



**UNIVERSITY  
OF  
LUSAKA**

**School of Postgraduate Studies**

**ASSESSING THE QUALITY OF CHILDCARE SERVICES FOR CHILD  
DEVELOPMENT IN A LOW-INCOME LUSAKA AREA**

**BY**

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**A dissertation submitted to the University of Lusaka, in partial fulfillment of the  
requirement of the degree of Master of Arts in Development Studies**

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2024**

## Author's Declaration

I, **KANGOMBE CLARE**, hereby solemnly certify that this dissertation is my original work and has never been submitted for any degree at the University of Lusaka or any other educational institution.

Author's Signature

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a series of loops and a horizontal line extending to the right.

Supervisors Signature

A handwritten signature in blue ink, featuring a large, stylized initial 'B' followed by a horizontal line and a small flourish.

DATE

17.01.2025

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## CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

This dissertation of **KANGOMBE CLARE** is approved as partial fulfillment of the requirement for the award of a degree of Master of Arts in Development Studies by the University of Lusaka

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## **DEDICATION**

This dissertation is dedicated first and foremost to my family who were understanding and patient enough to endure the long nights and 'off days' because of the stress and need for rest. Thank you for putting up with me and checking up on my progress, I hope this will be an encouragement to them all - particularly my children- that anything is possible with discipline and dedication. I also dedicate my work to all the children of Zambia – present and future - and pray that this work will contribute towards making quality early childhood care accessible for all in both rural and urban Zambia.

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## Table of Contents

Author's Declaration .....	i
LIST OF FIGURES .....	ix
LIST OF TABLES .....	x
ABSTRACT.....	xi
CHAPTER ONE .....	1
INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.0 Introduction .....	1
1.1 Background of the study .....	1
1.2 Statement of the Problem.....	4
1.3 Research Objectives.....	5
1.3.1 General Objective.....	5
1.3.2 Specific Objectives .....	5
1.4 Research Questions .....	5
1.4.1 General research question .....	5
1.4.2 Specific research questions.....	5
1.5 Justification of Study .....	6
1.6 Scope of the study .....	9
1.7 Definition of Key Concepts and Terms.....	9
1.8 Organization of the Study .....	10
CHAPTER TWO.....	11
LITERATURE REVIEW .....	11
2.0 Introduction.....	11
2.1 Theoretical Framework .....	11
2.1.1 Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory .....	11
2.1.2 Bowlby's Attachment Theory.....	12
2.2 Conceptual Framework.....	13
2.2.1 Concept of Childcare .....	13
2.2.2 Concept of quality childcare .....	15
2.2.3 Concept of Child Development .....	16
2.3 Empirical Review .....	18

2.3.1 Characteristics of childcare services provided in low-income areas .....	18
2.3.2 The effect of childcare services on the holistic development of children.....	21
2.3.3 Availability of quality childcare services and its influence on parental workforce participation.....	22
2.4. Research gaps .....	25
<b>CHAPTER THREE.....</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>RESEARCH METHODOLOGY .....</b>	<b>26</b>
3.0 Introduction.....	26
3.1 Research Approach .....	26
3.2 Research Design .....	26
3.3 Study Area.....	27
3.4 Study Population .....	28
3.5 Sampling Techniques.....	29
3.6 Sample Size.....	29
3.7 Data Collection/Instruments.....	30
3.8 Data Analysis.....	31
3.8.1 Validity and Reliability .....	31
3.9 Ethical Considerations.....	31
<b>CHAPTER FOUR.....</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>PRESENTATION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS.....</b>	<b>33</b>
4.0 Introduction.....	33
4.1 Demographic Information .....	33
4.1.1 Parent data.....	34
4.1.2 Childcare provider data.....	35
4.2. Characteristics of childcare services provided and accessed .....	35
4.2.1 Childcare services accessed .....	35
4.2.2 Physical environment and resources.....	37
4.2.3 Staffing – Qualifications.....	39
4.2.4. Caregiver to Child Ratio.....	40
4.2.5 Daily activities and routines.....	41
4.3 Impact of the current childcare services on the holistic development of children .....	42
4.3.1 In-home Childcare services and holistic development of children .....	42
4.3.2 Family and Center – based Childcare and holistic development of children .....	44

<b>4.4 Childcare services and their influence on parental workforce participation .....</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>4.4.1 Parental workforce participation.....</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>4.4.2 Challenges with Childcare and Workforce participation.....</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>4.4.3 Affordability of childcare .....</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>4.4.3 Employer support for childcare .....</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>CHAPTER FIVE .....</b>	<b>49</b>
<b>DISCUSSION OF STUDY FINDINGS .....</b>	<b>49</b>
<b>5.0 Introduction.....</b>	<b>49</b>
<b>5.1 Characteristics of provided and accessed childcare services .....</b>	<b>49</b>
<b>5.2 Impact of current childcare services on the holistic development of children .....</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>5.3 Childcare services and their influence on parental workforce participation .....</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>CHAPTER SIX.....</b>	<b>53</b>
<b>CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS .....</b>	<b>53</b>
<b>6.0 Introduction.....</b>	<b>53</b>
<b>6.1 Conclusion of the study .....</b>	<b>53</b>
<b>6.2 Recommendations .....</b>	<b>55</b>
<b>6.3 Areas for further research.....</b>	<b>56</b>
<b>REFERENCES .....</b>	<b>57</b>
<b>APPENDICES.....</b>	<b>61</b>

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1 – Conceptual framework .....	16
Figure 2 - Map of Kalingalinga .....	27
Figure 3 – Age and Education level of Parents .....	33
Figure 4 – Role of Childcare Providers .....	34
Figure 5 – Childcare services accessed .....	35
Figure 6 – Childcare physical environment and resources .....	37
Figure 7 – Childcare activities and routines in which children are engaged .....	40
Figure 8 – In-home care learning and development support .....	42
Figure 9 – Parent responses on caregiver knowledge and resources .....	43

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1 – Factors influencing choice of childcare service .....	36
Table 2 – Childcare providers education qualification .....	38
Table 3 – Average number of children attended to daily by a caregiver .....	39
Table 4 – Workforce participation and childcare availability .....	45

## **ABSTRACT**

The early years of a child's life largely contribute to setting a tone for their quality of life in the future. Their growth and development is largely influenced by the experiences in their early years. With the most rapid development taking place between the ages 0 to 5 years, it becomes important to ensure that children receive the best quality of care for their optimum development. The Nurturing Care Framework has served as a template to ensure the care of a child is comprehensive and attends to the five components namely, good nutrition, access to good health, opportunities for early learning, safety and security and responsive caregiving – which create a nurturing environment for their growth and development. However, with the coming of modern societal structures, there is a growing need for parents and guardians to outsource childcare services for children who may not be at the age to participate in formal schooling. Available childcare services in Zambia range from in-home, family based and center-based childcare with access being determined by varying factors. With increased attention being given to ensuring access to childcare the quality of the services being provided is not being attended to. This study aims to assess the quality of childcare services in low-income urban areas of Zambia, particularly in Kalingalinga as well as its effects on child development and the workforce participation of parents particularly women.

