

Relationship between Play Activities' Implementation and Learners' Academic Performance in Public Early Childhood Development Centres In Pokot County, Kenya

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Abstract

Play serves as an important process for promoting children's learning and development besides enhancing emotional, intellectual and social skills of the child. It's the teacher's role in ECDE to set up environment that facilitate play experiences. The main purpose of this paper was to establish the relationship between play activities' implementation and learners' academic performance in Pokot County. A descriptive survey design was adopted. The target population was derived from all the 417 public ECDE canters in Pokot County. The respondents were sampled through the use of stratified, simple random and purposive sampling and a sample size of 90 teachers and 16 head teachers was obtained. Questionnaires were used as instruments of data collection. Data obtained from pilot testing was analyzed to test for reliability and validity. The data obtained was analyzed using both descriptive and inferential statistics which involved measures of central tendency, measures of dispersion and Pearson Correlation and Chi-square presented using charts and tables. The study findings indicated that 68.7 percent ECDE Centers had inadequate playgrounds and furthermore 62.5percent ECDE centres were not provided with instructional materials required. Similarly, ECDE Centres use play activities time for other activities. Notwithstanding, teachers did not engage and participate with the children in the playfields. The study recommended that the government should conduct in service courses for teachers on the use play activities. It is hoped that, this study will provide valuable insights to education stakeholders on the factors influencing the implementation of play activities in ECDE curriculum. Teachers will benefit from the study in that; they are likely to acquire information to guide them on the need to sharpen their skills in dealing with challenges of curriculum implementation.

Keywords: ECDE, Play Activities', Academic Performance, play facilities

1.0 Introduction

The role of play in supporting children's development of 'metacognitive' and self-regulatory abilities is an area of recent research development. Metacognitive abilities worry our developing awareness of our own cognitive and emotional processes and expansion of policies to control them. It is now clearly established that children begin to develop this awareness and control very early in life, important individual differences are quickly established which have long-lasting results for attainment and well-being, that these abilities are learnt, and can be taught, and that the various types of play form a powerful context for their development (Whitebread, 2010).

Play is multifaceted, and its complexity lies in the many different ways in which children play. It is also a natural part of a child's life, with many opportunities to engage in play and work together with peers (Whitebread, 2011). Early childhood educators have long recognized the power of play. The significant contribution of play to young children's development is well documented in child psychology, anthropology, sociology, and in the theoretical frameworks of education, recreation, and communications (Frost, 2010).

Play is important for the child's development and learning. Conscious use of play to promote the development and learning of each individual child should be an omnipresent activity in the pre-school. Play and enjoyment in learning in all its various forms stimulates the imagination, insight, communication, and the ability to co-operate and solve problems. Through creative and imaginary games, the child will get opportunities to express and work through their experiences and feelings.

Serpell (2005) lamented the absence of connection between the Western theories that inform teaching and learning in African classrooms and the perspectives and everyday local contexts. In ECDE, Nsamenang (2008) expressed the concern that Western ECD services initiate Africa's children into an educational process by which children increasingly gain unfamiliar knowledge and skills but sink disturbing into alienation and ignorance of their cultural circumstances. Across cultures, children model substantial aspects of their play on adults' activities and in so doing learn not only social roles and cultural values and norms. Typically in the culture and play

culture pastimes of children through the games, songs and other play activities transmitted from one generation to another. On the other hand culture benefits ultimately from the play engendered creativity that prepares future generations of citizens for innovative problem solving and view contribution to society.

In South Africa, the role of play in young children learning of traditional games where play helps in the development of physical agility, concepts and cultural and social learning (Sedite, 2009).

In Zimbabwe a large number of play centres and playgrounds were established to provide custodial service for children while mothers engage in community project (Dozva, 2009). Further, play stimulates brain growth of a child, function and has a key role in building the base, organization, and capabilities of the brain. In Kenya Sinyei (2012) states that, parent, teachers and school managers are increasingly giving too much attention to excellent academic achievement in national examinations. A lot of emphasis is now on rote learning and memorization to reproduce the learnt concepts without a clear understanding of the concepts learnt. This practice has trickled down to the preschool institutions. It is perhaps on the realization of the importance of play activities in ECDE that the Kenya Government therefore, needs to ensure that best practices are developed in the ECDE settings to ensure effective learning to produce all-round learners. This can best be achieved through effective implementation of the various ECDE curriculum activity areas especially those which are play-centred. Play activities improve the working capacity of crucial body systems and improve the degree of alertness. It is believed that physically and mentally alert students perform well in their studies.

