Sapientia **Global Journal of Arts, Humanities and Development Studies (SGOJAHDS), Vol.1 No. December, 2018; p.g 68 - 75**

PARENTING SKILLS NEEDED BY YOUNG PARENTS FOR PROPER CHILD UPBRINGING IN ENUGU STATE, NIGERIA

UDEAGHA, SCHOLASTICA N.
Department of Home Economics and Hospitality Management Education,
Faculty of Vocational and Technical Education,
University of Nigeria, Nsukka.
E-MAIL: ***scholastica.udeagha.pg82248@unn.org.ng***
Phone: +2348069396431

Abstract
This study investigates parenting skills needed by young parents in Enugu State, Nigeria for proper child upbringing. Descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The population comprised 625 parents. A sample of 245 parents was purposively selected as the sample size. Questionnaire was used for data collection. Three research questions and three hypotheses guided the study. Mean, standard deviation and t-test were used for data analysis. The findings of this paper include the need for the parents to know when the children are hungry in order to feed them and while feeding them cuddle them. They should also provide play activities and select playing materials suitable for the children and keep floors ***safe*** *from dangerous items while keeping drugs, cleaning agents and tools out of reach of the children. The researcher generally recommends that parents in Nigeria should imbibe the various parenting skills in order to bring up well-balanced personalities in the society.*

Key words: Parenting Skills, Young Parents, Child, Upbringing, Nigeria.

Introduction

A child is a person who is not yet an adult and who is completely dependent on adult (parent or caregiver) for the provision of needs-physical, emotional, social and so on. The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of a Child (2013 defines a child as every being below the age of 18 years. A child in this study is therefore, a male or female human being between (0-5) years of age and who is provided his physical and emotional needs by his parents. This implies that child upbringing is the responsibility of the parents in the society.

Child upbringing includes caring and training a child from infancy to adulthood. Such a child is socialized in societal morals and values (Berk, 2000). It is caring for a child during the early stage of his life. Douglas, (2002) stated that what a child becomes has to do with his environment and the nature of training from his parents. This child upbringing involves active moulding of a child's character, personality, talents, physical and emotional well being, in addition to providing the basic needs to the child. Ononuju, (2004), stated that parents provide security, physical and emotional needs and support for the children both in early and later life. Sears, Maccoby & Levin (2003) asserted that parents have the responsibilities of transmitting values, moral beliefs, taboos, culture, rules, and tradition of the society to the children. Thus child upbringing has to do with taking care of the child as well as providing for his needs through parenting.

Parenting is the process of caring and nurturing young children from infancy to adulthood. It is a complex activity that includes many specific behaviours that work severally and jointly to influence development in children (Lamborn, 2002). Adewuyi, (2009) noted that parenting involves various processes aimed at raising a child from infancy to adulthood and educating to acquire good morals and values. This implies that parenting whether young or old encompasses parental affection; guiding, teaching and use of parental control but is the way parents relate to their children especially in socializing them. Hence young parents need the knowledge of parental skills.

Parenting skills involve the abilities of parents to perform learned actions that achieve the desired outcome of enabling the child to make satisfactory progress developmentally and to have the opportunity to achieve potentials. Miller, (2010) stated that parenting skills enable parents to understand what to expect from children: their capacities, interest and needs at various ages. Such skills give parents realistic expectation of child rearing. Miller 2010 identified parenting skills to include feeding needs, health care, toilet training, security, psychological care, as well as emotional requirements of the child in the society. A child's physical and emotional needs require special emphasis. A child has physical and emotional needs that have to be met while the child is being parented. Physically, a child needs healthy food, appropriate clothing, good hygiene, sleep, and safe environment. Undiyaundeye, (2006) explained that the closeness of the parent to the child affects positively his emotions. Emotionally, a child needs to be held, cuddled and comforted by his parents for his personality growth and development.

Effective use of parenting skills provides the child with care and nurture which in turn helps the child develop to his fullest capacity. Hall and Elliman, (2003) asserted that adequate knowledge and application of parenting skills helps to influence the child's development and progress. If properly applied, parenting skills make the child an adjusted individual who will be socially accepted in the society. The goal of parenting is to produce responsible and productive individuals, who will be a source of blessing to their parents and the society at large hence the provisions for the needs of the child has to be the priority and concern of every parent in the society. Parenting without a proper foundation has always and indefinitely led to confusion for any developing child. That is why the attempt of trying to be a successful parent is so important and will be the most important job of one's life (William, 2004).

Parenting therefore, whether for young or older parents requires adequate knowledge of the skills involved in child rearing in the society. Young parents men and women who are beginners in the area of child rearing. They are in their expanding state in the family cycle which does not only include the husband and the wife but also their children. Most of the young parents are below 30 years of age and with their children between 0-5 years, though there are older parents in age but who are young in the area of child rearing. Many of them are in their 30s or below and are often challenged by the rigorous problems associated with child rearing in the society. They lack the parental knowledge, experience and skills needed in child rearing in the society. It is the need to expose them to such different parental knowledge and skills needed by them for proper parenting that this study becomes imperative.

