

**PERCEPTIONS OF PRE-SCHOOL AND STANDARD ONE  
TEACHERS ON SCHOOL READINESS OF CHILDREN  
TRANSITING TO STANDARD ONE IN KABETE DISTRICT,  
CENTRAL PROVINCE, KENYA**

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**A Research Thesis Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the award of the Degree of Master of Education in Early Childhood  
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## DECLARATION

This thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other university.



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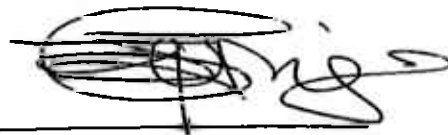
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## **DEDICATION**

**This work is dedicated to my parents, Dr Jackson Njuguna & Ann Muthoni who gave me a solid educational base.**

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

<b>ECD</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>Early Child Development</b>
<b>ECDE</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>Early Child Development Education</b>
<b>EFA</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>Education for All</b>
<b>KESSP</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>Kenya Education Sector Support Programme</b>
<b>MOEST</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>Ministry of Education Science and Technology</b>
<b>NAEYC</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>National Association for the Education of Young Children</b>
<b>NCES</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>National Center for Education Statistics</b>
<b>UNICEF</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund</b>
<b>UPE</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>Universal Primary Education</b>
<b>WHO</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>World Health Organization</b>

## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to establish the perceptions of both pre-school and primary school teachers on school readiness of children transiting from pre-school to standard one. This study set out to investigate the following objectives: Determine the influence of the characteristics of a ready child on the perceptions of teachers on school readiness, establish the relationship between the characteristics of a ready family and the perceptions of teachers on school readiness, Determine the influence of the characteristics of a ready school on the perception of teachers on school readiness and to Establish the relationship between the characteristics of a ready community and the perceptions of teachers on school readiness. It was important to carry out this study because over time, there has been lack of a clear conceptual definition of the qualities that comprise school readiness in children at various levels of transition. This has therefore impeded efforts to clarify the concerns regarding what it means to be ready for school thereby creating uncertainty. It was therefore necessary to establish how teachers perceive as ready the children transiting to standard one and if this perceptions fall within the suggested domains of readiness. A total of 380 teachers from both preschools and primary schools in Kabete District were used as the target population. These teachers were simply randomly sampled and this enabled them to have an equal chance of being selected. Two sets of questionnaires were used to collect data. One was administered to teachers in standard one and the other to teachers in preschool. The SPSS software was used to analyze data using descriptive methods. Majority of the responses from both preschool and primary teachers show that they have similar perceptions on school readiness in regard to the preschool child. Responses also show that majority of these perceptions revolved around the factors that revolve around the definition of a ready child, a ready family, a ready school and a ready community indicating a strong relationship between perceptions within the two groups of teachers. Among the recommendations made are; need for schools to come up with strategies to improve the relationship and interaction between the preschool and standard one teachers, need for the Ministry of Education to prepare relevant in-service courses for both preschool and standard one teachers on readiness, need for school heads to coordinate in detail all activities that include transition of preschool children to standard one. The following suggestion for further research was made: A study on the challenges facing children on transit from pre-school to standard one

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 Background to the study**

One of the most important transitions in a child's life is the start of primary schooling and this has been perceived to be a major challenge to early childhood. Children transiting to primary school come to school with a set of expectations about educational environments. It is important however to note that pre-school and primary school are different educational environments and there are evident discontinuities in the child's experience as he or she moves from pre-school to primary school. Initial success at school both socially and intellectually, leads to a virtuous cycle of achievement and this can be a critical factor in determining children's adjustment to the demands of the school environment and future progress, (Burrell and Bob, 2000).

Mingat and Jarmilla(2003) proposes that the way in which transitions are experienced not only makes a difference to children in the early months of a new transition but may also have much longer term impact and this is because the extent to which they feel successful in the first transition is likely to influence subsequent experiences. It seems thus that going through a transition is learning a skill in its own right and it is therefore important that not only should children build resilience to change but they should also be given support to help them mark as well as negotiate change. Successful transitions are clearly seen as being cost-effective, contributing to the retention rate at primary school and likely

to reduce the need for later social and educational remediation, (Fabian & Dunlop, 2002: Dunlop & Fabian, 2003).

Dunlop & Fabian (2003) have laid emphasis on the importance of making strong connections between the differing cultures and traditions on either side of the early education divide and using the difference to underline the consequent importance transition into school assumes. This is profoundly because the bigger the gap between the culture of the school and the culture of the pre-school, the greater the challenge for the child and the greater the risk of not being able to comply with understanding the requests of the teacher. For many working in ECD, there has been perhaps a historical wariness of making too much of the connections of ECD to the formal system. There is fear too that ECD programmes may become hijacked by the system as active learning methods in which children learn by doing, manipulating concrete objects, talking with others, discovering things for themselves in an atmosphere of encouragement and success might be replaced by an emphasis of rote learning where the child is seen as a passive recipient. Such fears have at times been well founded when we see many pre-schools in countries worldwide using inappropriate methods in a misguided attempt to give their children an academic edge when they enter school. This is done through pushing reading, writing and math's activities for which children are not yet ready rather than laying firm foundations in language, enthusiasm for learning and interaction.

Readiness and transition are closely linked. For a smooth transition, children must be ready for school. Equally important but only recently acknowledged is the fact that schools too must be ready for the children, (Adams,S.2004). Also key to successful



transition is parental readiness to be involved and supportive before and after children start school. The variation in support of the above conditions means that children will inevitably be at different levels of readiness to make most of school. School readiness implies that there are expected standards of physical, intellectual and socio-emotional development that children must meet in order to fulfill their school requirements and to assimilate the school curriculum, (Crinc and Lamberty 1994).

Having taught in Kabete District for quite a number of years, it has come to my attention that a number of standard one teachers feel that some of the pupils they receive at the beginning of the year are not yet quite ready for standard one and as such end up receiving them half-heartedly. A survey carried out in Kenya revealed that the most popular indication for school readiness for children was examination performance whilst in reality certain dispositions in children need to be nurtured for successful learning to take place, (World Bank Report 1995).

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

The primary school and the pre-school together with the home are the three main contexts that influence children's adaptation to school life. The child who has a most supportive relationship with the three is most likely to make a smooth transition. There is however quite a remarkable difference in how pre-school teachers view their work in comparison with the views of primary school teachers. Whereas a majority of pre-school teachers employ play-based methods of teaching and learning which are child-centered, primary school teachers on the other hand employ content oriented activities which

are teacher-centered instead of being learner-centered. Consequently, primary school teachers' conception of learning is associated with reading and writing. On the other hand, pre-school teachers view their work as part of a continuous learning process across pre-school and primary school.

Research to date suggests that the exchanges of information between preschool and primary school teachers are often absent as both pre-school and primary school teachers have been noted to be apprehensive of closer ties with each other none showing interest of whatever kind in what the other does, (NCES 1993). Other studies have revealed that preschool and primary school teachers have different views about skills that children need for formal schooling, (Ngaruiya, S, 2006). The existence of this difference on both divides has not been eased by the fact that there does not seem to be a lot of interaction if any between these two groups of teachers who at the end of the day have the same child pass through their hands.

There is a view that children learn better if the expectations of both sets of teachers are closely aligned. In light of the above differences, there arises a question as to what the concept of readiness means to both pre-school and standard one teachers. Could there be a difference in perception of school readiness from either group? How do pre-school teachers perceive as ready the children they release to standard one? On the other hand, how do standard one teachers perceive as ready the children they receive from pre-school? This study was therefore set up to investigate the criteria by which both pre-school and standard one teachers through perception are able to establish the level of readiness of pre-schoolers on transit to primary school in Kabete District.

### **1.3 Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to investigate the perceptions of both pre-school and standard one teachers on school readiness of children transiting from pre-school to standard one in Kabete District by examining the situation at hand.

### **1.4 Research Objectives**

The study sought to fulfill the following objectives:

- i. To determine the influence of the characteristics of a ready child on the perceptions of teachers on school readiness.
- ii. To determine the influence of the characteristics of a ready family on the perceptions of teachers on school readiness.
- iii. To determine the influence of the characteristics of a ready community on the perceptions of teachers on school readiness.
- iv. To determine the influence of the characteristics of a ready school on the perceptions of teachers on school readiness.

### **1.5 Research Questions**

- i. What is the influence of the characteristics of a ready child on the perceptions of teachers on school readiness?

- ii. What is the relationship between the characteristics of a ready family and the perceptions of teachers on school readiness?
- iii. What is the relationship between the characteristics of a ready community and the perceptions of teachers on school readiness?
- iv. What is the influence of the characteristics of a ready school and the perceptions of teachers on school readiness?

### **1.6 Significance of the Study**

It has been noted that there exists very little if any interaction between the pre-school and the standard one teacher. This study hopes to open up a channel of interaction and communication between both the pre-school and the standard one teacher.

Children on the other hand will benefit tremendously from this study. This is because once teachers' perceptions which could be distorted are re-aligned towards readiness, then they are in a better position to understand readiness and prepare the child fully towards it. Even where the teachers' perceptions could be correctly aligned in relation to readiness, this is reinforced and the teacher is able to fully prepare the child towards readiness. The end result will be a ready child exiting from a pre-school and a ready child being received by the primary school teacher into a ready school.

Theorists of perception who believe that perceptions stem from reality could have their theory proved right which is to their advantage. This is if findings from the research prove that indeed perceptions of teachers on readiness indeed stem up from the specified

domains of readiness as stipulated by researchers. As such, the findings will in no doubt reinforce the theory positively.

Having a common and shared definition of readiness has the potential of serving as a central focus around which the early childhood community can organize its efforts. This finding has strong implications to public and private agencies and their policies such as access to vision, hearing and dental screening; child immunization efforts; nutrition and health education programmes just to mention but a few which will most importantly create a context that will enable children succeed in their initial experiences of school.

### **1.7 Limitations of the Study**

The target population comprised of pre-school and standard one teachers some of whom were familiar to the researcher having interacted occasionally in the course of duty and may therefore have given socially acceptable responses so as to avoid offending the researcher. The researcher therefore did try to explain the importance of the study to the respondents to ensure that they responded as accurately and as honestly as they possibly could. On the other hand, some of the respondents especially from private schools were reluctant to respond altogether for fear of victimization which could be a threat to their jobs. In this case, the researcher assured the respondents of utmost confidentiality.

### **1.8 Delimitations of the Study**

This study was delimited to pre-school and standard one teachers only mainly because being in direct contact with the transiting child, their views were of utmost importance.

This study also focused mainly on teachers perceptions on readiness and did not focus on other issues such as beliefs or stereotypes in relation to readiness as the researcher thought that such issues would interfere with the teachers' responses.

### **1.9 Assumptions of the Study**

This study assumed that teacher' perceptions on school readiness of children transiting from pre-school to primary school in Kabete District cut across the board and could be a representative of a majority of pre-school and standard one teachers perceptions in the country. This study also assumed that the standard one teachers interviewed had undergone basic P1 training and therefore their perceptions would not vary to a great extent. This study also assumed that respondents having been assured of extreme confidentiality gave both accurate and truthful responses.

### **1.10 Definition of Significant Terms**

The following terms are defined in the context of the study as follows:

- Pre-school:** Synonymous to nursery school i.e. for children of 3-6 years.
- Primary school:** The compulsory school programme for children between the ages of 7-14 years.
- Perceptions:** A certain way that an individual sees or understands an issue or a matter.
- Ready child:** A child who has acquired appropriate knowledge, skills, abilities

and attitudes that will help him cope with the primary school curriculum.

**Ready community:** The locality a child operates within that is able to provide him with appropriate knowledge, skills, abilities, and attitudes that will help him cope with the primary school curriculum.

**Ready family:** A family that provides to the child an environment conducive enough for him to acquire appropriate knowledge, skills, abilities and attitudes that will help him cope with the primary school curriculum.

**Ready school:** A school that has quality facilities and procedures to accommodate a ready child.

**Transition:** The experience of children as they move from pre-school to primary school.

**School Readiness:** A level of development that children are expected to have achieved by the time they enter primary school

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.0 Introduction**

This purpose of this chapter is to review literature that relates to readiness of children under various contexts. The researcher has discussed readiness under the following subtopics: The Concept of readiness: domains of school readiness and factors affecting school readiness. The researcher also discusses the variables that shape and influence teachers perceptions on readiness. Finally the researcher looks at the theoretical framework underpinning the study and the conceptual framework of the study.

#### **2.1 Concept of Readiness**

One of the key expected results in the operationalization of the Sessional Paper no 1 of 2005 on Policy Framework for Educational Training and Research in Kenya is to attain Universal Primary Education (UPE) and Education For All (EFA) by 2015 and also to raise primary school to secondary transition rate from 47 percent to 70 percent by 2008. This Sessional Paper has also posed the need to develop a comprehensive ECD policy, enhance access and quality of ECDE services and build capacity. This is to be done under the Kenya Education Sector Support Programme (KESSP) 2005-2010.



The main objective of pre-school programme is to build a strong foundation for cognitive, socio-emotional and health development that will enable the child to maximize his or her learning potential upon entering primary school.

