

JOURNAL

OF

**THE EARLY CHILDHOOD
ASSOCIATION OF NIGERIA**

**VOLUME 5
Number 1 & 2**

ISSN 978-33641-2-X

JULY, 2016

**JOURNAL OF THE EARLY CHILDHOOD
ASSOCIATION OF NIGERIA (JECAN)**

VOLUME 5

ISSN 978-33641-2-X

EDITORIAL BOARD

- Editor-in-Chief:** Professor Olusegun AKINBOTE
Early Childhood Education Unit
Department of Teacher Education
University of Ibadan
- Associate Editor:** ÌshòláAkíndélé SÀLÁMÌ, Ph.D
Early Childhood Education Unit
Department of Teacher Education
University of Ibadan
- Member:** Adefunke EKINE, Ph.D.
Deputy Director (Research and Innovation)
Directorate of Academic Planning, Quality
Assurance and Research
Tai Solarin University of Education
Ijagun, Ijebu-Ode
Ogun State, Nigeria
- Member:** Olufunke O. CHENUBE, Ph.D.
Department of Early Childhood ad Care Education
College of Education
Agbor, Delta State
- Member:** Simeon S. FOWOWE
AdeniranOgunsanya College of Education
Otto-Ijanikin
Lagos State.

EDITORIAL COMMENTS

JECAN, the official journal of Early Childhood Association of Nigeria (ECAN), presents its Volume 5 (2016). Membership of the association is open to postgraduate students, practitioners and scholars of early childhood education and/or related fields in Nigeria and abroad.

All the articles that feature in this volume are those presented at the 2015 National Conference of the association held on October 26 to 30, 2015. Arrangements are on to make it possible for interested researchers to submit articles directly for publication in the journal.

It is therefore, the expectation of the editors that readers will not only find the volume a good companion in their continuous search for knowledge but also a reliable source of literature for further research studies.

Prof. Olusegun AKINBOTE
Editor-in-Chief

VOLUME 5 NO. 1

Meeting the Needs of the Whole Child through Effective Early Childhood Education AdefunkeOluwafunmilayo EKINE, Ph.D	1
Meeting the Needs of the Whole Child through Effective Early Childhood Care, Education and Evaluation Monica N. ODINKO	19
Teachers' Involvement in the Provision of Toys as Play and Learning Materials in Some Nursery Schools in Oyo State Olusegun, AKINBOTE and Gladys. Tinuola, SEGUN-DIPE	41
Meeting the Needs of the Whole Child through Effective Use of Guided Discovery, Pictorial Analogy and Play-way Strategies Dr. (Mrs.) Adunni Margaret OGUNTIMEHIN	55
Early Childhood Education Science Textbooks in Oyo State and their Agreement with the National Curriculum Provisions IsholaAkindele SALAMI, Ph.D and OluwadamilolaOMIYALE	77
Preschool Activities and Holistic Development of the Child Dr SarahSOPEKAN, AdemuyiwaASHIMOLOWO and OlayinkaDAGUNDURO	93
Assessment Tools Used by Teachers in Early Childhood Education Centres in Ibadan South-West Local Government Area of Oyo State Esther A. ODUOLOWU Ph.D. FatimaZAKARIYYAH and Peter KayodeOLOWE	111

Parents' and Teachers' Awareness and Implementation of the Rights of Pre-School Children in Owo Local Government Area of Ondo State	125
Nathaniel OlujobaAYOOLA, Adenike A. AKINROTIMI and Folasade Olujoke IZUAGIE	
Primary School Teachers Perception of Classroom Discipline as a Tool for Classroom Management in Ondo West Local Government, Ondo State	142
Nnenna C. OKOROAFOR and Shehu O. ADESOLA	
Primary School Teachers' Use of Indigenous Language and Local Materials for Teaching and Learning Activities in Akoko-Edo Local Government Area of Edo State	158
Anthonia, Osemeiasoh AKINYELE and Olusegun AKINBOTE	
Effect of Computer Interactive Games on Children's Vocabulary Retention in Language Acquisition	171
Christopher T. OMOTUNDE, Micheal O. FAKOMOGBON and Oluwatobi, I. OMOTUNDE	
Home and school environments as correlates of pre-school children's language development in Etiosa Local Government Area of Lagos State	190
Christy Owolemi OMOTUYOLE and Olumide Olakunle IGE	
Music Education: A Sine-Qua-Non for Developing Early Childhood Education Programme in Nigeria	210
Simeon S. FOWOWE and Blessing Uchechukwu UMEOKECHUKWU	

