

MODULE 1 NATURE AND CONTEXT OF CHILD DEVELOPMENT

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

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

UNIT 1 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

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

Just pause for a moment; recall how you viewed yourself as a child. Also think about how you view children now. You might have noticed that your views of children then and now are different. You might have also noticed that how children are viewed in

other societies is different from your own. This is an indication that people's views of childhood depend on time and location. To help you understand this issue further, this unit presents society's views on childhood and how the views changed from the medieval times to the present as well as the bases for such change. You are also going to learn how early childhood education originated. But first let's consider the meaning of childhood and early childhood education even though you have come across these terms in your 100 and 200 levels.

2.0 OBJECTIVES:

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

- explain the meaning of childhood, early childhood, early childhood education;
- trace the changing views of childhood from the medieval period to the present;
- explain the basis for the changing views of early childhood education; and
- trace the origin of early childhood education

3.0 HOW TO STUDY THIS UNIT

- i. Begin by reading the list of sub-headings to see what the unit will cover.
- ii. Read the main body carefully. Each main body consists of 3 self-assessment exercises.
- iii. Attempt the self assessment exercises after each main topic.

4.0 WORD STUDY

Bridge-building: Promotion of friendly relationship between groups

Impairment: damaged faculty of the body

Nouveau-riche: those who acquired wealth newly

5.0 MAIN BODY

5.1 Concept of Childhood, Early Childhood Education

What is Childhood?

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

- i. Early childhood (birth-8 years)
- ii. Middle childhood (3 – 5 years)
- iii. Late childhood (8-12 years)

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

What is Early Childhood?

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

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

What is Early Childhood Education (ECD)?

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

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE I

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

5.2 Changing views of childhood from the medieval period to the present

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

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

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

Studies of psychologists like Sigmund Freud and Jean Piaget also influenced views on the child. Freud for example contributed tremendously in the view of the child as 'welfare child'. Piaget believed that from birth humans are active learners who do not require external incentives and that development occurs in stages also changed views on the child and how he is taught.

For example it is futile to teach young children abstract concepts when they have not yet reached the age to understand the concept.

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

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE II

Trace the changing views of childhood from medieval period to present

5.3 Origin of Early Childhood Education

Ancient times

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

Right up to the 15th century in Europe, it was believed that childhood lasted only during infancy and in his book, *centuries of childhood*, Philippe Aries (1962), used historical documents, art and novels to confirm this. He showed that from about the age of seven the child was looked upon as an adult and treated and dressed as such, and was expected to take the responsibilities of adulthood. The church deeply steeped in the doctrine of original sin, taught that the child was born in sin and therefore evil. He had to be redirected, constantly punished and corrected to make him fit for society. However, with the coming of the Renaissance and the reformation, by the 15th century, new ways of thinking were sawing and soon spread, touching all aspects of civilization, including the training of children.

John Amos Comenius who lived in the first half of the 17th century, was one of the best known Renaissance educators to influence Western thought regarding children. He was a giant in humanistic education that believed that young children should be educated through involvement in practical activities using concrete objects. These would train the senses and thus lead to true learning. He frowned at verbal teaching of children and to illustrate his philosophy produced the first picture book for young children called the *Orbis Pictus*, but it was in actual fact a curriculum guide for teachers on how to prepare humanistic and appealing lessons rather than continuing with formal instructional method. Comenius called for stress to be laid on sensory training and learning by doing, through the use of nature study. He designed a concentric circle curriculum which evolved and expended to accord with the child's level of maturity and experience. His humanistic philosophy was clearly enunciated in his educational treatise- *The Great Didactic*

