederich Froebel was influenced by the works of Rousseau and Pestalozzi his masters whose attentions were centred on the education of pre-school children. In Froebel's views, education was considered as a process of self-activity and evolution in which the in-born endowments of the individual naturally unfold. The inborn endowment represent the inner or what is inside an individual while the external environment represents the outer sector. He compared a child to an animal or plant that grows by the two-told process of marking the outer, inner and the inner-outer. This implies that childhood education involves making the inner and outer sectors because the child unfolds his natural nature through acting on the external world, men and things. The environment influences him as he interacts with it. The child observes his environment, grasp objects, play with them at will and through this interaction, he expresses his inner being. Froebel then suggested creating an enriched viable environment free from corruption, for the child's healthy learning. He advocated also, an enriched environment where teachers will expose the children to play with concretes objects like toys, games Geometric horlms egg-balls, cubbs and blocks, sizes, shapes etc. that will help in intellectual development.

Froebel believed that all things are unified by God. In his book, *The Education of Man* (1948), God forms part of physical nature and man's spirit. Each person or object, like his maker, has three-fold nature since he or it is individual, diverse and universal. Whatever a child did was inspired by God through the divine element in him. Base on these ideas of Froebel, he further developed new ideas on pre-primary education – He believed that the child is self-active by the divine element even though he is incomplete, but that his self-activity will always result into growth. He believed that children education depends mainly to adjust to the society of which they are members, and that teachers should not interfere arbitrarily with the spontaneous growth. The teacher should use play-way method as the main strategy to attain this development in

the children. He should engage the children in active experience in the natural environment.

Froebel as the espousers of Naturalism in his views of the child and his education advocated for freedom for the child to explore on his own and for adult to support also, represented a departure from the steadfast insistence of John Lock school of thought which based child's learning on adult's standard. He rather emphasized that children should be thought through play and amusement and not force. Froebel known as the father of kindergarten, built his own kindergarten schools and espoused the virtue of play as a logical means to meaningful experience by the child. His theoretical framework which influenced the practice of pre-primary education in the continental Europe and the world around become the point of reference for humanistic early childhood education in the country.

### **3.1.2 Education Implication of Froebel's Ideology to Pre-primary Education**

Froebel suggested that pre-school children be given freedom to learn naturally. This implies that the role of the teacher is not to instill or indoctrinate the children through rote learning or memorization rather to encourage the children self-development, experiencing and interacting with rich environment. This concept together with the ideas of self-activity and the child's need for co-operative activity constitute the core of the kindergarten. He also recognized the need for a conducive environment, which takes cognizance of the child's needs, interest, aspiration and experiences in the development of self-active interests. Teachers should strive at providing enabling environment and materials that would stimulate self activity. This view is in line with Maduewesi, (1998) assertion that is in the consciousness of current early childhood professionals, the early childhood classroom is not a play-room where care-takers wipe noses and clean children's dirty hands, it is rather a workshop of intellectual stimulating activities suited to, and tuned to the frequency of the children's developmental stage.

Froebel suggestion is that children should be adequately equipped through their senses by providing concrete objects for learning and play is in consonance with Piaget's theory that the major mode of learning for child is through sensorimotor and concrete experience. A good teacher respects the play initiated by the children, she contributes his own quota by providing material and experience. For instance Toys can be provided for play house, water play equipment, puzzles (graded) games, in learning numbers, calendars, measuring cubs, spoons, containers, play money, scales, rulers, tape measures, yardsticks etc. In Audio visual facilities – materials like films strips, flags, record players,

globe, maps, pictures, picture books, costumes, magazines to mention but a few.

These teaching aids make lesson lively and concretize learning. The pupils will see, touch/feel and do. However, play activities should be appropriate to the developmental level of the children in the group and a balanced programme should be provided and equipment carefully selected. A good nursery school teacher should also asks the children questions, makes suggestions and encourages them as they explore with the enriched environment. She should give them guided freedom rather than interference. Although play is fun for children, it is also work for them. The children therefore need resourceful, creative guidance, adequate space, materials and equipment to help in their all round development.

