



Improving the Provision of Early Childhood Education in Public Schools in Sokoto State for Sustainable Development

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Abstract

Early childhood education is the bedrock on which all other levels of education are built for sustainable development. The chances of children fulfilling their potentials are affected by the early education, hence the importance of providing quality learning opportunities to every Nigerian child at the early childhood stage of life. It is therefore, the contention of this paper that, the practice and provision of early childhood education in Sokoto State should be improved, if equal access to quality early learning is to be provided to every child in the State. The paper therefore provides highlights on the concept of early childhood education, its status and rationale for improving its practice in Sokoto State. Essentially, the paper discusses the need for improving Early Childhood Care and Education for cognitive, physical, social, emotional and overall development of children. The paper concluded with a stand that wastage of time and resources in the primary education sector in Sokoto State can be reduced if all children who are ready to start formal schooling are prepared in advance. It equally suggested among other things, the need for Sokoto State government to expedite efforts toward providing equal access to quality early learning opportunities to all children in the State.

Keywords: Improvement, Early Childhood Education, Public Schools and Sustainable Development

Introduction

The United Nations Declaration of Human Rights provides among other things that everyone has right to education and as such education has for long been globally accepted as the major social service to which a citizen in every nation has a right. Muhammad and Ujah (2019), opined that, if anything has done the miracle of transforming man from 'brute' to 'being' and equally changes human societies from primitive' to 'complex' , it is education. Equally, the provision of education at the early stage of life has been recognized as an important prerequisite for individual and national development. The world is now a global village and as such, the children of today need to be prepared for the rapid changes taking place in every human community. This therefore, calls for an integrated and



meaningful educational system with particular focus on children's education. The called of 'the State of the world's children' in 2000; requiring the international comity of nations to renew their commitments to children's rights by advancing a new vision for the 21st century emphasized the need and importance of early childhood education.. This vision, as noted by Chowdhury and Choudhury (2002) is one with opportunity for every infant to have a healthy beginning, for every child to have a quality education to develop his or her unique abilities. This therefore supports the idea that children under school age have the right to be educated and this fact has established the need and importance of early childhood education.

Early Childhood Care and Education revolved in Nigeria some couple of decades ago as a special field of focus for development intervention which is based on the Federal Government's resolve to create an enabling environment for the Nigerian children to thrive and develop to the fullest in line with the national goal and aspiration of building a "land full of bright opportunities for citizens" (NERDC, 2004). Thus, the Nigerian education policy (FRN,2013) provides that, early childhood care and education is the care, protection, stimulation and learning promoted in children from age 0 – 4 years in crèche or nursery and a one year pre-primary or kindergarten class in the formal school system for children aged 5 years. However, these two stages have uniform objectives:

- a. effect smooth transition from home to school;
- b. prepare the child for the primary level of education;
- c. provide adequate care, supervision and security for the children while their parents are at work;
- d. inculcate social, moral norms and values;
- e. inculcate in the child the spirit of enquiry and creativity through the exploration of nature, environment, art, music and the use of toys, etc;
- f. develop a sense of cooperation and team spirit;
- g. stimulate in the child good habit, including good health habits;
- h. teach the rudiment of numbers; letters; colours; shapes; forms, etc, through play.

Looking at the policy prescribed purposes of early childhood education in Nigeria, Nakpodia (2003) as cited in Muhammad and Ujah (2019), opined that, if childhood education can provide these vital goals which are fundamental in human life, it is therefore very much likely to have an important and strong relationship between childhood life and school performance at the primary level and even beyond. This has therefore underscore the need for effective practice of childhood education in Sokoto State to provide a solid foundation for the development of cognitive, physical, social and communicative skills which are very vital for lifelong learning and overall development of children in the State.

Early childhood education is the foundation for a life-long education and it represents the first important step in achieving the Goal 4 of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Nigeria, through a multi sectoral effort to provide children with good