In order to provide services for children, pre-school teachers are expected to be guided by and use the ECD policy framework as a foundation for improved service delivery to preschool children (Republic of Kenya, 2006). The ECD policy framework is based on principles that are universally accepted as forming the cornerstone of quality early childhood development services and programs by ensuring that the holistic needs of young children are met to maximize the realization of their full potential. In order for pre-school teachers to provide these facilities, they should be guided by a framework that defines appropriate play facilities for all children. Pokot children are in congruency with their indigenous everyday socio economic survival activities. However, the teachers play activities in structural strategies encouraged dedication transmissions of play activities content to children in ways that these concepts appear separate from children's everyday life experience of their culture. Most of the Pokot are nomadic and thus teaching ethical rules were important for the teachers to incorporate their social customs songs, storytelling, decorative arts, and hairstyling among others. It was against this background that the researcher investigated the effect of play activities' implementation on learners' academic performance in public ECDE in Pokot County.

Play activities of ECDE learners is one of the most important activities in the development of mental, physical, social, emotional and intellectual skills of the learners. Teachers are expected to implement play activities to learners to the latter. However, in Pokot County, it was observed that implementation of play activities of ECDE children appears to be an important issue of research and the concern for the study. When one visits a school he or she can find learners playing on their own unattended. This scenario applies to many ECDE centres in the county, leaving one to wonder what could be wrong with the implementation process. It is against this background that this paper sought to find out the effect of implementation of play activities in Pokot County does not meet the developmental requirements thus affecting mental, physical, social, emotional and intellectual needs of the learners. A child who acquires a balance of all the developmental stages is likely to perform well academically. .

1.2 Literature Review

1.2.1 Theoretical framework

The study adopted Vygotsky, (1978) as cited by Christie & Roskos, (2009) social interaction learning theory which states that, play is primary source of development.

In support of social interaction theory Willis & Hyman-Parker (2010) argues that play is how young children learn and assimilate new things into what they already know. Children learn about diversity through play, including music, clothing, foods, games, celebrations, and dramatic play. In this study children should be provided with playing materials as a way of enhancing their play. Teachers and parents are required to provide playing materials to their children so as to help them get engaged in meaningful play which influence their social skills and development. In Pokot County, most schools had play materials in their natural set ups which could be improvised and made use of play activities lessons.

1.3 Availability of functional play facilities in ECDE on learners academic performance

A report by Common Wealth of Australia (2008) points out that there should be ample playground facilities, access to play tools and at the same time, teachers should be encouraged to undertake physical activities. According to Sabbi, Boating & Hammond (2010), teachers are unable to employ pre-scholars in play activities

because, play facilities are not available, and pre-schools lack leisure facilities, play materials and physical infrastructure. Equipment, materials and experiences planned should allow for a variety of kinds of movement for development of motor skills, natural features such as horizontal tree trunks, rope structures and temporary arrangement for physical challenges broaden the possibilities for play activities (.Guantlett et al.,2010) As regards stimulation, within indoor, environments, this is mostly related to the provision of play materials and toys which support play. It has been established for some time, through a number of studies that access to a variety of materials and toys related to children's cognitive development. Well established materials and toys support play most effectively when they are open and flexible and provide children with wealth of opportunities for creativity for social interaction with their peers and adults, for authorship and for deep engagement. Resources in form of play objects, space and time are very important in pre-primary classrooms because the level and type of children's play depend mostly on the availability of these resources.

Hanley & Tiger (2011) confirm that one strategy to promote selection of important but less preferred activities is to limit access to children's activities that children like most. For instance, limiting access to dramatic play, computers, and blocks might increase participation in other activities. A more acceptable alternative, which retains the preferred activities during free play, is to provide prolonged access to preferred activities in an attempt to decrease subsequent participation in those activities due to satiation or habituation. By decreasing the amount of time spent interacting with preferred free-play activities, such a procedure might also indirectly increase the amount of time spent in originally less preferred activities.

