- **A period of Development of Understanding :** With increased intellectual abilities, specially the abilities to reason and to see relationships, young children's understanding of people, objects and situations increases rapidly. This increase in understanding comes from new meanings being associated with meanings learned during baby-hood. Children come to know about the simple relationships, like - parents, sibling, relatives etc. By the time they are three years old, most young children know their sex, their full names, and names of different parts of their bodies. During the early childhood, the young children develop the concepts of bodily functions, space, size, numbers, colours, shapes, time, self, beauty etc.
- **A period of Development of Interests :** Early childhood is also a period when some common interests develop. These include :
  - i) Interest in play,
  - ii) Interest in human body,
  - iii) Interest in self,
  - iv) Interest in clothes,
  - v) Interest in Religion and
  - vi) Interest in Sex.

The young children love to play at all the time. They become interested in the exterior of the body before the interior. But at the later part of early childhood, most young children develop an interest in the interiors of their bodies and want to know about the interior parts and their functions. After the helpless days of babyhood are over, many young children develop an interest in themselves. There are many ways by which the young children show their great interest in self, like - looking at themselves in mirrors, examining the different parts of their bodies and their clothes, asking questions about themselves, comparing their possessions with those of their playmates etc. Young children also have a strong interest in their clothes. The reason is that, at an early age, they discover that their clothing attracts attention.

- there are individual differences in development;
- it is both quantitative and qualitative and it is often predictable.
- There are internal, external and other factors that affect the growth and development of the child.

- There are two main phases of the process of development i.e the stage or phase of before Birth and the stage or phase of after Birth.
- The second phase of life has four stages, i.e. Infancy, childhood, Adolescence and Adulthood. The period of infancy covers the period from birth to 5 years, childhood from 6 to 12 years and adolescence from 12 to 18/19 years. Each stage of development has its own specific characteristics.



3.7 FURTHER READING

1) Das, Dr. L. : Elements of Education (Part I), Amrita Prakashan, Guwahati,
2) Mangal, Dr. S. K., : Psychological Foundations of Education, Prakash Brothers, Ludhiana,
3) Goswamee, Dr. G., : Child Development and Child Care, Arun Prakashan, Guwahati-1.



3.8 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Ans. to Q. No. 1 : i) False, ii) False, iii) True, iv) Trie

Ans. to Q. No. 2 : i) Growth refers to increase in size, length, height and weight and development implies overall changes in the individual.

ii) Growth is one of the parts of developmental process.

Ans. to Q. No. 3 : Followings are the factors that affect in the continuity of growth i.e.

- Illness

- Malnutrition
- Environmental factors
- Abnormal conditions.

Ans. to Q. No. 4 : Pre-natal, Neo-natal, Babyhood, Early childhood, Late childhood Adolescence and Adulthood are the major developmental periods of human life.

Ans. to Q. No. 5 : i) Legs, ii) Head, iii) Trunk, iv) Arms, v) Arms

Ans. to Q. No. 6 : i) True, ii) False, iii) False, iv) False

Ans. to Q. No. 7 : i) Heredity, environment; (ii) Unique

Ans. to Q. No. 8 : i) True, ii) False



3.9 MODEL QUESTIONS

A) Very Short Questions (Answer each question in about 50 words)

Q.1. What do you understand by the term growth and development ?

Q.2. What is the relationship between growth and development?

B) Short Questions (Answer each question in about 50 words)

Q.1. What are the opportunities and experiences to be provided to the learner for development of genetic abilities?

Q.2. 'Development is a product of interaction of the heredity and enviornment'-explain the statement briefly.

C) Long Questions (Answer each question in about 300-500 words)

Q.1. What do you understand by the term growth and development? Bring out clearly the relationship between these two terms.

Q.2. Discuss in brief the various principles of human development.

attention. Children are **curious** about anything new that they see and also about their own bodies and the bodies of others and, as a result, they ask questions.

Young children often become **Envious** of the abilities or material possessions of another child and they express their Envy in different ways. Young children derive **Joy** from such things as a sense of physical well-being, different situations, sudden or unexpected noise, slight calamities, playing pranks on others, completing different tasks etc. They express their joy by smiling, clapping, jumping, hugging etc.

Another emotion which finds its expression is **Affection**. Young children learn to love the things are - people, pets, toys or other objects - which give them pleasure. They express their affection by kissing, hugging and patting. Young children are saddened by the loss of anything they love or that is important to them. They express their **Grief** by crying and by losing interest in their normal activities, including eating.

- **A period of Social Development :** One of the important developmental tasks of early childhood is acquiring the preliminary training and experience needed to become a member of a "Gang" in late childhood. Thus, early childhood is often called as "The Pregang age".

  The foundations for socialization are laid by the family, neighborhood and by his pre-school. The child develops his social qualities in his family. A good family provides a good social atmosphere for the child to develop healthy social habits. Sometimes he goes to the neighbourhood. He finds that the atmosphere there is different from that at home and he tries to adjust with that atmosphere. He develops **Friendship** with other children of his age in the neighbourhood. He plays with his friends and sometimes he also quarrels. He comes to know of teasing, imitating, quarrelling, sympathy, sharing, co-operation etc.

years old, most of the pre speech forms of communication they found so useful during babyhood are abandoned. Young children no longer babble, and their crying is greatly curtailed. They may use gestures, but mainly as supplements to speech.

