

# Influence of Head Teachers' Support Strategies for Slow Learners on Children's Learning Outcomes at the Early Childhood Centres in Nairobi City County, Kenya

Orpha Nyakundi, Jeremiah Kalai, Grace Nyagah, Simon Munayi

*University of Nairobi, Kenya*

**Abstract:** Adoption of appropriate strategies to support slow learners will not only help the pupils to progress in education, but lead to attainment of higher learning outcomes and increase confidence in the early childhood learning year. This study aimed at investigating the influence of head teachers' strategies for supporting slow learners on children's learning outcomes in the public early childhood centres in Nairobi City County in Kenya. The objectives of the study were to establish the strategies applied by the head teachers to support the slow learners and to determine the extent to which the strategies that were applied influenced children's learning outcomes at the early childhood education centres. Some indicators of the pupils' learning outcomes include: their ability to write their names in correct spelling, writing most sounds of the alphabet and singing simple songs. This study was inspired by revelations from empirical studies that some pupils at lower primary grades scored below what is expected and this was attributed to their early education experiences. The study used a descriptive survey design that targeted 21 stand-alone public early childhood centres in Nairobi City County, 2243 pupils aged 3-5 years, 21 head teachers and 65 teachers. Quantitative and qualitative data was collected using structured interview schedules for head teachers, questionnaires for teachers and document analysis tool for pupils' performance. The study involved 42 PP1 and PP2 classes and 50 teachers simple randomly sampled. Descriptive and inferential statistical methods were employed. From the findings, head teachers applied varied strategies to support the slow learners from which the strategy that influenced the PP1 pupils' learning outcomes most was to invite parents to assist while, for the PP2, teachers paying more attention was most influential.

**Key Words:** Head teachers' strategies, support, slow learners, influence, learning outcomes, public stand-alone early childhood education centres

## I. INTRODUCTION

This article explains the role of the head teachers in relation to the importance of education and the need for the right childhood learning experiences. It also gives the background of the early childhood centres where the study was conducted. It explains the indicators of learning outcomes and description of the slow learners as referred to in the study as well as the strategies that were applied by the head teachers. It then relates the strategies to the learning

outcomes. In the course of supervision of curriculum implementation, the head teachers' role of evaluating performance of pupils and identifying low performers is a key role towards improving general performance of the learning centres. Head teachers' role of utilizing the available resources to attain maximum results can be articulated in their strategies to support pupils who are low performers as it was shown in this study (Jones et al., 2006; Bose, 2013).

The early childhood education and development policy framework guidelines were first launched in Kenya in 2007 (UNESCO, 2010) before then, the Early Childhood Centres were managed depending on the guidelines provided by the sponsor. There are both public and private early childhood centres in Kenya, some are located in informal settlements such as Kibra. The management in the different sponsored centres is diverse. Nairobi City County Government started day Nurseries (as the Centres were commonly referred to) in the 1950s and they were mainly established to cater for children of single mothers who worked with the council (Nairobi City County, 2014). By 1980, there were 21 such centres that still existed and were at this point referred to as 'stand-alone' centres. This study was based on these centres, that are among the oldest of their kind in the country and unique in that they are not attached to any primary school.

Management of early childhood learning institutions is important because education is an essential part of life that prepares children for a better future that benefits both themselves and the society. Ensuring the right foundation for children lays the ground for valuable learning and higher educational attainment, which may result in major social and economic gains for society (UNESCO, 2015). The right foundation is comprised of the experiences the pupils are exposed to and these are based on the resources available and how well they are utilised for the success of the institution (Muirjs, Aubrey Harris & Brigg, 2004). Auxiliary study done by Mtahabwa and Rao (2010) on early childhood education and transition to later school performance, observed that, early school years have a great impact on children's readiness for primary school and transition to secondary education. This had earlier been revealed by Hyde and Kabiru (2003) who

found that effective early childhood education leads to increased enrolment and improved progress and performance at primary and secondary level.

