

Course: 01

**UNDERSTANDING
EARLY CHILDHOOD
AND EDUCATION**



Year: 2021



**Commonwealth Educational Media Centre for Asia
and
Krishna Kanta Handiqui State Open University**





UNDERSTANDING EARLY CHILDHOOD AND EDUCATION



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Course Introduction

This is the first course of Diploma in Early Childhood Education. There are four modules in this course. The first module gives a detail elaboration of the “*Human Development over the years*”. The second module reflects on *different developmental characteristics of small children ranging from age 3-6*. The third module deals with the *most important aspect of education i.e., early childhood education*. The fourth and last module of this course highlights upon *the child-centric education and role of discipline*.

While going through the modules you will find some Video links and QR Codes given inside the boxes. This will help you to understand the content of the module. In some of the modules there are some boxes which highlight the important points of the very module.

Introductory Video of the DECE Programme	Video link : https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1vucY - Glo	Scan with QR Code 
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Module I: Human Development



MODULE STRUCTURE

- 1.1. Learning Objectives
- 1.2. Introduction
- 1.3. Brief Introduction to Stages of Human Development
- 1.4. Principles of Child Development
- 1.5. Importance of Pre-natal Development
- 1.6. Factors affecting growth and development
 - 1.6.1 Hereditary factors affecting growth and development
 - 1.6.2 Environmental factors affecting growth and development
- 1.7. Let us sum up
- 1.8. Further Reading

1.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this module, you will be able to—

- Explain the stages of human development
- Discuss the principles of child development
- Elucidate the importance of prenatal development
- Identify the factors affecting growth and development of children

1.2 INTRODUCTION

The first module of this course introduces you to the idea of various stages of human development and the principles of child development. You will also come to know why prenatal development is very significant for early childhood stage as well as for the life as a whole. This will also enable you to understand what is human development and the various factors affecting development. Human development means the continuous changes in human beings that occur in people as they grow, from conception until death. This includes all aspects of human development, including physical, emotional, intellectual, social and personality development throughout life. There are various stages of life span and each stage carries its own implication in all round development of a child. Knowing the factors and the implications will enable you to take these into consideration while teaching the children.

1.3.BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO STAGES OF HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Human development can be divided into stages. As we already said, human development starts right from conception in the mother’s womb and continues till we die, the stages are divided accordingly. In general, the stages of human development are—prenatal, infancy, childhood, adolescence and adulthood. A brief overview of these stages and the age range of each stage is given below in the table.

Table 1.1 Stages of Development and their Age Range

Stages of Development		Age Range
Prenatal		From Conception To Birth
Infancy		From Birth To 2 Years
Childhood	Early Childhood	From 3 To 6 Years
	Late Childhood	From 7 To 12 Years
Adolescence		From 13 To 19 Years (Onset Of Puberty To Attainment Of Maturity)
Adulthood		From 20 Years/ Attainment Of Maturity Onwards

As we are concerned about the prenatal, infancy and early childhood, we will discuss in detail only these stages here.

Prenatal Stage

Prenatal stage means the stage before the actual birth of the child, when the child is inside the mother’s womb. Life begins at the moment of conception, the moment at which an woman becomes pregnant. From conception to the actual birth of the baby is a period of approximately nine months. This span of nine months or 280 days is known as prenatal stage of development. This prenatal period is divided again into three sub-stages—

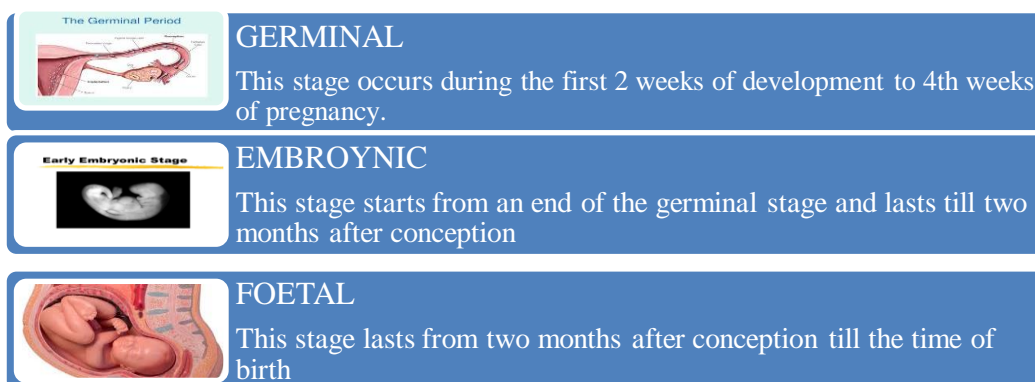


Fig. 1.1. Sub-Stages of Prenatal Development

Infancy Stage

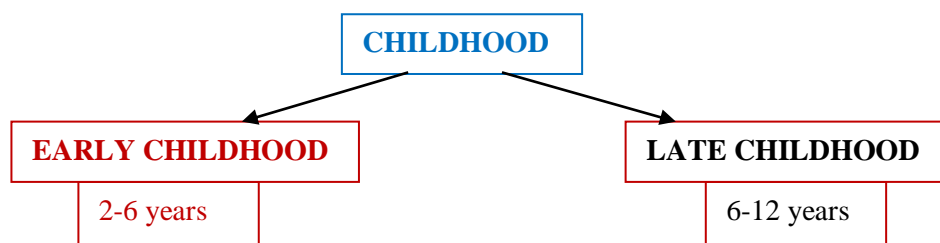
This is a period of newborn. From the moment of birth until the child reaches the second year is called infancy. Some developmental characteristics of this stage are—



- *Time of radical adjustment:* At this stage, the children have to make some radical adjustment as they are exposed to a very new environment after birth. For e.g. they become independent in terms of respiration, feeding and eliminating.
- *Growth rate is high:* There is a high growth rate during this period. Developmental changes are very rapid.
- *Muscular and nervous systems matures:* Their muscular and nervous system matures and becomes stronger as they gradually start moving.
- *Communication begins:* Communication begins at this stage in preliminary form.

