MODULE 1   ISSUES IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

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UNIT 1   MEANING AND BENEFITS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD (PRE-PRIMARY) EDUCATION

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1.0   INTRODUCTION

The early childhood period is generally regarded as a very significant period in the life of an individual. Although the environment plays an important role in encouraging or discouraging the child to attain his optimum development, yet the child should not be viewed as a passive recipient of environmental influences. Rather, he should be viewed as an active producer of knowledge and participant in the environmental influences that affect his/her optimum development.

All aspects of a child's growth and development are so interdependent that they should be adequately taken care of by both parents and teachers, particularly from birth up until about six years. This is a period when lifelong habits of thought, physical expression, social and emotional responsiveness are laid. Therefore an understanding of the child's all-round development will help the parents and teachers to promote rather than hinder it.

In this unit, you are going to learn the meaning, types and the benefits of pre-school education to the child, the parents and the society generally.

2.0   OBJECTIVES
By the end of this unit, you should be able to:
- explain the meaning of pre-school education
- identify the different types of pre-school education
- enumerate the benefits of pre-school education to the child, the parents and the society at large.

HOW TO STUDY THIS UNIT
Read through this unit carefully. Study the unit step by step as the points are well arranged.

NOTE: All answers to Activities and Assignment are at the of end this book.

3.0   WORD STUDY
i.   **Crèche:** A place or centre for children from a few months till about three years. It is established to provide custodial care for children of working mothers.
ii. **Day Care:** This refers to a place where children below the age of three are kept. It could be run by private individual, religious organization, or non – governmental organization such as community or social groups.

4.0   MAIN CONTENT

4.1   Meaning of Pre-School Education
Pre-school education is a very broad term which we need to explain very well. This is because of the mix up usually observed in the discussion of the education of children before the official primary school age, which is six years in Nigeria.

Pre-school refers to the period before the official school age of six years. Pre-school education could therefore be taken to mean all forms of education given to children

from birth till about the age of six years when formal schooling begins. This could be in the various well-organised establishments such as: schools and centres or in the traditional settings. For the purpose of clarity therefore, the next section will focus on the various types of pre-school education.

4.2   Types of Pre-School Education

We shall discuss four types of pre-school education as follows:

(a)   **Pre-School Education**
          Let us start the discussion of pre-school education with that type of education given to children from birth till about the age of six years in traditional African societies. Pre-school education in traditional African societies is also referred to as indigenous education or parental education. According to Akinpelu (2005), the first distinctive element in this system of education is its comprehensive and integrated nature. It is a complete and lifelong education which is well integrated in its parts and the whole is well integrated with living.

          Since we are discussing the education of children below the age of six years, it will be appropriate for us to say here that the education is practical and the whole community actively participates in moulding and educating the child in general and social behaviour, toilet training as well as intellectual and physical development. In other words, the education of the child is not left to the biological parents of the child alone. You can read more on traditional African education from the list of references provided at the end of this unit.

(b)   **Pre-Primary Education**
          This is the education given to children of ages from three to five years plus in an educational institution. It is usually well organised and coordinated with regular and trained teachers and other professionals who help to promote the child's all-round development. It helps in preparing children for the primary level of education. This is popularly referred to in Nigeria as nursery school.

          It is usually registered with the state ministry of education which supervises the activities of such establishments. We shall discuss more about this under the section on benefits of pre-school education. You can also read more on pre-primary education in the National Policy on Education (2004) and other references at the end of this unit.

(c)   **Crèche**

A crèche is a child-minding place or centre for children from a few months till about three years. It is mainly established to provide custodial care for children of working mothers. The physical, mental, social and emotional needs of children at the crèche are usually adequately taken care of by trained teachers/nurses.

A crèche is usually located within the same venue where the mothers of the children are working. Therefore, a crèche is usually a kind of cooperative pre-school centre managed and run by working mothers within an establishment. For example, there is one within the University of Ibadan managed by the University Women's Society.

(d)   **Play Group/Day Care Centre**

This is also a child minding centre for children below the age of three years. The day care or play group performs the same function as the crèche. The only difference is that while the crèche is located within the same environment/premises where the mothers of the children are working, the day care or play group centre may be located far away from the mother's place of work. In most urban centres in Nigeria, the play group or day care centres are located in private residential apartments, Church/Mosque premises, halls or community centres. They could be run by private individuals, religious organisations, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and international organisations like UNICEF, OMEP, etc.

You must have seen some of such centres around you even if you have never patronised them. The major concern about such centres is that many of them are not registered with the appropriate government agencies. In fact, the level of hygiene of many of them particularly those in private residential buildings is poor. Moreover, some old, jobless and sometimes, illiterate women are the owners of such centres.

At any rate, the day care centres as they are popularly called, have been helping some working mothers both in urban and rural areas to keep their children 'safe' while they are away at work. A few of such centres have in actual fact graduated into pre-primary and primary schools in different parts of the country.

Can you identify any of such centres in your own town or village?

4.3   The Benefits of Pre-School Education

The Jomtien World Declaration on Education for All (EFA) stated that, learning begins at birth. This implies that all countries of the world should not only expand access to early childhood education, but also ensure that the quality of services provided at the various pre-school education centres do not inhibit or affect negatively in any way the overall development and well-being of the children. It has been observed that while government pays attention to the 'education' of children from the age of three years up to the age of their entry into primary school, little or nothing is done for those below the age of three years.

According to UNESCO (2006), in many developing countries, early childhood education is not a priority of the governments. This is probably so because many of the countries are already almost too overburdened with the responsibilities for other levels of education. The urgent need for the development of the much needed manpower for the various sectors of the economy has made it difficult for many of the countries to spare some funds and attention for the development of early childhood education. This is most unfortunate because even where pre-primary education is given an attention, they are completely left in the hands of private individuals and organisations. The profit motive of such proprietors/proprietresses leading to high fees could not allow many pre-school children access to the existing pre-primary schools. The issue of access will be discussed in the next section.

Now let us discuss some of the benefits or purposes of pre-primary education:

- The major purpose of pre-primary education is the holistic development of the child. That is to say, it should promote an all-round development of the child. This is particularly necessary in a developing country like ours where many parents, for social and economic reasons, could no longer provide the needed stimulating environment for the child's holistic development. The ideal pre-primary school establishment should therefore take care, not only of the intellectual aspect of the child's development, but also the health, nutrition, social and emotional as well as the physical aspects of the child in a child-friendly environment. No matter how brief the pre-primary education lasts, it must promote the all-round development of the child.

- The pre-primary establishment also provides custodial care for the children while their parents are away at work in the offices, markets, schools, hospitals and other places. As you are aware, the days when grandmothers, mother-in-laws, aunties and other relations come to stay with the young couples are gone. Even now, the grandmothers, mother-in-laws no longer have the time to stay with their children. This is because they are themselves sometimes too busy to

have the time to come and stay for months. Similarly, reliable house helps are difficult to get these days. Those available are either too expensive for the average family or they constitute security risks to the family. Therefore, for social and security reasons, the pre-primary school establishments have become safe havens for the children while their parents are at work (Akinbote, *et al.*, 2001).

- As once argued by Kent and cited by Akinbote*et al* (2001), the chances of a child fulfilling his full potentials could be affected by the standard of living and the level of stimulation and encouragement received at home. Many families in Nigeria today, including the wealthy ones, are not providing the much needed stimulating environment that is good enough for the all-round development of their children. The social and economic activities which parents engage in hardly allow them time to provide the kind of stimulating environment needed for the optimum development of the children. In addition, we must realise that there is no home, however wealthy can provide the kind of child-friendly environment which a good pre-primary school provides for example, no home can provide 20 children of approximately the same age, or an array of experts in childhood education to take care of different aspects of the child's growth and development. Therefore, since children do not develop automatically without help from their environment, it is better to keep the young ones under the care of specialists and professionally qualified teachers who can provide and sustain the much needed stimulus for the child's optimum development.

- The pre-primary school establishments also help to identify children who are handicapped in some less obvious ways for early treatment. Many parents, as a result of their not spending much time with children at home, may not notice such 'minor' disabilities in their children. When such children are in good pre-primary school establishments, they could be identified and thus taken to the appropriate place for treatment at this tender age when the chances of their complete care are greatest.

- There is also the most widely acknowledged role of pre-primary school, which as mentioned earlier, should not be the major purpose of taking care of children, that is, preparation for primary education. Research findings have revealed that pre-primary education has some effects on children's intelligent quotient (IQ) and cognitive achievements. Moreover, children who attend good pre-primary schools are less often repeaters in school and they often complete secondary education at the required period of time (Entrisie, 1995).

In other words, attending pre-primary schools is important for success in the early grades which constitute a critical period for children's adjustment as students. Therefore, since pre-primary education may change children directly by building their skills or encouraging their abilities, it is necessary to make it accessible to all children. The present situation in Nigeria whereby majority of children from the poor homes have no access to pre-primary education may be one of the factors for the relatively poor performance of pupils in the public primary schools in Nigeria.

5.0   ACTIVITY
1.   Explain the meaning of pre-school education.
2.   Identify the different types of pre-school education.
3.   Enumerate the benefits of pre-school education to the child, the parents and the society

6.0   ASSIGNMENT
1.   Explain the concept pre-primary education.
2.   Identify the different types of pre-schools establishments with their similarities and differences

7.0   SUMMARY

In this unit, you have learnt that:

- pre-school education refers to all forms of education given to children before entering into primary school
- pre-school education include, traditional (home)
- education, pre-primary education, crèche, play group or day care centres
- Pre-primary education helps children to have a holistic development which positively affects their academic achievements.