Using a qualitative approach, the study utilized quantitative and qualitative data to identify the key characteristics of provided and accessed childcare services, analyze their effects on the holistic development of children as well as assess their influence on workforce participation. Analysis of the responses demonstrated that families in Kalingalinga utilize all forms of childcare for their children 0-6years with the majority utilizing in-home care followed by center-based care. These services were found to be lacking with regards to trained and qualified caregivers, appropriate child to caregiver ratio as well as availability of materials and resources to contribute to the holistic development of children. However, despite the shortfalls and challenges, the childcare services do positively influence/affect child development and contribute to participation of women in the workforce though quality and progression are determined by other factors outside of childcare services.

**Key words:** *quality childcare, child development and kalingalinga*

# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **1.0 Introduction**

This chapter provides an overview of the quality of childcare and its impact on child development from a global, regional and local perspective. The aim of the study is to assess the quality of childcare services provided and their effect on child development globally, regionally and specifically in Zambia. The study seeks to analyze the quality of accessed childcare services and their effects on the holistic development of children as well as their influence on parental workforce participation. This chapter consists of a detailed background of the study, a statement of the problem, research objectives and questions, the rationale and scope of study as well as the definition of key terms. Thus, constituting a firm foundation, context, significance and focus for the study.

### **1.1 Background of the study**

The increased incidence of urbanization has resulted in significant changes for societal institutions, cultural influences and has increased economic pressures leading to an increase in the prevalence of non-parental childcare, which include services like daycare facilities, preschools, care provided by grandparents, as well as nanny services. More and more families throughout the world are finding that they must rely on non-parental care to raise their children as more parents - particularly mothers - leave the home to pursue employment or school possibilities (Nicholl: 2022). According to Laughlin (2010) approximately two-thirds of young children regularly attend some form of childcare, with the average child spending 32 hours per week in these settings, with the transition into non-parental childcare occurring rapidly. According to the NICHD Study of Early Childcare (1997), the typical child first enters childcare at approximately three months. Within the first year of life, 80 percent experience regular participation in non-parental arrangements, and over one-third have at least three distinct caregivers. In line with this, it is indicated that the most common childcare setting for preschool-aged children is relative care (41 percent), followed by center (23 percent) and family-based (13 percent) arrangements (Laughlin: 2010).

Based on various studies conducted around the world, it has been documented that the quality of early childcare accessed is important for a child's holistic development as it lays a strong foundation for their cognitive, emotional, social and physical growth. Furthermore, research conducted in developed countries has shown that access to high quality childcare services does not only have long term benefits for children's cognitive, social and emotional development, but also supports long-term economic and social growth by enabling better educational outcomes and increasing workforce participation, particularly among women (Bruce: 2020). Therefore, it can be said that the quality of childcare services is a crucial determinant of national development, both globally and across Africa. According to James Heckman (2017), early childhood care and education provides the highest return on investment compared to interventions later in life, as it reduces social costs associated with unemployment crime and health issues.

In Africa, the dynamics of childcare, including the utilization of non-parental care, are deeply intertwined with cultural traditions, socio-economic realities, and historical legacies. Across the diverse landscape of Africa, traditional family structures have long played a central role in child rearing, with extended family networks providing support and guidance to children beyond their biological parents (Evans et al.: 2023). However, rapid urbanization, migration, and changing economic dynamics have led to shifts in these traditional patterns, resulting in increased reliance on contemporary childcare options such as daycare centers, preschools, and informal caregiver networks particularly in urban centers across the continent. Many factors, such as the rise in female labor force participation, the pursuit of education, and the aspirations of women, have had an impact on these trends (Hughes: 2021). However, it is important to note that conversations around childcare in Africa are still evolving, even though several countries are making strides in recognizing its importance for national development. Countries such as South Africa, Ghana and Kenya have put in place Early Childhood Education (ECE) policies to expand quality childcare services particularly for disadvantaged communities (Akkari:2022).

South Africa's Thrive by Five Index (2022), for example, has revealed that a significant number of children entering the school system are not developmentally on track,

indicating the urgent need for improved childcare quality. In Kenya study results are contributing towards policy reform to improve the standard of childcare services as they have shown that children who attend formal childcare centers demonstrate better school readiness and developmental outcomes compared to their peers in informal care settings (Swadener et. al: 2000, Abboah-Offei et. al:2022). With improved standard of childcare services, an improvement in social equity and economic growth is anticipated for the future generations.

In Zambia, the childcare landscape is reflective of broader regional trends, where the demand for formal childcare is increasing alongside urbanization and economic development. Yet, the quality and availability of services remain uneven, with many families relying on informal caregivers for their children's early childhood care. Similar to other African countries, Zambia has recognized and acknowledged the importance of early childhood development (ECD) through its national policies and it being signatory to the sustainable development goals which include SDG4 which aims to improve children's learning opportunities by enhancing access to quality education which has been operationalized through the free education policy as well as the inclusion of the need for early childhood development services within the eight national development plan.