According to statistics, Ngaruiya.S (2006), 65 percent of children in Kenya and especially those from poor households do not access quality pre-school programme. As a result of this, the capacity of these children to learn is diminished because of lack of appropriate care and stimulation at the right age and even when the primary education is free, these children will more often than not start school disadvantaged, (Ngaruiya, 2006).

There has been lack of policies to address the linkage between the ECD programmes and the primary education system. Consequently, there have been little efforts if any to address the level of school readiness amongst the children as they enter the primary education system. In Kenya, the official primary school entry age is six years, however, it is not a pre-requisite for a child to attend pre-school before primary schooling. The Free Primary Education policy MOEST, (2005) requires that every child attend primary school irrespective of ECD experience. It is therefore normal to find in standard one class, children from different pre-school models and those directly from home. In such a scenario therefore, the standard one teacher is not only faced with the challenge of dealing with a large number of children but also with the challenge of dealing with children with varied levels of school readiness.

Despite the best intentions of those concerned with the educational process, young children's readiness for school remains a critical yet controversial and complex construct.

Early childhood is characterized by rapidly growing abilities and attempting to identify any optimal readiness criterion has proven problematic. Curiously, age five to six has become a rather common standard against which readiness for school has been judged, however, there is little empirical evidence to suggest that this age is necessarily the optimal age for school readiness. There is however even less evidence suggesting which age could be better against which school readiness could be judged, (Raver, 2002).

Despite the wealth of literature that has addressed school readiness over the past two decades, there has been lack of a clear conceptual definition of the qualities that comprise school readiness or the rich complex interrelationships among developmental processes that facilitate success in traditional classroom environments. This has therefore impeded efforts to clarify the concerns regarding what it means to be ready for school thereby creating confusion and conflicts among practitioners and policy makers and as such Kagan suggests that school readiness as currently understood, still remains a “narrow and artificial construct of questionable merit.” (Kagan, 1990)

### **2.2.0 School Readiness**

School readiness is perceived as the acquisition by the child of the appropriate knowledge, skills, attitudes and abilities that will help the child to cope with the primary school curriculum and other learning demands. Readiness is thus the sum of a child's physical, cognitive and social-emotional development at a given time. Readiness therefore implies that by the time the children enter standard one they should have

achieved a level of development that makes it likely that they will successfully adapt to the challenges of formal schooling.

Those children who are ready to learn at the time they start primary school are more likely to complete primary, secondary and tertiary education levels and make positive contributions to society as caring and productive citizens, (Kagan, 1990). Children who are not ready to learn at school entry are more likely to repeat a grade, need special educational services, have emotional difficulties and drop out of school. This represents increased costs to government and society at large through increased government spending, decreased revenue, decreased productivity and decreased abilities to provide necessary societal functions.

Teacher's expectations for what children should know and when they should know it has changed over time and today not only just teachers but many people expect young children to arrive at school able to perform a variety of tasks. However, we now know that school readiness includes much more than just developing fundamental cognitive and language skills. Readiness for school is multifaceted encompassing the family, community and schools as well as the physical, social, emotional and cognitive skills that children need to thrive.

There is a consensus based on a wealth of research, Kids Count (2005), that children's readiness for school depends on their level in five distinct but interconnected domains and should therefore be measured and addressed across these following domains:

### **2.2.1 Physical Well-being and Motor Development**

The future health and well-being of young children is directly related to the strengthening of both their large and small muscles, using their sensory experiences and practicing healthy behavior. Children will use their senses and bodies to explore their physical environment and they will therefore practice with intensity those motions that will lead to the mastery of fine and large motor tasks. Children will more often than not describe their competence according to their physical accomplishments and that is why for example how a child learns to sit, run or hold an object has implications for how the child understands space, coordinates thinking and holds a pencil, (Kagan, 1990).

Strong body of research, Pikulski and Templeton (2004) links maternal and child health to school performance. Conditions such as low birth weight and poor nutrition have negative impacts on school preparedness and this is because children born with low birth weight experience higher rates of developmental delays, higher rates of poor school performance and are more likely to require special education.

Early childhood educators time and time again insist on the importance of the physical well-being and motor development of the child. This dimension takes care of motor skills in children, healthy habits and senses, (The Annie Casey Foundation,2004). Motor skills include gross motor skills like running and jumping required for activities such as games and also for developing peer relationships through everyday interactions for which mobility is of utmost importance. These skills demonstrate control, balance and coordination. Fine motor skills on the other hand include activities such as cutting with

scissors and fastening a button and they demonstrate hand-eye coordination, strength, control and ability to manipulate objects. Healthy habits in children means that they understand how daily activity and healthy behaviors promote overall personal health and safety. Children with well developed senses will be able to use them all and understand how they work together.

### **2.2.2 Social and Emotional Development**

Social development is related to the child's social interactions with people such as teachers, peers, parents and other members of the community. It is the ability of the child to interact with others and their capacities to self regulate themselves. Emotional development on the other hand pertains to the child's feelings regarding self and others. It is the child's perception of themselves and their ability to interpret and express their own feelings. Children are dependent upon their interactions with peers and adults to construct a sense of self and to view themselves as learners. As toddlers, children begin to notice differences among people and they willingly explore these differences as they mature. This natural curiosity about other people helps children develop a strong sense of identity and provides teachers and families with opportunities to associate schools and programmes with a child's home and community, (McClelland, 2000).

A child who is not secure in relating to others and does not trust adults is not motivated to learn. A child who cannot calm himself or be calmed enough to tune into teaching is not ready to learn. The emotional, social and behavioral competence of young children is a strong predictor of academic performance in school, (Zero to Three Policy Centre; Raver

2002; Ladd, Birch & Buhs, 1999). School success requires an understanding of the feelings and viewpoints of others, the ability to cooperate with adults and peers, emotional self-control and the ability to resolve conflicts constructively. Children who have difficulty paying attention, controlling negative emotions and getting along with others perform less well in school. Children who come to school curious, conscious of what behavior is expected of them, comfortable in seeking assistance and able to get along with others are more likely to perform better in school than students who lack these fundamental characteristics. On the other hand, young children with behavior problems are difficult to teach and if disliked by peers and teachers because of such behavior they quickly lose motivation for learning, withdraw from peers or face social rejection. Physically abused children for example will tend to be aggressive towards peers and they have difficulties with social relationships. Such infants and toddlers have lower social competence, show less empathy for others, have difficulty recognizing others emotions and show deficits in language ability and school achievement, (Zero to Three, 1992).

It is evident thus that the ability to form and sustain social relationships is central to a child's preparedness for school, (Kagen, 1990). Evidence also shows that children who have formed secure attachments to parents and caregivers are secure and confident in exploring and mastering new challenges, (Thompson, 2002). Young children will therefore need a minimum level of social and emotional competence to successfully interact with others and benefit from the learning environment in the school.

### **2.2.3 Approaches to Learning**

As early as infancy, children display some of the dispositions and styles of learning that lead to success in school. Some children seem to be born well-organized and bursting with initiative while others require more structure and encouragement as they discover their unique capacity as learners. As children transit from one level to another therefore, teachers will be keen to observe children's inclination to use skill and knowledge. As children connect their learning each day to past experiences, they learn how to take initiative to carry their knowledge and skills to a new level of mastery, (Currie, 2001). A well planned learning environment will therefore contain carefully designed activities and teachers who participate as co-learners so as to promote in children a willingness to try new experiences and persistence in completing projects.

Children who are ready to learn will therefore be inclined to use skills and knowledge and portray attitudes whose key components are as follows; Persistence, Curiosity, Self-organization and Reasoning. Persistence in the child means that he or she shows initiative, accepts help, takes risks and works towards completing tasks. Self-organization means that the child can be able to establish goals, develop them and follow them through. When a child possesses reasoning, he or she is able to identify possible solutions to problems, (Adams, 2004)

### **2.2.4 Language Development**

The development of language in a child has to do with the child's acquisition of linguistic forms and the procedures for acts of expression and interpretation. It includes

communication which involves listening. Speaking, vocabulary and emergent print awareness which involves story sense, early writing and connections of letters to sounds.

A rich language environment has an essential impact on the rapid development of a child's brain that occurs during the first years of life. Children increase their language and communication skills by engaging in meaningful experiences that require them to effectively express their ideas and feelings, listen and understand others. Early regular reading to children is one of the most important activities a parent can do with their children to improve their readiness for school (National Educational Goals Panel, 1997). Reading to children is related to positive outcomes including language development, emergent literacy and reading achievements. Reading skills are critical to students who are in school and research, NAEYC (1995) shows that children who read well in early grades are far more successful in later years while those who fall behind in reading often stay behind in academic achievement. Being able to read also opens the doors to learning about other subjects. Students who cannot read are more likely to be absent from school, exhibit behavior problems and perform poorly in school, (Kagan, 1990).

Language empowers children to participate fully in an education programme as it provides them with tools to interact with others and represent their thoughts and feelings. Educators should therefore respect and incorporate the rich diversity of families' language and dialects into the education environment as children make progress in speaking and understanding English. School readiness indicators for language development in a child are perceived to be as follows:



poems and conversation in general; the child waits and takes turns during conversation; the child listens to and understands English while maintaining the home language; the child follows directions that involve multiple steps and the child speaks and communicates using both verbal and non-verbal language to express and communicate information.

### **2.2.5 Cognition and General Knowledge**

Cognitive development involves the improvement in the way the child thinks, represents experiences mentally, retrieves the stored experiences and uses these abilities to solve problems. It is the child's ability to perceive, organize, and analyze information provided by the social and physical environment that provides school readiness. It consists of behavior such as attention, concentration, perception, memory, recall, appreciation, problem solving and creativity. A child in pre-school is ideally in the intuitive thought sub-stage of pre-operational thought. He is starting to develop his own ideas about the world he lives in and even though he has difficulty in putting things in correct categories at least he has ideas even though simple of the happenings around him, (Gessell,1940).

When it comes to general knowledge, children automatically develop ways to solve problems developing their thinking skills that are naturally used in daily life. Children are also captivated by the natural world and the questions they ask are transformed into hypothesis about their world. They use their senses and scientific tools to observe, collect and interpret data and draw conclusions. School readiness indicators under this domain

the physical and natural world; count and group objects and numbers; recognize and create shapes and be aware of position in space; recognize patterns; compare and measures time and quantity; identify some letters and words in print and understand that spoken and written words have meaning and are associated.

### **2.3.0 Factors Affecting School Readiness**

The early years of a child are quite critical to the formation of physical development, social behavior, personality and intelligence. There are however quite a number of factors that come into play at the level of the child and the wider environment that influence a child's overall development and readiness.

#### **2.3.1 Economic Status**

The economic status of both a country and a family is quite a fundamental concern for the same in relation to school readiness in children. Weitzman, (2003) points out that whether with respect to families, communities or countries, the lack of resources will undermine their capacity to adequately provide for children. Poverty tags along with it fatigue and general frustration which eventually takes it toll on families. Different studies, WHO (2004), have shown that poverty adversely affects children's health, intellectual capabilities, academic behavior and achievement Poverty means poor diets that result to poor behavioral and cognitive development in infants and children. Damage from severe malnutrition is difficult to reverse after the age of 3 years.

Research done, Currie (2001) states that throughout the developing world, one out of every four children under the age of 5 is underweight. (UNICEF, 2006). For children whose nutritional status is deficient, they are small for gestational age, have low birth-weight, and suffer from common childhood ailments and respiratory infections which could even be fatal. Malnourished children will be less engaged both in school and anywhere else for that matter, are less active and have shorter attention spans than their well-nourished counterparts. As a result, malnourished children score lower in school and have less emotional control. They also have low levels of iodine, iron protein which are major nutrients. This compromises their growth and immunity and may result to chronic sickness and stunted growth, impaired mental, social and cognitive development which in the end interferes with the overall educational attainment of the child. Consequently, these children are not quite ready for school. They perform poorly and end up dropping out of school in droves.

Language is the basic tool for thought, communication, reasoning and making sense of the world. Long before children learn to speak, their early interactions lay the foundation for language development. Children who live in poverty in their early years have for the most part, significantly less verbal interaction and begin school with fewer linguistic skills than peers from higher income backgrounds. Studies, Currie (2001) demonstrate that reading to pre-school children and the child's own direct experience with print are all facilitative precursors for language development and reading success in school. Against the background of poverty, it may be quite difficult for children to get people to read to them because poverty and illiteracy are quite related leave alone getting their hands on

print material which costs money, which if available has more pressing demands to meet such as food and other basic needs,(Pikulski and Templeton, 2004).

### **2.3.2 Home Learning Environment**

Home learning environment can be defined as activities that offer learning opportunities to the child. (Sylvia et al, 2004) points out these activities that help the child attain school readiness and include reading to children, teaching songs, poems and nursery rhymes, playing with letters and numbers, visiting the library, painting and drawing, having friends visit for play, taking children out for educative visits for instance to the museum and so on. Findings (Pikulski and Templeton, 2004) emphasis that parents rich or poor, can set their children off to a good start through home activities that foster learning because in essence, what parents do with their children is more important than who the parents are.

A caring and nurturing adult is paramount for a child's healthy growth and development. Sound child-caregiver relationships are typically characterized by children who are well-fed and kept safe and by consistent affection, stimulation, conversation, responsiveness and opportunities to learn about their world. Research (WHO 2004) indicates that support and warmth from a care-giver results in greater social competence. School-age children will therefore have fewer behavioral issues and better thinking and reasoning skills.

