

Relationship between Parental Attitudes towards Early Childhood Education and Pre-Schoolers Access to Early Childhood Education in Kenya.

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Abstract

Access and engagement to early childhood education worldwide helps prepare young children to succeed in school and become better citizens. The major challenge in Kenya was that Early Childhood Education (ECE) was left in the hands of the community and parents, resulting in a big variation in type and quality of ECE. Even with ECE being devolved to the county government, access to preschool education continue to be a challenge. Hence, the present study explored the relationship between parental attitudes towards early childhood education and pre-schoolers access to early childhood education in Kenya. The objective of the study was to find out the relationship between parental attitudes towards early childhood education and pre-schoolers access to early childhood education in Kenya. The study adopted concurrent triangulation research design and was informed by Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (1979) and Emile Durkheim's Functional Theory (1858-1916). The target population included 21 head teachers, 228 ECE lead teachers and 863 parents and a sub-county education officer. The sample sizes were 9 head teachers, 43 ECE lead teachers, 76 parents and a sub-county education officer. The instruments of data collection were: Questionnaires, interview schedule and document analysis. Validity of the instruments was enhanced through piloting and by experts. Reliability of the instruments was ensured by Test-Retest method. Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics and presented in form of tables, graphs and percentages. Qualitative data was coded and classified into major themes as they emerged. The findings revealed that most Parents' had a negative attitude towards accessibility to preschool by the learners. It was concluded that mechanisms should be put in place to deal with this negative attitude and ensure that parents and guardians are very positive with their children's accessibility to schools. It was recommended that policy makers and stakeholders come up with the course for adult literacy as a pre-requisite tool for good accessibility to preschools. The present study also recommends the government should support children whose parents have negative attitude towards education thus denying them education. The researcher recommends for a further research on preschool environmental factor as determinants of preschoolers' access to early childhood education in Kenya.

Keywords: Early Childhood Education (ECE), head teachers, preschool, parents.

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