

Factors Influencing Participation of Children in Early Childhood Development and Education Programme in Bungoma South Sub-County, Bungoma County – Kenya

Oyamo Joanna Murugi & Wafula Robert

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Abstract

The purpose of the study was to investigate factors influencing participation of children in the ECDE programme in Bungoma South Sub-county of Bungoma County. Early childhood care and education programmes yield greater investment returns than any other level of education yet it is the age at which children are most vulnerable to life threats like disease, abuse and neglect. This study was guided by the objectives: To examine the influence of common ailments, teachers' motivation and School Feeding Programme on participation of children in the ECDE programme. Systematic Random Sampling was used to identify 21 ECDE centers to be included in the study and 2 teachers from each centre involved directly as respondents. Data collection was done using questionnaires; collected data was further organized into themes then frequencies and percentages obtained. The information was presented on tables to make its interpretation clearer. Results obtained showed that absenteeism rate of 3% – 5% daily in the ECDE centres was due to common ailments; the highest satisfier for ECDE teachers was their good social relationship with other ECDE stakeholders while their highest dissatisfiers were their social status and remuneration; and, the feeding programme was very effective(88%) in enhancing enrolment and daily attendance of children. Based on the findings, the study concluded that childhood diseases affected children to the extent of them missing important school hours; the ECDE teachers' motivation was generally low due to poor remuneration and the status accorded to them and finally, School Feeding Programmes enabled smooth transition from home to pre-school since it acted as a bridge between home and school. The study recommends that local communities be empowered economically to afford nutritious food and medical services for their children; a clear Scheme of Service for ECDE teachers be put in place stipulating their remuneration and School Feeding Programme be availed in every ECDE centre without fail.

Key terms: Participation, Sanitation, Immunization, Motivation, Retention.