

Strategies ECDE Teachers Use in Providing outdoor Play Activities and Learning in Borabu Sub-County, Kenya

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Abstract: It is significant for teachers to find strategies of promoting outdoor experiences for young children. The purpose of the study was to find out the Strategies ECDE Teachers Use in Providing outdoor Play Activities and Learning in pre-schools in Borabu Sub-County. The study was based on Descriptive survey design. It involved; 44 primary school head teachers, 44 pre-school lead teachers and 309 final pre-school class pupils, selected using cluster, purposive and simple random sampling design respectively. Data was collected using questionnaires, interview schedule and observation checklist. The major findings includes: majority (88.7%) of the pre-school teachers were found to plan for the lessons. The study further found that more than half of the pre-school teachers always plan for outdoor activities. Also the study established that majority of the pre-school teachers always or sometimes directed or guided pupils during play time, made use of ideas from pupils to enhance play activities, utilized. In ensuring safety measures in the playground space, teachers were developing age appropriate play equipment and arrangement of play equipment in the play space. Even when teachers initiated the activity, they still allowed children the opportunity for processing and problem-solving. Teachers communicated to children that they were willing to let them lead in the exploration of ideas and solutions. There is need for the improvement of the outdoor environment because of its indirect and direct implications on pupils learning and development.

Keywords: Teachers strategies, Pre-schools, Play, Learning.

I. INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background Information

In looking at ways in which teachers may be expected to promote outdoor play as a way of fostering young children's learning and physical activity engagements, Emslie (2008) suggested four basic assumptions underlying young children's learning and playing. First pupils learn best and achieve more as they work and play with adults and peers. Secondly, children develop and learn at different rates. In addition, pupils learn by doing and retention rates depend on the type of involvement the learner is exposed to. Lastly Emslie demonstrates that pupils learn as they construct their own knowledge depending on past experiences and that pupils learn best when they are socially, emotionally, physically, and cognitively engaged.

Gordon & Browne (2004) reporting on foundations in early childhood education affirms that teachers have two most important roles in promoting play environments. Teachers set the stage and create an atmosphere for play and that teachers are facilitators of play. In this regard, they assert that a good teacher should be one who guides; does not control the state of affairs; capitalizes on the children's thoughts and ideas; does not impose children views; models play and shows children how specific character might act; models problem solving strategies for children; asks questions; makes clear to children everything that is happening; helps pupils begin, end, and start over again; gives children verbal cues; focuses learner's attention to each other; encourages interactions among learners; understands pupil's behaviour. It is

quite clear that these tips would give one a good basis for promoting play in one's classroom. Although Gordon et al study gives clear strategies on how to enhance play and learning. It is based on foundations in early childhood education while the current study investigated the implication of outdoor environment on children's physical activity performance levels and learning in public pre-schools. In addition, the current study was carried out in Borabu Sub-county Kenya which is two different geographical areas.

Puro's (2010) study on the significance of play in ECDE observes that when learners are given alternatives, children are astonishingly proficient at selecting right playthings for their stage of development, interests, and temperaments. Puro further contends that when the adult joins in a child's play, the child should be allowed to take the lead. When teachers respect children's imaginary plays and allow them to be in charge, this provides them with an opportunity to develop a healthy self-esteem, and by entering the child's world on his/her terms, an adult helps nurture a long-enduring strong bond with the child. Puro's (2010) study differs with the current study in that it was based on the importance of play while the current study will establish the implication of outdoor environment on physical activity level and learning. A study on modern perception on use of technology in early childhood education by Bergen (2008) demonstrates that one of the main characteristics of outdoor play is that anything in the environment can be used as playthings.

Ofsted's (2008) survey of learning outside in primary, secondary, and colleges done in London found that if planned and implemented well, outdoors contribute appreciably to elevating children's socio-emotional development. The study further noted that learning outdoors was mostly successful when it was a fundamental building block of long-term curriculum planning and directly associated to class instruction. Furthermore, it was found that just 6 schools had a comprehensive knowledge of the United Kingdom government's learning outdoors manifesto. Although this was a survey study, it differs with the current one because it was done in primary, secondary schools, and colleges in London while the current study was done in public pre-schools in Nyamira County of Kenya.

A case study research was conducted at K-5 elementary school in Lincoln, Nebraska at Saratoga Elementary School in the USA by Speedlin (2010). The study involved teachers' surveys on educators' attitudes toward outdoor classrooms and the cognitive benefits in children elementary schools in Lincoln, Nebraska. The findings revealed that half of the teachers did not include outdoor activities in planning their curriculum for the classroom, and to make matters worse only 42 percent of the teachers use outdoor irregularly. The Speedlin (2010) study was a case study while the current study is a descriptive survey.