Play facilities and materials in children's play add value to the play. Children learn best when they are part of a secure and stimulating environment full of materials for manipulation. Mahindu (2011) examined the effect that selected play materials have on certain aspects of children's development. He used 36 children ranging in age from 2 – 3 years. Each child was engaged in different play materials. The results revealed that children who had used a variety of play things had developed better than those who were not exposed to a variety of material. The discourse of boys and girls was similar but boys tended to initiate more topics during play than did girls. Due to this, children should be provided with playing materials as a way of enhancing their play.

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between availability of functional play facilities and academic performance in ECDE in Pokot County.

1.4 Frequency of learners' participation in play activities as time tabled in ECDE

Luke & McArdle (2009) emphasize that, play activity has remained static. The time learners spend playing has declining in ECDE. Most ECDE schools do not attain the amount of time recommended by experts. Lester & Russell (2008) noted lack of available data examining children's use of time and space, and therefore exploring whether children's time to play has increased or decreased in the UK is difficult to track. However, evidence from the US suggests that today's children have significantly less time for free play than previous generations.

In a study carried out by Hofferth (2009) on children's changing play guides across two time frames; between 1981 and 1997; and between 1997 and 2003 in which parents and children kept 24-hour diaries (one for a school day and one for a non-school day) and monitored the amount of time children spent in 18 different activities. The findings point out that children's free play and discretionary time (in other words, time that is not spent in school, childcare and so on) has declined by more than seven hours from 1981 to 1997 and by a further two hours to 2003. This research conclude that children in the US are receiving nine hours less free time a week than 25 years ago.

With regard to time, Frost (2010) argued that if more time is assigned to play children can explore in-depth whatever meanings are to be developed during play because they will be able to create meaningful pretend frames. As play in its varied forms is a serious business for children (Craig & Dunn, 2009). It is only when teachers allocate ample time and space for children's play that they can engage in receptive interactions with children as they play.

According to Tarman & Tarman, (2011) if literacy enriched settings, adequate time and facilitative teacher involvement are in place, socio-dramatic play can function as an ideal medium for children to construct their own knowledge about literacy, since its 'low -risk' atmosphere encourages experimentation with emergent forms of reading and writing. Despite these benefits, Lester & Russel, (2008) added that, there is evidence to that suggest less of children's time is being devoted to play, in favour of structured or educational activities. Elkind (2008), claims that the role of play in physical and psychological well-being has been 'overlooked' in many areas.

In Kenya, ECDE curriculum has a stipulated play activity time in the school timetable which should be followed by all schools (RoK,2006). This paper investigated the frequency of taking out learners for play activities as timetabled in ECDE centres in Pokot County. As such the hypothesized: The following hypothesis was formulated:

H₀₃: There is no significant relationship between frequency of learners participation in play activities as timetabled and academic performance in ECDE in Pokot County.

1.5 Teachers' Approaches of Teaching Play Activities in ECDE

Tsung-Hui & Wei-Ying (2008) illustrates that, ECDE teachers set up appropriate, stimulating environment for young children but decide to stand back and may not follow up with supervision, supportive, reactive interactions with the children as they play. These authors described this as the early childhood error. Some teachers find it difficult to participate in children's play for fear of disrupting the flow of children's play activities. Teacher's involvement in play enriches children's play and develops children's intellectual and social skills. On the other hand, if teachers give more structured cognitive activities through play and take over the control of play at that time teacher intervention interrupts children's play. In social dramatic play training, teacher actively participates in the dramatic play of children by enhancing inside intervention. Thematic fantasy is more structured type of training. In this training adult helps children by dramatizing story through reading stories and assigning roles to the children (Tarman & Tarman, 2011).

Further, Mills & McCarroll (2010) caution that, teachers have to watch what children are doing, support their efforts and contribute thoughtfully in order to support additional learning. Thus, teachers can take part in children's play activities by being sensitive to children's needs. Furthermore, teachers are expected to plan activities such as role-plays, sports and games that strengthen children's health and the process of socialization (UNESCO, 2006). Young children need to be encouraged and appreciated. Teachers need to discuss with them about the different music activities such as how songs are sung, give them an opportunity to describe how music makes them feel, or the images the particular music create in their mind, their reactions to different types of music and their likes and dislikes (Andang'o, 2009).

