

Lesson No 1 Early Childhood Care and Education: Meaning and Significance

SUMMARY

Early childhood refers to the early years of life starting from birth to six, now extended to eight years. You learnt in this lesson that the years from birth to six years are called the formative years as the foundation for physical, cognitive, socio-emotional and language development is laid during this period. Researches in the field of neuroscience have established the importance of these years as growth and development of the brain takes place at a very fast pace. Early care, stimulating environment and optimum learning opportunities have a lasting impact on the lives of young children. This can be done by ensuring quality Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) for all children during their formative years which makes imperative to understand the meaning and significance of ECCE

Build Your Understanding

- ✚ **Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE)** is combination of three words = ‘Early Childhood’ + ‘Care’ + ‘Education’

EARLY CHILDHOOD	CARE
<p>According to the National Policy on ECCE, 2013, there are three sub-stages of early years</p> <div style="margin-bottom: 5px;">  Stage 1: Conception to Birth </div> <div style="margin-bottom: 5px;">  Stage 2: Birth to Three Years </div> <div style="margin-bottom: 5px;">  Stage 3: Three to Six Years </div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ Most important period of life characterized by rapid growth and development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ Providing love and affection and ensuring a healthy, hygienic, protective and stimulating environment for all children. <div style="background-color: #fce4d6; text-align: center; padding: 5px; margin-top: 10px;">EDUCATION</div> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✚ Is a process of acquiring knowledge, skills, attitudes and values through exploration, experimentation, observation, participation and interaction. ✚ All such experiences help children learn more about themselves and the world around them.

Build Your Understanding

- ✚ ECCE refers to providing care including health and nutrition as well as early learning opportunities to all young children.
- ✚ A protective and stimulating environment consisting of play-based and developmentally appropriate activities is vital for children’s physical-motor, cognitive, socio-emotional and language development.
- ✚ Hence, ECCE forms the basis for overall development, later learning and wellbeing of children.

SIGNIFICANCE OF ECCE

- ✚ The first six years of children’s life are very important due to fast growth and development in all domains.

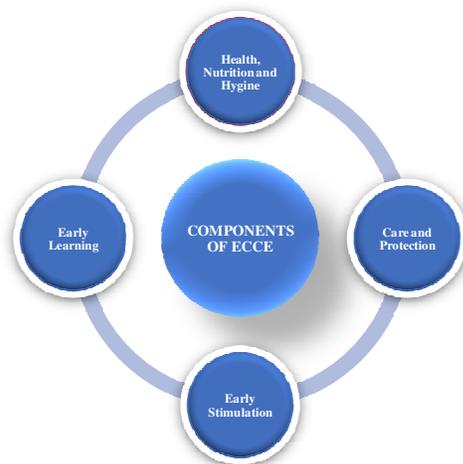
- ✚ By the time a child is six years old, 90% of brain development has taken place.
- ✚ This stage is considered crucial for the holistic development of children especially for the development of the brain.
- ✚ During these years, children acquire various physical-motor, cognitive, socio-emotional and language competencies. Hence, they should be provided opportunities to grow in a stimulating and engaging environment with positive experiences
- ✚ Quality early care and education provided to young children through ECCE programmes enables them to acquire age-appropriate knowledge and skills which further help them adjust better in a formal school environment.
- ✚ Thus, it is necessary to accord prime importance to ECCE for children to develop in an integrated, holistic and healthy manner.

OBJECTIVES OF ECCE

National ECCE Curriculum Framework, 2013 has defined the objectives of ECCE as follows:

- ✚ Ensure that children feel safe, secure, accepted and respected
- ✚ Ensure children have good and balanced nutrition
- ✚ Inculcate healthy habits, hygiene practices and self-help skills among children
- ✚ Enable sound language development, skills of communication and expression
- ✚ Ensure optimum physical and motor development of children as per their potential
- ✚ Foster sensory and cognitive abilities of children by providing engaging, participative and stimulating activities
- ✚ Promote development of pro-social skills and social competence along with children's emotional wellbeing
- ✚ Prepare children for formal learning in schools.