A study in KwaZulu Natal, South Africa by Imenda (2012) based on promotion of play in teaching and learning emphasized on allowing learners to pursue own interests as a strategy to leaning outdoors. The study was a mixed study relating to collection qualitative and quantitative data from interviews and questionnaire. The findings show that 71 percent of the teachers sometimes allowed learners to pursue their own interests during outdoor play; only 19 percent of the teachers always allowed learners to pursue their own interests. The study further indicates that when learners are left to pursue their own interests they gain academically. Imenda's study differs with the current study in that it was conducted in the Empangeni School District, KwaZulu Natal, South Africa while the current study was conducted in Borabu Sub-County of Kenya

In Uganda a study was carried out by Musiime (2010) in sampled high schools in Ibanda District to explore the effectiveness of biology lesson preparation and delivery. It used a sample of twelve teachers and two hundred and eighty students. The study employed a cross-sectional research design. Data was collected by use of teachers' and learners' questionnaires and class observation checklists. The tools were used to evaluate the performance of teachers in provisions of lesson plans and deliverance of lessons in class. The major findings of the study were; lesson planning was inadequate, in view of the fact that no single suitable and comprehensive lesson plan was seen. Musiime further found that there was a significant relationship between lesson planning and level of involvement of learners during lessons. Whereas Musiime's study was done in secondary schools in Uganda based on teachers' planning of biology lessons, the current study was carried out in Kenya and focused on the implication of outdoor environment on children's physical activity performance levels and learning.

In Kenya, Kerich & Momanyi (2015) did a study on suitability of children's outdoor play environment on cognitive development in Kisumu City ECD Centres. The study adopted descriptive survey design using a sample of 20 ECD centres. Purposive sampling was used to select all the 20 urban ECD centres within Kisumu city. Data was collected from

all the head teachers and teachers from the sampled pre-school using interviews, observation schedule, and observation checklist. The study found that meaningful planning of the environment should be important in providing profound outdoor play. Kerich & Momanyi recommend that after planning instructors' supervision was very useful in enhancing outdoor play environment activities in ECDE centres. Kerich and Momanyi differ with the current study in that it was only conducted in the city. The current study bridged this gap by conducting a study in both urban and rural pre-schools in Borabu Sub-county of Kenya.

1.1 Objective of the Study

The study aimed at finding out Strategies ECDE Teachers Use in Providing outdoor Play Activities and Learning in Borabu Sub-County, Kenya

II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The current study adopted a descriptive survey design. It involved a sample 44 primary school head teachers, 44 pre-school lead teachers and 309 final pre-school class pupils selected using cluster, purposive and simple random sampling design. Before the actual study, a pilot study was conducted in two pre-primary schools where study employed the split-half method to find out the reliability of the Questionnaire. The research instruments consisted of questionnaire, interview schedules, document analysis and Observation Checklist. Quantitative data from both Teachers' questionnaires were analysed by means of descriptive statistics such as means, percentages, summarized and presented in tables. Qualitative data gathered by responses from observation checklist and Interview schedule was read carefully by paying attention to concerns of respondents, and then organized according to a variety of evolving themes. Qualitative data analysis followed systematic order of identify necessary categories and themes.

III. RESULTS

3.1 The Findings on Strategies ECDE Teachers Use in Providing outdoor Play Activities and Learning

The task for the study was to examine the strategies ECDE teachers use in providing outdoor play activities and learning. This was done by establishing the planning, teaching, and assessment strategies employed by ECDE teachers in various ECDE centres. The results reported below came from both the open ended and semi-structured sections of the questionnaire, integrated as much as possible around the themes suggested by the research questions. The responses were both quantitative and qualitative in nature. These results are summarized using descriptive statistics and presented in figures and tables according to the following sub headings.

3.1.1 Planning Strategies

The study sought to establish the planning strategies used by ECDE teachers. In order to achieve this, the primary school head teachers were required to assess the planning strategies in their various schools and provide their responses as per the closed ended questions that were given in their various questionnaires. The descriptive results are summarized and presented in Table 3.1 as follows.