Being involved in movement positively affects children both cognitively and physically. Movement activities can be initiated by teachers throughout the day and especially during classroom transitions using songs and rhymes that reinforce lessons to improve children listening and memory skills. Activities, games, seat changing, role play and dance actively contribute to children development, basic timing balance coordination and concentration (Lawrence, 2011). McCollum & Ostrosky (2008) states that, as the teacher monitors and guides play, and scaffolds interactions, he/she use strategies that support social incorporation and interactions among children with and without disabilities, and among children of varied racial/cultural backgrounds. Social integration activities offer a context for teacher and peer support for children with social interaction difficulties. Teachers could act as mediators, supporting children's interactions with materials as well as with other children. In a mediating role, teachers model for children the flexible thinking and problem solving abilities needed for peer interactions (Van Hoorn et al., 2011). As the teacher monitors and guides play. For example, during teacher-guided play, teachers could arrange for children with limited peer interactions to be in involved in roles that put them in direct contact with children who are socially responsive and competent. This enables children with interaction difficulties to observe socially competent peers, participate directly in social interactions with peers who have excellent play and interaction skills, and establish a positive history of peer interactions. Also, as children engage in teacher guided play, teachers can encourage children to be friendly, interrelate affectionately, compliment, smile, give encouragement, share, and use other forms of prosocial behaviour. Such integrated playgroups have been found to lead to more frequent peer interactions, and positive changes in interactions between children with and without disabilities (McCollum & Ostrosky, 2008). In most schools teachers concentrate on class work with an aim of syllabus completion. However, play activities lessons are not fully prepared for. It's therefore against this that the paper hypothesizes that:

H₀₃: There is no significant relationship between teaching approaches and academic performance in ECDE in Pokot County.

3.0 Methodology

The study adopted descriptive survey research design which enabled to seek opinion on the extent of achievement and possible suggestions. the study focused on Pokot County where 16 ECDE centres from in Pokot County were targeted. The units of analysis were 417 head teachers and 1274 teachers from the 417 public ECDE (Pokot County Education Office, 2013). Stratified and simple random sampling were used to select teachers. A total of 106 participants were selected comprising of 16 head teachers and 90 teachers. This study used questionnaires, interview schedule and observation to collect data relevant to the study. To ensure reliability of the questionnaires, The SPSS computer software aided in working out this coefficient correlations achieved. Co-efficient alpha of 0.84 was obtained indicating that the research instruments were reliable and therefore adopted for data collection.

According to Oluwatayo (2012) a reliability index of 0.84 was considered ideal for the study. Data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistical techniques which were frequencies, mean, standard deviation. The findings were presented by use of frequency distribution tables that gave record of a number of times a score or a response occurs. The researcher used inferential statistics Pearson correlation

4.0 Findings and discussion

This section presents the analysis of the data collected and discusses them accordingly and in relation to the research questions stated with the aim of achieving the stated objectives. A total of 88 out of 90 teachers and 16 out of 16 head teachers duly completed and returned the questionnaires. Therefore the return rate for questionnaires used in data analysis was 97.8 percent for teachers and 100 percent head teachers respectively. Results showed that out of 106 respondents 56 (63.6 percent) were female while 32 (36.4 percent) were male. The gender of the head teachers was as follows: 10 (62.5 percent) were female while 6 (37.5 percent) were male. The results imply that the majority of the teachers and head teachers in Pokot County were female. Findings revealed that 45(51.1 percent) teachers had certificate level of education, 40(45.5 percent) teachers were diploma holders while information revealed that 3(3.4 percent) teachers were degree holders. From the head teachers 11 (68.8 percent) were diploma holders while 5 (31.2 percent) had degrees. This means that these teachers and head teachers have the capacity to conceptualize and implement the ECDE curriculum on play. In addition, it was indicated that that 43(48.9 percent) teachers had a teaching experience of over 10 years, 24(27.3 percent) teachers had a teaching experience of 3 -5 years, 16(18.2 percent) teachers had a teaching experience of 5-10 years while 5(5.7 percent) had a teaching experience of less than 3 years. This implies that the majority of the teachers in ECDE Centre had a teaching experience of over 10 years and therefore are expected to be effective in their classroom undertakings which should translate into increased learner engagement in play activities and achievement in class.