Childhood Stage

Now, let us look at the childhood stage. It refers to the period between infancy and adolescence and the age range is around 2-12 years. It can be divided into two stages:



Early Childhood: The age range of this period is generally from 2 years to 6 years. The main characteristics of this stage are—

- *Rapid development*: This stage, like the infancy stage, is characterized by rapid development in all the spheres—physical, mental, emotional and social.
- *Mostly dependent on elders*: However, the children are very dependent on the elders for most of their activities.
- Steadiness of movement and accuracy.
- *Speak complete sentences*: The children at this stage starts moving from uttering words to speaking complete sentences.
- *Socialized Individual*: This is the stage when the children get more opportunity to socialize with other people outside the family. This develops them into a distinctly socialized individual.
- *Curiosity*: Children gets very curious about everything around them at this stage as they explore their surroundings.



Stages of Human Development	Video link : https://youtu.be/WP- D3rTg3w	Scan with QR Code 
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1.4. PRINCIPLES OF DEVELOPMENT

After you have learnt about the stages of development, let us look at the principles of development. If you observe around a little consciously, you will find that human development is not a haphazard process. You will be able to find some kind of pattern in the developmental process. These patterns indicate that human development is based on some principles. Let us now see, what these principles are. These are—

- **Development proceeds from top to bottom**: According to this principle, growth follows a direction and pattern that begins with the head and upper body parts and

then proceeds to the rest of the body. It is also called as cephalocaudal principle of development. If you have seen the picture of a foetus, you will find that the head is developed earlier and more than the trunk. Look at the image below.

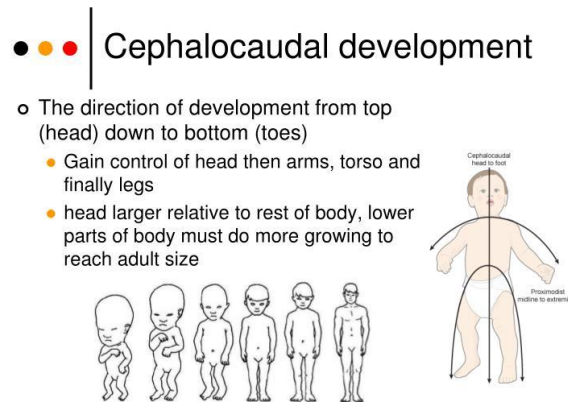


Fig. 1.4. Cephalocaudal Principle (Source: slideserve.com)

- **Development proceeds from centre to outward of the body:** This principle states that development proceeds from the center of the body to outward. It is also known as proximodistal principle. For example, the spinal cord develops before the outer parts of the body. The central organs like the heart, liver, etc. develop first and then the outer parts like hands, fingers, etc.

Proximodistal direction

The process in proximodistal from center or midline to periphery direction. development proceeds from near to far - outward from central axis of the body toward the extremities

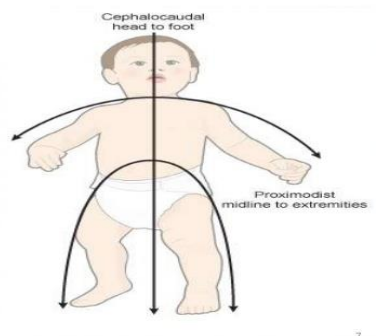



Fig. 1.2 Proximodistal Principle (Source: slideshare.net)

- **Development Involves Change:** It states that an individual undergoes continued and progressive changes. At every age, some of the developmental changes are just beginning, some are at the peak and others are in the process of decline. For example, by the age of 6 years, you will find that all the baby teeth of the

children have come out and during the later childhood, these are replaced by the permanent teeth.

- **Development is Continuous:** It states that one stage of development lays the foundation for the next stage of development. At every age, some or the other development takes place. You will see a child lifting and turning head before he /she can turn over, crawling before it learns to stand and then walk and run. Development is a continuous process, which keeps on adding new skills to the already acquired skills.
- **Development depends on Maturation and Learning:** Maturation refers to the sequential characteristics of biological growth and development. The biological changes occur in sequential order and give children new abilities. For example, a 3 month old baby cannot use language because it has not matured enough for this activity. Learning occurs as a result of the child's experiences in the environment. So, development is dependent on both maturation and learning of the child.
- **Development Proceeds from General to Specific:** Development occurs in general activities before the child can perform specific activities. Like in motor development, the infant will be able to grasp an object with the whole hand before using only the thumb and forefingers.
- **Individual Differences in Development:** Every child is unique. The patterns and sequences for growth and development are usually same for all, but the rates at which individual children reach the developmental stages are different. For example, you will find children of the same age with different height, different interests, and different abilities.

Principles of Development	Video link : https://youtu.be/5TZ_HJOSDhk	Scan with QR Code 
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1.5. IMPORTANCE OF PRENATAL DEVELOPMENT

The prenatal period is a crucial period of development of our lives. It is the formative period for all our body organs and plays a role in establishing their functional capacity. It is the foundation on which all future development after birth is built. Most prenatal development occurs normally, following the established patterns with little variation. However there are a number of things that can go wrong during this time which may cause various psycho-physical hazards in future. As soon as the embryo begins to receive nourishment from the mother through the placenta, it becomes vulnerable to hazards such as diseases of the mother, drugs, and other toxins that can pass from the mother through the placenta to the developing infant. It is during this time of pregnancy that we most clearly notify as critical periods, times during which some environmental influences can have an impact—often devastating—on the development of the infant. Some of the important points to be considered in this regard are—

- Traditional beliefs about prenatal influences are regarded as hazardous not because of their effects on the developing child during prenatal period but because of their effects on attitudes and treatment children receive during the early formative years of their life from significant people who hold these beliefs.
- Maternal stress involving unpleasant emotions as fear, anger, or grief have a negative impact on the child in later future.
- The attitudes like wanting the child of a particular sex, negative attitude towards unwed mother or divorced mother affect pre as well as post-natal development.
- Any unfavorable environmental condition (like drugs during first trimester, sudden death of relatives, accidents, shocking news, etc.) affects the further development stages of a child.
- Also fathers, who have a diet low in vitamin C, often produce offspring with higher risks of birth defects and cancer.

The last few months continue the development of fat and the growth of the body, until about the end of the thirty-eighth week. At the time, the fetus is pushed out of the mother's body in the process of labor and childbirth and becomes a baby. Babies born before 38 weeks are called preterm and may need life support to survive. This is especially true if the baby weighs less than about two and a half kilogram at birth.

