

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

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

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

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

- Unit 1            Physical Development at various stages of early childhood years
- Unit 2            Cognitive Development at various stages of early childhood years
- Unit 3            Socio-emotional Development at various stages of early childhood years
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## **UNIT 1      PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT**

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### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

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

In this unit, we shall learn more about the physical development of the child from birth to eight years and how to assist the child.

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

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

- define physical development;
- identify and describe the physical development of the child at various stages of early childhood years from birth to eight years ; and
- explain the educational implicational of physical development for early childhood education

### 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 self-assessment exercises.
- iii. Attempt the self-assessment exercises after each main topic.

### 4.0 WORD STUDY

**Reflex:** something you do without thinking as a reaction to something.

**Wholesomeness:** suggesting good health or behavior.

**Thrive:** to grow or develop successfully.

### 5.0 MAIN CONTENT

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

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

Rapid physical growth is intertwined with other types of development, because now the baby can use hands, eyes, ears, mouth and body to explore and test the environment (You will recall what we discussed in module 1 unit 4 about the wholesomeness of growth and development). The infancy period is Freud's oral stage of development, where the greater part of children's energy is spent exploring the world through oral activities like tasting, biting and spitting. The infant learns to sit, crawl, stand, and perhaps walk. Fine motor development allows the child to explore and manipulate toys and other objects by putting them in the mouth and performing actions that permit learning the physical properties. The baby is very interested in his or her body while practicing motor skills such as rocking on hands and knees or clapping. The child may begin to feed him- or herself and imitates the physical actions of other family members.

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

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

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

### **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE I**

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

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

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

In their first 2 years, infants and toddlers achieve more physical growth and development than in any other period of their childhood. During the second year, they practice and refine mobility skills. Motor development proceeds in proximodistal development i.e. from the center of the body out to the fingers. Cephalocaudal development emerges from top of the body down to the legs. Fine and gross motor

developments are controlled through biological maturation and stimulation and opportunities for physical activities. Teething begins at about 7 months and is completed at 3 years, when the full set of baby teeth has erupted. Bladder and bowel control are not achieved until age 2 and half years or 3 years.

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

## **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE II**

Mention six physical skills a child of two years can perform

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

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

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

## **SELF-ASSESSMENT EXERCISE III**

Describe the physical development of preschool stage

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

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

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

### SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE IV

Briefly describe the physical development of a seven year old child

## 6.0 CONCLUSION

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

## 7.0 SUMMARY

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

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

Physical Development	
Infant Birth - 1 yr	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Explores the world through the five senses.</li> <li>- At two months, eyes can fixate and baby can look around.</li> <li>- By four months head controlling muscles develop and can hold up head.</li> <li>- Can grasp objects and let go at six months.</li> <li>- First tooth appears around seven months.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sits well alone, can turn and recover balance (six to eight months).</li> <li>- Starts to crawl at six months and to creep at nine to ten months.</li> <li>- May begin walking.</li> </ul>
Toddler 1-3 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Begins to develop many motor skills.</li> <li>- Teething continues to about eighteen months, all twenty teeth by 2 years.</li> <li>- Large muscles develop. Can crawl well and stand alone</li> <li>- Starts to walk about fifteen months</li> <li>- Fine motor skills develop. Starts to use spoon, scribbles with crayon</li> <li>- Hand preference starts to emerge.</li> </ul>
Preschool 3-5 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Expansion of physical skills.</li> <li>- Walks stairs with alternating feet.</li> <li>- Can climb, run, jump</li> <li>- Expanding fine motor skills</li> </ul>
Primary school age 5-8 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Can skip, hop, climb</li> <li>- Greater control of fine motor skills. Beginning to use tools, such as toothbrush, saws, scissors, pencils, hammers, and needles for sewing.</li> <li>- Handedness well established</li> <li>- Beginning to lose teeth (six years).</li> <li>- Physique begins to change. Body more proportionally developed</li> </ul>

## 7.0 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT

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

## UNIT 2 COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

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### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

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

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

We are going to base our discussion on Jean Piaget's cognitive development theory as a way to explain the stages of the child's cognitive development. Piaget proposed a stage theory to explain how a child progresses from one stage to the other. Cognitive development involves changes in cognitive process and abilities. In Piaget's view, early cognitive development involves processes based upon actions and later progresses into changes in mental operations. When teachers and caregivers understand the stages of cognitive development of the child, they will be able to look for avenues to provide learning experiences to help the child.