Volume 5 No. 2

- Perceived Psycho-Social Effect of *Agemo* Festival on School Pupils in Ijebu Ode Local Government of Ogun State 230
AdefunkeEKINE, TawakalituAJAO and JokeONADUJA
- Primary School Teachers' Knowledge and Use of Peer-Mediated Intervention Strategies in Enhancing Pupils' Social Skills in Ilorin Metropolis 242
OlusegunAKINBOTE and AdegokeOLANIYAN
- Strategies for Improving Parents' Self-efficacy and Involvement in Children's School Readiness 262
Moses D. AMOSUN and Olabisi T.BANKOLE,
- Indigenous Education and the Development of the Whole Child: An Advocacy for Value Re-orientation in the Nigerian Society 281
O. Olukemi AKEREDOLU
- The Contribution of Outdoor Play in Meeting the Needs of the Whole Child 295
Tolu O. OKORUWA
- Home Environment and Its Implications on Child Development 305
Abigail OlukemiOLUGBAMIGBE, Emmanuel OLATUJAYAN andFolasadeIZUAGIE
- Effective Teaching and Learning Practices in Early Childhood Education: the Roles of Home and School Environment 321
NathanielOLANIRAN, Sunday PaulADEGOKE andMosunmola GraceIKUENOMORE
- Attitude of Some selected Primary School Teachers to Play as a Teaching-Learning Strategy 333

Partnership in Early Childhood Education Oladele M.ADEYEMI	344
Parental Involvement in Preparing Children for Reading Readiness in Early Years Olufunke CHENUBE, Veronica ANAZIONWU and Veronica IWERIEBOR	354
Influence of Authoritarian Parenting Style on Childhood Socialization Rachael Ojima AGARRY	362
The Influence of Aesthetic School Environment on Children's Motivation for Learning and School Attendance in Ilorin Metropolis Olabisi ADEDIGBA	374
Assessment of Learning Environment on the Cognitive Development of Pre-School Children in Education Adefunke T. KOMOLAFE & Chizobam Uju CHUBA-NOSIKE,	387

Meeting the Needs of the Whole Child through Effective Early Childhood Care, Education and Evaluation

By

Monica N. Odinko

Institute of Education, University of Ibadan, Ibadan

Abstract

The education of children during the earliest years of their life lays the foundation for all other developmental processes that follow. The nature and quality of care, the experiences and the learning opportunities offered to children from birth through infancy and early childhood, tend to affect their educational potential and their life chances in a lasting way. The globally recognised and the Nigerian government, of the importance of early years have resulted in a sharp interest and increase in the provision of early childhood care and education. Furthermore, in Nigeria, considerable energy and efforts have been directed into encouraging uniformity and advocating the improvement in the many and diverse services which at present cater for Nigerian children before they reach full-time mainstream primary education. The reasons for these provisions may not be far from the theme of this conference – to meet the needs of Nigerian child at the very beginning. Thus, the process through which practitioners as well as researchers could follow to ensure that, effective inculcation and exhibition of the expected behavioural outcomes need to be looked into. Understanding who the child is and the behaviours expected from the child to exhibit at every stage of development could help in effective early childhood provision. Thus, the proposed use of developmentally appropriate indicators could help in benchmarking acceptable practices at the pre-school level. Benchmarking helps in linking the internal processes to external expectations, which can be compared with best practices anywhere in the world.

Introduction

"A society can be judged by its attitude to its youngest children, not only in what is said about them but how this attribute is expressed in what is offered to them as they grow up.

(Goldschmied and Jackson 1994, cited in Biley 2003)

The education children experience during the earliest years of their life lays the foundation for all other developmental process that follows. The nature and quality of care, the experiences and the learning opportunities that may be offered to children from birth through infancy and early childhood, tend to affect their educational potential and their life chances in a profound and lasting way. The recognition globally and by the Nigerian government of the importance of early years have resulted in a sharp interest, increase in the provision of early childhood care and education as well as government pronouncement that, this level is compulsory for every Nigerian child before normal schooling begins. Driven by this concern, some funding has been allocated by the government and private interest also, encouraged to take part in providing early childhood educational services.

Furthermore, in Nigeria considerable energy and effort have been directed into rationalizing, encouraging uniformity and advocating for improvement in the many and diverse services which at present cater for Nigerian children before they reach full-time mainstream primary education. Additional expansion have been witnessed in the past five years which includes: the integration of childcare and educational provision in public primary schools, the intervention projects for both babies and their mothers in Nigeria, from conception (zero tolerance to maternal deaths, immunization of expectant mothers, children from birth to nine months free) and improving the quality and upgrading the professional training of the adults working within the pre-school sector (National Teachers Institute/Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) projects). The government's introduction of an official foundation stage (3-5 years) pre-primary in National Policy on Education, along with its associated document, Early childhood curriculum (by National Educational Research

Development Commission (NERDC)) further demonstrates its determination to improve the educational provision in Nigeria for all Nigerian children within the 3-5 years age range.

The essence of this paper is to sensitize early childhood practitioners on how to actualize effective development of the whole child through continuous assessment of the expected developmental milestones. Thus, the paper will among other things discuss the following:

- a. different views of the child,
- b. the concept of 'whole child';
- c. effective early childhood education, using developmental appropriate practices as a yard stick;
- d. break down each concept into identifiable and measurable behaviours

The Child

First, it is necessary for those working with children to have a clear view of what children are because, until we do, we may not work favourably with them. The reason may be that, our belief or understanding about the child is crucial in influencing our practice. One has observed that, non-experts in the field of early childhood education have exerted great developmental inappropriate influence on the practices; both in curriculum content and even on methods used when interacting with children. This is perhaps according to Bruce, Findlay, Read and Scarborough, (1995) who asserted that, early childhood workers have not been able to articulate during practice, the philosophy behind this level of education. This may be due to the facts that, most adults working with children in Nigeria are not trained for the work (Odinko, Williams and Donn, 2006).

