

**PREPAREDNESS OF TEACHERS TO HANDLE LEARNERS WITH VISUAL
IMPAIRMENTS IN INTEGRATED PRESCHOOLS, MAU CENTRAL DIVISION,
NAROK COUNTY, KENYA**

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BY

SHINALI MARY CONSOLATA KHASANTI

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ABSTRACT

Recent years have seen a global endeavor to prioritize early childhood care and education as a foundation for later learning and development, as evidenced by the Global Guidelines for Early Childhood Education and Care in the 21st Century. The study aimed at analyzing the preparedness of teachers to handle learners with visual impairments in integrated systems in preschools in Narok County Kenya. The objectives of this study were: to investigate the curriculum used for the learners with visual impairment, establish whether teachers are trained to handle learners with visual impairment, find out whether the learning environment is suitable for learners with visual impairment and assess the learning resources for learners with visual impairment in pre-school. The study employed a survey design where qualitative and quantitative approaches were used. The target population of the study included; the pre-schools teachers, head teachers and officers from the educational assessment and resource centre. The researcher used a combination of both simple random and purposive sampling methods to select the sample. The sample consisted of 33 head-teachers, 90 pre-school teachers and 4 Education Assessment and Resource Centre officials. Both primary and secondary data was collected by use of a Questionnaire and an interview schedules. The instruments were pretested and both content validity and reliability coefficient was determined. Data was analyzed both qualitatively and quantitatively by the aid of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences and presented using frequency and percentage tables. The researcher established that the main challenges that affect the teachers in the integration of learners with visual impairment were the curriculum used in the schools which was not adapted for these learners, most of the teachers were not trained to handle the specific needs of the learners with visual impairment and also the research established that the resources that are in schools were inadequate for these group of learners. The results revealed that teachers' preparedness to handle children with visual impairment is still very possible despite the many challenges. This calls for governments to take appropriate action and join their efforts in order to achieve the goal of equality of access and opportunities for children with visual impairment. The study recommends that more training opportunities for regular classroom teachers are required along with follow-up sessions to ensure that skills are being applied in the classroom. It is also noted that provision of adapted materials and assistive devices and training in their use should be enhanced among mainstream schools. This can be done through the provision of textbooks in Braille, better targeting of existing resources to children identified as blind in local schools and continued support for resource centers in mainstream schools for children who are blind. There is also need for the government to review its policies on Early Childhood Education and the integration process. It is hoped that the study will benefit head teachers in pre schools and policy makers to improve on the policies regarding Pre School education and integration. It is also hoped that parents shall be enlightened on the importance of supporting learners with visual impairment to attend pre-schools with their sighted peers