

**INFLUENCE OF PARENTAL CHARACTERISTICS ON ENROLMENT OF  
PRESCHOOL CHILDREN WITH VISUAL IMPAIRMENT IN  
INTEGRATED SCHOOLS IN NAIROBI COUNTY KENYA**

**By**

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**A research project report submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the award of Master's degree of education in early Childhood Education, in  
the Department of Education and Technology, University of Nairobi**

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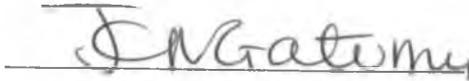
## DECLARATION

This project report is my original work and has not been presented for any award of diploma or degree in any other university.



Kiptoo Gadys Jepkorir

This research project has been submitted for examination with my approval as the university supervisor



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## DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my husband Mengech, whose support and sacrifices have been critically important to me, my children Jepkoech, Jeptarus, Sergon and Jepchumba, and my mother in law Kobilu for their encouragement and support during the entire period of study.

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS

<b>EPE</b>	-	Free Primary Education
<b>UN</b>	-	United Nations All
<b>CRC</b>	-	Convention on the rights of the child
<b>MOEST</b>	-	Ministry of Education Science and Technology
<b>UNICEF</b>	-	United Nations International Children Fund
<b>KUB</b>	-	Kenya Union of the Blind
<b>IDEA</b>	-	Individual
<b>UDPK</b>	-	United Disabled Persons of Kenya
<b>ILO</b>	-	International Labour Organization
<b>ECCE</b>	-	Early Childhood Care and Education Programs
<b>KISE</b>	-	Kenya Institute of Special Education
<b>IDEA</b>	-	Individuals With Disabilities Act
<b>ABC</b>	-	African Brail Centre
<b>UNFPA</b>	-	United Nations Population Fund

## ABSTRACT

Children with visual impairment have unique educational needs. In order to meet their unique needs they must be enrolled in schools for visually impaired to access specialized service. In the year 2000 UN General Assembly unanimously agreed on a goal of access to education for all children by 2015 EFA. UNESCO got the authority to implement this goal but still implementation continues in a slow speed. Some of the challenges that hinder enrolment of children with visual impairment include parental level of education, parents' income, parents' attitude and family size. The purpose of the study was to establish influence of parental characteristics on enrolment of preschool children with visual impairment in integrated schools in Nairobi County. The objectives included establishing relationship between education of parents and enrolment of preschool children, determining how parental income affects enrolment, establishing relationship between parents attitude towards enrolment of preschool children, Examining effects of family size on enrolment of children with visual impairment in integrated schools. Research design used was descriptive survey design. The respondents were 22 who provided information for both quantitative and qualitative. The relevant data was collected using questionnaires for teachers and interview schedule for parents and children. Documentary analysis was used to collect data on enrolment. Data analysis was done where tables frequencies and percentages was used to produce quantitative data. Qualitative data was constructed on the thematic areas which corresponded to the objectives which added quality to the quantitative data. The findings revealed that parents' educational level was moderate and they had highest enrolment of children. Those with low level of education had the lowest enrolment. Parents who had low income they lived from hand to mouth thus this influenced enrolment hence others retaining their children at home. Parents' attitude towards enrolment of children with visual impairment affected enrolment. Parents who had negative attitude had few children enrolled. Parents with positive attitude had more children who were enrolled in integrated schools. Finally family size influenced enrolment of children with visual impairment, large family sizes had lowest enrolment of children. Parents lacked seminars workshops and sensitization campaigns to allow them to enrol their children. Parents also lacked income for transport for their children .They do not have parents associations and support groups. This indicated that schools requires workshop and seminars to sensitize parents, funding for transport and feeding programs, formation of parents association and support groups. The recommendations were workshops and seminars were needed for parents to educate them on visual impairment. Campaign programs to sensitize the community about visual impairment. Future researchers should therefore focus on influence of parental characteristics on enrolment of preschool children who are visually impaired in special schools in Nairobi County. Further research should also be done on influence of social economic status of parents on enrolment of children with visual impairment in Nairobi County.

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background to the study

Children with visual impairment are among the world's most vulnerable citizens (UNICEF, 2006). Every action however simple that sighted children learns by observing and imitation, the blind child must be taught (Warries, 2006). Chronic illness and disabilities in childhood are a major drain in education and health system (Survey, 2008). The Americans with disabilities act defines visual impairment including blindness as vision that even with correction adversely affects an individual educational performance (Gargiulo, 2006). The visual impairment term includes both partial and blindness. The definition encompasses a student with a wide range of visual impairment who may vary significantly in their visual abilities (Gargiulo, 2006). Visual impairment may include reduction of vision (visual acuity) which is the ability to perceive details of distant visions or near visions. Consequently visual field is the amount of vision in the quadrant regions to the right left, up and down when seeing straight ahead. Major causes of visual impairment globally are normally categorized as unknown, congenital, which refers to conditions that one is either born with or that are genetic in nature (Survey, 2006).

Visual impairment in children hinders them from functioning as other children who are sighted. Children with visual impairment may experience increased injuries from accidents due to mobility problems, they may experience increased injuries from accidents due to mobility problems, and they often place higher emotional physical economic and social demands on families. Therefore close supervision would be required to ensure that each child participate fully in the society (Gargiulo, 2006).

Parents with limited social and community support may lead to their children being at risk because they do not provide them enough attention and reinforcement (Bonjo, 2003).

Impairment in communication abilities may prevent children with visual impairment from expressing themselves (Loxley, 2001). A child who has a physical problem may find it difficult to interact and play meaningfully with peers because of lack of stimulation, motivation and the fear of rejection (Loxley, 2001). The negative attitudes towards persons with visual impairment have persisted throughout the history of special needs education the behavior emanated from the medical model of disability, a model is a framework for understanding information. Through medical model, disability is understood as an individual problem for instance inability to see to see is understood to be their child's problem (Tassoni, 2003).

It is estimated that there are about 150 million children with disabilities in the world most of whom live with the reality of exclusion (UNICEF, 2006). It is estimated that persons with visual impairment are 650 million including children, among this 25% are children. The figure represents about ten percent of the world's population (Survey, 2008). Among people with disabilities 80% live in developing countries where most essential social services are inadequate (UNFPA, 2007). Child blindness remains a significant problem in the world. An estimated 1.4 million children who are below age 15 will be in blindness for many years. Consequently 1.2 million children are visually impaired because of uncorrected refractive errors (near sightedness, far sightedness). These are conditions that could be corrected (Vision Aid 2008) [Http://www.vao.org](http://www.vao.org). According to UNESCO (2008) realization of

education for all may not be possible if children with visual impairment who are below six years are not allowed to participate in preschool. Despite the adoption of EFA goals in 2000 not much has happened to persons with disabilities in the field of education. Since the Universal Declaration of Human rights was adopted, if the speed of implementation continue to be slow we may not be able to live up to the agreement of 1948. On 13<sup>th</sup> December 2006 United Nations general assembly unanimously adopted the eight human rights instrument named the convention on the rights of persons with disabilities which acts as a weapon to fight for human of rights people with disabilities.

Despite the international law it will be difficult to enroll all blind and partially sighted preschool children to school. Without the aggressive campaign on education to target the stakeholders like parents. According to Tassoni (2003) Parents have a great deal of background knowledge about their children. A father's education is associated with low mortality levels. This relationship is probably strongly influenced by association between husband's education and the socioeconomic status of family which result in better health because of the link between increased family income and the availability of basic foods and services for clothing sanitation and other related items (United Nations, 1985). Better educated mothers are more likely to receive proper prenatal and post natal care and have their deliveries assisted by trained health personnel (Hobcraft, 1992 and Lettenmaire 1988).

According to Sessional Paper 1 (2005) teaching and learning materials for learners with disabilities are expensive. As a result parents with low income may not be able to enroll their visually impaired children in integrated schools the few parents whose

income is better may lack skills on how they educate their children at home on areas like mobility orientation. Moreover parental education affects participation of children with visual impairment. Parents who are ignorant may not realize that visually impaired child has the same needs as all other children and that they need to enroll in preschool (Warries, 1984). Due to ignorance some parents hide their children from their neighbors (Savolainen & Kokkala, 2000). The parents who are educated may enroll their children and may not be confident on ways of raising up a blind or partially blind preschool child.

## **1.2 Statement of the problem**

The introduction of free primary education in Kenya in the year 2003 encouraged parents to enroll their children to schools therefore leading to overstretching of facilities. Unfortunately children with visual impairment enrolment still remained low. A total of 3,770 children with visual impairment are in both integrated education programs and special schools for the blind Kaburia (2008) among them 2,544 are within the integrated programs while 1,226 are in special schools (African Braille Center report Maurer M. (2005). It is estimated that 27,592 with visual impairment are out of school 9,463 are blind and 18,129 are children with low vision. The massive variance underlies the need to aggressively identify visually impaired children who should be in schools near their homes African Braille Centre report (2005). Warries (1984) argued that a dependent child makes a dependent adult the early the intervention given to children with visual impairment the greater the chance for reducing or reversing the negative impact of visual impairment.