Head teachers as managers of the early childhood education centres, have an essential role to play in ensuring the right systems are in place and adequate inclusive learning is taking place. High quality managerial practices are crucial for ensuring beneficial outcomes for children and families (Talan and Bloom, 2004). Institutional managers have the duty to mobilize resources, provide structures and exert leadership influence upon which teachers and pupils base the attainment of goals (Bush, Bell & Middlewood, 2010). The head teachers, through their varied skills and knowledge, influence the setting up of a relevant and appropriate environment so that children can be assisted to develop cognitively, emotionally and pro-social skills among other learning outcomes. The school is recognized as the unit of change and the head teacher plays a leading role in transforming it by mobilizing communities to support its efforts (Verspoor, 2006).

Despite the importance of education, there are however some children who may not get the benefits accrued to higher levels of education because of low attainment of learning outcomes (Goodall, 2018). This is what makes this study very important in that, it aimed at establishing the strategies that head teachers employed and the influence each of them had on the learning outcomes. This study is very important because there is limited research in Kenya on this particular topic of slow learners at the early childhood level certainly because of the attitude that has previously been attached to pre-school, that it is not very important part of education (UNESCO, 2010).

Learning outcomes are based on the children's learning experiences and it is what all parents and stakeholders look for from the early childhood learning centres. When children get the right early life experiences, they can thrive and develop their potential by ameliorating social circumstances (Sylva, Melhuish, Sammons, Siraj-Blatchford and Taggart, 2010). The experiences at the early childhood level can be observed through indicators of learning outcomes. Among these are: emotional development of the children which can be observed in their generosity, cooperation when playing with others and care-giving (Parker, Rees, Leeson, Willan & Savage, 2010). The children are able to solve their own small problems in a positive manner and their social interaction is promoted as they can play in a group, make friends with others and spend time watching others play. Further to that, children will have their large motor skills developed as they can be observed throwing and kicking a ball or skipping rope, they do creative movements such as dancing and jumping (Jacobs and Crowley, 2007). Children exposed to the right experiences should ideally develop cognitively and demonstrate knowledge of basic quantitative and numeric concepts according to the Early Childhood Development and Education Syllabus (Republic of Kenya, 2008). They should be able to match pictures with sounds, recognize shapes and

write some arithmetic as well as numbering. It is expected that these children will learn to speak and write in a language and in Kenya, it is expected that they would speak and write in English and Kiswahili. It is crucial to note that, there are further developments with language learning (Meece and Daniels, 2008).

Head teachers and teachers are credited for success in pupils' performance however, there are cases where children even after spending one year or two years at the centres, the children show little or no advancement in these developments ((Jacobs et al., 2007). Slow learners are those who do not learn at the pace of the rest of the pupils in class. In this study, these are pupils performing below- level grades. This can be attributed to physical, communication or emotional barriers to name a few (Goodall, 2018). In the course of trying to understand further the reasons that could be leading to low-performance in learning, it would be important to note that, while some children will be resilient when confronted with stressors, others will have their development and education compromised with temporary or lifelong effects (Kilburn, Cannon, & Karoly, 2005).

The learning institutions receive children from varied backgrounds with different experiences and all these influences how they will relate with their education (Goodall, 2018). This fact is illustrated by a study conducted in the U.S.A that showed that various childhood challenges such as poverty have implications for how prepared children are when they enter school (Kilburn et al., 2005). Such children get to school with low cognitive and socialization skills and challenges with their self-regulation behaviour. Such children therefore get to school with lower knowledge levels and social competencies that are required for school success. At the learning institution, they will meet pupils with higher experiences than them and this is what Goodall (2018) terms as achievement gap. This is the gap created by the different experiences' pupils are exposed to before and during their learning. Teaching at the early childhood centres must therefore be inclusive, no pupil should be left behind and this requires adequate planning, directing and organization by the head teacher.