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

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

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

In 1837, Friedrich Froebel (1782-1852) opened a school for children younger than six called the kindergarten, a German word meaning children's garden. After trying a number of occupations and teaching at several levels, Froebel concluded that the early years of life, those on which the foundations for later years was built, were the most critical. Froebel's kindergarten was designed to be a place where children could grow as naturally as flowers in a garden. Play, creative self-expression, sense perception, and harmonious living with one another formed the basis of the programme. Froebel presented children with gifts and occupations. Some of the gifts were balls, blocks, and cubes; and the occupations were paper folding, perforating paper, weaving and stringing beads. Songs, games, movement, dance and plays were also part of the gifts and occupation. All these formed the basis of the curriculum. Froebel's careful design and sequence of materials along with explicit directions for their use probably contributed to the successful growth of the kindergarten in the United States. The materials formed a kit that could be taken and adapted anywhere. Before long the idea spread to the United States. The German teacher, Friedrich Froebel, was in turn

influenced by Pestalozzi. He visited Pestalozzi's school in Yverdon occasionally. Although he was unable to understand clearly what Pestalozzi was trying to achieve, he was able to develop his own philosophy of how children should learn and used his ideas to establish the first school with an organized curriculum for preschool children. Froebel created the kindergarten, or 'child gardens' because he believed that his classes were gardens for children rather than schoolrooms.

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

The Nigerian perspective: According to Maduewesi (1999), the origin of early childhood education in Nigeria dated back to early 1960 when the colonial masters were in charge of governance in Nigeria. The earliest Nigerian beneficiaries of early childhood education were naturally those who associated with the missionaries. One can say that such schools have existed for as long as western education has existed in Nigeria. Many Nigerians attach a great deal of importance to education. Even though it costs a great deal to keep a child in the nursery school, parents especially those who themselves never went to school think that money spent on child education is money well invested.

The 1970's, those years following the Nigerian civil war were especially active in the growth of nursery schools all over the country in response to the increasing demand for such facilities. Many survivors of the civil war, especially in the former war zones in savoring their survival were ready to do for their children the best that was possible. And since generally it was believed that the nursery school gives a head start for primary education, there was a general scramble for nursery school places. There was also a competitive spirit abroad demonstrated by the uneducated nouveau-riche parents in their resolve to catch up through their children, with the educated class. Meanwhile in the process of post civil war rehabilitation, some Nigerian families among the educated frequently travel led to western European countries where they observed and imbibed the early education habits and practices of their hosts and on

return required similar services in Nigeria. There was also a frowning awareness of new research findings relating to the delicate and crucial importance of the early years of life for learning. Some of these research findings were discussed at academic gatherings, others percolated through the Nigerian media to the citizens of Nigeria. All these added to the urgency of the need and demand for early childhood education institutions. In general the erroneous view is strongly held, that children who attend nursery schools are automatically superior academic achievers, over their peers who do not. It was, therefore a perfect setting for the great scramble for preschool places which started in earnest in the 1990's. Since the seventies and more particularly with the laundering of the Universal Primary Education (UPE) in 1976, there has been an atmosphere proclaiming the liberalization of educational opportunities, which has leaked down to the preschool level. A favorable financial situation in the second half of the 1970's, which was a period of wealth for many Nigerians, also supported the general atmosphere of liberality; so expensive preschool bills were no big problems for many parents. Also, many more women go out to work for paid employment, leaving their young children at home. It thus became increasingly desirable to have places or centers looking after preschool children. This gave further filling to the growth and increase of preschool services.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE III

Trace the origin of early childhood education in Nigeria

6.0 CONCLUSION

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

7.0 SUMMARY

You have learnt in this unit that:

- Childhood is that period when an individual is free from responsibilities and depends on adults for protection and care
- In the medieval period, children were perceived as little adults
- Over a period of time the views of childhood changed
- Changes in the views of childhood brought about the evolution of early childhood education
- Early childhood education originated from the early philosophers

- The history of early childhood education in Nigeria is traced to Christian missionaries who pioneered pre-school education.