The pre-natal period is considered as an important part of the developmental process. Prenatal development is a time of remarkable change that helps set the stage for future psychological development. The brain develops over the course of the prenatal period, but it will continue to go through more changes during the early years of childhood. So, it is clear that prenatal care and proper development lays the foundation of a healthy life.

1.6. FACTORS AFFECTING DEVELOPMENT

Development is an integrated process involving genes, hormones, nutrients and other factors. It is the resultant of interplay of different factors. All these factors can be divided under two broad categories—hereditary factors and environmental factors.

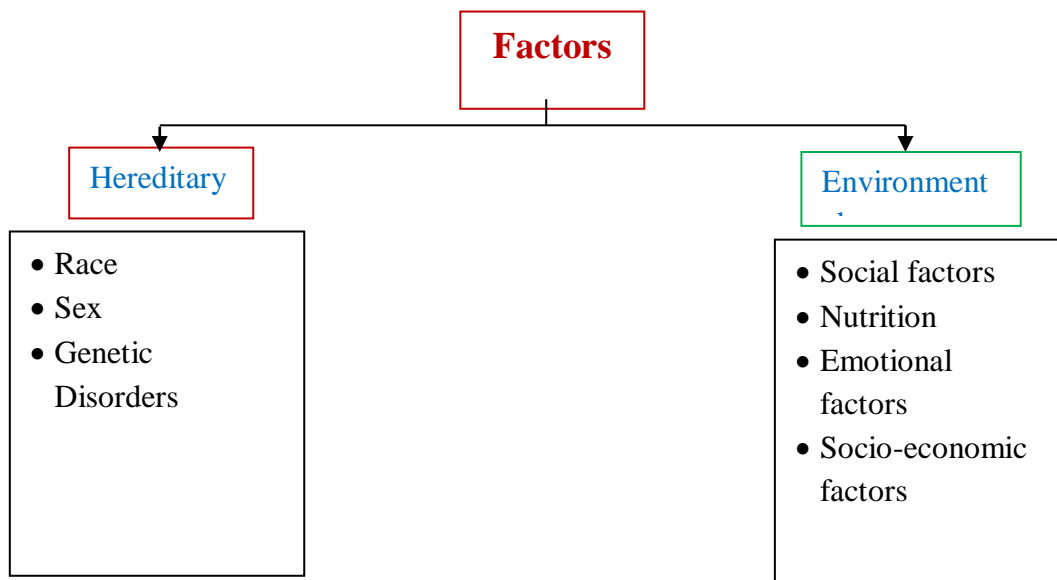


Fig. 1.3. Factors affecting Development

1.6.1 Hereditary Factors of Development


In your centre/pre-school, you find children with different skin colour, hair colour, body structures, etc. Why do you think, there are differences in these aspects among the children? These differences are due to hereditary factors, i.e. because of the genes. Heredity is the transmission of physical characters from parents to children through their genes. It influences all aspects of physical appearance such as height, weight, body structure, colour of the eye, texture of the hair and even intelligence and aptitudes. Diseases are also passed through the genes.

- **Race:** Growth and development of each child is determined by race of the child. For e.g. A child from Assam is different from a Kashmiri child in respect to their body type and complexion. Their rate of development also differs.
- **Sex:** Difference in development is also found in regard to the sex of the child. For example, in general, boys are heavier and taller than girls at birth and this is maintained till 11 years of age.
- **Genetic Disorders:** Many disorders are passed on to family members through genes. These disorders affect the development of the child. For example, Chromosomal abnormalities (Turner syndrome, Down syndrome, Klinefelter syndrome etc.) affect the development of a child.

1.6.2. Environmental Factors of Development

Environment represents the sum total of physical and psychological stimulations the child receives from its surrounding. It plays a crucial role in the development of children. Some of the environmental factors that influence early childhood development involve the physical surroundings, geographical conditions, social environment and relationships with family and peers. You will notice among your children that a well-nurtured child does better than a deprived one. Their environment is responsible for this.

- **Social Factors:** Relationship with the parents, siblings, other family members, peers and friends, parental attitude towards the child may also influence development.
- **Nutrition:** Children having nutrition deficiency and its effects like anaemia, and vitamin deficiency also affects growth and development.
- **Emotional Factors:** Children from broken family, separated parents, single parent may have some emotional impact which may in turn have some impact on their development.
- **Socio Economic Level:** Socio-economic level has a direct impact on child's development. A child from high socio-economic level gets access to more resources than a child from low socio-economic status.

Factors of Development	<p style="text-align: center;">Video link :</p> <p style="text-align: center;">https://youtu.be/DUPMS6hddEE</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Scan with QR Code</p> 
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1.7. LET US SUM UP

Human development is a lifelong process. Every individual has to pass four stages of development—infancy, childhood, adolescence and adulthood. Every stage carries its own characteristics, importance as well as hazards. There are various hereditary as well as environmental factors affecting growth and development.

- Development is a progressive series of changes depending on maturation and experience.
- Human development can be studied in terms of different stages of life—infancy, childhood, adolescence and adulthood.
- Along with the other four stages, prenatal development has its own importance and any hazards at this stage may lead to a vulnerable condition.
- Infancy is normally from birth to about three years of age.
- After the period of infancy, the period of early childhood begins. The years of early childhood are marked by rapid physical growth and development.
- During late childhood there is general development of mental abilities. The child is able to grasp relationships with increase in age.
- There are various principles of development—general to specific, individual differences, cephalocaudal, proximodistal etc.
- Prenatal stage is very important because the developmental opportunities that the child receives during this stage affect the developmental course in the later stages.

1.8 Further Readings

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Reading links:

<https://courses.candellearning.com/edps208/chapter/chapter-1/>



Module II:
DEVELOPMENTAL CHARACTERISTICS OF
EARLY CHILDHOOD STAGE



MODULE STUCTURE

- 2.1.Learning objectives
- 2.2.Introduction
- 2.3.Physical and Motor Development during Childhood
 - 2.3.1. Gross motor skills
 - 2.3.2. Fine motor skills
- 2.4.Mental/Cognitive development during childhood
- 2.5.Language development during early childhood
- 2.6.Socio-emotional development during early childhood
 - 2.6.1. Process of Socialization
 - 2.6.2. Emotional development during early childhood
- 2.7.Let us sum up
- 2.8. Further Reading

2.1. LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this module, you will be able to—

- Discuss the physical changes during early childhood
- Differentiate between gross and fine motor skills
- Explain the mental/cognitive development during early childhood
- Explain the language development during early childhood
- Discuss socio-emotional development during early childhood

2.2.INTRODUCTION

In the previous module, you have studied about the stages of human development, principles of child development, importance of prenatal stage and the factors affecting growth and development. In this module, we will discuss the physical, mental, linguistics and socio-emotional developmental characteristics during early childhood stage. You already know that early childhood stage range from 2 to 6 years. Early childhood development refers to the many skills and milestones that the children are expected to reach by the time they reach the age of six. These milestones include learning how to run, how to talk using simple sentences and how to play with others and many more. Let us see these different aspects of development one by one.