## 2.0 OBJECTIVES

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

- define cognitive development;
- identify and describe the cognitive development of the child at various stages of early childhood years from birth to eight years; and
- explain the educational implicational of cognitive development for early childhood education

## 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 self-assessment exercises.
- iii. Attempt the self-assessment exercises after each main topic.

## 4.0 WORD STUDY

**Sensorimotor:** functioning in both sensory and motor aspects of bodily activity.

**Schemata:** an outline or image universally applicable to a general conception, under which it is likely to be presented to the mind.

**Egocentric:** self-centered; focused on oneself or one's point of view.

## 5.0 MAIN CONTENT

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

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

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

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

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

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

## **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE I**

Describe specific behaviours that indicate cognitive development of an infant child

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

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

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

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

## SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE II

Describe cognitive development at toddlerhood stage

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

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

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

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

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

### **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE III**

What do you understand by egocentricism?

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

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

Between the age of 4 and 7, the preoperational child enters the intuitive thought sub-stage, when primitive reasoning begins. The child's thought process is changing from one symbolic thinking to intuitive, or inner thinking. The child can organize objects into primitive collection but is unable to use categories of classification in a consistent manner. As a result, the child might start organizing an array of objects by a color or move to arranging by shape or size. This primitive system of organizations caused by centration. The child tends to center or focus on one characteristics or attribute. Two attributes cannot be considered at one time. As a result the child may change from one attribute to another when trying to organize a group of objects. Once the child is able to move beyond centering levels of thought characteristic of the concrete operational stage-such as classification and seriation-can emerge (Berk, 2001; Santrock, 2002).

John Flavell has studied cognitive development for many years. He is particularly interested in preschoolers' understanding of mental experiences. Flavell has found that preschoolers have limited understanding about thinking and introspection. For example, 4 year olds believe that the mind is capable of using many thought in many directions at once. Likewise, they might be unaware of their own ongoing thought

activities (Flavell & Hartman, 2004; Lillard & Currenton, 1999). Although preschoolers have acquired some basic knowledge about mental experiences, there is much more for them to learn. Children between the ages of 2 and 5 need opportunities to explore. Parents and caregivers can provide experiences for cognitive development through excursion nearby environment as well as trips of longer books, picture and concrete materials related to concepts in their world. Activities with materials combined with conversation facilitate their process of sorting out and internalizing information and ideas.

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

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

#### **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE IV**

Briefly describe the cognitive development of a preschool child

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

In Maduewesi [1999] the following implications are identified:

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

during, for instance role playing, games and group play. Peer pressure is a factor in reducing egocentric behaviour.

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

### SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE V

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

## 6.0 CONCLUSION

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

## 7.0 SUMMARY

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

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

<b>Cognitive Development</b>	
Infant Birth - 1 yr	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Discriminate mother from others very early.</li> <li>- Later discriminate familiar faces from strangers (five to eight months).</li> <li>- Explores world through looking, mouthing and grasping.</li> <li>- Between six and twelve months beginning of object permanence</li> <li>- Becomes increasingly curious about surroundings.</li> </ul>
Toddler 1-3 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Achieves symbolic function</li> <li>- Ascribes human quality to inanimate objects</li> <li>- Object permanence completed by end of period.</li> </ul>