Even with the strides made towards increasing access and quality of childcare services in African countries, challenges such as affordability, availability of quality care, and concerns related to the safety, development, and well-being of children continue to exist. Furthermore, the societal implications of these challenges are significant, affecting workforce participation rates, gender equality, and the overall socio-economic fabric. Lack of affordable childcare often keeps women out of the workforce and limits their ability to take on quality employment and earn more (WorldBank, 2022). Quality childcare provides a safe and stimulating educational environment for children during the critical early years – a period of rapid and consequential development that lays the foundation for future life success. These investments help build human capital, which is intrinsically important for individual well-being, creating more equitable societies, sustaining economic growth, and preventing millions of people from falling into poverty (ibid).

Many African countries face significant challenges in providing quality childcare. Limited infrastructure, underqualified staff, and inconsistent regulatory frameworks mean that many children, especially those in rural or low-income areas, do not have access to the level of care needed for optimal development. Additionally, the informal nature of many childcare services across the continent makes it difficult to ensure consistent quality, particularly in low-income communities (Fredman et. al:2022). For Zambia in particular, the quality and availability of childcare services remains uneven with many families relying on informal, caregivers. Additionally, according to UNESCO (2006) education at this level is in the hands of private providers with home-based pre-schools in urban areas mushrooming at the expense of quality childcare and education. Furthermore, curricula and home environments in these private institutions are outdated and inadequate for the young children they serve (ibid).

This study, therefore, will assess the quality of existing childcare services in urban Zambia, thus exploring how they contribute to child development which in turn contributes to a nation's economic growth. Furthermore, the study will offer insights into how the country can enhance its childcare system to support holistic child development and sustainable national development.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

The advent of modern societal structures and economic demands has led to an unprecedented reliance on non-parental childcare, a phenomenon that has raised significant concerns regarding its impact on the developmental outcomes of children. Research indicates that the early years of a child's life are critical for cognitive, social, and emotional development, yet there remains a substantial gap in understanding how various forms of childcare contribute to or detract from these developmental milestones (Belsky: 2001; NICHD: 2002). Despite the critical role that early childhood care plays in shaping the cognitive, emotional, and social development of children, the quality of childcare services in Zambia remains under-explored.

While considerable progress has been made in increasing access to early childhood care, the focus on quality has been lacking. With primary emphasis being on enrollment rates and access a comprehensive evaluation of the effectiveness and quality of these services

is still lacking. Additionally, there is a disconnect on how traditional child-rearing practices can intersect with formal childcare systems, and how these practices can be integrated to enhance service delivery.

In this regard, there is a need for a detailed, context-specific assessment of the quality of childcare services in Zambia to contribute to the identification of gaps, challenges, and opportunities for improvement with a focus on underserved communities within Lusaka. Without this, efforts to improve early childhood development outcomes in Zambia may fall short, leaving many children without the high-quality care they need to reach their full potential.

### **1.3 Research Objectives**

#### **1.3.1 General Objective**

To assess the quality of childcare services provided and their effect on the development of children in Kalingalinga area in Lusaka Zambia

#### **1.3.2 Specific Objectives**

- I. To identify key characteristics of childcare services provided and accessed in Kalingalinga compound.
- II. To analyze the effect of the current childcare services on the holistic development of children in Kalingalinga compound.
- III. To investigate how the availability and quality of childcare services influence parental workforce participation

### **1.4 Research Questions**

#### **1.4.1 General research question**

How does the quality of childcare services provided in Kalingalinga area affect the development of children?

#### **1.4.2 Specific research questions**

- I. What are the key characteristics of childcare services provided and accessed by families in Kalingalinga Compound?
- II. What is the effect of existing childcare services on the holistic development of children in Kalingalinga compound?

- III. How does the availability and quality of childcare services influence parental workforce participation?

## **1.5 Justification of Study**

Childcare services are essential in fostering early childhood development (ECD), a crucial phase for cognitive, emotional, and physical growth. As delineated by the World Bank (2023), the formative years of a child's life are instrumental in shaping brain development, thereby influencing future capacities in learning, health, behavior, and income generation. The notion that quality childcare acts as a pivotal mechanism in providing a secure and educationally enriching environment during these critical years of rapid developmental strides cannot be overstated. Such investments are lauded for their capacity to fortify human capital, which stands as a cornerstone for individual well-being, the fostering of equitable societies, sustained economic growth, and the abatement of poverty levels (World Bank: 2022).

Echoing this perspective, the Nurturing Care Framework (2018) articulates that children's potential to thrive is contingent upon the provision of five inter-related components: good health, adequate nutrition, safety and security, responsive caregiving, and ample opportunities for learning. It posits that during the early stages of life, the proximal relationships with parents, intimate family members, and caregivers form the bedrock of nurturing care, emphasizing the significance of secure family environments in the early developmental phase.

This study's justification also finds solid grounding in the deliberate inclusion of child development agendas within numerous international, continental, regional, and national frameworks, underscoring the collective acknowledgment of the critical role of child growth and development. Notably, the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4, which aspires to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all, specifically targets early childhood development, care, and pre-primary education under target 4.2 to prepare boys and girls for primary education. Similarly, the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (ACRWC, 1999) emphasizes the cultivation of a child's personality, talents, and abilities while preserving positive African morals, traditional values, and cultures.

The government of Zambia's commitment, as outlined in the 8th National Development Plan (2022), to adopt a lifecycle approach to education, with a pronounced focus on nurturing early childhood development, underscores a national resolve to bolster early developmental stages. This commitment is aimed at fostering early literacy, numeracy, and problem-solving skills, as well as improving physical and cognitive health outcomes for children, particularly during the first 1,000 days of life—a period deemed crucial for cognitive and healthy long-term development.

In the case of Zambia, there has been limited research on the quality of childcare services provided and accessed and their effects on child development. According to the EGRA findings in 2022, only 4% of grade 2 learners in Zambia met the minimum level of reading proficiency as stipulated by the ministry of Education (USAID:2022). This becomes an indication that children between the ages 0 to 3 may not be receiving adequate childcare that contributes to their holistic development. Like many low and middle-income countries, Zambia faces challenges in providing equitable access to high-quality early childcare services due to resource constraints, inadequate infrastructure as well as insufficiently trained personnel (MESVTEE:2014). Because quality childcare services are essential in reducing developmental disparities that arise from poverty, malnutrition, and limited access to early learning environments. Assessing the quality of services and how they contribute to child development will help identify gaps in service delivery and inform policy decisions to improve standards. The research will seek to offer a nuanced, context specific analysis of the quality of childcare services within a complex tapestry of changing social dynamics and their implications for child development. By examining accessed childcare services, this study also aspires to enrich parental and caregiver knowledge and guide childcare centers in making informed decisions around service provision. The overarching goal is to ensure that available childcare services effectively support children in reaching their full potential, thereby equipping them to make positive contributions to societal development. This investigation not only aligns with but actively advances the global and national agendas aimed at fostering holistic child development, positioning it as a crucial endeavor in the quest to nurture future generations.

