

Abstract

Play has found little, if any acceptance in most of the Early Childhood Development (ECD) centres in Homa Bay Sub County. Observation reveals that parents and ECD Managers/Head teachers appear to pressurize the ECDE teachers to undertake academic work as opposed to allowing children learn spontaneously through directed play. The purpose of this study therefore was to determine the influence of directed play on ECDE children's holistic development. The study employed correlation research design. The target population comprised ECD children, teachers and ECDE Managers/Head teachers in Homa Bay Sub County. Out of a target population of twenty thousand (20,000) ECDE children, three hundred and seventy seven (377) were selected for the study through proportionate stratified random sampling procedure. Two sets of questionnaires were used to gather information from the Managers/Head teachers and ECD teachers while an observation checklist was used to establish the presence of directed play materials and their use in learning. Quantitative data was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22. Qualitative data was analyzed through descriptive statistics which comprised of percentages, means, frequency tables and value judgment. Hypotheses were tested by use of Pearson's Product Moments Correlation Coefficient. The findings of the study showed that directed play activities influenced ECDE children's holistic development. The computed Pearson's correlation further noted that directed play enhances holistic development ($r=0.228$ while $p<0.05$) which indicated that there was a significant relationship between directed play and holistic development.