

# **Teacher Support and School Environment Factors Influencing Children's Outdoor Play in Early Childhood Curriculum in Pre-schools in Kenya**

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## **Abstract**

Teacher support and school environment are central in the provision of play in early childhood education. This paper is a report of a study that was carried out in the months of February and March 2016 on teacher support and school environment factors influencing children's outdoor play in early childhood curriculum in pre-schools in Kenya. The study area was in Wareng Sub-County in Uasin Gishu County in Kenya. The research objectives were to find out the teacher support; and school environment factors influencing children's outdoor play in early childhood curriculum. The study was guided by Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory and adopted a mixed methods research methodology with a descriptive research design. The target population was all the teachers in the pre-schools in the area. A total of 4 private and 17 public pre-schools were selected to participate in the study through stratified and simple random sampling methods. The sample constituted 42 pre-school teachers selected through simple random sampling method. The research instruments used were questionnaires for teachers, observation check lists and photo voice techniques. The findings revealed that teachers provided minimal support to children's outdoor play due to heavy workloads, limited time and demotivation. School environment factors such as inadequacy of and poor maintenance of materials; and safety issues affected children's outdoor play. The study recommended the need to strengthen teacher support in children's outdoor play through in-service training of teachers, improved teacher: pupil ratio; and improved teacher remunerations. Other recommendations included the need to enhance play materials' acquisition and maintenance; and that the play environments should be carefully planned and maintained. This study will inform curriculum implementation policies on early childhood education in Kenya and other parts of the world.

**Keywords:** Early childhood education; play; teacher support; play materials; play resources; environment.

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