health care, good nutrition, psychological care, support and protection for optimal development of intelligence, personality and social behaviour. In the light of this, there is high expectation for the Sokoto State government (as one of the disadvantaged States in Nigeria in terms of western education) to be actively involved in the practice of early childhood care and education to meet the yearnings of the teeming population of young children in the State. As noted by Muhammad and Ujah (2019), the provision of Early Childhood Care and Education is covered by the UBE law and aimed at providing the physical, motor, health, nutritional, intellectual, aesthetic, emotional and social development of preschool children, hence the need for government ownership and community participation in Early Childhood Care And Education programme. However, the private operators seem to have complete monopoly of the practice and provision of Early Childhood Care and Education in Sokoto (like in many other States in Nigeria) and this might not be unconnected with the lack of quality in the public schools owing to facility inadequacy, managerial inefficiencies among others. The enormity of this problem has underscored the continuous proliferation of private schools for the provision of Early Childhood Care and Education in Sokoto State and Nigeria as a whole. The launching of universal basic education (UBE) in Nigeria in 1999 signified the federal government decision to focus attention on the provision of early childhood education and a policy was made for the establishment of Early Childhood Care and Education sections in all existing public primary schools in the country and all the 36 State governments were mandated to ensure compliance. A minimum standard was also developed in collaboration with United Nation Children's Funds (UNICEF) to assess the level of compliance in the implementation of public early childhood education programme in every State as part of the effort towards ensuring equity of access to early childhood education among all children in Nigeria. Sokoto State is one of the States that complied with this policy directive and by the 2016/2017 academic year, the State had established about 512 early childhood care and pre-primary education sections in its public primary schools. This evidently shows that early childhood education is in practice in Sokoto State through the State government's effort to ensure equitable access of early childhood education in the State. However, it is the contention of this paper that, in spite of the State government's effort there is still a growing concern and dissatisfaction by parents on the effectiveness of the practice of early childhood education in Sokoto State. This is evident in the continuous outcries of families with low socio-economic status whose preschool children are somehow deprived from the benefits accrued in early childhood education; due mainly to poor condition of public schools and the exorbitant fees charged by the private sector, coupled with the scarcity of private Early Childhood Care and Education schools in the rural areas of the State.

Early Childhood Education

The early childhood period is usually refers to as the years when a child starts to use language, develops a sense of autonomy, and is emotionally able to establish a sense



of separateness from his or her mother. It is at the end of this period of development that children develop the ability to reason logically and are usually ready to learn, read and understand arithmetic process. During these years, young children have quite indistinctive way of making sense of the world that Piaget described as “preoperational thinking.” According to Chowdhury and Choudhury (2002) early childhood begins when the relative dependency of babyhood is over, and it extends around 2 to 6 years of age. Educators refer to early childhood years as the “preschool age” to distinguish it from the time when children are considered old enough both physically and mentally to cope with the work they will be expected to do when they begin their formal schooling. It involves schooling for young children beginning at age 0-5 with the intention to prepare them for primary school (Caldwell, in Ugochukwu, 2014). However, by law, in Nigeria a child is considered as someone (male or female) who is below the age of 18 years and as such, Obinaju (2007) posits that the term ‘early childhood’ should go beyond the age bracket of 2 – 5 years; arguing that, since childhood period last by the age of 18 years, early childhood education should at least cover the lower segment of primary level of schooling in Nigeria. Universally, there is no one single definition of early childhood education; most often the term usually denotes social intervention, where children learn how to interact with their peer and learn from each other. As noted by Shehu (2016) the early childhood education programme has emphasis and wider concern for early children’s care, development and education (ECCDE) and as such, all societies have specific aims about raising and educating their children. Children at the early years of age are highly receptive to all that prevails in their environment and their learning potentials are at the peak as such whatever is assimilated in this foundation period gradually establishes later on. According to Utulu (2005) in Kpernyam and Shankyura (2013), psychologists such as Montessori, Piaget, Brunner, Freud and Froebel have emphasized the idea of giving adequate education to children at early years because the early years represent the most creative and intellectually productive period of human life.

Status of Early Childhood Education in Sokoto State

The world conference on Education for All (EFA) was the international convention that led to the birth of the free and compulsory Universal Basic Education (UBE) and Nigeria was a signatory to this international fora. Thus, Sokoto State government being one of the 36 States governments in Nigeria, has the constitutional responsibility to fully provides and manage early childhood education as a major component of the universal basic education scheme. As of 2015/2016 academic year when a functional Annual School Census (ASC) was carried out (which is still serving as the current data available) in the State, a total of 512 public primary schools in the State have early childhood section with nursery 1, 2 and 3 classes and total enrolment of 60,188 children. Similarly, in the private sector there are 126 early childhood schools with a total enrolment of 15,416 as shown in the table below:

