

Rethinking Early Childhood Care Education for Social-Economic Development and Democratic Reforms in Contemporary Nigeria

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Abstract

This study examines how early childhood care education can encourage socioeconomic development and democratic reforms among early childhood care development education (ECCDE) learners in contemporary Nigeria through the cultivation of necessary survival and social skills. This study believes that catching them young at their prime age could lead to better performance at their adult age. Because, poor followership could lead to poor leadership and lack of skills could also lead to poor labour force in the economy. Social-economic and democratic reforms are of significance in an emerging democracy like Nigeria. So, education as a reliable tool for conscious progression in society ought to be sustainably qualitative for it to encourage better social, cultural, economic and political order in society. This paper recommends that government educational policies in basic education should focus on the early stage of development by providing them with survival and social skills.

Keywords: Early Childhood, M Care Education, Socio-economic Development, Democratic Reforms

Introduction

Rethinking early childhood care development education (ECCDE) was aimed at the possibility of providing education at this level that inculcate some survival and social skills into these categories of learner so that they can understand the dynamics of society through play-based curriculum and methodology. It also implies implanting in the ECCDE learner their roles towards the progress of society. Methodologically, this aim is to enable these authors to realize the first goal of Basic Education Programme (BEP) which states that: “provide the child with diverse basic knowledge and skills for entrepreneurial, wealth generation and educational advancement.” The challenge of the BEP and other levels of the Nigerian Education System is that of implementation. Though, so many scholars and students of education believe that the major challenges to implementation in the system were funding, supervision/instruction, lack of educational materials, equipment, environmental

conditioning, and dearth of professional teachers among others. However, these authors believe that, if these factors are in place and the teacher and other stakeholders do not have a better understanding of the policy guiding and providing direction for the Programme, it may not be an easy task to realise the goals of the BEP.

The education policy in basic education, where ECCDE is part of, is apt and comprehensive in every area, not until there is a better understanding beyond the material reality of the Programme or what can be measured directly, everyone would continue to see these factors as the major challenges in the educational sector of the economy. In an attempt to resolve this problem, these authors employ the existential phenomenological approach to examine the following issues and questions: the nature of ECCDE, concepts of socio-economic development, democratic reform, rethinking, issues and challenges of ECCDE, cultivating survival and social skills in the early childhood learner for better performance and other issues (de Onis, et al., 2011; Prendergast & Humphrey, 2014). This study is important at this time because of the social, economic and political crises confronting the world presently. Every country of the world believes in the instrumentality of education as solid ground for recovery. The choice of ECCDE was to make literacy and numeracy realizable at the BEP. So, rethinking ECCDE is to make it meaningful, realistic, functional and qualitative.

Conceptual Learning Theory

This paper conceptualizes conceptual learning theory using Walker and Avant's (2011) approach to concept analysis. Conceptual learning is a process in which learners organize concept-relevant knowledge, skills, and attitudes to form logical cognitive connections resulting in assimilation, storage, retrieval, and transfer of concepts to applicable situations, familiar and unfamiliar. The concept-based curriculum design is one response to the call for reform in early childhood education to address content overload and better prepare early childhood for today's world. A concept-based curriculum facilitates both deep understanding and the ability to apply knowledge to diverse situations through the process of conceptual learning. A concept-based curriculum, content is structured around a defined set of concepts that form a unifying classification to frame the learning (Giddens, 2017). Concepts are defined as organizing principles grouped in coherent ways (England et al., 2015).

The learning outcomes of these structures and processes have not been identified and are complicated by incongruent terms in the literature. By defining conceptual learning and its associated characteristics, a basis will be provided to evaluate learning outcomes. To contribute

to the concept's clarity, it is important to develop model, contrary, and borderline or related cases to illustrate the concept (Giddens & Brady, 2007). The concept analysis of learning is part of a quality improvement project to measure the outcomes of the learners' educational process using a concept-based curriculum.

An evidence-based analysis of conceptual learning will: (a) provide clarity in the definition and identification of attributes of conceptual learning to facilitate the design of content within a concept-based curriculum, (b) explore whether conceptual learning provides the basis for understanding meaningful learning such as creative and critical thinking, and (c) provide a basis to design methods to measure conceptual learning outcomes for quality improvement and research purposes.