7.0   REFERENCES

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UNIT 2   UNIVERSALITY OF ACCESS IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

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1.0   INTRODUCTION

In the last unit, we discussed the meaning, types and importance of pre-school education.

In this unit, we are going to discuss how and why pre-primary education should be made accessible to all children irrespective of their parental social and economic status. We shall also look at other areas you need to know in this study unit as specified in the study unit objectives.

2.0   OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:
•   explain why every child should have access to pre-primary education
•   list the various ways of making pre-primary education accessible to all children in Nigeria.

HOW TO STUDY THIS UNIT
Read through this unit carefully. Study the unit step by step as the points are well arranged.

NOTE: All answers to Activities and Assignment are at the of end this book.

3.0   WORD STUDY

University: Simply means for all. That is something that is made available for all without difficulty or discrimination.

UPE: Universal Primary Education

UBE: Universal Basic Education

4.0   MAIN CONTENT

4.1   What Does Making Pre-Primary Education Accessible to All Children Mean?

You must have heard something like Universal Primary Education (UPE) and Universal Basic Education (UBE). The common word in the two programmes is 'universal'. The word universal simply means for all. That is, something that is made available or accessible to all without difficulty or discrimination. Therefore, the UPE programme which was introduced at the national level in Nigeria in 1976 was limited to primary education. In other words, primary education was made free for all Nigerian children of school age from that year. All children from the age of six years could attend public primary schools without paying school fees. I am sure many of us reading this course material or undergoing this course must have benefitted from the UPE programme directly or indirectly.

On the other hand, the Universal Basic Education (UBE) which was introduced in 1999 has extended the free education programme from the primary school level to the junior secondary school (JSS) level. This means that all JSS students in public secondary schools in Nigeria will no longer pay school fees. Moreover, it is open to all children who have completed primary school education irrespective of their parent's socio-economic status.

Although the UBE programme includes pre-primary education as one of the levels of education covered, there is not much that could be seen on ground in this area. In other words, government has not done much to make pre-primary education as available to all children as it is the case with primary and junior secondary education. Why is this so? Why is it necessary for government to make pre-primary school available to all children like those other levels of education in Nigeria?

These are some of the issues we shall be discussing in the next section of this unit.

4.2 The Need for Pre-Primary Education

In the last unit, we discussed briefly the importance of pre-primary education. Let us again review some of the important roles which pre-primary education can play in the life of an individual, parents/teachers and the society generally.

- **The All-Round (Holistic) Development of the Individual**

  Although pre-primary education is included in the coverage area of the present UBE programme, yet it is not made compulsory like the primary and junior secondary education. Nevertheless, the important role of pre-school education has been acknowledged all over the world. The Jomtien World Declaration on Education for All (EFA) assented that learning begins at birth. This implies that the education of the child should start as early as possible and it should not be left to chances. As mentioned in the previous unit, the focus of pre-primary education should be on helping children to develop the psychological and social foundations necessary for them to undertake abstract learning later in the primary school. When the child is given a good foundation at the tender age, through a very stimulating school environment, he/she will surely get up to a good start when eventually he/she gets to the primary school.

- **Preparation for Primary Education**

  Research findings have shown that children with pre-primary educational background are less often retained in primary classes. That is, they do not often repeat classes like children who did not attend pre-primary school. Pre-primary education has also been found to boost the intelligent quotient (IQ) test scores of children by about five points. Another research finding has indicated that pre-primary education children usually complete secondary education and that their parents are usually more satisfied with their performance than other children who did not pass through the same process.

  The summary of all these is that pre-primary education helps children to do better in the early grade of primary education. This is considered very important for long-term success because the early grades in primary schools constitute a critical period for children's adjustment as students (Enwitsle 1995). As psychologists have made it known, children's experiences during the early periods of life often have lasting consequences. Therefore, whatever they learn or acquire during their early years in school can help or hinder their overall performance for years to come.

- **Language Development**
  One of the greatest benefits of pre-primary education to children is the development of their spoken language. As you are aware, the style of living of many families these days do not give their children much opportunity to interact with many other children. The pre-primary school therefore exposes children to many other children from different social, economic, religious and cultural backgrounds. If you have ever moved very close to children, you would have realised that some of these factors may constitute some barriers to their interaction. They play together, and communicate freely and in the process learn new words, ideas and ways of doing things. In Nigeria, for instance, where English is our second language, pre-primary school exposes children to the English language early enough to make them speak it fluently. Invariably, they have less difficulty in learning English at the primary and even secondary school level.

- **Development of Self Confidence**
  Fafunwa (1967) once argued that the African child below the age of six is often shy, timid and afraid to talk to elders. This is as a result of the African philosophy which believes that the child must be seen and not heard. Many Africans even after the completion of secondary or university education still face this problem of timidity. The pre-primary school establishments have helped through their various activities and specialist care and attention to develop self confidence in our children below the age of six years through talking, singing and acting in different plays in the presence of a large crowd. They now radiate self confidence, fluency in speaking and boldness in their discussions. The stimulating and child friendly environments often provided by the pre-primary schools generate such development. The self confidence and boldness which children acquire during the pre-school years go a long way in shaping their adult life. Many Nigerian products of pre-primary school education are now eloquent speakers and self confident ladies and gentlemen in various callings.

- **Inculcating the Spirit of Cooperation, Enquiry and Creativity**
  Children are naturally self-centred (egocentric), inquisitive and creative. The pre-primary school helps to inculcate in the child, the spirit of cooperation. They are taught to share things like toys and other play materials with other children. Moreover, they are encouraged to satisfy their intellectual curiosity through the provision of different learning materials, explanation of their environment and visits to places of interest. They are given the opportunity to manipulate different objects, draw and paint among other things. All these

activities help in no small way in enhancing not only their socialization, but also their intellectual and creative abilities. Once these skills are developed in them, they usually carry them up to adulthood.

We can conclude this section on the importance of pre-primary education by saying that it is not a luxury at all. Pre-primary education 'is desirable not only on educational grounds, but also for social, health and welfare considerations. This explains why pre-primary education is a must for all Nigerian children.

4.3   Making Pre-Primary Education Accessible to All Children in Nigeria

Despite the universally agreed fact that learning begins at birth and the Jomtien World Declaration on Education for All (EFA), very few countries have made any appreciable expansion in pre-primary education. The emphasis of most countries, particularly the developing countries is centred on universal primary education. Even in Nigeria where early childhood education is an integral part of the UBE programme, little or no attention is given to the expansion of pre-primary education. In other words, in the developing countries, pre-primary education is not a priority of the education sector as the developing countries are already burdened with the enormous responsibility for other levels of education. As a result, they cannot afford to add the responsibility of funding pre-primary education in order to make it universal and accessible to their already 'heavy' education bill. The pre-primary education is therefore left in the hands of individuals, groups and organisations who naturally charge high fees to meet their running costs.

Invariably, the children from poor or low income families are denied this all-important early stimulation for optimum development. This therefore, explains the relatively poor quality of primary education in Nigeria. According to UNESCO (2001), the quality of primary education has not kept abreast of the expansion in enrolment. This has been a global concern which was high on the agenda for the World Education Forum held in Dakar, Senegal in the year 2000.

There is abundant evidence to show that pre-primary education prepares young children socially, emotionally and academically for primary education. In other words, the successful completion of pre-primary education is associated with greater success in the primary school. Children with good pre-primary educational background do not usually repeat classes or drop out of school.

Therefore, since research into early childhood education has not only confirmed better performance and high quality in primary education, it is necessary to make this level

of education accessible to all Nigerian children. The Nigerian pre-school child who is deprived in many ways through the poor standard of living of their parents need pre-primary education even more than their more favoured counterparts from the well -to - do families. These categories of deprived children are the ones mostly found in our public primary schools. By the time they complete primary education, if they do not dropout, they are usually not sufficiently literate and numerate to be useful to themselves and the society generally (Yoloye, 1999).

Let us summarise the benefits of early childhood education by highlighting what research says about it, as documented by the Department of Education, Western Australia in the year 2000:

- Students who participate in a high quality early childhood education programme make better transition from home to school and from school to community and ultimately, gain lasting benefits as socially responsible adults.

- High quality early childhood programmes are more effective in helping children to learn. They are more beneficial than remedial (coaching classes) programmes in later school life.

- Experiences in the early years of life are more influential on the development of the brain than experiences at any other time in life. Early brain development has a profound effect on a person's learning, behaviour and health throughout life.

- Children's well being, emotional maturity, language development, thinking skills, creative skills, and social and physical skills are all established and strengthened.

- Children develop initiative and responsibility and the ability to analyse, to question, to make decisions and to solve problems. They learn how to be friendly, share and cooperate with others. They develop the ability to act with confidence and they gain independence.

With this revelation, it is absolutely clear that we need to make pre-primary education accessible to all Nigerian pre-school age children. This we can do by:

(a)   **Making Pre-Primary Education an Adjunct of the Existing Public Primary Schools**
        That is, a section of the public primary school could be used for that purpose. This will save cost particularly, in the area of providing new school buildings

and other infrastructures. Only a few adjustments may be necessary to make the environment more suitable to the pre-scholars. The advantage here is that many children in the local communities who could not afford the high fees charged in the private pre-primary schools will have the opportunity of benefiting from the tremendous opportunities for their optimum development free of charge.