During early childhood, there is a strong motivation on the part of most of the children to learn to speak. Because,' learning to speak' is an essential tool in socialization and a tool in achieving independence.

Major improvements in speech during Early Childhood are :

i) **Improvement in comprehension :** Children at this stage, develop the power of understanding about what others say to them, which helps them to communicate with others.

ii) **Improvement in speech skills :** Early childhood is normally a time when rapid developments are made in the major tasks of learning to speak - mastering pronunciation, building up a vocabulary. It means that young children begin to learn more words and their meanings, and to combine words into sentences. Children can speak simple to complex sentences.

- **A period of emotional development :** Emotions are especially intense during early childhood. This is a time of **disequilibrium** when children are unable to control their emotions. Some common emotions of early childhood period are - anger, fear, jealousy, curiosity, envy, joy, grief, affection etc. The most common causes of anger in young children are conflicts over playthings, unfulfillment of wishes, attacks from another child etc. Children express anger through temper **tantrums**, characterized by crying, screaming, stamping, kicking, jumping up and down, or striking.

Another emotion which finds its expression is **Fear**. The child is afraid of many things which he does not know. Young children become **Jealous** when they think that their parents interest and attention are shifting toward someone else in the family, usually a new sibling. Young children may openly express their jealousy or they may show it by reverting to infantile behaviour to get



Disequilibrium: state of agitation, unbalance.
Tantrums : uncontrolled, outburst of anger**.**

UNIT 4 : EARLY CHILDHOOD STAGE

UNIT STRUCTURE

4.1 Learning Objectives
4.2 Introduction
4.3 Early Childhood Stage
4.4 Characteristics of Early Childhood Stage
4.5 Problems during Early Childhood
4.6 Educational Importance of Early Childhood
4.7 Let Us Sum Up
4.8 Further Reading
4.9 Answers to Check Your Progress.
4.10 Model Questions

4.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After going through this unit you will be able to :

- define the early childhood stage.
- Know about the characteristics of this stage.
- Identify the common problems during early childhood.
- describe the educational importance of this stage.

4.2 INTRODUCTION

In the preceding unit we learnt infancy and babyhood. This unit deals with the early childhood stage. In this stage the helplessness and dependency of a child is replaced by his growing independence. He gradually becomes aware of some simple concepts of social and physical realities. Development psychologists attach great importance to this stage since this is a period of mental growth. During this year a early childhood attitude, habits and patterns of behaviour begin to take shape. These attitudes help the child to adjust in life as he grows older. Children gradually start learning

how to fit their behaviuor to the patterns accepted by school and society. Thus, early childhood as a period of development is of great significant from the point of view of a child's mental, emotional and social development.

The purpose of this unit is to familiarise you with the early childhood stage, its basic characteristics, its problems and the significance of this stage in human life.

4.3 THE EARLY CHILDHOOD STAGE

Early Childhood stage is the foundation period of life covering 2 - 6 years of our life. It is a period of rapid - physical, mental, emotional, social and language development of a child. Apart from these major developmental aspects such as, development of - understanding, moral values, some common interests, those are some common characteristics of Early Childhood stage. It is a period of slow growth and rapid development.

Early Childhood, which extends from two to six years, is labeled by the Parents as 'The Problem'; 'The Troubles some, or 'The Toy' age, by the Educators as 'The Pre-school age'; and, by the Psychologists as 'The Pregang, 'The Exploratory', or 'The Questioning' age, because of its unique characteristics.



LET US KNOW

EARLY CHILDHOOD STAGE

- Age group 2-6 years.
- Period of rapid physical, mental, emotional, social and language development.
- It is th e foundation period of life.
- It is a period of slow growth and rapid development.
- It is termed as 'Pre-School age.



CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Q.1. Fill in the blanks:

i) It is a period of slow _____ and rapid _____.

ii) The Parents name early childhood age as _____.

iii) Educators term early childhood as _____.

iv) The Psychologists labeled this age as _____.

4.4 CHARACTERISTICS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD STAGE

The Early period witnesses the all round development of the child. This is one of the most important and impressionistic periods of human life. Let us now discuss the characteristics of the early childhood period,.

- **A period of physical development :** The child gains height at the average rate of about 3 inches per year. Children at the end of this stage generally have a height of 3 feet and 6 inches. The weight of the child also increases. Body proportions change markedly, and the "baby look" disappears. Difference in body build becomes apparent for the first time in early childhood with some children having a fat body build, some muscular body build and some others having a thin body build. Regarding the development of teeth, generally during the last half year of early childhood, the baby teeth begin to be replaced by permanent teeth, coordination of the finer muscles. The child acquires various motor skills like - catching, throwing, running, jumping, climbing, riding a tricycle, self-feeding, dressing, balancing, colouring, drawing etc.
- **A period of language development :** Early childhood is popularly known as "the chatterbox age", because children are then able to speak with ease. By the time the children are two