

Library Education and Information Resources in Improving Early Childhood Education in Nigeria

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Abstract

Early Childhood Education programmes are for children who are not up to school age but the programmes were designed to help introduce some knowledge that ought to acquire into reading and writing at the early childhood library education will make an extraordinary achievement in the field of education because of the use of various effective learning equipment, enables the child to develop and see things in different perspectives, develop critical thinking on handling useful information skills which will enable him evaluate information resources and grow to be an individual that can learn at his own pace and making life more meaningful after school. In view of these, the paper looked at the importance of early childhood education through the use of library services, examined how the reading culture of the early childhood education can be promoted. It explored the concept of early childhood education, some challenges, on a conclusive note, however, suggestions were offered.

Keywords: Education, Information, Improvement, Library Resources Early Childhood

Introduction

Early childhood education according to the National Policy on Education document is the education provided in an educational institution to children prior to their entering the primary school. It includes the crèche, the nursery, and the kindergarten (NPE, 2004). Education can be seen to be designed to develop the habits, attitudes and skills needed for primary education. In that case, education should be a birth right of every child, an investment, one can invest in a child that leads to intellectual property. This intellectual property is the intangible property which no one can steal or destroy in the life of a child. For the fact that children are naturally learners, this capacity to learn can be undermined and sometimes destroyed when we forgot that it is a lifelong education that revolves round the growth and survival of the child in line with their development milestones. The use of educative resources in library in teaching children at that age aimed at balancing the growth of the total personality of the child through training of the human spirit, intellect, rational self, skills, feelings and senses.

The library with teacher-friendly qualities engages the children with different educational learning materials like toys games and plays create the feeling for wanting to go to school every more, this not only make the child to learn but creates in him basic numeracy and literacy and even encourage an emotional understanding of the world in which he lives in. The four walls of the library in the early childhood education creates good educational environment, with different creative art works, pictures of great men and women, maps of great mountains, colours of seas and oceans, skeletons, and other sensitive organs of the body, that can help develop a child into a physical, intellectual and emotional individual, that can undergo any educational courses and stand out sustainable in the society. All these attributed to the learning environment, provision of quality librarian and instructional materials that enhanced good participation during learning process.

Conceptual Clarification

Early childhood is a crucial stage of life in terms of a child's personal, intellectual, emotional and social development. For a proper understanding and appreciation of this paper, it is necessary to define the key concept(s) used here in. for this purpose, the concept of early childhood education would be defined. According to Chowdhury (2002) as "early childhood education refers to the formal teaching of young children at the pre-school age". Bukola (2017) defined it as a term commonly used to describe the formal teaching and care of young children by people other than their families or in setting outside their homes.

Moreover, the National Policy on Education (2004) considers early childhood education as the education given in an educational institution to children prior to their entering the primary school. From the foregoing definitions, early childhood education could be defined as the kind of education made available to a child before the age of normal schooling. It involves the set of activities that are intended to modify the behaviour of children prior to their entry into elementary school.

Importance of Early Childhood Education

Early Childhood education is an intellectual innovation and investment that policy makers has made, that its benefits are manifold for both the academic success of the child and the quest for achieving a better life. It is a programme that develops the child mentally and ability to grow in skill acquisitions like motor skills, language, psychosocial, cognitive and learning. The early childhood education plays very important role in the formal education of a child by increasing the child readiness for primary school, which is a predictor for early school achievement. Moreover, it inculcates motivational force and strong social skills that motivate them to desire and acquire a higher level of education, which place them highly valuable in the workplace. In most cases, the children of early childhood education, elementary school is a place of recap of things taught to them at the early life, as they develop better in social and thinking skills, language ability and skills in mathematics.