In Nigeria and particularly in Enugu State, young and experienced parents appear not to possess the necessary skills needed for appropriate child rearing in the society. As a result, the child is denied adequate physical and emotional care needed for his /her growth and development. Therefore, parenting skills needed by young parents have to be properly addressed to protect the future of the child in the society.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of the study was to determine parenting skills needed by parents in Enugu State. Specifically, the study determined the:

1.feeding skills needed by young parents.
2. physical exercise skills needed by parents.
3. safety skills needed by parents in Enugu state.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study.
What are the feeding skills needed by young parents?
What are physical exercise skills needed by young parents?
What are the safety skills needed by young parents in the state?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses for the study were formulated for the study and tested at 0.05 level of significance.

HO_1: There is no significant difference between young and experienced parents with regards to feeding skills needed by parents

HO_2: There is no significant gender difference between young and experienced parents with regard to physical exercise skills needed by young parents in child's development.
HO_3: There is no significant difference in the mean responses of young and experienced parents with regard to safety skills needed in the child's social environment in Enugu State.

Methodology
Area of the Study: The study was carried out in Nsukka Education Zone in Enugu state.
Design of the Study: The study adopted a survey research design to investigate the parenting skills needed by young parents in Enugu State.

Population of the Study: The population for the study comprised 625 young and older parents from public institutions in Nsukka senatorial districts of Enugu state. Available records from Nsukka Zonal Welfare Office 2013/2014 indicate that there are two major public hospitals and twelve banks in the local government area.

Sample and Sampling Techniques: The sample size of the study was 245 respondents made up of 185 young parents (below 30 years) and 60 older parents (30 years and above) but young in child bearing selected based on the above criteria using purposive random sampling technique. A further breakdown of the figure showed that 110 of the young parents are females while 75 of them are males.

Instrument for Data Collection: The instrument for data collection was a questionnaire titled Parental Skills Needed Questionnaire (PSNQ). It is divided into two parts: 1 and 2. Part one provided demographic data of the respondents while part 2 contains (32 items) arranged into sections to provide information on the research questions for the study. While section one provided information on feeding skills, (items 1-15), section 2 elicited information on physical skills, (items 16-23), section three elicited information on safety skills (items 24-32) needed by the young.

Reliability of the Instrument: To ascertain the reliability of the instrument, it was subjected to trial testing using 10 young and 10 experienced parents selected from equivalent institutions in Izzi Local Government Area of Ebonyi State outside the study area. Cronbach Alpha reliability method was applied to determine the internal consistency of the instrument and the following estimates were obtained 0.72, 0.85 and 0.88, for sections 1, 2, and 3 respectively with an overall reliability estimate value of 0.81.

Method of Data Analysis: Research questions 1-3 were answered using mean. The computation of the mean was carried out using real limit numbers. A mean score of 2.50 and above was considered as being accepted while any mean score below 2.50 was rejected. T-test was used in testing the stated hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Results
Research question one: what are the feeding skills needed by young parents?
Feeding skills needed by young parents

Table 1: Mean responses of young and older parents on the feeding skills they need. N = 245. T critical value 1.56

S/N	Items	Parents	Mean	SD	t-cal	Decision
1	Parents should know when the baby is hungry	Young old	3.15 3.21	1.13 1.14	1.105	NS
2	Always cuddle the babies while feeding them	Young old	3.07 3.06	1.146 1.190	1.227	NS
3	Parents should wear smiling faces while breast feeding their babies	Young old	2.83 3.16	1.200 1.322	1.135	NS
4	Washing hands and cleaning the breast before feeding the babies	Young old	2.72 2.86	1.243 1.261	1.106	NS
5	Sitting comfortably while breast feeding the baby	Young old	3.03 3.17	1.113 1.235	1.209	NS
6	Holding breast properly and away from the baby's nose	Young old	2.77 3.25	1.928 1.200	1.009	NS
7	Feeding the baby on both breasts, one at a time.	Young old	3.19 3.19	1.254 1.352	1.248	NS
8	Winding the baby at the end of feeding	Young old	3.01 2.75	1.323 1.276	1.325	NS
9	Giving exclusive breastfeeding for six month	Young old	2.89 3.13	1.326 1.324	1.218	NS
10	Boiling all the water used for preparation of baby's food	Young old	2.79 2.86	1.367 1.192	1.256	NS
11	Sterilizing baby's feeding unit after each meal.	Young old	3.19 2.20	1.286 1.170	1.219	NS
12	Washing hands before preparing baby's food	Young old	3.12 3.00	1.293 1.239	1.218	NS
13	Using feeding bottle with suitable teat for the baby.	Young old	3.03 3.21	1.239 1.273	1.128	NS
14	Always cuddle the baby while bottle is feeding.	Young old	3.13 3.09	1.223 1.200	1.129	NS
15	Knowing when the milk is at right temperature for the baby	Young old	2.82 3.19	1.229 1.280	1.286	NS