2.3.PHYSICAL AND MOTOR DEVELOPMENT DURING EARLY CHILDHOOD

Physical development means the growth and development taking place in the body and physical activities of the child. Although children grow very rapidly over the first two years, growth slows down during early childhood. From ages 2 through 6 years, the average child grows 2 to 3 inches taller and gains nearly 2kg in weight each year. The average 6 years old child weighs about 20 kg and is about 46 inches tall.

Physical development also entails the development of motor skills. The refinement of motor skills that use the large muscles of the body—as well as those that tap hand—eye coordination and require subtle movements—is an important developmental task of early childhood. During this period the child practices, refined, and masters gross and fine motor skills.

Gross Motor Development

Between the ages of 3 and 6 children make great advances in gross motor skills those that use the large muscles such as running and jumping. They become physically stronger, with increases in bone and muscle strength as well as lung capacity. . Fundamental gross motor skills development during this period can be highlighted as below—

- Develop skill in movement, including jumping, stepping and landing, turning, changing direction.
- Learn to balance on different parts of the body, rolling, transferring weight from feet to hands.
- Use the floor and apparatus for climbing and swinging.
- Learn to lift, carry, place and use apparatus safely.
- Respond with gesture and stillness as appropriate.
- Improve their control, use different shapes, levels and directions of travel.
- Use their body movements expressively to reflect rhythms, moods of feelings conveyed by music.
- Create sequences of movements in response to music, and to perform their own sequences and traditional dances from various cultures. (see table below)

Table 2.1. Age-wise Gross Motor Skills during Early Childhood Stage

AGE	GROSS MOTOR SKILL
2-3 Years	Walks more smoothly, runs but cannot turn or stop suddenly, jumps, throws a ball with a rigid body and catches by trapping ball against chest, rides push toys using feet.
3-4 Years	Runs, ascends stairs alternating feet, jumps 15 to 24 inches, hops, pedals and steers a tricycle.
4-5 Years	Runs more smoothly with control over stopping and turning, descends stairs alternating feet, jumps 24 to 33 inches, skips, throws ball by rotating the body and transferring weight to one foot, catches ball with hands, rides tricycle and steers effectively.
5-6 Years	Runs more quickly, skips more effectively, throws and catches a ball like older children, makes a running jump of 28 to 36 inches, rides bicycle with training wheels.


Fine Motor Skills

Fine motor skills like the ability to button a shirt, pour milk into a glass, put puzzles together and draw pictures involve eye-hand and small muscle coordination. As children get better at these skills, they are able to become more independent and do more for themselves. Young children become better at grasping eating utensils and become more self-sufficient at feeding. Fundamental fine motor skills development during this period can be highlighted as below-

- Handle increasingly small equipment skillfully, for example construction toys.
- Use pencils, pens and paintbrushes of varying sizes to support their individual development when mark-making, writing and making pictures.
- Use hammers, saws and nails to create their own models.
- Pour and measure liquids.
- Handle computer mouse with increasing control. (see table below)

Table 2.2. Age-wise Fine Motor Skills during Early Childhood Stage

AGE	FINE MOTOR SKILLS
2-3 Years	Unzips large zippers, put on and removes some clothing, uses a spoon.
3-4 Years	Serves food, can work large buttons, copies vertical line and circle, uses scissors.
4-5 Years	Uses scissors to cut along a line, uses fork effectively, copies simple shapes and some letters.
5-6 Years	Ties shoes, uses knife to cut soft food, copies numbers and simple words.

<p>Physical development during early childhood</p>	<p>Video link : https://youtu.be/ZxvtpFNSCPI</p>	<p>Scan with QR Code</p> 
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2.4. MENTAL/COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT DURING EARLY CHILDHOOD

Continuing from infancy, early childhood is a rapid period of brain growth with an increase in synapses and connections among brain regions. At age 2 years, the brain reaches 75% of its adult weight and 90% by age 5. Children’s increasing motor and cognitive abilities are not simply due to the increase in brain matter. Fundamental mental/cognitive changes during this period can be highlighted as below-

- The child has got varied experiences connected with his immediate environment
- The child accumulate a heap of knowledge
- Understand the basic functional relationship between things and events
- Egocentrism and fantasy are in high degree
- Gradual development of the perception of size, shape, colour and time etc.
- Interest in adventurous activities increases
- Rapid increase in memory, thinking and reasoning
- Creativity and imagination etc. are also developed
- Sensory-perceptual learning begins
- Desire for specific learning increases,
- Considerable increases in vocabulary and language as tools of thought are acquired and

Mental/cognitive Development of Early childhood stage	Video link : https://youtu.be/ZLhzJQ3bp_U	Scan with QR Code 
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2.5. LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT DURING EARLY CHILDHOOD

The development of language is indeed a very important milestone in the cognitive development of a child because language allows children to think in words rather than just images, to ask questions, to communicate their needs and wants to others and to form concepts. There are several stages of language development that all children experience, no matter what culture they live in or what language they will learn to speak (Brown, 1973).

1. **Cooing:** At around 2 months of age, babies begin to make vowel-like sounds.
2. **Babbling:** At about 6 months, infants add consonant sounds to the vowels to make a babbling sound, which at times can almost sound like real speech.
3. **One word speech:** Somewhere just before or around age 1 years, most children begin to say actual words. These words are typically nouns and may seem to represent an entire phrase of meaning. They are called holophrases. For example: a child might say “Milk” and mean “I want some milk” or “I drank my milk”
4. **Telegraphic speech:** At around a year and a half, toddlers begin to string words together to form short, simple sentences using nouns, verbs, and adjectives. “Baby eat”, “Mommy go” are examples of telegraphic speech. Only the words that carry the meaning of the sentence are used.
5. **Whole sentences:** As children move through the preschool years, they learn to use grammatical terms and increase the number of words in their sentences, until by age 6 years or so they are nearly as fluent as an adult, although the number of words they know is still limited when compared to adult vocabulary.

