

# **Parental Involvement and Strategies used by Teachers in Supporting Children's Transition from Pre-primary to Primary School in Kiambu County, Kenya.**

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## **Abstract**

Early Childhood Education marks a transition phase between home and primary school, and is a major milestone to children, parents, and teachers. This phase is described as one of the major challenges children have to face in their early childhood years as they try to cope with a range of physical, social and academic challenges associated with the new school environment(s). Studies have found that thirty per cent of children who join Standard one drop-out of school as soon as they enter school due to transition related challenges. Studies done in Kenya have not adequately focused on establishing the transition strategies used by teachers in preprimary and primary schools and how they involve parents in the transition process. A smooth transition should create a degree of continuity between pre-primary and primary school. This study was based on Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory. The purpose of this research was to establish the transition strategies that are used by teachers in pre-primary and in primary schools and how parents are involved in supporting children's transition from pre-primary to primary school. This study was mainly qualitative and therefore focused on meaning rather than establishing casual relationships. The study was carried out in Kiambu County. The sample size constituted 24 teachers, 12 primary school teachers, twelve 12 preprimary school teachers who were obtained through Multiple Variation Sampling (MVS) and twelve 12 parents who were randomly sampled. Descriptive research design was used to collect data using interview schedules, observation checklists and focus group discussions. Data were analyzed both qualitatively and quantitatively. Qualitative data was analyzed using the five steps proposed by LeCompe (1999) and thematic analysis based on Spradley's semantic relationships. Quantitative data was analyzed using tables. It was established that pre-primary and primary school teachers used appropriate strategies such as child-centered teaching methods, DAC, and allowing children to visit primary school. In addition, inappropriate transition strategies that were identified included, teaching Standard one curriculum content and assisting children pass Standard one 'interview'. Strategies that were used by primary school teachers included, sharing information about children's performance, planning extra-curriculum activities with preprimary school teachers and asking for progress records. It was also established that inter-staff communication between pre-primary and primary school teachers was rarely practiced. The study also found that parents were less involved in their children's transition to primary school. The study recommends strengthening of collaboration among pre-primary and primary school teachers, pre-primary school teachers and parents, and primary school teachers and parents. In addition, teacher to child ratio should be reduced to ensure there are intensive and interactive class activities. Teachers should be empowered through in-service training in order to improve on their teaching

methods. The government should invest more on the lower primary school as well as preschool since they give firm foundation for future successes.

**Key words:** Parental Involvement, Strategies used by Teachers, Supporting Children's Transition, Pre-primary to Primary School, Kiambu County, Kenya

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