Different Views of the child

In the Nigerian society, one can understand how children are regarded from the names they are given. For instance, a child born into a family that have waited for some years after wedlock, such child if a boy is given such names as 'Obiayo' in Igbo or 'Tanwa' in Yoruba, all meaning my mind is now at rest. The implication is that, it is the birth of a child that solidifies marriage. Children are also given names such as;

'Akuabata' in Igbo - meaning wealth has entered my home. Furthermore, in the eastern Nigeria, children grow up in an atmosphere where they are seen and not heard for the adults know best. The adult's authority is accepted to be always right, has to be right, can never be wrong. Children are also viewed as humans who are not capable of doing much on their own without the help of an adult. However, the goal of educating the child whether formally or informally, if properly inculcated, should aid the growing child live a fulfilled life.

On the other hand, pioneer early childhood educators have basically three main standpoints towards the child (Bruce, 2004). The first instance is from John Locke (1632-1704) an empiricist who views the child as an empty vessel to be filled or a tabula rasa. To followers of this view, the role of the adult is to identify missing experiences, skills, concepts, select appropriate experiences and transmit them to the child. This demonstrates that, children according to the empiricist should be seen as objects to be mold into shape and given experiences which are appropriate and necessary for them to take their place in the society.

At the opposite end of the spectrum is the nativist view (Jean Jacques Rousseau 1712-1778) who believes that, children are pre-programmed with a propensity to unfold in certain ways. Bower (1974) describes the nativists view to mean that, human knowledge and skill were built into the structure of the organism while Erikson (1902-1994) believes that, a child develops or performs certain actions because he or she is already programmed by nature for it. Further, another educationist of nativist tradition Chomsky reasserts this view, when he claims that, we have an innate propensity for language, but the environment dictates the kind of language learned.

The views of the empiricist and nativist are combined in the third, "Interactionist" propagated by Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) who describes the child as partly empty vessels and partly pre-programmed and that, there is an interaction within and between the two. Early Childhood has also been supported by the view of the interactionist, Tom Bower (1975) who; shared the view that, environmental events interacting with maturation induces development. To him therefore, the major causal factors in cognitive development are behaviours interacting with other behaviours in their application to environmental events. In other words,

the child must be allowed to interact within him/herself through the senses as well as with the externals-the environment within which the child exists. In this approach, children are not seen as empty vessels waiting to be filled or those pre-programmed to act as they do, or helped as the case may be rather, they are supported by adults who help them to make maximum use of the environment and cultural setting.

Analysis of these three views of the child reveals that, certainly the nativist view has dominant influence on the childhood practices in Nigeria. Here, practitioners are guided by the feelings that, adults must interfere in child learning but there is every likelihood that they tend to intervene in the wrong way and at an inappropriate time too. This is because, the adult using this view may forget that, there are some aspects of the child's world which should be private and beyond interference. For instance, children need to play and develop creatively with imagination; adults can offer help but should never insist upon it. To achieve this however, those working with children need to be highly trained and skilled in the way they approach them. Furthermore, if early childhood education is to move forward, which it needs to do, more adequate ways of viewing the child are needed which may not be embedded in obsolete or incomplete theories (Bruce 2004; Athey, 1990).

However, at the present time, interactionism appears to be the way the contemporary Nigerian early childhood educationist view the child. These views place emphasis on the context in which children grow up and develop as much as biological path of their development. Here adults working with children should not be seen as those who should give out information and knowledge, instead, they should be seen as means by which children can develop their own strategies, initiatives and responses which enable them to adjust favourably in the environment. The interactionist view is supported by research conducted by social constructivist (Athey, 1990), socio-cultural research (Rogoff, Mistry, Goncu, Mosier, 1993) and also by studies of the brain (Trevathen, 1996; Greenfield, 1996).

The Concept of 'Whole Child'

Bruce (1996) is of the view that, the best way to prepare children for adult life is to give them what they need as children. To this assertion,

Froebel, Montessori and Steer agree by indicating that, childhood (0-8) is a phase of life which is important in its own right and lays the foundation for other levels of education. The foundation stone of a building has effect on the building as a whole. Thus, laying a solid foundation at this level considering all aspects of development (cognitive, social-emotional and psychomotor) could be the best preparation for adulthood.

Froebel, Montessori and Steiner all considered the development of the whole child to be of enormous importance. Froebel saw the whole child as including the physical, spiritual, feeling and intellectual aspects of the person. Like Montessori and Steiner, he proposed, to a great extent, how the whole child could be developed through appropriate curriculum. His notion of "Kindergarten" (the garden of children) partly emphasizes nature, community and family. Based on this, he deemphasized the curriculum and became more interested in the use of play, while working with children. He sees play as the means by which a child maintains the wholeness of his/her experiences (Bruce, 1996). To him, developing the whole child occurs when all aspects of development are enabled.