Furthermore, in an era where economic and societal demands necessitate various forms of childcare outside the traditional family setup, understanding the implications of these alternatives on child development is paramount. This research holds the promise of shedding light on critical aspects of childcare that directly impact cognitive, social, and emotional development during the most formative years of a child's life.

For families, the findings of this study will provide invaluable insights into the quality and types of childcare arrangements that best support their children's development. Parents and guardians stand to benefit from evidence-based guidance on selecting childcare options that not only meet their logistical and economic needs but also enrich their children's developmental outcomes.

Educators and childcare providers will find the research findings instrumental in designing curricula and interactive environments that are cognizant of the diverse needs of children under their care. By identifying specific factors within non-parental childcare settings that are conducive to positive developmental outcomes, educators can tailor their approaches to foster a more nurturing and supportive learning environment.

Policymakers and governmental bodies will be able to use the empirical evidence generated from this study to craft or refine childcare standards, regulations, and funding priorities. The study's insights into the critical elements of effective childcare could inform national and local policies aimed at ensuring that all children have access to high-quality childcare environments, regardless of their socio-economic background. This is particularly significant in efforts to reduce developmental disparities and support equitable opportunities for early childhood development.

Moreover, this research contributes to the broader societal goal of building human capital and promoting equitable, sustainable development. By elucidating how early childhood care influences long-term developmental trajectories, the study underscores the importance of investing in the early years as a strategy for enhancing societal well-being, economic productivity, and intergenerational equity. It aligns with global initiatives such as the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly Goal 4, which emphasizes inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all.

In summary, the significance of this study extends beyond academic interest, offering practical, actionable insights that can transform childcare practices, inform policy development, and ultimately, enhance the developmental outcomes of children.

## **1.6 Scope of the study**

Thematically, this study was limited to assessing the quality of childcare services for child development in Zambia with special emphasis on low-income urban areas. It was specifically addressing the need to assess the quality and effectiveness of accessed childcare services; to ascertain gaps and highlight determinants to selecting childcare options as well as examine long term effects on children's development.

Temporarily the study was limited to investigating literature from the years 2013 to 2023, with 2013 giving historical information and 2023 giving latest information on childcare services, its quality and its contribution to child development.

Spatially the study was limited to Lusaka province in Zambia with twelve (12) constituencies with varying socio-economic demographics. According to the Zambia Statistics Office (2022), the province has a total population of 3,079,964 only (Males 1,489,042 and Females 1,590,922). Due to the vastness of the province, the study was conducted in Kalingalinga, a low -income, high density area within Lusaka, located at 15.4038° S, 28.3301° E. Kalingalinga, has a total population of 38,862 (i.e. 18,677 male and 20,185 female) and a total of 9,713 households of which 3,422 are female led households (ibid).

## **1.7 Definition of Key Concepts and Terms**

**Childcare services:** Care provided by individuals other than the child's biological parents, encompassing a variety of settings such as daycare centers, preschools, in-home caregivers, and care by relatives other than parents (Belsky, 2001).

**Cognitive Development:** The process by which children grow and develop in terms of their ability to think, team, reason, and remember. This includes the acquisition of language and problem-solving skills (Shonkoff & Phillips,2000).

**Social Development:** The process by which children learn to interact with others around them, developing skills in communication, building relationships and understanding social norms and cultural practices (NICHD:2002).

**Emotional Well-being:** A component of child development that pertains to children's ability to express and manage emotions, develop a sense of identity and form secure attachments with caregivers (Vandell, 2004)

**Nurturing Care Framework:** A conceptual framework emphasizing that early childhood development is influenced by a combination of health, nutrition, security and safety, responsive caregiving, and opportunities for early learning. It underscores the interrelatedness of these components in ensuring optimal developmental outcomes (World Health Organization, 2018).

## **1.8 Organization of the Study**

**Chapter One** introduces the study with a background to the study from a global, continental, regional and local perspective, a statement of the problem, general and specific research objectives, justification/rationale of the study, the scope of the study and definition of key terms. **Chapter two** outlines the literature review for this study to help understand and establish the significance of early childhood experiences in the growth and development of children and how the prevalence of non-parental care can affect this. The chapter looks at the conceptual and theoretical frameworks, an empirical review and literature gaps. **Chapter three** highlights the research methodology outlining the research design, study population, sampling techniques and size, data collection and instruments, data analysis and ethical considerations. **Chapter four** is the presentation of study findings using pie charts, graphs and tables for illustration and representation of the data collected through semi structured questionnaires and observation checklists. **Chapter five** discusses the research findings in line with the reviewed literature as per research objectives, Finally **Chapter six** concludes the study and provides recommendations as well as possible areas for future research in line with gaps that still exist following the study.

# CHAPTER TWO

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.0 Introduction

This chapter establishes a comprehensive framework for examining the quality of childcare services and their impact on child development in Lusaka, weaving together a review of the relevant literature with the theoretical underpinnings of Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory and Bowlby's Attachment Theory. It highlights the critical developmental stages of early childhood affected by non-parental childcare and outlines the empirical and theoretical gaps that our study seeks to address. The conceptual framework presented illustrates the relationship between childcare service quality (independent Variable) and child developmental outcomes (dependent variable). This synthesized approach not only encapsulates the existing body of knowledge but also charts a course for our investigation to fill the identified research voids, aiming to enrich the discourse on childcare's role in shaping developmental trajectories in urban Lusaka settings.

### 2.1 Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for the study assessing the quality of childcare on child development is anchored in two foundational theories: Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (1979) and Bowlby's Attachment Theory (1969). These theories provide a comprehensive lens through which to examine the multifaceted influences of non-parental childcare environments on various aspects of child development, including cognitive, social, and emotional domains.

