

**FACTORS AFFECTING GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF
CHILDREN AGED 3-5 YEARS IN KATUTU ZONE IN KITUI WEST
DISTRICT, KITUI COUNTY**

HOGLAH MUSENGY'ANGUE

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ABSTRACT

The researcher investigated the factors affecting growth and development of children aged 3-5 years in Katutu Zone Kitui West District Kitui County. The objectives of the study were to establish factors affecting growth and development of children aged 3-5 years, to find out causes of malnourishment of children aged 3-5 years and to establish intervention measures to be carried out to curb growth and development problems on pupils aged 3-5 years in the area of study. The research adopted descriptive survey design, in this research, the target population comprised of the headteachers, teachers and pupils in this area. The researcher employed purposive sampling technique to select the sample population. The sample for this study was selected using a simple random sampling. Data was then collected through questionnaires and observation. The data collected from the respondents was summarized and tabulated. Data was further analyzed using descriptive analysis. The study revealed that there was a vicious cycle between malnutrition and or physical impairment and growth and development impairment as contributed by factors which includes nutrition and cognition, poverty, poor health, malnutrition and lack of guidance and counseling. The study revealed that the first 5 years of life are critical for the foundation of the skills which are developed in the following periods of the child's life. A newborn starts with no knowledge and learns a great deal during his/her first year of life. It is very important to realize that a child is a growing and developing human being right from birth. He ought to be treated very carefully, with love and respect, so that he can develop normally. He needs full emotional support; Poor feeding can lead to poor bio availability of essential nutrients and malnutrition therefore leading to the poor growth and development. The study confirmed that growth and development is a serious public nutritional problem in the area which requires immediate intervention to address the associated factors that collates to malnutrition and/or physical impairment and growth and development among children aged 3-5 years. Malnutrition and/or physical impairment is associated with Poor feeding and poor health as a result of intake of low nutrient diet and low cognition factors, which are a primary cause of the problem. The research recommends efforts on several key areas of response that are complimentary and necessary as part of comprehensive approach to the elimination of growth and development impairment. Control and prevention of growth and development impairment in areas with high prevalence of growth and development impairment would lead to substantial and lasting improvement in childhood survival as well as preventing scandals of under-development and poor health due to malnutrition.