**Self Assessment Exercise 4.1:** List out the major contributions of Froebel to pre-primary education.

### **3.2 John Dewey – (1859 – 1952)**

#### **His Life**

John Dewey was a pragmatic educator. He was born on a farm near Burlington, on October 20, 1859. He graduated in university of Vermont in 1879 and taught in Pennsylvania and Vermont for three years. He was a prolific writer and published his first philosophical articles in the journal of speculative philosophy.

A great American philosopher, Dewey was the most influential American Thinker of his time. He wrote *Democracy and Education* in (1916) where he related philosophy and education. His philosophy of “instrumentalism” and his writings and teaching in general profoundly affected not only philosophy and education theories and practices but also psychology, law and political science.

#### **John Dewey’s Educational Philosophy**

Dewey sees knowledge as the outcome of an individual interaction with his environment. His philosophy is reflected in his educational theory in its emphasis on the importance of “learning by doing” and its opposition to the stress on dogmatic and authoritarian teaching methods and on rote learning. He emphasized that education should develop children’s ability to handle future problems hence he encouraged that children should be taught skills that would enable them handle their problems. He advocated laboratory and workshop courses, which he felt would foster creativity and co-operation among the pupils.

Dewey was of the opinion that the democratic society must instill in its citizens the habit of free inquiry and an antipathy to rigid dictatorial methods. To him, for education to be most meaningful, it must have a practical outcome. He stressed that schools should relate the experiences children have at home with that of the school. This idea calls for the need to encourage transfer of knowledge. The school should not be a part of the community but the community itself, where the pupils exercise group living.

According to Dewey, curriculum should be based on the social life of the people and should consider the psychological and sociological problems of the child. This implies that curriculum of pre-primary education should consist of all the experiences of living which the child undergoes in the school. Moreover, the curriculum must be child-centred and appealing to the needs, aspirations and interest of the child. It should also be flexible to accommodate the individual differences in the children and should be subject to constant revision to reflect the changing circumstance.

On methodology, Dewey stressed the learning method of “Learning by doing” and discouraged group work. He emphasized the problem solving method which is scientific method and involves problem identification, formulation of hypothesis and verification, or testing. This is the same thing as activity method which places emphasis on what the children do and not what the teacher does. The teachers role should be to organize and motivate learners as they learn by doing.

Other methods Dewey advocated were, the project methods where pupils learn by doing under proper guidance by teachers, and the discovery method where the children are guided also to discover their own truth and test their validity based on experience.

**Self Assessment Exercise 4.2:** List out the major contributions of John Dewey to pre-primary education.

### **3.2.1 Educational Implications of John Dewey’s Philosophy of Early Childhood Education.**

Dewey was a pragmatist philosopher who believed in the use of practical methods in teaching the pupils. The implication for teachers is that they should direct the attention of the children’s understanding for learning materials through observations, experimentation, etc rather than encouraging the children to memorize facts. What is taught to them should be presented to them, physical for them to see, touch and do this

will help them to remember their previous experiences and internalize what is taught.

Teachers should also provide the children with a very stimulating environment including extensive playground with large toys in which children learn to control their actions and obtain some knowledge of special relationship. Smaller toys should be available for imaginative play, construction, sorting, grading and counting. Domestic toys such as baby doll and costumes for play acting, encourage modeling and imitation, water, sand, blocks, paints, pencils and crayons provide for expression of feelings and representation.

Children in pre-primary school should be encouraged to put their actions into words, and thus, develop the vocabulary which is vital for symbolic representation. Teachers have a vital role to play in answering children's many questions and in conversing with them, by doing so, learning takes place. Children should not be introduced to abstract concepts at this stage as this may confuse them in understanding the concepts. In teaching mathematics for instance, the teacher should apply practical method and involve the children actively. In teaching volume, the teacher may provide different boxes of different sizes. The pupils are then asked to find out which box holds more bricks than other. The same activity can be done with different sizes of measuring cups and water. Through these practical activities, children will understand what volume is and know how to measure it.