Early Childhood Care Development Education Socioeconomic Development and Democratic Reforms

ECCDE refers to the educational programs and activities designed for children from birth to eight. Grant said that during this critical stage of development, children acquire vital skills and knowledge that form the foundation for their future learning and development. Research has consistently shown that children who receive quality early childhood education demonstrate enhanced cognitive, social, and emotional skills throughout their lives. They are better prepared for formal schooling and have higher academic achievement rates. Moreover, early childhood education fosters essential skills such as problem-solving, creativity, and critical thinking that are vital in the modern world (Grant, 2023).

There were several key components which work together to provide a holistic learning experience for young children. These components include namely, Play-based Learning: Play is integral to early childhood education, promoting exploration, problem-solving, and creativity. Children engage with their environment, develop their imagination, and learn to interact with others through play. Developmentally Appropriate Curriculum: Activities and materials are tailored to suit each age group's developmental needs and abilities. This ensures that children are challenged appropriately and can progress at their own pace. Qualified and Dedicated Educators: Trained teachers who understand child development and effective teaching strategies play a crucial role in early childhood education. They create a nurturing and stimulating environment where children can thrive and reach their full potential. Safe and Nurturing Environment: Physical and emotionally safe

learning environments are essential for young children. When children feel secure and supported, they are more likely to engage in learning, take risks, and develop a positive attitude toward education (Kristjansson et al., 2012).

Furthermore, early childhood education nurtures children's intellectual growth and social and emotional well-being. Children learn to communicate effectively, develop positive relationships, and regulate emotions by engaging in age-appropriate activities. These skills are vital for their overall development and future success. Moreover, early childhood education builds a strong foundation for later learning. It helps children develop essential literacy and numeracy skills, curiosity, and a love for learning. By cultivating a positive attitude towards education from an early age, children are more likely to succeed academically and pursue lifelong learning. In conclusion, early childhood education plays a crucial role in shaping the lives of young children. It provides them with the necessary stimulation and support to promote their overall development and prepares them for academic success. By embracing the key components of early childhood education and recognizing its importance, we can ensure that every child has the opportunity to thrive and reach their full potential (Hadded, 2000).

Socioeconomic development in early childhood care and education refers to the holistic improvement in the social, economic, and educational well-being of children during their formative years, typically from birth to around eight years old. This concept recognizes the interplay between social and economic factors in shaping children's early experiences and opportunities for growth and learning. Key components of socioeconomic development in early childhood care and education include: firstly, access to quality ECCDE: ensuring that children, regardless of their socioeconomic background, have access to high-quality early childhood education programs that support their cognitive, social, emotional, and physical development. Secondly, equity and inclusion: promoting equitable access to early childhood care and education services, including targeted support for marginalized and vulnerable groups such as low-income families, children with disabilities, and those from minority communities. Thirdly, parental involvement and support: recognizing the critical role of parents and caregivers in children's early development and providing resources, information, and support to empower families to actively engage in their children's learning and well-being (Engle et al., 2008; Ferguson et al., 2007; UNICEF, 2013; Valdez, 2015).

Others include health and nutrition: Addressing the health and nutritional needs of young children to ensure they have a strong foundation for learning and development, including access to healthcare services, nutritious food, and safe environments. Early Intervention and Support Services: Identifying and addressing developmental delays, learning difficulties, and other challenges early on through early intervention programs and support services to maximize children's potential and reduce disparities. Professional Development for Educators: Investing in the training and professional development of early childhood educators to ensure they have the knowledge, skills, and resources to provide high-quality care and education that meets the diverse needs of young children and their families. Lastly, community engagement and collaboration: fostering partnerships between government agencies, educational institutions, non-profit organizations, businesses, and communities to create supportive environments that promote children's well-being and development. Overall, socioeconomic development in early childhood care and education aims to break the cycle of poverty, promote social mobility, and build a foundation for lifelong learning and success by investing in the early years of children's lives.