According to (Tassoni, 2003) parents hold information and have a critical role to play in their children's education, they have unique strengths knowledge and experience on children's needs and the best ways of supporting children. The fact that no one knows a child better than a child's family, has guided the educational plans for children with visual impairments for many years Kenya union of the blind (2009).

The researcher assumes that what could be contributing to low enrolment of preschool children with visual impairment in Nairobi County are parental characteristics. No study has been carried out based on influence of parental characteristics on enrolment of children with visual impairment in integrated schools in Nairobi County. There is therefore need to carry out a study on impact of parental characteristics on enrolment of preschool children with visual impairment in integrated schools in Nairobi County.

### **1.3 Purpose of the study**

The purpose of the study was to investigate the influence of parental characteristics on enrolment of preschool children with visual impairment in integrated schools in Nairobi County.

### **1.4 Objective of the study**

The study was guided by the following objectives:

- i. Establish whether there is relationship between education of parents and enrolment of preschool children with visual impairment in integrated schools in Nairobi County.

- ii. Determine how parental income affects enrolment of preschool children with visual impairment in integrated schools in Nairobi County.
- iii. Establish whether there is relationship between parent's attitude towards preschool children with visual impairment and enrolment of preschool children with visual impairment in integrated schools in Nairobi County.
- iv. To examine whether family size affects enrolment of preschool children with visual impairment in integrated schools in Nairobi County.

### **1.5 Research questions**

The study was guided by the following research questions:

- i. What is the relationship between education of parents and enrolment of preschool children with visual impairment in integrated schools in Nairobi County?
- ii. How does parental income affect enrolment of preschool children with visual impairment in integrated schools in Nairobi County?
- iii. What is the relationship between parental attitudes towards children with visual impairment and enrolment of preschool children with visual impairment in integrated schools in Nairobi County?
- iv. In which ways does family size influence enrolment of preschool children with visual impairment in integrated schools in Nairobi County?

### **1.6 Significance of the study**

The study sought to benefit stakeholders who would use the same policy guidelines to the development of inclusive education in Nairobi County. To the society the study would hopefully contribute to early childhood awareness among parents and

caregivers. Parents who have preschool going children with visual impairments would realize the importance of taking their children to preschool in their locality. The school administrators would use the study to give priorities to children with visual impairment in preschool hence supporting them. The government will increase financial support for visual impaired children who are poor and helpless.

### **1.7 Limitation of the study**

The study made use of descriptive survey. Survey studies depend on self report data. That is they depend on participants to truthfully and accurately report on their attitudes and characteristics. The second limitation of the study will be size of the sample schools compared to the number of schools in Nairobi county this could have an implication on generalization of this research in other counties.

### **1.8 Delimitation of the study**

The study focused on integrated primary schools within Nairobi County Our lady of mercy integrated school, Kilimani integrated school and Muthaiga integrated school, leaving special and regular schools. Some children with visual impairment especially low vision are in regular schools within Nairobi. The study findings were derived from preschool children enrolled in public integrated schools, head teachers, preschool teachers and parents were selected because they are the main custodians of the children.

### **1.9 Basic Assumptions**

The study assumed that parents play a major role in the education of their children.

## 1.10 Definition of key terms

**Convention:** Agreement between nations for a common purpose.

**Enrolment:** Number of children who are learning in school and their names are in the class register.

**Early learning:** Early experiences which refers to all effects of stimulation both immediate and long term in early stages.

**Family size:** Number of children in a certain home which may influence socialization and the participation of the child in the home.

**Inclusion:** This is focusing on adjusting the home, the school and the society at large so that children can have an opportunity to interact play and experience the feeling of belonging and develop in accordance with their potentials.

**Integration:** This is the provision of educational services to children with disabilities who have segregated into special school classes and are brought back partially or fully into regular school classes.

**Interaction:** Mutual attention towards each other or towards a thing or a person.

**Intervention:** Anything that is done to minimize the effects of disability in the life of a child.

**Orientation and mobility** This is a skill taught to the visually impaired which is concerned with knowing an environment and being able to move about in the environment.

**Participation:** Is the shared engagement in learning and social activities with others such as knowing an environment and being able to move about in the environment.

**Pre-school:** Is an institution for children between 3-6 years which children attend before they join primary school.

### **1.11 Organisation of the study**

The study was organised into five chapters. The first chapter represented the background of the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study and delimitation of the study, study assumptions, definition of key terms and organisation of the study. Chapter two covered the literature review related to area of study. Chapter three focused on how the study was conducted which included research design, population, sampling procedure and sampling size, validity and reliability, procedure for data collection and data analysis. Chapter four had findings and discussions of the collected data on parents' education, parent's income, parent's attitude and family size. Chapter five focused on summary, conclusions and recommendations.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### **2.0 Introduction**

In this chapter focus was on reviews of related literature to the study based on the following international effort to address disability, concept of early childhood parent's education parental income, parent's attitude, and family size.

#### **2.1 International efforts to address disability**

According to Kenya survey (2008) globally people with disabilities are often marginalized and face difficulties as a result of their disability. International efforts to address disability globally people with disabilities are often marginalized and face difficulties as a result of their disability.

In the world it is estimated that there are about 650 million people with disabilities of these 10% live in the developing countries and there are estimated 150 million children with disabilities (UNICEF, 2006). Among the 150 million children with disability 1.4 million are visually impaired children aged 0-14. The vast majority of the visually impaired children with low vision conditions in developing countries are sent to blind schools despite having usable vision (Vision aid, 2008). People with disabilities including visual impairment have no access to education, health, employment or rehabilitation. Majority of the people with visual impairment face hardships as a result of social cultural and economic prejudices stigmatization and often abuse and violence. It depicts people with visual impairment as the poorest of the poor and they are unlucky to remain poor because of environmental social and economic barriers that hinder them from attaining their potential. Attitudes and

practices embedded in cultural beliefs, taboos, and religion create obstacles to the participation of people with visual impairment in both social and cultural activities. Vision Aid, (2008) [Http://www.vao.org.uk](http://www.vao.org.uk).

Efforts to deal with disability issues started before promulgation of the human rights charter 1948 (Survey, 2008). These efforts were mainly advocacy in nature, it meant that provision in the charter were for all human beings. The first efforts of international level deal with the issues of disability were initiated in 1971, following the UN declaration of the rights of the mentally handicapped. This declaration called for the world community to treat people with mental disability as human beings with all the entitlements of other human beings. The 1975 UN declaration on the rights of persons with disabilities expanded the space for people with disability and that they should be accorded respect, opportunity for rehabilitation, education, employment, human dignity and the enjoyment of life within a family set up.

Global awareness created during the 1981 International Year for the Disabled Person (IYDP) expanded social participation and equality for disabled persons. The international labor organization (ILO) formulated the first ever enforceable document for its members the vocational rehabilitation and employment convention (1983). The convention made sure that appropriate vocational rehabilitation measures are made available to all categories of disabled persons; later people with disabilities were involved in the development of new document known as the UN standard rules on equalization of opportunities for person with disabilities. The document had 22 rules on the behavior of states and was the most comprehensive ever.

The document for law standard rules on equalization of opportunities for persons with disabilities was adopted in December 1993. The rules in the document had brought greater influence in the world in terms of awareness Survey (2008). In America, the education for all children, now known as (IDEA, 1990) is the most important piece of legislation enacted on behalf of infants and preschool age children with visual impairment. This act opened up a new era of services for young children with disabilities. It required that all states ensure a free and appropriate public education of every eligible child with disability between three and five years of age infants and toddlers 0-2 years (Egan W. Hardman, 2005). Early intervention under part C of idea; focuses on the identification of provision of education health care and social services as a means to enhance learning and development, reduce the effects of disability and prevent the occurrence of future difficulties for young children.

IDEA (Individuals with disabilities Educational Act) defines infants and toddlers as those less than three years who need early intervention services for two reasons. There is developmental delay in one or more of the areas of cognitive development, physical development, social, emotional development and adaptive development. It is the responsibility of the state to ensure that all the support required by a child with disability to access to education are availed. In America parents have a bigger say in where and what programs to be offered to their children (Randiki, 2002).

According to Randiki (2002) South Africa like all developing countries poverty level is very high; this makes education especially for learners with visual impairment rather expensive. The cost of equipment and other support services that would enhance inclusion of learners with special needs in the neighborhood schools is out

of reach for many parents. Therefore they find special schools rather cheap as they are well equipped and staffed.

## **2.2 The concept of early childhood education**

Weber (1970) defined early childhood education as the period from birth through age 8. Recent years have seen a global endeavor to prioritize early childhood care and education as a foundation for later learning as evidenced by the global guidelines for early childhood education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Industrialization has led to the increase of women with young children working as employees or self employed. Families with two working parents arise in the number of single parents and the demise of traditional systems of child care and extended family support (Weber, 1970).

Kimanthi (2003) asserts that there is increased interest in early childhood education around the world. Accordingly children may be viewed as growing plants that need nurture they are natural and national resources that need to be nurtured as future investments critical to the sustenance of a society and its ability to compete in a technological age.

