

**INFLUENCE OF TEACHING/LEARNING MATERIALS ON CHILDREN'S
ACQUISITION OF LANGUAGE SKILLS IN EARLY CHILDHOOD
DEVELOPMENT CENTERS IN KAPSABET DIVISION, NANDI
COUNTY, KENYA**

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ABSTRACT

The main purpose for this study was to investigate the influence of teaching and learning materials on children's acquisition of language skills in early childhood education centres in Kapsabet Division, Nandi County. The specific objectives was to; to establish the influence of the availability of teaching/learning materials on acquisition of writing skills in Early Childhood Centres, to find out the influence of relevance of teaching/learning materials in acquisition of speaking skills in Early Childhood Centres, to determine the influence of adequacy of teaching and learning resources on acquisition of reading skills in Early Childhood and to evaluate the challenges faced by ECDE centres in acquisition of teaching/learning materials in Kapsabet Division. This study was guided by input-output theory or the production function theory of education. It employed descriptive research design. The target populations of this study were 252 ECDE teachers and 84 Headteachers. The sample size comprised of 153 teachers and 25 headteachers making a total of 178 respondents. These respondents were selected by stratified sampling techniques. The research employed the use of questionnaires and interview schedules to collect data relevant to this study. To test validity, research instruments were availed to research experts and their opinions integrated in designing the main tool for the study. To determine reliability piloting was conducted and Cronbach Alpha coefficient was employed. Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient of 0.7 and above means that the instrument is reliable. The data collected from the test instrument were organized, coded and analyzed using both qualitative and quantitative techniques. Quantitative data was analyzed by use of frequencies and percentages. Qualitative data was analyzed according to the nature of responses and objectives of the study. Responses of the open ended questionnaires were recorded word for word. To determine the frequencies of each response, the number of respondents expressing the same opinion was converted to percentage to illustrate relative levels of opinion. Chi-square was used to compare relationship between the study variables. findings in indicated that although not much the schools had availability of textbooks, clay/plasticine chalkboard, real materials to aid pupils acquire language skills and models for teaching to help learners understand shapes. Further, findings indicated that there were writing materials, displayed charts and flash cards were available for all the learners. However, there were less adequate teaching/learning materials such as model shapes to enhance sorting and grouping. Moreover, teachers denied that text books to pupils' ratio are 1:1. Nevertheless findings showed that teaching/learning materials are expensive to buy and that the preparation of learning/teaching materials consumes a lot of time. Therefore, I recommend that there is need for ECDE centers to develop play and learning materials appropriate for language acquisition by young children and to develop activities to ensure acquisition of language skills in children. It is also necessary for ECDE centers to ensure that teaching and learning resources are durable, attractive to children so as to capture the interest of learners and reinforce motivation to read and write. In the same way, teaching materials need to be durable and safe for the children. As well, teachers need to increase their professional capabilities so as to have the skills in modifying teaching/learning materials.