

**RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PLAY IMPLEMENTATION PRACTICES AND ECDE  
LEARNER PERFORMANCE IN KANGARI ZONE, KIGUMO SUB-COUNTY,  
MURANG'A COUNTY IN KENYA**

**Veronicah Wanjiru Karanja (2017)**

**ABSTRACT**

Play is valued worldwide and is viewed as a fundamental human right for all children as articulated in Article 31 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. Play is widely recognized as a major route to learning, especially in children's early years. There is insufficient record of research on play in Africa especially in Kenya. The purpose of this study was to find out the relationship between play implementation practices and ECDE learner performance in Kangari Zone, Kigumo Sub-county in Murang'a County. This study was guided by Vygotsky social cultural theory. The researcher used descriptive survey design. The target population for the study was 2930 respondents consisting of 39 teachers, 1445 parents, 1445 children and 1 ECDE Sub-county Coordinator. The sample size was 300 respondents consisting of 11 teachers, 144 parents, 144 children and 1 ECDE Sub-county Coordinator. This study adopted stratified and simple random sampling methods. The questionnaire, interview schedule and children's test were the main data collecting tools. Validity of the data collection instrument was tested using pilot study and expert judgment while reliability was determined using the Cronbach reliability test. To collect the data, the researcher sought all legal documents needed in research and was given permission from school administration to conduct the study in the respective schools. Data collected was prepared by editing and coding for analysis. A statistical package SPSS version 22.0 was used to analyze for effectiveness and accuracy. Data was analyzed using descriptive statistics which involved use of percentages and means. The Pearson correlation coefficient ( $r$ ) was used to test hypotheses. The study findings showed that ECDE centres and parents played a significant role in provision of playing materials, with a  $p$ -value of .046, teacher involvement influenced learner's performance with a  $p$ -value of .000, time scheduling influenced on learners' performance with a  $p$ -value of .000 and parental involvement influenced learners' performance with a  $p$ -value of .023. The study recommended the government and other education stakeholders to partner in provision of enough play and instructional materials to ECDE centres. The researcher suggests that a study should be carried out on the effects of play on holistic development of children in ECDE centres. It is hoped that the findings of this study will be of help to the Government of Kenya, scholars, ECDE teachers and children.

**Key Words:** Play Implementation Practices, ECDE learner performance, Playing materials