If the right strategies are not put in place to support the slow learners, the consequences may be lifelong. According to Kilburn et al. (2005) the achievement gap can widen and the disadvantaged pupils may later experience higher rates of grade repetition, drop out of school, attain lower rates of achievement in education with unfavourable trajectories in later years. These may include low rates of employment, welfare dependency and even join in crime. When the head teachers are able to detect the achievement gap, equip the teachers and provide direction in addressing the challenges, the learning outcomes will be raised and the consequences associated with slow learners in education be reduced or eliminated. This is because head teachers have the role of supervising teacher instruction and learning outcomes as well as suggest improvements to teachers (Townsend, 2011).

Observations reveal that the early childhood age is a critical stage to get pupils who score below what is expected back on track Kilburn et al. (2005) and this is what mostly contributed to the need for this particular study. Some of the findings leading to this observation are from empirical studies conducted in some countries. For instance, a longitudinal study reported by Goodall and Vorhaus (2010) showed long-lasting effects of early interventions in the education of such children. The study commenced on pupils who were lower than five years old and on tracing the performance of the pupils after interventions were implemented, 40 percent of those who took part and had been deemed under achievers in class, were taking their classes at universities as opposed to 30 percent of the control group who had not been subjected to the interventions. This supports that early childhood is a critical stage to detect if children have learning challenges because if these are averted as early as at this level, the benefits can be substantial (Sylva et al., 2010; Kilburn et al., 2005).

Strategies will depend on individual pupils and this is affirmed by Goodall (2018) who observes that what helps one student to learn may not help the next. While some educationists propose parental involvement as strategy, others suggest that head teachers need to empower teachers to acquire skills on how to handle the pupils, motivate the teachers, acquire adequate staff to have smaller teacher-pupil ratio and others would advise that supportive policies be put in place (Muirjs, Aubrey, Harris and Briggs, 2004; Kochhar, 2011; Kagan and Kaurertz, 2012). Though children develop at different rates and their achievements vary, all children should have the opportunity to follow a curriculum that enables them to make appropriate progress in learning and to achieve their full potential (Yoshikawa and Kabay, 2015). The strategies of curriculum implementation such as adequate communication between the management and the staff are therefore important in supporting the low performing pupils. It is expected that by the time the child is leaving preschool, he or she should be equipped with specific knowledge and skills that were not in him or her before.

The strategy to involve parents to support the slow learners and improve learning outcomes has been supported by Harris, Andrew-Power and Goodall (2009) who say that parents can detect that their children have learning challenges as early as pre-school. This therefore underpins the head teachers' role in laying appropriate structures at the learning institutions that would include the parents' role in the education of their children (Harris et al., 2009). Further to that, parents give vital insight into the child's experience beyond the classroom (Parker, Leeson, Willan & Savage, 2010; Metto & Makewa, 2014). This strategy is further recommended as one that can lead to very good outcomes for children's achievements Harris, et al. (2009). Goodall (2018) noted that parents should engage the children in newly learned skills while at home and therefore enable the children to link personal events experienced at home and school. To help improve performance for such pupils, frequent feedback is necessary from the parents. Despite the importance attached to parental

involvement and the essential role played by families in improving the learning outcomes. UNESCO (2010), discovered that some parents see no need of taking a child below five years to school and teachers often struggle dealing with parents (Goodall, 2018). Goodall et al. (2010) advised that structures for parental engagement would be more effective if the head of the institution initiated them. Supporting parenting and stimulating home environments are among the most powerful predictors of school performance during and beyond primary school (Metto and Makewa, 2014).

Teachers and the parents discover that the child's grades are below what is expected at that level and age even as they compare them to the other pupils at the same age and level of learning (Sylva et al., 2010). The skills and knowledge of the teachers to be able to detect challenges of learning of pupils and to address them are key factors. Pianta, Barnett, Justice and Sheridan (2015) made an observation that the standards that lead to the highest quality of learning environments are the teacher qualifications and the teacher-child ratios. Head teachers' strategies in staff support including in-service training and pedagogical guidance would promote the performance of the pupils (Kagan et al., 2012). A study by Dunlop (2005) further highlighted the need for strong and effective leadership in children's learning with the teachers' contribution remaining important to ensure appropriate planning for children's learning.

