

PARENTAL ROLES IN EDUCATING THE 21ST CENTURY CHILD TOWARDS THE ATTAINMENT OF SUSTAINABLE LIVING

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ABSTRACT

The paper identified the 21st century child to possess some unique features which calls for special attention. It observes that roles of parents are key to the education of the 21st century child such that the child can attain a sustainable living. It defined the child as one undergoing development in all areas of life. It defined sustainability in this context to mean as that which has the capacity to be durable and long lasting without causing harm to future users. It contends that there are many ways to attain parenthood. It further argued that the ability of a 21st century child to attain sustainability depends on the parents. It therefore agitated that parents must take their roles serious. It outlined about twelve (12) roles of parents in making the 21st century child attains sustainability. For the parents to credibly carry out their roles some of the measures were suggested are since education is key to all things, the paper argues that the parents need to enroll the children in the three components of childhood education (day care, pre-primary and primary education); and since capacity building programmes are the best ways to equip parents acquire the needed skills to train the 21st century child, they should devour to attain various forms of capacity building programmes so as to be abreast with what to do.

INTRODUCTION

Man's existence on earth has witnessed a decrease in the availability of natural resources. The reduction in man's source of livelihood may be attributed to negative consequences resulting from man's scientific and environmental exploitative activities. Any activity embarked by man has effect on him and his environment. On daily bases, man's urge for a better living lures him into more activities that if well interpreted impacts negatively on members of the society with the child being the most vulnerable. The observation registered by this few sentences calls for a pause so as to ask if man's environment offers the child good opportunities of attaining sustainability. Indeed the consequences of man's activities reduces the chances for attaining a life describable of sustainable living. Unfortunately, as the day go bye, it becomes more and more difficult for man to live a life that can sustain the future generation.

The 21st century child who is confronted with multiple challenges mostly in the under developed countries like Nigeria and other African countries stands a high risk of survival. It may be misunderstood or misinterpreted that the child's environment is confronted with diverse problems. For the purpose of clarity, it is not out of place to point out that there is increase in environmental pollution (air, water, and land), natural disasters such as earth quakes, flood, and poor harvest of both plant and animal produce. Increase in crime rates like child kidnapping, rape, labor, theft, denial of formal education among others. Beyond these, the modern child receives lesser attention by the parents and members of the immediate

family due to the socio-political and economic changes in recent times. The changes and the attention given to the 21st century child does not enhance the child's proper development. The last statement is made because in recent times, close relations are no more obliged to undertake the care of the child. An x-ray of this issue leaves a sermon in the mind of every one that the 21st century child demands more attention and care to attain a worthwhile living or attain a life of sustainability.

The most viable instrument used worldwide to make the child live a life worthy of sustainability is the nature of education received. This is to say that education of the child plays crucial roles in helping the child cope with life. In this connection, it is important to point out that the child's education starts from the home, with the parents as the key players. If sustainability has to be attained by the child, the parent who is primarily saddled with the responsibility of educating the child must not overlook the current developmental chemistry of educating the 21st century child. To equip the parents in carrying out this role, the following will serve as the framework of this discussion.

1. Who is a child?,
2. What is 21st Century and the 21st Century Child?
3. What is sustainability?
4. The roles of parents in educating the 21st century child attain sustainable living
5. The roles of teachers in educating the 21st century child attain sustainable living
6. Conclusion
7. Suggestion.

Who is a Child?

The question of who is the child and who is the 21st century child demands an answer. There may not be an acceptable definition of who is a child? This view attracts the definition of a child from many perspectives. Responding to this, Anero (2018) defined the child from nine perspectives. A sum of the perspectives are:

1. philosophically, the child cannot engage in abstract thinking;
2. psychologically, the child is undergoing physical growth and development;
3. age wise, is not up to eighteen years;
4. socially, the child is undergoing acquisition of social morals, norms and values of the society;
5. economically, the depends on others to provide his/her needs;
6. politically, the child cannot vote or be voted for;
7. legally, the child cannot sue or be sued;
8. biologically, before puberty; and
9. societally, a child is under ones parentage or guardian or care or fostering.