It is interesting to note that some of the South Western States of Nigeria have been experimenting with this idea. Although it has been done to check the drift from public to private schools, yet it is a step in the right direction. All the states that have introduced pre-primary education into their primary school system need to do is to improve on the quality of facilities, instructional materials and teachers to make them more suitable and relevant to the pre-schoolers.

(b) **Local Government-Owned Pre-Primary Schools**
Each local government should establish at least, one model pre-primary school in a centrally located place that will be accessible to all children in the area. The supply of appropriate facilities and high quality and specialist teachers in early childhood education and other categories of workers should be the responsibility of the local government. It is important to note that the establishment and management of the school should not be based on political patronage.

As a matter of policy, there should be a constitutional provision making pre-primary education the responsibility of the local government. This will ensure that there is an annual statutory allocation of funds to this level of education.

(c) **Grants in Aid to Private Pre-Primary Schools**
Since the private sector participation in the provision of pre-primary education has gained prominence in Nigeria, all we can do is to assist them. The assistance could be in the form of free registration of such schools with the appropriate government agency. The annual provision of grant to each private pre-primary school establishment should be on the basis of enrolment figures, quality of teachers and the provision of facilities. This assistance will make it possible for the private schools to expand their facilities in order to admit more children at relatively low fees.

We should not forget to add here that government should intensify efforts at regular monitoring and supervision of pre-primary school establishments. This will ensure

high quality in the services provided by the schools. It is not just providing high quality schools that are needed, research findings have, in fact, indicated that only high quality early childhood education programmes can benefit our children in the various ways highlighted earlier on.

5.0   ACTIVITY
1.   Explain why every child should have access to pre-primary education.
2.   List the various ways of education accessible to all children in Nigeria.

6.0   ASSIGNMENT
1.   Discuss the reasons why you think Nigerian children need pre-primary education.
2.   How can pre-primary education be made readily accessible to all children like primary education?

7.0   SUMMARY

In this unit, you have learnt that:
- pre-primary education is essential for all round development of the child
- high quality pre-primary education enhances the academic achievement of pupils in the primary school
- high quality pre-primary education prevents repetition of classes and school dropout
- pre-primary education is not a luxury hence all children particularly those from poor homes need it
- government should be directly involved in the provision of high quality pre-primary schools to all Nigerian children.

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UNIT 3   ORGANISATION AND MANAGEMENT OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

CONTENTS

1.0   INTRODUCTION

In the last unit, you studied universality of access in early childhood education. In this unit you will discuss the **organisation and management of early childhood education.**

Effective organisation and management of educational institutions is important to the success of any nation's educational system.

In this unit, you are going to learn the importance of effective organisation and management of pre-primary education. You will also learn some of the factors that affect the organisation and administration of schools generally.

2.0   OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:
- explain the meaning of organisation and management
- mention the importance of the effective organisation and management of schools
- Identify the major components of a school organisation.

HOW TO STUDY THIS UNIT
Read through this unit carefully. Study the unit step by step as the points are well arranged.

NOTE: All answers to Activities and Assignment are at the of end this book.

3.0   WORD STUDY
Organization: This is a social unit that pursues specific goals which they are structured to serve e.g. a school, or religious institution.

Management: This refers to the totality of all the processes through which human, material and financial resource are made available, organized and directed towards the realization of the objectives of an organization.

4.0 MAIN CONTENT

4.1   Meaning of Organisation and Management

The word, 'organisation' has been described in different ways by sociologists and administrators. For instance, Ezewu (1983) quoting Etzioni refers to an organisation as "social unit that pursues specific goals which they are structured to serve. Example of this includes the school, the prison, churches among others.

Nwankwo (1982), on the other hand, refers to an organisation as:
(i)   a group of persons working together for a common purpose
(ii)   a network of relationships among individuals and activities
(iii)   a process of executive functions aimed at ensuring that resources, activities and authority relationships are so coordinated to achieve specified goals.

For the purpose of our discussion, we shall make use of Nwankwo's second definition. That is, a school organisation is a network of relationships among individuals and activities through which the curriculum objectives of schools are achieved.

Management on the other hand, refers to the totality of all the processes through which human, material and financial resources are made available, organised and directed towards the realisation of the objectives of an organisation (Adeyemi, 2000).

4.2   Importance of Effective Organisation and Management of Schools

As mentioned in the introduction, effective organisation and management of educational institutions is essential to the successful realisation of the nation's educational goals and objectives. Let us now consider some of the advantages of effective organisation and management of schools.

(i)   Effective organisation and management provides the essential structure upon which policy makers, and educators build school standards and policies. For example, school standards such as the number of pupils in a class, teachers professional qualification, teachers' workload etc. are all affected by the decisions which policy makers take on the school. Similarly, school practices such as teachers' role in school decision making and their influence over school and classroom policies are affected by the decisions policy makers make about the school.

(ii)   Effective organisation and management also promotes good discipline among staff and pupils in the school. As you must have heard before, order is the first law in Heaven. A well organised and managed school will not give room for misbehaviour on the part of the learners and the teachers. If all the required facilities are provided and are well utilised, there will be no discontentment in the school. This means that both the learners and their teachers will be happy and will go about their daily activities with great dedication.

(iii)   Effective organisation and management will also promote good academic achievement of the learners. When all facilities are adequate, and they are well organised and used appropriately, effective teaching and learning will take place. This will therefore help the pupils to perform well in their class tests and examinations.

(iv)   Effectiveorganisation and management also prevents wastage. When the available resources are well organised and managed, there will be no room for wastage of either materials or time. Teachers and pupils will learn to make the best use of the materials given to them and they will not waste their time. This is because, they are always purposefully engaged.

(v)   With effective organisation and administration, there will be peace and harmony in the school. Teachers will be respected by the learners since they will be kind and helpful to the pupils.

There will also be cooperation between the teachers and the school on one hand and between the staff and the parents on the other hand. All these will make things work well in the school and the overall effect will be the successful achievement of the goals and objectives for which the schools were set up.

In concluding this section of the unit, it is necessary to call your attention to certain things. The first is that parents always like to send their children to schools that are well organised and managed. They are, in many cases, ready to pay very high school fees for their children in such schools. On the other hand, badly organised and managed schools will not attract the interest of parents. This is why you find parents taking their children to schools that are very far away from their homes even when there are schools around them.

In the same way, children are always very happy to attend good schools. That is, well organised and managed schools. They are always very proud of the schools and will do all things they can to remain in the school. Children of such schools always try to do well academically and behave well too so as to keep the good image and prestige of their schools

Can you mention some schools that are very popular in your town or local government area? Find out why the schools are popular and what it takes parents to keep their children there.

4.3   Components of a School Organisation

Akinbote*et al.* (2001) have identified six major components of a school organisation. It is through the effective planning, organisation and management of these components that can ensure the smooth running of the school. Let us now discuss the components.

(i)   The Duration of the Course
This refers to the length of the course or programme. For example, the duration of pre-primary education in Nigeria is between two and three years. That is, a child starts pre-primary school at the age of three years and remains there till he/she is old enough to go to the primary school at the age of six years.

The duration for the primary school is six years. That is, a child remains in the primary school from the age of six to 11 years and above. There are some physiological, social and psychological reasons for fixing the duration of

schools in different parts of the world. Why do you think the pre-primary school age in Nigeria is fixed between three and five years and above?

(ii)   Length of School Year
This refers to the number of weeks or months children keep in the school. The length of pre-primary and primary school year in Nigeria is about 36 weeks. The 36 weeks are divided into three terms of 12 weeks each. However, for various reasons ranging from climatic, political and social, the length of the school year varies from time to time and from state to state. It is the state ministry of education that fixes length of the school year in Nigeria. This is what they often refer to as the school calendar for the year.

As mentioned above, the 36 weeks are broken into three terms of approximately 12 weeks each. Thus, the first term is usually from September to December while the second term is usually from January to April; and the third term is usually from April to July. There is usually a break of not less than two weeks between the terms. The long vacation is from seven to nine weeks. It always comes up from July to September each year.

Find out why the long vacation is fixed from July to September in Nigeria.

(iii)   The School Timetable
This is the planned daily school routine which shows the sequence of activities for any particular period of the day. It is the general guide for both the teachers and learners. It is one of the statutory records that must be kept in every school and every classroom. It is usually prepared by the head teacher and or the most senior teachers in the school. There are some factors to take into consideration when preparing the school's timetable. These are:

(a) *Government Policy* – There is always a government policy as to what to teach in each school, when the schools should open and close each day. The head teacher must keep strictly to the policy. However, if for whatever reason, there is to be some deviation from the policy, there must be an approval from the state's ministry of education.

(b)   *The Length of Each Period* – From our knowledge of child psychology, we know that the younger a child is, the shorter is the attention span. Therefore, the timetable should take this into consideration by not making the lesson periods longer than necessary. For instance, in the nursery and junior primary classes, the period in the morning should be

between 20 and 25 minutes and between 15 and 20 minutes in the afternoon. As for the senior primary classes, it should be between 30 and 35 minutes in the morning periods and between 25 and 30 minutes in the afternoon.

