

Early childhood education



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Early Childhood Education (ECDE) Introduction Early childhood education (ECE) can be defined as the official training and care given to young children by non-family members or relatives, and it mostly takes place outside the children's homes (Hildebrand, 1971). The ancestry of early childhood education can be traced back in the seventeenth and eighteenth century. According to Spodek (1982), for the last over twenty years, the field has been on growing upward trend in terms of research and popularity. Lately, many countries have emphasized on both physical care and education as the foundation of early childhood education, since children are considered the foundation of any healthy family or society. Treatment of children in a family or society dictates how the family or society will be perceived in terms of success or failure.

Isenberg & Jalongo, (1997) illustrate that childhood is the stage in life that is characterized by agility, curiosity and creativity. It is during this period of time that one decides on what to or not to be in future life. This therefore, implies that, a lot of attention is needed to get rid of undesirable characters which might associate with the child and grow with him/her to the future. Based on my profession and what I have gathered when learning this profession, given the opportunity to execute my duties, I will ensure that the children under my care obtain the best practices. This will be possible through incorporation of best learning practices such as practical learning methods into this system of education as echoed by Mallory & New (1994). According to Grotewell and Burton (2008), it is worth noting that not all children are born physically and mentally healthy. Some are born with physical disabilities while others suffer from mental disorders. In case this happens, it is possible that a child might be healthy both physically and

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mentally but born out of families which are not capable of providing for their basic needs. This can range from shelter, food, and clothing to comfort that they might need at some point in their childhood. The main objective of the early childhood initiative was to help young children and their families to survive which ever times they might be living. This is achieved through provision of support and intervention for the children and infants with priorities given to those who are disabled.

Anning, Cullen & Flear, (2004) explain that undertaking a course on early childhood education will open up opportunities in areas such as educational administrators, coordinators and librarians. Those trained in early childhood education have the chance of becoming nursery, kindergarten and elementary teachers.

Training in early childhood education is considered significance even for those who teach at middle school and secondary schools. A apart from teachers, other school staff member such as drivers and counselors are required to have working background knowledge in ECD. This is because they also deal with children at certain point of their daily duties in school. This implies that the profession is open and cuts across all other careers as opposed to other profession, which gives those trained in this area an advantage as several job opportunities related to it will be available (Anning, Cullen & Flear, 2004).

Initially, Early Childhood Education was perceived to be non-lucrative in terms of job opportunities. This perception has since changed since the program is becoming more common because of the positive impact it has on the young children (Saracho & Spodek, 1998). As number of children being born continues to rise, the need for them to be taught useful life changing

skills also grows. This is crucial as it aims at getting them ready for occupations that will help them towards realization of universal society. The major components of education as a field, that includes but not limited to sciences, mathematics, literacy and bilingual education. The increasing trend in this sector of education will mean that in the coming years, there shall be increased demand for persons with specialties in these areas. This will mean that for this demands to be met, education provider who provide ECE training has to raise their intake. Those people being trained will take up the massive job opportunities predicted to be available in future (Grotewell and Burton, 2008).

Conclusion

Early childhood education is significant especially, in this era when most of the young children do not have ample time with their parent because of commitment to careers. Such children stand a high chance of developing attributes that might not be beneficial to them in future. ECE also stresses the degree to which the concern of young children and their families are always tackled within the limits of coexisting political and social demands.

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