8.0 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT

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

9.0 REFERENCE/ FURTHER READING

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

UNIT 2 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

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 - 5.2 Objectives of Early Childhood Education and National Policy on Education
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- 6.0 Conclusion
- 7.0 Summary
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- 9.0 Reference /Further reading

1.0 INTRODUCTION

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

2.0 OBJECTIVES:

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

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

3.0 HOW TO STUDY THIS UNIT

- i. Begin by reading the list of sub-headings to see what the unit will cover.

- ii. Read the main body carefully. Each main body consists of 3 self-assessment exercises.
- iii. Attempt the self assessment exercises after each main topic.

4.0 WORD STUDY

Naturalist: a person who studies plants and animals as they live in nature

Postulated: to suggest (something, such as an idea or theory) in order to start a discussion

Distilled: to take the most important parts of something and put them in a different and usually improved form

Unsullied: opposite of: contrary to

Mystical: having spiritual meaning that is difficult to see or understand.

5.0 MAIN BODY

5.1 Aims and Objectives of Early Childhood Education

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

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

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

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

It has been said that JEAN JACQUES ROUSSEAU (1712-1778) was the father of child-centered education. He was a naturalist who postulated that children have a pattern of natural enfoldment, which they should be allowed to follow. He believed that the child is morally good but corruptible by the environment. Rousseau urged that the child be left alone as much as possible and given freedom to explore experiences

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

JOHANN PESTALLOZI (1746-1826): Pestalozzi was a Swiss educator who was extensively influenced by Rousseau. He had in his theory expressed strong belief in the child's capacity to learn for himself through living according to Nature. He strongly believed that "life educates", and this he practicalised in the Swiss Orphanages and schools where he worked, stressing that the hand, the heart and the head must all be integral part of the school curriculum. He held the view that children should be taught not just intellectual facts, but also the practical arts, by loving teachers who cared for and were ever attentive to children's needs. He considered pre-school education a supplement to education at home and in his book, *Leonard & Gertrude*; he discussed how Gertrude a mother taught her children. Pestalozzi's theories included moving from the concrete to the abstract, using objects and materials to help children learn rather than requiring them to learn by rote and to memorize information. Sensory education and oral language development were emphasized. In one of his letters, written in 1818 as cited by Meller (1966), Pestalozzi said:

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

FRIEDRICH FROEBEL (1782-1852): Froebel's writings on the aims of early childhood education were greatly influenced by his strong religious beliefs. He based his theory on his own childhood experiences and on what he learnt from working with

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

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

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

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

The general objectives of early childhood education can be classified into two, long term objectives and short term or immediate objectives. Evans (1975) observed that long term objectives are general and abstract in nature, while short term objectives are usually more specific in nature. However the inter-relationships between short term and long term objectives are very obscure. This has led to some differing views among early childhood educators as to what should constitute the objectives of early childhood education. Kohlberg and Mayer (1972) for example see the objectives of early childhood education as developmental in nature and should therefore be conceptualized in terms of intellectual and moral development. They therefore suggested that Dewey's (1916) cognitive-development and progressivism should serve

as the major source of educational objectives for early childhood education. Havighurst (1972) on his own part argued that the objectives of early childhood education should be based on the achievement of “developmental tasks”. His position seems to be a middle of the road approach between “the theory of freedom”, which allows the child to develop at his own pace and “the theory of constraint”, which depends on social restraint that enables the child to conform to a “responsible” adult role. Kagan (1972) on the other hand sees “adaptability” as the main objective of early childhood education. From his point of view, adaptability emphasizes autonomy, self-reliance and the development of the child’s “reading competence, quantitative skills, ability to write coherently and skill in discriminating effective from ineffective arguments”. Kagan emphasized that early childhood education should cultivate in children “basic motivational characteristics such as a wish to be intellectually competent, a positive expectancy for achieving intellectual competence and a strong personal identity.

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

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

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

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISES I

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

5.2 Objectives of Early Childhood Education as expressed in the Nigerian National Policy on Education

Compared to the United States, Britain, Germany and France (to mention a few) the history of early childhood education in Africa and particularly Nigeria is very recent. The history of early childhood education can be traced to Christian missionaries who were said to have pioneered pre-school education. It was however not until the late

1970's that the Nigerian government realized the importance of early childhood education and included it in its National Policy on Education (NPE, 1977, revised 2004).