Research reveals that there are many countries that have employed varied strategies to manage low learning outcomes such as the Delaware state. This is clearly stated in a study carried out by Delaware Early Childhood Council (2009) that found that two thirds of five years old children did not enter the next level with necessary proficiencies for success. Part of the data collected was as follows: Up to 49% of the children would participate in various activities, 53% were able to write their names, 33% were able to write numerals, 30% were able to count up to 50% would demonstrate appropriate fine-motor skills and 59% would demonstrate appropriate locomotor patterns. This was attributed to ineffective supervision of curriculum implementation. Due to these results, the state of Delaware developed a strategic plan (2012-2015) to address the academic challenges. As result of the findings of this study, these poor learning outcomes led to the recognition and advocating for new policies, appropriate programmes and practices. These would address the needs in a sustainable and more comprehensive manner.

All children need to be brought to the level of learning that will ensure that they contribute adequately to society in which they belong. The study employed the General Systems Theory by Ludwig Bertalanffy. In this theory, an organization is an open system where elements interact leading to specific results. In relating this study to this theory, learning outcomes are dependent on the interaction among the head teachers, pupils, parents and resources and the head teacher is at the centre of this interaction. A system in this case is any set of

distinct parts that can interact to form a complex whole (Jones et al., 2006). This system has three stages: the input, the conversion and the output. Parts in the system comprise of employees and resources among others.

The managers, parents and teachers must interact and utilise the resources adequately to attain results. The input is involved of the head teacher, the parents, the children and the resources which are supposed to interact leading to the expected output. At the interaction, the teacher knowledge and skills are essential, the head teacher's organizational skills are important because this would determine success of the system through the choice of strategies. The interaction of the elements therefore determines the end result or learning outcomes. The head teacher as the manager, influences the way parts of the system interact; it is by adequately strategizing ways of curriculum implementation through relevant materials, teacher relevant skills and knowledge and parental involvement that high learning outcomes can be attained. When children are able to read, jump or solve their simple problems and get the best entry behaviour to primary and higher learning that society shall benefit from the early childhood centres. This theory puts the head teacher at the centre of the system and the major determinant of the output, results or in this case, child learning outcomes.

Kilburn et al. (2005) states that early interventions to improve learning outcomes will lead to higher progress in school programmes and higher educational attainment which may subsequently lead to beneficial results to the children, families and society. Quality pre-school strategies can help prevent the need for costly interventions later in a child's life and this is what this study conducted at the early childhood centres in Nairobi City County hoped to recommend for.

## II. METHODOLOGY

*This study was based on two objectives:*

1. To establish the strategies applied for support of slow learners at the early childhood learning centers in Nairobi City County.
2. To determine the influence of the head teachers' support strategies for slow learners on the children's' learning outcomes at the early childhood centers' in Nairobi City County Kenya.

This study employed descriptive survey design because it is an efficient method for systematically collecting data from educational settings, while providing comprehensive information about a situation. This was the aim of this particular study (Fowler, 2002). At the same time, a survey is versatile and its information can be used to generalize (Mukherjee & Albon, 2012). The study was both qualitative and quantitative. The researcher went for primary, face to face data collection from the head teachers and through review of pupils' documents while the teachers responded to a questionnaire. The target population was from the 21 stand-alone public early childhood centres in Nairobi City County

and all of them participated in the study. The 21 head teachers responded to a structured interview schedule while 50 teachers participated in the study out of the 65 who had been targeted. Documents of 973 pupils from PP1 and PP2 levels were reviewed.

The questionnaires and the structured interview schedule were piloted in two of the targeted study centres that were randomly sampled from the list that had been received from the government offices. According to Creswell (2012) a small number of individuals can be used in the piloting of the instruments and their responses used to adjust the instruments. The objective of the pilot was to further the interaction for subject selection, understand the population characteristics and the effect of the research environment which proved quite valuable. Validity was also ensured by conducting research with a representative sample of over 50 percent of the targeted population.