Table 3.1: The extent to which ECDE Teachers Planned for outdoor Activities

Planning strategies	Frequency teachers plan for various outdoor activities			
	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Always
How often do you often take preschool children outdoors?	2.4	7.1	21.4	69.0
How often are children involved in planning for outdoor activities?	7.1	23.8	47.6	21.4
How often do teachers plan by scheming outdoor activities?	2.4	7.1	2.4	88.1
How often is do your teachers plan outdoor lesson plans?	2.4	7.1	4.8	85.7

✚	How often do teachers mark the outdoor space to encourage variety of outdoor activities?	4.8	35.7	33.3	26.2
✚	Do the teachers' plans cater for children with Special Needs?	14.3	9.5	40.5	35.7

Table 3.1 provides results on the extent to which teachers planned for outdoor activities. On taking pre-school children for outdoor activities, 2.4 percent of the primary school head teachers reported that their ECDE teachers never take their pre-school children for outdoor activities which implies that these children are left to play or engage in various outdoor activities alone. Seven point one percent, 21.4 percent and 69.0 percent rarely, sometimes, and always took their pre-school children for outdoor activities respectively. From these finding, it can be concluded that majority of the ECDE teachers take their pre-school children for outdoor activities.

On how often the ECDE children were involved in planning for outdoor activities, majority (47.6%) of the primary school head teachers observed that the ECDE children were sometimes involved in planning for outdoor activities while only 21.4% indicated that the ECDE children were always involved in planning for outdoor activities by their ECDE teachers. At the same time, it was found that 7.1% and 23.8% of the head teachers indicated that the ECDE children in their schools were never and rarely involved in planning for outdoor activities respectively.

On how often the teachers planned by scheming for outdoor activities, majority (88.7%) of the pre-school teachers were found to plan for the lessons while only 2.4% and 7.1% of the teachers never and rarely wrote schemes of work for outdoor activities respectively. On how often the teachers planned for outdoor lessons, majority (85.1%) of the pre-school teachers were found to plan schemes of work for outdoor activities while only 2.4% and 7.1% of the teachers never and rarely planned for outdoor lessons respectively.

On the other hand, it was found that only 26.2 % of the ECDE teachers marked the outdoor space to encourage variety of outdoor activities and more than one third (35.7%) rarely marked the outdoor space to encourage variety of outdoor activities. Also it was found that majority (40.5 %) of pre-school teachers sometimes catered for children with special needs while about one fifth (23.8%) either rarely or never planned for children with special needs during their lessons. From these findings, it can be concluded that more than half (54.35%) of the pre-school teachers always plan for outdoor activities while very few (5.57%) of pre-school teachers never plan for outdoor activities.

3.1.2 Teaching Strategies outdoors

The head teachers were required to provide information related to outdoor related strategies that are employed by pre-school teachers. From their responses pre-school teachers utilise various teaching strategies. On letting the pupils pursue their own interests during outdoor play, it was observed that majority (45.2%) of pre-school teachers sometimes let the pre-school pupils pursue their own interests during outdoor play while only 7.1% and 14.3% never and rarely let the pre-school pupils pursue their own interests during outdoor play respectively. It was also reported that more than 90% of the pre-school teachers always or sometimes guided pupils during play time, made use of ideas from pupils to enhance play activities, utilized examples from play activities to assist pupils to understand concepts in class.

They also demonstrated to the pupils how to play and learn so that they could copy from them, encouraged pupils to interact during outdoor play, gave the pupils hints when they were not sure with their outdoor activities and encouraged caregivers and parents to allow pupils to engage in a variety of play interests without being forced. Further it was observed that all pre-school teachers always or sometimes made sure that pre-school pupils maintained discipline while performing various outdoor play activities and ensured that outdoor play activities took place in safe areas.

On the other hand the head teachers reported that about one quarter (21.4%) of pre-school teachers never or rarely gave guided questions to support pupils in the understanding of their play engagement activities, almost one third (32.3%) of the pre-school teachers never or rarely at the beginning of play activities left the pre-school pupils get started by their own and 42.8% of the pre-school teachers never or rarely allowed pupils resolve their disagreement alone during play.

3.1.3 Assessment of outdoor Play and Learning

The study further sought to establish the assessment strategies used by ECDE teachers. In order to achieve this, the primary school head teachers were required to assess the assessment strategies in their various schools and provide their

responses as per the closed-ended questions that were given in their various questionnaires. The descriptive results are summarized and presented in Table 3.2 as follows.