(c)   *Nature of the Subjects* –Although all subjects in the school curriculum are important, yet some are more important and difficult than others. Therefore, such subjects like mathematics, English language, and science subjects should have more periods on the timetable weekly than other subjects. In the same way, some subjects that require much mental or physical energy should come up in the morning when the pupils are still full of energy. This is why at the pre-primary and primary school levels, mathematics, English language and physical and health education will not be slated for the afternoon periods. Rather, the subject that require less of mental energy should be slated for the afternoon when as a result of our hot climate, the children easily get tired. Therefore, you will always find on a good school timetable subjects like storytelling, handwriting, cultural and creative arts (CCA) coming up in the afternoon.

(iv)   The School Subject

The classification of teaching and learning activities into specific branch of knowledge being studied in the school is referred to as school subject. Although formal teaching is not recommended for the pre-primary level of education, yet they are still exposed to some 'subjects, which help to prepare them for formal schooling at the primary and secondary levels. However, at the primary school level, there are about 16 subjects open to the primary level of education in Nigeria. Even if not all the 16 subjects, yet there are the core subjects that must be taught and learnt in all primary schools irrespective of their location or ownership. Such subjects include mathematics, English language, social studies, physical science, physical and health education, cultural and creative arts, family living.

(v)   Classes, Grades/Streams

The grouping of pupils into classes according to their age is the most popular mention in Nigeria. This however, does not mean that pupils are not grouped according to their abilities. Whatever the method of grouping of pupils into classes, there are situations when you have more than the required number of pupils enrolling into a class. For example, the ideal teacher-pupil ratio in nursery and junior primary classes is 1:25 and in the upper primary 1:35. If you now have about 50 or more pupils for either nursery 1 or primary 1, you

can now divide them into two classes. This is how we often find Classes 1A, 1B, etc. in some schools.

In the urban centres where there is usually a high population density, schools are often broken into two schools or more. In a situation where there is adequate space for building more classrooms within the school compound, there could be School A and School B. However, where there is no sufficient space, there could be the shift system whereby we have one school coming for the morning session and the other for afternoon session. This system is now being phased out of the school system.

(vi)   Staffing

The type of school often determines the type of teaching to employ. The teacher remains the most expensive and also the most indispensable factor in the school system. Without good teachers, no system of education can function effectively. However, individual public schools in particular cannot train or recruit its teachers. This is done by the government who through the appropriate agency, recruits and sends teachers to the schools. There is not much school heads can do here since they are not involved in the process.

The area where individual school heads can exercise their discretion is in respect of assigning teachers to classes or subjects. The head teachers need to be very careful so that the right person is assigned to the right class. Therefore, there are certain factors to take into consideration when assigning teachers to classes at the pre-primary/primary school levels. Let us briefly discuss them.

* *Gender*
  It is a globally recognised fact that women are usually the best teachers of young children. Therefore, the first person to consider for teaching the nursery classes or the junior primary classes is a lady. If there are however many women in the school, the head teacher can apply other factors which we shall now discuss.

* *Teaching Experience*
  When we have many qualified women for instance, their teaching experience may be used to select who will teach the nursery or junior primary classes. For instance, if there are three women with NCE in primary education, the one with the longest teaching experience could be assigned to primary 1.

* *Interest*
  This is another factor that may be used in assigning teachers to teach a particular class in the pre-primary and primary schools. In the example of the three NCE/primary education specialists mentioned above, the most

experienced teacher may not be particularly interested in teaching very young children. The head teacher should consider this so that he does not assign a reluctant teacher to teach a particular class. Since primary one is the foundation class in the primary school, only people who can help to lay a solid foundation there should be assigned to teach them.

- *Professional Qualification*
  Generally speaking, the most professionally qualified teachers should be assigned to teach in the upper classes. If you have an array of Grade II, NCE and B.Ed. specialists in pre-primary education, except for some other reasons, the B.Ed. degree holders should be assigned to teach the upper primary classes.

5.0 ACTIVITY
1. Explain the meaning of organization and management.
2. Identify the major components of a school organization.

6.0 ASSIGNMENT
1. Mention the importance of the effective organization and the management of schools.

7.0 SUMMARY
In this unit, you have learnt that:
- an organisation can be described in many ways
- an organisation refers to a network of relationships among individuals and activities through which the curriculum objectives are achieved
- management is the totality of all processes through which human, material and financial resources are made available, organised and channeled towards the realisation of the objectives of an organisation.
- there are six major components of a school organisation.
- effectiveorganisation and management is essential for the successful realisation of the goals of education.

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UNIT 4   EARLY CHILDHOOD CURRICULUM AND EVALUATION CONTENTS

1.0   Introduction
2.0   Objectives
3.0   Word Study
4.0   Main Content
       4.1   Meaning of Curriculum
       4.2   Guidelines for Pre-Primary School Curriculum
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       4.4   Evaluation and Assessment Techniques in Pre-Primary and Primary Schools
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1.0   INTRODUCTION

In the last unit, you learnt the meaning and importance of effective organisation and management of pre-primary education.

In this unit you are going to learn the basic principles involved in curriculum and evaluation in pre-primary education.

2.0   OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:
• explain the concepts of curriculum and evaluation
• identify the basic principles necessary for pre-primary education curriculum development
• Explain the evaluation procedures in pre-primary education.

HOW TO STUDY THIS UNIT
Read through this unit carefully, Study the unit step by step as the points are well arranged

NOTE: All Answers to Activities and Assignment are at the of end this Book.

3.0   WORD STUDY

Curriculum: it refers to the school educational programmes of studies activities, and guidance

Evaluation: Is a process of gathering, analyzing and interpreting data to be used in taking decisions about the learner – teachers method of teaching and materials

Assignment: Is the ongoing process of observing, recording and documenting the work children do and how they do it so as to provide a basis for some education a decision that affect the child.

Test: Is an instrument used for measuring the performance in a given situation.

4.0 MAIN CONTENT

4.1   Meaning of Curriculum

Curriculum has been defined in different ways by different people. For our purpose in this unit, we shall make use of Olivers' definition cited in Akinbote, *et al* (2001). According to him, curriculum refers to the school educational programmes which include programmes of studies, programme of activities and programme of guidance. This definition of curriculum shows that the curriculum is not limited to school subjects such as Mathematics and English Language etc. It also includes some other activities which may take place inside or outside the school as well as the guidance and counselling services provided by teachers to the learners and their parents.

At the pre-primary education level, many people do not know whether or not a curriculum exists. Even among practitioners who are aware of the existence of a pre-primary curriculum, their thinking is always on the traditional type of curriculum found in primary schools. That is, the type of curriculum with its emphasis on drilling and the practice of isolated academic skills. Such a curriculum does not reflect the current trends about how children learn.

Therefore, we have not been able to produce learners who possess the higher order thinking and problem-solving abilities that will be needed on the 21st century (Bredekamp, *et al*., 1992).

Emphasis in pre-primary and primary school curriculum is now on:

- Active hands-on learning
- Conceptual learning that leads to understanding along with the acquisition of basic skills
- Meaningful, relevant learning experiences
- Interactive teaching and cooperative learning
- A broad range of relevant content, integrated across traditional subject matter divisions.

4.2   Guidelines for Pre-Primary School Curriculum

We have just mentioned in the preceding section that pre-primary and primary school curriculum should de-emphasise drilling and the practice of isolated academic skills. The current thinking about the school curriculum as noted by Bredekamp*et al* (1992) is that:

- Curriculum is an organised framework that delineates the content children are to learn, the processes through which children achieve the identified curricular goals, what teachers do to help children achieve these goals, and the context in which teaching and learning occur.

Therefore, for any pre-primary school curriculum to achieve the goals of giving children an all-round development there is need to note certain basic principles of child development and learning. These principles are very crucial to the development of appropriate curriculum for our children.

(a)   Children learn best when their physical needs are met and they feel psychologically safe and secure. Therefore, children should not be   made   to sit down and listen to their teachers for a long time. Rather, they should be actively involved in their learning. They should be allowed freedom of action in a child- friendly, safe and secure environment.

(b)   Children construct their own knowledge. This is done through their dynamic interactions with their physical and social environment. Since children discover new knowledge through active involvement and experimentation, they should be given opportunity to form their own hypothesis. In addition to this, they should be encouraged to keep testing their hypotheses through mental actions, physical manipulations, observing what happens, comparing their findings, asking questions and discovering answers etc.

(c)   Children learn through social interactions with other adults and other children around. There should be good relationship between the   child   and   the teacher as well as with peers and others. The teacher is to support and guide the children in their effort to have good relationship with people around him including the parents until they can function independently.

(d)   Children learn through play. This is one of the most natural way of learning for children.   Play provides them the necessary opportunities to explore, experiment and manipulate things in order to construct knowledge. It is also important to note that during play, children have the opportunity to examine and refine their learning as a result of the feedback they get from their environment. All these play activities help children to develop their imaginations and creativity.

(e)   Children's interests and their need to know (curiosity) motivate learning. Since children need to make sense out of their experience, the teacher should identify what interests them and allow them to solve problems together. We should remember that activities that are based on children's interests provide them the motivation for learning. This eventually promotes their love for learning curiosity, attention and self-direction.

(f)   Human development and learning are characterised by individual differences. The most important element in all of education is that of individual differences. Individual differerences among people is the reason for variation in cognitive styles and functioning. Some are fast learners some are slow while others are convergent. There are extroverts and introverts. (Alhassan, 2000: 61-62). There are no two people that are exactly alike in all things; not even identical twins. This is normal and it should be expected among the school children. This implies that every learner is unique and has individual pattern and timing of growth and development as well as styles of learning.

