

# Child Development: Aesthetic Education as a Core Learning Approach

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**Abstract:-** The article provides insights into child development and learning, with a focus on aesthetic education as a fundamental learning approach. Employing the traditional narrative review technique, the paper gathers information from peer-reviewed articles, government reports, and reputable non-governmental organizations. It delves into various approaches to child literacy and development, specifically exploring the role of aesthetic education in this context. The review concludes that incorporating aesthetic education as a core learning approach positively impacts child education and development in Nigeria. As a result, the paper recommends the integration of aesthetic education into the pedagogy of Early Childhood Education in Nigeria, aligning with policy objectives laid out in the Nigerian National Policy on Education.

**Keywords:-** Aesthetic Education, Child Development, Child Education, Early Childhood Education, Learning Approach, Policy on Education.

## I. INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, there has been a notable transformation in the field of child development. While the significance of traditional academic subjects is widely acknowledged, a growing movement underscores the vital role of aesthetic education in shaping well-rounded individuals (Arsey et al., 2023). This examination delves into the expanding body of research on this approach, investigating its profound influence on various aspects of a child's life and advocating for its incorporation as a fundamental learning strategy. Aesthetic education goes beyond merely acquiring artistic skills; it instills an appreciation for beauty, sharpens observational skills, and fosters a deep understanding of the diverse forms of artistic expression that enhance human experience (Dickson et al., 2023). As Ma insightfully noted, art serves as the most effective mode of education (Ma et al., 2021), engaging not only the intellect but also the senses, emotions, and imagination, facilitating holistic development beyond traditional academic measures.

Increasing research supports the transformative potential of aesthetic education. Studies by researchers such as Lukaka (2023), Biber (2022), and Carlson (2023) demonstrate how aesthetic education promotes cognitive development.

Interacting with art stimulates critical thinking, problem-solving, and the ability to interpret and analyze various forms of expression. Children exposed to a rich array of artistic experiences learn to observe, compare, and discern nuances, enhancing their perceptual acuity and laying the foundation for lifelong intellectual curiosity (Qasserras, 2023). The impact of aesthetic education extends beyond the cognitive domain, influencing the emotional and social well-being of children. Artistic creation provides an outlet for self-expression, vulnerability, and the exploration of complex emotions (Stepney, 2017). It offers a safe space for children to navigate and process feelings, contributing to emotional intelligence and resilience. Additionally, collaborative artistic endeavors foster social-emotional development, promoting empathy, communication, and cooperation (Sullivan, 2023). Through shared creative projects, children learn to collaborate, resolve conflicts, and appreciate the diverse perspectives that enrich the artistic process (Boss and Krauss, 2022).

The focus on child development in this context pertains to early childhood literacy from ages 0 to 5, as defined by the Nigerian education system, which initiates primary education at age six (Ogbonnia, 2020; FRN, 2014). The concept of child development, particularly in terms of literacy, encompasses social and cultural practices that cultivate individual skills in reading and writing, utilizing various methods such as audio-visuals and play-based activities aligned with children's diverse social-cultural contexts (Choiriyah, 2021; Arthur et al., 2011). 'Literate,' as noted, extends beyond reading and writing capability to include cultural awareness reflecting an aptitude for decoding the world beyond printed words, embracing expressions and languages articulated in diverse manners (McDermott, 2023). Conventionally, literacy in early childhood involves the gradual progression of learning letters corresponding with sounds, acquiring words, understanding sentence structures, developing vocabulary, mastering book-handling, and gaining phonemic receptiveness (Zhang, 2022; McLachlan et al., 2013; Arthur et al., 2011).

The term "aesthetic" originates from "aesthesis," meaning "I feel beauty." Aesthetics involves the discernment and appreciation of taste and beauty, characterized by sensual and physical responses to values, nature, beauty, taste, and the arts (D'Olimpio, 2022). Aesthetic education, therefore, aims to instruct learners in recognizing and appreciating the beauties present in nature, vocabulary, language, social relationships,

# Child Development A Core Approach

**Terry C. Jones**



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