Learning is a dynamic process and is effective when it begins at a young age and continues through to adulthood to have attained higher education and employed in higher earning organization which has an impact on socio-economic wellbeing in the society, attended important and progressive issues in the society and have less chances of involvement in criminal activity. Early childhood education was programmed to foster the proper development of the children, identify and address their problems, harness their potentials, mould their character, enhance their learning, equip them for life, so that their actions are channelled towards positive personal, communal and global development in all ramifications of life. This was asserted by Anderson (2002) who posits that, when children are exposed to early childhood education, they develop superior communication skills necessary for physical ability and social unity needed in adult life and increased cognitive and effective education balance. As a matter of fact, children from early childhood education perform better in their academic work than non-beneficiaries and also relates better with other peers.

The Benefit of the Library Resources

One of the most important educational aims of childhood is to develop social skills and the level of children's and adults' enjoyment of these skills is influential in their personal and social health and their educational success (Rawles, 2016). Where there are inadequate teaching and learning materials, poor school environment, poor child-friendly activities leads to poor products of the educational output in the society.

Early childhood education focuses on preparing the child for cooperative and team living, this Pamkin (2016) emphasized that the early part of a child's education is the responsibility of the home, that a child at that age of three to five years needs proper handling by experts that has the love of children at heart to be able to benefit not only in education but also express their feeling and develop creative abilities.

The library provides different educational materials in teaching technology, robots and real form of things like the pictures, games, computers, radio, television, toys models, flash cards, films, filmstrips, videos etc the availability of learning resources provide support to learner when they approach to problems.

The Use of Toys

Children of that age like playing with toys even at home not minding they are boys or girls. Playing with toys helps to develop the mental balance in the children. It also serve as an instructional materials. Hornby (as cited in Kesimba, 2004), that children does not only involves himself in the play but also needs to develop the abilities to create some of these materials at home e.g. constructions of cars, guns, fans, cooking intellectuals, phone etc. All these the educationists accept the fact that play is one of the physiological needs of the child.

The Use of Computers

According to Aduwa and Iyawa (2005), the society is now in the era of globalization where the flow of information via satellites and the internet holds sway in the society. At the early childhood education, librarian introduce and encourage the children to the use of self-paced nature of computer, most of them has assistant instruction that enable the child to learn independently and at his own pace.

The good basic thing in teaching the children with computer assisting instruction is that it gives immediate feedback, of which they can study without the guidance of the teacher.

The Use of Films

In teaching with filmstrips and videos which composes with series of captions, placed in a sequential order e.g. the teaching of United States of America, Russian, Oceans, ships manufacturing or processing industries. When all these are taught, the child instigate great interest and more inquisitive wanting to see and learn more of important places he has not seen or heard before.

The filmstrip series accompanied with written scripts which the teacher uses in teaching children during the story telling time or period, the children listen attentively, at the end the librarian ask them questions, at this point most of the children involves themselves into giving answers to the questions. At this point, the teacher/librarian assess the learners' knowledge, skills and attitudes as well as evaluate his work.

The Use of Television

The library provide television for the teaching and learning of the children at that level as it serves as an audio-visual device that allowed the children to see as well as hear the concepts being taught by their librarian. The fact that children can sit to watch films, makes it easy for teachers to capture the attention of children by using interesting and appropriate films/programme to teach simple topics on English language, social studies, science, mathematics, playing video games and can also teach different kinds of skills in dancing, cultural dresses etc. In view of these, the children develop positive behaviours, attitudes and values to others. Mangal and Mangal (2011) observed that in viewing television programmes children even in the remote areas gain or have equally opportunity with those in the urban areas.

The Use of Model

Model is portable in nature, can be carried into the class for demonstration lesson. It look the same with the real object and pose no danger while using it with the children. The great advantage of the model is that it can be de-assembled and re-assembled at this point the librarian group the children in two's or three's and sometime individual while each part of the component can be given out for study and proper examine the steps before re-assembling. The

model enables the child to develop critical thinking – re-assembling cars, games, houses, pictures etc.