The various perspectives, simply suggests that the child cannot exist independently. The propensity of the child to cope with life and more particularly in the 21st century demands invested attention of all and sundry; most especially the parents and teachers. The emphasis that the 21st century child needs special attention leads the discussion to two main directions. They are namely: what is 21st century and who is the 21st century child?

What is 21st Century and the 21st Century Child?

Century denotes one hundred years (100) interval. The century in question began 1st January, 2001 and will end 21st December, 2100. Commenting on the peculiarities of the 21st century child, Daniel (2017) associate them with the following unique characteristics.

1. Exhibit higher degree of digital literacy than the parents
2. Wishes to make choice of the school to attend

3. Is more out spoken than the parents
4. Sometimes tells the parents where they have gone wrong
5. Demands freedom to do that which pleases them
6. Demonstrates good degree of collaboration with others
7. Can show creativity and learn more by doing
8. Cherishes trial and error approach to learning
9. Can accommodate other cultures outside the one he/she operates
10. Hunger for western education

Following the peculiarities associated with the 21st century child, Burns and Rouw (2017) sought to know the difference between the modern child and the ones of the previous generations. Consequently, they concluded that the 21st century child needs much more attention from those who care and train them. Unfortunately, the attention received by the child from the immediate family members and others around them may not be sufficient to give the child the required training. This axiom justifies why it is necessary to spare time to explain or justify why parents who are key players in the upbringing of the child should be made to know their basic roles in making the child become live a life worthy of sustainability.

What is Sustainability?

Sustainability is derived from the Latin word 'sustinere' meaning to maintain or support. Going by language derivatives, it is interpreted to mean durable as derived from the French language 'durabilité'. In German language it is 'nachhaltigkeit' meaning lastingness. Considering that some major languages use it to mean maintain or support, durability and lastingness; there has been a global attraction to use it by all. The history of its globalization or world official usage is accredited to its usage by United Nations (UN). The word sustainable was adopted worldwide after the UN (1987) set up a commission on environment and development headed by Brundtland who while submitting the report; introduced the term sustainable development. The sense Brundtland used it, prompts it to be interpreted to mean man's attainment of needs without jeopardizing the chances of the future generation from attaining their needs. Based on his submission, the world bodies and leaders configured it as the best acceptable development model. This explains reasons why the 189 world leaders on 8th September, 2000 met at New York under the auspices of UN signed 15 year Millennium Goal Declaration into law. The 15 year term covers the period 2000 to 2015. The popular 15 year millennium goals were to improve life generally, most especially as it affects the child.

Consequent to the progress and momentum gathered by the pursuit of the 2000-2015 Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), 193 world leaders converged at New York on 25th September, 2015 under the umbrella of UN and signed world 17 goal agenda with the title 'transforming our world: The 2030 agenda for sustainable development'. The idea is to consolidate the gains of MDGs thereby advance world development. Sustainable Development Commission (2015) therefore articulated the world post-2015 integrated and multidimensional agenda which indeed targets at providing the child and citizens generally what can enable them attain a life of sustainability. In consideration to all of these, Kemjika (2014) defined sustainability to be improving the quality of human life while living within the carrying capacity of supporting ecosystem. In summary, sustainability can be understood as that which has the capacity to sustain the operations or existence of man or human systems over time without causing harm in time to come to the future users.

Roles of Parents in Educating the 21st Century Child Attain Sustainable Living

The child belongs to the family or parents before the society. This proposition suggests that the degree of success to be achieved by the child in life is dependent on the roles of the parents in educating the child. In this write-up, attention may not be given to what is education? However, it is important to point out that it is conceived as the total input made to bring up an individual such that the person acquires the relevant values, skills and knowledge that will guarantee or mar the chances of attaining sustainable living. To balance this discussion, who is a parent? A parent may be the biological Father or Mother of a child. Beyond the biological bond, parental status can be acquired through social or legal means. Cahn (2012) explains that parents who have biological bond with children possess the same DNA with their children while social parents acquire family relationships with the children through law do not share the same DNA. At this point, there is the need to outline the different forms of social acquisition of parentage as surrogating, adoption and fostering.