**Table 1 a:** Enrolment in public and private early childhood education schools in Sokoto State in 2016 Sokoto State Annual School Census Report (ASC) 2016

s/no	LGA	Public Pre-primary or Early Childhood Care and Education					
		Schools	Pupils	Boys	(%)	Girls	(%)
1	Binji	26	3,076	1,469	48.0	1,607	52.0
2	Bodinga	25	2,571	1,450	56.0	1,121	44.0
3	Dange-Shuni	30	4,252	2,536	60.0	1,716	40.0
4	Gada	28	2,825	1,420	63.0	1,405	37.0
5	Goronyo	32	4,594	2,724	59.0	1,870	41.0
6	Gudu	27	2,163	1,376	64.0	787	36.0
7	Gwadabawa	16	2,259	1,434	63.0	825	37.0
8	Illela	80	1,797	1,059	59.0	738	41.0
9	Isa	21	2,056	1,155	56.0	901	44.0
10	Kebbe	8	1,072	613	57.0	459	43.0
11	Kware	9	930	487	52.0	443	48.0
12	Rabah	29	2,894	1,659	57.0	1,235	43.0
13	Sabon Birni	15	2,010	1,202	60.0	808	40.0
14	Shagari	18	2,272	1,420	62.0	852	38.0
15	Silame	1	100	70	70.0	30	30.0
16	Sokoto (N)	16	3,943	2,055	52.0	1,888	48.0
17	Sokoto (S)	28	6,022	3,381	56.0	2,641	44.0
18	Tambawal	29	4,882	2,981	61.0	1,901	39.0
19	Tangaza	42	2,412	1,414	59.0	998	41.0
20	Tureta	15	804	461	57.0	343	43.0
21	Wamakko	50	3,784	2,180	58.0	1,604	42.0
22	Wurno	8	1,089	505	46.4	584	53.6
23	Yabo	19	1,383	786	57.0	597	43.0
	Total	512	60,188	34,890	58.0	25,298	42.0

Table 1b

s/n o	LGA	Private Pre-primary or Early Childhood Care and Education					
		Schools	Pupils	Boys	(%)	Girls	(%)
1	Binji	1	76	46	61.0	30	39.0
2	Bodinga	1	55	30	55.0	25	45.0
3	Dange-Shuni	7	765	379	52.0	368	48.0
4	Gada	1	41	23	56.0	18	44.0
5	Goronyo	2	210	110	52.0	100	48.0
6	Gudu	-	-	-	-	-	-
7	Gwadaba wa	-	-	-	-	-	-
8	Illela	3	274	136	49.6	138	50.4
9	Isa	1	39	20	51.0	19	49.0



10	Kebbe	-	-	-	-	-	-
11	Kware						
12	Rabah	1	107	57	53.0	50	47.0
13	Sabon Birni	1	41	23	56.0	18	44.0
14	Shagari	-	-	-	-	-	-
15	Silame	3	215	129	60.0	86	40.0
16	Sokoto (N)	-	-	-	-	-	-
17	Sokoto (S)	22	3,357	1,816	54.0	1,541	46.0
18	Tambawal	47	5,658	2,897	51.0	2,761	49.0
19	Tangaza	3	226	117	52.0	109	48.0
20	Tureta	1	191	126	66.0	65	34.0
21	Wamakko	1	30	15	50.0	15	50.0
22	Wurno	29	3,882	1,931	49.7	1,951	50.3
23	Yabo	2	249	156	63.0	93	37.0
	Total	126	15,416	8,029	52.0	7,387	48.0

Going by the content of Table 1 a & b, it can be seen that Sokoto State government has over the years tried to ensure equitable access to early childhood education with the establishment of early childhood care and education sections in public primary schools in the State. However, this effort of the State government seems to be thwarted by the shortage of adequate and relevant learning facilities in public primary schools in the state. The public early childhood care and education sections have no any special arrangement to distinguish them from the normal settings of the formal primary schools. In fact, the schools with early childhood care and education sections fall short of the requirements of the National Minimum Standard for Early Care Centers in Nigeria as stipulated by the National Education Research and Development Council (NERDC) in 2004.