Table 3.2: Assessment of outdoor Play and Learning

Assessment of outdoor play and learning	Frequency teacher plan for various outdoor activities			
	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Always
a) I plan assessment of outdoor physical activities	0	9.5	26.2	64.3
b) I record learner's level of achievement	2.4	9.5	19.0	69.0
c) Remedial is given to the underachiever	14.3	4.8	21.4	59.5

From Table 3.2, it is evident that no pre-school teachers plans for the assessment of outdoor physical activities; however 4 (9.5%) of the teachers rarely planned for the assessment of outdoor physical activities. Further the results show that majority (64.3%) of pre-school teachers always planned for the assessment of outdoor physical activities. On keeping record of learners' level of play achievement, it was reported that majority (69.0%) of the teachers were found to keep records of learners' level of play achievement and only one teacher never kept record of learners' level of play achievement. The result further shows that majority (59.5%) of pre-school teachers always conducted remedial lessons for underachievers in outdoor play, while 14.3%, 4.8% and 21.4% never, rarely and sometimes of pre-school teachers never conducted remedial lessons for underachievers in outdoor play respectively.

Contrary to the above findings, Chapman's (2011) study found out that teachers were generally highly skilled in outdoor education however; there were indications that there were gaps of understanding of theoretical assessment concepts. Teachers seemed to find assessment challenging during outdoor activities and most of the teachers did not assess the students.

3.1.4 Observation Schedule of the Strategies Teachers used in the Implementation of outdoor Activities

Observations were conducted at each site for 3-4 hours by the researcher. This occurred in 42 pre-schools. The observer recorded the strategies the pre-school lead teachers use in the implementation of outdoor activities.

3.1.5 Planning for outdoor Activities

From pre-school teachers' lesson plans, it was observed that 76.19% of pre-school lead teachers either never or rarely planned for outdoor play activities while only 28.57% of pre-school lead teachers occasionally planned for outdoor play activities. These planned activities were observed within the outdoor environment in very few (28.57%) of the pre-schools. For example, T11 specified some activities that she plans,

I do usually plan some creative activities, I however usually get frustration about the lack of space and availability of materials in the outdoor setting which is one of the hurdles I frequently face in creating an ideal outdoor space for children (T-11).

Overall, teachers from pre-schools with high quality outdoor environment (all except three) reported planning multiple activities and were observed conducting some of these activities during outdoor play, while teachers from pre-schools which had low quality classrooms had fewer planned activities for outdoor play, however pre-school children were observed jumping rope in the outdoor setting.

All pre-school lead teachers reported regularly conducting planned and unplanned activities during outdoor play. Some teachers, 10 (23.8%), specified that they did planned outdoor activities every day, 15 (35.71%) of them reported having planned activities on some days, while the majority ($f=17$; 40.48%) of them explained that they planned for outdoor activities when the outdoor weather was good. Further it was observed that the outdoor activities in which pre-school children involved themselves in were child initiated, others spontaneously planned in relation to the weather and some were planned according to the curriculum. For example, one teacher said,

It's fifty- fifty. Sometimes the activities are planned and sometimes they are not. Some ideas are planned from the classroom that we are going to do outside, and then others we just think of while we're out there. Sometimes the children ask us to bring things outside, so in order to meet their needs, we do what they ask (T-4).

Another teacher who used a prescribed curriculum for planning described,

I always use the curriculum to ensure that my preschool children acquire all the skills recommended by the KICD. This enables me to integrate the teaching of all activity areas using the thematic teaching approach. In some cases we use activities which the children enjoy performing which are not in the curriculum (T-2).

3.1.6 Monitoring Children as they performed outdoor Play

Variations were also observed in the ways pre-school lead teachers supervised pre-school children. Teachers from 32 (76.19%) pre-schools were observed monitoring children during play while 10 (23.81%) of them left the children to play alone. T8 was frequently observed watching twenty three children climbing on the slide. The slide was in good condition but not all children were able to climb that one equipment because the children were many. In addition, it was situated next to a class which prevented the children from exploring and playing with it as it could be observed in the following photograph.



Figure 3.1: Pre-School Children Performing Locomotive Activity

4.6.7 Directing and Providing Comments as Children played

Teachers were occasionally observed making verbal comments, asking open ended questions and/or engaging in non-verbal behaviours that facilitated children's play and took their play to the next level. Overall, instances of facilitation did not occur as frequently as monitoring, directing and making comments to the children on their play. When observed in facilitating play, teachers enhanced different types of play, including children's dramatic play, physical play and movement. T-14 was observed directing pre-school children, asking them not to engage in activities considered inappropriate and asking them to do something she thought was appropriate. This teacher typically directed children to ensure safety while engaging in various outdoor activities. For example, T-24 responded when she saw children engaging

in play that she considered unsafe. A few boys pretended to play while pushing each other, and one boy kicked another. The comments made by teachers were responses to child-initiated interactions.



