

## **TOWARDS EFFECTIVE TEACHING AND LEARNING AT PRE-PRIMARY SCHOOL IN NIGERIA.**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Among the objectives of pre-primary education in Nigeria is to prepare the child for the primary level of education. This can be achieved when there is adequate or effective teaching and learning at this level of education in Nigeria. Recent developments in the expansion and advantages of pre-primary school have been motivating many parents to patronize these pre-primary schools by sending their children there to receive pre-primary education. It is on the basis of various observations about the preschool child's learning that some basic methods of teaching have been proffered for the level. This paper also touches on the objectives of pre-primary education, significance of this level of education and suggests the most appropriate methods for effective teaching and learning at pre-primary level of education in Nigeria.*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Pre-school education in Nigeria can be said to be important as the entire education system itself, whatever happens to the child before enrolling in the formal school system determines to a great extent, the quality of the imputes into the formal education system. More important, national policy on education recognizes pre-primary education as a vital segment of the entire education structure, although the policy does not go into sufficient depth to specify the details of the modus operandi as in the case of other levels of education in Nigeria (Lassa, 1995).

Pre-primary education, as it is referred to in the national policy on education (1981), is the education given in an educational institution to children aged three to five plus prior to their entering the primary schools.

With rapid economic changes after independence in Nigeria, Fafunwa (1991) said many women take up employment in organizations to make the two ends meet. He further said that, parents began to see the need to send their children to these pre-primary institutions where these children would be taken care of before the mothers returned from work and where they would also learn in preparation for entering the primary school later on.

As a result, this writer felt the need to examine some methods for effective teaching and learning at pre-primary level of education considering its important place in the education system in Nigeria.

### **OBJECTIVES OF PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION IN NIGERIA**

The objectives of this level of education as contained in the national policy on education (1981) include the following:

1. Effecting a smooth transition from the home to the school
2. Preparing the child for the primary level of education.
3. Providing adequate care and supervision for the children while their parents are at work, on the farm, in the market, office etc.
4. Inculcating social norms;
2. Preparing the child for the primary level of education.
5. Inculcating in the child the spirit of inquiry and creativity through the exploration of nature, the local environment playing with toys, artistic and musical activities etc.
6. Teaching co-operation and team spirit;
7. Teaching the rudiments of numbers, letters, colours, shapes, forms etc. through play;
8. Teaching good habits especially good health habits;

### **IMPORTANCE OF PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION IN NIGERIA**

In recent time, due to availability of many employment opportunities especially after independence, many parents secured jobs that earned them some amount of money at the end of the month. This then warranted the need for house maids or house girl. Coincidentally, with the introduction of the Universal Primary Education (U.P.E) and Universal Basic Education (U.B.E) both of which are free-of-charge, many parents have been sending their children to primary schools. With this development, Douglas (1997) said many parents nowadays find it difficult to have house maids. Parents have began to see the need to send their children to pre-primary institutions where these children would be taken care of before their mothers return from work and where they would also learn in preparation for entering the primary school later.

Douglas (1997), further said that This level of education helps in providing the child with a .stimulating environment which helps to develop the child's cognitive abilities and skills. This may be by providing toys and play devices.

Children of pre-school institutions come from different families. Here the children learn to live together, respect other people's opinion, abide by rules and promote team spirit. This type of living together as brothers and sisters will lay a good foundation for adult life. Baba J. (1998) quoting Penfield (1964), describes early age as the best 'age for learning second and third language, therefore children of these institutions have greater opportunity to learn other languages apart from their mother tongue.

Lassa (1995) in his work said, the pre-primary institutions will gradually train the pupils to leave home at times without much emotional upset. The type of activities given in the pre-primary schools like plays, songs, dance and so on will help to discourage them from fighting one another, which may lead to responsible adult behaviours in the future.

Most of the pre-primary pupils like to engage in one activity or the other. Since most of the parents cannot provide the best environment for children to satisfy their physical needs. It helps in developing good shape and good health, (Lassa, 1995).

As the parents are away to the farmers, markets, or their working places, Nigeria Journal of Arts, Science and Technology (NIJASAT) Vol. 3 No. 1 June 2005 these types of institutions, which are blessed with trained staff, are in the best position to serve as custodians to the pre-primary school pupils. Pre-primary school helps to detect the anti-social or anti-moral behaviours among the children in these schools when watching them at play. This is the right time for correcting these types of behaviours. It may be difficult to affect correction at adult stage.

Lastly, it promotes healthy habits like washing hands before and after eating hygienic way of using toilets, cups and how to dress.

From the above discussion, it is important to note that early or pre-primary education for our children is very essential.

#### **SOME TEACHING METHODS THAT COULD AROUSE THE INTEREST OF CHILDREN IN PRE-PRIMARY INSTITUTION**

1. Play way method could be adopted for children of this stage for an effective learning. Durojaiye (1997), said "Dramatic play is their way of learning informally about life and about what is ultimately expected of them". Children like to dramatize while playing. Therefore, they should be given freedom and encouragement to play with some playing, materials like sand, water and clay. They should be encouraged to make different things with clay.
2. They should be given adequate attention by the teacher. Curiosity, exploration and manipulation should be exploited maximally. Recent research by P.E Willis (learning to labour) confirms that children interest is captured by a teacher who is prepared to use illustrations, demonstrations or experiments in an inquiring way. Play in the early years of schooling is an obvious exploitation of attention needs which teachers can make use of.
3. Teacher-learner interaction will include encouraging individuals to raise their level of motivation to a point where they want to succeed. A trained and sensitive adult teacher provides examples of social behaviours to his pupils (Oyeyemi, 1995).
4. Oyeyemi (1995) further said that, Questioning is another method that could be adopted in pre-primary school. It is an effective way involving pupils at various level of thinking whenever the pupils participation in exploring existing or creating new knowledge is needed, questioning techniques is very effective. The questionnaire may be directed to the whole class, a group to individuals, questions must be designed o bring the best out of the learners.
5. Learning may also be through songs, and rhyme learning could be made meaningful to the pre-primary school pupils when put into songs and rhymes. This also helps the child in adding to the perception of the old and new experiences.

## SUGGESTIONS

This paper enumerated the objectives of pre-primary education in Nigeria, mentioned some of the importance of pre-primary schooling and suggested some strategies for the effective teaching and learning at this level of the educational system. My appeal therefore, goes to the governments, federal, state and local and the proprietors of pre-primary institutions to supply the necessary equipment to the schools of this type. The teacher's salaries at this level should be promptly paid to allow effective teaching in the schools.

Teachers in the pre-primary institutions should try to use various methods of teaching so as to help the children learn effectively and make the teaching easier and meaningful.

The inspectorate division of the ministry of education must always pay periodical visit to these pre-primary institutions to ensure strict compliance with the objectives of national policy on education.

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