Table 2: Summarized features of an effective early childhood education center

Features	Purpose	Requirements
School playground	The early childhood education school should have standard play ground to facilitate children's outdoor learning activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Enough space for children to plan and carry out their play activities ii. Safe and secured. iii. May have grass or sand but not bushy or dirty. iv. Not waterlogged. v. Free from dangerous objects.
School fence	The early childhood education school	The fence can be done with concrete, mud, bamboo, raffia, corn stalk, wood and so on depending on the school hosting community



	should have a fence that can prevent outside interference such as rampaging animals, and prevent children from straying outside	
Offices	Every Early Childhood Care and Education school should have office accommodation for the staff	In the offices, safe secured space is to be provided for safety of school records and materials.
Classroom	There should be adequate classrooms built according to standard specifications for effective practice of early child care and education	<p>It is very essential that the classroom structures should meet the following requirements;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">i. Be solid enough to avoid collapse. Generally the building should not pose any form of danger to children.ii. Have enough space to cater for the 1:25 teacher-pupils ratio as stipulated in the nation's education policy.iii. Should be well ventilated by having two doors and adequate windows with good locking devices to ensure security.iv. The design should allow for free movement and sitting arrangements that are flexible and not rigid like in formal school setting.v. Flooring should be smooth but not slippery. The floor has to be plastered with cement or with local material excluding flooring with cow dung and other harmful materials.vi. Roofing of the classrooms should be done with corrugated iron sheet and so on depending on the location of the school. It should be properly done to avoid leaking during the raining season.vii. Ceiling should be done with modern ceiling boards and other local materials depending on the school location. However, the use of asbestos ceiling boards should be avoided.viii. The Classrooms should have corners or areas for science, art, health and hygiene, drama, shopping, sleeping, etc. to facilitate children's effective indoor learning activities.

Culled from National Minimum Standard for Early Care Centers in Nigeria (NERDC, 2004)

**Characteristics of public early childhood care and education schools with various needs in Sokoto State**

Table 3: Characteristics of early childhood education centers existing in public primary schools in the 23 local government areas of Sokoto State as of 2015/2016 academic year are summarized in the table below:

LGA	No. of schools	No. of usable classes	Classes in need of major repairs		Classes with insufficient furniture		Classes without good chalk boards		Schools where classes are held outside		Schools without health facilities	
			No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Binji	78	241	22	9.0	206	86.0	171	21.0	0	0	78	100
Bodinga	103	471	119	25.0	271	58.0	172	37.0	60	58.0	66	64.0
Dange-Shuni	86	365	112	30.0	180	49.0	108	30.0	38	44.0	56	65.0
Gada	120	312	130	42.0	249	80.0	150	48.0	47	39.0	113	94.0
Goronyo	123	351	83	24.0	225	54.0	183	52.0	45	3.0	51	41.0
Gudu	53	199	49	25.0	110	55.0	34	17.0	18	34.0	50	94.0
Gwadabawa	98	224	85	16.0	99	44.0	81	36.0	0	0	98	100
Illela	113	438	157	36.0	311	71.0	160	37.0	11	10.0	106	94.0
Isa	112	440	121	28.0	298	68.0	167	38.0	46	14.0	84	75.0
Kebbe	63	225	71	32.0	181	80.0	114	51.0	19	30.0	52	83.0
Kware	82	295	54	18.0	151	51.0	80	27.0	17	21.0	72	88.0



From the Table3, it can be seen that except in Binji, Gwadabawa and Sokoto South, the remaining 20 LGAs in state have schools in which classes are held outside. Equally, Sokoto North and Sokoto South are the only LGAs with very little number of schools in which health facilities are lacking (each having 3of such schools, representing 12% and 10% respectively) whereas .none of the other 21 LGAs has less than 50% of such schools.

Rationale for Improving the Practice of Public Early Childhood Education in Sokoto State

Improving the practice of early childhood education in the context of this paper refers to the act of putting more efforts in terms of committing rational ideas and resources to the practice of early childhood education to make it functional to meet parental expectations for children overall development via the system of schooling. Scholars have provide both theoretical and empirical evidence regarding the positive impact of early childhood education to future educational development of children, encompassing achievements beyond the basic level to include post basic and tertiary levels of schooling. Some of the studies carried out in Sokoto State which attested to these empirical evidence of the positive impact of early childhood care and education on children future education, include Bagudo (2012) influence of nursery education on cognitive and psycho-social competence of pupils in Sokoto State and Ladan (2014) assessment of parent and teachers attitude towards early child care development and education in Sokoto state, as well as Shehu (2016) early childhood care and education experiences and academic achievements of primary one pupils in Sokoto state to mention a few. In this connection therefore, improving the practice of public early childhood education in Sokoto State is deemed necessary so as to make children education beneficial to every child, so that children within the pre-school age can gain a lot cognitively, socially and emotionally at the early stage of their lives.

a) Improving Early Childhood Care and Education for Children's Cognitive Development