Warries (1984) suggested that the belief that early learning begets learning and success just like early failure breeds late failure have been validated in both economic and educational research. Therefore the potential long term for a child's cognitive and social development emotional and physical development should benefit all children including children with visual impairment. In the year 2003 the government of Kenya implemented free primary education. Education was

recognized as basic right for all children including children with visual impairment (Kochung, 2003). For Kenyan society to reverse the growing pattern of failure and developing among youth there is need to recognize the changes that comes most readily if attention is given to children when they are experiencing the greatest rush to development (Kimanthi, 2003).

According to Palm (1977) interventions can succeed, he notes that when children are involved in preschool intervention projects, when they reach later elementary classes, they score high on various achievement tests than do children who do not experience early interventions. In this regard for humanity to understand and shape the changes in the society, it is the whole education of these young must be worked into so as to prevent damaging and socially dangerous maladjustments (Wall, 1975). Children living under difficult circumstances need to be given all the necessary support in school and at home so that they can have a better future.

### **2.3 Parental education**

According to UNESCO (1998), as cited in Sida, Melin, M. (2001) education empowers the people particularly the poor and the weak by attacking ignorance, building skills and by changing the outdated attitudes and values, education can be a life empowerment in other words education is not for empowerment it is empowerment.

Children who are lacking access to pre-school services tend to be children from disadvantaged communities such as arid areas and urban slums. This observation is reinforced by the findings of the multiple indicator cluster survey (MICS) UNICEF/

government of Kenya, 2000). The findings showing that 29.5% of children whose mothers had secondary education were enrolled in some form of ECD compared with 10.7% of those whose mothers had only completed primary school and 12.4% of those whose mothers had no schooling (UNESCO, 2005).

According to Warries (1984) parental education affect enrollment of children with visual impairment in schools because educated parents with high incomes are able to provide their children conducive environment. They also understand the value of education and its benefits to the child. Parents who are ignorant may not realize that visually impaired child has the same needs as all other children and those they need to enroll children in preschool. Some parents hide their children away from neighbors. On the other hand the educated parents may not be confident on the ways of raising up a visually impaired child in areas like early intervention on orientation and mobility (Stone, 1995).

According to UNESCO (2005) the level of education of parents is an attribute which helps in understanding parent's views and perception on visual impairment. It is a well-known fact that ones level of education has an impact on both perceptions and behaviors. Data on parent's level of education could therefore be valuable in shading light on how parents understand visual impairment and how they relate with stakeholders their concern on quality education for their children.

Lewis (1985) asserted that much of children's learning is stimulated by what happens at home and in school. There is need for developing and sustaining links between home and school. Participation in school events and support provided at

home and around the school related tasks supervision of homework completion and asking learners what is going on at school. In some cultures parents consider that they are fully performing their rolls if they fulfill their parental obligations for instance meeting the basic need of their child in a loving home environment (Schwartz, 2005). They also view school as professionals as having the training necessary to educate their children and as best equip to make school related decisions. Therefore where parents view each party as having dramatically different and completely independent roles to play in the life of the child they truly do not understand why they are being asked to make educational decisions or why school personnel are involving themselves in matters of the home.

According to Schwartz (2005) parents of children with visual impairment may have difficulties they may have additional stresses that make it difficult for them to play the roles that schools may want them to play in education of their children. Those parents who are involved solely at home make sure their children are healthy safe and cared for. They can also provide schedule for children to do homework listen to them read and respond to them as they talk about what happened at school. Tasks of this nature are associated with school success. Family processes were considered more powerful in producing change than classroom procedures (Paul, 1997). Children with visual impairment who are from homes or classrooms where they are given greater opportunities for communication and decision making depict greater initiative in carrying out activities and gaining independence after entering school. They also attain higher grades (Paul, 1997). Parents for visually impaired children need to interact through associations so that they share ideas on challenges of children with visual impairment.

## 2.4 Parent's income

According to Ayres (1985) poverty is the inability to attain a minimum standard of living. Measure of standard of living is by incomes and expenditure per capita. Although urban areas are generally higher than the rural, urban services and facilities are accessible. Poor town dwellers may suffer more than rural household from certain aspects of poverty. The urban poor typically housed in slum squatter settlements often have to content with overcrowding bad sanitation and contaminated water; the sites are illegal and dangerous.

UNICEF (2006) noted that households with the lower income per capita tend to be large with many economically dependent members. Poverty and hunger among children is of particular concern. The implication of recent food research shows that if young children are not properly nourished the result may be lasting impairment not only the body but also the mind. According to Sida (2001) families with low income spend all their income on consumption of one sort or another and at least half of this consumptions is on food for instance 70% is on food, poverty is one of the fundamental causes of malnutrition. Families of low social economic levels spend a rise in income on better foods and they are likely to invest in boys than girls. (Okot, 2008) observed that parents with low income cannot afford to buy for their children white canes and magnifying glasses for reading. Mason and McCall, (2003) suggested that few parents who have better income may lack the skill on how to educate their children on orientation and mobility and other useful skills.

According to Sida (2001), poverty and economic constrain keep away children from economically poor families away from schools. Income poverty does not allow

households to meet high direct costs of schooling or to bear the opportunity costs for schooling. A large proportion of children from poor families participate in wage yielding activities, non wage yielding activities like such as household and get engaged. In addition Dalal and Pandley (1999) argued that poor parent's often do not have the finances, resources to make their children access school. Poor household do not enroll their children because of high rates of poverty (Orodho, 2003).

#### **2.4.1 Child Development in low income families**

According to Kaur (2005) all evidence indicate that children from home background that not only economically income and socially at its lowest level lacks orientation toward formal learning. Poverty lack of parental supervision and absence of support from parents derails enrolment of preschool children. Moreover the daily priorities in such families are directed to survival than succeeding in school (Kaur, 2005). Skills that are most lacking in low income families in the child are skills with words and comparison of ideas that sprout from the thoughts behind words. The contrast between them and the middle class child is of no comparison. The middle class home is a child oriented has time for their children they welcome and encourage questions exploration within reasonable limits. Parents with low income have no time for their children (Ayres, 1983). A visually impaired child who is blind needs to be nursed more than other children, for instance when the child is lying awake hearing sounds which have no meaning for the child and cannot know its cause, he or she will be frightened so the mother must try to keep him near her she must try to touch often and to speak to him/her soothingly to let the child know that she is there and loves him or her (Warries, 1984).

The slum home is of little opportunity to ask questions and seek answers. In overcrowded residence curiosity is a nuisance. During day time the most competent adult are out to make a living. The children including the visually impaired child are either left to the old brothers and sisters or are left with the least competent woman in the building. When parents return after the frustrations of the day they have no time for their children (UNICEF, 2006). In the slum dwellers life the atmosphere hardly encourages much concern with child care there is little patients to children's issues. This does not go in line with training of children with visual impairment where they should be allowed to take part in daily activities for instance washing, cooking (Warries, 1984). Parents and caregivers need to be sensitized on how to bring up a visually impaired child and other children who are normal. Children from low income families need support mainly in education and medication.

## **2.5 Parents attitude**

Reginald (1984) asserts that attitude is construct that exist in the minds of people but they cannot count or pinpoint. Negative attitudes of parents towards children with visual impairment have persisted throughout history. The negative attitudes of parents coupled with the society's attitudes put children with visual impairment at risk of exclusion (Harman, C. and Egan, 2005). Some parents regard visual impairment to be caused by witchcraft curse or punishment.

According to Mccal and Mason (2003) parents may experience periods of drama as they face up the reaction of others such as family and friends and this may be a problem if the child has a disfiguring eye those negative attitudes. Parents with children with visual impairment sometimes overprotect them. For instance a child

with visual impairment may be pitied by parents, overprotected and they may feel that they need assistances all the time which may lead the child to being over dependent (Bonjo, 2003). Negative attitudes and some forms of prejudice are key difficulties that are faced with children with visual impairment this impacts negatively on enrolment of children with visual impairment.

Ayres (1983) observed that the damage caused by poor judgment in raising a child with visual impairment is usually after the fact that instead of feeling guilt parents should do something to help their children to appreciate themselves. Those parents who sympathize with the child may decide to assist the child to complete homework for the child. The same parent can allow the child not to attend school regularly or not to attend at all. Children with visual impairment may find themselves overprotected and treated like children. This form of negative attitude is called “does he take sugar syndrome” this refers to particularly visual impaired children being treated as if they do not know their own minds and cannot speak for themselves. Needless to say children who are treated that way may not participate well in language development in classroom.

Schwartz (2005) observed that parents and teachers must be extremely careful of over helping. Over helping occurs when adults come to child’s rescue without being asked for help or before the child has tried for instants for a blind child the parent may decide to assist the child in completing his or her homework (Schwartz, 2005). Over helping is an attempt to alleviate the persons struggle to get a better more polished version of the assignment for instance if a child gives his parent a modeled object as a gift and if he or she shapes it to look better the child will not be proud of

it as the way he or she gave him. This applies to parents and teachers when they provide too much assistance to learners to achieve a more polished work. In this case they are actually preventing them from struggling a bit and from feeling the pride of a job done on their own. According to Hatlen (1996) social interaction skills must be taught to children with visual impairment because they are unable to casually observe how people interact and thus they must be taught when and how to smile frown and many other nonverbal communication.