Strong and supportive caregiving relationships make children more resilient and also cushion them against the ravages of deprivation, poverty and violence. This is the strongest and clearest explanation as to why some children who grow up in materially

wretched conditions are nonetheless healthy and productive at school and in society and have good relationships.

### 2.3.3 ECD Programmes

Quality childcare programmes maximise synergism between protection, good health and nutrition, supportive and affectionate interaction, stimulation and opportunities for exploring the environment. The positive influences of such programmes are far-reaching for the child way beyond just school readiness as benefits continue throughout the child's life.

There are several different measures to assess quality of child care but generally we focus on the length of ECE sessions, personnel ratios, qualification of personnel, ECE facilities and auxiliary services and classroom process measures which examine the actual practices within the classroom. Differences in quality of individual pre-schools has resulted in differences in levels of school readiness outcomes in children on transit to standard one and that is why some children from pre-school can read simple words whereas others cannot even write their own names.

However, studies from around the world (Sylvia 2004) demonstrate that children who participate in early childhood programmes do better in school, are healthier, and even later as adults are more economically productive, emotionally balanced and socially responsible. A study in East Africa tracked children who attended pre-school programmes and those who did not. This study found out that advantage of pre-school

participation continued into primary school through the three grades that were tracked (Mwaura, 2005; Mwaura and Nyamweya, 2006).

Similarly, a study carried out in Peru (Aldaz-Carrol, 1999) found out that nearly 60 percent more poor children who participated in pre-school programmes completed primary school as compared with poor children who did not access pre-school. This is because ideally, pre-school is supposed to provide for all round developments of the child namely stimulation which is intellectual, physical, social, emotional and spiritual. This all round development is what makes a pre-school child to be termed as ready for school and in this case ready for primary school.

## **2.4 Variables Shaping Teachers Perceptions on School Readiness**

Stakeholders of Early Childhood (NAEYC 1995) agree that efforts to improve school readiness must address a number of interrelated components that will be discussed briefly. These components in reality are what influence teachers perceptions on school readiness.

### **2.4.1 Ready Child**

From the time of birth a child quickly learns a variety of things. Children need a wealth of support to thrive and grow to independence, (Colorado campaign, 2003).

These includes good nutrition and health care for their developing bodies; loving attentions and nurturing from parents and caregivers to help them develop self esteem and healthy relations and stimulations through language and play to help children learn

how to speak, listen and understand their relationship to the world around them. All these factors work together to prepare a child to enter school ready to learn and succeed. A child's school readiness is therefore based upon one's maturity physically and the skills that they have mastered in the following domains; social and emotional development; approaches to learning; language development; cognition and general knowledge. Regardless of the age at school entry, it is critical that a child's education address all the domains of child development.

#### **2.4.2 Ready family**

One of the greatest predictors of a ready child is a ready family. This is because both parents and caregivers are the child's primary teacher, model and provider. The family therefore is one major component in shaping children's early development. To grow up secure and ready to learn, children need a safe, warm place to sleep, enough daily food and loving and nurturing parents and caregivers who will support and care for them. Such a home is one free from child abuse and neglect. Children coming from such homes look well nurtured and are therefore considered healthy, are emotionally stable, confident, active, and attentive and are able to communicate their needs, feelings and thoughts. Such are the children perceived to be ready for school by teachers. Strengthening families is one major approach that the community should take so as to enhance children's readiness for school (Rhode Island Kids Count, 2002)

### **2.4.3 Ready School**

Schools must be prepared to receive children and to create a climate for academic achievement. Currie (2001) suggests that not only should schools be clean, in good repair and properly equipped but they also need to ensure that children are in small classes with the best teacher student ratio for early learning. Schools can also play a positive role in increasing the rate of parent involvement in their children's education leading to a child's greater school success. In addition schools should also ensure that proper transition practices are in place so as to enhance school readiness of children because transition and readiness are closely linked. Such practices include ensuring that information and evaluations on individual children are transferred to the primary school. Ready schools are about the readiness and capacity of schools to receive young children and to provide the highest quality learning environment.

### **2.4.4 Ready Community**

Families do not raise their children in a vacuum. Communities in which they work and live do play an important part in helping a child achieve school readiness by contributing to the families overall quality of life. According to the Colorado campaign( 2003) research suggests that neighborhoods in which children live have an influence on their development. For example, children growing up in neighborhoods with high rates of poverty are more likely to have less access to high quality ECE programmes and consequently end up attending under-resourced and low-performing schools. Interventions for children and families identified as at-risk for social and educational



outcomes are most effective if they begin early. Children who are most at-risk benefit when programmes are comprehensive, intensive and work with the family as well as the child. High quality childcare and education programmes, access to good nutrition and health care and support programmes like libraries and recreation centres contribute to ready communities that support children and families.

## **2.5 Teachers Perceptions on School Readiness**

How readiness is defined and measured is much less universally established. With many forces guiding education, it is difficult to determine who will accurately define readiness and state when a child is ready to embark on formal education. Depending on whom one is, one is likely to get a different answer based upon ones underlying beliefs and motivations about children, learning and the role of Early Childhood Education. However, there is a view that children learn better if the expectations of both pre-school and primary school teachers are closely aligned. As such, children's success is partially influenced by teachers' perceptions of their academic, personal and social achievements, and the extent to which these groups share common beliefs in this area, (NAEYC, 1995).

There are two predominant beliefs regarding school readiness. According to the maturational concept, the responsibility for readiness rests within the children and that children will in most cases given time become ready for school. Biological forces therefore determine school readiness or when a child's developmental age is adequate for educational purposes, (Gessell, 1940). The integrationists' concept on the other hand states that all children are ready to learn in school based upon internal knowledge and

knowledge of the external world as all children possess innate knowledge. Readiness threshold is therefore not an issue as all children are ready to learn. The burden of readiness is therefore placed upon both the child and the school but particularly on the school which should work with children at their current level of skills, (de cos, 1997).

In their position paper, NAEYC proposes a set of expectations closely aligned with the integrationists' perspective stating that schools may reasonably expect that children entering school will be active, curious and eager to learn. They will know some things about themselves and will be interested in making friends and sharing experiences with them. This belief is growing and has become widely accepted amongst teachers who seem to put more emphasis on the social domain where readiness is concerned, (NAEYC 1995).

Teachers are important points of reference as they are with youngsters every day watching their reactions, observing their relationships with others and noting their struggles and successes. Teachers, especially the sensitive and seasoned ones will have a keen and almost intuitive understanding of children's needs. It is therefore in order to consider findings of studies that have been taken on teachers' perceptions on school readiness. A majority of teachers believe that readiness should not only be identified at the local level but their perception of readiness is highly influenced by the interaction among children, families, schools and communities. A teacher will therefore perceive a child to be ready for school if the child comes from a ready family and a ready community and is being absorbed into a ready school. A child will therefore have to have been exposed to consistent stable adults who have emotionally invested in them; to a

physical environment that is safe and predictable; to regular routines and rhythms of activity; and to materials that stimulate their exploration and enjoyment of the object world, (Kids count, 2005).

A number of studies (NCES 1993) have been carried out where the main objective has been to gather teachers' perceptions on readiness. These studies rely mainly on survey data and have used teachers as their main respondents. Question items have been prepared to generate child readiness items. After the survey and interview results have been taken, agreement on how the concept of child readiness is viewed and organized has been remarkable across the groups coinciding quite well with several of the readiness domains.

The three top qualities teachers consider essential for school readiness are that a child be physically healthy, rested and well nourished; be able to communicate needs, wants and thoughts verbally; and be enthusiastic and curious in approaching new activities. A majority of the teachers also place significant importance on the child's ability to follow directions, not being disruptive in class, being sensitive to other children's feelings and the ability to take turns and share. Generally, findings from these studies and other readiness research indicate that teachers perceive social-emotional development, language and communication, dispositions towards learning, physical health and well being and school related behaviors most important to readiness for school success. These results suggest that teachers perceive that children who are healthy and can get along with others, who can communicate their wants and needs, and who are self-regulating in the school environment have the necessary foundation for academic learning, (NCES 1993).

The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching carried out yet another survey regarding teachers' perceptions about the readiness of children. A total of more than 20,000 teachers were surveyed and one of the central findings was that teachers claimed that about a third of the nation's children are not ready for school. Compared to children enrolled five years ago, 42 percent of the teachers said that the situation is getting worse while only 25 percent of the teachers said that things are getting better. These findings continue to beg the question of the meaning of "ready to learn" and what readiness entails according to teachers perceptions (Boyer, 1991). Probably therefore definitions of readiness, must take into account the settings, context and conditions under which the child acquires skills and is encouraged to learn. Consequently, assessments of readiness should incorporate data collected over time from the child, teacher, parents and community.

There also arises the fact that there occurs differences in teachers perceptions on school readiness. Whilst teacher A would consider a particular child ready for school, teacher B may consider the same child as not yet ready for school. These differences will be based on influences such as the teachers' prior dispositions, the teachers' status, the teachers' personal experiences, the teachers training and the teachers' beliefs. Teachers for example in schools with high levels of poverty may be more concerned with a child's ability to take turns and share as an indicator of school readiness whereas another group of teachers in an urban setting may be more concerned with a child's knowledge of the English language

## **2.6.0 Theoretical Framework Underpinning the Study**

The researcher discusses two theories. The theory of Perception that influences perceptions and Brofenbrenners' Ecological theory that shapes readiness in children.

### **2.6.1 Theory of Perception**

Perception is the way an individual views or interprets things or issues. Brunner(1986) argues that all perception is influenced by our experience and expectations. As such, learning is an active process in which learners construct ideas and concepts based upon their current and past knowledge (Brunner, 1986)

The theory of perception (Richard Gregory 1970) states that any interpretation of a thing goes beyond the immediate act of perception. The speed with which we do label things does mask the fact that considerable processing is involved and physiological aspects are intertwined with the activation of thought. We know for example that sight perception depends on the flow of photons through the pupils which is absorbed into the retina, similarly, other senses can be described likewise. Therefore, with the operation of our senses, we know that there is something there that can and is influencing the sensory mechanisms within ourselves (Popper, 1972)

This theory therefore proposes that there exists a reality that is able to generate and influence perceptual fields. A perceptual field is that aspect of the environment that will affect the sensory physiology of the selected species. It is totally a physical phenomenon making its interpretation totally an act of the observer. This perceptual field in turn influences the eye which in turn influences the reacting part. The reacting part is a

particular part of the brain involved directly with the environment. This information can be represented as follows;

Reality → Perceptual Field → Influence on the perceptual system of the perceiver → interpretation

For purposes of this study, it is evident from the above propositions that the perceptions that teachers have on school readiness of children are not just make believe. This is because, perceptions will arise out of reality. As such, these perceptions are as a result of a reality out there on the ground. The reality out there on the ground states that based on research, children's readiness for school depends on their level in five distinct but interconnected domains. The reality based on these domains is what generates a perceptual field. This perceptual field in turn has an effect on the sensory apparatus of the teacher's physiology leading him to make interpretations. These interpretations basically are inferences from reality. A teacher will therefore for example perceive a child who cannot recognize simple letters as not ready for school because in essence, reality stipulates that a child who is ready for school should be able to identify simple letters and words in print (Gazzaniga, 1995). Perceptions of teachers are therefore not far-fetched but they spring out of a reality and this study seeks to identify these perceptions of teachers as pertaining to school readiness of children.

### **2.6.2 Brofenbrenner's Ecological Theory**

Brofenbrenner (1998) has been the primary contributor to the ecological systems theory. This ecological theory defines four types of systems which contain roles, norms and rules

that shape development. The systems include a microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem and macrosystem. The microsystem is the family, classroom or systems in the immediate environment in which a person is operating. The mesosystem is two Microsystems interacting such as the connection between a child's home and school. The exosystem is a setting in which the child does not spend time but this setting though external to him does affect him anyway. The macrosystem is the larger cultural context. This theory states that as a child develops, the interaction within these environments becomes more complex and this interaction will either help or hinder continued development.

Child readiness for school will take place through processes of progressively more interaction between an active child and the persons, objects and symbols in its immediate environment. The child is at the centre of this model and the most important settings for him is his family where he spends most of his time. A Childs readiness for school will be determined by what the child experiences in the settings she or he finds himself in. Is someone showing the child how to behave? Is someone talking and reading with the child? Is the child being fed well? The stability or instability of family life plays a big role in determining a child's readiness for school. Without proper nurture from adults and caregivers, children will not develop well physically, socially and cognitively domains that are crucial in ascertaining school readiness in children.

The number and quality of connections between the settings in which a child spends time for example his family and preschool; also have important implications for school readiness. For example, in relation to school readiness of children, pre-school teachers put more emphasis on the social domain whereas many parents emphasis is on academic

readiness. Unless therefore this parents and teachers communicate between each other frequently and effectively they end up having different expectations of school readiness and this means that the child ends up getting caught in between.