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

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

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

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE II

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

5.3 Types of Early Childhood Education Institutions

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

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

We will now carefully examine these types of early child hood education.

(a) Day Care Education

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

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

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

(b) Nursery School Education

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

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

In Britain, the first Nursery school was established in London in 1912 by Margaret McMillan (Onwake, 1963). In the U.S., public nursery schools were first established in 1919 (Mayer, 1960). In Nigeria Nursery Education can be traced back to the colonial days when pre-school education was the exclusive preserve of the colonial officials.

Today, Nursery schools are found all over the country. Such schools are found on the campuses of our colleges and universities, in churches, mosques and homes. Some are commercially operated while others are run by non-profit organisations.

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

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

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

It was suggested that nursery groups should not exceed twenty (20) children, for four-year old and not more than fifteen (15) children per group, in a room for two and

three-year-olds. This assumes further that at least two teachers should be available for constant supervision within such groups.

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

(c) *Kindergarten Education*

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

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

In the United States, the first Kindergarten school was established in Water town, Wisconsin in 1855 (Omwake, 1963). In Nigeria Kindergarten education is an integral part of Nursery education and its history can be traced to the colonial days. Kindergarten education was generally restricted to five-year old children, and they spend one year in activities in readiness for formal primary school education. The emphasis here is on keeping the continuity from preschool or nursery school so that the child gets adjusted easily and yet is able to learn the basic concept of math, language and natural sciences. He/she also learns to write alphabets, which is the first step towards reading and writing abilities. According to Evans (1980) most Kindergartens operate half-day sessions. Like in the Nursery schools, the teacher-children ratio is very important. The Class groups should be between 20 – 25 children. The design of the class should allow for free movement. Sitting arrangement should not be rigid like in formal school setting but flexible and allow for individual activity, play and interaction with other children so as to support the general philosophy of kindergarten education.

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

- (i) Friendliness and helpfulness in relationships with other children.

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

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

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE III

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

6.0 CONCLUSION

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

7.0 SUMMARY

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

8.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

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

Activity

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

9.0 REFERENCE/FURTHER READING

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

National Policy on Education (1981, revised 2004) NERDC Press, Yaba, Lagos.

Evans, E.D. (1975) Contemporary Influences in Early Childhood Education, 2nd ed. New York, Hold, Rinehart and Winston, Inc.

UNIT 3 CONCEPTS OF GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 How to Study this Unit
- 4.0 Word Study
- 5.0 Main content
 - 5.1 Meaning of Growth and Development
 - 5.2 Distinction between Growth and Development
- 6.0 Summary
- 7.0 Tutor Marked Assignment
- 8.0 Reference /Further reading

1.0 INTRODUCTION

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

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

2.0 OBJECTIVES

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

- define growth and development and
- distinguish between growth and development

3.0 HOW TO STUDY THIS UNIT

- i. Begin by studying the list of sub-headings to have an overview of the unit and what it covers.
- ii. Read the main body carefully for better understanding. At the end of each main body, there are 2 self-assessment exercises.
- iii. Attempt the self-assessment exercises after each main topic.

4.0 MAIN CONTENT

4.1 Meaning of Growth and Development

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

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

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

that young children can survive within a fairly broad range of environmental experiences.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE I