All these principles are based on the work of great psychologists such as Piaget, Vygotsky and Erikson among others. They should be taken into consideration when developing school curriculum that will be appropriate for the growth and development of the child. Anything short of this will not only violate the natural inclinations of the child but will also hinder his higher-order thinking, problem-solving and creative abilities.

4.3   Evaluation in Early Childhood Education

Just as the traditional approach to curriculum development has become a great source of worry and concern, so has the traditional method of evaluation.
It is not enough to have a developmentally appropriate curriculum. It is especially important to have a more performance-based assessment that falls in line with or reflect children's learning.

Before discussing the appropriate evaluation procedures for early childhood education, it is necessary to clarify the meaning of certain concepts such as evaluation, assessment, and testing.

(a)   **Evaluation**
Educational evaluation may be regarded as a process of gathering, analysing and interpreting data to be used in taking decisions. According to Regan and Shepherd cited in Akinbote*et al*. (2001), the decision could be about the learner's progress, pacing instruction, providing guidance or determining the effectiveness of methods and materials.

The major purposes of evaluation in pre-primary and primary education could be summarised as follows:
(i)   *Evaluation can be used for course improvement*
That is, it could be used to find out which instructional materials and methods are satisfactory and where changes are necessary.
(ii)   *Evaluation can also be used to take decisions about individuals*
For example, it could be used to identify the particular needs of the learners for the sake of planning the instruction, judging pupils' merit for the purpose of selection or grouping and giving the pupils feedback about their individual performances – that is, their strengths and weaknesses.
(iii)   *Evaluation could also be used for administrative regulations*
That is, judging how good the school system is, how good individual teachers are and the deficiencies in facilities.

Let us round off this discussion on the purpose of evaluation by stating that it helps to motivate the learners to do better in their study. It also helps the teachers to know their pupils' weaknesses and how to help them. Moreover, teachers need evaluation to know their own areas of deficiency either in the use of instructional materials or methods of teaching.

(b)   **Assessment**

Teachers and pupils are very familiar with this concept as they make use of it regularly. Both teachers and pupils often talk about having a continuous assessment (CA) test on the assessment record book. However, not many of them know what assessment is. You may even find many taking it to be the tests given in the various class subjects.

Assessment is the ongoing process of observing, recording and determining the work children do and how they do it to provide a basis for a variety of educational decisions that affect the child.

Assessment can also be described as the process of organising test data into interpretable forms on a number of facts. That is, assessment uses the data (information) obtained from various ways including tests, observations and the use of records. Therefore, to get a complete assessment of a learner's performance, different test instruments could be used to assess different aspects of the learners such as the cognitive, psychomotor and affective.

The assessment of learning outcome thus focuses on different aspects of the learner using various techniques in order to arrive at a particular grade or judgment in respect of the learner's ability, attitude and progress in any specific area of learning. This therefore implies that assessment is part of the evaluation practice.

Assessment is integrated into curriculum and instruction in early childhood education programmes to provide a basis for:
(i)   Planning instruction and communicating with parents;
(ii)   Identifying children with special abilities and therefore special needs.
(iii)   Evaluating programmes and demonstrating accountability.

(c)   **Testing**

We are all familiar with tests in our various school subjects. A test can therefore be described as an instrument or a procedure used for measuring a sample of behaviours or performance in a given situation. In other words, tests may come up on a daily, weekly or monthly basis.

Purpose of Testing

At the pre-primary school level, the traditional paper and pencil test may not be particularly very appropriate. You should remember that testing and learning at this level should not be too formal.

Therefore, it will not be of much benefit if we insist on giving the children paper and pencil test like those in the upper primary classes. We should be discussing the mode of evaluation most suitable to them later.

The purpose of testing is not different from those already discussed under evaluation. However, for the purpose of revision, let us quickly go over them with you again.

(i)   Tests can be used to find out whether the learners have mastered certain topic or skill well enough to go ahead to another one.

(ii)   Tests can be also used to find out the learner's area of weakness or whether the method of teaching is suitable for them or not.

(iii)   Tests can also be used to place the learners in the most suitable group for the purpose of receiving adequate attention.

(iv)   Tests are also used for guidance either to the learners or the parents on how to make progress or the next step to take.

4.4   Evaluation and Assessment Techniques in Pre-Primary and Primary Schools

Teachers are expected to evaluate learning in the areas of knowledge and understanding based on school activities, social relationships, emotional adjustment habits, manipulative skills and the general lifestyles of the young learners. You surely cannot effectively carry out the evaluation of these aspects of knowledge learning and attitude by just the paper and pencil tests. There are many other techniques of evaluating the learning outcomes in addition to the written tests. These include oral interview, practical tests, class work, and observation, self-report (interview, questionnaire etc.).

Since helping the individual learners to develop a positive self-image and to develop effective relationship with others are important objectives of pre-primary and primary education, we must use the most appropriate evaluation technique. At times, we may use personality tests and rating scales to encourage the children to examine their own characteristics. Sociograms could also be used to discover the relation of any one child to the class as a whole.

Successful school work depends among other things, on such characteristics as the pupil's personal adjustment, attitudes, and social or group skills. It is important that teachers know how to measure and interpret these personal and social factors and to use the test results in planning classroom activities. Sociometry is the study of patterns of interrelationship existing in a group of people. The teacher could generate sociometric data by asking the pupils different questions. For example, the teacher can ask the children to "list the person you would like to sit next to in class" "whom do you prefer as the class monitor?"The children may be requested to make a single choice or two choices.

The teacher then transfers the information by the children to a sociogram. A sociogram allows you to see how the cliques in the class are distributed A Star, (most popular), isolate (least popular) a rejectee (no one makes a choice of him/her and he/she makes none)

Other curriculum areas where evaluation of achievement can take place include the physical growth, growth in interests and attitude, growth in creative and critical thinking. Most teachers and parents of pre-primary and primary school children tend to be more concerned with the evaluation of academic achievement. There is nothing wrong in evaluating academic achievement, but evaluation of social adjustment, physical development, habits, interest, attitude, special aptitudes, growth in creative ability are also very important. The evidences of growth in these other areas are necessary for the school to do its job of fostering the wholesome growth and development of the children and prepare them for effective living in the society.

Therefore, until teachers learn to evaluate pupils' progress in three other important aspects of the education of the young ones, the children will continue to be neglected.

5.0   ACTIVITY
1.   Define curriculum and highlight the characteristics of early childhood education.
2.   Identify three ways and discuss reason for evaluation.

6.0   ASSIGNMENT
1.   Enumerate the principles of child development and learning that any pre-primary school curriculum should take into consideration.

7.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, you have learnt that:

- curriculum refers to the school educational programmes of studies, activities, and guidance
- curriculum in early childhood education should emphasise active hands on learning:
  - conceptual learning that leads to understanding
  - meaningful, relevant learning experiences
  - interactive teaching and cooperative learning
  - a broad range of relevant content, integrated across traditional subject matter divisions.
- evaluation is a process of gathering, analysing and interpreting data to be used in taking decisions about the learners-teachers method of teaching, and materials
- assessment is the ongoing process of observing, recording and documenting the work children do and how they do it so as to provide a basis for some educational decisions that affect the child
- a test is an instrument used for measuring the performance in a given situation
- evaluation methods in every childhood education must take not only the academic achievement, but also the social adjustment, physical development, interests, attitudes and the creativity of the learners into consideration.

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UNIT 5   PRE-PRIMARY SCHOOL LEARNING STYLES

CONTENTS

1.0   Introduction
2.0   Objectives
3.0   Word Study
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         4.1   Pre-School Learning Theories
         4.2   Other Learning Styles of Pre-School Children
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6.0   Assignment
7.0   Summary
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1.0   INTRODUCTION

In the last unit, you have learnt what pre-primary school curriculum and evaluation should take into consideration.

In this unit, you are going to learn the pre-primary school children's learning styles. In other words, you are going to learn how children learn and how teachers can guide and facilitate their learning. Let us look at other areas you need to know in this study unit as specified in the study unit objectives below.

2.0   OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:
- mention and explain pre-primary school children's learning styles and
- explain how the teacher can best guide pre-primary school children for effective learning.

HOW TO STUDY THIS UNIT
Read through this unit carefully. Study the unit step by step as the points are well arranged

NOTE: All Answers to Activities and Assignment are at the of end this Book.

3.0   WORD STUDY

Stimulus Response: This refers to a learning process through a particular experience (stimulus) and the subsequent reaction of the child is the (response) it can be positive or negative.

Cognitive Theory of Learning: States that a child is in a constant state of growth, change, and interest more effectively with stimulating environment.

4.0 MAIN CONTENT

4.1   Pre-School Learning Theories

In one of the previous units, you learnt some of the factors to be taken into consideration when preparing pre-primary school curriculum. This is based on the nature of children and how they learn. Children tend to learn better than grownups, and better than they themselves will when they are older. This is because they use their minds in special ways.

Therefore, since children learn in special ways, certain theories have been put up as basic to the facilitation of pre-school children's learning. These theories of teaching and learning in early childhood education are derived from the practical experiences of great child educators and psychologists like Froebel and Montessori among others.

