

Relative Contributions of Caregivers' Level of Education, Role Definition and Average Household Income to caregiver Involvement in Children's Emergent Reading

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Abstract

Recent studies have consistently reported low reading achievement levels among primary school children in Kenya. Reading is a very critical component of children's development. Many aspects of learning at school revolve around this skill. Being the media via which other subjects are taught and learnt, reading is very significant and could contribute to failure in school. Reading is not only a school agenda. Children also acquire early reading skills through specific experiences at home that require support of other adults besides teachers. Parent involvement in children's early reading development has been found to play a very critical role in the child's later reading success. Parents who take an active role in children's reading foster children's lifelong passion for reading, which in turn lead to improved children's performance in learning at school. However, majority of the parents do not perceive themselves as crucial partners in children's emergent reading development. This paper is based on a study that compared the relative contributions of the parents' level of education, parents' role definition and the average household income, to parents' involvement in children's emergent reading development. The authors argue that although these three factors positively correlate with parents' involvement in children's reading development, parents' perceptions about their role in children's reading development is the most important predictor of their' involvement in terms of direct and indirect behaviours and strategies with children around print. Interventions to improve reading achievement levels need to address parent involvement in children's reading. Such interventions should place priority in helping parents to correctly define their role in this important aspect of children's development.

Key words: caregivers; children; education; role definition; household income; emergent reading

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