Early Childhood Education & EOMS Certification

WHAT IS EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION?

Early childhood education refers to any kind of educational program or activity provided to children at an early age of development, before the beginning of their kindergarten years. Since this age in children is associated with the various behavioural and social aspects of the personality spectrum, it is given even more importance when it comes to the federal funding of such programmes, the curriculum design or simply stressing upon its veracity as a genuine claim during parental counselling.

CHILD PSYCHOLOGY

This area of education holds massive importance among teachers and parents alike because during this time period, the absorptive minds of young infants are at their maximal capacity and any kind of behaviour or 'play' displayed before them becomes a model for emulation. This implies that the kind of events and activities which occur in the safe environment created by and for the child instantly gets mapped into his/her behavioural cycle.

Now, considering that all that happens around a child is good in its over-all intention is an assurance to the successful mapping of those actions into a child's behavioural cycle. But that is not what happens most of the time. There exist the negative traits in one's personality, which tend to be in full bloom in times of sadness and grief, and anyone living in a complex household understands that these negative traits become more and more common as the complexities in life increase. Now, in order to ensure that these traits do not get mapped into a child's personality owing to his socio-cultural influences, teachers and especially parents, need to be trained and educated in how to prevent this from happening.

Personality, as a concept, is tricky. It is extremely confusing and difficult to differentiate the personality elements which are biologically determined from those which are the result of a socio-cultural environment around a child. Early childhood education plays an intricate role when it comes to personality development. One increases the chance of the successful mapping of positive traits in a child's personality by engaging in activities with them that revolve around that particular trait or value. And by also integrating those elements which are biologically determined so that the biological works in tandem with the socio-cultural so that a desirable personality can be created.

Curriculum design for early childhood education takes utmost priority owing to the fact that the majority number of times, it needs to be made more flexible and personalized as per the need of the child. In order for that to occur, the teacher teaching the child should be equipped with the correct skills and experience when it comes to understanding personality and catering to the child using a child-centric approach.

The curriculum designed should be a mixture of play and activities, including teacher-child initiated interaction. Games and team-building activities, knowledge puzzles and quizzes to improve general knowledge and thinking skills, use of technology to help with visual aid, are just some of the strategies which will make children more interested in learning and help base their personalities around the centralized foundational values which are associated with the human spirit.

When a child reaches two years of age, the mind opens up to something that can be somewhat encompassed in the term 'society'. Social cues and hints become more apparent, and it is at this stage when the onus is upon parents to make their children as socialized as they possibly can, and incorporate in their personality's traits which are both likeable and desirable. Children displaying positive traits in their personalities are more preferred as playmates by other kids and adults like to spend more time with them. As a result, adults end up teaching more things to them which obviously proves to be beneficial for the child. A child, who is badly behaved, wining all the time and always stirring things up, no matter how cute, will always be negatively received by other adults.

One method of positively socializing a child is to voluntarily and incrementally exposing them to situations that make them slightly uncomfortable. This may be analogous to the popular saying that ''the best ways to defeat your fears is to face them.''

Let's consider an example.

Suppose a child is extremely shy and reserved, and reluctant to be a part of new situations and experiences. This may be partly due to lack of courage or simply because the child has a personality type leaning towards introversion. This child is at a park with his/her parents and there are a bunch of children playing right in front of them at a distance. The child, being shy and reserved, is hiding behind the leg of his/her parent and just observing the other kids playing. Now in order for this child to play with the other children, he/she is going to have to approach and make friends with them. At this point, the parent encourages the child to approach the other kids, and tells him/her to take four steps forward.

After some persuasion, the child does that having a nervous stride and quickly comes back. That is an incremental victory in teaching the child how not to be socially nervous and incorporating within him the courage to face new situations voluntarily. Now the parent asks the child to take eight steps forward. The child is a little nervous but not as much as he/she was before. This is because the mind knows that it has the capacity to take four steps forward and gets naturally curious about whether it can now move eight steps forward. This, in turn, becomes a game for the child, a 'play'. The child keeps accomplishing small feats voluntarily and is curious about the next, which leads to the building up of his/her confidence as an individual.

A teacher under any early childhood education programme must have the requisite training and experience to deal with small children. She must have an excellent understanding of child psychology and personality development spectrum. The actual catch is in not knowing the content, but knowing how to deliver the content.

KIDS 'PLAY'

''Our real problem is – what is the goal of education? Are we forming children that are capable of learning what is already known? Or should we try developing creative and innovative minds, capable of discovery from the preschool age on, throughout life?''

A Swiss scientist and development psychologist, Jean Piaget, was quoted as saying in his later years.