While Montessori (1912) took each part of the child's development and built it to make the whole through her simple-to-complex model. To her, each sense should be developed separately and in isolation (visual, aural, learning, self-worth, among others) through a sequence of carefully graded, simple-to-complex exercises. She emphasized that, the child should be in a position to use, in a general way, the skills acquired only if the child is allowed to master each step and arrive at the end of each sequence.

Steiner is also an advocate of whole child development. To him, the whole child emerges as the four-fold picture of man, involving the physical body, the life body, the soul element and individuality (Steiner, 1965). He stressed that, uneven development is seen as damaging, indicating that, the different stages of development all contribute to the whole child. Thus, all-round harmonious development should be emphasized more; furtherance of special talent can come later (Wilkinson, 1980). Steiner shared the same view with Froebel and Montessori because he laid much emphasis on processes in the child. To him, moral sense, social feelings and religious attitude are influenced by the experiences offered to the child. Steiner advocated that, the whole child should be

reflected in each aspect of a child's development which should be influenced by the cultural environment of the child.

Despite having outlined the views of the pioneers of early childhood education, the paper will also discuss in details these aspects of the whole child (the cognitive, socio-emotional and the psychomotor development) , how the domain of development can be measured as well as how those working with children can aid children acquire the needed skills in each domain.

The Cognitive

Cognitive development includes child's ability to think, communicate using language, solve problem, understand concepts, process information, and the overall intelligence. As a child develops cognitively, such child should be able to use his or her intellectual skills to interact with the surroundings. At this level, language development should be seen as paramount. This is because, behavioural development is reflected by children's actions in or responses to their environment. These responses may be voluntary or involuntary, conscious or unconscious.

Language is both the expression and comprehension of words. It involves a set of rules that allow people to exchange thoughts, ideas, or emotions. Language can be expressed through singing, gestures, speech, or other means of communication. Communication also involves hearing, which develops from the newborn stage to early childhood. Hearing should be checked at birth and into early childhood. There is a wide range of typical development. For instance, the most intensive period for development of communication is the first three years of life (Kelly Stanton, 2009). It is therefore, the duty of those taking care of the child to identify developmental delays, either correct them or make referral to specialists. A practioner should be able to do so through evaluation of the different domains of learning.

Evaluation of educational programmes focuses on the degree to which the objectives of such programmme have been achieved. Teachers use of evaluation of information on Children's developmental processes helps them to be responsive to the differences which may exist between desirable behaviours and the observed behaviours exhibited by the children. Thus, evaluation helps to identify areas of needs and those to pay

more attention to. Once this is identified, it helps the practicing teachers to prioritize the children's needs. A need is best defined as a gap between what is currently happening and what should be occurring in terms of expected results (Kaufman, 1972, Rossett, 1987).

The evaluation activity can be carried out at the formative or summative level. Formative Evaluation is most often used in the early stages of instructional development to gather information on the adequacy of materials, strategies and assessments. This information is used in the revision and further development process (Seels and Richey, 1994). Formative evaluation techniques can be used to improve the effectiveness of early childhood educational programme and should not only be used only at the initial stage, but as a process of testing assumptions about instructional techniques, materials injected into the programme throughout the processes of design and development of such programme (Dick, Carey and Carey, 2001). On the other hand, summative evaluation focuses on the outcomes of such programmes. Summative evaluation occurs at the end of a programme because, the focus is on ascertaining the impact of the programme (Seels and Glasgow, 1998). Whichever one the practising teacher intends to use, care must be taken to select appropriate evaluation tool or instrument. Information generated must be analysed, interpreted and the result feedback into the programme for decision making processes.

The information needed on each child's level of development in each aspect can be best generated through the use of research instruments and observation technique. In such instruments, expected developmental mile stones are listed and those working with children are expected to check for the existence or none existence of such behaviours. After collecting such information, the teacher or care giver analyses such information to identify those who have attained the expected mile stone and those who did not. Care givers working with the children should allow those who exhibited the expected behaviours to be exposed to new ones commensurate to their age, while those who are yet to attain this development are helped to measure up.

Evaluation Tool for Measuring Child Cognitive Development Level

A check list can be used by early childhood practitioners to identify behaviours which a child has accomplished in this domain.

Essentially, the best technique to use by the person carrying out this activity is through observation. Table 1, shows a checklist of behaviours which early childhood educators can adapt while measuring children's cognitive developmental mile stone.