Parentage by surrogating: It is commonly used among infertile parents to get children. The infertile parents contact a woman who will gestate the child and relinquish the child to the surrogate parents. Explaining further, Ali and Kelly (2008) say that it is a form of parenting where a couple allow a third party to serve as a birth mother of their child. Surrogating, gives room to step mother or father.

Parentage by adoption: Adopted children have two set of parents. The first set of parents are the biological parents who is deemed to have given birth to them and the other are the parents who took the responsibility of educating them or raising them into adulthood. It is common that such children rarely wish away to know whom their biological parents are but in most cases they do not know them. However, the parents that raised them up occupy a center stage in the life of the adopted children. Shyann (2016) attributed the attachment the adopted children hold with their biological parents to be traced to the fact that they share the same gene, heritage, culture and race. In terms of ownership and duration, the parents who are not the biological parents are deemed to own the child by law.

Parentage by fostering: Parentage by fostering is a common form of parentage. It takes place when there is obvious absence of security, care, food and ability of the child to care for self or fend for oneself or the parents manifest incapability to care for the child. Sometimes the parents are dead, away on exile, bed ridden by sickness. Infact, there are several reasons that can lead to child fostering. Parentage by fostering is in most cases carried out with the knowledge of the child that the fostered parents are not the biological parents. It is unlike the surrogate or adoption approach where the child may rarely know the biological parents. Both surrogate and adoption are carried out with the intent that the child permanently belong to the care provider; but parentage by fostering is done with an intention for interim care giving and the child will after a while go back to the real parents. The bottom line of the entire discussion is that there are many ways to qualify as a parent and parents owe the duty to care and educate the child. It is however misleading to generalize that all parents can care or educate a child such that the 21st century child will attain sustainability. This view leads to the next phase of this discussion which is the role of parents in educating the 21st century child attain sustainable living

The role of parents in educating the 21st century child attain sustainable living

The task at this point is what can the parents do to enable the 21st century child live a life describable of sustainable living? Parental roles in this direction are indeed enormous and

may not completely be exhausted in this piece of work. Some guide to what the parents have to do can be discussed under the following:

1. enroll children in school;
2. ensure Pre-primary school enrollment of children;
3. enroll children for an entrepreneurial skill;
4. save ahead of your children's education and training;
5. provide useful educational information and supports to children at home;
6. participate in your children's educational activities;
7. provide basic facilities at home;
8. serve as a model at home and elsewhere;
9. avoid any act capable of making the child feel abused;
10. provide information that will lead to award of scholarships, training and sponsorship of children's education;
11. participate in parentage capacity building programmes; and
12. parents need to participate in acts that will promote good health and safety living.

Enroll children in school: No doubt, not all parents have the skill to teach and educate the child. The most viable option to parents is to send their children to school. It is only when parents enroll their children that children can be found in school and be educated. If the parent do not do so, no one takes the child to school. In doing so, the parents must ensure that they enroll them in schools they can afford to pay the fees and other levies as well as provide the basic learning materials. It must be pointed out that it is the right of the child to be educated. In pursuance of providing basic education as a right to the child, the Federal Government (2004) signed a bill known as Compulsory, Free, Universal Basic Education bill; No. 66, volume 91. The bill which is a derivative of item 2 (a) of the fourth schedule of the 1999 constitution dealing with primary school education; among other things reads: Every parent shall ensure that his child or ward attends and completes his

- (a) Primary school education; and
- (b) Junior secondary school education, by endeavoring to send the child to primary and junior secondary school.

A parent who contravenes the provision of this Act commits an offence and liable. The Act states that the parent shall:

- (a) On first conviction, to be reprimanded;
- (b) On second conviction, pay a fine of ₦2,000:00 or imprisonment for a term of 1 month or to both; and
- (c) Consequent conviction, will pay a fine of ₦5,000:00 or imprisonment for a term of 2 months or both.