Other environments where the child does not spend time can also affect the power of proximal processes that influence school readiness. These can include immediate factors like the parents' workplace or more remote ones like government policies. After Free Primary Education was introduced in Kenya, a number of parents opt to enroll their children straight into standard one regardless of whether the child has gone through any form of Early Childhood Programme. These children are not ready for school having skipped a major phase of pre-school but because of a policy in place, there is nothing much that can be done as the exosystem has interfered with the process of getting children ready for school (Bronfenbrenner, 1998).

The macrosystem which is the child's larger cultural context will also help to explain school readiness. With cultural values moving more towards high passed and technology oriented thinking, parents and caregivers are tending to have little time to talk and listen to their children. As a result, some parents are loosing connection with their children and this inhibits development of the socio-emotional domain in children which is a crucial component in school readiness. These children will lack role models in their parents and this will impact heavily on their emotions and behavior.

Teachers should therefore avoid being overly judgmental in their assessment of readiness and in this way avoid the blame game. This is because readiness in children is determined



by a number of intertwining conditions and the teacher therefore has to be careful with the child who as explained is in the centre of the model. The teachers role therefore should be to work with the child and if possible try to identify the inhibitors of readiness in the child who is considered not ready.

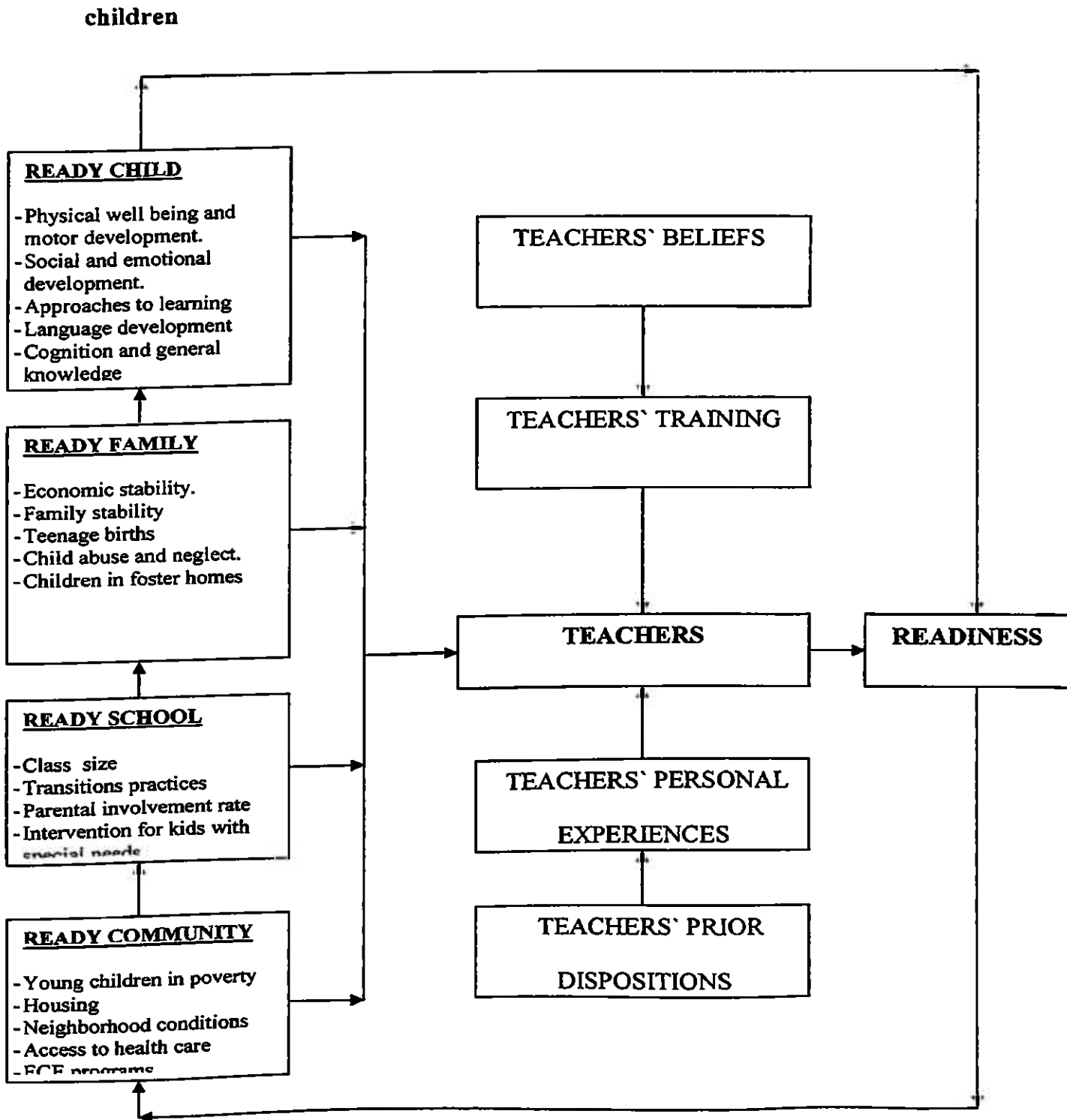
## **2.7 Conceptual framework**

This study has identified the following independent variables as the ones that directly influence the perceptions of teachers on school readiness of children transiting to standard one: Ready child; Ready family; Ready school and Ready community. A teacher will perceive a child to be ready for standard one if the child is physically and emotionally sound; if the child is exposed to consistent stable adults and a physical environment that is safe and predictable to regular routines and rhythms of activity. The influence that they have on the perception of the teachers is so great such that the teacher is now able to fully prepare the child through the schooling process towards readiness.

However, teachers do not strictly draw their perceptions on school readiness from these variables alone and as such leave no room for sound reason. Consequently, there could be differences in teachers perceptions based on a number of influences such as teachers beliefs, teachers training, teachers personal experiences and teachers prior dispositions. For example, a teacher may initially perceive a child to be ready for standard one because he comes from a ready family but refrain from quick judgment because previously he may have handled children who come from ready families but are not yet ready for school; his perceptions on readiness will thus be deduced from alternative inferences.

These influences to a certain extent act on initial teachers perceptions which eventually culminate to the teachers' final perception of the readiness of a child.

**Figure 2.1: Factors Influencing Perceptions of Teachers on School Readiness of**



### **2.7.1 Summary of Literature Review**

Based on all the literature reviewed by the researcher, it is important to note that readiness and transition are quite closely linked. This is because for a smooth transition children must be ready for school. It is therefore crucial that transition issues be given greater attention if children's overall development and learning is to improve. Consequently, key to successful is parental readiness, school readiness and community readiness. The variation in their readiness means that children will inevitably be at different levels of readiness to make the most of school. It is also quite important to note that teachers perceptions on readiness are not usually far-fetched. According to the perception theory, these perceptions arise out of a reality and this means that a teacher could be able to determine to some degree readiness in a child. All stakeholders involved in education need to unite so as to fully prepare the child in readiness for smooth transition to primary school.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.0 Introduction**

This chapter outlines the methodology employed by the researcher in the research. This include the research design, the target population, sample and sampling procedure, research instruments, data collection procedure and data analysis.

#### **3.1 Research Design**

This research took the form of a descriptive study which is a method that involves collecting information from members of a targeted population by administering a questionnaire so as to determine the current status of that population with respect to one or more variables, (Mugenda and Mugenda 1999). This is the most frequently used method for collecting information about peoples attitudes, opinions, habits or any variety of educational issue. This design was most suitable for the study as the questionnaire was a suitable instrument to capture teachers perceptions as the teachers responded to specific areas of study that the researcher was interested in.

#### **3.2 Target Population of the Study**

The target population consists of all the members of an area or a hypothetical set of people, events or objects from which a researcher wishes to generalize the research study, (Mugenda and Mugenda 1999). The target population of this study consisted of all the pre-school and standard one teachers in Kabete District in both public and private schools. Statistics obtained from the Kabete District Education Office indicated that Kabete District is divided into 4 divisions with a total of 105 primary schools with 180 standard one teachers and 120 pre-schools with 200 pre-school teachers. Readiness of pupils going to primary school may differ based on weather the school is public or

private. However, the researcher was able to take care of this disparity by asking the teachers in either domain to give their honest opinions without being biased.

### **3.3 Sample & Sampling Procedures**

According to Mulusa (1990) a sample is a smaller population which is carefully selected to represent all the main traits of the whole population. To select the schools the researcher used simple random sampling technique which is normally used in order to obtain a representative sample. Simple random sampling was used from the total number of 180 standard one teachers and 200 pre-school teachers in Kabete District. This type of sampling enabled all the teachers in the defined population to have an equal and dependent chance of being selected. Kabete district has 4 divisions and in order to ensure that all teachers had an equal chance of being selected, selected schools from the District were used as sampling units. Names of all the primary schools in the district as were written down on pieces of paper, folded, put in a box and shuffled. From the cluster of schools a random sample of 50% of the one hundred and five primary schools was selected. This was considered an adequate sample for the purpose of this study. The same procedure was repeated with the pre-schools where a random sample of 50% of the one hundred and twenty pre-schools was selected. Two teachers from each selected primary school and two teachers from each selected pre-school were used as respondents totaling to 105 standard one teachers and 120 pre-school teachers respectively.

### **3.4 Research Instruments**

The data was collected using a questionnaire which is considered the most suitable research instrument for descriptive research design, (Wiersman 1986). Two sets of questionnaire were used; one was administered to teachers in standard one and the other one to teachers in pre-school. Data was gathered through responding to the questionnaire which had been developed by the researcher. Both sets of questionnaires contained 3 sections. The first section contained structured questions where respondents were expected to tick suitable responses and also open ended questions where the respondent

was to use their own words to answer. These questions mainly solicited information on qualifications and teachers input on readiness of children on transit to standard one. The second section required the teachers input on their perceptions on school readiness whilst the third section required the teachers to give their evaluation on school readiness. Both of these sections had statements provided which were both positive and negative. Each statement was measured on a five point Likert response scale with alternatives running from extreme strongly agree, through a central point, undecided, to the other extreme strongly disagree.

### **3.5 Validity of Instruments**

Validity is the degree to which results obtained from the analysis of the data actually represent the phenomena under study, (Mugenda and Mugenda 1999). To enhance content validity, two lecturers in the field of Early Childhood Education from the University of Nairobi were asked to appraise the instruments. The lecturers involved were the researchers supervisors who appraised the questionnaire and their ratings and comments assisted in improving the instrument. External validity which has to do with the representation of the sample with regard to the target population was done on pilot study of three primary and pre-schools from each division. Simple random sampling was used to select the schools and one teacher from each school was used in the pilot study. During the pilot study, the instrument was discussed with the respondents so as to establish their suitability, clarity and relevance for the purpose of the study. Inappropriate question items were discarded so as to improve the quality of the research instrument. Schools used in the pilot study were not used in the main study.

### **3.6 Reliability of Instruments**

Reliability is the measure of the degree to which a research instrument yields consistent results after repeated trials, (Mugenda and Mugenda. 1999). To ensure reliability, internal consistency techniques were used. The test-retest method was used whereby both sets of

questionnaire were administered twice to the same group of teachers in the pilot study. The researcher assessed the consistency of the responses on each pair of the pilot questionnaires to make judgment on their reliability. There was a time lapse of a week between the first test and the second test and this ensured consistency by eliminating chance error which could have arisen by testing only once. Afterwards the correlation coefficient was obtained so as to determine the reliability of the questionnaires. The results represented what was anticipated and this was an indication that the instruments could be used to solicit information for the study.

### **3.7 Data Collection Procedure**

The researcher obtained a research permit from the National Council for Science and Technology. The researcher then reported to the District Education office to obtain authorization to conduct the study in the district. Once this authorization was granted the questionnaires were then distributed personally by the researcher to the one hundred and five standard one and one hundred and twenty pre-school teachers in the various sampled primary and pre-schools. The date for collection of the filled in questionnaires was agreed on. This ensured an almost near 100% return rate of all filled in questionnaires as they were collected when agreed.

### **3.8 Data Analysis Procedures**

Data obtained from the field in raw form is difficult to interpret (Mugenda and Mugenda 1999). Such data must be cleaned, coded and key-punched into a computer and analyzed. It is from the results of such analysis that researchers are able to make sense of the data. The study generated quantitative and data. Quantitative data derived from the demographic sections of the questionnaire and other closed questions was analyzed using descriptive techniques of data analysis. This included frequency distribution tables which were used to present data and percentages which were used to discuss the findings. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to analyze tabulated data. Means and standard deviations obtained were used to arrive at objective conclusions.



### **3.9 Concluding Remarks**

This chapter dealt with the design of the study focusing on areas of methodology. The section discussed target population, drawing the sample size, sampling procedure, validation of the research instrument and data analysis. The population focus for the study was pre-school teachers and standard one teachers. Questionnaires were used to collect data. The instruments were adjusted accordingly to ensure validity and reliability. Data was both quantitatively and qualitatively analyzed.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **DATA ANALYSIS, FINDINGS AND PRESENTATION**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents data findings, analysis and interpretation. The main purpose of the study was to establish perceptions of both pre-school and standard one teachers on school readiness of children transiting from pre-school to standard one in Kabete District. The chapter is organized into 2 sections, the first deals with demographic information, and then presentations based on the research questions. Frequency distribution tables were used to present data while percentages, means and standard deviation were used to discuss the findings.