Table 1: Child Cognitive Development Checklist for Three to Five Year Olds

S/N	Expected Behaviours.	Yes	No
A	General. Child is able to:		
1.	sort objects by size		
2.	sort objects by primary colours		
3.	sort objects by shape		
4.	write the alphabet		
5.	recognize the alphabet		
6.	start to use more reasoning skills through trial and error		
7.	engage in pretend play with dolls or toys		
8.	match objects to pictures		
9.	sort objects by numbers of two, three, four		
10.	use imaginative play with people, dolls, etc.		
11.	sort items into categories		
12.	begin to understand the concept of time		
13.	ask adults questions		
14.	identify common objects in the environment		
15.	identify body parts such as elbow, back, face, eye, head, leg, hand.		
B	Language Development. Child is able to:		
16.	understand most adult sentences		
17.	say the names of parts of the body		
18.	understand concepts of over, under, in, and on		
19.	use plural forms		
20.	use two- to four-word (e.g. it, is, on, he, she, boy, girl, book, goat.		
21.	use pronouns such as I, me, you, they, and we		
22.	express possession such as, "My book."		
23.	use command		
24.	increase vocabulary		
25.	express action such as, "Go outside."		
26.	express location such as, "I went up."		

27.	repeat two numbers in sequence (e.g. one, two; five, six;)		
28.	understand the difference between the concepts one, more		
29.	be understood by others		
30.	use the question words who, what, and where		
31.	use possessive forms, such as "my daddy's car"; ' my pencil'		
32.	use verbs such as is, am, and are		
33.	describe objects by size, shape, and colour		
34.	sing simple songs		
35.	count from zero to ten; 0-50; (for five year olds 0- 100, as the curriculum prescribes).		
36.	engage in conversation		
37.	begin to tell stories (for five year olds)		

How to Help the Child Develop this Skill

Embedded in a concept of effective cognitive support for an individual are certain pre-requisite conditions that have to be met by the learner, among them is active participation. Therefore, for learning to take place the child has to be motivated in order to engage with a cognitive challenge. Encouraging and enabling the child to participate at this high level are perhaps the most important feature of learning in the early years. For instance, Pascal and Bertram (1997) suggest that effective learning demands an almost symbiotic relationship between child and adult. These writers describe 'involvement' of the child as that which flows from him or her and is influenced by the 'engaged' teacher. The characteristics of an involved child are those of ability to be focused and persistent in an activity. Mutual collaboration in the learning act is described by Pascal and Bertram in the following ways: '...not only does the adult's style of engagement directly affect the children's level of involvement, but the children's involvement affects the adult's style of engagement' (1997:135). The centrality of which is the notion of reciprocity.

Furthermore, children activities should be carried out through play. 'Play is the work of the child' (Froebel, 1878). Play based-activities as an effective vehicle for learning appear to meet all three of the above educational aims. Traditionally, play has a place at the heart of early childhood education. it is recognized as the way that young children learn most effectively. Play offers opportunities from which children benefit

hugely, both cognitively and socially. On the cognitive side, play-based learning should be encouraged because of its highly motivating self-directing qualities which encourage engagement, concentration, task completion and the development of problem-solving abilities. Others avenue of helping children develop the expected skills include:

- encouraging children to explore the environment,
- using adult-child interactions that involves open-ended questioning to extend children's thinking,
- practitioners possessing high levels of subject knowledge of the curriculum as well as knowledge and understanding of child development,
- building information collected at the formative stage into children's activities,
- discussing educational aims with parents, among others.

Social – Emotional Development

Social-emotional development refers to how people develop social and emotional skills. Healthy social development allows us to form positive relationships with family, friends, teachers, and significant others in our lives. As we mature, we learn to better manage our own feelings and needs and to respond appropriately to the feelings and needs of others. Social-emotional development can be affected by a child's personality, the opportunities he/she has for social interaction, behaviours learned from parents, and developmental disorders. For example, a child who has a short temper and who witnesses violence in the home may have trouble learning how to play amicably with other children.

Social development involves learning the values, knowledge and skills that enable children to relate to others effectively and to contribute in positive ways to family, school and the community. This kind of learning is passed on to children directly by those who care for and teach them, as well as indirectly through social relationships within the family or with friends, and through children's participation in the culture around them. Through their relationships with others and their growing awareness of social values and expectations, children build a sense of who they are and of the social roles available to them. As children develop

socially, they should respond in ways that are acceptable to the people around them and play active part in shaping their relationships.

What Are Social – Emotional Skills?

Social skills are ways of dealing with others that create healthy and positive interactions. Children who have social skills can communicate clearly, calmly, and respectfully. They show consideration for the feelings and interests of their peers. They take responsibility for their actions, are able to control themselves, and are able to assert themselves when needed. Children learn social skills through experiences with peers, examples and instructions from their parents, and time with significant others. It is vital for children to be exposed to socialization as early as possible because it is the building block to developing positive relationships. Social skills are needed for enriching social experiences, and they lessen the chance for negative interactions. By having a positive impact on life experiences, social skills also give children a sense of confidence and how to consider other emotions with whom they share their environment.

