

AN ASSESSMENT OF THE MEASURES PUT IN PLACE TO ENHANCE THE  
PHYSICAL SAFETY OF CHILDREN IN ECDE CENTERS IN THIKA WEST  
DISTRICT, KIAMBU COUNTY, KENYA



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## ABSTRACT

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-method of data collection  
-analysis data

The Government of Kenya enacted children's Act (2001) and has committed itself in ensuring the rights of a child are provided for. Thus, the children have a right to survival and development. In addition the Kenya Institute of Education (2006) launched ECD Services Standard Guidelines for Kenya towards realization of children's Act. In regard to this, the purpose of the study was to present findings of management of physical safety of ECDE centers in Thika West District, Kiambu County. The objectives of the study included:- i) To find out facilities and strategies put in place to help reduce risks in ECDE centers ii) To investigate the extent to which facilities and strategies put in place are adequate in enhancing children's physical safety in ECDE centers ii) To identify the extent to which ECDE centers are prepared for emergencies. iii) To establish challenges faced by ECDE centers in management of emergencies and how they can be overcome. The study employed Maslow's Theory of human motivation. The study was conducted in Thika West District and used the survey research. Thika West District has a population of seventeen public ECDE centers and eleven private ECDE centers. Questionnaire, interview and observation guides are the instruments the study used to collect primary data. Piloting of the instruments was done in a public ECDE center two weeks before the main study. The pilot ECDE center was not included in the study. Data collected was analyzed using descriptive statistics which entail use of mean, mode and frequencies. The study included use of total percentages, tabulation, graphs and charts to enhance better presentation of information. The findings of proposed study may contribute towards advancement of knowledge on emergency preparedness and practically it may lead to application of proper safety measures needed to enhance effective disaster management. The study established that ECDE centers in Thika West District are not fully prepared for the management of physical safety of children as they did not have adequate strategies put in place to reduce the risk of emergencies. The study found out that most of the schools were not compliant with the safety precautions guidelines as stated by Ministry of Education circular on Health and Safety Standards in Educational Institutions (2001). Most centers lacked emergency doors and the few that had, the doors were not labeled. The study further established that there were no marks showing entrance and exit and most centers did not have fire extinguishers. Lack of adequate funds and awareness on how to manage emergencies were reported to be the major challenges faced. The study recommends that: the Ministry of education should ensure that every head teacher of ECDE center should have a copy of manual showing guidelines on health and safety standards in educational institutions; all pre-school stakeholders (teachers, parents and children) should be sensitized on importance of physical safety of children while in and outside the school; among other recommendations.