#### **4.2 Questionnaire Return Rate**

Two sets of questionnaires were used to collect data from the respondents where one was administered to the primary school teachers and the other to the preschool teachers. In the research design the sample size had been identified as 120 pre-school teachers and 105 standard one teachers. The return rate was as illustrated in Table 4.1

**Table 4.1: Return rate**

<b>Return rate</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Standard one school teachers	100	95.2
Preschool teachers	100	83.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>89.2</b>

Source: Field Data

This shows that the return rate was 95.2% for standard one teachers and 83.3% for pre-school teachers. The average questionnaire return rate was 89.2%. The questionnaire return rate in this study was therefore satisfactory.

### **4.3 Findings from Standard One School Teacher**

In the primary schools the researcher visited, the standard one teachers were the main respondents in the study.

#### **4.3.1 Demographic outlook**

Demographic information was based on the work duration, teachers qualification, and the number of children the teacher handled per class.

**Table 4.2: Teachers' Work Duration**

<b>Duration</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
1 – 5 years	47	47
5 - 10 years	23	23
10 years and above	30	30
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Data

The researcher sought to know the number of years which the teacher had taught in primary school. According to the findings illustrated in Table 4.2, 47 percent of the standard one teachers had taught in primary schools for 1-5 years, 30 percent for ten years and above while 23 percent had taught for 5-10 years. This indicates that the standard one teachers chosen had enough experience thus then right information was obtained.

**Table 4.3: Standard One Teacher's Qualification**

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
P1	43	43
Graduate	57	57
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Data

The standard one teachers' education qualification was also researched. According to the findings illustrated in Table 4.3 above, majority (57 percent) of the standard one teachers

were graduates while 43 percent of the primary school teachers had P1. This indicated that the standard one teachers had the gone through basic training and were therefore well qualified and as such, they were therefore ideal respondents for the study.

**Table 4.4: No. of Children in the Standard One Class**

<b>No. of children in the primary school teachers' class</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Below 30	13	13
Between 30- 50	47	47
Above 50	40	40
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Data

Table 4.4 above summarizes the number of children in the primary school teachers' classes. The finding in the table confirmed that 13 percent of the primary school teachers had below 30 children in their class, 47 percent had between 30-50 children in their classes while 40 percent had above 50 children in their classes. This shows that most standard one teachers handled many children in a class.

#### **4.3.2 Findings Addressing the Objectives**

The researcher was able to gather information from the standard one teachers on their perceptions on school readiness as per the research questions.

### 4.3.3 Teachers' Perceptions on Characteristics of a Ready Child

The researcher wanted to know the qualities that the teachers thought were important for a child to possess on arrival to standard one.

**Table 4.5 Qualities Important for a Child to Posses on Arrival to Standard One**

	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean	Std Dev
Is physically healthy, rested and well nourished.	60	40	-	-	-	4.60	0.49
Finishes tasks.	40	60	-	-	-	4.40	0.49
Can count to at least 50.	40	50	-	10	-	4.20	0.87
Takes turns and shares.	17	73	-	10	-	3.97	0.75
Is enthusiastic and curious in approaching new activities.	20	80	-	-	-	4.20	0.40
Is able to hold and use a pencil.	80	10	-	10	-	4.60	0.92
Is not disruptive of the class.	7	70	-	23	-	3.60	0.92
Knows the English language.	27	53	-	20	-	3.87	1.02
Knows the Kiswahili language.	10	67	-	23	-	3.63	0.95
Is sensitive to other children's feelings.	20	57	-	10	13	3.60	1.28
Sits still and pays attention.	27	60	-	13	-	4.00	0.89
Knows the letters of the alphabet.	53	47	-	-	-	4.53	0.50
Can respond accurately when given directions.	37	63	-	-	-	4.37	0.48
Identifies primary colors and basic shapes.	37	63	-	-	-	4.37	0.48
Can write down their name.	47	53	-	-	-	4.47	0.50

Source: Field Data

From the findings illustrated in Table 4.5, the researcher wanted to know the qualities that the standard one teacher thought were important for a child to possess on arrival to standard one. A likert scale was used to summarize the qualities. There were five levels of agreement and each level was given points to help in finding the mean and standard deviation. Strongly agree being the first level of agreement was given 5 points, agree was given 4 points, undecided was given 3 points, disagree was given 2 points and strongly disagree 1 point.

The respondents strongly agreed that a child should be physically healthy, rested and well nourished, a child should be able to hold and use a pencil and should know the letters of alphabet with a mean of 4.60, 4.60 and 4.53 respectively.

In addition, the respondents agreed that the child should be able to finish tasks, be able to count to at least 50 and be able to take turns and shares with a mean of 4.40, 4.20 and 3.97 respectively. Moreover, the respondents agreed that the child should be enthusiastic and curious in approaching new activities, not disruptive of the class and know the English language with a mean of 4.20, 3.60 and 3.87 respectively. The standard one teachers also agreed that the child should know the Kiswahili language, should be sensitive to other children's feelings and be able to sit still and pay attention with a mean of 3.63, 3.60 and 4.00. They agreed that the child should be able to respond accurately when given directions, identify primary colors and basic shapes and write down their names with a mean of 4.37, 4.37 and 4.47 respectively.

Research (Kids Count 2005) states that the top three qualities public school teachers consider essential for school readiness are that a child be physically healthy, rested and well nourished; be able to communicate needs, wants and thoughts verbally and be enthusiastic and curious in approaching new activities. Majority of the teachers also placed significant importance on the child's ability to follow directions, not being disruptive in class, being sensitive to other children's feelings, and the ability to take turns and share. Studies (NAEYC 1995) also stipulate that children are deemed ready for school if they are healthy, can communicate thoughts verbally, are enthusiastic and curious in while learning, can follow directions, are sensitive to other children's feelings and have the ability to take turns and share.

The findings analyzed by the researcher reveal that the stipulated domains of child readiness; Physical and motor development, Language development, Approaches to learning, Social and emotional development, Cognition and general knowledge are in essence the constituents of the characteristics that define a ready child and these characteristics highly influence the way teachers perceive as ready the children they receive into standard one. Primarily, standard one teachers will perceive pupils as ready based on the above domains showing their strong influence on teachers' perceptions.



### 4.3.4 Teachers' Perceptions on the Characteristics of a Ready family and a Ready Community

The researcher sought to find out the teachers perceptions of a ready family and a ready community. The figure below shows the responses.

**Table 4.6: Qualities of a Ready Family and a Ready Community**

	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean	Std Dev
Teen mothers are less likely to have the parenting skills needed for healthy child development.	40	37	13	10	-	4.07	0.96
Children who have been abused and neglected are more likely to have cognitive and social problems.	60	40	-	-	-	4.60	0.49
Unstable mental health of parents can affect children's development negatively.	73	27	-	-	-	4.73	0.44
Children need a stable, safe and permanent environment so as to develop healthily.	87	13	-	-	-	4.87	0.34
Poverty during early childhood can have a negative effect on children's health and development.	73	20	-	7	-	4.60	0.80
Inadequate, crowded, or unaffordable housing has a negative impact on children's health and education.	60	30	7	3	-	4.47	0.76
Infants who grow up without their parents' develop more slowly and may develop emotional and have academic problems.	50	33	10	7	-	4.27	0.89
High quality child care and educational programmes improve child development outcomes.	53	33	3	10	-	4.30	0.94
Access to health care and the quality of care impacts on child outcomes academically.	47	47	-	7	-	4.33	0.79
Children living in poverty are more likely to have physical and health problems.	70	10	3	17	-	4.33	1.14

Source: Field Data

From the findings above, a likert scale was used to summarize the qualities. There were five levels of agreement and each level was given points to help in finding the mean and standard deviation. Strongly agree being the first level of agreement was given 5 points, agree was given 4 points, undecided was given 3 points, disagree was given 2 points and strongly disagree 1 point.

The primary school teachers strongly agreed that children who have been abused and neglected are more likely to have cognitive and social problems, unstable mental health of parents can affect children's development negatively and children need a stable, safe and permanent environment so as to develop healthily with a mean of 4.60, 4.73 and 4.87 respectively. Moreover, the researcher strongly agreed that poverty during early childhood can have a negative effect on children's health and development with a mean of 4.60.

In addition, the respondents agreed that teen mothers are less likely to have the parenting skills needed for healthy child development, inadequate, crowded, or unaffordable housing has a negative impact on children's health and education and infants who grow up without their parents' develop more slowly and may develop emotional and have academic problems with a mean of 4.07, 4.47 and 4.27 respectively. The primary school teacher also agreed that high quality child care and educational programs improve child development outcomes. Access to health care and the quality of care was found to have an impact on child outcomes academically and children living in poverty are more likely to have physical and health problems with a mean of 4.30, 4.33 and 4.33 respectively.

A study by Weitzman (2003) showed that family poverty adversely affects children's health, intellectual capabilities, academic achievements and behavior. Poorer families have also been seen to provide a less stimulating environment for the child, (Ladd, 1990). McClelland (2000) also records that children need a stable and safe environment so as to develop healthily as factors such as unstable mental health of parents or absent parents can affect children's development negatively. Sylvia (2004) states that the quality of child care will either stagnate or improve child development outcomes. She notes that services such as access to health care , proper housing facilities and quality ECE programmes impact child outcomes academically.

It is evident thus that the qualities in table 4.6 do constitute to the characteristics of a ready family and a ready community. Findings from the research also reveal that there indeed is a close relationship between these characteristics and teachers perceptions. This is because the perceptions of standard one teachers on the qualities of a ready family and a ready community are similar to the already researched characteristics of a ready family and a ready community.

#### **4.3.5 Teachers' Perceptions on the Characteristic of a Ready School**

The researcher sought to establish the standard one teachers perceptions of a ready school and their responses are captured in the tables below.

**Table 4.7: Teachers' comfortability with children handled per class**

	Frequency	Percent
No	77	77
Yes	23	23
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Data

Majority (77 percent) of primary school teachers were not comfortable with the number of children which they handled in a class while 23 percent were comfortable with the number of children they handled in a class.

**Figure 4.1: Number of children the primary school teacher can handle comfortably per class.**

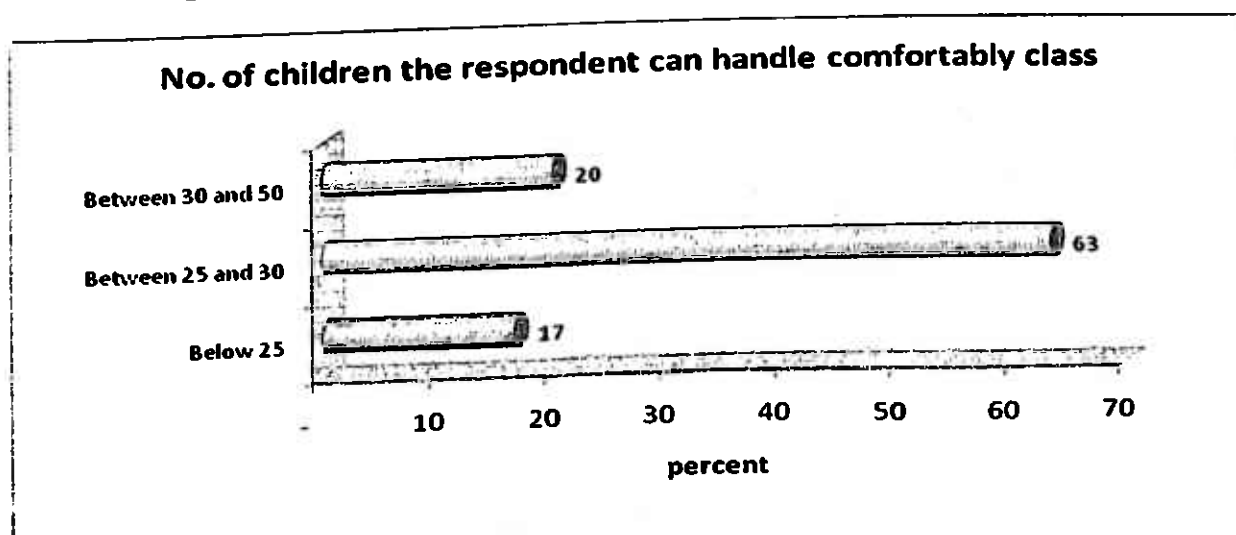


Figure 4.1 illustrates the number of children the standard one teacher can handle comfortably in a class. From the findings, majority (63 percent) of primary school

teachers confirmed that they could comfortably handle between 25 and 30 children, 20 percent could comfortably handle between 30 and 50 children while 17 percent could comfortably handle below 25 children.

**Table 4.8: Presence of a Preschool Within Primary Teachers' School**

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
No	70	70
Yes	30	30
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Data

The researcher wanted to know if there was a pre school within the primary school teachers' school. According to the findings illustrated in Table 4.6, majority (70 percent) of the primary school teachers said there was no pre school within their school while 30 percent said there was a pre school within their school.

**Table 4.9: Provision of Proper Transition Practices in the Teachers' School**

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Yes	13	13
No	87	87
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Data

On whether the primary school teachers' school has proper transition practices for children coming to Standard one, majority (87 percent) of the primary school teachers said there were no proper transition practices in their schools for pre-schoolers coming into standard one while 13 percent said there were proper transition practices for children who came to standard one.

