

**AN EXAMINATION OF THE ADEQUACY OF READING SKILLS ON
TRANSITION OF LEARNERS FROM PRESCHOOLS
TO CLASS ONE IN THIKA SUB-COUNTY,
KENYA**

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ABSTRACT

Concerns in transitions from preschools to class one have been raised by many education stakeholders. Thus, the study intended to examine the adequacy of reading skills on transition of children from preschools to class one in Thika Sub-county. The literature review was based on the concept of preschool transition, phoneme awareness, vocabulary, fluency and comprehension in relation to transition of children from preschool to class one. The study adopted qualitative and quantitative methodology. The study applied explanatory sequential mixed design which involved collecting, analyzing, and mixing both quantitative and qualitative research. The procedure started with the collection and analysis of quantitative data. The researcher then merged the two data sets by bringing the separate results together in the interpretation. Questionnaires and observation checklists were used to collect data from preschool managers and teachers and preschool children respectively. Pilot survey was conducted twice amongst 5 preschool teachers to establish validity and reliability was determined using Cronbach's Alpha Method. This study targeted 80 preschool teachers and 1700 preschool children all totaling to 1780. Using The Central Limit Theorem, a sample of 8 preschools, that is, 20% of the targeted 40 preschools, were selected. Based on the same theorem, the researcher sampled 200 respondents, that is, 11% of 1780. The researcher then applied stratified sampling to create 5 strata each consisting of 8 preschools. From each stratum, 2 preschool teachers were nominated using purposive sampling. Approximately 38 preschool children were selected using simple random sampling. Analysis of data began by identifying common themes from the respondents' description of their experiences. Frequency counts of the responses were obtained to generate descriptive information about the respondents and to illustrate the general trend of findings on the various variables that were under investigation. Qualitative data was analyzed thematically along the research objectives whereas quantitative data was analyzed using ANOVA in Statistical Packages for Social Science (SPSS). The findings of the study were presented using tables. The study established that transition of children from preschools to class one is low due to poor reading skills. The study has established that transition rates is low since the preschool children manifest dismal phoneme awareness, vocabulary development, fluency and comprehension skills and thus cannot acquire creativity and problem solving skills. From the foregoing, the study thus, concludes that phoneme awareness, vocabulary development, fluency and comprehension skills are important dynamics which enhance transition of children from preschools to class one. Therefore, it recommends that preschool teachers should stress teaching and learning of phonemes to preschool children since it enhances their acquisition of basic reading skills. The Ministry of Education should provide language materials which are geared towards enhancing reading skills of preschool children. The schools should develop rules and regulations which lay emphasis on using English language as a medium of communication at preschool levels. Ministry of Education and other policymakers should formulate regulations to enforce adherence to language policy in preschools which lays emphasis on use of English as a medium of communication and instruction