Cognitive development has to do with intellectual or mental development of an individual. The rate of intellectual development is quite rapid among children during the early stage of life just like the rate of physical growth at the infancy period. As observed by Chowdhury and Choudhury (2002), about 80% of the brain growth appears to be completed by the time the child attained the age of 6 years. Children at the early childhood stage therefore, tend to acquire new experiences and try to adapt to their environment as their mental abilities and capacities are gradually developed. According to Mangal (2008), the process of mental growth and development is responsible for the development of an individual's entire cognitive, intellectual abilities such as sensation, perception, imagination, memory, reasoning, understanding, intelligence, generalization, interpretation, language ability, conceptual ability, problem solving ability and decision



making ability. These abilities are interrelated and never develop in isolation. As such, children's development which is governed by the overall development of these abilities can be properly guided for the positive transformation of children through efficient of early childhood education practice, hence the need for exposing children to experiences which are developmentally appropriate. Supporting this assertion, Kpernyam and Shankyura (2013) maintained that, this exposure involves what the child can see and what he or she can do leading to what he or she will eventually understand through experience. It is however very disheartening to note that, the situation of public early childhood education in Sokoto State, is short of the expectations of providing the exposure for children to develop their cognitive ability. For instance, most of the public pre-primary and primary schools have an average of 86 pupils in one classroom (ASC, 2016). These schools are equally under equipped and cannot facilitate children's interaction with relevant appropriate learning materials; there is almost a complete absence of that rich and stimulating classroom environment which can enriches children cognitive abilities and skills. Quality early child education can only be provided to children in private early childhood care and education centers.

b) Improving Early Childhood Care and Education for Children's Physical Development

The early period of the child's growth and development witness growth of the nervous system and other parts of the body. The brain increases in size and the child learns to control his muscles gradually. Right from birth to the age of five, children are in need of training that will enhance these aspects of physical development. Children are always seen doing one thing or the other as they learn throughout the childhood period. According to Chowdhury and Choudhury (2002) during the impressionable stage of childhood, the child's physical development is fastest and the surrounding environment creates deepest impact on the child. Hence, the demand for the right type of early child care and education institutions as excellent environment with provisions of play facilities for children to engage in one form of activity or the other aiding their physical growth. However, as noted by Rabi (2016), many public pre-primary and primary schools in Sokoto State are in dare need of adequate number of facilities for children's play activities such as swings, marry go rounds, climbing ropes, old tyres and manipulating materials that are normally organized and purposively arranged to help children develop necessary physical ability which are very much needed for the production of physically fit and mentally balanced adults that will contribute positively to the development of their community.

c) Improving Early Childhood Care and Education for Children's Social Development

The early childhood education schools play host to children from different family backgrounds to where they are made to learn together, interact and associate as a family.



Here children are made to respect other people's right and to learn to be law-abiding. As noted by Mangal (2008) children at this stage develop social tendencies and pick up many virtues; they like to play in group and share their toys with each other. By living together, children develop feelings of mutual cooperation, team spirit, group loyalty and leadership traits, hence grooming them in a conventional setting well planned for learning, will lay a solid foundation for social unity in adult life; helping to reduce ethnic and tribal discriminations. Early childhood education school offers children the opportunity for learning languages other than their mother tongue and this can promote inter-personal understanding between one child and the other and as well widen their chances of becoming friends up to adulthood and this will lay a good foundation for healthy inter-tribal and inter-ethnic relationship which are very critical to Nigeria's quest for sustainable national development. This is why Mahuta (2007) asserted that the aims of early childhood education include fostering proper development of children, identifying and addressing their problems, harnessing their potentials, molding their characters, enhancing their learning and equipping them for life so that their actions are channeled towards positive personal, communal and global development. However, preference to private schools over the public ones by families with high socio-economic status and the proliferation of nursery schools founded along religious and ethnic dimensions are some of the key challenges facing the provision of public early childhood care and education in Sokoto State and which are in turn acting against desired social development for children by means of early childhood education.

d) Improving Early Childhood Care and Education for Children's Emotional Development

From birth to the day children start attending the early childhood school, they are so emotionally attached to their parents and other closed relatives. It is obvious that parting from loved ones is usually painful and often this has been one of the causes of truancy in early childhood schools. During these early years, a child is a very difficult human being to cope with and understand; behaviour problems become more frequent and more intense. That is why some parents consider the age bracket of 2 to 6 years as "problem age" or "troublesome age" (Chowdhury and Choudhury, 2002). It is very easy for children at this stage to become aggressive in nature and display certain behaviour to demonstrate their anger and displeasure, their emotional expressions at this time include fear, jealousy and love. The early childhood school therefore, provides good opportunity for children to outgrow these traits through programmes of activities and skillful guidance and supervisions of trained and competent personnel. Early exposure to activities like dances, singing and playing with various objects can create a lot of joy for children thereby making them to let off their emotion and this is of great significance as it provides the basis for the grooming of future adults who are less temperamental and less hostile in nature. However, the poor quality of public early childhood schools coupled with the scarcity of private



nursery schools in rural areas of Sokoto State, are two major bottle necks to the development of children emotion via education.

