

Caregivers' role definition and practices in the stimulation of children's emergent reading development in Ruiru, Kenya

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Abstract

Emergent reading refers to the reading related developments that occur before formal reading instruction. Although research on this concept exists in other countries, It is a relatively new concept in Kenya and for this reason has not received much attention in research. Recent studies in Kenya are consistently reporting poor reading achievements among children in primary school. These studies show that most of the reading difficulties begin from early childhood years and continue impacting on children's reading attainment in their later school years. This implies that there is need to establish issues surrounding reading development from children's early years. The study from which this paper draws investigated the current status of caregiver perceptions and practices with 30 to 42 months old children around print. The study found that caregivers largely lacked knowledge about children's emergent reading development and their role in it. Caregivers' perceptions about their role in children's emergent reading development were largely negative. These findings implied that children are receiving little or no stimulation to enhance their early reading development. Consequently, they may start preschool with little or no interest and motivation to read. This may explain the reading difficulties that recent research has reported. Important recommendations arising from the study include the need to sensitize caregivers' and to help them redefine their role in children's emergent reading development are the key recommendations discussed in this paper.

Key words: Emergent reading; Stimulation; Children; Caregivers; Role Definition

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