Preschool 3-5 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Beginning problem-solving skills</li> <li>- Adept at using symbols</li> <li>- Egocentric thinking persists.</li> <li>- Begins to sort out fantasy from reality.</li> </ul>
Primary school age 5-8 years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Beginning of conservation of amount, quantity, length</li> <li>- Knows most colors.</li> <li>- Recognizes one can get meaning from the printed word.</li> <li>- Interested in conclusions and logical ends.</li> <li>- Reads well and really enjoys reading (seven to eight).</li> </ul>

## 8.0 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT

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

## 9.0 REFERENCE/ FURTHER READING

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

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

## **UNIT 3 SOCIO-EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

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### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

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

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

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

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

There is a great deal of research on the social-emotional development of children. John Bowlby proposed one of the earliest theories of social development. Bowlby



believed that early relationships with caregivers play a major role in child development and continue to influence social relationships throughout life. In addition to Bowlby's social development theory, we shall rely on Eric Erickson's psychosocial theory to explain the child's socio-emotional development.

## **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

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

- define socio-emotional development;
- identify and describe the socio-emotional development of the child at various stages of early childhood years from birth to eight years; and
- explain the educational implication of socio-emotional development to early childhood education.

## **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 self-assessment exercises.
- iii. Attempt the self-assessment exercises after each main topic.

## **4.0 WORD STUDY**

**Sequential:** method of accessing information

## **5.0 MAIN CONTENT**

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

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

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

Infants demonstrate emotional development when they cry from pain or discomfort. Crying is differentiated to indicate hunger, wetness, and cold. Babies show their emotions by kicking, arm waving and making facial expressions as they begin to hug, kiss and chew or even bite on something to show their affection. They also show their fear or dislike for people or things by cringing, pulling away or biting. Emotions are temporary and change suddenly.

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

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

### **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE I**

Describe the process of attachment formation at the infancy stage

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

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

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

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

One year olds seem rather amiable, whereas eighteen month olds begin to resist events and two year olds express strong wishes and preferences. Emotional development is uneven during this time. Emotions go from one extreme to another. Toddlers can be exuberant one moment., laughing or showing affection and the next moment hitting and kicking. Suddenly the eighteen months old will not let his mother out of sight. By two years there are often a great many 'nos' as well as negative behaviour and willfulness. Other emotions are beginning to develop. Toddlers begin to show pity, sympathy and a growing sense of caring. Two year olds do not like to see another cry, and will often put their arms around the baby they have just walloped. saying, 'don't cry, don't cry'. At eighteen months there is no sense of guilt, but by two, a child may have a look of being sorry.

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

## **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE II**

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

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

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

and becomes frustrated since the friction helps to disintegrate egocentrism forcing the child to accommodate others view, needs and wishes. Generosity as a behaviour trait, which was non-existent now begins to appear so does role taking which is a direct experience in being other people. A closer more detailed examination of the pre-school child's social behaviour may reveal the details as follows.

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

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

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

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

### **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE III**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- The teacher is more likely to teach desirable social behaviour by modeling it than by preaching. The research work of Bandura emphasizes the value of imitation in learning social behaviour.

- Because young boys are more likely to imitate male models than female ones, it is advisable to have male teachers in the nursery school at least as volunteers and occasional visitors.
- Socially desirable behaviours should be strongly and always reinforced to encourage their repetition.

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

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

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

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

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

- Helping reduce frustration. Children's needs should be satisfied as fast as possible. They are usually impatient and their needs are urgent, but when the attending adult is sympathetic and attentive, such needs can be attended to promptly so the child feels valued and well cared for. It reduces frustration.
- The attending adult be she a nursery school teacher or parent, can verbalize the frustrated child's frustration to help the child know that others understand and feel with him or her, such as 'Uzo, it hurts to have your favourite doll burned in the fire, doesn't it? I am sorry, I know how sad you feel'. The description of the child's feelings helps the child express such feelings.