**Table 4.10: Teachers' Rating of Readiness in Standard One Children**

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Ready	20	20
Fairly ready	70	70
Not Ready	10	10
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Data

Majority (70 percent) of the primary school teachers rated standard one children transiting from pre- school to standard one as fairly ready whilst 20 percent of the teachers rated the children as ready and 10 percent rated them as not ready. This was illustrated in Table 4.9 above.

**Figure 4.2: Primary Schools Catering for Children with Special Needs**

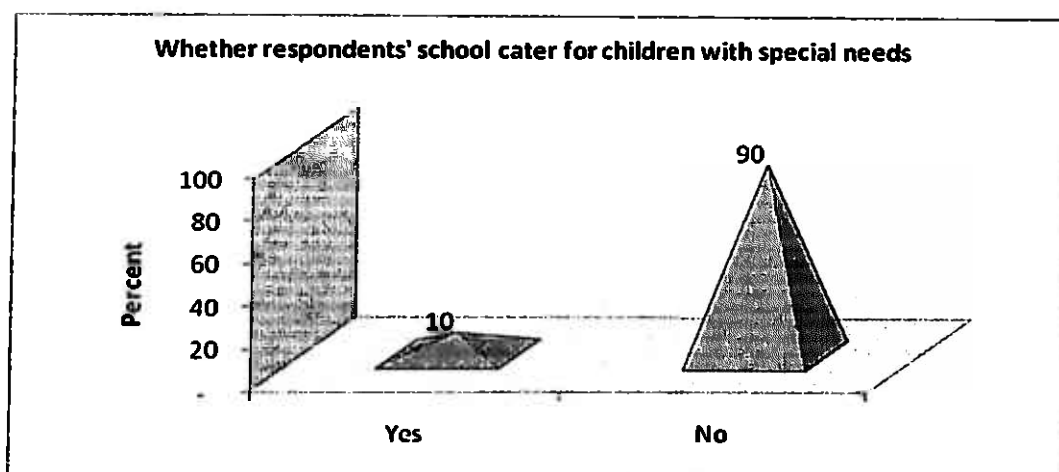


Figure 4.2 illustrated the findings of whether the primary school teachers' school catered for children with special needs. According to the findings, majority (90 percent) of the primary school teachers' schools did not cater for children with special needs while 10 percent of the primary school teachers' schools catered for children with special needs.

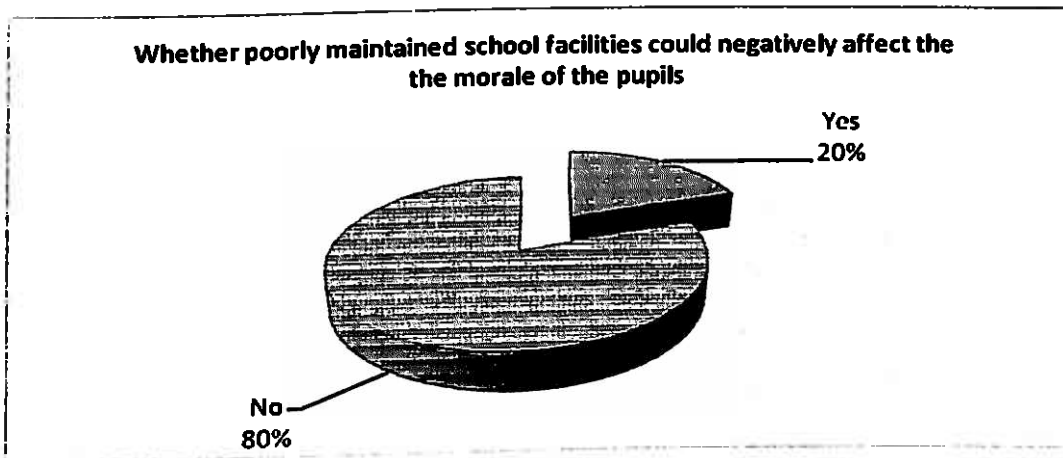
**Table 4.11: Primary Schools Ability to Handle Standard one Children**

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	80	80
No	20	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Data

According to the findings illustrated in Table 4.10, majority (80 percent) of the primary school teachers confirmed that their schools were ready to handle standard one children while 20 percent said their schools were not ready to handle the children.

**Figure 4.3: Effect of Maintenance of School Facilities on Pupils Morale**



The researcher was interested in knowing if the poorly maintained school facilities could negatively affect the morale of the children. Majority (80 percent) of the primary school teachers said that poorly maintained school facilities could not affect the morale of the pupils negatively while 20 percent said the poorly maintained school facilities could negatively affect the pupils.



**Table 4.12: Relationship between Quality of a Pre-School and School Readiness**

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Yes	70	70
No	30	30
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Data

According to the findings illustrated in Table 4.11, majority (70 percent) of the primary school teachers confirmed that the quality of pre school contributed to school readiness of a standard one pupil while 30 percent said that it did not contribute.

Based on the teachers responses above it is evident that standard one teachers perceived a ready school to be one that had proper transition practices, catered for children with special needs and had enough teachers. Currie (2001) suggests that children should be in small classes with the best teacher to student ratio for easy learning. Statistics (Kids Count 2005) also reveal that quality schools will take into consideration the teacher to student ratio; the length of ECE sessions, the quality of personnel and the transition procedures within a school.

Teachers' responses on a ready school which depict their perceptions on a ready school seem to be highly influenced by the components of a ready school which have been discussed above.

### 4.3.6 Teachers' Evaluation on School Readiness

The researcher wanted to find out the input of teachers on their general evaluation of school readiness.

**Table 4.13: Suggestions Aimed at Improving School Readiness**

	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean	Std Dev
Children should know the alphabet before they go to standard one.	47	53	-	-	-	4.47	0.50
Information and evaluations on individual children should be transferred to the primary school.	30	53	13	3	-	4.10	0.75
There should be in-service courses for both preschool and primary teachers on the area of school readiness.	40	27	-	33	-	3.73	1.29
School readiness of pupils should not be based so much on age but on individual preparedness for school.	23	23	-	53	-	3.17	1.29
Children should repeat if they appear unready for standard one.	13	80	3	-	3	4.00	0.68
Preschool teachers should arrange class visits to primary schools prior to the start of the school term.	30	23	13	23	10	3.40	1.38
Communication should be established between preschool teachers and receiving teachers of class one.	40	30	10	20	-	3.90	1.14
Readiness for standard one children comes as children mature, you cannot push it.	40	57	-	3	-	4.33	0.65
Homework should be given in pre school	40	43	-	17	-	4.07	1.03

Source: Field Data

The researcher was interested in knowing the teachers general suggestions aimed at improving school readiness among pupils who transit from pre school to standard one. A Likert Scale was used to summarize the qualities. There were five levels of agreement and each level was given points to help in finding the mean and standard deviation. Strongly agree being the first level of agreement was given 5 points, agree was given 4 points, undecided was given 3 points, disagree was given 2 points and strongly disagree 1 point.

The primary school teachers agreed that children should know the alphabet before they went to standard one, information and evaluations on individual children should be transferred to the primary school and there should be in-service courses for both preschool and primary teachers on the area of school readiness with a mean of 4.47, 4.10 and 3.73 respectively. In addition, the respondents agreed that children should repeat if they appear unready for standard one, communication should be established between preschool teachers and receiving teachers of class one and readiness for standard one children comes as children mature, you cannot push it with a mean of 4.00, 3.90 and 4.33 respectively. Moreover, the primary school teachers agreed that homework should be given in Pre School with a mean of 4.07.

The respondents were undecided on whether the school readiness of pupils should not be based so much on age but on individual preparedness for school and whether the Preschool teachers should arrange class visits to primary schools prior to the start of the school term with a mean of 3.17 and 3.40 respectively.

#### 4.4 Findings from Pre-school Teachers

The researcher sought to find out the perceptions of pre-school teachers on school readiness and got the following responses..

##### 4.4.1 Demographic findings

Demographic information was based on the years the pre-school teacher had taught in pre school as illustrated in Tables 4.14

**Table 4.14: Years the Pre-School Teacher has Taught in Pre-School**

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
1-5 years	10	10
5-10 years	40	40
More than 10 years	50	50
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Data

The researcher sought to know the years which the pre-school teacher had taught in preschool. According to the findings illustrated in Table 4.14, 10 percent of the pre-school teachers had taught in Pre School for 1-5 years, 50 percent for ten years and above while 40 percent had taught for 5-10 years. This is an indication that the pre-school teachers chosen had enough experience thus right information was obtained.

#### **4.4.2 Findings Addressing the Objectives**

Teachers` were interviewed on their perceptions on school readiness and their responses were captured as follows.

#### **4.4.3 Teachers perceptions on the characteristics of a ready child**

Pre-school teachers gave their views on their perceptions of a ready child as follows;

**Table 4.14: Qualities important for a child to possess on arrival to standard one**

	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean	Std Dev
Is physically healthy, rested and well nourished.	40	60	-	-	-	4.40	0.49
Finishes tasks	40	50	10	-	-	4.30	0.64
Can count to at least 50	40	60	-	-	-	4.40	0.49
Takes turns and shares	20	60	10	10	-	3.90	0.83
Is enthusiastic and curious in approaching new activities	20	80	-	-	-	4.20	0.40
Is able to hold and use a pencil	60	40	-	-	-	4.60	0.49
Is not disruptive of the class	20	50	10	20	-	3.70	1.00
Knows the English language	20	70	-	10	-	4.00	0.77
Knows the Kiswahili language	30	60	10	-	-	4.20	0.60
Is sensitive to other children's feelings	30	50	10	10	-	4.00	0.89
Sits still and pays attention	20	40	20	20	-	3.60	1.02
Knows the letters of the alphabet	60	40	-	-	-	4.60	0.49
Can respond accurately when given directions	50	40	-	10	-	4.30	0.90
Identifies primary colors and basic shapes	40	60	-	-	-	4.40	0.49
Can write down their name	70	30	-	-	-	4.70	0.46

Source: Field Data

The researcher wanted to know the qualities important for a child to possess on arrival to standard one. A likert scale was used to summarize the qualities. There were five levels

of agreement and each level was given points to help in finding the mean and standard deviation. Strongly agree being the first level of agreement was given 5 points, agree was given 4 points, undecided was given 3 points, disagree was given 2 points and strongly disagree 1 point.

The respondents strongly agreed that a child should be able to hold, use a pencil and should know the letters of alphabet and write down their names with a mean of 4.60, 4.60 and 4.70 respectively.

In addition, the respondents agreed that the child should be physically healthy, rested and well nourished, able to finish tasks, be able to count to at least 50 and be able to take turns and shares with a mean of 4.40, 4.30, 4.40 and 3.90 respectively. Moreover, the respondents agreed that the child should be enthusiastic and curious in approaching new activities, not disruptive of the class and knows the english language with a mean of 4.20, 3.70 and 4.00 respectively. The pre school teachers also agreed that the child should know the English language, know the kiswahili language, should be sensitive to other children's feelings and be able to sit still and pay attention with a mean of 4.00, 4.20, 4.00 and 3.60. They agreed that the child should be able to respond accurately when given directions and identify primary colors and basic shapes with a mean of 4.30 and 4.40 respectively.

Research (Kids Count 2005) states that the top three qualities kindergarten teachers consider essential for school readiness are that a child be physically healthy, rested and

well nourished; be able to communicate needs, wants and thoughts verbally and be enthusiastic and curious in approaching new activities. Majority of the teachers also placed significant importance on the child's ability to follow directions, not being disruptive in class, being sensitive to other children's feelings, and the ability to take turns and share. Studies (NAEYC 1995) also stipulate that children are deemed ready for school if they are healthy, can communicate thoughts verbally, are enthusiastic and curious in while learning, can follow directions, are sensitive to other children's feelings and have the ability to take turns and share.

The findings analyzed by the researcher reveal that the stipulated domains of child readiness; Physical and motor development, Language development, Approaches to learning, Social and emotional development, Cognition and general knowledge are in essence the constituents of the characteristics that define a ready child and these characteristics highly influence the way teachers perceive as ready the children they receive into standard one. Primarily, pre-school teachers will perceive pupils as ready based on the above domains showing their strong influence on teachers' perceptions.

#### **4.4.4 Teachers perceptions on the characteristics of a ready family and community**

The researcher sought to find out the pre-school teachers perception of a ready family and a ready community.



**Table 4.16: Qualities of a Ready Family and a Ready Community**

	Strongly agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean	Std Dev
Teen mothers are less likely to have the parenting skills needed for healthy child development.	60	40	-	-	-	4.60	0.49
Children who have been abused and neglected are more likely to have cognitive and social problems.	40	60	-	-	-	4.40	0.49
Unstable mental health of parents can affect children's development negatively.	60	40	-	-	-	4.60	0.49
Children need a stable, safe and permanent environment so as to develop healthily.	60	40	-	-	-	4.60	0.49
Poverty during early childhood can have a negative effect on children's health and development.	60	40	-	-	-	4.60	0.49
Inadequate, crowded, or unaffordable housing has a negative impact on children's health and education.	60	40	-	-	-	4.60	0.49
Infants who grow up without their parents' develop more slowly and may develop emotional and have academic problems.	40	60	-	-	-	4.40	0.49
High quality child care and educational programmes improve child development outcomes.	60	40	-	-	-	4.60	0.49

Source: Field Data

The researcher was interested in knowing the perceptions of pre-school teachers on a ready family and a ready community. A likert scale was used to summarize the qualities.