Pre School Years

- At the age of 4, most children have acquired the basic structures of the language. (ask questions, give commands, give reports)

- Children (3-4 year olds) begin to learn vocabulary at the rate of several words a day.
- They develop their ability in using the language in a widening social environment and variety of situations.
- Children also begin to develop metalinguistic awareness. For example, the ability to treat language as an object separate from the meaning it conveys.

School Years

- Children develop their language as they grow up.
- Reading gives a major boost to metalinguistic awareness (language is formed as well as meaning)
- In the school years, children also develop vocabularies.

2.6. SOCIO-EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT DURING EARLY CHILDHOOD

Learner, you may observe different social behavior of a child in different situation. This social behaviour of the children is the result of social development. Social development means acquisition of the ability to behave in accordance with social expectations. Social development takes place through the process of socialization. Let us see what is included in the process of socialization.

2.6.1. Process of Socialization

We can understand the process of socialization under three broad heads—

(a) Development of social attitudes

- To become socialized, children must like people and social activities.
- If they do, they will make good social adjustments and be accepted as members of the social group with which they are identified.

(b) Playing approved social roles

- Every social group has its own patterns of customary behavior that are carefully defined and are expected by members of the group.
- There are approved roles, for example, for parents and children and for teachers and pupils.

(c) Learning to behave in a socially approved way

- Every social group has its standards of what is approved behavior for its members.
- To become socialized, children must not only know what this approved behavior is, but they must also model their own behavior along the approved lines.


2.6.2. Emotional Development During Early Childhood

You may have observed children display their various emotions. Young children like adults experience many emotions during the course of a day. Emotional development is the basis for social development. It is because their social behaviour is shaped by their emotional development. Their emotional development in early childhood allows them to try to understand other people's emotional reactions and to begin to control and express their own emotions.

- **Expressing emotions:** During the early childhood years, emotions such as pride and guilt become more common. They are especially influenced by parents' responses to children's behavior. For example, a young child may experience shame when a parent says, "You should feel bad about biting your sister"
- **Understanding emotions:** Among the most important changes in emotional development in early childhood is an increased understanding of emotion. During early childhood, young children increasingly understand that certain situations are likely to evoke particular emotions; facial expressions indicate specific emotions and emotions affect behavior, and emotions can be used to influence others' emotions. For example, when a young child understands that a peer (friend) feels sad about being left out of a game.
- **Regulating emotions:** Emotion regulation especially plays a key role in children's ability to manage the demands and conflicts they face in interacting with others. For example, showing respect for others emotional state.

Fundamental emotional changes during this period can be highlighted as below—

- Love of classmates and associates of the same group takes place
- School life plays an important role in forming the emotional behavior of the child
- Love and sympathy develop during this period
- Number of learned fears increase
- School phobia may also develop
- Angry reactions also increase due to threat to one's own status of prestige
- Considerable emotional stability takes place [during this period](#)

<p>Social/emotional Development of Early childhood stage</p>	<p>Video link : https://youtu.be/IBQmMzmGxPM</p>	<p>Scan with QR Code</p> 
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2.7.LET US SUM UP

- The developmental milestones of early childhood relates to the development of children’s body control and coordination of large movements, fine manipulative skills, spatial awareness and balance.
- It also focuses on children’s knowledge and understanding of a healthy lifestyle upon which all around well-being depends.
- After the period of infancy, the period of early childhood begins. The years of early childhood are marked by rapid physical growth and development.
- Between the ages of 3 and 6 children make great advances in gross motor skills those that use the large muscles such as running and jumping.
- Fine motor skills like the ability to button a shirt, pour milk into a glass, put puzzles together and draw pictures involve eye-hand and small muscle coordination.
- Continuing from infancy, early childhood is a rapid period of brain growth with an increase in synapses and connections among brain regions
- The development of language is indeed a very important milestone in the cognitive development of a child because language allows children to think in words rather than just images, to ask questions, to communicate their needs and wants to others and to form concepts
- Social Development means acquisition of the ability to behave in accordance with social expectations
- Young children like adults experience many emotions during the course of a day. Their emotional development in early childhood allows them to try to make sense of other people’s emotional reactions and to begin to control their own emotions.

2.8 Further Readings

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Module III :
EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION



Module Structure

- 3.1.Learning Objectives
- 3.2.Introduction
- 3.3.Concept of Early Childhood Education
- 3.4.Nature and Scope of Early Childhood Education
- 3.5.Objectives of Early Childhood Education
- 3.6.Principles of Early Childhood Education
- 3.7.Significance of Early Childhood Education
- 3.8.Let Us Sum Up
- 3.9. Further Reading

3.1.LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this module, you will be able to—

- Define the concept of Early Childhood Education
- Describe the nature of early childhood education
- Explain the scope of early childhood education
- Analyse the objectives of early childhood education
- Identify the principles of early childhood education
- Discuss the significance of early childhood education

3.2.INTRODUCTION

This module will make you acquainted with the conceptual understanding of what you have been doing in your field of work. As early childhood educators, you are well-aware of the practical aspects of early childhood education. This unit will boost up your knowledge and understanding of the bases of early childhood education. Early childhood education is based on the theories and principles of child development, which you have gone through in the previous two units. Let us now look into the concept, nature, scope, objectives, principles and significance of early childhood education.

3.3.CONCEPT OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

If you will go little back in time, you will find that early education was a part of the family. The child received education and care from elders, parents and the community

members. The wide existence of joint family provided a rich environment for socialization, inculcation of values, love, care and education for the child. But, now changes in the socio-economic situations have brought about many changes in the early education system. This has given rise to the formal institutions of early childhood education like the Anganwadis/Balwadis, pre-schools, etc.

Now, early childhood education is one of the most important areas in the field of education. It forms the foundation of the whole education structure. It serves the children of age-group birth to 6 years. So, we can understand early childhood education as the education system designed for holistic development of the children of age group 0-6 years. It is a readiness programme for the primary school education, i.e. it prepares the children for entering into the formal education system.