× = Mean SD = Standard deviation x_1 =Mean of young parents, x_2 =Mean of old parents, n_1 = Number of young parents and n_2 = Numbers of Old parents, NS = Not significant

Table one shows that all the items 1-15 under feeding skills needed by parents have their mean scores ranging 2.20 to 3.21 for the young and older parents. The results indicate that the young and older parents are in agreement that feeding skills are needed by them for proper parenting or child rearing in the society. Hence the items are also seen not to be significant at 0.05 level.

Research Question Two

What are physical exercise skills needed by young parents?

Table 2: Mean responses of young and older parents on physical care skills needed by the parents. N = 245

S/N	Item Physical Exercise Skills Needed by Young Parents	Young parent $n_1 = 185$ $\times_1$	SD	Older parent $n_2 = 60$ $\times_2$	SD	t-cal	Decision
16	Choosing, or providing play activities suitable for the child.	3.00	0.68	2.82	0.65	1.215	NS
17	Selecting the play materials suitable for children.	3.21	0.72	3.21	0.75	1.125	NS
18	Teaching children how to use the play materials.	2.94	0.67	3.21	0.80	1.216	NS
19	Supervising children on the use of toys and other play materials.	2.65	0.58	2.60	0.66	1.016	NS
20	Providing safe play ground for children.	3.20	0.69	3.15	0.78	1.129	NS
21	Praising children for their efforts at play even when they do not achieve their goals.	2.65	0.58	2.60	0.52	1.105	NS
22	Teaching children to identifying colours during play.	2.90	0.65	2.80	0.73	1.325	NS
23	Providing safe toys for the children	3.11	0.80	3.06	0.65	1.248	NS

× = Mean SD = Standard deviation x_1 =Mean of young parents, x_2 =Mean of old parents, n_1 = Number of young parents and n_2 = Numbers of Old parents, NS = Not significant, t-table value = 1.960.

Table two above shows that the listed items 1-8 on physical exercise skills needed by parents have their mean scores ranging between 2.65 to 3.21for the young parents while the same set of items have their mean scores from 2.60 to 3.21 for older parents. The results of the hypothesis indicate that the items are not significant at 0.05 level, hence the hypothesis of no significance difference was accepted. This shows that young and older parents agree that they need the physical exercise skills for good parenting or child caring.

Research Question Three:

What are the safety skills needed by young parents

Table 3: Mean responses of young and older parents on safety skills needed for good parenting. N= 245

S/N	Safety Skills Needed by Young Parents in the State	Young parent $n_1 = 185$		Older parent $n_2 = 60$			
		$\times_1$	SD	$\times_2$	SD	t-cal	Decision
24	Keeping floors safe from dangerous items.	3.00	0.63	3.14	0.70	1.215	NS
25	Keeping drugs, cleaning agents and tools out of reach of the children.	3.50	0.76	3.14	0.63	1.125	NS
26	Monitoring children in their everyday activity.	2.93	0.62	2.82	0.76	1.216	NS
27	Switching every electrical appliances off	3.20	0.64	3.30	0.80	1.016	NS
28	Keeping children's surroundings clean.	2.95	0.70	2.90	0.69	1.129	NS
29	Keeping all sharp objects out of children's reach.	3.05	0.69	2.96	0.72	1.105	NS
30	Provide fire extinguisher at home	2.70	0.65	2.60	0.55	1.325	NS
31	Keeping playgrounds free from sharp objects.	2.98	0.71	2.82	0.67	1.248	NS
32	Covering play ground with fine sand to prevent injury in case of fall.	2.65	0.54	2.71	0.64	1.015	NS

× = Mean SD = Standard deviation x_1 =Mean of young parents, x_2 =Mean of old parents, n_1 = Number of young parents and n_2 = Numbers of Old parents, NS = Not significant, t table value = 0.960.

Table three indicates that the listed items 1- 9 under safety skills needed by parents have their mean scores for young parents ranging 2.65 to 3.50 while the same items have mean scores of 2.60 to 3.41 for the older parents. The two scores reveal that young and older parents agree on the items as safely skills needed by them for good parenting or child rearing in the area. Therefore the result of the hypothesis indicated in all the items, there is no significance difference at 0.05 level.