The data from the three objectives was analysed by use of SPSS V.21.0. after which both descriptive statistics as well as inferential statistics were applied. Descriptive statistics was most appropriate because of its property of being broken down into measures of variability, while the inferential statistics were appropriate to test the strength of the relationship between the dependant and independent variable (Kothari and Garg, 2019). The quantitative data collected from document review records, and from the questionnaires was edited, coded, classified and tabulated before being analysed. In data interpretation, triangulation of different types of data was carried out. There was a comparison and contrasting of results. From this data explanation were given. In this particular case, responses from head teachers through interview schedules and review of records on the children's learning outcomes served as key data that was complemented by responses from the teachers by use of questionnaires. The results of the analysis of the data were done in means and percentages that made it much easier to relate the independent and dependent variables after which coefficient of correlation was used to determine the strength of the relationship between the variables, the head teachers' strategies of supporting slow-learners and the children's learning outcomes. In this case, the learning outcomes depended on the head teachers' strategies. Relevant letters and legal documents required before commencement of the study were acquired. Ethical considerations were adhered to in this study by providing an informed consent form for signing before participation in the study and those who wanted to withdraw from the study were given permission to do so. Confidentiality was also promised by the researcher in writing.

## III. RESULTS

Table 1 shows responses from the teachers on the various strategies the centres applied to support the slow learners.



Table 1: Support Strategies for Slow Learners

Support Strategy	Frequency	Percent
Involve parents	12	28.6
Creating extra time for such pupils	15	35.7
Letting the pupils proceed on	5	11.9
Recommend specialized attention out of the centre	6	14.3
Any other	4	9.5
Total	42	100.0

The findings from table 1 show that the stand-alone public early childhood learning centres applied varied strategies to support slow learners. Among them, was creation of extra time to support the pupils, which 35.7% of the centres applied, involvement of the parents to support was used by 28.6% of the centres while letting the pupils to catch up by themselves was by 11.9% of the centres and recommendations for specialised attention outside the centre had 14.3%. The strategy of involving parents is recommended by (Goodall, 2018) who connoted that parental engagement can lead to good outcomes for children’s achievements as the parents would help the children in reviewing and relating newly learned skills while at home. Harris et al. (2009) concurs by stating that involving parents would be fostering continuity with learning at home and notes that there is need to promote parents’ positive attitude and behaviour towards their children’s learning. For teachers to be more supportive, the teaching career should be satisfying, respected and financially viable (OECD, 2001; Pianta et al., 2015). The strategy to leave the slow-learning pupils to catch up by themselves is not supported in empirical studies but rather research recommends that it is the early childhood stage that is most critical time to intervene for the pupils (Kilburn, et al., 2005).

Table 2 below is based on cross tabulation of the means from the learning outcomes in the activity of the pupils’ ability to write most letters of the alphabet against the head teachers’ strategies to manage slow learners that included: giving extra work, involving parents, teachers paying more attention and ignoring them given that they were young. A child’s performance or level at the rating scale depended on the number of letters written correctly. The results were recorded in the progressive reports of each of the pupils under study.

Table 2: Practices to Manage Slow Learners against Writing Most Letters of the Alphabet

Class	Head teachers’ strategy	No. Excellent	No. Good	No Average (Means)	No. Below average	No. Slow
PP1	Giving them extra work at extra time	6.00	1.60	5.40	4.00	4.80
	Inviting parents to assist	8.13	6.63	4.63	3.63	.88
	Teachers giving more attention	6.31	6.31	4.00	3.46	1.77
	Ignoring them since they are young	5.00	1.33	6.00	3.00	.33
PP2	Giving them extra work at extra time	3.00	3.33	2.00	12.67	2.33

Inviting parents to assist	5.75	1.25	1.50	.75	2.00
Teachers giving more attention	9.23	6.00	2.46	3.54	.31
Ignoring them since they are young	9.00	0.00	4.00	1.00	3.00