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

4.2 Distinction Between Growth and Development

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

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

- Growth brings about observable changes in the physical characteristics such as height and weight. It should be noted that growth is observable and can be quantified that is, it can be measured. For example, changes in the height and weight of a newborn baby can easily be observed, particularly by the mother. The increase in the height and weight can be measured using a meter rule for height and a weighting balance or scale for the weight.
- Growth varies from one individual to another; this means that each individual grows at his or her own rate. This explains why people of the same age may be physically different in terms of height and weight.
- Growth comes in stages i.e. pre-natal stage, infancy stage, childhood stage, adolescence stage, adulthood, and old age
- Growth stops at a certain stage in the life of an individual. This occurs when the rate at which new cells are produced and added is lower than the rate at which old cells die. In the youthful age, growth rate increases more rapidly and physical changes are easily observed, whereas, the middle age appears to be in equilibrium when increase in growth is no longer conspicuous. That is, the rate at which new cells are added seems to be the same as the rate at which the old ones die and are removed from the body. Adults and old people therefore appear not to grow at this stage.
- Growth may or may not bring development. A child may grow (in terms of weight) by becoming fat but this growth may not bring any functional improvement (qualitative change) or development.

The following are the attributes of development:

- Development cannot be directly observed, however, it can be measured indirectly. For instance, a teacher cannot directly observe an intelligent learner, nor determine the learner's level of intelligence through direct observation, but the teacher can measure the level of intelligence of the learner indirectly using

different types of tests. The level of intelligence can thereafter be inferred from the learner's score in the tests.

- Individuals develop at different rates.
- There are aspects of development i.e. physical development, cognitive development, socio-emotional development, language development
- Changes in development are associated with growth; this implies that development cannot be separated from growth. For example, child's intellectual ability will not develop if the brain has not grown.

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE II

Give two distinctions between growth and development

5.0 SUMMARY

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

6.0 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT

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

7.0 REFERENCE/ FURTHER READING

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

UNIT 4 PRINCIPLES OF GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 How to Study this Unit
- 4.0 Word Study
- 5.0 Main content
 - 5.1 Factors influencing Growth and Development
 - 5.2 Basic Principles of Child Growth and Development
- 6.0 Conclusion
- 7.0 Summary
- 8.0 Tutor Marked Assignment
- 9.0 Reference /Further reading

1.0 INTRODUCTION

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

2.0 OBJECTIVES

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

- discuss factors influencing growth and development; and
- explain the basic principles of growth and development

3.0 HOW TO STUDY THIS UNIT

- i. Begin by studying the list of sub-headings to have an overview of the unit and what it covers.
- ii. Read the main body carefully for better understanding. At the end of the main body, there are two self-assessment exercises.
- iii. Attempt the self-assessment exercises after each main topic.

4.0 WORD STUDY

Helix: something spiral in form

Periphery: the area that surrounds a place or thing: the outside edge of an area.

5.0 MAIN CONTENT

5.1 Factors Influencing Growth and Development

Heredity

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

Gene

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

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

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

Chromosomes

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

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

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

Characters that are inherited are determined by the genes. An organism that has two sets of chromosomes is known as a diploid organism, and it has two copies of each

gene. Gametes are produced in reproductive organs by (meiosis) cell division. During cell division, the number of chromosomes in a cell is halved. The gametes therefore contain one set of chromosomes that is one copy of each gene. During sexual reproduction, the gametes of a male and a female fuse to form zygotes. Each zygote receives one set of chromosomes from the gamete of each parent. Hereditary characters are then transmitted from parents to offspring through the gamete

Environment

The environment consists of all the factors in the surroundings of the child that affect him or her. It is the totality of other experiences the child is subjected to after the genetic materials would have been transferred from the parents to the child. The concept of environment is very broad; it includes the physical environment (temperature, humidity, light, wind, etc.), socio-environment (the family, peers) and home environment, (care and support provided). Others include school, religious influences and nutrition. These influence the child's growth and development before, during and after birth.

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

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE I

Write short notes on the following

- Genes
- Chromosomes
- Phenotype

5.2 Basic Principles of Child Growth and Development

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

Growth and development are complex: the processes involved in growth and development are very complex. It is difficult to pinpoint the exact time growth and developmental processes take place. For example, the exact time a matured sperm fuses with a matured ovum in the process of fertilization is not known. As a result of

this uncertainty, only a time range is given. Furthermore, the stages involved in growth and developmental processes are closely interrelated such that it is difficult to demarcate the boundaries between one stage and the other.

