

# **SYNERGY BETWEEN CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS**

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## **Abstract**

Today's education system is fast-paced and ever-evolving, with a growing emphasis on children's academic achievement. As such, it is important to consider the synergy between the educational experiences offered in childhood and tertiary institutions. This paper explored the potential benefits of collaboration between childhood education and tertiary education.

The paper focused on the potential benefits of collaboration between the two educational levels. Developing relationships between childhood and tertiary education could lead to increased transfer of knowledge and a more seamless transition from childhood to tertiary education. The collaboration could also result in richer learning opportunities for students, as they could benefit from new ideas, activities, and resources. Furthermore, increased communication between childhood and tertiary levels may lead to enhanced student confidence, as well as improved abilities in problem-solving, critical thinking, and other skills.

**Keywords:** Synergy, Childhood Education, Tertiary Institution

## **Introduction**

The education system is constantly changing and adapting in order to best serve the needs of the students that will be in the future workforce. One relationship that is becoming increasingly important is the synergy between early childhood education and tertiary learning institutions. Childhood education plays an important role in shaping the foundation of a student's educational experience. Early childhood learning lays the groundwork for a student to eventually transition to a postsecondary institution, so it is critical that the curriculum and practices used in elementary schools are as effective and efficient as possible. Through innovative teaching methods, such as the use of technology and progressive performance assessments, elementary schools can provide the best possible learning experience that will set the stage for further academic success.

At the tertiary level, it is important to create a learning experience that builds upon the foundational knowledge that is gained during early childhood education. By actively engaging

with the student and providing appropriate challenges, universities and colleges can ensure that the student is receiving the best possible education.

It is an unarguable fact that early years experiences in the life of a child have a significant influence on the later life of any child. This implies that, as a country we must consider the quality of Early Childhood Education serious. Bush<sup>1</sup> stated that the years between birth and age five are the foundation upon which successful (or otherwise) lives are built. At the global level, this fact is recognized and every nation is working assiduously towards providing quality early years education and care for the very youngest children. Nigeria signed up in order to provide quality and comprehensive early childhood education and care for all preschoolers. The Federal Government of Nigeria is now responsive to early childhood education by virtue of its inclusion in the Universal Basic Education (UBE) programs and even moved a step further to inaugurating early childhood education policy on 8 October 2007<sup>2</sup>. This constitutes a step in the right direction in the provision of good early childhood education.

### **Rationales behind the Introduction of Early Childhood Care Development and Education ECCDE**

The rationale for the provision of ECCE is to ensure the overall development of the child who is endowed with nascent potentials who is to be nurtured properly right from the cradle for him/her to be nurtured meaningfully to maturity. Anuna & Obi<sup>3</sup> advance the following reasons for the introduction of ECCE in Nigeria:

**Intellectual Development of the Child:** The pre-primary school falls under the pre- operational stage of Piaget's theory of cognitive development which categorizes the intellectual development at this stage from 3-5 years since children are merely able to develop and form mental pictures of things and use symbols or representations of the world in which they live. Piaget establishes in his theory that the first five years of a child's life are crucial as they form foundation for later adult life. Since this period is characterized by accelerate of intellectual development, this can be linked to the child's social, emotional and physical development. The ECCDE before serves as engine room for intellectual progress and opportunities missed at this stage are secondly reclaimed.

**Socialization of the Child:** Socialization can be seen in this context as the process of conforming to societal standards, customs, values and culture for smooth integration into the larger society. In early Childhood Education Centers, children with varying background attend the school together. In the school the pupils learn societal customs, values and culture. Children

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<sup>1</sup>Bush, L. (2001). White house summit on early childhood cognitive development, in Teaching Our Youngest: A guide for preschool teachers and family providers (2002). Washington, DC. P. 61

<sup>2</sup>Punch newspaper, 9 October 2007, p. 16

<sup>3</sup>Anuna, M. C. & Obi, R. C. (2004). Introduction to pre-primary education (Concepts and principles). Enugu: Ernesco Publishers.

also learn to interact through playing, become law abiding and tolerated as well as learn to tolerate others.

**Emotional Development of the Child:** Emotional development of the child is the most difficult aspect of the child's life to be understood by adults. From the date of birth to the day the child enters school, the child is emotionally attached to the parents particularly the mother. It is obvious that parting from loved ones is usually painful and this has been one of the causes of truancy in schools. Pre-primary school therefore provides opportunity for children to leave their home without much emotional upset when they enter primary school. This is possible because the ECCDE centers are full of other children that the child enjoys emotional attachment and upset associated with leaving loved ones at home.