Parents need to be sensitized on the rights of children with visual impairment (Schwartz, 2006). Kaburia (2008) argued that some members of the society encourage dependency syndrome to the visually impaired persons who are sometimes seen in the streets even after going through basic education. Studies on attitudes by different authors focus on attitudes of parents of children with visual impairment in general, they have not focused specifically on how parent's attitudes influence enrolment of preschool children with visual impairment.

## **2.6 Family size**

Warries (1984) observed that there is an extra stress in time and energy involved in rising up a visually impaired child in large family size. The situation requires everyone in the family to understand the need of cooperation and making effort in caring for the family member with visual impairment in order to make it easier and have a happier family. Sometimes the challenges faced by families are not shared equally among members (Allen, 2001). Developmental problems go undetected because many children and their families have inadequate care or are without health care of any kind (Allen, 2001). Consequence of large families where parents have

low social economic status cannot be able to cater for their children's needs. Children from such families may not be able to attend school. There is need for providing support to families in natural environment. Parents with large families and are poor and need to be provided financial support.

According to Warries (1984) the relations of children with visual impairment suffers serious problems with subsequent adverse effect on lives and wellbeing of the children. Children living with a single parent or other relatives would generally get less support compared to a situation where the child lives with both parents. The task of bringing up a child with visual impairment is more challenging it requires knowledge skills experience and hard work, it becomes even more challenging when a parent has many children.

### **2.6.1 Family type**

According to pioneer anthropologist Malinowsky (1913) nuclear family is universal because it filled a basic need that's caring for and protecting infants and young children. He also asserted that no culture could survive unless the birth of children would be linked to both mother and father. Family from the perspective of children is a family of orientation where the family serves to socialize children. Another type of family is single parent where one spouse may have died or a parent may decide to have a single family by choice. In a family where children live with one parent as a result of divorce, children are not well catered for. Limited resources become a major problem. Children in single parent families may have more difficulties in following divorce custodian parents mostly the mother generally have less income than two parent family and may have difficulty in enrolling their children in schools

Amato (2001). According to Crowder and Teachman (2004) more often children in single parent families moved to new residence the more likely children can drop from school.

According to Mbugua (2004) with the presents of single parents and the demise of traditional systems of child care and extended family support it becomes difficult for children with disabilities to access education. Wadge and Essein (1982) suggested that children who grow up in large or single families are poorly housed and have low family income thus may not be able to attend school.

## **2.7 Theoretical framework**

The study will be based on the social model theory of disability which was created by people with disabilities themselves. The social model theory is traced to the civil rights movement of 1960s. In 1993 the disabled academic Mike Oliver coined the phrase 'social model of disability' in reference of ideological development. Swain and Oliver (1993) focused on an idea of an individual (model of which the medical was a part) versus social model derived from the distinction originally made between impairment and disability. However the social model suggests it is the society that causes individual with physical or psychological differences to be disabled, in other words individuals with impairments are not disabled by their impairment but by the barriers that exists in society which do not take into account their needs. It was primarily as a result of society's respond where they viewed society as problem. The society made them feel socially isolated and oppressed. The denial of opportunities, the restriction of choice and self determination and lack of control over support

systems in lives let them to question the assumptions underlying the medical model where they view the disabled as a problem (Tassoni, 2003).

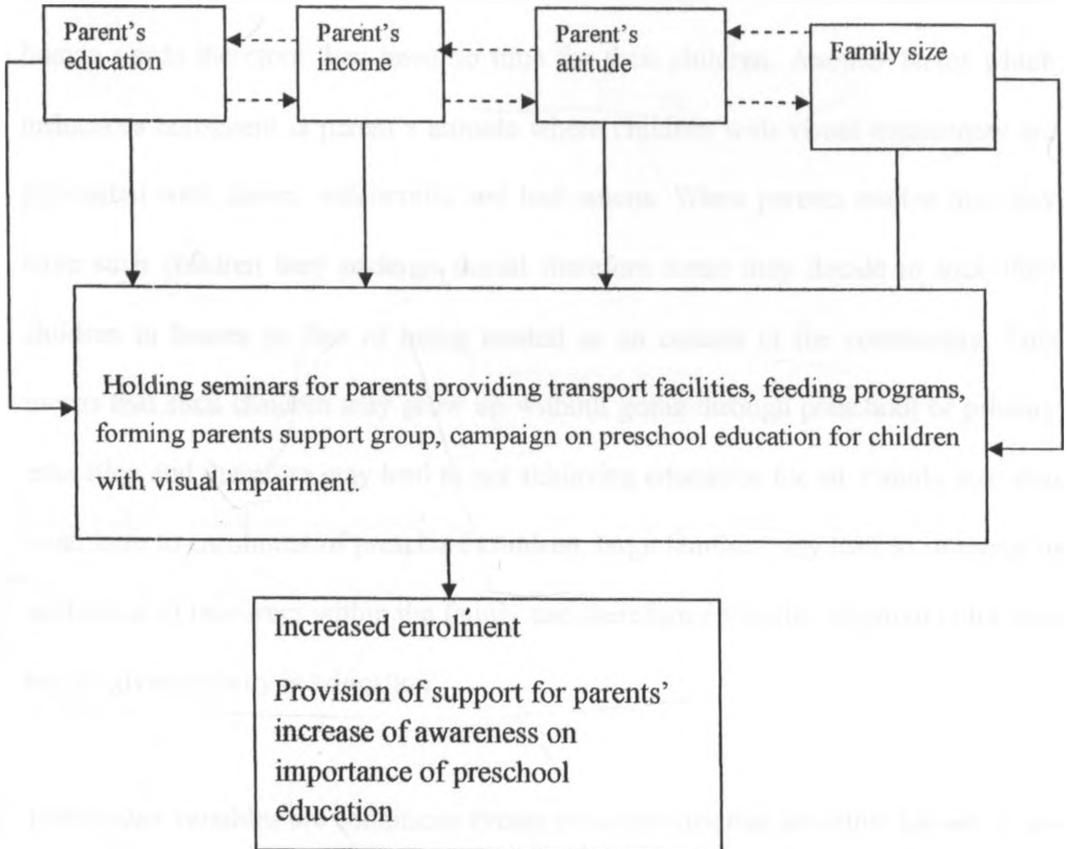
Culturally society let impaired people down because of the prejudice views a negative shared attitude of the non impaired community towards people with physical and psychological impairment. Prejudice is associated with the recognition of difference and disabled people are not seen as normal in the eyes of non-disabled people (Swain, Finkelstein French and Oliver, 1993). Prejudices are evident in language and the terminology used to describe people with impairment much of which is derived from a medical level. A fundamental aspect of the society concerns equality. Equal rights are said to give empowerment and decisions and opportunity to live to the fullest, a related phrase is often used by the disability rights campaigners as with other social activists in 'nothing for us without us'. Social model of disability focuses on changes required in the society attitude not under estimating the potential quality of life of those with impairment, social support to deal with barriers aids to overcome them.

The social model and the study are related in that it spells out attitude of society and economic social support. What has not been discussed in the social model theory of disability is about parents; in this regard parents are part of the society. Barriers within the home set up act as a hurdle in enrolments in preschools. The study will focus on the type of attitude, parents have towards enrolment of children with virtual impairments, it also focus on parental level of education ignorance and lack of involvement in school activities. Parent's income is also another barrier which may

hinder the enrolment in schools due to lack of involvement. The study will also focus on the family size which children with visual impairment come from.

## 2.8 Conceptual framework

**Figure 2.1: Deals with influence of parental characteristics on the enrolment of visually impaired children**



The Conceptual framework of the study shows interrelatedness of parental characteristics that impact on enrolment of visually impaired children in integrated primary schools. These characteristics which are the independent variable include parent's education, parent's income, parent's attitude and family size. Parents education influence enrolment of children with visual impairment, in this regard

parents may not value education of preschool learners with visual impairment hence they retain them at home until later age when they join primary one directly therefore may not receive early stimulation. Some may not even join primary school at all because of parental ignorance. Parent's income cannot be overestimated because it influences enrolment. Without enough resources to meet the basic needs of the child then the need for education especially for a visually impaired child does not come into the mind. Such parents are busy looking for money to meet the basic human needs therefore they have no time for their children. Another factor which influences enrolment is parent's attitude where children with visual impairment are associated with curses, witchcrafts and bad omens. When parents realize that they have such children they undergo denial therefore some may decide to lock their children in homes in fear of being treated as an outcast in the community. This means that such children may grow up without going through preschool or primary education and therefore may lead to not achieving education for all. Family size also contribute to enrolment of preschool children, large families may lead to straining in utilization of resources within the family and therefore a visually impaired child may not be given priority in education.

Extraneous variables are conditions events or occurrence that are either known or not controlled by the researcher James, (2008). In this study the extraneous variables are curriculum, teachers, educational facilities which affect enrolment of children with visual impairment. Curriculum which is not flexible is designed for preschool children in the regular school. When the factor of curriculum is compounded with teachers who are not trained then it makes it even worse because they cannot adapt the curriculum to meet the needs of the visually impaired children. Educational

facilities also affect enrolment of children with visual impairment. Learners with visual impairment may lack Braille, white canes and machines to practice reading and writing. The study assumes that the schools have trained teacher's flexible curriculum and availability of educational facilities.