The ECCDE can also help in inculcating socioeconomic development skills in the ECCDE learner through the following ways. Namely, Social Skills Development: Early childhood education emphasizes social interaction and cooperation through activities such as group play, sharing, and collaborative projects. By engaging in these activities, children learn essential social skills such as communication, empathy, teamwork, and conflict resolution, which are vital for success in later academic, professional, and social contexts. Emotional Development: Early childhood education often incorporates strategies to help children understand and manage their emotions. Through activities like storytelling, role-playing, and guided discussions, educators teach children how to recognize and express their feelings appropriately. These skills lay the groundwork for emotional intelligence, which is essential for building healthy relationships and navigating various social situations throughout life. Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving Approach: Early childhood education encourages exploration, experimentation, and discovery through hands-on activities and open-ended play. By engaging in activities that requires problem-solving and decision-making, such as building blocks, puzzles, and imaginative play, children develop critical thinking skills and learn how to approach challenges creatively. These skills are essential for adapting to new situations, making informed decisions, and finding innovative solutions in the future. Another is financial literacy and numeracy. Some early childhood education ought to incorporate basic concepts of

financial literacy and numeracy into their curriculum. Through activities like counting money, budgeting for pretend purchases, and simple math games, children begin to develop an understanding of concepts such as value, saving, and responsible spending. These early experiences lay the groundwork for financial literacy and numeracy skills, which are essential for managing money and making sound financial decisions as adults. Cultural Competence and Diversity Awareness is another way of inculcating socioeconomic development skills. Early childhood education promotes cultural competence and diversity awareness by exposing children to a variety of cultures, languages, and perspectives. Through multicultural books, music, art, and celebrations, children learn to appreciate and respect differences while also recognizing shared humanity. These experiences foster empathy, tolerance, and a sense of global citizenship, which are essential for navigating an increasingly diverse and interconnected universe or cosmic. Executive Function Skills are also required. Executive function skills, including attention control, working memory, and self-regulation, are critical for academic success and lifelong achievement. Early childhood education activities such as storytelling, games, and structured routines help children develop these skills by providing opportunities to practice focusing their attention, remembering instructions, and managing impulses. Strong executive function skills lay the foundation for academic achievement, career success, and overall well-being. By integrating these elements into the curriculum and learning experiences, early childhood education programs can effectively foster the development of socioeconomic skills in young learners, setting them on a path toward future success and contributing to broader socioeconomic development goals (Acharya et al., 2015; ; Valdez, 2015); UNICEF, 2013; Hassan et al., 2012; Engle et al., 2008; Ferguson et al., 2007; Alderman et al., 2003).

All children have the right to learn or be educated in a qualitative environment and in a manner that works best and in the best possible childhood education. Education should be committed to certain values such as equity and quality for the development of children's ability. Development of ability depends on the structure of the school system. For this ability to be actualized in children, school should be an exemplary environment for developing some kind of aptitudes. Development of attitudes starts from early years of children's education which is basic education. Basic education should gear towards provision of initiatives for early childhood care and education; acquisition of functional literacy and life-long skills; appropriate level of literacy, numeracy, manipulation, basic communication skills, ethical, moral and civic values needed for laying a solid foundation for life-long education. Basic education refers to the whole range of educational activities taking place in

various settings (formal, non-formal and informal), that aims to meet basic learning needs. According to the International Standard Classification (ISCED), basic education comprises primary education (first stage of education) and lower secondary education (second stage). In countries (developing countries in particular), basic education often includes also pre-primary education and/or adult literacy programmes (Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia, 2013). Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia also noted that Universal Basic Education is regarded as a priority for developing countries and is the focus of the “Education For All” movement led by UNESCO. It is also included in the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) as Goal number 2: Achieve universal primary education by 2015. Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) (2013) defined UBE as Educational reform programme of the Nigerian government that provides free, compulsory, and continuous 9-year education in two levels: 6 years of primary and 3 years of Junior Secondary Education for all school-aged children. There are three components of the UBE programme, and these are: Early Child Care and Development Education (ECCDE); 6 years Primary Education; and 3 years Junior Secondary School (JSS) Education. To achieve the above, there is need for reforming current education system. Education reform aims at making children achieve the social, intellectual, economic, physical and emotional potentials (Education International Early Childhood Task Force, 2010). Education Reform is the name given to a demand with the goal of improving education. Small improvements in education theoretically have large social returns in health, wealth and well-being (Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia, 2013). In modern world, economic growth and spread of democracy have raised the value of education and increased the importance of ensuring that all children and adults have access to high quality and effective education. Modern education reforms are increasingly driven by a growing understanding of what works in education and how to go about successfully improving teaching and learning in schools (Whelan Lessons Learned, 2009). This will help reduce incidence of drop-out from school system by enhancing early childhood education (Barry et al., 2000).