Children's social-emotional development therefore influence all other areas of development: Cognitive, motor, and language development are all greatly affected by how a child feels about him/herself and how he/she is able to express ideas and emotions (Kelly Stanton, 2009). Healthy social-emotional development includes the ability of a child to form and sustain positive relationships, experience, manage, and express emotions, and explore and engage with the environment. Furthermore, children with well-developed social-emotional skills are also more able to express their ideas and feelings, display empathy towards others, manage their feelings of frustration and disappointment more easily, feel self-confident, more easily make and develop friendships and succeed in school. Social-emotional development provides the foundation for how we feel about ourselves and how we experience others. This foundation begins the day we are born and continues to develop throughout our lifespan. The greatest influence on a child's social-emotional development is the quality of the relationships that he or she develops with his/her primary caregivers.

Evaluation Tool for Child's Social – Emotional Development

Also a check list of identifiable behaviours can be used by those working with children to ascertain social-emotional development level of each child. Essentially, the best technique to be used by the person carrying out this activity is through observation. The person checks and identifies the existence or non- existence of the expected behaviours and records appropriately. Listed in Table 2 are some behaviours which those working with children can use to measure development of this domain.

Table 2: Social – Emotional Development Checklist for Three to Five Year Olds

S/N	Expected Behaviours. The Child is able to:	Yes	No
1.	imitate adults		
2.	imitate other children		
3.	make or develop personal friends		
4.	have a group of friends		
5.	cooperate with others		
6.	share things with peers		
7.	demonstrate greater ability to agree with rules		
8.	integrate increased detail into imaginary play		
9.	play “mom” or “dad” in imaginary play		
10.	Sing		
11.	Dance		
12.	act		
13.	take turns with other children, although not consistently		
14.	show affection for other playmates		
15.	display empathy towards others		
16.	please others		
17.	get involved in new experiences		
18.	manage their feelings when frustrated or disappointed		
19.	feel self-confident		

Basic things to do while supporting children's social-emotional development

Children's earliest and most extensive learning about social relationships occur in the family. Those working with children (parents, teacher and carers) can support positive social-emotional development by doing the following:

1. model respect and consideration,

2. encourage children to be respectful in all their relationships,
3. Provide care and support by responding to children's needs,
4. listen and take children's feelings into consideration,
5. help children to develop social skills by providing coaching and teaching them to think through and solve the day-to-day social difficulties they encounter,
6. supervise and support children's social activities without taking over.
7. ask questions that encourage children to put them in someone else's shoes. Use questions such as "How would you feel if ...?",
8. help children learn skills for perspective-taking,
9. Ask questions in a supportive way because this helps children to think through situations and
10. encourage them to take others' feelings and perspectives into consideration.

Physical Development

Early childhood is the time when children should develop active, healthy lifestyles. Physical fitness allows children to participate in group activities and maintain attention to, and interest in task necessary to the learning process. Applying stamina, energy, strength, and flexibility to a variety of physical activities are major elements of physical development and fitness. Children need access to free time, adequate space, and challenging materials to play and pursue their own physical needs. Thus, physical well-being, health, and motor development are central to children's entire learning experience and aids life-long active and healthy lifestyle.

Physical development has three distinct components: gross motor skills, fine motor skills, and sensorimotor skills. Gross motor skills are characterized by movements of the entire body or large portions of the body and include the abilities to roll over, walk, run, jump, hop, skip, and climb. These skills begin to develop in infancy and early childhood. Fine motor skills involve the ability of a child to coordinate small muscle in the arms, hands, and fingers. Infants and children develop these skills over time, starting with more gross movements such as grasping an object. Eventually, they can use more precise and refined movement, such that,

used for grasping, holding writing materials, cutting with scissors, or fastening buttons, drawing, and writing.

Sensorimotor skills require the ability to use and integrate the senses (sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch) to guide motions. Two key aspects of sensorimotor development are eye-hand coordination and self-regulation. Taken together, these skills provide a foundation for behaviour, learning, and overall development for young children. Sensory skills, such as taste, touch, vision, hearing, and smell develop through movement and exploration. Children explore with their mouths and progress to exploring with the hands. Sensory skills tend to be more refined in early childhood.

Evaluation Tool for Child's Gross motor skills

A check list can be used by those working with children to identify areas of strength or weakness of a child in this domain. Essentially, the best technique to be used by the person carrying out this activity is through observation. Table 3 shows listed behaviours which early childhood educators can use to ascertain each child's level of psychomotor development for three to five year olds.

Table 3: Physical Development Checklist for Three to Five Year Olds

S/N	Expected Behaviours.	Yes	No
A	Two to Three Years . Child is able to:		
1.	climbs well		
2.	kick a ball without loss of balance		
3.	jump from the floor Progresses to jumping off the second step		
4.	balance briefly on one foot		
5.	run with good coordination		
6.	walk up and down stairs, alternating feet on each		
7.	jump forward and backwards		
8.	hop on one foot		
9	jump over a two-inch-high hurdle or obstacle		
10.	throw with some accuracy		
	Four to Five Years. Child is able to:		
10.	Hop		
11.	Jump		
12.	Skip		