#### 2.1.1 Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory

Urie Bronfenbrenner, an American developmental psychologist established the ecological systems theory in 1979, which subsequently grew to be regarded as a foundation for comprehending human evolution. In his research, Bronfenbrenner highlighted the significance of considering the various environmental systems that impact a person's growth, from close-knit environments like the family and school to more expansive social and cultural contexts (Cherry, 2023).

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory posits that child development is influenced by the interactions between various environmental systems ranging from the immediate microsystem (e.g., family, childcare settings) to the broader macrosystem (e.g., societal values, cultural norms). Within this framework, the childcare environment is a critical component of the microsystem, directly interacting with the child and potentially influencing their development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). This theory underscores the importance of considering the quality of the childcare environment, including caregiver-child interactions, the physical setting, and the educational materials available, as key factors that impact child development. The mesosystem, or the interconnections between the child's microsystems (e.g., the relationship between family and childcare providers), also plays a significant role in shaping developmental outcomes, highlighting the importance of alignment and communication between the child's primary caregivers and childcare providers. The macrosystem which refers to the larger society and cultural factors though not directly engaged play a key role in development as these factors support personal growth, influence cultural perceptions on non-parental childcare, pertinent government regulations as well as how one's socioeconomic situation affects their ability to access high-quality childcare and its effect on child development. By examining interactions across several environmental systems, Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory will be utilized to evaluate the impact of non-parental childcare on children's growth and development by assessing the level of care given to a child taking into consideration the physical surroundings, caregiver credentials as well as child-to-caregiver ratios.

### **2.1.2 Bowlby's Attachment Theory**

Bowlby's Attachment Theory focuses on the importance of the child's relationship with their primary caregivers in the early years of life, positing that secure attachments formed during this period are crucial for healthy emotional and social development (Bowlby, 1969). John Bowlby's attachment theory was developed in the late 1950s and early 1960s and was founded because of Bowlby's interest in understanding the bond between a child and their primary caregiver, typically the mother, and how this bond affects the child's emotional and social development (Granqvist and Duschinsky, 2021). According to Bowlby (Ackerman, 2018), his interest and motivation to develop the attachment theory

was ignited by two children that he observed during his volunteering experience at a school for maladjusted children after his graduation. While originally centered on the parent-child bond, the principles of attachment theory have been extended to understand the relationships children form with non-parental caregivers in childcare settings. Secure attachments with caregivers in these environments can provide a foundation for exploring the world, learning new skills, and developing social relationships, thereby influencing cognitive and social development. Conversely, inconsistent, or unresponsive care can lead to insecure attachments, potentially impacting the child's emotional regulation and social interactions.

Therefore, by using Bowlby's attachment theory as a framework, it will be possible to gain a deeper comprehension of the ways in which non-parental care affects a child's emotional and developmental path, as well as the long-term consequences of early attachment experiences on subsequent development. The theory will also help to pinpoint elements that support positive social, emotional, and intellectual outcomes that translate to child development.

Integrating Bronfenbrenner's and Bowlby's theories offers a holistic view of the child's developmental ecosystem, emphasizing the significance of interactions within and between various environmental systems, including non-parental childcare settings. This theoretical framework suggests that high-quality childcare can serve as a supportive microsystem that not only promotes positive developmental outcomes through direct interaction but also contributes to the child's overall development through its integration within the broader ecological system.

## **2.2 Conceptual Framework**

### **2.2.1 Concept of Childcare**

Childcare is a concept that refers to care provided by individuals other than the child's biological parents, encompassing a variety of settings such as daycare centers, preschools, in-home caregivers, and care by relatives other than parents (Belsky, 2001). It is also referred to as the care, supervision or guidance of a child by a person other than the child's parent, guardian for periods of less than 24 hours per day per child on a regular basis (lawinsider.com). The supervision and care are typically in relation to infants and

children too young to begin formal schooling. Childcare in this context can be provided by individuals such as nannies, sitters, relatives or professional childcare centers with the primary purpose to ensure the well-being and safety of children whilst supporting their developmental needs.

It can be provided through various platforms such as, in-home care - which is typically provided within the child's home by nannies or babysitters tailored to the needs of the child and family (Phillips et al.:2015). Another form of care referred to as family childcare where a caregiver -typically not related to the child – takes care of a small group of children from different families within his/her home (NICHD:2006). Center-based care on the other hand is provided in a more structured environment and are regulated by government bodies to ensure that they meet health, safety and educational standard. The centers are expected to have trained staff able to follow a curriculum delivered according to developed schedules (Clarke-Stewart & Allhusen: 2005).

Within the context of Zambia, provided childcare services fall within the highlighted categories and are accessed primarily by working parents who need their infants and young children cared for whilst they are away from home. With the growing body of knowledge around the importance of early childcare for development, some organizations have created spaces within the workplaces for mothers to be able to interact and breastfeed their infants for a period as they continue to carry out their tasks. Increased discussions around early childhood development have highlighted the importance of childcare in the early years of a child as it determines the development of a child and determines their future participation in society. According to the National Institute of Child Health and Development (NICHD:2006) the quality of childcare plays a significant role in promoting cognitive and social development and can result in better performance in school where the childcare services received were high- quality. Aside from the cognitive benefits, childcare settings also provide opportunities for children to interact with others which helps them develop social skills, develop relationships as well as learn cooperation (Lamb:2008).

In line with the above, it can be stated that childcare is a vital service that fosters children's growth and offers necessary assistance to families that need to engage in livelihood

activities. As such it becomes a priority to ensure that every parent is able to access quality, affordable childcare and should be a priority for both governments and societies because of its influence on children's future outcomes.

### **2.2.2 Concept of quality childcare**

Quality childcare signifies care that promotes the physical, cognitive, social, and emotional development of children within a safe, nurturing, and stimulating environment. It goes beyond simple oversight and ensures that children receive developmentally appropriate learning opportunities, emotional support, and direction from qualified caregivers. It enhances children's general well-being and provides parents with assurance regarding their children's safety and development. Key characteristics of quality childcare include presence of qualified and well-trained caregiving staff, low caregiver to child ratio, safe and stimulating environment, age-appropriate curriculum, supportive and responsive interactions between the child and the caregiver as well as parental involvement in the children's care.