Findings on table 2 revealed that, when head teachers worked with parents to solve the problem of slow learning, the mean of the pupils at excellent performance was the highest for PP1 at 8.13, and when teachers gave more attention, the highest mean was at 6.00 while giving extra work led to the mean of 6.13. The mean scores for those at average level and below were below six. This connoted that, the practice of involving parents had the highest influence on pupils’ ability to write most letters of the alphabet. However, the findings show that for PP2, the practice of giving extra work at extra time did not seem to positively influence higher learning outcomes in writing most letters of the alphabet because at excellent performance, the mean was 3.00 while the mean of the pupils at below average was 12.67 while involving parents had a mean of 5.75 at excellent performance and teachers giving more attention and ignoring them because of their young age had a mean of 9.23 and 9.00 respectively. Engaging parents as a strategy is supported by Sylva et al. (2010) who noted that parental support is important for good results in education. Teaching of the pupils should be subjective or child-focused so as to meet the educational needs of each of the pupils (Pianta et al., 2015; Kagan & Kaurertz 2012). According to Koza (2010) and the Early Childhood and Development Syllabus (Republic of Kenya, 2008) at PP2 level, a pupil should be able to write most letters of the alphabet. Robert, Cesare, Higgins and Elliot (2014) argued that, learning outcomes is the most important yardstick of head teachers’ and teachers’ effectiveness in the performance and behaviour of children at the learning centres.

Table 3 describes how the various strategies applied by the head teachers to support slow learners influenced the learning outcomes at the early childhood centres in Nairobi City County.

Table 3: Strategies to Support Slow Learners against Pupil Ability to Sing

Class	Head Teacher’s Strategy	No. Excellent	No. Good	No Average (Means)	No. Below average	No. Slow
PP1	Giving them extra work at extra time	11.40	5.80	1.20	0.00	0.00
	Inviting parents to assist	16.25	2.13	0.00	.13	.13
	Teachers giving more attention	12.00	6.00	2.46	.69	.85
	Ignoring them since they are young	12.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
PP2	Giving them extra work at extra time	10.00	12.33	1.67	1.00	.33
	Inviting parents to assist	5.00	6.25	2.25	0.00	.25
	Teachers giving more attention	19.38	4.54	1.46	.38	.15
	Ignoring them since they are young	10.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.00

Table 3 shows results from cross tabulation of head teachers' strategies and the learning outcomes in the activity of singing. For the PP1, inviting parents to assist led to the highest learning outcomes with a mean of 16.25 at excellent level and almost nil at the other categories of performance. This was followed by giving them more attention 12.00 while giving extra work had a mean of 11.40. Giving the PP2 level more attention by the teachers lead to higher performance with a mean of 19.38 at the excellent category, giving extra work at extra time at a mean of 10.00, but a mean of 5.00 when parents were invited to assist or support. The early childhood development and education syllabus (2008) requires that at five years' children should be able to sing simple songs. Koza (2010) affirms that by five years, children should be able to sing simple songs if they have been exposed to the right experiences. Parental engagement contributes to higher learning outcomes (Harris et al., 2009). Goodall and Vurhaus (2010) in a report noted that parental engagement has a significant impact on children's learning hence suggests the need to support parental involvement in the study of their children. These results are further supported by Bush, Bell and Middle wood (2010) who reiterated that institutional managers, through their roles of mobilizing resources, providing structures and exerting leadership influence, do provide the base upon which teachers and pupils attain their goals.

#### IV. DISCUSSIONS

The data on the strategies employed at the learning centres was based on the responses both from the head teachers and the teachers while the data on the learning outcomes was from the review of the pupils' performance progress records kept by the class teachers. Based on the analysis of the data collected, it was noted that there were pupils who performed lower than expected.

