



CAPACITY BUILDING FOR PARENTS AND PARENTS' KNOWLEDGE ON IMPORTANCE OF PLAY MATERIALS ON DELIVERY OF QUALITY SERVICES BY EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION OFFICERS IN KWALE COUNTY, KENYA

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Abstract

Provision of early childhood services begin with the parents i.e. mother and father and at pre-school level teachers and other stakeholders in education get involved. This study sought to find out whether capacity building of parents influence delivery of quality ECDE services, and determine whether parents' knowledge on importance of play materials influences delivery of quality ECDE services. Descriptive Survey Design was adopted targeting parents from ECDE centres and ECDE officers in Kwale County. The study population comprised of nine hundred and fifteen (915) parents from all ECDE centres and twelve (12) ECDE officers in the county. Purposive sampling was used to select the county while stratified random sampling technique was used to select the parents from the sampled ECDE centres. A sample size 120 parents was therefore selected from the sampled ECDE centres while all twelve (12) ECDE officers were selected. Questionnaires and interview schedules were used to collect data from the ECDE officers and parents respectively. A pilot study was conducted in Kwale County for the parents and in Mombasa County for the ECDE officers. The test- retest method was used to test the validity and reliability of the instruments. Descriptive statistics were used to analyze quantitative data. The analysis was aided by the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software. The quantitative data was presented in percentages, tables and graphs while qualitative data was categorized in themes then reported in prose form alongside the quantitative data. The study found out there was no capacity building for the parents. This had a negative impact on delivery of quality services. It was also established that the parents knew the importance of play materials and how beneficial they were to their children. They knew that provision of play materials had effect on child development and that is why they availed them. The study therefore concluded that capacity building did not take place and therefore did not benefit the parents to enable them give quality services. Majority of the parents did not attend any meetings or workshops organized by ECDE officers. The failure of parents' attendance to workshops shows that there was no effective capacity building for the parents as indicated by the ECDE officers. The study concludes that parents in Kwale know the importance of play materials in influencing delivery of quality ECDE services. The study revealed that majority of the parents knew the importance and benefits of play materials and therefore made sure they were available for their children's use. The study recommends that, to ensure that quality ECDE services are delivered efficiently and effectively at all times, both the County government and the National government should provide adequate funds for ECDE services. The funds would also help to organize for meetings and workshops to empower parents and other stakeholders on matters of ECDE in the area. The government should consider increasing its commitment to early childhood education by encouraging parental involvement in pre-school education through home visits or community based training. In addition, the parents and other stakeholders in ECDE in the community should provide necessary support to the ECDE officers so that they can deliver quality services.



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