Existential Phenomenological Approach

Existential phenomenology is a philosophical tradition developed by thinkers such as Buber, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Heidegger, Gadamer, de Beauvoir, Sartre, Marcel, Merleau-Ponty, and Levinas. It seeks to develop an in-depth, embodied understanding of human existence. It challenges approaches which view human beings in a reductionistic way. The methodology is a source of insight into the richness and diversity of human psychological experience. Existential phenomenology is

humanistic in that it challenges the modern tendency to interpret the human condition through a set of narrow technological lenses. It engages with and appreciates the wisdom accumulated by the rich traditions of reflection on the human condition. It deepens our understanding of the experiences and perspectives of others through its focus upon the meanings that we make in our lives and the choices that are reflected in our understandings and actions. It nourishes openness to understanding the lives and needs of others by helping us to identify and set aside our theoretical, ideological prejudgments, superstition, and bias as we approach our studies as researchers. Finally, the existential-phenomenological approach is ethical in recognizing that the fundamental characteristic of being human is to be responsible to others.

Issues and Challenges of Early Childhood Education in Nigeria

Despite the immense benefits of early childhood education, several challenges hinder its progress. Gray, (2024), itemize some significant challenges ranging from: Lack of Adequate Funding. One significant challenge is insufficient funding for early childhood education programs. Many programs struggle to secure the necessary resources to provide high-quality education and support services to all children, especially those from disadvantaged backgrounds. Insufficient funding leads to limited access to early childhood education and compromised program quality. Investing in early childhood education is essential as it yields long-term benefits for individuals and society. Governments and communities must prioritize funding early childhood education to ensure every child has an equal opportunity to thrive. For example, allocating more funds towards early childhood education can result in smaller class sizes, which allows for more individualized attention and better learning outcomes. Additionally, increased funding can provide resources such as books, educational materials, and technology, enriching the learning environment for young children.

Teacher Shortages and High Turnover Rates: The shortage of qualified early childhood educators is another significant challenge in early childhood education. Many countries struggle to attract and retain skilled teachers in this field. The demanding nature of the job, inadequate compensation, and low professional status contribute to high turnover rates. Efforts should be made to recruit and retain talented educators by offering competitive salaries, comprehensive professional development opportunities, and recognition for their invaluable work. Additionally, enhancing the public perception of the early childhood education profession will attract more individuals passionate

about nurturing young minds. Moreover, establishing mentorship programs and support networks for early childhood educators can help alleviate their challenges. Educators can receive guidance, share experiences, and feel more valued by providing a supportive community.

Inadequate Training and Professional Development Providing ongoing training and professional development opportunities for early childhood educators are crucial for ensuring quality education. However, many educators lack access to comprehensive training programs that equip them with the knowledge and skills to teach young children effectively. Investing in professional development for early childhood educators is essential to keep them abreast of the latest research, teaching methodologies, and best practices. Continuous learning opportunities will empower educators to provide high-quality and developmentally appropriate instruction. Furthermore, collaboration between educational institutions and early childhood education programs can facilitate the exchange of knowledge and expertise. This partnership can create opportunities for educators to receive specialized training and gain insights from experienced professionals in the field. Additionally, incorporating technology into professional development programs can enhance accessibility and provide educators with innovative teaching strategies. Online courses, webinars, and virtual conferences can offer flexibility and convenience, allowing educators to grow professionally at their own pace. In conclusion, while early childhood education faces various challenges, addressing these issues is crucial for providing every child with a solid foundation for lifelong learning. By investing in adequate funding, attracting and retaining skilled educators, and providing comprehensive training and professional development opportunities, we can overcome these obstacles and ensure high-quality early childhood education.

The Impact of These Challenges on Children The challenges facing early childhood education have significant implications for children's development. Let's explore the effects of these challenges on children:

Effects on Cognitive Development: Inadequate access to quality early childhood education can hinder children's cognitive development. Without early exposure to enriching learning experiences, children may enter school unprepared, lagging behind their peers in essential skills such as language acquisition, problem-solving, and logical thinking. For example, imagine a child who grows up in a low-income neighborhood with limited access to quality early childhood education programs. They may be unable to engage in activities stimulating their cognitive abilities, such as hands-on experiments, interactive storytelling, or educational games. As a result, their cognitive

development may be stunted, making it challenging for them to grasp complex concepts and keep up with their classmates. On the other hand, high-quality early childhood education programs offer a stimulating environment that supports children in developing cognitive skills necessary for success in school and later in life. These programmes often incorporate engaging activities that promote critical thinking, problem-solving, and creativity. Additionally, they provide a structured curriculum that introduces children to foundational concepts in math, science, and language arts. By participating in such programs, children can explore and discover their interests, develop a love for learning, and build a solid foundation for their future academic pursuits. It is crucial to address early childhood education challenges to ensure that all children have access to these programs and foster their cognitive development from an early age.