- The nursery school teacher should recognize emotional upset and try to treat it before it reaches the climax. There are usually many warning signs apart from crying such as reverting to less mature behaviour, hair twisting, nail biting, sighing deeply, thumb sucking, lethargy and withdrawing from activities. All the above are indicative of stress and should be so recognized, so that the child can be helped.
- The teacher or caretaker should know what to do when the child is emotionally upset. Short-term treatment is to comfort the child and then plan for a more long lasting solution. A quiet voice helps to calm the child down so also holding him close while using comforting words.
- Handling the emotional upset child. There are three feelings, which are experienced by the child when the mother leaves him in a strange place; they are grief, fear and anger. The teacher may recognize the first two but not the last and yet the nursery school teacher should be aware of this, so as to help the child overcome this through.

## **6.0 CONCLUSION**

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

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

## **7.0 SUMMARY**

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

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

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

### 8.0 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT

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



## **9.0 REFERENCE/ FURTHER READING**

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

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

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

## UNIT 4 MORAL DEVELOPMENT

### CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 How to Study this Unit
- 4.0 Word Study
- 5.0 Main body
  - 5.1 Infancy Stage
  - 5.2 Toddlerhood Stage
  - 5.4 Preschool stage
  - 5.4 Primary school age
  - 5.5 Implication of moral development for early childhood education
- 6.0 Summary
- 7.0 Tutor Marked Assignment
- 8.0 Reference /Further reading

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

## 2.0 OBJECTIVES

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

- define moral development;
- identify and describe the moral development of the child at various stages of early childhood years from birth to eight years; and
- explain the educational implication of moral development to early childhood education

## 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 a better understanding of the unit.

## 4.0 WORD STUDY

**Empathy:** the ability to share someone else's feelings.

**Heteronomous:** subject to external controls and impositions.

**Ramifications:** a consequence or implication.

**Parable:** a short narrative illustrating a lesson by comparison.

## 5.0 MAIN CONTENT

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

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

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

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

### 5.3 Moral Development during preschool stage

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

"bad" behavior, and this understanding provides the basis for more complicated moral thinking in the future.

From the age of three to four years, the child finds others' opinions of him/herself to be important. The child is more self - controlled and less aggressive. He /she uses verbal threats ("I'll kill you!") without understanding the full implications.

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

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

Even though the child is aware of right and wrong; usually he/she has the desire to do right , but may blame others for personal wrongdoing(s). Children between the ages 5 and 6 typically think in terms of distributive justice, or the idea that material goods should be fairly shared. In other words, everyone should get his or her exact "fair share." By ages 6 and 7, the ability to differentiate between moral rules, social norms, and personal choices matures, and children can take more circumstances and possibilities into account when thinking about the ramifications of different behavior.

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

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

Some moral behaviors are passed on by way of verbal stories or structured lessons, such as religious parables or classroom teaching activities. However, more commonly, moral behavior is learned through direct observation and imitation. Children carefully watch the behavior of their caretakers, parents, other adults, and older children. If they see Uncle Dan being helpful to neighbours, will be more likely to be helpful to others as well. Notice and reinforce instances of self-control (the ability to wait, to share belongings etc.)

Parenting practices and daily discipline have a huge effect on a child's developing sense of morality. Children who receive fair consequences every time they break a rule will learn to connect their choices with consequences. For example, if Daisy gets in trouble only periodically for taking change out of Mommy's coin jar, Daisy may learn that stealing is sometimes okay. However, if Daisy learns that she will get fair

consequences every time she takes money from Mom's coin jar, she will understand that stealing is never okay. Furthermore, she will learn a lesson (hopefully) that she will carry forward as she matures into a responsible and moral young woman. Teachers and parents should therefore provide clear limits and reinforce them consistently (but not harshly).

Praise the child whenever you can do so honestly, focus on specific behaviour(s) and offer clear, specific feedback (say “you ate all your beans and beans is good for you” or that drawing has such wonderful, bright colors”, instead of “I like that drawing”).

Teachers and parents should not take threats personally or too seriously.