The study assumed that when there is awareness of importance of preschool education for children with visual impairment change of attitude by parents and society at large this will lead to Increase in enrolment. Also increase in financial support for parents whose income is low will lead to high enrolment of visual impaired children in preschool.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.0 Introduction**

This chapter represents methodology and various procedures and techniques which were used in conducting the study. It is a description of how the study was carried out. It contains research design, study population, sampling procedure and sample size the instruments used to collect data, validity and reliability data collection procedure and data analysis procedures.

#### **3.1 Research design**

Research design is a plan structure strategy of investigation conceived as to obtain answers to research questions (Ranjit and Kumar, 2005). This study utilized a descriptive survey design. According to Mugenda (2008) descriptive studies design are conducted to establish the extend of range of issues such as education. The disparities between variables are found and intervention measures are made to reduce the range. Surveys are designed to collect information that help investigate and understand social issues and tries to find out challenges in social life. The research design was appropriate for the study because by identifying parental characteristics that influence enrolment of visually impaired children the researcher would establish the status of parents' income, parent's education, parent's attitude and family size. The researcher would find out how this characteristics influence enrolment.

#### **3.2 Study population**

The study targeted all the three primary integrated schools that is Kilimani integrated school, Muthaiga integrated school, Our lady of mercy integrated school. The three

schools have preschool children who are visually impaired who learn separately from the other normal preschool children. This preschool children are later integrated into standard one where they learn with children who are not visually impaired. The accessible population was 30 preschool children, nine preschool teachers three male teachers and six female teachers were selected. The target population also included 30 parents of preschool children with visual impairment.

### **3.2.1 Study sample**

The greater the sample size the more accurate will be the estimate of the true population (Carol and Tricia, 2000). Also the greater the diversity of what one is trying to find out the greater the number of respondents needed to be contacted to reach saturation. Saturation point is where the researcher thinks that he or she is not getting more new data from the respondents (Ranjit and Kumar, 2005). The sample size included 3 pre school children, 9 preschool teachers and 10 parents.

Sampling procedure adopted probability sampling techniques, where every sample unit of the population has an equal and known probability of being included in the sample (Nachunias, 1996). Sampling will be done without replacement so that no unit appears more than once in the sample (Mugenda & Mugenda, (1999). Three pupils were selected from the three preschools. The selection technique adopted simple random technique. According to Gay (1976) cited in (Mugenda & Mugenda, 1999) 10% of sample population for the study can be used in descriptive studies. Numbers were written on papers in each school and others were blank all rolled and put in a bowl and learners were instructed to pick. Those who picked numbers became the respondents.

Purposive sampling was adopted; purposive sampling is the chance that a particular sample was selected for the sample will depend on the subjective judgment of the researcher (Nachmias, 1996). Purposive sampling was used to select from the 9 preschool teachers. The reason for choosing purposive sampling was because choosing the whole population provided enough information for the study. Convenience sampling was used to select 10 parents. Convenience samples is obtained by selecting any sampling unit available (Nachmias, 1996).

### **3.3 Instruments**

Instruments used to collect data included questionnaires which sought data relating attitudes of parents and family size. Interview schedule was used to collect data on parents' income and level of education. Documentary analysis was used to collect data on enrolment.

#### **3.3.1 Questionnaire**

The main advantage of a questionnaire is that it can be used to obtain large data. The questionnaire was administered to teachers (Appendix1). The questions must motivate the respondent to provide information. The questionnaire has two sections ,section A and B. Section A consisted of questions on demographic information while section B consisted of questions on parental attitude and family size types of questions, closed ended questions (with multiple choice) and open ended questions (without multiple choices). The questionnaire was administered to preschool teachers of learners with visual impairment. The questionnaire was designed to elicit

information from the respondents regarding their demographic information, parental attitude and family size.

### **3.3.2 Interview schedule**

Another research instrument is interview schedule was administered to parents and children appendix I and II. The reason for choosing interview schedule is that it is appropriate for any type of population. For instance it can be used to seek information from handicapped children, young Children who are handicapped, young children like preschool children and illiterate population (Ranjit and Kumar, 2005). The second advantage of interview schedule is its usefulness in collecting in-depth information. Also information can be supplemented with those gained from observation of nonverbal reaction (Nachmias, 1996). Consequently the interviewer can clarify some issues that cannot be clearly understood by the interviewee. Use of interview usually ensures a more accurate and complete response this accrues from the idea that the interviewer can prop for more information (Real, 1992).

The study used structured interviews questions to solicit information from which parents were asked questions on parental education family size and parental income. Interview for children consisted of structured questions which sought information on concerning family size and parental attitude.

### **3.3.4 Documentary analysis form**

It was used to collect data on enrolment from registers it focused on information on number of children in class, those who have dropped at the course of the year

Documentary analysis also solicited information on parents meeting records that is the number of parents who attend parents meeting and those who do not attend.

### **3.4 Validity and reliability**

Validity means to make an instrument one which is supposed to measure what it intends to measure Nachmias (1996). Ranjit and Kumar (2005) further defined validity as the quality of a measurement procedure that provides respectability and accuracy. In this study the validity of the questionnaire and interview schedules were measured by giving to three experts from university of Nairobi. The validity of the documentary analysis was measured by ensuring that the registers and parents meeting attendance records were available in the three schools. The critique received included leading questions and asking questions that can give relevant answers to the research questions. This helped to modify the questionnaire and interview schedule to avoid ambiguous questions and any other irrelevances.

#### **3.4.1 Reliability**

A reliable test is one that measures consistently of what is supposed to be measured one method of making the test reliable is by pre testing. Mugenda (2008) noted that pre testing is essential it identifies errors found in the study instrument which can later be corrected. Moreover pretesting of the instrument helps to estimate time needed to administer the instrument. According to Pallant (2006) the reliability of a test indicates how free it is from random error scale. The test retest reliability of a scale is assessed by administering it to the same people on two different occasions and calculated the correlation between the two scores. In this study, the instruments do were administered at two different times to 2 preschool children, 4 teachers and

three parents in visually integrated schools. The correlation between the two sets of administered instruments was computed. The following formula was used to calculate the reliability coefficient.

$$R = \frac{\sum y}{(\sum X^2) (\sum Y^2)}$$

Where R = Pearson moment correlation coefficient

X = The deviation of x scores from the measure that the sum of all the questionnaire and interview schedule filled in during the first administration

Y = The deviation of y scores from the mean. The sum of scores for questionnaire and for each interview schedule

The Pearson moment correlation was then calculated. From the analysis of responses a Pearson R was 0.8 therefore the questionnaire was accepted as reliable.

### **3.4.2 Data collection procedure.**

Data collection refers to the steps that must be followed to ensure that data collecting instruments are administered correctly (Mugenda, 2008). Research permit was obtained from the ministry of education. The research instruments were administered to preschool teachers, parents and preschool children.

Questionnaire was pre tested by the researcher before revisions were made accordingly. The copies of questionnaires were presented by the researcher to three teachers in each integrated schools who were selected purposively. The researcher familiarized herself in the field before the actual day for presenting the

questionnaires. The questionnaires were filled in the presents of the researcher and were collected the same day.

Interview schedule which had been pre tested by the researcher was administered to parents who were sampled using convenience sampling. The researcher administered the interview schedule to three parents from two schools and four parents from one school. The researcher was able to clarify questions that parents did not understand. Some questions had to be asked in Kiswahili for more clarification. More questions were propped which led to additional insights.

Interview schedule for children was also administered by the researcher. One child from each school was interviewed in a friendly manner putting in mind ethical concerns. The information got from children was used to supplement the information got from parents. Last but not least documentary analysis was administered to teachers to collect data on enrolment of preschool children's record of parent's attendance during parent's teachers meeting.

### **3.5 Data analysis and interpretation**

When data analysis is properly analyzed and interpreted and the interpretation given meaning then it becomes a source of knowledge (Mugenda, 2008). The study utilized qualitative and quantitative methods to analyze the collected data. Interview schedule for parents were organized in key thematic areas in line with objectives of the study. Searching for patterns was important and deciding what was important in answering the research questions. The data was analysed in tables, frequencies and percentages Ms excel was used which was followed by discussions. Interview schedule for children also used qualitative data where relevant information was

retrieved to back up information got from parents. Information from children was analyzed and written in a narrative form. The questionnaire for teachers was checked for completeness and the data was analyzed using tables, frequencies and percentages. Documentary analysis provided data that made the report to be complete.

**CHAPTER FOUR**  
**FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS**

**4.0 Introduction**

This chapter focuses on the findings of the study which has been discussed under four thematic themes in line with the objectives of the study. The themes include parental education and enrolment, parental income and enrolment, parental attitudes and enrolment and family size and enrolment.