13.	Climb		
14.	Swing		
15.	Somersault		
16.	throw overhand with greater accuracy		
17.	balance on one foot for many seconds without support		
18.	catch a ball consistently		
Three to Five Years. Fine Motor Skills Development			
Child is able to:			
19.	copy shapes such as squares and triangles		
20.	use scissors to cut out pictures		
21.	copy block letters		
22.	write letters		
23.	connect the dots		
24.	color between the lines		
25.	recognize the alphabet		
26.	trace the alphabet		
27.	copy geometric shapes		

Some strategies which care givers can use to aid children's physical development include:

1. provision of safe environment and equipment that vary in skill levels (examples are balls, tyres, climbing frames, balance beam); and
2. provide opportunities for each child to participate in activities that develop large muscles such as dance, play balls, run, skip, and other movement activities.
3. teach children have new skills
4. provide activities in which only one side of the body is used at a time (e.g. hopping, standing on one foot) and
5. include children, especially the five year olds in simple, small physical chores (e.g, picking papers littered in the environment, emptying the trash baskets

Furthermore, to aid their fine motor development, practioners should endeavour to engage the children in activities that strengthen hand, grasping e.g moulding with clays, picking up small objects with fingers, provide opportunities for children to practice buttoning up and tying their

shoe laces, spend time with each child using a variety of writing materials (e.g. crayons, pencils, paints) and above all, ensure that each child participates.

How can Practicing Pre-school Teacher Provide Appropriate Early Childhood Care and Education Practices.

According to National Association for Education of Young Children (NAEYC 2009), it is paramount that early childhood practitioners consider these three areas of knowledge while engaging those who will work with the children. These include knowledge of child development and learning, knowledge about each child as an individual and information on the social and cultural contexts in which children live.

1. Knowledge of child development and learning.

Here, care must be taken by employers of those who will work with the children to employ practitioners who have adequate knowledge of age-related characteristics that permit general predictions about what experiences are likely to best promote children's learning and development. This is because teachers who are knowledgeable about child development and learning are able to make broad predictions about what children of a particular age group typically will be like, what they typically will and will not be capable of, and what strategies and approaches will most likely promote their optimal learning and development. With this knowledge, teachers can make preliminary decisions with some confidence about environment, materials, interactions, and activities. At the same time, their knowledge also tells them that specific groups of children and the individual children in any group always will be the same in some ways but different in others.

2. Knowledge about each child as an individual

To be effective, those working with children should understand that, each child is unique with his or her own pattern and timing of development. As a result, care should be taken to plan the curriculum to respond to individual differences. Thus, teachers should understand each child in the group well. They do this using a variety of methods such as observation, clinical interview (an extended dialogue in which the adult seeks to discern the child's concepts or strategies), examination of children's work, individual child assessments, and

talking with families. From the information and insights gathered, teachers make plans and adjustments to promote each child's individual development and learning as fully as possible. Developmental variation among children is the norm, and any one child's progress also will vary across domains and disciplines, contexts, and time. Children differ in many other respects - too including in their strengths of interests, and preferences; personalities and approaches to learning; and knowledge, skills, and abilities based on prior experiences. Children may also have special learning needs; sometimes these have been diagnosed and sometimes they have not. Among the factors that teachers need to consider as they seek to optimize a child's school's adjustment and learning are circumstances, such as living in poverty or homelessness, having to move frequently, and other challenging situations. Responding to each child as an individual is fundamental to developmentally appropriate practice.

3. **Information about the social and cultural contexts in which children live**

As individuals grow up in a family and in a broader social and cultural community, practioners should understand what groups consider appropriate values, acceptable respects and behaviours. Practioners should endeavour to learn this through direct teaching from parents and other important people who children under are their care and through observing those around the environment. Among these understandings, practioners will have better understanding of rules about behaviours peculiar to each child's culture. Such culture may include how to show respect, how to interact with people we know well and those we have just met, how to regard time and personal space, how to dress, and other attitudes and actions. Human beings tend to absorb these rules very early, so behaviours are indoctrinated with little conscious thought. When young children are in a group setting outside their homes, what makes sense to them, how they use language to interact, and how they experience this new world depend on the social and cultural contexts to which they are accustomed. A skilled teacher should take such contextual factors into account, along with the children's ages and their individual differences, in shaping all aspects of the learning environment.

Understanding the Needs of the Child

All children need the basics of life such as food, warmth, shelter and clothing and they also need to feel loved and secured. One way to view the needs of the child is to consider children's growth in terms of Maslow's hierarchy of needs. The human basic needs as summarized by Maslow includes; physiological, safety, love, and belonging needs. Experience has shown that, when one's needs are met, one can pursue higher levels of comfort and understanding.

Physiological Needs

Physiological Needs according to Maslow's include: provision of food, shelter, warmth and clothing and these come first. Experience has also shown that, a hungry man can become temporarily mad. Thus, unless children are fed very well and those working with them ensure that, they have enough sleep, their capacity to learn may be hindered. This means that, what does and doesn't happen outside the school comes into our classrooms whether we like it or not. This shows that, parents have a major role to play in this aspect. Parents therefore need to be fully informed on the implications of not meeting this basic need. This is because, those working with children cannot ignore the fact that pupils who come to school tired or hungry will not learn as well as those who are provided with such basic needs.