The Use of Flash Cards

Flash card is a game that help involving children into activities, a skill that their engaged as a habit. The flash cards are made up of objects or sentences written on cards which when flashed by the teacher/librarian during lesson the children quickly responds to it.

To improve Reading Culture in Children

We are in the era of massive technological development, and as such almost everything can be done simply by pressing a button, with the emergence of e-books, and the likes, hardcover books are becoming “old school” for young ones. The importance of reading in general cannot be over emphasized, but reading hardcopy book is important for the development of the child. Here are few tips to get your child to read:

1. **Lead by example** – you cannot encourage your children to read when you do not read yourself but pressing phones. Children are more likely to read if they see you reading regularly. It is also important that parents provide enough reading materials for all the children in their houses. Frequent reading of books sets you as good role model and will certainly prompt your children to adopt a reading culture.
2. **Create a conducive atmosphere:** create a comfortable reading spot or room that will entice your children, just the act of creating special reading space can take away the distractions and help your child focus on reading. Also, it is a good idea to minimize TV time and to free your child from some house chores.
3. **Reading together:** to encourage your child to read from a young age, take the time to read with him every day. Let your child see the words. Assist them with their school work; let them see that you are interested. As your child grows older, encourage him to read aloud for you to hear. Let them sit besides you while you read a newspaper.
4. **Respect your child’s interests:** One of the best ways to encourage your child to read is to allow him to pick out books that interest him/her. The goal is to encourage your child to develop a habit of reading, as long as what he is reading is not offensive, allow him to get on with it. Reading interests change over time as they mature. Encourage them to participate in whatever reading and spelling competitions that interest them.

Challenges of Early Childhood Education

- a. Profit first was the watchword of most of early childhood education owners, they preferred what their gain and not the welfare of the children or the teachers employed to teach them.
- b. Employing unqualified teachers that are ready to accept what every condition of salary, no motivation, such librarian/teachers cannot put in their best towards the interest of the children of have time to listen to the need and love of the children.

- c. Sub-standard education: it is very dangerous to open a school that cannot be run properly, poor equipment, unqualified unexperienced staff most times they are understaff where one teacher handles three or four classes and they devoid of the recreational facilities. Such education cannot produce children that can stand or promote the physical, social, emotional.
- d. Poor supervision of Early child schools: it is very clear that federal and state ministries of education no longer do their work rather they accept brown envelopes for good and perfect care of the children. The ones in the rural areas were the worst, no good toilets, classroom, water, learning materials etc. All these made the proprietors and proprietresses refused to do what was right towards the welfare of the children and the teachers.
- e. Poor supply of light: The lack and poor infrastructural facilities like electricity, generator has reduced the effective use of computers and other teaching communication facilities. According to Adeoye (2012) said that when electricity supply is not stable and constant, it is difficult to keep high-technology equipment such as computers functioning under extreme weather conditions as obtained in Nigeria.
- f. The use of vernacular: The idea of teaching children at this level with native language is very poor because it's the same language he speaks at home. For there are needs to prepare the learners for greater task ahead, being in the urban or rural areas. Most of the teachers claim that the children can only hear the native dialect and that is why they adopted it, which is not right rather most of the teachers cannot speak English language.

Conclusion

It has been a marked fact that the investment in education is essential for both personal growth and economic development, so the development and progress at societies and nations depend on the education of their youth for future adulthood roles. Increased access to effective library resources materials for the teaching and caring of early childhood education places great demands on the qualified and competent of librarian/teachers to teach them and government should be complement to help build a character needed to live both independently and freely in community for oneself, with others and for others.

Suggestions

1. There should be adequate and prompt funding in order to equip early childhood education for better and qualitative services.
2. There should be proper and fully implementation of annual budgetary.
3. There should be adequate allocation of time for different activities like plays, games, singing etc.
4. Childhood education management needs linkages and collaboration capable of attracting funds sponsorship and endowments to enable them implement those current trends in helping.

5. There should be adequate training and retraining opportunities, proper and prompt motivation of library personnel.

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