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

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

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

The principle of proximo-distal development: 'proximo' means central part, while 'distal' stands for periphery. This principle means that growth and development start from the central part of the body towards the periphery. For example, internal organs in the trunk region grow before the limbs. Also in the growth of the limbs, the forelimbs (arms) grow before the hind limbs (legs). For the forelimbs, the humerus (upper arm) grows before the lower arm; this is followed by the wrist after which the palm grows, and finally, the fingers. Similarly, for the hind limbs, the thigh grows before the ankle, followed by the foot and then the toes. The principle of 'proximo-distal' development shows that behaviour follows a sequence from general to specific, unselective to highly selective, concrete to abstract and unknown to known. The principle of cephalo-caudal and proximo-distal; developments are jointly called the principle of directional pattern, meaning that growth and development follow a directional pattern

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

is developing physically, he/she is also developing mentally, socially, and emotionally.

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

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

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

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE II

- i. Explain the principle of cephalo-caudal development
- ii. Explain the principle of proximo-distal development

6.0 CONCLUSION

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

7.0 SUMMARY

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

- Complexity of growth and development
- Orderly sequence of growth and development
- Variation in rate of growth and development
- Directional growth and development
- Continuity and discontinuity of growth and development
- Wholesomeness of growth and development

- Individual differences in growth and development

The next unit examines the theories of child development

8.0 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT

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

9.0 REFERENCE/FURTHER READING

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

UNIT 5 THEORIES OF CHILD DEVELOPMENT

CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 How to Study this Unit
- 4.0 Word Study
- 5.0 Main content
 - 5.1 Behaviouristic Theory
 - 5.2 Maturationist Theory
 - 5.3 Constructivist Theory
 - 5.4 Psychoanalytic Theory
 - 5.5 Psychosocial Theory
 - 5.6 Social Development Theory
 - 5.7 Ecological Systems Theory
- 6.0 Conclusion
- 7.0 Summary
- 8.0 Tutor Marked Assignment
- 9.0 Reference /Further reading

1.0 INTRODUCTION

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

2.0 OBJECTIVES:

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

- identify and explain seven major theories of child development; and
- compare and contrast any two of the theories of child development

3.0 HOW TO STUDY THIS UNIT

- i. Begin by studying the list of sub-headings to have an overview of the unit and what it covers.
- ii. Read the main body carefully for better understanding. At the end of each main body, there are 2 self-assessment exercises.
- iii. Attempt the self-assessment exercises after each main topic.

4.0 WORD STUDY

Nurture: to give tender care and protection to a young child, animal, or plant, helping it to grow and develop

Adept: skillful or highly proficient

5.0 MAIN CONTENT

5.1 Behaviouristic Theory

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

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

Through B.F. Skinner's work, behaviourist theory was applied to parenting and schooling. Skinner proposed that if the environment is arranged to facilitate the desired behaviour and expectations are set for that behaviour, then the child will be influenced to use the appropriate behaviour. Adult rewards for appropriate behaviour will strengthen or condition the behaviour. According to Skinner, because all behaviour is learnt it can be shaped or modified. Strategies for behaviour modification are based on reinforcement. When appropriate behaviours are rewarded, the behaviour is reinforced, and chances that the behaviour will be repeated are increased. Punishment is used to discourage the reoccurrence of an undesirable behaviour. However, punishment affects unwanted behaviours only temporarily and should be used infrequently. Parents and teachers of young children have found the concept of positive reinforcement helpful in managing behaviour. Praising the young child for an appropriate behaviour is more effective than reinforcing a behaviour that the adult

wants the child to stop using. For example, if a parent buys a toy to stop his two preschoolers from fighting, he may find himself faced with inappropriate behaviour the next time the children are shopping with him. The children have learnt that the parent will reward them for misbehaving. Appropriate behaviour should be strengthened through positive reinforcement.

