

PROFESSIONALISATION OF CHILDCARE SYSTEMS IN KENYA: LESSONS FROM SELECTED COUNTRIES

By

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ABSTRACT

High quality child-care and education systems have been encouraged worldwide to provide positive developmental outcomes for infants and preschool age children. Quality and level of qualification of childcare workers on the other hand, is highly linked to quality of childcare services. As a consequence, there is widespread movement towards longer and higher level basic training for early childhood workers among world states. Nonetheless, types and levels of qualifications found among early year workers in different countries vary considerably. While in some countries, there have been improvements in the training for teachers to the point that these teachers now have the highest formal academic level of training; this subsector is largely dominated by low qualifications in some countries like Kenya. This has been based on the perception that working with the youngest children is limited to physical care, a task that can be carried out by any person without training. This extensive literature review, examined exemplars of contexts where governments have instigated coherent policies to upgrade the qualifications and, invested in increased professionalism of childcare workforce. The examined literature seems to line up a myriad of advantages in investing in the early childcare workforce to the individual child, parents and the community. The paper provides important implications for countries where early childcare workforce quality is compromised. It established that there is higher professionalism within integrated childcare systems. Professionalism was noted to promote vertical and horizontal mobility, high degree of autonomy, creativity and independence among early childcare workers.

Key Words: Professionalism, Quality Early childcare, Level of qualification, Kenya