The bill further provides that:

1. Every parent shall ensure that his child receives full-time education suitable to his age, ability and aptitude by regular attendance at school.
2. The provisions of this Act shall not apply to any parent who, for the time being, is resident outside Nigeria.
3. The provisions of this Act shall not apply to any child who is resident outside Nigeria and who has not received such education.
4. The magistrate court or any other state court of competent jurisdiction shall have the jurisdiction to hear and determine cases arising under this Act and impose the punishment specified.

By the provisions of the UBE law, it is evident that failure to send the child to school to acquire a minimum of Junior School Certificate otherwise Basic education is a violation to

the law of the land. The offence is not only violation to law but rubs the child the literate skills that will enhance the ability to cope with life issues.

Ensure Pre-primary school enrollment of children: There is difference in school enrollment of children and enrolling the child for pre-primary school education. Presenting children for day care and pre-primary school education was not mentioned in the books of government until the introduction of Universal Basic Education (UBE) in 1999. The takeoff of the UBE program in 1999 did not mark a significant commencement of pre-primary school education in Nigeria till the early and middle 2000's when government began to establish and manage pre-primary schools by accommodating early child schools in the existing primary schools. Before then, it was entirely a private venture. The investors enjoyed 360 degree freedom to merchandize with the intellectual property of the Nigerian child. Within the period, parents had restricted choice of sending their children and wards to schools owned by investors where they are charged to pay outrageous fees. Since the window of choice is now open by government, parents need to cash into it and send their children to pre-primary so that the children can acquire skills early enough that will help them cope with school works and general life activities.

Several research reports, eulogize the need to send children to pre-school before enrolling them into the school. In this context, Ochenje (2015), Uzoeshi and Asuru (2005) contend that children who acquire pre-school education before entering primary school significantly do better academically; than those who did not attend pre-school education and enroll into primary school. What this means is that, early school education has positive impact on the child. It is proper to add, that the effects of early school education on the child is not only restricted to academic performance but all other areas of an individual's life. This view accredits Alan (2009) who justified that Broom's taxonomy of 1956 that 50% of an individual's intellectual development occur between conception and the age of four. This invariably means that the extent an individual can survive depends on the education the individual receives during his formative years. It therefore cautions parents to put in their all in the early education of their children if they wish them live a life that can be sustaining.

Enroll children for entrepreneurial skill: It is not a contest that the world is drifting from paper qualification to the show-case of skills. Indeed every individual is endowed with idea, initiative, talent and knowledge that if put together can promote acquisition of entrepreneurial skill. The prevailing economic situation worldwide requires people with creative and innovative tendencies that can transform the economy. Defining entrepreneurship, Opuwari and Thom-Otuya (2013) say that it is the ability of an individual to identify the need of the society and provide goods and services that can satisfy the needs of the people. To be an entrepreneur, the individual must possess skills such as conceptual, technical, analytical, financial, managerial and human relations. The identified skills cannot be acquired overnight, so there is the need to expose the child as early as possible. Early exposure of the child to acquire an entrepreneurial skill marks a good beginning for the child. As parents, the need to engage the child in one entrepreneurial skill or the other will count for the child's attainment of sustainable living.

Save ahead of your children's education and training: The common saying that we must save for the rainy days applies to the issue of financing children education and training. It is obvious that unlike some countries, the Nigerian government does not pay any child for going to school. Therefore, the ability to fund the child's education rest on the shoulders of parents. If parents must successfully do it, they must have a plan to save for the education of

their children and wards. It may not seem to be true that in some countries, children are paid for going to school. In the light of this CSB - Centrum Voor Sociaal Beleid Herman Dereck (2018) captured some countries where parents reap financial gains for sending their children to childhood schools. List of some such countries and the amount they pay per child per annum are as follows:

S/N	COUNTRY	AMOUNT A CHILD RECEIVES IN USD PER ANNUM
1	Austria	5,704
2	Belgium	5,709
3	Denmark	2,794,4
4	Finland	2,888,9
5	France	1,779
6	Germany	5,620
7	Ireland	4,060
8	Luxembourg	8,750
9	Netherlands	2,404,7
10	Norway	2,576,6
11	Sweden	3,507

Commenting on the funds received from government by parents, Mathew (2016) described it as a means by which parents benefit financially from government. No doubt, most parents in those countries will save funds realized from government magnanimity and plug it into the child's future education. In the case of Nigeria where both the parents and children are abandoned to their fate, parents must make plans and save ahead of time for the education and training of their children.

