

TET 103: CHILD DEVELOPMENT (0–3 YEARS)

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Lecture 1: Introduction to Child Development

Objectives

- At the end of this lecture the learner should be able to:
 - a) Define the terms; growth, development, fertilization, conception, Child development
 - b) Describe the human reproduction
 - c) Explain the aspects of child development
 - d) Highlight characteristics of child development
 - e) Explain the importance of early years of a child

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Definition of Key Terms

- **Growth**
 - This is the increase in the size of an individual
 - It is measured in terms of height, size and weight
 - physical characteristics
 - It therefore refers to the quantitative aspect of an individual
 - The rate of growth varies from child to child but it follows a certain laid down pattern (growth graph/chart) which shows the progress of growth

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Definition of Key Terms

- **Growth**
 - The growth pattern of a child may indicate the need for interventions if there is drop in weight or no increase in height.

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Definition of Key Terms

- **Development**
 - This refers to the change in body or behaviour within the individual across one’s lifespan as a result of age and experience
 - Development encompasses both quantitative & qualitative aspects of an individual
 - It is therefore a more complex process as some of its aspects may not be measurable
 - Examples of qualitative aspects of development are: cognitive, social, personality, emotional development, etc.

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Definition of Key Terms

- **Human Reproduction**
 - This is process of procreation – giving birth that requires a male and a female
 - See Bible verses on human procreation e.g.
 - **Genesis 1:28** - God blessed them; and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth, and subdue it; and rule over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the sky and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

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Definition of Key Terms

- **Conception**
 - This is the beginning of pregnancy and marks the beginning of prenatal period.
- **Child development**
 - Refers to the sequence of physical, language, thought and emotional changes that occur in a child from birth to the beginning of adulthood
 - During this process a child progresses from dependency on their parents/guardians to increasing independence.

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Human Reproduction

- This is the process of procreation
- The human reproduction comprises both the male and female reproductive systems.
- The male reproductive system consists of the following parts shown in the figure below;
 - Testes which are sperm producing glands
 - The urethra which is a tube running through the centre of the penis and it allows urine and sperms to pass through
 - The sperm duct which is a tube that runs from the testis to urethra and allows sperms from the testes to pass to urethra

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Human Reproduction

Male Reproductive System

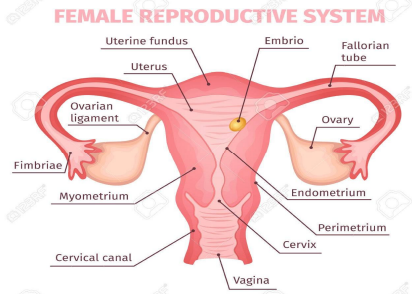
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Human Reproduction

- The female reproductive systems consists of the following parts shown in the figure below:
 - Ovaries which are the organs in a woman’s body producing egg cells (ova)
 - Oviducts (fallopian tube) which is where fertilization actually takes place
 - Uterus which is a muscular organ in a women where babies develop
 - Vagina which is the passage through which menstrual flows from the body and through which sperms from the male organ are introduced to the uterus. It is the organ through which fetus passes during vaginal child birth.

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Human Reproduction



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Aspects of Child Development

- Child development consists of the following components or aspects which shall be covered in details later in this unit;
 - Physical development** – involves observable changes in size and shape of the body as well as ability to move, coordinate body movement
 - Mental development** – refers to the ability to think, reason, make decisions, curiosity, analyzing, recognition, making judgments, memorizing, comparing, etc. also referred to as cognitive development.

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Aspects of Child Development

c) **Language development** – refers to the ability to understand and use symbols or words to express self and to communicate

d) **Social development** – it is the ability to relate to others and perceive one self as part of society. It also includes acquisition of values and norms and ability to communicate

e) **Emotional development** – involves the ability to express and control ones emotions/feelings e.g. feelings of anger, joy, happiness, showing love and empathy, sharing, trust, faith, self-awareness, etc

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Aspects of Child Development

f) **Moral development** – is the ability to differentiate between right and wrong. It involves the development of values and principles (e.g. punctuality. Hard work, etc) that guide one’s ethics and moral conduct

g) **Spiritual development** – it is the ability to understand self in relation to supernatural being and understand the purpose of life

h) **Aesthetic development** – this is the appreciation of beauty, of life and others. It is the expression of art and creations

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Characteristics of Child Development

- The aspect or components of development discussed above are interrelated and interdependent
- It involves changes from simple to complex
- It is continuous process beginning from conception to death
- Development occurs in interaction with the environment and the genetic inheritance
- Development is patterned i.e. it follows a sequence but the rate differs from individual to individual with each stage of development being built on earlier stages

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Characteristics of Child Development

- Each individual is unique and follows a unique pattern of development
- Each child has inborn abilities to learn and develop.

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Importance of Early Years of a Child

- Early years of a child form the foundation for adult life. What happens during this period influences the individual throughout his/her life
- This is the period of fastest growth in all aspects – physical/psychomotor, mental and socio-emotional development
- Brain development is most rapid
- By end of second year of life the child's brain is 70% of adult weight. At 6 years it reaches 90%
- By end of 6 years the brain of the child has maximum connections required for lifetime

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Importance of Early Years of a Child

- During this period the brain of a child is twice as active as that of an adult, hence learning takes place more easily and faster
- Critical windows of opportunity are open during early years
- This is the period the brain is most malleable (shaping in each aspect). Environmental influences have greatest impact especially care, e.g. severe malnutrition can lead to mental retardation or lack of consistent responsive care can lead to dysfunctional adult who cannot establish relationships with others
- Best period to prepare the child for formal schooling

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Reflection Questions

1. Define the following terms with respect to child development: (8 marks)
 - a) Growth
 - b) Development
 - c) Conception
 - d) Child development
2. Explain 7 aspects to child development. (7 marks)
3. Explain the characterizes of child development. (7 marks)
4. Explain the importance of studying the early years of a child. (5 marks)

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