

1. Factors Affecting Early Childhood Education In Liberia

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Abstract

Findings gathered from the Baseline survey show that it is a noticeable fact that actual (quality, teachers' qualification, MOE supervision and parents involvement in school Administration) ages of children in the pre-primary sector in the Liberian Educational system are on a very low scale.

The study shows that there are less qualified teachers in Early Childhood Education. Out of a total number of 155 teachers studied in 30 institutions providing instructions for 8,563 children, 33.55 percent are below high school; 24.52% are high school certificate; 36.13 per cent have B. and C. certificates, while in the area of Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD), there is no trained teacher in this area. This information should capture the attention of others, because it is a very unique and distinct branch of Education.

The next area of attention is the Curriculum and Center facilities. To have a vital program in ECCD, there must be a curriculum. The study provides that 35.6 percent of the centers use the ECCD curriculum, while 43.33% work with lesson plan. Many of the centers are not aware of the Curriculum Division at the Ministry of Education. This low degree provides for many of the problems that are in ECCD centers.

In regard to center facilities, 33.67 percent indicated poor classrooms, (seating, dark classes) 23.3 percent were satisfactory and 13.35 percent were in good condition. This representation has had a toll on the Liberian school system in ECCD. If the classrooms are not conducive, qualified teachers are lacking; facilities are very poor; therefore, there must be a mandate and some positive steps in the right direction. Policies must be set and guidelines implemented by the government to buttress the work of ECCD in Liberia.

Ages of children is another crucial factor in the ECCD program. During the survey, attempts were made to capture the age range of children in Day Care, Nursery, and Kindergarten. Results show that the ages of children range from 0 - 14. The internationally accepted age range of children in pre-school is 3 to 5.

It was discovered that 67.7 percent of the children in the Southwestern Region (Kakata, Margibi) are overage.