Provide useful educational information and supports to children education at home: It is the responsibility of parents to provide information that will help their children to succeed. No one succeeds without basic information. Some such information that parents must provide are:

1. information that can lead to children gaining admission;
2. information that can lead to children gaining scholarships;
3. information about the best available schools;
4. information about how and where to access educational materials; and many more. The family as a mini community is the center for learning and plays significant roles to support the child's education. Supporting this view the US Department of Education (1997) contends that irrespective of ethnicity, cultural background, educational level and income, all families function as a learning environment. This position points to the fact that each family has the potent to support every child succeed academically and in all sphere of life. Parents of the 21st century child must be up and doing by providing basic information that will help to equip their children to function better in the society.

Participate in your child's educational activities

Most parents do not seem to realize that they are part of the school programmes where their children and wards attend. The more a parent attend the child's school programmes the more the child experiences sense of belonging. The phenomenon of making the child feel accepted goes a long way to help the child settle in school and cope with both curricula and extra curricula school activities. There are several ways or activities the parent can be involved as a means of participating in the educational activities of their children. Listing some such activities US Department of Education (1997) suggested the following:

1. participation in Parent Teachers Association meetings and programmes;
2. attend the orientation programmes given to children at the first day of resumption;
3. attend school events. Some such events are open day, award nights, cultural day, exhibition day and other meetings;
4. read all memos and notices from the school and act accordingly;
5. volunteer to serve the school at any capacity when appointed or elected;
6. sponsor projects within the capacity of your resources; and
7. carry the child to and fro the school.

A parent who engages in these activities succeeds in boosting the morale of the child in all school programmes and activities. It therefore becomes important that parents who want their children to excel in their education and cope with the challenges of 21st century must look inwards and execute the activities listed in this paragraph.

Provide basic facilities at home: Most homes or some parents may not consider it important to provide facilities such as television, radio, phone, computers, video, textbooks, play materials and many more for children to use and explore the world. It is globally acknowledged that social media is a tool that makes the world operate like a global village. In Nigeria, the idea of electronic form of communication is traceable to Late Chief Obafemi Awolowo, the then Premier of the Western Nigeria Region with Anthony Enahoro as Minister of Information who established the first television station at Ibadan in the present day Oyo state Nigeria. It is on record that the station officially commenced on Saturday, 31st October, 1959. Chukwunyere (2018) notes that during the commissioning of the station, Chief Awolowo in his maiden speech explained that it will teach, entertain and stimulate Nigeria and Nigerians into a booming and a successful nation. The speech points to the fact that exposure to electronic means of communication is matching on the pedestrian of success in life. It is also important to point out that its use has not been without side effects. Considering the fact that it is a source by which children emulate both cherished and uncherished norms and values, there is the need for parents to edit what their children watch and do with both television and other forms of social media as well as the facilities they provide for them.

Beyond the provision of social media facilities, other facilities aid the education of the 21st century child. Significant among such facilities is the provision of library or reading corner, play corner or availability of recreational facilities. In the bid to ensure that 21st century child copes with his/her educational challenge, the parents need to ensure that the children do the following;

1. ensure that the children have done their home works;
2. interpret the child's academic performance and proffer ways of improvement;
3. provide information or strategies that will help the children to improve in all aspects of human development;
4. create time to teach or engage someone to teach the child what the child ought to learn; and
5. ensure that the child is never late to any school programme or event.

By doing these the parents have provided a conducive home and support for the education of the 21st century child.

