

DEVELOPING CAPACITY BUILDING FOR CHILD CARE PROVIDERS IN BENUE STATE

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Abstract

Child care provision have in the recent past moved from the confines of families and homes and from the responsibilities of mothers, parents and other significant others to commercial service providers situated in neighborhood creches, homes and schools. Some of these service providers are registered, while others are unregistered. Recent development in Nigeria has shown a trend of child kidnappings and ritual killings perpetrated through the hands of child care service providers who most often have been identified as untrained in the skills and ethics of child care provision. This study was conducted using 150 nannies located in child care centres in Benue State. It was guided by five(5) research objectives and two (2) hypotheses. The population of the study was derived from all child care , day care and nursery schools offering child care services in Benue State. The simple random sampling technique was used for the selection of the respondents. The Child Care Questionnaire (CCQ) was developed from an extensive review of literature. The result showed favorable knowledge of the functions of child care (> 3.00), however poor knowledge of the ethics of child care provision (< 3.00). Most of the providers had insignificant educational qualification and training which explains the general misconception and value attached to such professionals. The challenges faced by child care providers shows: poor remuneration (85%), poor working conditions (89%), inappropriate conditions of service (85%), job insecurity (87%), stigmatization and other factors. Until recently, the government has not paid attention to this sector of the population, which is, young children needing care outside of the home, therefore, apart from the Child Rights Act (CRA, 2005), which has not been passed into law in some states of the federation in Nigeria, there is no other policy/ law guiding the operations of child care service providers in Nigeria. This explains the result of the hypothesis which shows that there is no difference between the knowledge of child care professionals in child care and other child care givers, also, qualification and training has no relationship with the quality of child care provision. Based on these findings, it was concluded that professionalism is necessary in this sector of the economy in order to address incessant abuse of the rights of young children. Therefore, the recommendations were based on the need in establishing policy in the establishment and management of a child care centres, also there is the need for the establishment of agencies for home child care provision.

Keywords: Child Care Provision, Professionalism, Work ethics, Quality child care.