The two major theories of learning from where the sub-theories of learning by children are derived are the Stimulus-Response (S – R) and the Cognitive Theories of Learning.

We shall now discuss some of the sub-theories of learning from each of the two major theories that are related to pre-school learning and education.

(A)   S – R Theory of Learning

      The sub-theories relevant to pre-school child's learning as identified by Onibokun*et al.* (1987) are:

(i)   ***Learning by Doing***
      There is a popular saying that "what I do I understand". This is very true of children generally. Therefore, when a child is exposed to a particular experience (stimulus), the child will react to the experience by responding either positively or negatively (Response). When the pre-

school child is allowed to do things by himself or herself, and is reinforced by what he or she does, the child will continue to do it. In the process, the child will develop the skills needed for doing what he/she does. In other words, the child acquires the special skill of doing certain things through practice.

This implies therefore that children should be given the opportunity to do things themselves. There must be a variety of play and learning materials which could be bought or improvised by the teacher or parents.

(ii)   **Curiosity and Interest**
This sub-theory is well known to parents and teachers that children are always eager to know. Their desires to find out (Curiosity) always bring about their interest in learning. In other words, curiosity generates interest and interest assists learning.

The implication of this sub-theory for teaching pre-school children is that we must always make their learning tasks and environment stimulating and interesting to the children. Monotony kills interest. Always introduce new materials, and ideas to children so as to ginger up their curiosity and interest in whatever they are to learn.

(iii)   **Inquiry**
In their natural desire to find out or know certain things, children generally ask fundamental questions beginning with 'why', 'when', 'what', and 'how'. By asking these questions, children acquire the large volume of facts and knowledge about anything in their environment. Therefore, we should never be tired of answering their questions.

One of the reasons why African children below the age of six are at a disadvantage when compared to their American and European counterparts is the philosophy that African children should only be seen and not heard. In many places, it is even considered as bad manners for children to talk or ask questions when elders are around (Akinbote,*et al.*, 2001).

We must learn to allow children to ask questions as freely as they want to. In the same way, we should ask them questions to stimulate their interest and or curiosity. Teachers should ask well planned questions

that can evoke deep thinking, curiosity and even creativity among the children.

(iv)   ***Learning through Stories***
Children like to tell stories and listen to stories. They are never tired of listening to interesting stories. In the Traditional African societies, parents and other adult members of the society take time to tell their young stories either folklores or those of their ancestors. Such stories are used to teach morals, correct wrong attitudes and behaviours among other things.

In the pre-primary schools, teachers could make the learning of children interesting and meaningful by the use of carefully selected stories. Such stories must not only be relevant to the topic for discussion, it must also contain some important messages for the children. Teachers can also use rhymes and songs to help children learn certain concepts or principles.

(B)   Cognitive Theories of Learning

The sub-theories derived from the cognitive theory of learning are now going to be discussed:

(i)   ***Metamorphic Change and Environment***
This sub-theory states that children are in a constant state of growth, change and interest more effectively with stimulating environment.

You must have observed children that they are naturally more able to interact with their social and physical environment than adults. Except a child is ill, he or she cannot remain idle in a place for a long time. Children are always very active.

The implication of this sub-theory is that we must always provide stimulating environment for children to interact with freely. In the same vein, children must be given the opportunity to observe, move around, experiment and discover things by themselves in the environment.

Moreover, we must help the children to see the relationship or similarities between certain things in the environment.

(ii)   ***Movement***
        This sub-theory is very similar to the above one in that children always like to move. As mentioned earlier on, they are always on the move and except something is wrong, they cannot remain quiet in a place for long. They often like to explore their environment to discover new things. The children could be taken out on visits to the school garden to observe plants with their peculiar characteristics. Visits to other interesting places within the school or the immediate community will be of much interest to the children.

        At home, you must have seen how excited children are whenever you take them out on a visit to a family friend and other places. For many days after the visits, they still recollect some of the interesting things they saw, did or enjoyed. This implies that if children are allowed to move around, they will not only enjoy but acquire some new knowledge about different things and places.

(iii)   ***Learning through Perception***
        This sub-theory implies that children's learning and experiences come through perception. In other words, they perceive or derive meaning from things they see or hear. In order to train them to perceive things well, we should allow them to play different games where they are trained to observe details. Questions could be used to guide their perception of certain situations or things. For example, showing them two similar things and asking them to identify the differences between them. They may even be given some puzzles to supply the missing parts, numbers, letters or words and so on.

4.2   Other Learning Styles of Pre-School Children

In the previous units where we discussed the early childhood education curriculum, we mentioned certain ways through which children learn. We may have to go over them again here for the sake of emphasis, particularly since they could still be meaningfully explained under the learning styles of pre-school children. You will recall that we said children construct their own knowledge. This they do through interaction with their environment. Let us now see the various ways children do their own learning.

(i)   ***Play***

This is one of the most natural things with children. Children can play anywhere and at any time. The main reason why children enjoy playing is that play provides them the opportunity for exploration, experimentation and manipulation of things. During play, they take their time to examine and refine their learning based on the immediate feedback they receive from the environment and other people they interact with. Above all, it is through play that children develop their imagination and creativity.

Therefore, we must always allow the children time to play with other children as much as possible. Their play must be well directed so that they can make the best out of their playing. There must be many materials for them to play with and there must always be opportunity for them to move around as they play. They like to change from one activity to the other as frequently as possible.

(ii)   ***Hands-on Activity***

Children like to experiment and manipulate things as mentioned above. This implies that young children in the pre-primary and junior primary classes should learn by handling some objects. They are too young for any abstract thinking. For example, when they are being introduced to numerals, it is absolutely necessary to give them physical objects to represent the figures e.g. two oranges, one ball etc. If it is addition, subtraction, multiplication or division they are being taught, there should always be some materials for them to count. Clay modeling is also essential to develop their manipulative and creative skills.

(iii)   ***Learning through Rhymes/Songs***

Many of us will still remember certain things we learnt in the junior primary classes which we are still using now. For example, I still easily fall back to the rhyme in the number of days in each month to say how many months of the year have thirty or thirty-one days. If this can help an adult to remember well, it will do greater things for the young learners. There are different rhymes that can be used to help children learning.

In addition, the question technique is another useful technique of fostering meaningful learning among children. Since they themselves ask a lot of questions to acquire new information or knowledge, they will naturally respond to questions that stimulate their interests. Such questions we ask them must

however be simple, clear and well-directed to achieve some desirable instructional/educational objectives.

(iv)   ***Learning through Social Interactions with other Adults and Children***
        It is essential to note this important and natural way of learning for children. The teacher should therefore encourage interaction among the children and adults on opening days for instance. For instance, you must always allow them to interact with other children in other classes during break. Group activities inside and outside the classroom also promotes good relationship among children. Research findings have shown that children learn better from other children what they may find difficult to learn from either their parents or teachers.

5.0   ACTIVITY
1.   Mention and explain pre-primary school, children's learning styles.
2.   Explain how the teacher can best guide pre-primary school children for effective learning.

6.0   ASSIGNMENT
1.   Identify learning styles discussed in this unit for teaching pre-school children.

7.0   SUMMARY

In this unit, you have learnt that:
- The two major learning theories on which the sub-theories of learning by pre-school children are based are:
    o   the S – R theory of learning
    o   the cognitive theory of learning.
- Some of the sub-theories of learning for children discussed in this unit are:
    o   learning by doing/hands-on activity
    o   curiosity and interest
    o   inquiry
    o   learning through stories
    o   metamorphic change and environment
    o   movement
    o   play
    o   perception.

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UNIT 6   TEACHER EDUCATION FOR PRE-PRIMARY AND PRIMARY EDUCATION IN NIGERIA IN THE 21ST CENTURY

CONTENTS

1.0   Introduction
2.0   Objectives
3.0   Word Study
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      4.1   Preparing Teachers for Nigerian Pre-Primary and Primary Schools in the 21st Century
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5.0   Activities
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1.0   INTRODUCTION

In the last unit, we discussed pre primary school learning styles. In this unit, we are going to discuss teacher education for pre-primary and primary education. This is because of the important role teacher's play in the successful implementation of any school curriculum.

2.0   OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:
•   explain the role of teachers in the effective implementation of school programmes
•   identify the major weaknesses in the Teacher Education programmes in Nigeria
•   Suggest ways of training effective and efficient teachers for pre-primary and primary education in Nigeria.

HOW TO STUDY THIS UNIT
Read through this unit carefully. Study the unit step by step as the points are well arranged.

NOTE: All Answers to Activities and Assignment are at the of end this Book.

3.0   WORD STUDY

Pedagogy: This refers to the professional of teaching. It includes the activities of educating, teaching or instructing. It consists of the strategies of instruction.

In-service Education: This comprises the training of individuals (teachers) for further education.

4.0 MAIN CONTENT

4.1   Preparing Teachers for Nigerian Pre-Primary and Primary Schools in the 21st Century

The professional competence of teachers is central to the education of children. The veracity of this assertion is embedded in the National Policy on Education (2004) where it is clearly stated in the section on Teacher Education that, no system of education can rise above the quality of its teachers.

In other words, the level of commitment, competence and creativity of teachers are central to the success of the school children and the whole education programme. Therefore, in modern societies, the quality and caliber of teachers that service the educational system could serve as a valid index of that country's development and progress.