Discussion of the Findings

The findings of the study revealed that young and old parents needed the indentified feeding skills such as mothers sitting comfortably while breast feeding the babies, cuddling babies while breast feeding them, wearing smiling faces, washing hands and cleaning the breast and giving exclusive breastfeeding for six months. This is in agreement with Anyokoha (2010) who posited that mothers have to sit comfortably, wash and clean breast and cuddle the babies while breast feeding them. The findings are also in line with the views of Undiyaundeye, (2006) who stated that parents require the knowledge of necessary feeding skills for proper child training in the family. The result of the first hypothesis shows that there was no significance difference between young and older parents with regard to feeding skills.

Findings from research question two indicate that parents needed the following physical exercise skills providing play activities for the children, selecting playing materials, supervising the children on the use of the materials, and ensuring that safety playing ground is provided for children. In support of these findings is Esere, (2007) who stated that children need to be monitored while playing with materials in their environment. These findings agreed with Shelov, (2010) who stated that the play ground for the children should be free from sharp objects. The findings are also in line with the view Adewuyi, (2009) who noted

that selecting playing materials and supervising the children while playing are important skills needed by parents to ensure that the children exercise themselves properly.

The result also indicated that parent's views did not differ with regards to the feeding, physical, and safety skills needed by parents for proper parenting. Hence, the three stated null hypotheses of no significant difference were accepted.

The result of this study has a lot of implications for the parents especially mothers in the society. The parents should ensure proper breast feeding of the babies and the need to maintain appropriate hygiene practices including ensuring exclusive breast feeding as one of the basic preventive measures against children diseases. The place of physical well-being of the child cannot be overemphasized. It becomes imperative that parents should ensure that the children are well guided in selecting and the use of playing materials in safe surroundings.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, this study concludes that parents need the required knowledge of the feeding, physical exercise and safety skills for proper child training and development in the society.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Parents should endeavour to embrace the feeding skills identified in this study to ensure proper training of their children in the society.
2. Parents should also ensure that they apply the physical skills as identified in this study to help in the personality development of their children in the society.
3. Families should endeavour to embrace the safety skills suggested in this study to ensure conducive environment for the children to exercise themselves effectively for their social development in the society.
4. Families should adopt the parenting skills identified in this study and help to teach the younger ones even as they are in different churches, schools, hospitals for societal welfare.

References

Adewuyi, T.D.O. (2009). Family Background and Parental Skills in Child Upbringing: Implications for Parents and Counsellors. The CASSON Journal, 26 (2) 57-72

African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child. OAU Doc CAB/LEG/24.9/49/ (1990) @ 2013 African Commission on Human and People's Rights.

Anyakoha, E.U. (2010). Home Economics for Junior Secondary Schools. Onitsha. Africana First.

Anayakoha, E.U. (2015). Home Management for Schools and Collages. Onitsha. Africana. Publishers PLC.

Berk, L. (2000). Development Throughout the Lifespan (3rd Ed.). U.S.A Allyn and Bacon.

Douglas, R. (2002). Helping Children Learn to Use Toilet. Intodd, C.M. (Ed.). Family Day Care Connection: Urbana-campaign. University of Illinols' Press. Co-operative Extension Services.

Ejinkonye, U.B. anayakoha, E.U. (2011). Forms and Causes of Child Neglect Practice by Parents in Onitsha Urban of Anambra State. Journal of Home Economics Research vol. 14, No.1, p. 332.

Esere, M. O. (2007). Communication Management Skills Training as a Marriage Enrichment Programme in the Improvement of Marital Adjustment. The CASSON Journal (23) 67-76

Hall, D. & Elliman, D. (2003) 4th (Ed.). Health for All Children. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Kendiora, N. and Leary, J. (1993). Parenting and Discipline Life Matters. Retrieved 14/4/2006, from http://lifematters.com/parenting-and discipline.asp

Lamborn, I.S. (2002). Contraceptive Patterns and Adolescent Sexual Behaviour. Family Planning Perspectives.

Miller, C. (2010). Skills Needed for Parenting http://www.livestrong.com/article/71210-skills-needed parenting/Nixzz2ELbBzhD.

Ononuju, J.N. (2004). The Family and Parenting in Nigeria's Social Development, Nigeria Amadi Publication.

Robertson, C. (1998). Safety, Nutrition and Health in Early Child Education. Delmar: U.S.A.

Santrock, J.W. (2003). Child Development. (10th Ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.

Sears, R.E, Maccoby R. & Levin, H. (2003). Pattern of Child Rearing, New York: Evanston, Row Peterson.

Shelov, P. (2010). Caring for Your Baby and Child: Birth to Age 5. U.S.A Bantam.

Undiyaundeye, F. A. (2006). Effect of Marital Conflict Management Skills on Marital Stability Among Literate Couples in Northern Cross River State. An Unpublished Ph.D Thesis, University of Jos, Nigeria.

William, L. (2004). Successful Parenting Skills that Shapes Children's Behaviours. All-Psychy Journal May, 15.