Serve as a model at home and elsewhere: People behave the way they do because of the people that came across them early in life. Parents as mentors and models must exhibit acts that would engender hard work, honesty, fear of God, respect for elders and others in the life of the children. No doubt, it is the foundation laid for the child within the early childhood

period that enables children develop basic values, attitudes, skills, behaviours and habits, which will enable them sustain their living. In this wise Anero (2018) pointed out that one of the early philosophers Thomas Aquinas advocates that where children are gathered they should be made to pray and worship God. The recognition of the existence of God by them through worships and prayers in schools and families is a means of making them get close to God and be of good behavior. Parents and other family members can be good models in this direction by praying with children in family morning devotions. If the opportunity is well utilized it will help children learn how to acquire basic values that will help them attain sustainable living. The parents may not only exhibit model attitudes by praying with children in the mornings, they can as well read with them. By constantly reading with children, they imbibe the life style of reading. Indeed, reading has the great advantage of making a man great in all aspects of life.

Avoid any act capable of making the child feel abused: Parents and all those involved in training children are sources of child abuse. A good number of those who indulge in abusing children, do not know that they do so. It is admissible that this discussion is not centered on exposing the evils of abuse on children but it may not be out of place to point out that abuse in any form constitute hitch to the child's overall development. In this discussion, there is the need to identify the various ways parents and all others who take care of children indulge in abusing children. The commonest forms of abuse are physical, psychological, economic, social and education.

Identification of abuse may not make parents and other child givers appreciate the acts that constitute abuse. Based on this thinking, the highlights of what constitute each of them are physical (slapping, beating, twisting, stabbing, pinching, strangling, hair pulling, burning, chocking, kicking etc); psychological (ignoring the child, conferment of children in a particular place, not protecting children to be attacked by animals or man, forceful take away of children, threat letters, verbal aggression, curses, shouting, glaring, quarrels before children, humiliation etc); economic (using children to beg, using children to rear cattles, using children for fishing/farming, employing children to work in companies and industries, using children to hawk, using children as house helps etc); sexual (touching or pinching of breast/buttocks or genital, rape etc) and education (late payment of fees and charges, allowing the child to be harassed before fees are paid, not providing learning materials, making the child trek long distance to school, taking the child to school late, inability to drop and pick the child from school, allowing the child use torn clothes/books/sandals/shoes etc). It is important to point out that available records indicate that the rate with which the different abuses occur in Nigeria are high. Commenting on this, the African Child Policy Forum (2011) pointed out that the rate of beating and kicking of children as forms of physical abuse in Nigeria are respectively 90% and 55%. The African Child Policy Forum further reports that Fathers take the lead in inflicting psychological abuse or violence on children. Analyzing the rate of occurrence, Nigeria occupies second place position in Africa with 76% while Burkina Faso is rated first. It is also reported that the most sexual abuses that occur are touching or pinching of buttocks (42%) followed by force sexual intercourse or rape (10%). The essence of this analogy is to keep parents abreast with what constitutes abuse and the various ways they are carried out. A child that is abused in any of the ways, appears to have a marred chance for attaining sustainable living.

Provide information that will lead to award of scholarships, trainings and sponsorship of the child's education: It is not common among Nigerian parents to source information as regards individuals, groups, institutions and agencies that award grants and scholarships to

children. There are both local and international bodies that award scholarships to children. The parents are more informed than their children as regards both local and international sources of gaining scholarships. The scholarships when awarded will help the children to pursue their academics, enterprise or acquire one skill or the other.

Participate in parentage capacity building programmes: No one is an encyclopedia of all knowledge. Knowledge as any one knows rules the world. For the 21st century child to attain sustainable living, much knowledge is needed. It is obvious that the parents are in position to impart the basic information that will make the children to be functional. The parents in the bid to acquire knowledge must as a matter of fact participate in capacity building programmes such as talk shops, workshops, seminars, conferences and mentorships. The rationale for parents to participate in capacity building programmes is to enable them acquire the right attitudes, skills, knowledge and experiences that would boost their roles as parents. Discussing this issue by mere mention of capacity building strategies is not sufficient for anyone to deduce how helpful the measures can be in helping parents play their roles in educating the 21st century child. There is the need to briefly explain how some capacity building programmes can boost the chances of parents to train the 21st century child to attain sustainability.