As children are individuals, they all, at different levels of both cognitive and other parts of development have different rate of assimilation. Their rate of learning may not be the same even though they are of the same age, other factors could influence them. Some may be thinking at the pre-operational stage, others at the intuitive (4-5years), while others may be at the concrete operational state (6-7years). A good teacher therefore should design or plan activities appropriate to suit the children. (Individual differences to be considered)

According to Dewey, childhood education should be active and related to the interest of the child. This concept imposes the "child-centred school" where learning activities are determined by the child. It refers to the development of "the whole child" hence, an wholistic learning system. Thus it does not disregard any aspect of the child's life. Education from this perspective is viewed as life rather than a preparation for life. For within the child's present life, there are problems and interests that are both of social significance, and with potential for future problem (WOKOCHA, 1992). Any attempt therefore to bypass these in order to deal with the problems of the future exposes the child to an abnormal education and indeed to an incomplete

education. Acceptance of the child-centredness in education by teachers will aid the child to grow in learning as he solves his current problems in education, therefore he is growing leading to further growth in life, in capacity and ability to solve future problems.

Teachers therefore, should design the activities of the children to be developed, considering the child's immediate environment based on his experiences of the environmental conditions so as to relate his learning experiences to his everyday experience in his environment.

#### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

The development of pre-primary education started by John Dewey and Froebel. They maintain that children are precious gifts from God and their education must be started early. This is because the early stage of life is crucial for character and habit formation. They suggested the provision of stimulating environment, free from threat and torture for smooth and natural growth and development of the "whole child". They viewed education of the child, as life itself, rather than a preparation for life, therefore in planning the educational programme for pre-primary schools, their immediate environment must be considered. Beside child should be thought by "learning by doing" so that they can acquire essential knowledge and skills through experience.

#### **5.0 SUMMARY**

In this unit, we discussed the ideas of Friederich Froebel and John Dewey to pre-primary education. It was found that Froebel was a naturalist who believed that the unborn has hidden powers that will be unfold if given conducive and stimulating environment. He advocated the use of play-way method of teaching. Schools to be made house of joy and free from torture for healthy and easy learning.

John Dewey a practical philosopher was also discussed. He was a pragmatist who encouraged learning by doing. He believed in thinking about, or treating things in practical ways rather than in memory, hence his philosophy of "Learning by doing" was advocated in teaching of pre-primary education. He opposed the stress on dogmatism and authoritarian teaching methods, rather, he encouraged that the children should be taught skills practically that would enable them to handle their problems. Dewey also suggested that the society should instill in its citizens the habits of free inquiry and an antipathy to rigid and dictatorial methods. The educational implications of both Froebel and Dewey were also discussed.

**6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT (TMA)**

1. Name two contributions of Froebel to pre-primary education
2. Mention two ways a teacher can provide conducive rich environment in his classroom.
3. Who is John Dewey? Mention two of his contribution to the development of pre-primary education.
4. Compare the contributions of John Dewey and Froebel in to pre-primary education.
5. Mention two methods advocated by John Dewey in teaching pre-primary school children.

6 marks each = 30 marks.

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## **UNIT 5 PLATO (427-348 BC) AND ARISTOTLE (384-322 BC)**

### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main body
  - 3.1 Life history of Plato
    - 3.1.1 Platos contribution to primary Education
  - 3.2 Aristotle's – His life history
    - 3.2.1 Educational Implications Of Plato And Aristotle's Contributions To Pre-Primary Education.
  - 3.3 The educational implications of their ideas to pre-primary education.
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor -Marked Assignment (TMA)
- 7.0 References /Further Readings

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Researchers have confirmed that a number of renowned educators on the education of young children include; Plato and Aristotle, these philosophers contributed immensely to the development of early pre-primary education. Plato and Aristotle called attention mainly to the “pliable character” of the young children and therefore the value of good influence at that age. Both believed that at birth the mind is impressionable and affected by the environment, hence the need for both parents and teachers to provide an ideal enriched environment that will promote growth and development.

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

At the end of the lesson, the student should be able to do the following:

- ◆ Mention two educational contributions of Plato in pre-primary education
- ◆ Name two contributions of Aristotle to pre-primary education.
- ◆ Describe two educational implications of both philosopher's to childhood education.