ACTIVITY: After watching the video, write down what you have understood by early childhood development.

<p>Concept of Early Childhood Education</p>	<p>Video link : https://youtu.be/Z8bQTHyBFA</p>	<p>Scan with QR Code</p> 
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3.4.NATURE AND SCOPE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

After knowing about the concept of early childhood education, let us understand its nature or characteristics through the following points—

- a. It focuses on holistic development of the child.
- b. It provides a stimulating play environment for intellectual, language, emotional, physical and social development of the child.
- c. It is based on the principles of child development.
- d. It is a school-readiness programme for the children.
- e. It follows play-way and activity approach.
- f. It encourages interaction with environment, active participation in group activities and creative problem solving among children.
- g. It requires very careful planning and execution.
- h. It involves the parents of the children as well as the community.

Early childhood education is a vast area inter-connected with many related areas. However, its scope can be defined. Let us try to define the scope of early childhood education and see what the aspects are coming under its purview.

- a. Early childhood education is concerned with the children of age-group 0-8 years. Here, zero (0) represents the pre-natal period. Though it is actually up to 6 years, the early years of primary stage of education is also considered under it.
- b. It involves all the aspects of human development—physical, intellectual, emotional, moral and social.
- c. Early childhood education is not confined only to the four walls of the Anganwadi Centres/early childhood education institutions but the family and the community also plays an active part in it.
- d. Care is an integral part of early childhood education programme. The education of children goes hand in hand with their care.

Scope of ECE	Video link : https://youtu.be/K-T6KewZAt0	Scan with QR Code 
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3.5.Objectives of Early Childhood Education

The objectives of early childhood education are determined based on the developmental characteristics and needs of the children at early childhood stage. The objectives of early childhood education are—

- To develop in child a good physique, adequate muscular coordination and basic motor skills.
- To develop in the child good health habits and to build the basic skills necessary for personal, social adjustment such as washing, cleaning, dressing and going to toilet.
- To develop the child’s ability to express his/her thoughts and feelings in fluent, correct, clear speech.
- To encourage independence and creativity by providing the child with the sufficient opportunities for self expression.

- To stimulate intellectual curiosity and to help him/her understand the world around him and foster new interests by providing opportunities to explore, investigate and experiment.
- To develop desirable social attitudes and manners to encourage healthy group participation and making child sensitive to the rights and privileges of others.
- To develop emotional maturity by guiding the child to express, understand, accept and control his feelings and emotions.
- To encourage aesthetic appreciation.


3.6. Principles of Learning in Early Childhood Education

You have seen in the previous sections that holistic approach has been emphasized again and again in early childhood education. Teaching in the early childhood years should apply the holistic approach. It must be based on inquiry and exploratory methods. Some of the principles that are to be followed for the early childhood education are as given below—

- *Principle of child-centeredness*- Education is a tri-polar process which includes the teacher, the taught and the curriculum. The curriculum along with the whole classroom environment should be child-centric. The teacher should give due importance to individual differences of the children.
- *Principle of learning at own pace*- The teacher should allow the child to learn at their own pace. Every child is unique and everyone have their own learning style and speed. The teacher should act as a facilitator to provide the best environment to his children.
- *Learning as a natural activity*- Learning is not something forceful but spontaneous. The teacher should never try to impose something upon the child but let him learn naturally in his own way. The only task of the teacher is to help the child learning.
- *Principle of knowledge of child development*- Another important thing on the part of the teacher is the knowledge of child's development as discussed earlier. The teacher must be aware of the different developmental characteristics of the child. Only then she/he will be able to help the child learn accordingly.
- *Principle of interdisciplinary education*- The concept of interdisciplinary education has gaining tremendous importance in the present day education.

Early childhood education is also no different. It is a method or set of methods used to teach a unit across different curricular discipline. For example- subjects in a definite class suppose second, language, mathematics, environment, etc. might work together to form an interdisciplinary unit.

- *Principle of exploration-* As we have discussed it earlier children should be allowed to explore the environment more to learn better.
- *Principle of play-* Children are playful by nature. This characteristic of them can be totally applied for teaching them. This way they won't feel the burden of learning something and even this will make learning interesting for them. This method has the at most importance in the education of early childhood stage.

Objectives& Principles of ECE	<p style="text-align: center;">Video link :</p> <p style="text-align: center;">https://youtu.be/QL5A2R9OKM4</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Scan with QR Code</p> 
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3.7.SIGNIFICANCE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Early childhood education is an important stage of education. Its importance can be compared to the foundation stone of a building. The stronger the foundation, the stronger will be the building. Thus, it means that the early childhood education shapes the educational performance of the individual at later stages as well as their life as a whole. Early childhood education is important because—

- ***Rapid rate of development:*** It is a stage of rapid development in all the dimensions. The children have to make a lot of adjustments during the course of development. Therefore, there is a need for guided development for them, which can be provided through early childhood education.
- ***Require stimulating environment:*** At the early childhood stage, the children are brain is developing more than the later stage. Therefore, an exposure to a stimulating environment provides them the opportunity to learn new things.
- ***Foundation of development:*** This is the foundation of development of the later stages of development. It determines the developmental nature of future course

of development. Therefore, it is essential to provide a good foundation of development for the children.

- ***Readiness to primary school:*** Early childhood education is the preparatory stage of education for primary school. It develops readiness in the children for entering into primary school.
- ***Important for optimum development of potential:*** Early childhood education ensures optimum development of the potentials of the children. Those deprived of early childhood education may not get the opportunity for optimum development of their potential.
- ***Important for universalization of elementary education:*** As early childhood education prepares the child for formal schooling, it has been found that preschool education has a positive impact on both attendance and learning achievements of the children.

Readiness: A stage when a child is ready to learn in a conducive learning environment and can do so without emotional disturbance.

Soni & Sangai, 2017

3.8.Let Us Sum Up

- Early childhood education is one of the most important areas in the field of education.
- Early childhood education is the education system designed for holistic development of the children of age group 0-6 years.
- It is based on the principles of child development and follows play-way approach.
- It is a school readiness programme for children.
- Early childhood education is concerned with the children of age-group 0-8 years. Here, zero (0) represents the pre-natal period. Though it is actually up to 6 years, the early years of primary stage of education is also considered under it.
- It involves all the aspects of human development—physical, intellectual, emotional, moral and social.
- Early childhood education is not confined only to the four walls of the Anganwadi Centres/Early Childhood Education Institutions but the family and the community also plays an active part in it.