Safety Needs

A level up from physiological needs is what Maslow terms "safety needs." Those working with children should ensure that, the children feel safe in school, both physically and emotionally. The children's egos and bodies should be protected and structures should be put in place by the authorities concerned to intervene when things don't go as planned. If the children under our care are worried about their safety with respect to kidnapping threats, presence of a bully and teacher use corporal punishment by practicing teachers or care givers, these actions can inhibit their adjustment and learning. We practitioners should endeavour to spend a great deal of time on each child's personal intelligences as well as intrapersonal and interpersonal relationships between the teachers and the

children. Teachers should teach the children under their care how to work with others, how to manage conflict, and how to give feedback.

Safety is actually a critical aspect of physical well being, which includes; protecting children from exposure to harmful substances and situations. It also involves helping children learn to avoid harmful objects, environments and circumstances. In order to develop these abilities, children and families need to learn about safety rules and regulations, know when and how to ask for help, and recognize the boundary between safety and danger. In recent times, Nigerian children are victims of slavery which comes in different forms; sex, house helps, street hawkers, suicide bombers. Thus, it is expected that, Nigerian children from the very beginning should be exposed to basic safety rules such as the use of seat belts, avoid over crowded areas, avoid explosives and weather survival skills. Such exposure enables children to establish healthy life long behaviours. Parents need to partner with teachers through training to drive home these points. It is important that, teachers and parents pay attention to both traditional indigenous knowledge of survival as well as modern science and technology.

Love/Belonging Needs

Love and belonging are found in the next level of Maslow's needs, and I see that is inherent in the idea of community. Therefore, schools being part of the community should be made a place in which each child is actively part of, with respect to the larger group, peers and adults in the school environment. Each child should be loved and this should be modeled by significant adults in the child's environment.

Conclusion

Hence, if early childhood education is to meet the needs of the Nigerian children at this age level, those working with the children should observe the recommended developmentally appropriate practices. Thus, they should remember that, all areas of development and learning are important, learning and development follow sequences, proceed at varying rates and results from an interaction of maturation and experience. They should also not lose sight of the fact that, child development is at its best when children feel secured, exposed to multiple social and cultural

contexts, teaching and learning carried out in a variety of ways, especially through play. Service providers which should endeavour to engage those who know about child development and learning, know what is appropriate for each child as well as know what is culturally important for each child.

REFERENCES AND BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Athey, C. (1990). *Extending thought in young children. A Parent-Teacher Partnership*. London: Paul Chapman Publishing.
- Barbara B. and Rita C. Richey (1994). *Instructional technology: The definition and domains of the field*. Washington DC: AECT.
- Bruce, T. (1996). *Helping young children play*. London: Hodder and Stoughton.
- Bruce, T. (2004). *Early Childhood Education*. London: Hodder and Stoughton.
- Bruce, T., Findlay, A., Read, J., Scarborough, M. (1995). *Recurring themes in education*. London: Paul Chapman Publishing.
- Dick, W., Carey, L. and Carey, J. O. (2001). *The systematic design of instruction* (5th Edition). Addison-Wesley Educational Publishers, Inc.
- Froebel, 1878). *Mother play and nursery songs*. (trans. Fanny E. Dwight (songs) and Josephine Jarvis (prose)) Boston, MA: Lee and Shepard.
- Goldschmied, E. and Jackson, S. (1994). *Peer's under three*. London: Routledge.
- Greenfield, S. (1996). A physical base for consciousness. one of three lectures on evolution consciousness and conscious evolution. *RSA Journal*, CXLIV(5470). 37-40.
- Kaufman, R. A. (1972). *Educational system planning*. Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc.
- Montessori, M (1912). *The Montessori Method*. London: Heinemann

- National Association for Education of Young Children (NAEYC 2009). Developmentally appropriate practice in early childhood programme serving children from birth through age 8. Downloaded from www.naeyc.org: assessed on November, 2013.
- Odinko, M. N., Williams, J, M, and Donn, G. (2009).Teacher qualification and instructional delivery modes at the preschool level of education in Nigeria.*Journal of Early Childhood Teacher Education*. 30(3), 230 - 246.
- Pascal, C. and Bertram, T. (eds.) (1997).*Effective early learning*. London: Hodder and Stoughton.
- Rogoff, B., Mistry, J., Goncu, A. and Mosier, C. (1993).Guided participation in cultural activity by toddler and care givers.Monographs of the Society for Research in Child Development, 58 (8, serial no 236).
- Rossett, A. (1987). *Training needs assessment*.Englewood Cliffs, NJ: EducationalTechnologyPublications.
- Seels, B. and Glasgow, Z. (1998).*Making instructional design decisions*.(2nd ed.) Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill.
- Trevathen, C. (1996). November.Lecturer for TACTYC Conference, Greenwich.
- Wilkinson, R. (1980).*Question and answers on Rudolf Steiner education*. East Grinstead: Henry Goulden.