COMPONENTS OF ECCE



1. Health, Nutrition and Hygiene –

- Providing regular health interventions to both the mother and the child
- Provision of
 - a) Healthy Nutritious Food,
 - b) Timely Immunization,
 - c) Regular Health Check-ups,
 - d) Stress-Free Environment

2. Care and Protection

- A physically and emotionally safe, secure and protective environment
- To ensure psychological and socio-emotional needs of children.

3. Early Stimulation

- Refers to providing appropriate stimulating inputs through seeing, hearing, touching, smelling and tasting to children especially during their first three years of life

4. Early Learning

- Must be provided age- and developmentally appropriate learning experiences.
- To ensure access to quality education comprising of play, concrete experiences, observation, manipulation and experimentation.

THE PROCESS OF DEVELOPMENT

Physical-Motor Development

Physical Development

- ✚ Increase in weight
- ✚ Increase in height
- ✚ Rapidly change in body proportions

Motor Development

- ✚ involves the process of development of gross and fine muscles and eye-hand coordination

Gross Motor Skills

- ✚ Crawling, Walking, Running, Cycling, Climbing, Jumping

Fine Motor Skills

- ✚ Holding a Crayon, Scribbling, Drawing, Coloring, Cutting & Writing

Socio-Emotional Development

Emotional Development

- ✚ Refers to the development of emotions and feelings in children.
- ✚ Development of basic emotions such as love, fear, anger and happiness etc.
- ✚ Development of complex emotions and their ability to recognize, express, and manage feelings over time.

Social Development

- ✚ Acquiring social norms and cultural values.
- ✚ Forms positive relations with family, friends and other people in life

Cognitive Development

- ✚ Development of mental or cognitive abilities such ability to think, remember, recognize, categorize, imagine, reason and take decisions.

Language Development, Communication and Emergent Literacy

- ✚ Process of acquiring, understanding and using language. It involves the skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing.

EARLY INTERVENTION

Early intervention means taking necessary actions as early as possible to work on children's developmental and learning needs, thus reducing the effects of any developmental delay.

- ✚ Regular health check-ups of children
- ✚ Maintaining a health record
- ✚ Regular examination of Physical and sensory impairments

ECCE IN THE INDIAN CONTEXT

- ✚ In India, the early pioneers of early childhood education include Gijubhai Badheka, Tarabai Modak, and Maria Montessori.
- ✚ Gijubhai Badheka believed that holistic education is very important for the proper development of children. For this, he founded 'Bal Mandir', a preschool in Bhavnagar, Gujarat in 1920.
- ✚ Tarabai Modak also made significant contributions in the field of preschool education in India. In 1926, she founded the Nutan Bal Shikshan Sangh in Mumbai.
- ✚ The Montessori Method founded by Maria Montessori is an approach to preschool education.
- ✚ At present, ECCE services in India are

ECCE IN THE GLOBAL CONTEXT

- ✚ The importance of ECCE has been recognized globally as well. It started in 1989 with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) which is an international agreement for child rights.
- ✚ The World Conference on Education for All held in Jomtien, Thailand in 1990 emphasized that 'learning begins at birth' and promoted early care and education as a must that needs to be provided through the involvement of families and communities.
- ✚ In addition, the World Education Forum held in Dakar, Senegal in April 2000 also reiterated the importance of ECCE.
- ✚ Recently, World Education Forum held in 2015 at Incheon, Republic of Korea, set up

made available through public, private and non-governmental organizations.

✚ In recent years, the focus on ECCE in the Five-Year Plans and formulation of the National Early Childhood Care and Education Policy, 2013 in India has further opened opportunities of access to quality care and early education by young children.

the goal for sustainable development recognizing the important role of education as a main driver of development by 2030.

✚ The Sustainable Development Goal 4 targets that, “by 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education, so that they are ready for primary education”.

EVALUATE YOURSELF

- Q1.** Explain in your own words what do you understand by the term ‘Early Childhood Care and Education’. Why it is important to understand early years of child’s life?
- Q2.** ECCE is an integrated programme consisting of various components which together contribute to the development and wellbeing of children. List those components and explain at least five components of ‘Early Childhood Care and Education’.

PRACTICE YOUR KNOWLEDGE

Explore the internet and make a report on the present status of ‘Early Childhood Care and Education’ in the global and Indian context.