It would seem as if Government has long recognised the important contributions of teachers to national development. This was evident in the setting up the Ashby Commission by the Federal Government in 1959 to among other things look into Nigeria's needs in the area of teacher education for a period of twenty years. The recommendations of the commission led to the establishment of the Advanced Teachers Colleges (ATCs) now known as Colleges of Education (COEs). As you are aware, the Colleges of Education produce non-graduate, professionally qualified, Nigeria Certificate in Education teachers (NCE) which is now the basic/minimum teaching qualification approved for our primary schools. Thus, the Colleges of Education are now charged with the responsibility of producing teachers for our primary schools. This is in addition to the degree programmes now available in the Faculties and Institutes of Education of some Federal and State Universities in Nigeria (Akinbote, 1999) that train teachers for pre-primary and primary education.

However, in spite of all the efforts made at improving the quality of teachers through the introduction of pre-primary and primary education into the NCE and University Teacher education programmes, the problem of poor quality of teachers in schools has persisted. It is therefore necessary for us here to highlight what an effective teacher

education programme for pre-primary and primary education entails. This we shall discuss in the next section.

4.2   Teacher Preparation for Effective Performance in Schools

In the last section of this unit, we discussed that government has made NCE the minimum teaching qualification in our primary schools. We also learnt that there are some Faculties and Institutes of Education in some Nigerian Universities producing graduate teachers who specialise in pre-primary and primary education. These are good efforts aimed at improving the quality of teachers and in teaching and learning in our pre-primary and primary schools. The question some people are asking now is why has the quality of our primary school products not kept abreast of this development?

Although this poor quality of primary education is a global concern (UNESCO, 2001), yet, it is strongly believed that teachers competence through an efficient teacher education programme is central to the education of children. The traditional role of the teacher being at the centre of pupils learning is no longer regarded as adequate for meeting the challenges of the 21st century. Teacher education programme is now seen as the one in which learners take ownership of their learning.

In order to get teachers who can fit well into the new expectations, Reynolds (1992) suggested that teacher education programme for beginning teachers should include the following:

- knowledge of subject matter
- disposition to find out about students and schools including the skills to do so
- knowledge of strategies, techniques and tools to create and sustain a learning environment/community, and the ability to employ the above
- knowledge of content specific pedagogy.

For the teacher education programmes to adequately take care of the points listed above, the following areas must be reviewed:

(i)   Entry Qualification

As at now, the number of credits required for entry into the Colleges of Education is three credits at the SSCE/GCE Ordinary Level. Although those admitted into the degree programmes for teacher education require five credits, yet they are not usually of the same quality as those for other professions. In most cases, as noted by Akinbote (1999), such students that enroll for the teacher education programme generally and those for pre-primary and primary education in particular, are those who have not been offered admission to the

other 'choice' professions. In other words, they are the reluctant ones. You may therefore not expect much commitment, high degree of efficiency and effectiveness from such teachers if they eventually find their ways into the classroom.

Therefore, in order to attract the right caliber of recruits into the various teacher education programmes, there are some things we can do. These include:

(a)   making the teaching profession attractive through improved condition of service and an enabling work environment for teachers. There is also the need to ensure that the programmes are of good quality. They must not be inferior to the recruits into other professions in sister institutions/faculties;

(b)   providing bursary and scholarship awards to all qualified students who are specializing in pre-primary and primary education. In-service programmes such as study-leave with pay for primary school teachers who must go for further studies in teaching;

(c)   making the school learning environment attractive with an appropriate level of personnel, materials and facilities.

(ii)   A More Pragmatic Teacher Education Curriculum
One of the causes of poor quality in the output of primary school teachers, as once observed by Taiwo (1981) may not lie only in the quality of recruits into the various teacher education programmes. At times, the traditional scope and sequence, approach to curriculum with emphasis on drilling and paper qualification could be the cause.Sometimes, what we do or don't do as individual teacher educators or as government and collectively as a people (society) may impede the professional competence of the student teachers. For example, the teacher educators in some of the institutions might themselves not be current and up-to-date in the new trends and developments in the methods and techniques of teaching. Since we teach the way we are taught, some of the products of the teachers colleges will only give what they have. Some of the teacher educators are themselves, not professionally qualified.

On the part of the government, the inconsistency in policy and the inadequacy of the necessary materials, equipment and facilities as a result of inadequate funding may make it difficult for any meaningful and effective education of the student teachers to take place. In the same vein, the general attitude of our people to leave everything to government even when some wealthy individuals, groups or community can provide some of those things lacking in the institutions.

Therefore, the curriculum of the various teacher education programmes for pre-primary and primary schools should be improved upon to include the following areas:

- Sound knowledge of the subject area of specialisation e.g. Mathematics, Science, English Language, Social Studies etc.
- Adequate exposure to the basic principles of teaching and learning, initiation in autonomous learning, motivation of learners, knowledge of new technologies, training in tutorial guidance and in research action methodologies.
- Instructional materials production and utilisation. Teachers should be resourceful enough to develop, improvise and utilise instructional materials. Pre-primary and primary school teachers should be creative about what is to be done in the face of difficulties in getting support from the government. Therefore, student teachers should be exposed to and adequately guided on the production and use of instructional materials.
- Adequate exposure to classroom practice. This aspect of the teacher education programme is no longer taken seriously by both the students and the school authorities. Without adequate exposure, the student teachers will not be able to effectively manage the classroom situation. Therefore, it will be more appropriate if student teachers are allowed to go out on teaching practice for a whole year in pre-primary and primary school classrooms.

(iii) **Provision of Adequate Facilities and an Enabling Environment**
Although there has been a massive expansion in teacher education and other levels of education generally in the last two decades, yet there has been no commensurate increase in facilities. The enrolment figures of Colleges of Education and Universities with Faculties of Education have increased tremendously over the years.

The lecture halls, laboratories and even furniture are not enough. Moreover, the number of academic staff in certain areas is grossly inadequate. Therefore, it has not been possible to produce high quality teachers with the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes for teaching at the pre-primary and primary schools.

There is need for adequate provision of the basic facilities in our institutions. Lecture halls and laboratories should not only be made available in quantity,

but also quality. The laboratories should be well-equipped to give the student teachers the much needed practical experience to effectively teach later.

The learning environment in all the institutions should be very conducive to learning. Adequate recreation facilities for both students and staff of the institutions should be provided. A healthy body is essential for effective teaching and learning. There is a need for recreation after some serious mental activity in the lecture room and laboratories.

(iv)   **Adequate Funding of Teacher Education**
        Although this is implied in the provision of adequate human and materials in the various institutions involved in Teacher Education in the country, it is not adequate. Apart from the grossly inadequate facilities and inadequate personnel, it is also obvious that the funding of teacher education is to say the least inadequate. Since the teacher is the heart of any system of education, nothing is too much to spend so that only the best quality of teachers is produced for our schools. As once observed by Lewis cited in Akinbote (2006), no system of education can function effectively without capable men and women to serve as teachers in schools and colleges.

        The capable men and women who are to be teachers cannot drop from the sky. They have to be trained and this requires a lot of capital. No amount of money invested in teacher education can be too much or wasted. The effective and efficient teacher education is particularly necessary for primary education because it is the core of development and progress in modern societies.

        Therefore, government should make adequate funding of teacher education for primary education a priority in the yearly budgets. Money is required not only for the provision of infrastructure and facilities, but also for the development, recruitment and retention of the high quality teachers in our schools.

(v)   **In-Service Education**
        In-service education is an important means of developing and improving teachers' efficiency and effectiveness. It could be in form of study leave for a period of time. In the case of study leave, it could be with pay or without pay. It could also be part-time or full time course in a tertiary institution.

The other form of in-service education for teachers is by inviting some specialists in certain aspects of education to talk to the teachers. It could be on how to improve their teaching, school administration, curriculum planning and implementation among

others.The teacher needs constant interaction with other professional colleagues in order to keep abreast of development in education.

The competence of teachers is central to the education of children. Whatever we want teachers to be able to do is related to the great aspirations we hold for our children. Therefore, to make our teachers relevant in the 21st century, their education both pre-service and in-service should expose them to scientific theories of teaching and learning, curriculum planning and evaluation, school administration and the design of instructional materials. This would not only improve the knowledge and professional competence in teachers, but also command respect and honour among the pupils, parents and the general public.

5.0   ACTIVITY
1. Explain the role of teachers in the effective implementation of school programmes.
2. Identify the major weaknesses in the Teacher Education programmes in Nigeria.

6.0   ASSIGNMENT
1. Identify and explain four major areas for inclusion in the teacher education programme for beginners.
2. Suggest ways of achieving effectiveness in four major areas of teacher education programme for pre-primary and primary schools in Nigeria.

7.0   SUMMARY

In this unit, you have learnt the following:
- That effective teacher education is central to the education of children.
- Teacher education for effective performance in the 21st century should enable the learners to take ownership of their own learning.
- Four areas are crucial for the effective education of beginner teachers. These are:
  o knowledge of the subject matter
  o disposition to find out more about the learners and the school
  o knowledge of strategies, techniques and tools to create and sustain learner friendly environment
  o knowledge of content of specific pedagogy.
- For these to be made possible, certain things must be looked into, such as:
  o the admission requirement/entry qualification
  o a more pragmatic teacher education curriculum
  o provision of adequate facilities

o   adequate funding.

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UNIT 7   COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION AND INVOLVEMENT IN PRE-PRIMARY AND PRIMARY EDUCATION

CONTENTS

1.0   INTRODUCTION

In this unit, you are going to learn why and how the community can participate actively in pre-primary and primary education.

