TRCN

PhD Study Material

on

PQE 011: *Child-Friendly Schools*

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Concept of Child-Friendly Schools

A Child-Friendly School *(CFS)* respects children's rights and structures teaching and learning processes to meet their holistic developmental needs.

The primary goal of CFS is to support each child's physical, emotional, social, and cognitive growth, ensuring inclusiveness, safety, and active participation.

Models of Child-Friendly Schools (CFS)

UNICEF designed the Child-Friendly Schools *(CFS)* framework to create learning environments that promote children's rights, well-being, and holistic development.

This model follows the Convention on the Rights of the Child *(CRC)*, ensuring education systems are inclusive, participatory, and supportive of every child's diverse needs.

The framework ensures that every child has access to quality education in a safe, inclusive, and healthy environment.

Key Generic Principles of CFS

The CFS model follows several principles derived from the Convention on the Rights of the Child, critical to creating environments where children thrive:

- **Child-Centeredness**: Teachers should design education around the needs, interests, and learning styles of children, ensuring active participation and empowerment.

- **Democratic Participation**: Children should contribute to decisions affecting their education, engaging actively in school processes.

- **Inclusiveness**: CFS must include all children, regardless of gender, socioeconomic background, or physical/cognitive abilities.

- **Quality as Holistic and Multi-Dimensional**: Educational quality extends beyond academic outcomes, fostering children's social, emotional, and physical well-being, along with life skills.

Characteristics of Child-Friendly Schools

CFS principles address the essential elements needed for an enabling teaching and learning environment:

Principle 1: Child Rights and Inclusive Education

This principle integrates child rights into the educational process, ensuring all children receive equal learning opportunities regardless of their backgrounds or abilities.

Inclusive education requires adapting teaching methods to meet the needs of diverse learners, including those with disabilities or from marginalized communities.

Principle 2: Effective Teaching and Learning Environments

Effective environments ensure high-quality, child-centred education that is engaging and relevant. Teachers must use interactive and activity-based methods that cater to learners' individual needs.

Constructivist principles encourage children to explore, solve problems, and participate actively in their learning.

Principle 3: Safe, Supportive, and Protective Learning Environments

Creating a safe, supportive, and protective learning environment is vital. Schools must provide physical safety by eliminating hazards and preventing bullying while nurturing emotional well-being, allowing children to learn without fear.

Principle 4: Healthy and Health-Seeking Learning Environments

A healthy learning environment supports both the physical and mental health of students. Schools should ensure access to clean water, sanitation, hygiene, and health education, promoting health-seeking behaviours such as vaccination awareness.

Principle 5: Gender-Sensitive Learning Environments

CFS promotes gender-sensitive environments that give both boys and girls equal access to education while addressing gender-related issues like early marriage and gender-based violence. Schools must provide a safe space for all children to thrive.

Principle 6: Democratic Participation and Partnership Building

Children should actively participate in their learning and school decisions. Promoting democratic participation fosters responsibility and ownership.

Schools should build partnerships with parents, communities, and stakeholders to ensure comprehensive support for education.

Policies in Nigeria that Promote Child-Friendly Schools (CFS)

- **National Policy on Education**: Advocates for inclusive, equitable access to quality education, ensuring that every child receives learning opportunities in a supportive environment.

- **Universal Basic Education *(UBE)* Act**: Focuses on providing free, compulsory, and universal basic education, with attention to the diverse needs of children.

- **Child Rights Act**: Upholds children's rights to education, protection, and development, ensuring that educational practices adhere to child-centred and rights-based approaches.

- **National Policy on Gender in Basic Education**: Promotes gender equality in education, eliminating barriers that prevent girls and boys from accessing and benefiting from schooling.

Child-Friendly School Standards and Indicators for Teacher Education

Child-Friendly School (CFS) standards for teacher education ensure that teachers are equipped to create inclusive, safe, and supportive learning environments.

Key standards and indicators include:

- **Child-Centred Pedagogy**: Teachers should adopt interactive, participatory, and learner-centred methodologies that engage students in their own learning process.

- **Inclusivity**: Teacher training must emphasize addressing the diverse needs of all learners, including those with disabilities and from marginalized backgrounds.