Social and Emotional Consequences: Early childhood education is vital in shaping children's social and emotional well-being. It helps children develop crucial social skills such as communication, empathy, and cooperation. Without access to quality early childhood education, children may struggle with social interactions, and experience increased social and emotional challenges. Consider a child who does not have the opportunity to attend a high-quality early childhood education program. They may miss out on valuable social experiences, such as working collaboratively on projects, engaging in group discussions, and learning how to navigate conflicts constructively. As a result, they may struggle to form meaningful relationships, communicate effectively, and regulate their emotions. On the other hand, providing inclusive early childhood education programs that promote positive relationships, emotional regulation, and social competence is essential in addressing the challenges and supporting children's social and emotional development. These programs often incorporate activities that encourage children to express their emotions, practice active listening, and develop empathy toward others. By participating in such programs, children learn how to navigate social situations, build healthy relationships, and develop a strong sense of self-awareness. These skills contribute to their overall well-being and lay the foundation for their future success in various aspects of life, including personal relationships, academic achievements, and professional endeavours.

Rural Early Childhood Education: Rural communities often face unique challenges in providing early childhood education due to geographic isolation, limited resources, and economic constraints. Access to quality programs may be limited, resulting in educational disparities between

rural and urban areas. Rural early childhood education faces a specific challenge: infrastructure and facilities. In many remote areas, there may not be enough schools or classrooms to accommodate all the children in the community. This can lead to overcrowded classrooms and a shortage of qualified teachers. Innovative solutions like mobile early childhood education units have been introduced to address this issue. These units are equipped with educational materials and staffed by trained educators who travel to different rural communities, bringing early childhood education directly to the children. This approach ensures access to education and fosters a sense of community and belonging among the children. In addition to mobile units, virtual learning platforms have been implemented in some rural areas. These platforms provide online educational resources and interactive activities that children can access from their homes. This helps overcome geographic barriers and allows children to learn at their own pace and explore topics of interest. Furthermore, community partnerships are crucial in improving rural early childhood education. Local businesses, organizations, and volunteers collaborate with schools to provide additional resources and support. For example, a local farm may partner with a rural school to organize field trips, exposing children to nature and hands-on learning experiences.

Urban Early Childhood Education: Urban areas often encounter challenges such as overcrowded classrooms, high poverty rates, and cultural diversity. These challenges can hinder quality early childhood education and impact children's learning experience. One of the major challenges in urban early childhood education is the high student-to-teacher ratio. Overcrowded classrooms make it difficult for teachers to provide individualized attention to each child, resulting in a less effective learning environment. High poverty rates in urban areas can also lead to limited access to resources and support systems crucial for a child's development. Community-based organizations have emerged as a vital component of urban early childhood education to address these challenges. These organizations work closely with schools and community resources to provide comprehensive support to children and their families. They offer after-school programs, tutoring services, and mentorship opportunities to ensure children receive the necessary academic and emotional support. Collaborations between schools and community resources have also proven effective in improving urban early childhood education. For example, partnerships with local health clinics can ensure that children can access regular health check-ups and necessary

vaccinations. This holistic approach recognizes the importance of addressing educational and non-educational factors impacting a child's learning experience.

Furthermore, targeted intervention programs have been implemented to address the needs of urban children specifically. These programs focus on early literacy, social-emotional development, and parental involvement. By providing resources and training to parents, these programs aim to create a strong support system for children at home and in school. Gray, (2024) also proffer some potential solutions to overcome these challenges. Such help as:

Increasing Investment in Early Childhood Education Governments, communities, and philanthropic organizations must allocate adequate funding to enhance access to early childhood education. Investing in high-quality programs, improving infrastructure, and increasing teacher salaries will ensure that every child can benefit from quality early education. Increasing investment in early childhood education is crucial for children's overall development and well-being. Adequate funding allows for implementing evidence-based practices, such as play-based learning, which fosters cognitive, social, and emotional development. With proper investment, early childhood education programs can provide enriching experiences that support children's growth and prepare them for future success.