**4.1 Parental level of education and enrolment**

Table 4.1 deals with Parents Level of Education and its effect on enrolment

**Table 4.1 Parents Level of Education and enrolment**

<b>Education level</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>	<b>No. children</b>
Class 8 and below	1	10.0	1
Form I and 2	2	20.0	2
Form IV	5	50.0	5
Other	2	20.0	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>10</b>

Table 4.1 shows that out of ten parents, one parent had educational level of class eight and below. The parent had one child enrolled. This was the lowest number of children showing that parents who are of this academic level do not enroll their visually impaired children in school. This is probably because they do not perceive education as important. They tend to give priority to their children without disabilities. In addition parents of lower educational level do not know that children with visual impairment have the same needs like all other children. Five parents who

were the majority had attained O level and they had the highest enrolment of five children. This implies that parents who are educated understand that education of children with visual impairment will make them to be independent hence reduce poverty.

This finding concurs with Warries (1984) where he argued that parental education affect enrolment because educated parents are able to provide their children conducive environment because they understand the value of education and its benefit to the child.

Schwartz (2003) argued that where parents with visual impairment may have difficulties and additional stresses that make it difficult for them to play roles that the schools want them to play. According to Lewis (1985) much of children's learning is stimulated by what happens at home and in school. In this case there is need for developing and sustaining links between home and school. Parents who are educated participate in school events by supervising children's homework completion and asking children what goes on in school. Parental level of education leads parents to understand visual impairment and how they relate to stake holders in order for their children to acquire quality education.

According to Fielder (1993) parents play a major role of being the first teacher of the child with visual impairment. Thus parental involvement in education of a visually impaired child is crucial. Educated parents get involved with the activities involving education of their children.

Table 4.2 deals with parent's involvement in the education of their children and its effect on enrolment.

**Table 4.2 Parents involvement in the education of their children and enrolment**

Education level	Rate	Frequency	Percentage	No of children
Form IV and Others	High	6	60	6
Form I and 2	Moderate	3	30	3
Class 8 and below	Low	1	10	1
<b>Total</b>		<b>10</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>10</b>

Table 4.2 shows that six parents have educational level of form four and above and had high involvement in the education of their children while three parents have moderate involvement with the education of their children. Parents who have attained class eight and below have lowest involvement. From the preceding findings parents who have high educational level tend to get more involved in their children's education. Parents who involve themselves in the work of their children tend to understand the benefits of education in their child's future and that indeed will eventually reduce the effects of visual impairment therefore preventing dependency. Parents whose education is low do not get involved with their children's education hence the enrolment of their children is low. This finding concur with Dalal and Pandley (1999), where parents with low level of education belief they cannot influence their children's education They view school as having professionals who are trained to educate and make decisions.

Schwartz (2005) argued that in some cultures parents believe that they are fully performing their roles when they provide basic needs and a loving environment to their visually impaired children is enough contribution. Therefore parental involvement influences enrolment.

An isolated case was cited by the researcher where a parent whose educational level was standard eight was noticed by teachers to be very much involved in her child's education. On further inquiry it was found that the child had been sponsored by world vision. Lewis (1985) asserted that much of children's learning is stimulated by what goes on at home and that there is need for developing sustainable link between home and school. Participation in school events is very crucial. School activities include parents meeting, making educational resources for preschool children acting as resource persons. One of parental involvement in education of their children is through parents meetings.

Table 4.3 deals with parents meeting attendance and its impact on enrolment.

**Table 4.3 Parents meeting attendance and enrolment**

<b>Education level</b>	<b>Rate</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>No. of children</b>
Form IV	6	60	6
Form I and II	3	30	3
Class 8 and below	1	10	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>10</b>

Table 4.3 shows one parent who never attended parents meeting had educational level of class eight and below at the same time the enrolment of their children is low.

Parents whose educational level is form IV and above were six and they often attend parents meeting and they had highest number of children enrolled. Those parents who are educated and others with higher level education of education attend parents, teachers meeting where they get more information on how to assist their children in areas like mobility and orientation and give support in terms of books and other learning sources. Parents whose educational level is low and the enrolment of their children is low. They seem not to show serious commitment in the education of their children by involving themselves in parents meeting. For parents to educate a visually impaired child he requires knowledge, positive attitude and commitment. These findings are in line with Shwartz (2005) where he argued that parents with visual impairment may have stresses that make it difficult for them to take part in the roles they are expected to undertake in school.

**4.2 Parental income and enrolment**

Table 4.4 deals with parental income and enrolment

**Table 4.4 Parental income and enrolment**

<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>No of children</b>
Profession occupation	6	60.0	6
Casual laborers	3	30.0	3
Small business	1	10.0	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>10</b>

Table 4.4 shows that six of the parents who enrolled their children had professional occupation and had the highest enrolment of children with visual impairment. Three of the parents were casual laborers while one had small businesses of selling second

hand clothes, vegetables and fish and had the lowest enrolment. This showed that occupation of parents affect the enrolment of preschool children with visual impairment in that parents with higher income are able to enroll their children with visual impairment because they have capacity to meet school expenses such as transport and writing materials. Parents who have small businesses may not have the capacity to enroll their children with visual impairment because they are preoccupied with food and shelter expenses hence enrolment of children with visual impairment is not a priority to them. The foregoing findings is in line with Dalal and Pandley (1999) who argued that poor parents often do not have the financial resources to make their children access school. Orodho (2003) also holds the same view when he asserted that high rates of poverty at house hold level have made poor household not to enroll their children Kaur (2005), observed that poverty and lack of parental supervision absence of support from parents derails enrolment of preschool children. Families with low income spend all their income on consumption of one thing or another and they spend about 70% of their income on food. Okot (2008) observed that parents with low income cannot afford to buy materials for learning for their children, income also has an influence on enrolment. Therefore the researcher investigated parent's income per month.

Table 4.5 shows parents income per month and enrolment

**Table 4.5 Parents income per month and enrolment**

<b>Average income per month</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>No of children</b>
Less than 5000	2	20	2
5,000-10,000	5	50	5
11,000 and above	3	30	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>10</b>

Table 4.5 shows that five parents earned Ksh 5,000 to Ksh 10,000 per month. Two parents earned less than Ksh. 5,000 while three parents earned Ksh. 11,000 and above. From the foregoing discussion it is clear that the income of parents influences children access to education. Parents with less income had the least enrolment of children in schools while those with higher income had higher enrolment of children. Parents with less income cannot be able to meet educational needs of their children. This finding confirms Sida (2001) that poverty and economic constraints keep away children from school. It also concurs with Kaur, (2005) findings where he argued that daily priorities in low income families are directed to survival than succeeding in school.

Lewis (1991) observed that when learners are provided with relevant resources that are clearly organized then opportunity for learning is enhanced. Driscoll (1994) also cited that materials inputs like books and cost of transport have an implication on enrolment of preschool children. One of the major constraints cited by parents is transport. Parents who earn less than Ksh 5,000 find cost of transport to be high

because schools are far from where they live. As a result of this concern, the researcher sought to investigate the number of children who incur transport expenses.

Table 4.6 deals with mode of transport and enrolment

**Table 4.6 Mode of transport and enrolment**

Transport	Frequency	Percentage	No of children
Bus	8	80	8
Foot	2	20	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>10</b>

Table 4.6 shows that eight parents who had highest enrolment of children cited that their preschool children travel to school by bus/ matatu while two parents had lowest enrolment of children. They reported that their children are taken to school on foot, they walk daily to school. It is important also to remember that poor parents also have other children to cater for in terms of food, clothing and medication. UNICEF (2006) holds the same view that parents with low income tend to be large and has many dependence.

One parent who earns Ksh 5,000 to 10, 000 also cited challenge in transport and that since they spend Ksh 200 per day on transport from home to school daily. She decided to device a way of cutting down cost of transport. The parent decided the house help will be taking the child to school in the morning and she waits for the child until half past noon.

### 4.3 Parental attitude and enrolment

Table 4.7 shows parents' belief on causes of visual impairment and enrolment.

**Table 4.7 Parents belief on causes of visual impairment and enrolment**

	Frequency	Percentage	No of children
Strong agree	0	0	0
Agree	1	11.1	1
Disagree	3	33.3	3
Strongly disagree	5	55.5	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>10</b>

Table 4.7 shows that five teachers strongly disagree that parents who had enrolled their children believe that visual impairment was caused by witchcraft, curses or punishment from gods. The parents who do not believe in witchcraft as a cause of visual impairment had the highest enrolment of children. One teacher agreed that parents believe that visual impairment is caused by witchcraft and had the lowest enrolment of their children. Such parents do not like to expose their children because they feel guilt about them. The same parents also feel they are failures especially when they compare themselves with parents who have children without visual impairment. Harman and Egen (2005) in their book entitled Human exceptionality asserted that negative attitudes of parents coupled with society's attitude put children with visual impairment at risk of exclusion.

However one parent who had positive attitude and did not believe that visual impairment was caused by witchcraft cited that their two sons who were totally blind had affected her marriage since her community believe that visual impairment is

caused by curses. This is in line with Mccal and Mason (2003) where they observed that parents may experience problems in the family as they face reaction from family and friends especially when the child has a disfiguring eye. One visually impaired child who was interviewed by the researcher commented on attitudes of parents towards their visually impaired children. The child said that when visitors come to their home he is told to go outside and he is not given time to talk to the visitors. This implies that parents feel embarrassed about their children's eye condition. Warries (1984) who focused on blindness and early childhood asserted that all parents of blind children need to know that a blind child does not know he is blind hence he or she needs to be treated equally as other children without disability. The above challenge made the researcher to examine how often do parents go to school to ask question pertaining the future of their children.