**Moral Development of the Child:** Norms of the society are made for the maintenance of peace and harmony in the society. Serious deviation from known norms of a given society leads to immorality. Morality which sustains a given society comes as a result of respecting the societal norms and mores. Moral education should therefore start from early childhood education level and not at the adult stage when many anti-social and immoral behavior patterns are formed.

**Physical Development of the Child:** The physical development of the child is of two dimensions that is the development of gross motor skills through throwing, running and jumping activities and the development of fine motor skills through handling of small objects, toys, tying of shoes, drawing etc. Children of pre-primary school age like to be involved in one activity or the other. The average child's home may not always meet the physical needs of the child to be engaged in activities at least as much as they would like. They like to jump, cross dwarf walls, form groups and walk across buildings, play with balls, play with swings and manipulate with old tyres and bicycles. The pre-primary school provides opportunities for the child to acquire these skills and help them to develop physically.

### **The Philosophy of Childhood Education**

Philosophy of childhood education stresses the need to adopt a wholistic approach to the education of the child. Akinbote<sup>4</sup> asserted that, developmental and educational psychologists all over the world have made it clear that pre-schools years are the formative periods in the life of an individual. As a critical period, most concepts and basic principles of life are engrained in the children during these early years. Therefore, the educational objectives that guide ECCDE education should be well planned and developed from the child's immediate environment. The philosophy of childhood education also seeks to establish the principles underlying this level of education, aims, purposes and methods which scientific knowledge has accepted within this level.

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<sup>4</sup> Akinbote, O., Oduolowu, E. and Lawal, B: *Pre-primary and Primary Education in Nigeria: (A Basic Text. Ibadan: StirlingHorden Publishers 2001).* p35

Moreover, most educational practices are prevaricated upon some philosophical principles or thoughts. Philosophy of education deals with speculative and contemplative issues in education that are fundamental to human existence.

Therefore, according to Nkechi<sup>5</sup> while clarifying NPE provision on early childhood education as varied programme initiatives required for children from birth to pre-school ages to make them thrive. These initiatives include early stimulation, nutrition and optimal interactive environment. In education, philosophy helps us to establish standards and formulate goals that can help us to set up signposts for the achievement of such goals. It will include a critical examination of methods and principles for solving the problems of childhood. For instance there are beliefs that young infants have a number of developmental needs like protection, nourishments, defence against diseases and physical injury, emotional, psychological and social needs just to mention a few. The philosophy of childhood education there foregives guidelines on how to achieve these objectives. It seeks to know those values, purposes and ideas towards which the child's efforts can be directed.

Another crucial role of philosophy according to Maduwesi<sup>6</sup> in childhood education is that it encourages education to be geared towards the child. It focuses on vital aspects like educational objectives, methods, curriculum, environment and the role of the teacher in education of the child. This implies that childhood education should be activity-based and relate to the interests and needs of the child. Child-centred education is the education where learning activities are specifically directed towards the optimal development of the child. It refers to the development of "the whole child" hence called a wholistic approach to learning. It does not disregard any aspect of the child's life. Education from this perspective is viewed as life itself rather than preparation for life. The practice of child-centredness in education is the function of philosophy and this will help the child to grow in learning as he overcomes challenges gradually. Therefore, the pre-primary educational objectives should be developed from the child's immediate environment, based on the experience of the environmental conditions so that a child can relate these learning experiences to the daily experiences in the environment. Philosophy of education suggests that teaching should be done scientifically on developmental basis and measurable terms psychologically to motivate the child sufficiently to learn. The child's individual difference should be considered and teaching adopted to that effect. Socially, children should be exposed to interact with an enriched environment, trained teachers, siblings, materials etc. to make them acquire the right type of social skills. All these philosophical ideas were the guiding principles that led to the establishment of pre-primary education as well as the curriculum used.

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<sup>5</sup>Nkechi o.: *Early childhood education in Nigeria, policy implementation: critique and a Way forward* AJOTE Vol. 4, No. 4 (Fall 2014/Spring 2015)) p.3.

<sup>6</sup>Maduwesi, E. J. *Early Childhood Education*. (Ibadan: Macmillan Nigeria 1999). P. 28.