Talk shops: In Nigeria, parents do not organize themselves in a formal forum to verbally discuss issues affecting the upbringing of their children. Formal or semi-formal verbal discussions can be referred to as talk shops. Cultivation of practices that will enable parents discuss matters that will help parents bring up children in the best way will help the 21st century child to attain sustainable living.

Workshops: Workshops are organized so that participants can come together and practically learn from one another. There are so much to learn when people with the same pursuit come together. Uya (2004) in this direction contends that participation of parents as care givers in workshops will help to lay grounds for children to cope with their daily life activities.

Seminars: Seminar can be understood as a process where a person deemed to have vast knowledge on a particular issue is give the opportunity to teach others. It is one of the commonest capacity building programmes. Parents therefore, need to utilize seminar opportunities to abreast themselves with what should be done to equip the 21st century child attain sustainable living.

Conferences: Naturally, people conference from time to time to deliberate on issues that border on their lives. Unfortunately, parents of the 21st century child do not come together to discuss issues that affect the life of their children. Since conferences expose parents to skills and knowledge on how to get certain things done, parents must endeavor to utilize conference opportunities that discuss issues that teaches how to train the 21st century child to become a sustainable individual.

Mentorship: Mentorship as a capacity building strategy is not a common practice among parents. The fact that it is voluntary for people to have children, makes it easy for everybody to be qualified to be parents but not all can educate children. It is therefore important that ill experienced parents need to source for mentorship. Absence of mentors and mentees can be held responsible for the careless attention given to the 21st children in preparing them become self-sustaining and independent.

Parents need to participate in acts that will promote good health and safety living:

Sustainable health and safety practices are key to prevent children from death and sicknesses. Some parents pay no attention to good health and safety practices. Most children who are disabled are attributed to careless handling of objects and substances in the homes and schools. The cause of most disability among children are traceable to falls, fire burns, hot water, breakable objects, electric accidents and many more that occur at homes. No doubt, the children need to be alive and disabled free to enable them attain sustainability in the 21st century. The parents must therefore ensure safety homes that must promote healthy and safety practices. Some such practices are:

1. regular washing of hands;
2. keeping medicine out of reach of children;
3. avoid wet floors;
4. avoid children from entering kitchen, electric generator rooms;
5. use of belt in cars;
6. prevent children from holding sharp objects like knife, bottles, razor blades etc.;
7. prevent them from climbing to avoid falls;
8. prevent them from lifting or carrying heavy objects; and many more.

CONCLUSION

No doubt, the extent a child succeeds in life is anchored on the home background. The mention of home background brings to mind the roles of the parents. Today most children are bound to malfunction in the society because they were not equipped with the basic information, skill and training during the childhood periods. The parents has so much to do in the life of every child. Unfortunately, not all parents realize that they have roles to play to make the child live a life that is describable of been self-sustaining. The need for parents to train their children such that they can stand the rigors of life and attain sustainability in this 21st century does not need to be over stressed. The parents therefore need to undergo some capacity building programmes, avoid acts that will lead to abuse of children, provide basic information that will aid the children do well in life, enroll them in schools among other measures. This is so because the task of making a child to live a life of self-sustaining is not a task that can be accomplished with mere folding of hands.

SUGGESTIONS

The paper establishes that for the 21st century child to attain a life that is sustaining, the parents have significant roles to play. Some of the key roles among others are;

1. since education is key to all things, the paper argues that the parents need to enroll the children in the three components of childhood education (day care, pre-primary and primary education); and
2. since capacity building programmes are the best ways to equip parents acquire the needed skills to train the 21st century child, they should endeavour to attain various forms of capacity building programmes so as to be abreast with what to do.

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