Table 4.8 deals with parents concern in asking questions pertaining the future of their children and enrolment.

**Table 4.8 Parents concern in asking questions pertaining the future of their children**

	Frequency	Percentage	No of children
Never	1	10	1
Sometimes	3	30	3
Often	5	50	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>10</b>

Table 4.8 shows that five parents often go to school to ask questions about the future of their children, the same parents had highest enrolment of children with visual

impairment. This implies that parents who have positive attitude towards their children with visual impairment are eager to find if their children will eventually succeed in future. Two parents never ask questions about the future of their children. This means that such parents do not expect much from their children who are visually impaired in terms of education. Since parents do not expect much from their children few enrol their children in integrated school.

However one parent who never asks questions on her child's future commented that she has heard that people with visual impairment succeed in life but she doubts if her child will make. She suggested that parents should be allowed to interact with role models with visual impairment so that they are encouraged to enrol their children in integrated school. The researcher's findings are in line with Kaburia (2008) who suggested that parents need to see role models who have gained employment through education for them to be convinced that investing in their visually impaired children is beneficial. From this point of view the researcher sought to investigate overprotection of parents towards children with visual impairment and enrolment.

Table 4.9 deals with whether parents overprotect their children who are visually impaired.

**Table 4.9 Whether parents overprotect their children who are visually impaired.**

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>No of children</b>
Never	4	44.4	5
Sometimes	3	33.3	3
Often	2	22.2	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>10</b>

Table 4.9 shows that four teachers are of the opinion that parents never overprotect their children hence the enrolment of their children is high. When parents do not overprotect their children they believe that children who are visually impaired should learn like other children and should not be denied their right to education. When parents do not overprotect their children, they give them a chance to be independent adults in future. Two teachers are of the opinion that parents often overprotect their children, the enrolment of children who are overprotected is low in this case their children are not given opportunity to learn independent skills. One child who was interviewed commented that at home she is not allowed to play with water and soil the reason is that the child may catch a cold. Parents also fear that their child may hurt himself or herself and this leads to passive behaviour.

One parent who never overprotect her child had this to say :

*‘ ‘ I allow my child to play with other children freely, he plays football*

*Initially he use to fall and hurt himself but nowadays he rarely hurts himself’’*

(A parent from Our Lady of Mercy integrated Primary school)

Kiarie (2004) argued that attitudes towards people with disabilities is highly viewed as helplessness and hopeless and could not contribute the development of the society. State of helplessness is created by parents and the society. Those who do not overprotect their children have positive attitudes. Waren and Konkon (1974). Concluded that parental overprotection syndrome is a contribution of young children which has been precursor of poor mobility.

#### 4.4 Family type, size and enrolment

Table 4.10 deals with marital status of parents and enrolment.

**Table 4.10 Marital status of parents and enrolment**

Size of family	Frequency	Percentage (%)	No of child
Married	5	50.0	5
Single	3	30.0	3
Divorced	2	20.0	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>10</b>

Table 4.10 showed that five parents were married and in families where children stay with both parents more preschool children are enrolled in visually impaired schools. Parents are concerned about their children's education and have close ties with their children. They are also able to pull together resources in order to enroll their visually impaired preschool children. Three were single while two were divorced. This indicates that the enrolment was low in single and divorced families. It is assumed that care and attention the child gets under such circumstance would be generally less compared to a situation where the child lives with both parents. Parents strain in resources for meeting the needs of children. According to Mbugua (2004) with the presents of single parents and the demise of traditional systems of child care and extended family support, it becomes difficult for children with disabilities to access education. Wadge and Essen (1982) holds the same view that children who grow in large or single families are poorly housed and have low family income. From the time of birth the child already has problems in normal early childhood development

because of diseases emanating from malnutrition and health problems and such children are not likely to attend school.

The development of mutual and meaningful relationship and contact between the child and the parent with visual impairment does not always take place by itself. Here the emotional state of the parents among other conditions plays a vital role. Various studies indicate the importance of the home environment for a balanced experience and learning among children interaction between children and parent is extremely essential.

Number of children in a family can affect enrolment of children with visual impairment. Parents need emotional bonding with all the children in the family. The parent sought to investigate the number of children in the family.

Table 4.11 displays number of children in the family and enrolment.

**Table 4.11 Number of Children in the Family and enrolment**

<b>Family size</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>	<b>No of children</b>
1-2	5	50	5
3-4	4	40	4
5-6	1	10	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>10</b>

Table 4.11 shows that five parents said that they have a family size of 1-2 children and the number of children enrolled from such families is five. Four parents reported

that they have a family size of 3-4 and the enrolment of children who came from these families were four. One parent had a family size of 5-6 children and had one child enrolled. No child came from families who had seven and above children in a family. The findings of the study indicate that there is a relationship between the size of the family and access to preschools in integrated schools. It is important to note that parents with large families are the same families that have no salaried occupation or have low income. This clearly explains why visually impaired children do not access school. Parents in large families tend to focus on basic needs such as food, shelter and education of their able children. Those with visual impairment are considered last and if they are not lucky they remain at home as others attend school. Allen (2001) holds the same view when he argued that consequences of large families where parents have low social economic status cannot be able to cater for their children's needs and may not attend school.

Parents who have a large number of school going children are bound to spend more on education with meagre incomes leading to financial constraints. In large families also children with disabilities are not treated the same as those without disability especially in accessing school. In addition in large families more responsibility is left to the mother.

Table 4 .12 displays family size, income and enrolment

**Table 4.12 Family size, income and enrolment**

family size	Frequency	Percentage	No of children	Average income
1-2	5	50	5	11,000 and above
3-4	4	40	4	5,000-10,000
5-6	1	10	1	Less than 5,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>10</b>

Table 4.12 displays that five parents had family size of 1-2 and their average income per month is 11000 and above the same parents had the highest number of children enrolled in integrated schools. This indicates that parents who have smaller family size tend to have higher income which enables them to meet home expenses as well as school expenses. This allows parents to enrol their children with visual impairment in preschool at the same time provide for them writing materials and finances for transport. One parent had a family size of 4-5 had an income of less than five thousand and had least enrolment of children. Parents from lower social classes tend to bear more children hence they cannot be able to meet the needs of the children resulting to not enrolling children with visual impairment.

This finding is in line with Wedge and Essein (1982) who talked to socially disadvantaged children who grew up in large families where they are poorly housed and have low income, his findings is that children from such families were rarely enrolled in school.

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

#### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the summary of the findings in line with the objectives of the study. From the findings conclusions and recommendations are made on influence of parental characteristics on enrolment of children with visual impairment in integrated schools in Nairobi county Kenya.

#### 5.2 Summary of the findings

The study examined influence of parental characteristics on enrolment of preschool children with visual impairment in integrated primary schools in Nairobi County.

The study sought to establish the relationship between educational level of parents and enrolment of preschool children with visual impairment in integrated primary schools; determine how parental income affects enrolment of preschool children with visual impairment in integrated schools primary schools; to establish the effect of parental attitude on enrolment of preschool children with visual impairment in integrated schools in Nairobi county.

The study adopted a descriptive survey design, which utilized both quantitative and qualitative techniques to collect and analyze data on influence of parental characteristics on enrolment of preschool children with visual impairment in integrated schools in Nairobi County. The population included 10 parents 9 preschool teachers 3 preschool children from 3 integrated schools in Nairobi County. The relevant data was collected using questionnaire and interview schedule and document analysis. The data was edited to ensure that it was complete and it was

also coded to facilitate analysis, data was analyzed using tables, percentages and frequencies.

As regards parental level of education, it was noted that five parents had reached form four. Parents who had academic qualification of standard eight and below was one and had the least enrolment of the children in the preschool this implies that there are still other children who are out of school because of parent's ignorance.

Parents who do not attend parents meeting at all were three. The same parents who have low academic qualification still do not attend meetings thus their level of ignorance increases, this has impacted negatively on enrolment.

The study found that parents of children with visual impairments perceived income as a hindrance to enrolment in integrated school. One of the parents hold small businesses this compounded with single parenthood leads to adverse financial problem; enrolment of children of such parents is low meaning that their children are excluded due to lack of finance. Parents are not able to meet all the needs of the preschool children with visual impairment. Schools are also far from residents of parents thus eight children who were the majority use bus/ matatu for transport and therefore parents who cannot afford funds for transport cannot enroll their children in integrated schools that act as barrier to enrolment.

The study also revealed that parents' attitude influenced enrolment of preschool children with visual impairment. Five teachers strongly disagree that parents believe that visual impairment is caused by witchcraft, those parents had positive attitude

had high enrolment of children. Parents who believed that visual impairment was caused by witchcraft or curses their children were few in integrated schools. Some parents continued to retain children at home without enrolling them in integrated schools for visually impaired. The study also revealed that parent's attitude still affected enrolment in the sense that parents overprotect their children. Four teachers were of the opinion that parents never overprotect their children and the parents enroll their children in schools. Two teachers were of the opinion that parents overprotect their children and they had the lowest enrolment of children. Parents who overprotect their children make them to develop passive behavior.

