

African Early Childhood Development Curriculum and Pedagogy for Turkana Nomadic Pastoralist Communities of Kenya

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Abstract

Western conceptions of child development and the models of early education they engender predominantly shape services for young children in the first eight years of life all over Africa. This chapter brings a reconceptualist perspective to the critique of Kenya's continuing failure to ground early childhood programs and services in local cultural conceptions, developmental values, childrearing practices, and the practical day-to-day realities of children's learning through participation and apprenticeship in the contexts of family routines, community experiences, and economic survival activities. The chapter draws on work I have conducted in nomadic pastoralist communities in Kenya. That research reveals the disconcerting reality that (a) early childhood education programs privilege Western pedagogical practices over equally effective and locally more relevant ones, and (b) local communities are increasingly resentful of an educational system that alienates their children from their cultural roots in the name of modernization. Asserting the educational value of indigenous knowledge, I present a framework for integrating that knowledge and the naturalistic learning processes in local contexts into instructional programs in formal ECE settings.