Children are developing a conscience and an understanding of moral rules of behavior. Teachers who use positive guidance techniques and model appropriate behaviors are more successful in helping children internalize rules of behavior than if they criticize and punish. Teachers and parents should be aware of their own feelings and also try to understand the child’s perspective while helping the child to discover consequences for unacceptable behavior(s).

## 6.0 SUMMARY

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

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

<b>Moral Development</b>	
Infant Birth - 1 yr	- Amoral (neither moral nor immoral)
Toddler 1-3 years	- Begins to experience guilt. - Beginning of formation of conscience (two years). - Is inwardly sensitive to adult approval and disapproval despite tantrums and bursts of anger. - Before two to three years, the child usually appears self-reliant and wants to be good but is not yet matured enough to be able to carry out most promises
Preschool 3-5 years	- Intentional lying may begin - Between 2 & 5 years starts to show morally-based behaviour - Is more self-controlled and less aggressive.
Primary school age 5-8 years	- Learns right from wrong. - Develops a conscience at five, but actions seen as all good or bad. At six, acceptance of rules develops and often a rigid insistence that they be obeyed (at least by others)

## **7.0 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

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

## **8.0 REFERENCE/ FURTHER READING**

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

## UNIT 5 LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

### CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main body
  - 3.1 Infancy Stage
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- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor Marked Assignment
- 7.0 Reference /Further reading

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

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

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

Language is a powerful tool to enhance cognitive development. Using language allows the child to communicate with others and solve problems. Children from varying backgrounds seem to learn to speak at about the same age because all humans are genetically 'wired' to learn language and that exposure to language triggers this development. A normally developed child will possess a Language Acquisition Device to learn a new language. Language Acquisition Device (LAD) is a genetic set of language processing skills that enable children to understand the rules governing

others' speech and to use these in their own speech. In this Unit, we are going to look at language development from birth to eight years.

## 2.0 OBJECTIVES

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

- define language development and the importance of language to children in early years;
- identify and describe the language development of the child at various stages of early childhood years from birth to eight years; and
- explain how care givers can foster language development in children

## 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 4 self-assessment exercises.
- iii. Attempt the self-assessment exercises after each main topic.

## 4.0 WORD STUDY

**Phonemes:** the fundamental sound unit of a speech that can be used to make one word different from another word.

**Auxiliary:** available to provide extra help, power, etc., when it is needed.

**Morphology:** the study and description of how words are formed in language.

## 5.0 MAIN CONTENT

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

The process of language development at the infancy stage is as yet not fully understood, but it is known to pass through certain stages, preceded by the preverbal /pre-linguistic speech stage because usually children do not begin to speak before they are a year old. But during this first year, they engage in a wide range of vocalization - crying is the first of these. From birth till end of the first month, the newborn engages in what has been called undifferentiated crying, that is, the adult listener cannot differentiate between cries of hunger, pain, fear, or general unhappiness. The second month shows the child developing differentiated crying - crying that is more distinguishable to the adult for example crying which can be interpreted as due to hunger, wetness or tiredness. At 3 months, the child begins cooing - a series of soft vowel sounds that seem to be produced when the baby is relaxed and contented. They also make gurgling sounds, which involve consonant sounds as well as vowel sounds. During this first year, they also become aware of the speech of those around them and



sometimes stop their own sounds to listen to others speaking. Babbling also starts and reaches its peak at about the age of six months. During babbling, especially in the second half of the first year, the infant begins to produce phonemes - the fundamental sound units of a language. Babbling, unlike cooing is highly structured and is made up of consonant and vowel sounds combined in syllables like 'di' and 'ka'. Through interaction with adults, the child begins to eliminate progressively sounds that are not in the language of the parents while progressively elaborating those in the language. Thus, babbling enables the child to begin to acquire the language of his or her particular society. During the later part of the babbling stage also, the child begins to make repetitive sounds such as baba baba or mama mama, sometimes called lallation. It should be noted that during babbling, the child does not produce sound in order to communicate, but rather he is playing with the articulatory organs. In general, babbling sets the stage for producing communicative language sounds. From about nine months the child begins to string sounds together to produce word, repeating the same sound patterns. At the same time, he also begins to vary the pitched volume of vocalization - just as in real speech. Language scholars have established that there are distinct differences between the sounds of crying, cooing and babbling.

