



Holistic Approach for Early Childhood Education

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ABSTRACT

Early childhood education is important for developing a child's moral, intellectual, physical, social and aesthetic aspects as well as his language and cognitive skills early in life. A significant body of research establishes the impact preschool education has on young children's learning and development. Many studies have found immediate effects of preschool education for children during their first five years of life. A holistic approach in education means engaging and developing the whole person through education. A holistic approach helps bring out different levels of development for learners. It covers physical, emotional, cognitive, language and spiritual. It is the concept that human beings are multi-dimensional. We have conscious and unconscious aspects, rational and irrational aspects.

Keywords: holistic approach, childhood, early childhood development, early childhood education, preschool

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INTRODUCTION

Early childhood education is important for developing moral, intellectual, physical, social and aesthetic aspects of children along with cognitive skills. Parents play an important role in their children's early life and provide a role model. In addition, holistic education seeks to incorporate the principles of wholeness, interconnectedness and spirituality. Early childhood education is important for developing a child's moral, intellectual, physical, social and aesthetic aspects as well as his language and cognitive skills early in life.

Early Childhood Education

A significant body of research establishes the impact preschool education has on young children's learning and development. Many studies have found immediate effects of preschool education for children during their first five years of life. Some have compared the outcomes of preschool education against other alternatives: the outcomes of a true control group with no preschool education; Results for typical experience (including childcare outside the home); and outcomes for more or less well-defined alternatives (for example, outcomes for preschool education programs using different curricula). With such a large number of studies, the meta-analysis clearly shows the importance of preschool education.

The Aim of Early Childhood Education

- Develop a positive self-concept. Establish a sound foundation for a good physique, adequate muscular coordination and basic motor skills
- Imbibe good health habits and basic life skills/ self-help skills necessary for personal social adjustment.

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- Develop the verbal and non- verbal communication skills which helps to expression of thoughts and feelings in fluent, correct, clear speech.
- Develop the five senses and cognitive skills and concepts which are foundation for higher order thinking and reasoning
- Develop emotional maturity by guiding the child to express, understand, accept and control feelings and emotions.
- Imbibe values, social attitudes and manners important in his/her socio-cultural context and to become sensitive to rights and privileges of others.
- Develop independence, aesthetic appreciation and creativity by providing child with sufficient opportunities for self-expression and active exploration, investigation and experimentation.
- Make a smooth transition from preschool to primary through development of emergent literacy and school readiness.

Curriculum in Preschool

Curriculum is the full range of experiences that children have in school. Content objectives and learning outcomes, knowledge of child development, and careful observation of individual children's needs and interests guide the curriculum. NAEYC defines curriculum as a written plan that includes: goals for children's development and learning; Experiences through which they will achieve these goals.

- Materials for children to learn.
- The processes by which children achieve identified curriculum goals.
- What do teachers do to help children achieve these goals.
- The context in which teaching and learning takes place.

Curriculum in Preschool

- Preschool helps in the overall development of the child. When we talk about early childhood education curriculum, we need a specific approach that enhances the development of the child.
- There are a number of approaches, which help children to develop. Then the million-dollar question is 'Why the holistic approach?'
- A holistic approach helps in the overall development of a child.



Holistic Education

With world research emphasizing the importance of a holistic approach to education, early childhood educators are being challenged to integrate teaching practices that focus less on traditional goals of academic development and more on the child's complete physical, emotional and psychological well-being (UNESCO), 2002). Research is compelling and studies show that over time, individuals with average IQ (intellectual intelligence) but high EI (emotional intelligence) are also significantly more successful than those with high IQ but low EI (Goleman, 1995). The early childhood curriculum reflects holistically how children learn and develop.

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Cognitive, social, cultural, physical, emotional and spiritual dimensions of human development are integrally interwoven. An early childhood curriculum takes a model of learning that weaves together complex patterns of connected experience and meaning rather than emphasizing the acquisition of discrete skills. The child's entire context, physical environment, emotional context, relationships with others, and the child's immediate needs at any given moment will affect and modify how the child contributes to development.

Holistic Approach

Holistic education is a philosophy of education based on the premise that each individual find identity, meaning, and purpose in life through connection with community, with the natural world, and with humanistic values such as compassion and peace.

A holistic approach in education means engaging and developing the whole person through education. A holistic approach helps bring out different levels of development for learners. It covers physical, emotional, cognitive, language and spiritual. It is the concept that human beings are multi-dimensional. We have conscious and unconscious aspects, rational and irrational aspects.

- This integrative view of learning sees the child as a person who wants to learn, sees work as fully meaningful, and sees the whole as more than the sum of his individual actions or experiences.
- A holistic approach integrates learning and development.
- Constant, warm ties that bind everything together.
- Opportunities for open-ended exploration and play.
- Recognition of the spiritual dimension of children's lives in a culturally, socially and individually appropriate manner

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- Work, activities, and contexts that have meaning for the child, including practices and activities not always associated with the term "curriculum," such as caregiving routines, mealtimes, and child management strategies.

Holistic Approach in Preschool



- Development is holistic; It has inter-dependent dimensions. This means that child development cannot be divided into health, nutrition, education, social, emotional and spiritual variables. All are interconnected in a child's life and are developing together.
- Progress in one area affects progress in other areas. Likewise, when something goes wrong in any one of those areas, it affects all the other areas.
- A holistic approach helps a child overcome learning difficulties. Because it helps in the overall development of the child.

Implementation of Holistic Approach in Schools

- Teachers facilitate an environment that allows children to feel the warmth and connectedness of a small village. They respect building a home life within our school community.

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- Teaching methods emphasize a nurturing, multi-sensory, nature-based learning environment. Stimulating a child's imagination and creativity is a high priority. Multiple learning methods are integrated into the daily rhythm to create a supportive, challenging and meaningful learning environment for each child. Opportunities for artistic expression abound throughout the class.
- A young child learns primarily through imitation and example. Provide an environment that guides and supports the child's imagination and fantasy world. The week is rhythmically structured to include storytelling and puppetry, creative work and drama, singing and creative movement, games and finger plays, crafts, art activities and storytelling.
- Teachers practice "awareness of self" in the classroom. They model and teach healthy, respectful, and compassionate ways of relating and problem solving in the classroom through their behavior, language, and energy. Children will feel the nurturing presence of their teachers. This creates emotional security that will give the child's spirit the freedom to imagine, create and explore the world around them. Additionally, this encourages them to discern their sense of self.
- Teachers create daily, weekly and yearly rhythms. These rhythms provide a balanced framework for children to navigate their time in the classroom, as well as meet the expectations of the classroom environment (of their teacher and their peers). Rhythms enable children to feel, know, and respond to what comes next (pleasant anticipation). Knowing this, children become free to create, learn and discover.
- Healthy Expectations - Age-appropriate responsibilities, as well as activities that teachers bring to children are an essential part of their growth and development. A

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teacher should allow children to grow for space and time and get what is asked of them. Parents will see joy as they feel their sense of self/place in the classroom.

- Nurturing and Nurturing a Child's Sense of Wonder and Imagination – Teachers provide materials, space and activities for children to create their worlds and express themselves.

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