The 'play' theory is extremely relevant to our present understanding of child psychological development as it brilliantly hypothesizes that domain of infancy which most of us do not as yet have a proper understanding of – namely play. A society in a sense is a macrocosm of social clues, hints, ideas and norms that define or set apart a suitable standard for the people living in it to adapt to. Some people may imbibe it without question and become one with this societal standard, while others may entirely reject it as pseudo-nonsense. Most people in the general populous tend to linger in the middle, rejecting some ideas while trying to understand why a social norm has continued to be relevant after thousands of years, and then maybe accepting it.

For little kids, a societal representation is instituted in place more or less, by their parents or any guardian responsible for them. The mom and the dad, each representing half a person, when together, form a complete person for the child. Interaction with either of the two leads to the social development of the child in more ways than one. However, the roles and responsibilities between the two counterparts may fluctuate as per the condition of the household. An example of this would be the rough and tumble play that kids often engage in with their dads. This is extremely important as it leads to immense bonding between the two and also teaches the kid how to wrestle in a non-harmful way by placing trust in the other person. This also teaches the child to practice self-control and restrain and is extremely healthy because of the physical exhilaration involved.

Now, the age at which early childhood education starts is an age when the brain of the child is trying to grasp the social hints and cues present around, and trying to logically reason out the 'why' involved behind everything. The kids obviously ask a lot of questions and are not merely satisfied without knowing the underlying reasoning behind their doubt. This also leads to the skills which a teacher must possess while dealing and negotiating with infants. To drop down to the level of the child and think, from an infant's perspective, about the correct way to try and answer a question which otherwise, would be troublesome for the infant to grasp.

Coming back to play, let us look at a game that kids like to play at a very young age. 'House' is a common childhood pretend game in which kids try to act like adults and run a household. In other words, it is an emulation of the world they see around them. The styles and mannerisms mapped into their memory by observing their parents are displayed in that act they put up. Several studies have found that the effect of such a mapped memory at a young age can have a lasting impact in the development of the child's personality later. Therefore, it is important that teachers, along with parents, make sure that only the right characteristics and mannerisms are mapped onto the memory.

Reciprocity involves trust. Any relationship, professional or otherwise, is based on reciprocity. Let's look at a scenario in which reciprocity is displayed among children and how a teacher can help a child understand the true value of trusting a person.

Even a very small infant can be taught the value of reciprocity at a very early age. Kids usually like shiny and glittery stuff. So imagine a toddler sitting in front of a grown up and there's a shiny toy placed right between them, and the gaze of the child is transfixed upon the object. Now suddenly, the grownup puts a hand on top of the object to cover it completely. And so the child gets slightly baffled and disoriented. But after, say a period of three seconds, the adult removes his hand and the child is happy again.

This action is performed multiple times and after each try it is found that the infant gets less and less disoriented with each passing attempt and a point is reached when even if the adult keeps his hand on the object for a long period of time, the child doesn't get unsettled.

That is reciprocity involving trust. The child trusts the person in front to reveal the object to him again even if it takes a longer time, and doesn't get confused by it. The child has learnt how to trust the person. Exercises like these and many more are extremely important in early childhood education as they not only teach a child how to become more trustworthy but also teach them the essential value of placing their trust in the right person.

CERTIFICATIONS – WHY ARE THEY IMPORTANT?

To many, teaching infants is a dream job which invites both passion and effort. It helps a teacher to get equipped with certain life-skills and makes for an enriching experience, interacting with little kids.

Early childhood education is given a lot of importance around the globe as nations understand that they need people who are creative, industrious, courageous and bold, and have the capacity to carry the nation forward upon their shoulders. In order for this to happen, efforts need to be made right from the start and teachers with proper teaching qualifications, certifications and experience need to be brought forth.

Teaching little kids requires commitment, passion, patience and a joyous attitude. The teacher needs to be mentally rigorous for the kids he/she is teaching and always have that fun vibe around them for the kids to be engaged throughout.

In order to be able to give their best, teachers need to work in an environment which is process-driven and the management system is sound. A certification is a mark of trust and credibility. It's an assurance to parents that the needs of their kids are being met with the highest quality standard. Childhood education is a subset of the field of education which holds immense importance. The youngest citizens of a country are to be dealt with the utmost seriousness.

Along with the key standard requirements including:-

Context of the organization, Determination of the interested parties and their requirements, process interactions, visionary leadership, educational policy and objectives, risk assessment, curriculum planning and implementation, assessments, monitoring and evaluation and continual improvement, the ISO 21001 standard provides additional requirements for Early Childhood Education.

In the absence of any regulations on ECE, the following additional requirements as specified by ISO hold a great value for the schools:-

Learning resources for ECE, facilities, competence, communication, individual learning plans, reception & delivery of the child, hygiene care, care in situation of illness or accident, pedagogical-playful materials, equipment & spaces and behaviour management & prevention of child abuse and negligence"

As a third-party certification body, our experts audit the management systems of these ECEs and on verification of compliances, we grant them the international certifications for three years.