Qualified and well-trained staff will have the necessary training and understanding of the importance of age-appropriate activities, materials and interactions that will significantly promote children's development. They can also contribute to early identification of developmental problems/challenges thus ensuring that children receive the needed attention and services for their continued growth and development. Additionally, studies have shown that well-trained staff provide more stimulating and responsive care, which is critical to child development (Burchinal et al., 2015). A low child to caregiver ratio is vital for provision of quality childcare as it allows for caregivers to devote adequate time and attention to each child under their care which contributes to feelings of attachment and emotional security within the child. Furthermore, it becomes significant as it allows for meaningful and individualized engagement particularly for infants and young children that may require the additional support (NICHD:2006).

To foster child development a safe and stimulating environment cannot be overemphasized as a standard for quality childcare services. A physical space that is free of dangerous objects, clean and conducive for learning provides opportunities for children to freely explore and develop their motor, communication, social as well as cognitive skills.

According to Whitebook et al. (2016) this kind of environment should include materials and spaces that encourage exploration and creativity, such as books, toys, outdoor play areas. A well-designed environment supports children's curiosity and developmental needs. In addition to a safe and stimulating environment, a well-structured curriculum featuring age-appropriate activities that advance cognitive, language, and social development contribute towards having quality childcare services. The curricula should strike a mix of free play and supervised learning activities meant to boost children's social relationships, creativity, and problem-solving ability (NAEYC: 2009). Additionally, positive interactions, where caregivers are attentive, affectionate, and supportive, within childcare spaces, help build children's self-esteem and emotional resilience. This emotional security is crucial for healthy social and emotional development (Clarke-Stewart & Allhusen, 2005). Another important characteristic of quality childcare that might be easily overlooked is the involvement of parents in provision of care for their children. According to Belsky (2009), quality childcare encourages active parental involvement and open communication. This ensures that parents and caregivers work as partners in providing the care and support needed to enhance children's outcomes in all domains particularly cognitive and social domains.

Given the anticipated benefits of providing quality childcare in the foundational years becomes essential for fostering children's development, especially during their critical early years. It establishes a basis for lifelong learning and well-being, while also assisting working families by enabling parents to engage in the workforce with the assurance that their children are in a secure and supportive setting. Societies that allocate resources to high-quality childcare see enduring advantages, such as elevated educational achievement, less social disparities, and enhanced economic results (Karoely, 2005).

### **2.2.3 Concept of Child Development**

Child development refers to the physical, cognitive, emotional, and social growth that occurs from birth through adolescence. This process involves learning and mastering various skills such as walking, talking, problem-solving, and interacting with others. It typically occurs four key stages, which include infancy (0–2 years), early childhood (2–6 years), middle childhood (6–12 years), and adolescence (12–18 years). Each stage

encompasses specific milestones in various domains, influenced by both genetic and environmental factors (Berk, 2013). Science has shown that there are four domains of child development namely physical, cognitive, emotional and social, as well as language development.

*Physical development* covers increase in a child's size, strength, and coordination. Important benchmarks in this field include motor skills such as crawling, walking, and fine motor coordination—that is, object grasping—from which to build This domain depends critically on physical activity and a good diet (Santrock, 2020).

*Cognitive development* refers to the child's capacity for thinking, understanding, reasoning, and memory. According to Jean Piaget's theory of cognitive development, there is the preoperational stage (2–7 years) where symbolic thinking develops and sensorimotor stage (0–2 years) when newborns learn via interactions with their environment (Piaget, 1954).

*Emotional and social development* involves the development of emotions, personality, and social relationships. Erik Erikson's psychosocial stages outline challenges that children face as they develop emotionally, such as building trust during infancy and fostering autonomy in early childhood (Erikson, 1963). Social skills like empathy and cooperation also grow as children interact with family and peers.

*Language development* refers to children's ability to understand and use language which develops rapidly during the first few years of life. They progress from cooing and babbling as infants to forming complete sentences by the age of 3–5 years (Bloom, 1993). Language acquisition is critical for cognitive and social development.

In as much as it has been said that the quality of childcare services positively impacts child development, it is also important to recognize that other factors play a significant role in child development. These factors include genetics, environment and parenting styles. Genetics play a key role in the overall physical development of the child in that their genetic makeup largely influences traits such as height, weight, and susceptibility to certain health conditions (Rutter, 2006). In the case of environment this takes into consideration factors such as family, culture, socioeconomic status, and education

attainment which play a critical role (Bronfenbrenner, 2005). Additionally, the way parents interact with and raise their children—whether authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, or neglectful—can significantly affect a child’s development (Baumrind, 1991).

Therefore, understanding child development becomes crucial for parents, educators, and caregivers to be able to support children in reaching their full potential. Early childhood experiences significantly influence later life outcomes, including academic performance, social relationships, and mental health. Early interventions in cases of developmental delays or behavioral problems can mitigate long-term adverse effects (Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000).