Figure 3.2: Pre-school Teacher Giving Instructions during outdoor Play

3.1.8 Teacher Involvement

During observations the quantitative analysis of teachers' involvement levels indicated that when focused on the target child, overall, teachers were moderately involved (i.e., they sometimes directed children, provided short comments, and asked short questions during play) for about half of the time they were being observed. However, teachers from pre-schools with high quality outdoor environments were seen interacting more with children than teachers who were from pre-schools with low quality outdoor environments. Further, results from observation revealed that overall, teachers were least engaged in activities that required vigorous body movement (which included introducing play, facilitating play, and participating in play).

The results also indicated that teachers in high quality outdoor environments displayed high involvement more often than teachers in low quality outdoor environments. Qualitative analysis of photographs supported this finding and revealed that teachers, specifically those who were above 45 years spent most of their time supervising children and did not interact with them very often during outdoor play activities unlike those teachers who were below 30 years who were seen planning a wide range of activities for children outdoors.



Figure 3.3: Involvement of the Pre-school Teachers in the outdoor Activities

3.1.9 Supporting Individual Work

Data revealed that teachers planned their outdoor lessons to support individual work, group team building and social interaction. Their lesson plans indicated that the conceptual learning or literacy skills were the primary purpose for their lessons. 61.9% of the pre-school lead teachers indicated specific lessons could not have been effective indoors, and that by taking the class into the outdoor environment the learners were able to participate in an activity that would bring them to a higher level of understanding. T-21, T-35 and T-42 observed that the physical outdoor environment provided a special stage for action that was stimulating for children to play and learning as they involved themselves in various physical activities.

Some of the teachers observed that an effective outdoor environment that encourages individual work should be designed in a way that allows children to take safe risks while testing their emerging abilities. T-19 said that a safe, well-planned environment provides opportunities for children to seek new challenges as they master old ones. T-5 also observed that a natural play space that encouraged individual work was core in stimulating children's imaginations and engage the children's sense of curiosity as they explore their physical surroundings and learn in ways beyond what they could experience indoors.

3.1.10 Ensuring Safety Measures in the Playground Space

Using this theme, the study purposed to examine the influence of safe playground spaces on participation of the pre-school children in outdoor activities. To achieve this, the interview items required the pre-school lead teacher to identify the strategies they used to ensure that safety measures were observed to either minimize or eliminate risky conditions or threats in the outdoor space that may cause accidents, bodily injuries, emotional and psychological distress to the young children. From the results, it was found that 19 (45.24%) pre-school lead teachers were found to have collected or cleared harmful or sharp objects (like broken glasses thorns, sticks and stones) and covered potholes that were perceived to harm children or create fear of using the playgrounds.

Further the results revealed that 27 (64.29%) of the primary school head teachers cited cutting grass and bushes as well as maintaining cleanliness of the play areas as ways of ensuring playground space is safe for children to participate in outdoor activities. On marking the play spaces by defining areas for different activities or zoning them from other spaces that serve other purposes, only 3 (7.14%) of the pre-school centres had their play fields marked. This implies that playgrounds were not well utilized in majority of the pre-school centres.

It was also observed that 8 (19.05%) of the pre-school lead teachers mentioned inspecting or pre-visiting the play area on a daily basis before allowing children to go out for play so as to check and collect harmful or sharp objects, ensuring the equipment and materials were available and in good condition, that is, no sharp points, edges and corners. From the interviews, the pre-school lead teachers reported that they always ensured safety during outdoors and gave the following responses on safety:

Safety of the children of paramount importance. I must always prevent accidents from occurring. T14

I ensure that the play equipment and materials are in good order before I let the pupils play. T43

Safety is most vital when dealing with young children therefore should be taken into serious deliberation. I make sure that no learner gets injured during lay activities. T-22

Play should be done within a much secured setting, to escape some injuries. T-30

3.1.11 Teachers Developing Age-appropriate Play Equipment

From observation, only 15 (35.71%) of the pre-school lead teachers had developmentally appropriate playground equipment for pre-school children in outdoor activities. Although the most important factor for playground safety is good and appropriate play equipment and materials that children manipulate in their play, games and sports activities, majority of the pre-schools play grounds were not in good condition. According to ECD SSGK (2006) the play equipment in the pre-school playgrounds should be age and developmentally appropriate however, the condition of most of pre-school centres are like the one in the Figure 3.4.