### 3.0 MAIN BODY

#### 3.1 LIFE HISTORY OF PLATO:

Plato, a disciple of Socrates, was one of the greatest thinkers the world has ever produced. He was an Athenian and was born about 427 BC. in a distinguished family. His father was Ariston, while his mother was Perictione. Plato's real name was Aristocles, but he was nicknamed Plato because he was of stocky build, and had broad shoulders (for the word 'Platos' in Greek means breadth).

This Great philosopher called Plato was a splendidly gifted man and he used his gifts with studious diligent. He was among others a poet, a playwright, and observant traveler, a literary stylist of the first rank and a philosopher of repute (Uzoma 1996). He lived in the flourishing portion of Athenian culture where he received a cultured education. According to Aristotle, Plato was acquainted in his youth with a Heraclitan philosopher called Cratylus where he probably learnt that the world of sense-perception is a world of flux, and so, not the right subject matter for true and certain knowledge. Plato believed that true and certain knowledge is attainable on the conceptual level. He was interested to embark on a political career but the brutal actions of his relatives in Oligarchy discouraged him. After the death of his mother, Socrates Plato took shelter with Euclid and travelled many places Egypt, Cyrene then back to Athens where he established a school of Academy. Plato's Academy may rightly be called the first European University for the studies done, they were not confined to philosophy alone but extended to a wide range of auxiliary sciences like mathematics. Physical Sciences and Astronomy. His aim for the establishment of the Academy was to produce trained and disciplined politicians who would not be opportunists time observers, but men who will act courageously and fearlessly in accordance with convictions founded on external and changeless truths. His philosophy was to produce 'statemen' and not 'demagogues' hence, his advocate for an ideal society where every child should be reared and educated together from pre-primary, kindergarten and primary education at the end of which they would be streamed according to their individual abilities.

**Self Assessment Exercise 5.1:** List out the major contributions of Plato to pre-primary education.

##### 3.1.1 Plato's Contribution to Pre-primary Education

Plato advocated that education should be an instrument for reconstruction of the state for development. He emphasized on adopting a national ideology which may invariably mean designing an appropriate

educational system where all the children will be trained together to cultivate good character and habits that will help them to live and adjust in the society they may find themselves. His idea is relevant in the Nigerian educational system where the National policy on education continues to undergo series of review as time changes for the improvement of human beings and the society.

Plato acknowledges the need for teachers and educational planners to consider the ability of the child at the end of pre-primary education, which will determine streaming. This has a psychological consideration, which involves assigning appropriate contents to the learners according to their abilities and capabilities. He suggested that pre-school children be exposed to sports, games, basic elements of reading, story telling for moral and spiritual development. His ideology is vital because studies have confirmed that sports and games help in the quick and overall development of the child's motor ability. He also appreciated the value of environment in learning. A good environment is made up of elements of the social environment (human beings with their various levels of interaction), and the physical environment which include equipments, materials, various aids for learning, as well as buildings that house many of these objects and persons. Good environment is necessary for effective learning, Plato advocated for the production of men who are "beautiful in mind and in body" is still of relevance in pre-primary education. This implies that both the cognitive, psychomotor and effective domains must be trained for the development of the educated man.

### **3.2 Aristotle-His Life History**

Aristotle was one of the most outstanding students of Plato. Born in 384 B.C to the family of physicians at Stagira a town in Thrace, a Greek colonial town on the Aegean sea near the Mecedonian border. At the age of seventeen, Aristotle abandoned his ancestral calling and went to Athens where he joined Plato's Academy to continue his studies. That was in the year 367 BC when his master, Plato was sixty years of age. By this time, Plato was away and his Academy was being managed by the first professor and the school Eudoxus. In 364 BC, Plato came back to Athens to continue his directory work in the Academy. Plato was much impressed for the outstanding intelligence of Aristotle that made him to retain Aristotle as the teacher of rhetoric. His various anecdotes recount how Plato who was forty-three years old, called the young Aristotle. "The mind" "The clear intelligence", "The Reader" and "The Mind of The School". Aristotle was deeply influenced by Plato's thoughts and Personality.