2.0   OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit, you should be able to:
•   explain the nature and significance of community participation and involvement in pre-primary and primary education
•   identify the various ways by which the community can participate actively in pre-primary and primary education
•   Suggest ways of good school/community relations.

HOW TO STUDY THIS UNIT
Read through this unit carefully. Study the unit step by step as the points are well arranged

NOTE: All Answers to Activities and Assignment are at the of end this Book.

3.0   WORD STUDY

Community: A community is a group of people living in the same geographical area under common laws.

School: A school is an artificial institution set up by society for certain purposes.

4.0 MAIN CONTENT

4.1   The Nature and Purpose of a Community

Since no one is an island, every man or woman therefore belongs to a community of people. According to Berns (2004), a community is created because no individual is self-sufficient; hence he turns to others to help satisfy some of his needs. This then leads us to the definition of a community.

A community is a group of people living in the same geographical area under common laws e.g. neighbourhood, town or city. It can also be described as a group of people having fellowship, a friendly association, a mutual sharing and common interests. The crucial components of a community are the relationship of people to one another and the sense of belongingness and of obligation to the group. Communities are structured to perform the following functions as listed by Warren and cited in Berns (2004):

(i)   **Production, Distribution, Consumption** – the community provides its members with a means of living.

(ii)   **Socialisation** – the community instills its norms and values in its members through tradition, modelling and/or formal education.

(iii)   **Social Control** – the community has the means to enforce adherence to community values through group pressure to conform to state laws.

(iv)   **Social Participation** – the community fulfills the need for companionship e.g. in churches, mosques, businesses etc.

(v)   **Mutual Support** – the community enables its members to cooperate to perform tasks too large or too urgent to be handled by a single person.

From these functions of the community, we can see that the basic reason for their living together is to provide support for one another. For instance, communities can provide informal support to families or individuals when neighbours watch each other's children or share things. They can also provide formal support through publicly or privately funded community services such as schools, hospitals, etc.

Our concern in this unit is community participation and involvement in pre-primary and primary education. We shall see how this is done in another section of this unit. But let us first discuss the structure and function of the school.

4.2   The Nature and Purpose of School

The school is a creation of the society where formal learning takes place. The school's basic function in society is therefore to develop future contributing citizens. It serves as a socializing agent by providing the intellectual and social experiences from which children develop the skills, knowledge, interest and attitudes that make them individuals and which shape their abilities to perform adult roles (Bern, 2004).

We can also add that the schools exist in order to provide services which parents unaided cannot provide. In this regard, the parents are the consumer or client and as such their wishes carry great weight.

The schools have been accused of progressively limiting the intellectual, creative and social development of children by restricting the range of human contacts available to them. There is therefore a new idea now that parents as well as other adult members of the community should come into the school not only as sight-seers on open days. Rather, they should be involved in the affairs of the school. In other words, community participation and involvement in school activities is a must for effective and efficient school management.

The expectation of the society which are expressed in goals of the school include academic, vocational, social, civic, cultural and personal. These are explained below.

- **Academic Goals**
  The mastery of basic skills of reading, writing and numeracy as well as the fundamental processes of communication and use of information.

- **Vocational Goals**
  The vocational/career education which enables the individual to select an occupation that is based on ability and interest. It also develops appropriate work habits and attitudes that make the individual productive and economically independent.

- **Social and Personal Goals**
  The schools help individuals to acquire attitudes and values necessary for interpersonal relationship, good citizenship, cultural appreciation, development of moral integrity.

Personal goals have to do with the emotional and physical well being of the individual as well as development of creatively aesthetic expression and self-realisation.

Now that you have known what a community is as well as what a school is and their purposes, let us discuss why and how the community could participate and be actively involved in the school.

4.3   School/Community Linkages

In the previous sections of this unit, you learnt that the school is a creation of the society. In other words, the school is not created by God hence it is a man-made institution. The society establishes the school in order to perform specific roles which we have already discussed. Therefore, for the school to effectively carry out the responsibilities assigned to it by the society, the family and the community must be involved in the education of their children.

The progressive isolation of the school from the community has led to the limited intellectual, imaginative and social development of children. As explained earlier, adult members of the community other than the parents should come to the schools not only for sight-seeing on Open Days, they should come also so as to be involved in the affairs and activities of the school.

The schools must no longer be a fortress heavily guarded against members of the community. The schools must 'open' their doors to the community so as to get the people more actively involved and participate in the school activities.

The community on the other hand, should stop looking at the school as a government property which in the Nigerian context (parlance) is nobody's property. There are many things the community can do for the school if they are given the opportunity to be involved. The first thing on the part of the school head is to develop what is known as 'Good school-community relations'.

(i)   **School-Community Relations**
        The school, as an artificial institution set up by society for certain purposes must have relations with the community. This is because, members of the community, whether immediate or distant, control the forms and the means of the education provided (Morrish, 1992).

        Therefore, school-community relationship is "a process of developing and maintaining relationship with the community". It should be a two-way structure of giving and receiving. Thus, while schools should maintain good relations

with the community in order to gain support for its projects and activities, it should also aim at giving the community (public) a good account of what the school stands for, in terms of its efforts towards building a good society.

The building of good relationship should start from the staff members of the school. In this regard, both the teaching and non-teaching staff should be carried along in the day-to-day administration of the school. Through regular meetings and consultations on matters affecting their general welfare and those of the learners, there will be enhanced cordial relationship necessary for progress and success of the school.

With good relationship within the school itself, this could now be extended to the community. From here, the regular communication with parents of the children will then become a necessity. It is the best means of receiving support from the parents apart from the regular Parents-Teachers Association (PTA) meetings, there is need to communicate directly with individual parents as the need arises.

There are other community members who do not have children in the school. They should also be receiving accurate information about and from the school. They should also be given the opportunity to communicate with the school. We must remember that among these community members are senior citizens, different categories of professionals with wide experiences of life. They could be interested in certain activities of the school such as the performance of the pupils, discipline, security and so on.

To keep them informed, parents could be encouraged to share the school newsletters with their neighbours. At times, some newsletters may be sent to them through the community centres, religious centres, the library etc. The newsletters may also be shared with newspapers publishers, radio and television stations. Any other available opportunity to communicate with the community members on the affairs of the school should not be left out. It could even be person-to-person discussion with them by any member of staff.

(ii)   **Securing Community Participation/Involvement in School Activities**
With good school-community relations well established through regular communications, it will not be difficult to get them involved in school activities. As a matter of fact, many of them would have been showing up in the school to ask questions about certain things or make suggestions on how to

improve on certain things. Some may even on their own donate money or some other things to the school.

Some of the ways by which the community could be involved in the school activities will now be discussed:

(a)   **Serving as Resource Persons**
         Many parents and community members are experts in various fields of human endeavour. They could be invited to give a talk on certain topics which are of interest to children. This will particularly be interesting to the children who probably have heard about that person but had no opportunity of meeting him. They could also be used as guest speakers in the school on special occasions.

(b)   **As Volunteers**
         In some of the developed countries, many parents and community members often volunteer to come and work in the pre-primary schools in various capacities. Some serve as medical experts to help attend to the health needs of the children. They could be medical doctors or nurses.

         There are also those who could come to take turns in teaching the children. In the United States of America, the Head start project has benefited many children through volunteers. We need to encourage parents and community members to do similar things in Nigerian pre-primary and primary schools. It is no longer fashionable for community members to see the school as an outcast or a closed system. Teachers should no longer look down on community members as people who are selfish, ignorant or uneducated. Let us give our children the opportunity to understand the connection between school learning and the world of work.

(c)   **Donating Resources and Time**
         Individuals or groups within the community can donate buildings, equipment, teaching and learning materials to schools. They could even offer scholarship award to some pupils. In addition, they could sponsor or host fieldtrips for the children. As you know, there are many places of historical, political, economic, educational, social and religious significance within and outside the community. It is usually a great thing for children to be taken on a visit to such places. The schools could not have the financial resources to go on such a trip. Some may not even be

aware of the existence of such places. Moreover, some schools may be aware of the existence of such place and even have the resources to visit the places.

However, for one reason or the other, the school authorities may not have access to the place. In such cases, the community members may be in a position not only to know the people there but also facilitate the fieldtrip to the place.

(d)   **Invitation of the School to Participate in some Community-Organized Activities**
For example, the school band or cultural group could be invited to perform at community events. The children could be asked to come and observe how certain things are done etc. This could also involve asking the community to explain the nature, purpose or the working of certain machines, festivals and so on purposes.

5.0   ACTIVITY
1.   Explain the nature and significance of community participation.
2.   Identify the various ways by which the community can participate actively in pre-primary and primary education.

6.0   ASSIGNMENT
1.   Explain what you understand by community and school.
2.   How can Nigerian schools secure the active participation and involvement for the community in their activities?

7.0   SUMMARY

In this unit, you have learnt:
- that a community is a group of people living in the same geographical area under common laws
- a school is an artificial institution set up by society for certain purposes
- the expectations of the society expressed in goals include academic, vocational, social, civic, cultural and personal
- through effective school-community relations, the community could be adequately involved in its activities
- the areas where the community could be made to participate actively in school activities include:
  o   serving as resource persons and guest speakers
  o   serving as volunteers

o   Donating resources and time.

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