### **Tertiary Education Philosophy**

Tertiary institutions in Nigeria encompass universities, polytechnics, and colleges of education. According to Amaghionyeodiwe<sup>7</sup> The philosophy behind these institutions is to provide higher education and training to empower individuals with knowledge and skills for personal and national development. This includes fostering critical thinking, research, and innovation, and promoting values such as academic excellence, ethics, and social responsibility. Nigerian tertiary institutions also aim to address societal challenges, promote cultural diversity, and contribute to economic growth by producing a skilled workforce. However, it's important to note that the specific goals and philosophies can vary between different institutions and may evolve over time.

### **Roles of the Childhood Education to Tertiary Education**

The childhood education plays a crucial role to tertiary institutions in a student's academic and personal development journey. It involves a seamless transition and continuity of learning experiences from early childhood education to higher education. Let's delve further into the details:

**Foundation of Knowledge:** Childhood education forms the fundamental basis for a student's academic growth. It helps in developing essential skills like reading, writing, and critical thinking, which are further built upon in tertiary institutions. A strong foundation in early education sets the stage for success in higher education<sup>8</sup>.

**Smooth Transition:** The collaboration between childhood education and tertiary institutions aims to ensure a smooth and successful transition from one educational level to another. Akinbote<sup>9</sup> asserted that by aligning curriculum frameworks and teaching methodologies, educators can bridge any learning gaps that may exist and equip students with the necessary skills for higher education.

**Continuity of Learning:** Childhood education focuses on holistic development, fostering social, emotional, and cognitive growth in students. This continuity is critical as students enter tertiary institutions, where they face more specialized and in-depth subject knowledge. As opined by Maduwesi<sup>10</sup> the skills and knowledge acquired during childhood education act as a springboard for further exploration and academic success.

**Building a Growth Mindset:** Childhood education inspires and nurtures a growth mindset, encouraging students to embrace challenges and develop resilience. This mindset is essential in tertiary institutions, where students often face more demanding coursework and high academic

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<sup>7</sup>Amaghionyeodiwe, L.A and Osinubi, T.S.(2007). "Do Higher Levels Of Schooling Lead To Higher Returns To Education In Nigeria?" Applied Econometrics and International Development, Vol.7-1. pp.157.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid pp. 157

<sup>9</sup> opcit

<sup>10</sup> opcit

expectations. By cultivating this mindset in early education as asserted by Maduwesi<sup>11</sup>, students are better equipped to tackle challenges and persevere through their higher education journey.

**Long-Term Success:** The synergy between childhood education and tertiary institutions is crucial for long-term success. It ensures that students are adequately prepared for the rigors of higher education and the demands of an evolving job market. Akinbote<sup>12</sup> believed that by establishing a strong educational foundation, students have a higher likelihood of academic achievement, personal growth, and successful career outcomes.

### Summary

It can be learned that education system is constantly changing and adapting in order to best serve the needs of the students that will be in the future workforce. One relationship that is becoming increasingly important is the synergy between early childhood education and tertiary learning institutions.

While, childhood education stresses the need to adopt a wholistic approach to the education of the child. Moreover, the developmental and educational psychologists all over the world have made it clear that pre-schools years are the formative periods in the life of an individual. As a critical period, most concepts and basic principles of life are engrained in the children during these early years.

Eventually, Nigerian tertiary institutions also aim to address societal challenges, promote cultural diversity, and contribute to economic growth by producing a skilled workforce. However, it's important to note that the specific goals and philosophies can vary between different institutions and may evolve over time.

The childhood education plays a crucial role to tertiary institutions in a student's academic and personal development journey. It involves a seamless transition and continuity of learning experiences from early childhood education to higher education as follow: Foundation of Knowledge, Smooth Transition, Continuity of Learning, Building a Growth Mindset and Long-Term Success

### Conclusion

The synergy between childhood education and tertiary institutions is vital for a student's educational journey. It provides a seamless transition, builds on foundational knowledge, fosters continuity of learning, instills a growth mindset, and contributes to long-term success. Collaboration and alignment between these two educational levels are essential in equipping students with the skills and knowledge they need to thrive in higher education and beyond.

### Recommendations

The smooth synergy between childhood and tertiary education can be effective by providing opportunities for students to engage with experts in the subject areas can not only create a

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dynamic learning environment, but also ensure that the students are engaged with current trends and developments in the field. Therefore, it is of utmost importance that educational institutions continue to explore innovative ways to create a learning experience that is both effective and efficient.

It can also be essential for the development of effective learners. By creating an educational environment that both provides rigor and encourages engagement, students will be able to gain the necessary skills needed to succeed in the future.

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