4.1 Functional Play Facilities on Academic Performance in ECDE

The findings in Table 1 shows that ECDE classrooms are not furnished to specified standards (mean = 2.4091, SD 1.2922). In many cases ECDE classes are not furnished to the required standards since most of the classrooms lack windows and enough desks for the pupils. Teachers in the public ECDE are not well equipped for special learners (mean = 2.2500, SD=1.2526. This findings from Ministry of Education (2011) EMIS and Economic Survey, which pointed that generally access and participation of pupils with special needs was low and their needs were not being specifically addressed, especially children with behavioural difficulties and those with various forms of learning difficulties and attention deficit. This poses a challenge to the integration and inclusion of children with such disabilities in regular schools.

The survey also indicated that instructional materials were not available and adequate in ECDE (mean = 2.2841, SD=1.3386) as well as sanitation facilities (mean = 2.3977 SD 1.2552. the findings are consistent with Carlson, et al., (2008) view that the use of instructional resources would make discovered facts glued to the memory of students. In addition, school playground were found to be poorly maintained (mean = 2.4205, SD= 1.3622). Similarly, quality of physical infrastructure did not meets the requirements specified by the government (mean = 2.0526, SD 1.3359). The study findings shows that ECDE had no adequate materials (mean= 2.5455, SD=2.3825) spacious classrooms (mean = 2.4659, SD = 1.3126 required for the implementation of play activities in ECDE, for the implementation of play activities. Findings also revealed that that child size materials were not provided (mean =2.7386, SD = 1.3937).

Table 4.1: Availability of Functional Play Facilities in ECDE

Statement		1	2	3	4	5	Mean	SD
The classroom are furnished to specified standards	Frequency	27	26	14	14	7	2.4091	1.2922
	Percent	30.7	29.5	15.9	15.9	8.		
The equipment's for special learners available	Frequency	31	27	13	11	6	2.2500	1.2526
	Percent	35.2	30.7	14.8	12.5	6.8		
Instructional material are provided as required	Frequency	35	20	13	13	7	2.2841	1.3386
	Percent	39.7	22.7	14.8	14.8	8.0		
Sanitation facilities are available and adequate	Frequency	25	29	15	12	7	2.3977	1.2552
	Percent	28.4	33.0	17.0	13.6	8.0		
The school playground is well maintained	Frequency	30	23	11	16	8	2.4205	1.3622
	Percent	34.1	26.1	12.5	18.2	9.1		
There are adequate play facilities in the playground	Frequency	31	23	13	13	8	2.5455	2.3825
	Percent	35.2	26.1	14.8	14.8	9.1		
ECDE centre have spacious classrooms	Frequency	28	38	0	15	7	2.4659	1.3126
	Percent	31.7	43.3	0	17.0	8.0		
Child size materials are not provided	Frequency	24	16	18	19	11	2.7386	1.3937
	Percent	27.3	18.2	20.5	21.6	12.5		

1=strongly disagree; 2=disagree; 3=Not Sure; 4=agree; 5 = strongly agree

4.2 Frequency of taking learners for play activities as timetabled in ECDE

Table 4 indicated that there are adequate and enough hours of PE in the school time table (mean = 4.1591, S.D = 0.6929). This concurs with Tarman & Tarman (2011) who stated that, there is need for provision of adequate physical spaces and props to support play as well as the need to allow ample time for children's free play in the preschool daily schedule. Results suggest that ECDE have provided adequate and enough hours for play in their time tables which was used for play activities but not for teaching other subjects, however, teachers believed that play activities took a lot of time while teaching. Children were provided with adequate time during play activities which implies that children in ECDE may be in a good position to interact with various types of play activities in their schools.

Table 3: Frequency of learners' participation in play activities s as timetabled in ECDE

Statement		1	2	3	4	5	Mean	SD
There is adequate and enough hours in play activities in the school time table	Frequency	1	7	2	44	34	4.1591	0.6929
	Percent	1.1	8	2.3	50	38.6		
Other subjects use time allocated for play activities	Frequency	1	55	4	19	9	3.9773	0.7728
	Percent	1.1	62.5	4.5	21.7	10.2		
Time allocated for play activities is fully utilized in play activities teaching only	Frequency	2	22	4	46	14	4.25	0.7466
	Percent	2.3	25	4.5	52.3	15.9		
Play activities take a lot of time while teaching	Frequency	5	10	1	56	16	4.2614	0.7191
	Percent	5.7	11.4	1.1	63.6	18.2		
Children are provided with adequate time during play activities	Frequency	2	24	4	45	13	4.5682	0.6396
	Percent	2.3	27.3	4.5	51.1	14.8		
Time allocated for play activities is limited	Frequency	4	10	2	56	16	4.6477	0.4804
	Percent	4.5	11.4	2.3	63.6	18.2		
Children are active in class after play activities lessons	Frequency	2	31	8	26	21	4.6477	0.5475
	Percent	2.3	35.2	9.1	29.5	23.9		

