

Abstract

The concept of preschool is not a new phenomenon in Kenya. The purpose of the study was to examine factors influencing children's language development in preschools in Mathare Slum area in Nairobi. The study focused on four factors: learning facilities, teachers' level of education, children absenteeism and strategies used by teachers to enhance children's language development. Mixed method approach was used. Target population was 25 childhood preschools and 25 teachers. Systematic random and purposive sampling methods were used to select 8 preschools and 8 teachers. Data collection instruments were observation schedule and questionnaire. Data analysis was done through coding and categorizing to create themes; as well as frequencies and percentages. The findings showed that quality of preschools was inadequate in terms of learning facilities and teachers' level of education. In addition, the findings of the study showed that some parents brought their children to school when they were busy, meaning, they did not value education. In addition, the findings revealed among others that teachers employed a number of strategies to enhance children's language development although it was evident that teachers were limited in English proficiency. The study recommends that preschool teachers be given training in English proficiency for teaching children.