

Early Childhood Care and Education in the North-West of Nigeria: Trends and Challenges

Authors : Muhammad Adamu Kwankwaso

Abstract : Early childhood is a critical period of rapid physical, cognitive and psycho-social development of a child. The quality of care and Education which a child receives at this crucial age will determine to a great extent the level of his/her physical and cognitive development in the future. In Nigeria, Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) is a fundamental aspect or form of Education for children between the age of 3-6. It was started after independence as pre-primary Education or early child development as contained in the 1977 National Policy on Education. The trends towards ECCE in Nigeria and the northwestern part of the country in particular keep up changing as in the case of other part of the world. The current trends are now towards expansions, inclusiveness, redefinition, early literacy, increased government participation and the unprecedented societal response and awareness towards the Education of the younger children. While all hands are on deck to ensure successful implementation of the ECCE programme, it is unfortunate that, ECCE is facing some challenges. This paper therefore, examines the trends in Early Childhood Care and Education and the major challenges in the north west of Nigeria. Some of the major challenges include, inadequate trained ECCE teachers, lack of unified curriculum, teacher pupil's ratio, and the medium of instructions and inadequate infrastructural and teaching facilities respectively. To improve the situation the paper offered the following recommendations; establishment of more ECCE classes, enforcement for the use of mothers' tongue or the languages of the immediate community as a medium of instructions, and adequate provision of infrastructural facilities and the unified curriculum across the northwestern States of Nigeria.

Keywords : early childhood care, education, trends, challenges

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