The study also focused on the effect of family size on enrolment of preschool children with visual impairment. The study revealed that parents do not send their children with visual impairment to school due to large family size they only enroll those who do not have disabilities five of the children enrolled come from families where children were 1-2. A family where children were 5-6 the enrolment was one meaning that children who are visually impaired in such families are facing the risk of exclusion. The study showed parents face challenges when working together to bring children with children with visual impairment especially those in single family and divorced. It was also discovered that families who have children with visual impairment did not operate as a unit care for members with visual impairment. Smaller family size 1-2 had high income and therefore high enrolment because parents can afford to meet the educational expenses of their children. Those with families of 5-6 had low income which influenced enrolment of children.

### 5.3 Conclusions

Education for All emphasized that all children should attend schools. This goal has not been realized due to a number of children who have been barred from attending school because of the barriers that arise from parent's characteristics. The study revealed that hurdles hindering enrolment of preschool children with visual impairment were noted to be parental level of education, income of parents' attitudes of parents and family size. More can and should be done to address these disturbing issues and to work towards improving access of children with visual impairment in integrated preschools.

The study noted that parents who had low involvement of children need to have workshops and seminars on how to respond to their children because they are the first educators of their children. They need to know that education starts at home.

The findings also showed that parental income contributed significantly to enrolment of preschool children with visual impairment. Parents lacked money for transport. Parents who earn less do small businesses which cannot meet their needs and the needs for their visually impaired children. Parents need to be provided with transport so that more children can be enrolled in integrated schools.

Parents' attitude is paramount in enrolment of children with visual impairment in school. Parents' sensitization campaigns need to be done to encourage parents and to equip them with knowledge which leads to demystifying beliefs hence reduce stigma that leads them to locking their children in homes.

Family size is another barrier, parents' knowledge on the rights of children is critical this should be done through parents associations where parents learn on the rights of children. They can discuss problems they face in their family units and also to equip parents to deal with their children and daily routines.

#### **5.4 Recommendations**

In order to assist learners with visual impairment to access education which is one of the rights of children, the following are recommendations:

The Ministry of education with other partners like Kenya Union of the blind should ensure that there should be a structure for parents' workshops and seminars where there is consistency in equipping parents with knowledge on how to bring up their children who are visually impaired. The same parents can help others in their villages or estates to enroll their children in integrated preschools. Once they are equipped with knowledge they can advocate for children with visual impairment to be educated. Parents of the visually impaired children can influence others to enroll their children. This should be extended to parents meetings in primary schools and that one of the agendas parents is to inform on the importance of eye screening for children shortly after birth, at six months of age and shortly before entering school and periodically throughout school years.

The study revealed that some parents have low income and some depend on donors. They are facing constraints especially in transport, because the integrated schools are far from their residence. Those who cannot afford to employ house help end up doing small businesses near their homes. This acts as a barrier to parent's in

individual development this is contrary to eradicating extreme poverty and hunger by 2015. Ministry of education should find ways of cushioning parents on transport and feeding programs, this can be done through funding.

The study revealed that parent's attitudes were negative they still overprotect their children. Overprotection acts as a precursor of poor mobility. Parents believe that children with visual impairment should not be treated as normal children. Some parents retain their children at home. This accrues from the idea that parents are ashamed to expose their visually impaired children thus they hide them in their homes. There is need for the ministry of education together with other agencies to carry out sensitization campaigns to assist parents to bring up their children with visual impairment as other children and also to help the community to include children with visual impairment. They should be sensitized that each child has potential to succeed in life. There is need to conduct public education campaign to illustrate personal success stories across all components of education which will help parents change their attitude. There is need also to maintain a national support and information network phone and mail correspondence that parents can seek assistance whenever they are confronted with challenges.

Family size contributed significantly to enrolment of children with visual impairment. From the findings parents focused on children without disability they enroll them in schools. They gave special preference to the able children. The study revealed that families with children who are visually impaired did not operate as a unit to care for children with visual impairment. More responsibility is left to the mothers. Bringing up children with visual impairment demands extra effort and

commitment by parents. Parents association is needed where parents can discuss the challenges they face as they dealing with children with visual impairment guiding and counseling is also needed.

### **5.6 Recommendations for further research**

- (i) In this study I recommend further research to be done on influence of parental characteristics on enrolment of children with visual impairment in special schools in Nairobi County.
- (ii) Further research should be done on impact of social economic status of parents on enrolment of children with visual impairment in Nairobi County

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX I: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PRESCHOOL TEACHERS

Dear Teacher

This questionnaire has two sections (A-B) you are kindly requested to answer the questions by ticking the appropriate respondents. You can also explain briefly where need be. Do not write your name. Your participation in filling the questionnaire will help the researcher to compile a comprehensive educational report on enrolment of preschool learners with visual impairment in integrated schools.

#### 1.0 Section A. Demographic information

##### 1.1 Teaching experience

1 – 5 yrs

11- 15 yrs

5 – 10 yrs

Over 15 yrs

##### 1.2 Number of teachers in preschool in special school

### SECTION B

#### 2.0 Attitudes of parents

2.1 Do parents believe visual impairment is caused by witchcraft ,curses or punishment

Yes

No

2.2 Do parents overprotect their children who are visually impaired?

Often

Sometimes

Never

2.3 How often do parents go to school to ask questions on the future of their children

Often

Sometimes

Never

2.4 Do parents assist their children in doing homework at home. Please explain briefly.....

.....

2.5 In your opinion in which ways can parents of visually impaired children can be assisted to overcome negative attitudes

.....

.....

**Family size**

3.1 Do Parents report challenges of working together in the family to assist the child with visual impairment? Yes  No

3.2 If your answer is yes explain briefly

.....

.....

3.3 Do parents complain of constraints on raising up the child with visual impairment and yet they have many other children to attend to?

Yes  No

3.4 If your answer is yes explain your answer briefly

.....

.....

3.6 In your opinion how can the parents of preschool children with visual impairment Can be assisted to overcome challenges in their families

.....

.....

**APPENDIX II**

**INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR PRESCHOOL CHILDREN WITH VISUAL  
IMPAIRMENT**

1. Name of school \_\_\_\_\_
2. District \_\_\_\_\_
3. Gender                      Boy       Girl
- 5 Who brought you to this school?.....
- 6 Do you love being in this school? .....
- 7 Do you attend school every day? (Probe for more answers)
- 8 How many siblings do you have?.....
- 9 When coming to school do you come by bus/matatu or on foot?  
.....
- 10 Are you allowed to greet visitors at home and talk to them?  
.....
- 11 Do people buy you toys or improvise for you to use while playing?  
.....
- 12 Are you allowed to take part in daily activities like washing your cloths like  
your siblings?  
.....
13. Have you heard of a person who is blind and is successful?  
.....
- 1.4 Who comes to see the teacher when your parents are called?

APPENDIX III

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR PARENTS / GUARDIANS OF PRESCHOOL

CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

1. Marital status married   not married   single   divorced
2. Age of child    3 – 4      4 – 5      5 – 6
3. Sex of child   Male    Female
4. Level of education  
Below standard 8      Form 1-form 11     
Form 1V     
Others  
.....  
.....
5. What is your relationship of your child  
Real mother      Real father    Step mother    Grandmother   
Foster mother      Aunt      Guardian
6. If you are not the real parent guardian what happened to the child's parents  
.....
7. Occupation .....
8. Your child joined preschool at what age?.....  
Do you involve yourself in the education of your child,s  
work.....
9. To your opinion do you support the fact that all children including those  
with visual impairment .must attend pre-school?  
.....

10. According to you what are the causes of visual impairment in children.

.....

11. Do you believe that early childhood education can help reduce the magnitude of visual impairment in later life in children in later life?

.....

13. Are you in any parents support groups where you discuss issues concerning visual impairment.....

14. do you have meetings where parents and children interact with role models with visual impairment

15. Were you aware of this school before you brought your child?.....

16. How did you come to know?.....

17. What is your income per month

>5000  5000-10000  11000 and above

18. Do you experience financial difficulties in purchasing educational facilities for your child?

.....

19 If your answer is yes what can be done to ease this problem?

.....

What is the number of the children that you have?.....

20 does your child come by bus/matatu while coming to school?

if no explain briefly?

.....

21 do you think there are children who are five year old with visual impairment who have not attended school?

.....

22 If your answer is yes explain

briefly.....

24 Suggest ways in which parents can be assisted to improve enrolment

.....

.....

**APPENDIX IV**

**DOCUMENTARY ANALYSIS FORM**

- 1.1 Name of the school .....
- 1.2 Number of children in class .....
- 1.3 How many children have dropped this year .....
- 1.4 How many children joint preschool in second term for the first time?.....
- 1.5 Number of children who have chronic absenteeism? .....
- 1.6 What was the enrolment for the last fou year? .....
- 1.7 What is the parents meeting attendance

<b>Time</b>	<b>Parents who attended</b>	<b>Parents who did not attend</b>	<b>No of children enrolled</b>
First term			
Second term			
Third term			