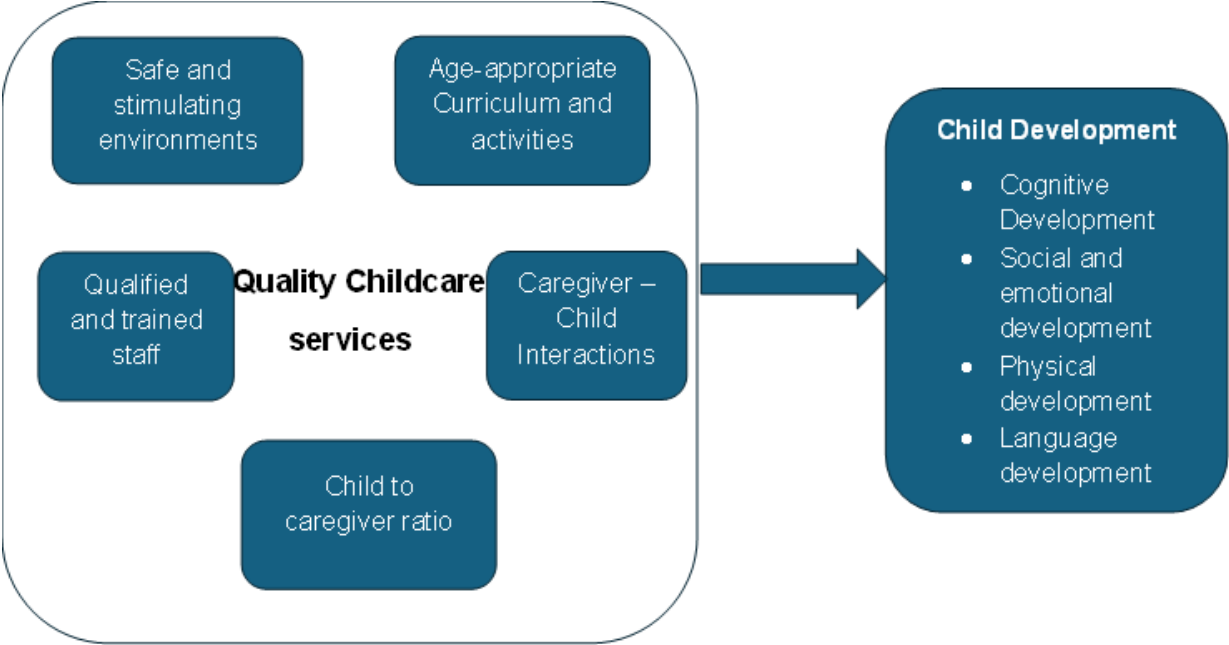


Figure 1: Conceptual framework Source: Researchers compilation 2024

**2.3 Empirical Review**

**2.3.1 Characteristics of childcare services provided in low-income areas**

The fundamental purpose of childcare is to provide care and support for the development of children while their parents are involved in work or other activities. It becomes the responsibility of childcare providers to offer a caring and secure environment for infants and toddlers as well as ensure access to adequate nutrition, safety, engaging items, and opportunities to learn and play. Further, to accommodate the working hours of parents, childcare centers should ideally be open for the entire day (Currimjee et al.:2022).

Globally, quality childcare services are recognized as essential for early childhood development (ECD), particularly because of the changing societal dynamics which have resulted in an increased participation of women in the labor market. A study by Burchinal et al. (2016) highlights how childcare quality significantly predicts children's cognitive and social outcomes whilst stressing the importance of responsive caregiving and stimulating environments. Similarly, studies conducted have emphasized that characteristics of quality childcare services that contribute to child development include access to trained caregivers, age-appropriate curriculum, proper child-to-caregiver ratio and safety of the physical environment. With growing focus on early childhood development at a global level, the WHO Nurturing care framework has provided guidance on what is needed to improve early development of children for better outcomes. Guidelines have indicated the need for health, nutrition, safety, early learning and responsive caregiving as components of a nurturing care framework (WHO:2018). Despite the growing body of knowledge indicating a correlation between the quality of childcare and developmental outcomes, challenges still exist in availability and access to quality services particularly in low-and middle-income areas. A study conducted by Chaudry et al. (2011) highlighted factors that determine the choice of childcare services for low-income working families were their work schedules, flexibility as well as available options which restricted their decisions resulting in them settling for what they may not really want (ibid).

Countries in Africa continue to face challenges with the provision of quality care particularly in low-income areas in both urban and rural settings. Studies have shown that barriers to the provision of quality childcare include underfunding, lack of trained caregivers as well as inadequate infrastructure. Further, with majority of childcare services for children 0-3 being provided by private organizations/entities issues of accessibility regardless of availability become barriers. Caregivers in low-income areas are largely engaged in unregulated informal work and as such have limited resources to enable them to afford private childcare services that provide quality. For example, a study conducted in South Africa amongst adolescent mothers, found that many low-income households rely on informal childcare arrangements, which include family members and unregistered caregivers, due to the financial constraints and limited access to formal early childhood centers (PubMed, 2023). Additionally, another study in South Africa found that

access to qualified staff and inclusive practices could go a long way to improving the quality of childcare services however, urban poverty resulting from caregivers operating in unregulated informal sectors makes accessibility complicated (Biersteker et al.:2016; Lloyd & Desai:2016). According to a study conducted by Nampijja et. al. (2023), poverty, limited access to education and health care disparities are some of the several challenges with which countries in Sub-Sahara Africa continue to grapple with.

Notwithstanding the limitations, significant endeavors have been undertaken to enhance childcare in sub-Saharan Africa. Governments, NGOs, and international organizations have initiated numerous programs and policies to meet the needs of children (Nampijja et. al.:2023). The African Union's Agenda 2063 underscores the need of investing in early childhood development and acknowledges its enduring effects. The UNICEF-led Early Childhood Development Action Network (ECDAN) has significantly enhanced access to quality childcare services throughout the region.

Like other African countries, Zambia faces significant disparities in childcare provision particularly in low-income areas. Access to quality childcare is limited due to insufficient investment in ECD programs, lack of community involvement and low parental awareness of the importance of early learning (UNICEF:2018). Poor infrastructure, overcrowded facilities as well as untrained caregivers are what characterize childcare services in low-income areas (Kalindi &Matanda:2016).

Additionally, a study conducted by Zuilkowski et al. (2012) examining a community-based early childhood center in Zambia showed that such centers often operate with minimal government funding and heavily rely on community support. These centers are faced with challenges such as unqualified staff, lack of standardized curricula and insufficient learning materials. Despite these shortcomings, the community-based centers provide structured learning environments for children within their communities. However, despite these challenges, the government of the republic of Zambia has prioritized ECD through the introduction of community-based programs in collaboration with various stakeholders and has annexed early learning centers in some of the government run primary schools. An example of this, are the community-based childcare hubs established by UNICEF (2021) in rural areas to provide holistic early childhood development services which

include nutrition, cognitive stimulation and healthcare; as well as highlighting the role of integrated, locally driven initiatives in expanding access to early childhood care. Further, through funding from the World bank, infrastructure within underserved communities countrywide are being constructed as hubs where quality ECD services will be provided using a multisectoral approach.

