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An investigation of the programs and equipment used by caregivers and day mothers for the age group 0-36 months in Limpopo Province, South Africa

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2008-05-14T09:45:02Z
http://hdl.handle.net/10539/4800

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to investigate the quality of care provided to children between 0 and 36 months by care givers in Limpopo Province, South Africa.

A non-experimental, quantitative, cross sectional descriptive design was used.

The researcher developed two research instruments for the study on the basis of current literature:

- a questionnaire which collected information on registration, training, services provided, programs used to stimulate the children, methods of referral and equipment that was used.
- An observation sheet which recorded information on the premises, the staff, equipment and office, toys, outdoor play area, sleeping and dining areas.

The 2 instruments were checked for reliability and validity and were modified after a pilot study

111 subjects participated in the study. The sample was divided into 19 day mothers who provided services in their homes in more urban areas and 92 caregivers who provided care within nursery schools and crèches in more rural areas. Each subject was interviewed by the research or research assistant and a questionnaire and observation sheet was completed during a single visit.

Descriptive statistics were used to summarize and organize the data and the overall mean values for the two samples were compared using a t test.

The overall results suggest that the quality of care provided to children 0-36 months by both day mothers and caregivers is below the accepted overall mean of 3 for all variables examined except premises where the day mothers scored an overall mean of 3. Caregivers scored slightly better than day mothers with respect to staff, equipment and dining area and the was a, toys and dining areas with toys and dining areas being significantly different with a p value of 0.001 and 0.003 respectively. Whereas day mothers scored marginally higher than caregivers with respect to premises, outdoor play and sleeping areas however none of these scores were significant.