From the findings of the study, the strategies applied at the learning centers influenced learning outcomes. There were strategies that lead to higher learning outcomes than others depending on either PP1 or PP2 and the particular activity that the pupils participated in. It is notable that the two levels responded differently to the various strategies applied in the different activities. Practices such as inviting parents to assist in support of the slow learners worked perfectly as well as that of teachers paying more attention. For the PP1 level, inviting parents to assist in supporting pupils to do better in writing most letters of the alphabet and in improving on their singing worked better although there were still pupils performing at below average and at the slow level. The strategy of giving the PP1 extra work at extra time to improve on writing most letters of the alphabet, did not seem to support much because there were still quite a number of pupils scoring below average. It was noted that when teachers gave more attention to support these pupils read most letters of the alphabet, the learning outcomes were higher at the category of excellent and good.

Presentation of findings of the PP2 level in writing most letters of the alphabet and ability to sing, were that, the strategy of teachers paying more attention to the slow pupils led to the highest learning outcomes followed by inviting parents to assist in supporting such pupils. Giving extra work at extra time as a strategy did not seem to work in this case as the mean of the pupils at excellent level was lower than for those at below average. By the PP2 level, the pupils need to have been able to write almost all the alphabets according to the syllabus provided by the government. In the activity of singing just as that of writing most letters of the alphabet, when teachers gave more attention to the slow learners the scores were higher at the excellent level followed by giving extra work at extra time. Inviting parents to assist in supporting such pupils led to the lowest mean as compared to the other two strategies. At this level, pupils need to have known how to sing simple songs according to the syllabus for early development and education. It is important to note that, according to the early childhood syllabus of early childhood development and education, perfection in these activities is at PP2. This might explain why in PP2, whenever pupils were left to catch up by themselves, the mean was still significant at excellent level of performance.

#### V. CONCLUSIONS

Head teachers' practices influenced the child learning outcomes positively but at different levels differently in the activities provided for in the syllabus. The study also revealed that head teachers who involved parents in supporting the slow pupils in learning, managed to improve the learning outcomes. When teachers paid more attention to the slow learners, the learning outcomes were higher. Giving extra work at extra time in supporting pupils to write most letters of the alphabet and to sing simple songs, did not work as well as the other two strategies. Conclusions from reviewed literature observed that, early interventions can put the children back to track and that the detrimental learning outcomes can be averted if discovered early and substantial gains made in the child through education progression and economic independence. Recommendations from the study would be: there is need for regular training of the head teachers of the early childhood centres to boost their skills in decision making and management. The Government also needs to give more support to the early childhood learning centres, specifically in provision of resources, in-servicing of the teachers and provision of a more effective framework for monitoring and parental engagement.

#### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I acknowledge the support and cooperation from the City County education department and the willingness of the head teachers and the teachers from the early childhood learning centres for giving information that was required in this study.