Improving infrastructure is essential to create safe and stimulating learning environments. Upgrading facilities, providing age-appropriate materials, and ensuring proper sanitation are all crucial aspects of enhancing the quality of early childhood education. By investing in infrastructure, children can access well-equipped classrooms and outdoor spaces that promote exploration, creativity, and physical development. In addition to investing in programmes and infrastructure, increasing teacher salaries is vital for attracting and retaining highly qualified educators. Higher salaries recognize the value of their work and encourage talented individuals to pursue a career in early childhood education. Well-compensated teachers are more likely to be motivated, dedicated, and committed to providing young children with the best learning experiences.

Enhancing Teacher Training and Retention Strategies: It is crucial to prioritize teacher training and professional development opportunities to address the shortage of qualified teachers. By offering competitive salaries, mentorship programs, and career advancement opportunities, the

early childhood education field will attract and retain talented educators passionate about nurturing and educating young minds. Effective teacher training programs equip educators with the knowledge and skills to support children's development.

Cultivating Survival and Social Skills in the Early Childhood Learner for Better Performance

To reevaluate early childhood for better performance, government need to recognizing and rewarding excellence in teaching can motivate educators to continue their professional growth and stay committed to the field. By providing clear pathways for career advancement, early childhood education can attract and retain talented individuals dedicated to positively impacting children's lives.

These programmes should focus on evidence-based practices, child development theories, and strategies for creating inclusive and culturally responsive learning environments. Ongoing professional development opportunities should also be provided to ensure that teachers stay updated with the latest research and best practices in early childhood education. Mentorship programs can be crucial in supporting new teachers and helping them navigate the profession's challenges. Experienced educators can provide guidance, share their expertise, and support early career teachers emotionally. By establishing strong mentorship programs, the field of early childhood education can create a supportive network that promotes professional growth and development.

Career advancement opportunities, such as leadership and specialized roles, can also increase teacher retention. Efforts can focus on fostering partnerships between early childhood education programs, schools, and community organizations. By building strong collaborations, advocates can create a unified voice for early childhood education and work towards systemic changes that benefit all children. Advocacy for policy changes advocacy efforts are vital in influencing policy changes that support early childhood education.

Advocacy organizations, educators, parents, and concerned citizens can work together to advocate for increased funding, improved standards, and equitable access to early childhood education. Advocacy efforts can focus on raising awareness about the importance of early childhood education and its long-term benefits. By educating policymakers and the general public

about the positive impact of quality early education, advocates can build support for increased funding and resources. They can also highlight the disparities in access to early childhood education and advocate for policies that ensure equitable opportunities for all children, regardless of their socioeconomic background. Advocacy organizations can also be crucial in shaping policies and standards that promote quality early childhood education. By conducting research, providing expert insights, and collaborating with policymakers, these organizations can influence the development and implementation of effective policies. They can advocate for evidence-based practices, appropriate teacher-child ratios, and comprehensive support services that address the diverse needs of children and families.

Conclusion

The Future of Early Childhood Education Emerging trends and innovations characterize the future of early childhood education: Emerging Trends and Innovations Incorporating research based approaches, such as brain development and individualized instruction, is becoming prevalent in early childhood education. Additionally, including diverse perspectives and cultural responsiveness is gaining recognition as essential components of effective early childhood education. The Role of Technology in Early Childhood Education Technology has the potential to revolutionize early childhood education by enhancing student engagement and providing personalized learning experiences. Interactive learning platforms, educational apps, and virtual reality tools can complement traditional teaching methods and make early childhood education more accessible and engaging. In conclusion, early childhood education is critical in shaping children's cognitive, social, and emotional development. However, it faces various challenges, including inadequate funding, teacher shortages, and training limitations. These challenges can significantly affect children's overall well-being and future success.

Suggestions

This study, however, recommends that government educational policies should focus on children at the grass root level and provide unlimited access to quality education regardless of their family socio-economic conditions and reform development in contemporary early childhood education in Nigeria.

Open discussions among educators, policymakers, and stakeholders will foster collaboration and innovation in the field.

Investing in early childhood education, enhancing teacher training and retention strategies, and advocating for policy changes can overcome these challenges and ensure all children have access to quality early childhood education.

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