- **Rights-Based Education**: Teachers should be well-versed in children's rights, promoting practices that safeguard these rights within the classroom.

- **Safe Learning Environment**: Teachers are trained to create and maintain environments free from bullying, violence, and discrimination, while providing emotional and psychosocial support.

Teacher Preparation for CFS - Child-Centred Interactive Methodologies

In preparing teachers for Child-Friendly Schools (CFS), the focus is on equipping them with child-centred interactive methodologies grounded in constructivist principles.

These methodologies encourage:

- **Active Learning**: Teachers are trained to use activity-based, learner-centred approaches that engage students in hands-on tasks, exploration, and problem-solving.

- **Constructivist Principles**: Teachers help students build their own understanding through interaction with the environment, promoting critical thinking, inquiry, and collaboration.

- **Individualised Learning**: Teachers are prepared to tailor instruction to meet the diverse needs, interests, and learning styles of each child, ensuring inclusivity.

Facilities and Resources Required for CFS

- Safe, well-maintained school buildings.
- Classrooms equipped with adequate learning materials and technology.
- Water, sanitation, and hygiene *(WASH)* facilities.
- Playgrounds and recreational areas for children's holistic development.

Assessment of Teaching in a CFS

In Child-Friendly Schools *(CFS)*, assessment of teaching focuses on ensuring that instruction is supportive, inclusive, and promotes holistic development.

Key aspects include:

- **Formative Assessment**: Continuous evaluation of students' progress, providing constructive feedback to help improve learning outcomes and tailor teaching methods to individual needs.

- **Child-Centred Evaluation**: Assessments consider the diverse abilities and learning styles of students, focusing on their overall growth rather than just academic performance.

- **Non-Competitive**: Assessments emphasize personal progress and effort over competition, fostering a supportive environment where children feel encouraged to participate and learn at their own pace.

Technology in CFS Learning and Teaching

Technology plays a vital role in enhancing the learning and teaching experience in Child-Friendly Schools (CFS).

Key benefits include:

- **Enhanced Learning Opportunities**: Digital tools and e-learning platforms expand access to resources and information, facilitating diverse learning experiences that cater to different needs.

- **Interactive Learning**: Technology supports interactive methodologies, allowing students to engage actively with content through multimedia resources, simulations, and collaborative online activities.

- **Inclusivity**: Technology helps create inclusive environments by providing adaptive learning tools and resources for students with varying abilities, ensuring that all learners can participate fully.

- **Teacher Support**: Educators can utilize technology for professional development, sharing best practices and accessing resources that improve their teaching methods and strategies.

Strategies for Mainstreaming CFS Concepts and Principles in Nigeria

- **Policy Advocacy**: Strengthen child-friendly education policies at all levels of government.

- **Teacher Training**: Integrate CFS principles into teacher education programs to ensure teachers can create child-centred, inclusive classrooms.

- **Community Involvement**: Involve parents and communities in the educational process, encouraging collaboration and shared responsibility for children's learning.

- **Monitoring and Evaluation**: Regularly assess and improve CFS principles' implementation in schools to ensure optimal outcomes for children.

PRACTICE QUESTIONS ON THIS TOPIC: CHLID-FRIENDLY SCHOOLS (011)

1. A key feature of a safe learning environment includes _____

A. Strict discipline

B. Eliminating hazards and preventing bullying

C. Limiting student interaction

D. Authoritarian practices

2. The principle of Individualized Learning involves _____

A. Standardized approaches for all students

B. Tailoring instruction to meet diverse needs

C. Ignoring students' interests

D. Limiting engagement in classroom activities

3. Which principle is central to the CFS framework?

A. Individual competition

B. Democratic Participation

C. Standardized teaching

D. Teacher-centred methods

4. Which of the following is essential for a Child-Friendly School's curriculum?

A. Focus on competition

B. Relevance and cultural context

C. Rigid adherence to traditional methods

D. Teacher-centred instruction

5. What is an important outcome of Child-Friendly Schools?

A. Increased dropout rates

B. Improved student engagement and learning outcomes

C. Strict academic focus only

D. Reduced parental involvement

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