1=strongly disagree 2=disagree 3=Not Sure 4=agree 5 = strongly agree

4.2 Teachers approaches of teaching play activities in ECDE

Findings from Table 4.5 shows that teachers support children as they play during play time and they also participate with the children during play (69.3 percent). They also participate with the children during play activities (69.3 percent) and engage themselves in play activities. McCollum & Ostrosky (2008) pointed out that as children engage in teacher guided play, teachers could promote children to be friendly, interact affectionately, compliment, smile, give encouragement, share, and use other forms of prosocial conduct. In addition, children were guided during play time by their teachers (43.2 percent) and 47.7 percent planned activities such as role play to strengthen children during play. Nevertheless, teachers do interact fully with children during play to enhance safe play (76.1 percent). The findings were in line with Ghana Education Services (2004) where teachers were responsible for providing play leadership in schools by means offering favourable conditions in which children learned with delight with ease.

Table 4.5: Teachers approaches of teaching play activities in ECDE

Statement		1	2	3	4	5
Teachers support children as they play during play time.	Frequency	16	61	1	9	1
	Percent	18.2	69.3	1.1	10.2	1.1
Teachers participate with the children during play.	Frequency	12	61	2	11	2
	Percent	13.6	69.3	2.3	12.5	2.3
Children are guided during play time by their teachers.	Frequency	7	39	4	38	
	Percent	8	44.3	4.5	43.2	
Teachers plan for lessons such as role plays to strengthen children n during play.	Frequency	4	39	1	42	2
	Percent	4.5	44.3	1.1	47.7	2.3
Teachers interact fully with children during play to enhance safe play.	Frequency	8	67	1	9	3
	Percent	9.1	76.1	1.1	10.2	3.4
Teachers encourage learners during the lesson.	Frequency	16	63	0	9	0
	Percent	18.2	71.6	0.0	10.2	0.0

1=strongly disagree; 2=disagree; 3=Not Sure; 4=agree; 5 = strongly agree

Hypotheses Testing

Table 4 represents Spearman rank correlation results of the study dependent and independent variables to assess to association of the variable (Anglim, 2007). Findings revealed that availability of resources was positively and significantly associated with academic performance of EDCE learner ($r = 0.248$). Similarly Frequency of learners' participation in play activities s as timetabled in ECDE and teach approaches of teaching play activities in ECDE was positively and significantly correlated to academic performance of EDCE learner ($r = 0.541$ and $r=0.607$).

Table 4 Correlations statistics

	Performance	availability	Frequency	Teachers approaches
Performance	1			
Availability	.248*	1		
Frequency	.541**	0.075	1	
Teacher approach	.607**	.281**	.447**	1

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

5.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

Basing on the study findings the following conclusions were made ECDE centres had inadequate playground therefore do not facilitate effective children play activities. Furthermore, ECDE children do not have adequate water which is vital for quenching thirst during play activities. The study further suggests that increasing facilities for play that can enhance ECDE learners play activities improve children's academic performance.

However, ECDE centres school should be provided allocated sufficient time in the timetable for children to engage in play activities. Thus, the more time allocated for play activities in the school time table, the higher the ECDE learners academic performance. However, time allocated for play activities was mostly used for teaching other subjects other than play activities. Teachers did not support ECDE learners when they were playing. They did not engage and participated with the children in the playfields as well as making the play ground safe for learners. Nevertheless, teachers do not plan for various play activities which should be taught on certain day. Moreover, they do not plan for those activities which are necessary for improving learners' physical, cognitive and emotional support, thus having more teaching and better methods for teaching play activities would enhance learners' academic performance. Therefore, the government and other education stakeholders should partner to provide enough play and instructional materials to ECDE schools in Pokot County. ECDE centres need to devote more time for play activities since these activities helps in holistic development of a learner. In addition, Children should be given enough time to explore and discover on their own through play activities. Teachers need to support learners when they are playing especially in planning for play activities. Additionally, there is need for a study to be undertaken on the effects of play on holistic development of children.

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