Aristotle, a close disciple of Plato, held a similar view with him as regards pre-primary education especially in matters of intellectual disciplines. He advocated that pre-school children should be helped through education to be the best he could be as an adult. This is very important because their minds at birth are impressionable and they should be instructed to be the best they can be.

Aristotle advocated that for a life to be complete, it must combine the life of academics for intellectual studies with practical living. He suggested that children be provided with enough activities for the overall development. In modern pre-primary education, development of both psychomotor and affective domains are emphasized. Aristotle believed strongly that the main aim of education should be for self realization through the development of the potentials of the individuals, hence he suggested that pre-primary school programmes should be structured to provide opportunities for children to explore or apply their natural curiosity to develop their hidden powers.

With liberalization of education, the Universal Basic Education placed emphasis on pre-primary education in the National policy on Education (2004), pre-primary school education has assumed a cornerstone in Nigeria's Education System. Considering this awakened interest in, and emphasis on pre-primary education, based on the realization of its importance in human development, the nation concern should not merely be how many pre-primary schools are in the country, but more importantly the effectiveness of the existing pre-primary schools in the attainment of the objectives of pre-primary education as stated in the National Policy on Education.

**Self Assessment Exercise 4.1:** List out the major contributions of Aristotle to pre-primary education.

### **3.2.1 Educational Implications Of Plato And Aristotle's Contributions To Pre-Primary Education.**

Both Plato and Aristotle advocated for an appropriate educational system that will provide good opportunities for the children's character, moral and habit development. This is in line with the National Policy on Education prescription of providing suitable educative programmes full of activities for pre-primary children. The Government should therefore be more committed to the planning and implementation of Pre-Primary Education as done in other levels of education.

They also stressed the need of considering the child's ability in planning and teaching of pre-primary children. Teachers should ensure that children's age and ability are considered before exposing them to

various learning activities. This is necessary because, age and ability of the child determine to a great extent what he will achieve. If higher or more complex activities are given to the children, they will not perform well. In the area of exposing the children to sports, games etc. the teachers should provide enough teaching materials and sports equipments for the children to be involved in physical training. This is necessary because at this particular time, the children are very hungry for physical activities e.g running, jumping, pushing, throwing, kicking, pushy, bouncing, catching. The play experiences of the young children serve as the primary vehicle by which they learn about their environment. The teacher should therefore provide an enriched physical environment that will give the children good opportunities to explore their environment and develop manipulative skills adequately.

### **3.3 Educational Implications Of Both Plato And Aristotle To Pre-Primary Education**

Plato is reported to be the first person to suggest that the education of children should start as early as possible. This according to him is necessary because, it is during the early childhood period that any impression which one may desire to communicate is most easily stamped and taken (Akinbote, Odulowu and Laral 2001). Psychologists and childhood educators have also stressed the need to provide children with the opportunity to explore their environment and manipulate various objects around them. It is through this exploration and manipulation of their environment that, children's creative abilities are manifested and developed. Man alone has within him, the creative powers. However, the ability to develop and tap this unique powers depends on the amount and quality of stimulation and encouragement received by the individual. In other words, the chances of the child fulfilling his potentials could be affected by the type of environment to which he is exposed. The teacher is a major factor in the success or failure of all the activities that go on in the classroom. He therefore should play an important role in the stimulation, encouragement and development of creativity in children. The teacher should be able to encourage the children to exercise their natural curiosity, independence and self reliance.

### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

In this unit, the contribution of Plato and Aristotle to pre-primary education include production of men who are beautiful in mind and body, which implies all round education for the child, liberalization of education which suggests that education should be free for all children irrespective of class, religion or tribe. They also advocated for good environment that will stimulate the children to learn with ease. Their

contributions are still relevance in the present system where much emphasis is placed on rich academic environment equipped with adequate teaching aids to assist in the all round development of the child.

## **5.0 SUMMARY**

In this unit, the life history and contributions of Plato and Aristotle were discussed. The educational implications of their ideas to the improvement of pre-primary education were highlighted.

## **6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT (TMA)**

1. Mention two contributions of Plato to pre-primary Education
2. Name two contribution of Aristotle to pre-primary Education
3. Explain two Educational implications of both philosophies to Early Childhood Education.