The last stage of the pre-linguistic speech phase commences about age 10 months. This is the stage of vocal imitation and comprehension of adult speech sounds. From now on, the child becomes able to distinguish and respond differentially to the words of adults. Though the gestures rather than the words might give a clue to the meaning [Maduwesi 1999]. At about the end of the first year, the child speaks the first meaningful words. Once this has taken place, there is rapid increase in vocabulary. Use of single words or holophrastic speech for many types of meaningful communication is gradually extended at about 18 months to combinations of two and three word utterances.

### **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE I**

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

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

As the child moves into the second year, he begins to go beyond the single word sentences to use combinations of 2 or more words. This shows that the child realizes that words and word intonation convey meaning. But there is still considerable difference from the adult speech. This has been called telegraphic speech in the sense that the child usually leaves out articles, auxiliary verbs and the like. For example mommy book. Studies have shown that at age 2, some children have up to 250 words in their vocabulary, though they may not use some of them. After the age of 2, young children move beyond telegraphic speech in that they are able to use longer and more complete sentences. They are learning morphological rules. This is evidenced by their use of plural and possessive forms of nouns and verb endings although they make

errors in the use of rules, such as overgeneralization. In syntax or sentence construction, children learn the proper word order for asking questions. Their sentences become more complex as they expand their vocabulary and expressive speech. They are gradually able to use negative sentences. At about 3 years of age, young children begin to understand and use rules of conversation. They are able to talk about things that are not present; consequently, they can use language as they engage in pretend play or talk about imaginary people and things.

Over the first three years of life, children develop a spoken vocabulary of between 300 and 1,000 words, and they are able to use language to learn about and describe the world around them.

## **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE II**

Describe the process of language development of a toddler

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

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

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

As prosocial awareness develops, 4 year olds are able to understand others' feelings or needs expressed in conversations. Four year olds can also vary their speech style when talking to different audiences, such as younger children, peers, or adults (Gleason, 1988). Word meanings develop continuously. Young preschoolers use environmental contexts to understand the meaning of new words. Locative expressions such as 'on' and 'under' emerge between ages 2 and three, but others, such as 'beside' and 'between' take longer to understand and use. Santrock reported that between the ages of 1 and 5, the child learns an average of five words per day. Development in writing and reading or literacy, is also an important area between the ages of 2 and 5. Literacy is important in the infant and toddler years and is encouraged when parents and other caregivers share books, stories and pictures with babies. When parents point out labels

on a food product, indicate why they are making a grocery list, or explain how they can find a telephone number in the directory, they are helping develop the child's understanding of the functions of reading and writing (Pressley, 2001). Building on oral language development with books and environmental print, preschool children develop strategies for becoming literate. When parents and teachers talk with children about things the children are interested in and take them on outings that will expose them to new experiences and information, they are helping the child build conceptual foundation and language that is later used in reading and writing (Morrow, 2000). As a result of their experiences, children gradually come to understand that print, not just picture, gives meaning to books. They come to recognize print and gain knowledge of the spacing between words and that individual letters are used to form words (Field & Spangler, 2000).

### **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE III**

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

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

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

### **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE IV**

What do you understand by "metalinguistic awareness?"

## **6.0 CONCLUSION**

As children develop from one stage to the next, they need different types of stimulation and interaction to exercise their evolving skills and to develop new ones. Not all children will develop at the same speed or in any of the same patterns in many other children. They will individually find their own speed and learn their own patterns in time.

## 7.0 SUMMARY

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

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

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

## 8.0 TUTOR MARKED ASSIGNMENT

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

## 9.0 REFERENCE/FURTHER READING

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