- Care is an integral part of early childhood education programme. The education of children goes hand in hand with their care.
- The objectives of early childhood education are—to develop in child a good physique, adequate muscular coordination and basic motor skills; to develop good health habits and to build the basic skills necessary for personal, social adjustment, to develop the child’s ability to express his/her thoughts and feelings, to stimulate intellectual curiosity, to develop desirable social attitudes and manners, to develop emotional maturity and to encourage aesthetic appreciation.
- The principles on which the learning in early childhood education is based are the principles of child-centeredness, learning at own pace, as a natural activity, knowledge of child development, interdisciplinary education, exploration, play.
- Early childhood education is important because—it is a period of rapid rate of development, children require stimulating environment, it is the basic foundation of development, it prepares the child for primary school, important for optimum development of potential, important for universalization of quality elementary education.

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Module IV:
CHILD CENTRIC EDUCATION AND
DISCIPLINE



Module Structure

4.1.Learning Objectives

4.2.Introduction

4.3.Concept of Child-Centric Education

4.4.Characteristics of Child-Centric Education

4.5.Implications of Child-Centric Education in Early Childhood Education

4.5.1. Importance of Child-Centric Education in Early Childhood Education

4.5.2. Activities Related to Child Centric Education in Early Childhood Education

4.6.Concept of Discipline

4.7.Importance of Discipline at Early Childhood Stage

4.8.Discipline as a Part of Early Childhood Education

4.9.Let Us Sum Up

4.10. Further Reading

4.1.Learning Objectives

After going through this module, you will be able to—

- Explain the concept of Child-Centric Education
- Describe the characteristics of child-centric education
- Discuss the importance of child-centric education in early childhood education
- Apply different activities related to child centric education in early childhood education
- Explain the importance of discipline in early childhood education
- Inculcate disciplinary principles among the children during their early stage.


4.2.Introduction

By the name itself, you may have understood that child-centric education is a process of education in which the child is the focus or is in the center of the whole education process. It means that the child is given utmost importance in every aspect of the education process. The children should be provided enough scope to participate in different types of activities related with teaching-learning process. Here, the role of teacher is just like a facilitator. In this module, we will discuss the concept and characteristics of child-centric education, figure out its importance in early childhood

education and find out how early childhood education can be made child-centric. Also, discipline is an important part of early childhood education. The disciplinary principles ingrained among the children during this phase of their life forms the basis of the discipline they will follow in the later life. Let us first understand the concept of child-centric education.

4.3. Concept of Child Centric Education

Child centric education is an approach to educate the child focusing on the needs of the children. This approach has many implications for the design of the learning objectives, curriculum, course content, arrangement of different activities and even evaluation. It focuses on student’s needs, abilities, interest and learning style. The main aim of child centric education is to improve every child’s participation and learning in school, rather than concentrating on the subject matter and examinations. Child centric education is more effective than teacher centric education as child centric education encourage joyful self-learning situation and provide the children with abundant scope for self-expression. Therefore, it is considered as the child friendly education. Because, all children have the right to an education that helps them to grow and develop to their fullest.

<p>Concept & Characteristics of Child Centric Education</p>	<p>Video link : https://youtu.be/LklyanppFUc</p>	<p>Scan with QR Code</p> 
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4.4. Characteristics of Child Centric Education

You will be able to understand the concept of child-centric education better by knowing its characteristics. Let us now look at the characteristics of child-centric education—

- **Dignity of the Child:** In child centric education, the dignity of the child is very significant. It implies that due respect should be given to the individuality and the interest of the child.
- **No Discrimination:** Though the individuality of the child is to be considered, there should be no discrimination in treating the children. It implies providing ample opportunities to each and every child to actively participate in the teaching-learning process irrespective of their caste, tribe, religion and ability of the child.

- **Education as fundamental rights:** The child-centric education regards education as the fundamental right of every child, no matter whatever is his physical strength, mental ability, emotional status and socio- economic background.
- **Curriculum, Syllabi, Teaching:** In child-centric education, curriculum, syllabi and teaching are organized in accordance with the needs and interests of children. In case of early childhood education the curriculum is totally based on play way method including rhyming, singing, playing, jumping, etc.
- **All-round Development of Child:** The aim of child-centric education is all-round development of the children. So, different activities should be designed in such a way that leads to their cognitive, affective and psycho-motor development and make them ready to cope up with surrounding situations.
- **Continuous Evaluation:** Evaluation of learning at the end of the year or after a long time of learning is against the principle of child psychology. The evaluation procedures should be continuous and remedial. Evaluation should be a process of identifying the child's deficiencies and accordingly remedial measures are to be instituted in progressive manner.
- **Helping Every Child to Acquire Minimum Level of Learning:** In child-centric education, teachers are required to help children according to their potential. For this, it is essential for the teacher to be able to identify the potential of each learner and then guide them accordingly.
- **The Teacher is important:** The role of teacher is even more important in child-centered approach. The teacher's importance is enhanced and his functions become varied and complex as he has to understand the psychology of the child and has to adopt his methods of teaching to suit individual differences. In spite of transmitting knowledge alone, his function now is to develop the entire personality of the child.
- **Collaborative nature:** Child-centric education emphasizes on group work. This is done through encouraging students to collaborate on activities that broaden their minds. This approach considers the act of play as a type of work or lesson. When children play, they consistently learn.

4.5.Implication of Child Centric Education in Early Childhood Education

Early childhood stage is the foundation of future studies and habit formation of the child for the whole life. Earlier, it was largely an informal affair involving family, household,

and community members. However, the formalization of these arrangements was required as a result social changes. In this process of formalization, the child was lost in the desires of the parents, high academic expectations from them and unhealthy competition. The ultimate aim of education is not to make the children literate but to develop desired changes in the physical, social, emotional and intellectual sphere. For this, appropriate arrangement for teaching in this stage is very much important. Child-centric education helps children become more independent, responsible and confident. Child-centric education places the child first, an approach with the belief that all children have the right to an education that helps them grow to their fullest potential.