e) Improving Early Childhood Care and Education for Children's Overall Development

Due to shortage of basic social amenities in the rural areas of Sokoto State, there is rapid increase in rural–urban drift. This is posing serious problem to child care as living space is correspondingly becoming limited day by day making the required space at home for children to move about, run and play less available, there is hardly the possibility for children to navigate and experiment around, both of which are central to children optimum development. As already pointed out, the preschool years or early childhood stage is the period of socialization; children love to play with their peers, which is very important and which they may not get at home.

Equally, even among the educated mothers, there is the tendency that only very few do understand the meaning and importance of early childhood period. Since in Sokoto State the number of mothers with formal education is comparatively very low (considering the fact that in olden days the opportunities for girl-child education in the State were limited) majority of the mothers may not be able to guide their young children properly and as such the home environment may not provide the satisfying inputs for the all round growth and development of preschool children. In the light of this therefore, the Early Childhood Care and Education centers with adequate space, enriching environment, learning equipment and trained personnel become the positive answer to the yearning of children in the present Sokoto State.

f) Improving Early Childhood Education for Families Income Generation Support

Due to global economic pressure, urbanization, spread of women's education and social duties, today, many mothers in Sokoto State are found working away from home during the day time; pursuing different careers to supplement their family incomes. This, situation saw polygamous families now breaking up and working mothers facing the challenge of leaving their children at home and go out to work. Therefore, the establishment of early childhood care, development and educations centers where young children can be adequately looked after, becomes a social necessity in the present Sokoto State. As noted by Rabi (2016), the demands for early child care and education services is increasing on daily basis in the State and to cater for this need, large number of early childhood or pre-primary schools which are well equipped are required.

Conclusion

This paper is concluded with a stand point that, persistent poor performance in schools and tremendous wastage of time and resources that characterize the primary education sector in Sokoto State can be address and scale down to the barest minimum if all children who are ready to start formal schooling are prepared in advance. This entails



making such children to acquire quality early childhood education before joining the primary school; this will provide children with the ability to adjust easily and successfully in primary classes. In fact, scholars have provided both theoretical and empirical evidence regarding the positive impact of early childhood or preschool education to future educational development of children. Some of these scholars have however, posited that, if not properly planned, equipped and staffed, early schooling will do more harm than good to the children. Therefore, guiding and directing of learning provided in an enriched educational environment, will expose children to a variety of learning experiences. This has therefore signifies the need for the Sokoto State government to take drastic measures toward strengthening the provision of education in the State by improving educational practices at the early childhood level which at present serves as the foundation of the entire education system not only in Sokoto State but in Nigeria as a whole.

Suggestions

1. Sokoto State government should expedite efforts toward providing equal access to quality early learning opportunities to all children in the State through ensuring uniformity in the operation of both public and private early childhood schools in the State. This can be achieved by equipping the public schools with adequate relevant learning facilities and qualified teaching personnel and by providing a legislative act that will mandate all government officials, political lords and the royal families in the State to enroll their preschool children into public early childhood care and education schools.
2. Sokoto State government should encourage private proprietors of early childhood schools to extend their services to the rural areas of the State to enable rural patronage of private education. In doing so, the government may consider going into partnership with the private proprietors having interest, to provide a government funded but privately provided early child care and education in the rural areas.
3. The practice of operating nursery classes in motor garages, two-bed room flats and confined storey buildings with no space for child play is faulty and should be ceased so that the provision of early childhood education in Sokoto State can be in accordance with global best practices. Therefore, the Sokoto State government should withdraw the license of any private early childhood school owner who fails to comply with the national and state regulations governing the establishment and management of early childhood schools.
4. There is the need for Sokoto state government to work towards ensuring multi sectoral rapid response from Ministry for Basic Education, Health, Water Resources, Local Government Councils, Commercial Banks and Community Based Organizations which are stakeholder agencies in the early childhood care



development and education programme in the state, to improve the condition of public early childhood education schools.

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