There were five levels of agreement and each level was given points to help in finding the mean and standard deviation. Strongly agree being the first level of agreement was given 5 points, agree was given 4 points, undecided was given 3 points, disagree was given 2 points and strongly disagree 1 point.

The pre school teachers strongly agreed that teen mothers were less likely to have the parenting skills needed for healthy child development, unstable mental health of parents can affect children's development negatively and children need a stable, safe and permanent environment so as to develop healthily with a mean of 4.60, 4.60 and 4.60 respectively. Moreover, the teachers strongly agreed that poverty during early childhood can have a negative effect on children's health and development, inadequate, crowded, or unaffordable housing has a negative impact on children's health and education and high quality child care and educational programs improve child development outcomes with a mean of 4.60, 4.60, and 4.60 respectively.

In addition, the respondents agreed that children who had been abused and neglected were more likely to have cognitive and social problems, infants who grow up without their parents' develop more slowly and may develop emotional and have academic problems, access to health care and the quality of care impacts on child outcomes academically and children living in poverty are more likely to have physical and health problems with a mean of 4.40, 4.40, 4.20 and 4.20 respectively.

Statistics (NAEYC 1995) show that family poverty adversely affects children's health, intellectual capabilities, academic achievements and behavior. Poorer families have also been seen to provide a less stimulating environment for the child, (Ladd, 1990). McClelland (2000) also records that children need a stable and safe environment so as to develop healthily as factors such as unstable mental health of parents or absent parents can affect children's stagnate or improve child development outcomes. She notes that services such as access to health care, proper housing facilities and quality ECE programmes impact child outcomes academically.

It is evident thus that the qualities in table 4.15 do constitute to the characteristics of a ready family and a ready community. Findings from the research also reveal that there indeed is a close relationship between these characteristics and teachers perceptions. This is because the perceptions of pre-school teachers on the qualities of a ready family and a ready community are similar to the already researched characteristics of a ready family and a ready community.

#### 4.4.5 Perceptions of Teachers on the Characteristics of a Ready School

The researcher sought to find out the perceptions of pre-school teachers on a ready school and gathered the following responses.

**Figure 4.4: Number of Children who Transit to Standard One**

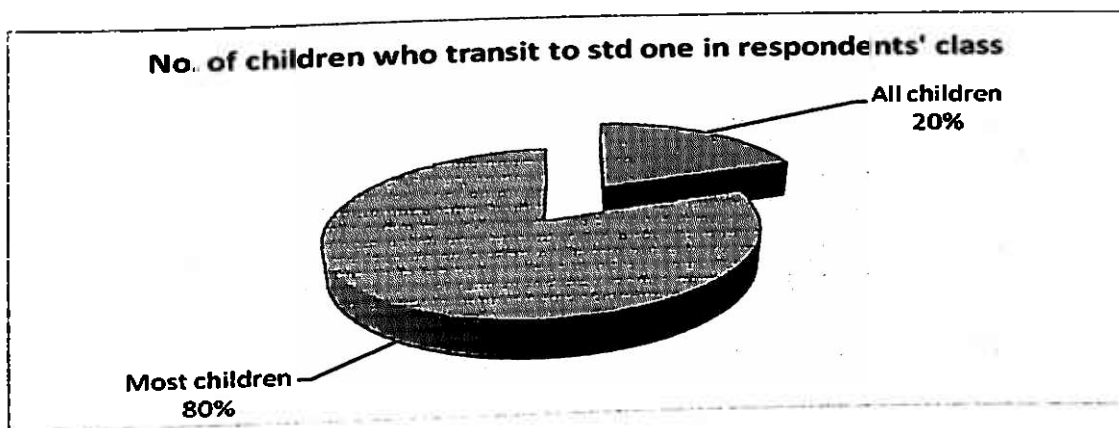


Figure 4.4 presents the findings on the number of children who transited to standard one in the pre-school teachers' class. According to the findings majority (80 percent) of the pre-school teachers said that most of their children transited to standard one while 20 percent said that all their children transited to standard one.

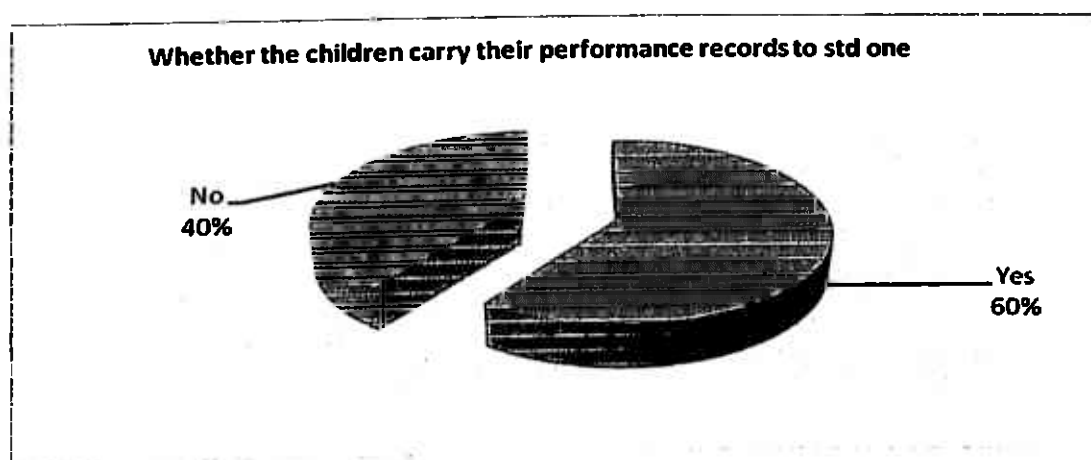
**Table 4.17: Interaction Between the Pre-School and standard one teacher**

	Frequency	Percent
Always	10	10
Never	90	90
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Data

From Table 4.16, majority (90 percent) of pre-school teachers said they never interacted with standard one teachers while 10 percent said that they always interacted with standard one teachers.

**Figure 4.5: Performance Records of Children**



Majority (60 percent) of the pre-school teachers said that the children carried their performance record to standard one, while 40 percent said that the children never carried their performance records to standard one. This is presented in Figure 4.5.

**Table 4.18: Methods Used by Primary Schools to Admit Pupils to Standard One**

	Frequency	Percent
Oral interview	0	0
Written interview	10	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Field Data

All (100 percent) of the pre-school teachers confirmed that primary schools used written interviews to admit students to standard one.

**Table 4.18: Appropriate Methods to Test Readiness**

	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percent</b>
Oral Interview	0	0
Oral Interview	0	0
Both Methods	100	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>

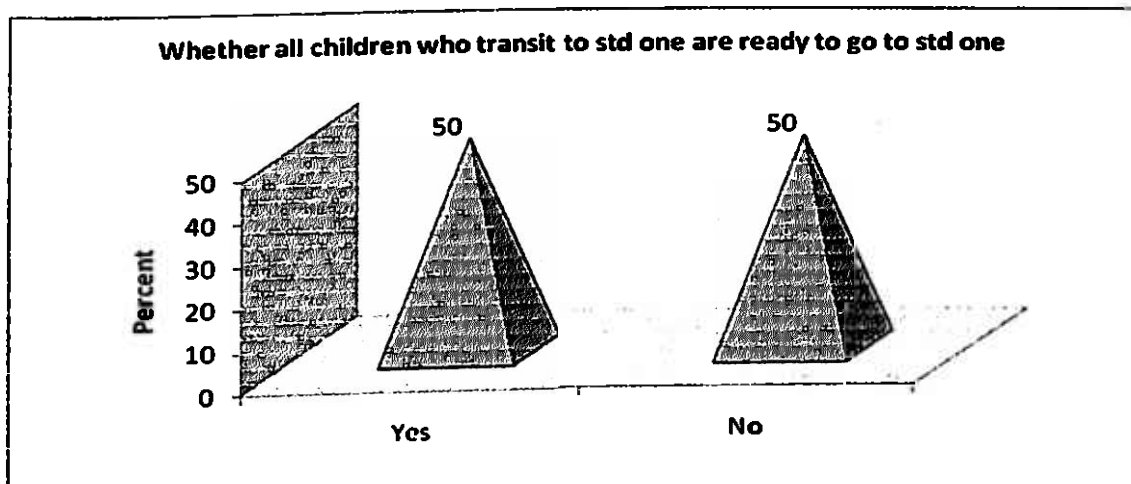
Source: Field Data

All (100 percent) of the pre-school teachers confirmed that both written and oral interviews were appropriate to test readiness to class one pupils.

Research findings reveal that majority of pre-school teachers do not interact with standard one teachers. Majority also were in agreement to the fact that children never carried their performance records with them as they transited to standard one. All these seemed to be drawbacks that hindered readiness in schools. Pre-school teachers seemed to perceive ready schools as the ones that had proper transition practices and held interactions between pre-school and standard one teachers. The National Centre for Education Statistics(1993) proposed characteristics of ready schools and among them are smooth transitions between pre-school and primary school and continuity between child care and early education programmes brought about by teacher interaction. These

Characteristics seem to have highly influenced the perceptions of pre-school teachers on ready schools.

**Figure 4.6: Readiness of Pre-Schoolers on Transit to Standard One**



The researcher wanted to know if all the children who transited to standard one were ready to go to standard one. Half (50 percent) of the pre-school teachers said all the children were ready while half (50 percent) of the pre-school teachers said all the children were not ready. This means that quite a number of children who transited to standard one were considered not ready yet they were still allowed to go ahead and transit to standard one.

**Table 4.19: Ready Children**

	<b>Few children</b>	<b>Most children</b>	<b>All children</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std Dev</b>
Physically health, rested and well nourished	10	50	40	2.30	0.64
Could communicate effectively	10	60	30	2.20	0.60
Could speak the English language	40	50	10	1.70	0.64
Could speak the Kiswahili language	10	70	20	2.10	0.54
Could count to at least 50	10	40	50	2.40	0.66
Could identify primary colors and basic shapes	50	-	50	2.00	1.00
Could write down their name	30	-	70	2.40	0.92
Knows the letters of alphabet	50	-	50	2.00	1.00
Could follow directions	70	-	30	1.60	0.92
Had good problem solving skills	10	60	30	2.20	0.60
Were socially competent	20	70	10	1.90	0.54
Could finish tasks	80	-	20	1.40	0.80
Could sit still and pay attention	10	80	10	2.00	0.45
Were enthusiastic and curious when approaching new activities	80	-	20	1.40	0.80
Were not disruptive to the class	20	70	10	1.90	0.54
Were able to hold and use pencil	50	-	50	2.00	1.00

Source: Field Data



The researcher wanted to know the children who met the pre school teachers' expectation before being transited to standard one. To summarize the number of children, a Likert Scale was used. There were three levels, where each was given points to help in obtaining the mean and standard deviation. Few children was given 1 point, most children was given 2 points and all children 3 points.

The respondents said that few children who transited to primary school were able to finish tasks and were enthusiastic and curious when approaching new activities with a mean of 1.40 and 1.40 respectively.

The preschool teachers said that most children who transited to primary schools were physically health, rested and well nourished, could communicate effectively, could speak the English language and could speak the Kiswahili language with a mean of 2.30, 2.20, 1.70 and 2.10 respectively. In addition, the respondents said that most children could count to at least 50, could identify primary colors and basic shapes, could write down their name and knew the letters of alphabet with a mean of 2.40, 2.00, 2.40 and 2.00 respectively. Moreover the respondents said that most children could follow directions, had good problem solving skills and were socially competent with a mean of 1.60, 2.20 and 1.90 respectively. The respondents also confirmed that most children could sit still and pay attention, were not disruptive to the class and were able to hold and use pencil with a mean of 2.00, 1.90 and 2.00 respectively.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter provides a summary of significant findings from the study. It gives a conclusion to the findings and recommendations. In the chapter, there are suggestions for further studies.

#### **5.2 Summary of the Study Findings**

The purpose of this study was to investigate the perceptions of both pre-schools' and standard one's teachers on school readiness of children transiting from pre-school to standard one in Kabete District. This study sought to investigate the relationship between the characteristics of a ready family and a ready community on teachers perceptions. It also sought to find out the influence of the characteristics of a ready child and a ready school on teachers' perceptions.

It was interesting to note from the findings that both pre-school and primary school teachers had almost similar perceptions on readiness as pertaining to children on transit to standard one. There seemed to be a close relationship between the factors that influence readiness in children and the perceptions of teachers. Majority of the teachers seemed to perceive readiness in children under the already defined domains of readiness.

Both pre-school and standard one teachers perceived ready children as those who were physically healthy, rested and well nourished, could communicate effectively, could speak the English language and could speak the Kiswahili language. They also strongly agreed that a child should be able to hold and use a pencil, know the letters of alphabet, write down their names, finish tasks, count to at least 50 and be able to take turns and share. Interestingly these perceptions are similar to the characteristics in the domains that revolve around child readiness meaning that the domains of child readiness highly influence teachers' perceptions of a ready child.