## REFERENCES

- [1]. Bush, T., Bell, L., & Middlewood, D. (2010). *The principles of educational leadership management (2nd ed.)*. London : Sage publishers.
- [2]. Bose, C. (2013). *Principles of management and administration*. New Delhi: Prentice-Hall Of India.
- [3]. Creswell, J. (2012). *Planning, Conducting, and Evaluating Quantitative and qualitative Resrach (4<sup>th</sup> .ed.)*. Boston: Pearson Publishers.
- [4]. Delaware Early Childhood Council. (2009). *Delaware Department of Education*. Delaware: State of Delaware.
- [5]. Dunlop, A. (2005). Scottish Early Childhood Teachers'Concepts of Leadership, *Interim Report of Research in Progress*, Glasgow: University of Strathclede.
- [6]. Fowler, F. (2002). *Survey research methods (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.)*. New York: Sage publications.
- [7]. Goodall, J., & Vurhaus, J. (2010), *Review of Best Practice in Parental Engagement*. Department of Education UK. *Department of Education UK*.
- [8]. Goodall, J. (2018). *Narrowing the achievement gap: parental engagement with children's learning*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge
- [9]. Harris, A., Andrew-Power, K., & Goodall, J. (2009). *Do parents know they matter?: raising achievement through parental engagement*. London: Continuum.
- [10]. Harris, A. (2005). *Crossing boundaries and breaking barriers: distributing leadership in schools*. London: Specialist Schools Trust.
- [11]. Hyde, K. A., & Kabiru, M. N. (2003). Early Childhood Development as an Important Strategy to Improve Learning Outcomes . *Association for the Development of Education in Africa* , 1-116.
- [12]. Jacobs, G., & Crowley, K. (2007). *Play, projects and pre-school standards*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publishers.
- [13]. Jones, G., & George, J. (2006). *Contemporary Management, (4th ed.)*. New York: McGraw-Hill Irwin.
- [14]. Kothari, C., & Garg, G. (2019) *Research Methodolgy, Methods and Techniques (4<sup>th</sup> .ed.)* London: New International Limited, Publishers.
- [15]. Koza, W. (2010). *Managing an early childhood classroom*. Huntington: Shell educational publishers.
- [16]. Kilburn, M. R., Cannon, J. S., & Karoly, L. A. (2005). *Proven benefits of early childhood interventions*. Santa Monica, CA: Rand.
- [17]. Kagan, S. L., & Kaurertz, K. (2012). *Early Childhood Systems: Transforming Early Learning*. New York: Teachers College.
- [18]. Kochhar (2011). *School Administration and Management* .New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Private Limited.
- [19]. Meece, J., & Daniels, D. (2008). *Child and adolescent development for educators*. New Jersey: Merrill.
- [20]. Metto, E., & Makewa, L. N. (2014). Learner-Centered Teaching: Can It Work in Kenyan Public Primary Schools? *American Journal of Educational Research, 2014, Vol. 2, No. 11A*, 23-29.
- [21]. Mtahabwa, L., & Rao, N. (2010). Pre-primary education in Tanzania: Observations from urban and rural classrooms. *International Journal of Educational Development*.
- [22]. Murkerji, P., & Albon, D. (2012). *Research Methods in Early Childhood*. London: Sage publications.
- [23]. Muirjs, D., Aubrey, C., Harris, A., & Briggs, M. (2004). How do they manage? A review of the research on leadership in early childhood. *Journal of early childhood research 2(2)*, 157-160.
- [24]. Nairobi City County. (2014). *The Task Force Report for the Education Sector of Nairobi City County*. Nairobi: Kenya Literature Bureau.
- [25]. OECD (2001). *Starting strong early childhood education and care*. Paris: OECD Publications
- [26]. Pianta, R. C., Barnett, W. S., Justice, L. M., & Sheridan, S. M. (2015). *Handbook of early childhood education*. New York: The Guilford Press.
- [27]. Parker-Rees, R., Leeson, C., Willan, J., & Savage, J. (2010). *Early childhood studies (3rd ed.)*. London: MPG books group.
- [28]. Republic of Kenya. (2008). *Early childhood development and education syllabus*. Nairobi: Kenya institute of curriculum development.
- [29]. Robert, C., Cesare, A., Higgins, S., & Elliot, L. M. (2014). *What makes great teaching? Review of the underpinning research*. Centre for Evaluation and Monitoring.
- [30]. Sylva, K., Melhuish, E., Sammons, P., Siraj-Blatchford, I., & Taggart, B. (2010). *Early childhood matters: Evidence from the effective pre school and primary school education project*. London: Routledge.
- [31]. Talan, T., & Bloom, P. (2004). *Measuring early childhood leadership and management*. New York: Teachers' college press.
- [32]. Townsend, T. (2011). *International handbook of leadership for learning*. Dordrecht: Springer.
- [33]. UNESCO. (Sep, 2010.). *Building the Wealth of Nations; Conference Concept Paper*. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 27-29.
- [34]. UNESCO. (2015). *Education for all; 2000-2015; Achievements and Challenges*. Paris: UNESCO.
- [35]. Verspoor, A. (March 27-31, 2006). *Effective Schools for Sub Saharan Africa. Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA)*, 5-10.
- [36]. Yoshikawa, H., & Kabay, S. (2015). *The Evidence Base on Early Childhood Care and Education in Global Contexts*. New York: UNESCO.