4.5.1. Importance of Child-centric Education in Early Childhood Education

The education process during early childhood stage is like gardening. You need to nurture the children as the gardener takes care of a newly grown plant. By following child centric education, you can make early childhood education as it should be. It is very important in early childhood education as it emphasizes—

- **Learner-friendly environment:** In child centric education, all learners get equal opportunities to take an active participation in teaching-learning activities according to their own interest. Teacher are engaged just as a facilitator. Therefore, it is considered as more effective approach of teaching.
- **Psychological principles of learning:** Self-learning is more effective than teacher-centric approach, in which the teachers impose their own ideas on the learners. Child-centric approach encourages the child to learn something directly from their environment, which help them to develop reasoning power.
- **Inculcation of moral values:** As child centric education emphasizes on group activities, it helps them to develop moral values like sharing, caring, co-operation etc. and live happily.
- **Development of balanced personality:** As the children are actively involved in different types of activities, it helps the child to be physically fit, mentally sound, socially adjustable and emotionally attached, which leads to development of balance personality among them.
- **Respecting the individuality of the child:** Children’s ideas, learning styles and interest are considered as the prime factor of learning and encourage them to involve freely in different learning activities according to their own choices.

- **Joyful learning:** child-centric education advocates joyful learning which involves activities like games, sports, singing, dancing, role-playing, toy making, etc. as the medium of instruction in this stage. In this way, children enjoy learning. It also makes learning effective and everlasting.

4.5.2 Activities Related to Child Centric Education in Early Childhood Education

Children are very active and constructive by nature. They are ever ready to make new things. Sometimes they break their toys and other items to make something new. The teacher should be able to utilize this instinct by encouraging children to construct and create new things. They are also fond of collecting things. They should be encouraged to collect useful things for their own interest. These allow children to take an active part in the teaching-learning process.

In child-centric education, teachers engage in an “active learning” process and takes on the role of a facilitator. As no formal teaching is associated with early childhood education, the teacher should organize different activities to develop interest and ability to perform different activities required to acquire knowledge in both physical and emotional level.

Some activities related to child centric education in early childhood education are mentioned below—

Activities related to games and sports

Activities like running, jumping, standing in a line, playing with sports materials, etc., which helps the teacher to make the child to be physically strong, mentally sound and emotionally attached with one another.

Activities related to collecting different items

Teacher should ask the children to collect different items based on the interest of the child. It helps the child to form good habit to collect some important things which also leads them to acquire knowledge about different shapes, size, colour and nature of different things they have collected. These activities help children learn at their own pace. The teacher acts more as a partner to guide the child in their individual journey.

Activities related to making things

The teacher can organize different group activities to provide opportunities to the children to express themselves. The activities like paper folding, making clay models,


earing and pasting, pattern making, sorting, flower making, drawing, painting, hand painting, etc. in the group to make different items and help them to develop knowledge about different shapes, size, colour, etc. These are also helpful for development of motor skill, moral value as well as cooperative nature among the young children and encourage them to be conscious about health and hygiene.

Activities related to singing dancing etc.

Activities like singing song, reciting poem, dancing, drama etc. help the children to develop the skill of speaking, expressing and have clear thinking and reasoning power. These activities help the teacher to teach the children how to apply what they learn, in real-world situations.

Activities related to day-to-day activities

Activities like cleaning hand before and after taking meal, tying knot, changing dresses, keeping things in proper place etc will help the children to maintain discipline in their life. It also helps them to inculcate good habit from the very beginning.

<p>Importance and activities of Child Centric Education</p>	<p>Video link : https://youtu.be/Jx38idF-82M</p>	<p>Scan with QR Code</p> 
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4.6. Concept of Discipline

Though we use the term discipline very often, sometimes we misunderstand it with the ‘being strict’, ‘taking away the freedom of the children’, ‘not giving heed to any of their free will or wish’. So, we need to understand what is discipline?

The Term “Discipline” has been originated from the Latin Word-“Discipulus” which means pupil and another word “Disciplina” which means “Teaching”. Thus discipline means teaching the pupils. Again the Oxford English Dictionary defines Discipline as "a branch of learning or knowledge". In general term, **Discipline** is the practice of making pupil obeys rules or standards of behaviour, and punishing them when they do not follow or violate it. When we refer to an activity or situation as a **discipline**, we mean that, in order to be successful in it, the students need to behave in a strictly controlled way and obey particular rules or standards.

4.7.Importance of Discipline at Early Childhood Stage


Discipline is a very important aspect of early childhood education system. First, it is easier to inculcate disciplinary habits during the early childhood period. Second, the habit formed during this stage has a life-long effect on the individual. Good habits formed during this period helps to shape the personality of the child. Therefore, it is important to consider discipline as an important aspect of early childhood education. When the young child is able to follow a disciplined lifestyle, it not only helps them to be a successful person later but also modify their behaviour.

4.8.Discipline as a part of Early Childhood Education

Discipline can be taught to the young learners as a part of their life rather than separately. Effective discipline strategies are essential to the teacher for creating the kind of culture where student can nurture a sense of duty and responsibility to maintain discipline in the classroom, home and the society.

Activities like drawing, painting, recitation, role-play etc. will help both teacher and students to explore the knowledge of discipline. Understanding discipline in the very early stage of life will help our students to live a very sound and systematic life in their future. Parents and teachers can help a lot teach the child about discipline-

- Through play, the child can be taught about discipline in life.
- Formations of habits like taking food, combing, and clothing young child can be given idea about discipline.
- Child imitate others, parents can help the child to be disciplined by following a disciplined routine in carrying out the household chores.
- Proper toilet training can make the child disciplined.

Discipline in child centric Education	Video link : https://youtu.be/eQvnXDRuogU	Scan with QR Code 
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4.9. Let Us Sum Up

- Child centric education is an approach to educate our young children, focusing on the needs of the child, rather than the process.
- The child centric education in early childhood education is very important. Children should be the prime focus of learning.
- Child centric education is more effective than teacher centric education as child centric education encourage joyful self-learning situation and provide the children with abundant scope for self-expression.
- Child-centric education is characterized by dignity of the child, no discrimination among children, education as fundamental right of the child, child-centric curriculum, syllabi and teaching, emphasis on all-round development of child, continuous evaluation of learning, helping every child to acquire minimum level of learning, teacher as an important factor and collaborative activities.
- Activities like drawing, painting, recitation, role-play etc. will help both teacher and students to explore the knowledge of discipline

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