Findings also revealed that both pre-school and standard one teachers' had similar perceptions on what constituted a ready family. Both groups of teachers strongly agreed that teen mothers were less likely to have the parenting skills needed for healthy child development. In addition, both groups of respondents agreed that children who had been abused and neglected were more likely to have cognitive and social problems whilst infants who grew up without their parents developed more slowly, developed emotional and had academic problems. These perceptions are quite closely related to the characteristics of a ready family as stipulated in research reviewed, (Kids Count 2005).

Standard one teachers perceived a ready community as one that was stable, safe and one that provided a permanent environment so as to develop healthy children. Pre-school teachers echoed the above sentiments and in addition both groups of teachers strongly agreed that a ready community should have access to high quality child health care and educational programmes so as to improve child development outcomes.

A ready school was perceived by the teachers to be one that had proper transition procedures. It was also strongly agreed by both groups of teachers that ready schools encouraged interaction of teachers so as to ease the transition process.

Findings also revealed that 50 percent of the pre-school teachers who took part in the study said that the children who transited to standard one were not ready and this made the researcher wonder why such children were allowed to transit to standard one. The respondents said that few children who transited to primary school were able to finish tasks and were enthusiastic and curious when approaching new activities.

## **5.2 Conclusions**

Based on the findings, it was concluded that there isn't much difference in the way pre-school teachers and standard one teachers' perceive a ready child even though they rarely interact in their professions. Their perceptions on readiness of children are quite similar and they revolve around the stipulated domains of child readiness. It is therefore important to note that a teacher can be able to gauge the degree of readiness in a child to some extent. It is therefore important for teachers and parents to work hand in hand especially during the early years of transition where readiness is key in pre-schoolers. It is also necessary to note that even though perceptions of both pre-school and standard one teachers are more or less similar, their interactions are certainly wanting and much more effort is required to promote interactions between pre-school and standard one teachers as this is sure to improve readiness in children.

#### **5.4 Recommendations**

From the study the following recommendations have been suggested,

Channels of interaction and communication between both the pre-school and the standard one teachers should be enhanced to ensure that the children are ready when transiting from Pre School to primary school.

Teachers' perceptions which could be distorted should be re-aligned towards readiness, and this could be done through the Ministry of Education which would hold inservice courses for both pre and primary school teachers who after this would be in a better position to understand readiness and prepare the child fully towards it. This should be reinforced thus making the teachers able to fully prepare the child towards readiness. The end results are ready children exiting from a pre-school and a ready children being received by the primary school teacher into ready schools.

The community should be fully focused and follow ups done to the children ensuring that the children are fully ready when transiting from Pre School to primary school. In order to make more children ready for primary school, the community should try addressing the social problems which affect the children.

There is ~~also~~ need for school heads to coordinate in detail all activities that include transition of preschool children to standard one.

## **5.5 Suggestions for further studies**

Based on the scope of this study where the main aim was the perceptions of both pre-school and standard one teachers on school readiness of children transiting from pre-school to standard one in Kabete District, the researcher suggests areas for further study:

- i. A study on school readiness of children transiting from pre-school to standard one.
- ii. A study on the challenges facing children on transit from pre-school to standard one.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix I: Letter of introduction to respondents

University of Nairobi,  
P.O Box 30197,  
Nairobi  
May 2010

Dear Respondents,

I am a postgraduate student at the university of Nairobi pursuing a Master of Education degree in the Department of Educational Communications & Technology. I am conducting a research on *Teachers perceptions on school readiness of children transiting from pre-school to standard one in Kabete District*. The findings of this study will be used to asses the validity of teachers perceptions on school readiness of children transiting from preschool to standard to standard one. I am requesting for information that will facilitate the study. The information you give will be used for this study only and will be treated with utmost confidentiality.

Thank you.

Yours Faithfully,  
Mary Njuguna.

## **Appendix II: Pre-school teachers questionnaire**

### **SECTION A:**

**(Please tick [√] against the answer of your choice.)**

1. How many years have you taught such group of pupils?
  - a) 1 – 5 years
  - b) 5 – 10 years
  - c) 10+ years
  
2. What are your qualifications?
  - a) P1
  - b) Graduate
  - c) Other (specify).....
  
3. How many children are in your class?
  - a) Below 30
  - b) Between 30- 50
  - c) Above 5
  
4. Are you comfortable with the number of children in your class?
  - a) No.
  - b) Yes.
  
5. How many children can you comfortably handle per class?
  - a) Below 25.
  - b) Between 25 and 30.
  - c) Between 30 and 50.
  
6. Which criteria do you think is appropriate for testing readiness of children transiting to standard one?
  - a) Written interview.
  - b) Oral interview.
  - c) Other criteria(specify).....

7. Which method is used by the primary schools to admit your pupils to standard one?
- a) Written interview
  - b) Oral interview
  - c) Both methods
8. Do children carry their performance records with them as they transit to standard one?
- a) Yes
  - b) No
9. How often do you get to interact with the standard one teachers?
- a) Often
  - b) Rarely
  - c) Never
10. According to you, what three things should a pupil in pre-school be able to do before he or she can move on to standard one?
- a) \_\_\_\_\_
  - b) \_\_\_\_\_
  - c) \_\_\_\_\_
11. How many of your pupils are able to do the above things by the time they are transiting to standard one?
- a) All of them
  - b) Most of them
12. Are there pupils in your class who transit to standard one before they can be able to do the things that you have mentioned in number 10 above?
- a) Yes
  - b) No
13. If your answer above is yes, please indicate the reasons that make these pupils transit to standard one before they can be able to fully do the things you mentioned above.
- a) \_\_\_\_\_
  - b) \_\_\_\_\_

## SECTION B: TEACHERS PERCEPTIONS ON SCHOOL READINESS

**Please tick against the choice which best indicates your level of agreement that the qualities listed below are important for a child to possess on arrival to standard one so as to indicate readiness.**

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Is physically healthy, rested and well nourished.					
Finishes tasks.					
Can count to at least 50.					
Takes turns and shares.					
Is enthusiastic and curious in approaching new activities.					
Is able to hold and use a pencil.					
Is not disruptive of the class.					
Knows the English language.					
Knows the Kiswahili language.					
Is sensitive to other children's feelings.					
Sits still and pays attention.					
Knows the letters of the alphabet.					
Can respond accurately when given directions.					
Identifies primary colors and basic shapes.					
Can write down their name.					

Please tick against the choice which best indicates your level of agreement to the given statement in regards to school readiness of standard one children.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Teen mothers are less likely to have the parenting skills needed for healthy child development.					
Children who have been abused and neglected are more likely to have cognitive and social problems.					
Unstable mental health of parents can affect children's development negatively.					
Children need a stable, safe and permanent environment so as to develop healthily.					
Poverty during early childhood can have a negative effect on children's health and development.					
Inadequate, crowded, or unaffordable housing has a negative impact on children's health and education.					
Infants who grow up without their parents' develop more slowly and may develop emotional and have academic problems.					
High quality child care and educational programmes improve child development outcomes.					
Access to health care and the quality of care impacts on child outcomes academically.					
Children living in poverty are more likely to have physical and health problems.					

**SECTION C: TEACHERS EVALUATION OF SCHOOL READINESS**

**Below are some suggestions aimed at improving school readiness among pupils on transit from preschool to standard one. Please tick against the number which best indicates your level of agreement on the importance of each statement.**

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Children should know the alphabet before they go to standard one.					
Information and evaluations on individual children should be transferred to the primary school.					
There should be in-service courses for both preschool and primary teachers on the area of school readiness.					
School readiness of pupils should not be based so much on age but on individual preparedness for school.					
Children should repeat if they appear unready for standard one.					
Preschool teachers should arrange class visits to primary schools prior to the start of the school term.					
Communication should be established between preschool teachers and receiving teachers of class one.					
Readiness for standard one children comes as children mature, you cannot push it.					



## **Appendix III: Primary School Teachers Questionnaire**

### **SECTION A:**

**(Please tick [√] against the answer of your choice.)**

1. How many years have you taught such group of pupils?
  - a) 1 – 5 years
  - b) 5 – 10 years
  - c) 10+ years
2. What are your qualifications?
  - a) P1
  - b) Graduate
  - c) Other (specify).....
3. How many children are in your class?
  - a) Below 30
  - b) Between 30- 50
  - c) Above 5
4. Are you comfortable with the number of children in your class?
  - a) No.
  - b) Yes.
5. How many children can you comfortably handle per class?
  - a) Below 25.
  - b) Between 25 and 30.
  - c) Between 30 and 50.
6. Which criteria do you think is appropriate for testing readiness of children transiting to standard one?
  - a) Written interview.
  - b) Oral interview

7. Is there a pre-school within your school compound?
- a) Yes
  - b) No
8. Does your school have proper transition practices for children coming to standard one?
- a) Yes
  - b) No
9. How would you rate the majority of standard one children transiting to std one?
- a) Fairly ready
  - b) Not ready
10. Does your school cater for children with special needs?
- a) Yes
  - b) No
11. Is your school ready enough to handle standard one children?
- a) Yes
  - b) No
12. Do poorly maintained school facilities negatively affect the morale of pupils?
- a) Yes
  - b) No
13. Do you think that a standard one child in a large class will receive the same type of individualized attention as compared to if he were in a class with fewer pupils?
- a) Yes
  - b) No
14. Does the quality of a pre-school contribute to school readiness of a standard one Pupil?
- a) Yes
  - b) No

**SECTION B: TEACHERS PERCEPTIONS ON SCHOOL READINESS**

**Please tick against the choice which best indicates your level of agreement that the qualities listed below are important for a child to possess on arrival to standard one so as to indicate readiness.**

	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Undecided</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>
Is physically healthy, rested and well nourished.					
Finishes tasks.					
Can count to at least 50.					
Takes turns and shares.					
Is enthusiastic and curious in approaching new activities.					
Is able to hold and use a pencil.					
Is not disruptive of the class.					
Knows the English language.					
Knows the Kiswahili language.					
Is sensitive to other children's feelings.					
Sits still and pays attention.					
Knows the letters of the alphabet.					
Can respond accurately when given directions.					
Identifies primary colors and basic shapes.					
Can write down their name.					

Please tick against the choice which best indicates your level of agreement to the given statement in regards to school readiness of standard one children.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Teen mothers are less likely to have the parenting skills needed for healthy child development.					
Children who have been abused and neglected are more likely to have cognitive and social problems.					
Unstable mental health of parents can affect children's development negatively.					
Children need a stable, safe and permanent environment so as to develop healthily.					
Poverty during early childhood can have a negative effect on children's health and development.					
Inadequate, crowded, or unaffordable housing has a negative impact on children's health and education.					
Infants who grow up without their parents' develop more slowly and may develop emotional and have academic problems.					
High quality child care and educational programmes improve child development outcomes.					
Access to health care and the quality of care impacts on child outcomes academically.					
Children living in poverty are more likely to have physical and health problems.					

**SECTION C: TEACHERS EVALUATION OF SCHOOL READINESS**

Below are some suggestions aimed at improving school readiness among pupils on transit from preschool to standard one. Please tick against the number which best indicates your level of agreement on the importance of each statement.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Undecided	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Children should know the alphabet before they go to standard one.					
Information and evaluations on individual children should be transferred to the primary school.					
There should be in-service courses for both preschool and primary teachers on the area of school readiness.					
School readiness of pupils should not be based so much on age but on individual preparedness for school.					
Children should repeat if they appear unready for standard one.					
Preschool teachers should arrange class visits to primary schools prior to the start of the school term.					
Communication should be established between preschool teachers and receiving teachers of class one.					
Readiness for standard one children comes as children mature, you cannot push it.					

**Below are some suggestions aimed at improving school readiness among pupils on transit from preschool to standard one. Please tick against the number which best indicates your level of agreement on the importance of each statement.**

	<b>Strongly Agree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Undecided</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Strongly Disagree</b>
Children should know the alphabet before they go to standard one.					
Information and evaluations on individual children should be transferred to the primary school.					
There should be in-service courses for both preschool and primary teachers on the area of school readiness.					
School readiness of pupils should not be based so much on age but on individual preparedness for school.					
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Communication should be established between preschool teachers and receiving teachers of class one.					
Readiness for standard one children comes as children mature, you cannot push it.					

REPUBLIC OF KENYA



# NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

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22<sup>nd</sup> June 2010

Ms. Mary Nyambura Njuguna  
University of Nairobi  
P. O. Box 30197  
NAIROBI

Dear Madam,

## RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION

Following your application for authority to carry out research on "*Teachers' perceptions on school readiness of children transiting from pre-school to standard one in Kabete District, Central Province, Kenya*" I am pleased to inform you that you have been authorized to undertake research in **Kabete District** for a period ending *31<sup>st</sup> August, 2010*.

You are advised to report to the **District Commissioner and the District Education Officer, Kabete District** before embarking on the research project.

On completion of the research, you are expected to submit two copies of the research report/thesis to our office.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. N. Nyakundi', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

**P. N. NYAKUNDI**  
**FOR: SECRETARY/CEO**

Copy to:

The District Commissioner  
Kabete District