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

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE I

Discuss the relevance of behaviouristic theory to child development

5.2 Maturationist Theory

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

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

development than did chronological age. The role of the environment on cognitive development also was not addressed in Gesell's maturational theory. Nevertheless, there is a continuing influence of maturational theory reflected in the unfortunate practice of evaluating a child's readiness for placement in kindergarten or first grade in elementary schools. This practice follows the belief that some children are ready for school while others lack the needed maturity (Wortham 2006).

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE II

Discuss the relevance of behaviouristic theory to child development

5.3 Constructivist Theory

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

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

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

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

cognitive styles of organizing and structuring knowledge change. The child's mode of quality of thinking is different in each stage.

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

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

environment and other experiences to support the child and enable the child to acquire competencies and continue to move to new competencies (Wortham 2006).

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

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

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

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE III

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

5.4 Psychoanalytic Theory

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

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

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

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

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

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

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE IV

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

Psychosocial Theory

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

Psychosocial Stage 1 - Trust vs. Mistrust

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

Psychosocial Stage 2 - Autonomy vs. Shame and Doubt

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

Psychosocial Stage 3 - Initiative vs. Guilt

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

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

Psychosocial Stage 4 - Industry vs. Inferiority

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

Social Development Theories

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

Bowlby believed that there are four distinguishing characteristics of attachment:

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

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

Based on these observations, Ainsworth concluded that there were three major styles of attachment: secure attachment, ambivalent-insecure attachment, and avoidant-

insecure attachment. Main and Solomon (1986) added a fourth attachment style known as disorganized-insecure attachment.

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

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

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

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

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

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE V

Describe John Bowlby's contribution to social development theory

5.5 Ecological Systems Theory

Urie Bronfenbrenner (1917-2005) developed the ecological systems theory to explain how culture and the child's environment affect how a child grows and develops. He labeled different aspects or levels of the environment that influence children's development, as the microsystem, the mesosystem, the exosystem, and the macrosystem. The child resides at the center of the systems. Interaction with the systems expands as the child develops and moves increasingly into the environment. The microsystem is the small, immediate environment the child lives in. Children's microsystem will include any immediate relationships or organizations they interact with, such as their immediate family or caregivers and their school or daycare. How these groups or organizations interact with the child will have an effect on how the child grows; the more encouraging and nurturing these relationships and places are, the better the child will be able to grow.

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

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

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

SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE VI

Explain the influence of microsystem and mesosystem environment on child development

6.0 CONCLUSION

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

7.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, you have learnt the major theories of child development. You have learnt that for behaviouristic theories the critical factors in growth and development are the environment and the opportunity to learn. For maturationists, they believe that development is a biological process that occurs automatically in predictable, sequential stages over time. Constructivist theorist proposed that children construct knowledge from interaction with the environment. Psychoanalytic theory is of the view that sexual energy is the force that influences children's behaviour and that children progress through a series of psychosexual stages. Psychosocial theory proposes that the child's personality development is strongly determined by social context such as the family and school and that the individual's interaction with environmental influences within eight life stages and that the individual's adaptation at each developmental stage determines personality growth. Social development theory believes that early relationships with caregivers play a major role in child development. Ecological systems theory explains how culture and the child's environment affect how a child grows and develops. Each of the theories involves a different way of approaching child development. Maturational theory focuses on physical and intellectual development, whereas psychoanalytic and psychosocial theories are concerned with social and emotional, or personality development. Behaviourist and social learning theories focus on intellectual and personality development. Each of the theories has relevance for child development and learning, however, none offers a complete explanation for all aspects of development (Seefeldt and Barbour 1998).

8.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Discuss and compare the influence of psychoanalytic and psychosocial theories on child development
2. Describe the major tenets of ecological systems theory
3. Different theorists suggest that children normally progress through various stages of development. Name some of the theorists and describe the stages they discuss

4. How can knowledge of theories of child development help explain stages of development in children from birth to age eight?

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