

Education comment: Refocusing pre-primary education [NG] ^[1]

Editorial

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AVAILABILITY

See text below.

EXCERPTS

The National Policy on Education referred to pre-primary education as the education given in an institution to children aged three to five and more, before entering primary school.

According to the document, the purpose of pre-primary education shall be to; effect a smooth transition from the home to the school; prepare the child for the primary level of education; provide adequate care and supervision for the children while their parents are at work (on the farms, in the markets, offices, etc); inculcate social norms, inculcate in the child the spirit of enquiry and creativity through the exploration of nature, the environment, art, music and playing with toys, etc; develop a sense of co-operation and team spirit; learn good habits, especially good health habits; and teach the rudiments of numbers, letters, colours, shapes, forms, etc, through play.

From all indications, the state seems to have abdicated its responsibility of encouraging and monitoring pre-primary education, allowing private enterprise/entrepreneurs to have unregulated rein. Now that most parents belong to the working class, leaving their homes so early and returning late in the evening, ability of families to provide care and support for the children has reduced considerably. In most cases, these children are left in the hands of illiterate, sometimes ill-tempered, ill-mannered and uneducated house helps, invariably depriving those children of their rights to basic education.

It is our contention that these children should be provided with the opportunity of a well planned, socially structured form of childhood care in pre-primary learning centres at day-time. While there are care/learning centres of commendable standard who charge high fees, major deficiencies in still abound.

Government must be alive to its responsibilities for pre-primary education which include training of qualified pre-primary school teachers in adequate numbers, develop suitable curriculum, supervise and control the quality of such institutions. What our nation sends from pre-primary, primary to secondary schools are what tertiary institutions would produce.

- reprinted from Vanguard (Lagos)

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