Figure 3.4: The Condition in one outdoor Space in one of the Schools

Most of the play grounds have potholes and the fields are not fenced.

3.1.12 Arrangement of Play Equipment in the Play Space

Further analysis was done to show how the play equipment were arranged or organized in the playground space. Layout of the equipment was perceived to be crucial in enhancing children's safety in the playground. From the results, it was evident that less than a third ($f=12$, 28.57%) of pre-school lead teachers were observed to organize their equipment according to children's age or level of learning. T-40 indicated that arranging equipment ensured that all children of all ages were able to use the equipment because they were arranged according to the age and ability of the children. Observations done on arrangement revealed that 6 (14.29%) organized the equipment according to equipment type thus separating loco-motor and non-loco-motor activities undertaken using equipment from those using other types of materials and those without.

3.1.13 providing Children with Freedom to Engage in Meaningful Child-initiated Activities

It was observed that majority (73.81%) of pre-school lead teachers supported children's initiated activities within the outdoor environment, 26.19% of the pre-school lead teachers dominated in the selection of outdoor activities that the pre-school children were involved in.

SCH-11 the preschool lead teacher gave the children freedom to engage in activities that were meaningful to them and allowed them to learn through experiences that they initiated rather than didactic instruction or teacher-initiated activities.

In SCH-17 the physical placement of teachers near and around children made it easy for children to include teachers in their experience or to seek assistance.

In SCH-19, the teachers routinely sat near children so they could not only observe them but hear their

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conversation.

SCH-10 the preschool lead teachers in got down on children's level, in positions that encouraged children to engage them. In this case the children were comfortable having their teacher observe them and offer comments or ask questions. These children frequently initiated engagement with teachers by asking questions, narrating their play to teachers, making declarative statements or asking for help. Teachers offered observations and thought provoking questions, responded to children when approached and engaged with children when they were invited but did not take a lead role in the experiences, but instead deferred to children's leadership.

Also in SCH-40, it was observed that the teachers intentionally stayed out of children's play and trusted them to problem-solve, create, hypothesize, test theories and collaborate alone or with one another

The teacher in SCH-5 routinely asked open-ended questions that provoked children's thinking and often led to expanded learning.

In the above examples, children's skill development within the outdoor environment was successful due to the pre-school lead teachers' ability to know how to best support children without interfering or taking over. The teachers were observed to make informed decisions regarding when and how to engage children, what questions to ask to spur children's thinking and when to step back and allow children to experience on their own. The teachers usually used open-ended questions to extend children's thinking, allowing them to be the experts (i.e. showing what they knew) and encouraging them to articulate their thoughts.

On the strategies of ensuring effective implementation of outdoor play activities, the current findings are supported by the results of a study conducted by the National Children's Bureau (2007) which observed that the teacher needs to be flexible when promoting outdoor play. Further the study indicated that learners achieved more when they worked with teachers as they set the stage and created an atmosphere for play by being facilitators of play.

IV. CONCLUSION

The study sought to establish the links between utilization of the outdoors environment and pre-school children's physical activity and learning experiences, with a focus on studies relating to children's use of outdoor spaces. It has shown that there is general agreement about a positive relationship between use of the outdoors and pre-school children's development of various skills. From the study it could be concluded that the ability of pre-school children to perform various loco-motor and rhythmic movement activities is equated to the adequacy, availability, site and effectiveness of outdoor components.

Based on the results of this study, it could be concluded that despite the many challenges that constrain having a rich outdoor environment, children continue to use the playgrounds as the major component of the outdoor environment. This study undoubtedly exemplifies the significance of children spending time in a well-designed, nature-filled outdoor environment under the support of peers and pre-school lead teachers. This outdoor environment is crucial in supporting children's success and skill development. As educators take charge of outdoor activities, they need to be flexible in their expectations of children in nature-based outdoor classrooms. It is through this expanded freedom that children more fully experience the space, materials, and environment, adding to their skill development and to the depth of their understanding of the world around them.

Lastly, the overarching philosophy of outdoor environment should embrace the value of unstructured play for children, the role of child-initiated activities in learning, and the importance of children spending time outdoors, connecting with nature. All children deserve the rich learning that can occur through opportunities to experience the beauty of nature that spending time in an intentionally designed outdoor classroom can provide. The current findings demonstrate that providing games equipment can increase children's activity levels.

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