### **2.3.2 The effect of childcare services on the holistic development of children**

Research worldwide repeatedly shows that access to high-quality childcare services significantly influences the comprehensive development of children, especially in low-income environments. Superior early childhood care, defined by low child-to-teacher ratios, structured curricula, and attentive caregiving, markedly improves cognitive and linguistic abilities, emotional regulation, and social relationships. Burchinal et al. (2016) assert that in low-income urban areas, children enrolled in structured childcare facilities demonstrate enhanced cognitive outcomes, including language development and executive functioning, relative to those in informal care environments. Additionally, McCoy et al. (2017) observe that children's physical development is enhanced by programs that integrate play-based learning and physical exercises. Holistic parenting practices that emphasize emotional and social well-being have been demonstrated to diminish behavioral issues and enhance emotional resilience (Shonkoff & Fisher, 2013).

In Africa, low-income urban areas are often plagued by inadequate infrastructure and a lack of resources for early childhood care. Even so the available childcare services have a significant impact on children's holistic development, particularly when they are community-based or incorporate local cultural practices. Biersteker et al. (2016) emphasizes the role of center-based care in enhancing cognitive and social outcomes for children in South African urban areas. These programs often include health interventions, early learning, and social development, contributing to both cognitive and emotional growth. Furthermore, Naudeau et al. (2011) demonstrate that formal childcare services in African countries like Kenya and Nigeria improve children's readiness for school by boosting early literacy and numeracy skills. Social development is also facilitated through interaction with peers and the development of prosocial behaviors. In the SADC region, childcare services have been found to be critical in shaping the holistic development of

children from low-income urban settings. According to UNICEF (2018), the integration of health, nutrition, and early learning services within childcare programs has significantly enhanced children's cognitive, physical, and social development. These interventions often focus on addressing malnutrition and poor health, common challenges in low-income areas, which directly affect children's physical growth and cognitive capacities. Studies in Zimbabwe and Malawi show that community-based childcare centers positively impact emotional and social development by promoting inclusive play and collaborative activities (Mtonga, 2017). These centers often act as safe spaces for children in urban areas to engage in structured play, which enhances emotional well-being and reduces the effects of stress related to poverty.

In Zambia, like the rest of Africa, childcare services in low-income urban areas face various challenges, but their effect on children's holistic development remains significant. Kalindi and Matanda (2016) discuss how the holistic development of children is often hindered by the poor quality of services, which suffer from overcrowded classrooms and undertrained caregivers. However, when adequately resourced, these childcare services positively influence children's cognitive, physical, and social development. The Ministry of Education has recognized the importance of early childhood education (ECE) in fostering cognitive development, school readiness, and improved academic outcomes. The incorporation of health and nutrition programs within childcare services has also been noted to enhance children's physical development, particularly in reducing malnutrition in urban poor settings (Chansa & Zulu, 2016). Social development is promoted through peer interactions in childcare centers, which help children build communication skills and emotional regulation.

### **2.3.3 Availability of quality childcare services and its influence on parental workforce participation**

Global research shows that access to affordable and high-quality childcare plays a pivotal role in enabling parents, particularly mothers, to participate in the workforce. Kimmel (2006) found that the availability of affordable childcare services increases labor force participation among low-income mothers by reducing the time constraints and stress associated with balancing work and family responsibilities. High-quality childcare, which

ensures the safety and well-being of children, allows parents to work more hours or pursue higher-paying jobs (Hofferth & Collins, 2000). Moreover, public investment in childcare has been shown to positively impact workforce participation rates and productivity across both developed and developing countries (Del Boca, 2015). In Africa, the relationship between childcare services and parental workforce participation has gained attention as urbanization increases and traditional extended family support systems decline. A study by Clark et al. (2019) in Kenya found that the lack of accessible childcare facilities is a key barrier to women's employment, especially in informal settlements. In addition to availability, the quality of childcare services also plays a significant role. Parents are often unwilling to leave their children in low-quality care settings, which limits their ability to engage in full-time work (Madigan & Doherty, 2014). In Ghana, Nkwake (2013) observed that mothers with access to quality early childhood education programs were more likely to engage in formal employment, highlighting the link between childcare availability and economic empowerment for women. In Rwanda, tea plantation owners, have provided childcare services within the plantations which allows mothers to take breaks from their work and care for and feed their children without worrying about travelling the distance between work and home and suffer pay cuts for reduced work hours (Palladium: 2021) According to the study, an increase of worker productivity was also observed following the implementation of care programs in the plantations (ibid). A South African study on adolescent mothers found that access to formal childcare significantly increased the likelihood of young mothers to continue their education and engage in paid employment. It further reported that the adolescent mothers using formal childcare services had higher odds of grade promotion and employment compared to those without access to such services (PubMed,2023). According to UNICEF (2018), the abundance of inadequate childcare services in low-income urban areas across Southern Africa limits mothers' ability to fully participate in the workforce. Many countries have worked to put in place policies and interventions that contribute towards increased opportunities for women in the workforce whilst ensuring the care and development of their children. For example, in Malawi, the establishment of community-based childcare centers (CBCCs) has led to increased workforce participation among women, allowing them to take up formal and informal jobs while ensuring their children

receive adequate care (Munthali et al., 2014). Similarly, a study in South Africa found that high-quality early childhood care services positively influenced labor force participation, particularly for women, who are often the primary caregivers (Posel & Rogan, 2018).

As is the case in most countries, in Zambia, the availability and quality of childcare services directly influence parental workforce participation, particularly in low-income urban areas. Limited access to quality childcare services in Zambia, often forces parents – especially women - to either leave their workforce or rely on informal childcare arrangements. A study by McCoy et al. (2017) noted that Zambia's low ECCE enrollment rates i.e. only 32% of children attended formal early education - likely contribute to lower female labor force participation, as many women take on caregiving responsibilities in the absence of accessible childcare options. Kalindi and Matanda (2016) report that the lack of affordable and reliable childcare services constrains parents, especially mothers, from fully engaging in formal employment. With most urban households relying on informal, low-quality childcare arrangements -which are often unreliable- it forces parents to prioritize childcare over work. This further limits the career progression of mothers as they most often than not have to consider the care and development of their children or overall family needs before taking on increased responsibility and challenges. Chibuye (2015) highlights that the Zambian government's efforts to improve access to early childhood education have led to modest improvements in women's labor force participation. However, the quality of these services remains a concern, as many parents still avoid using substandard care facilities due to safety and developmental concerns for their children.

The above studies indicate that availability of childcare services does play an important role in increasing parental participation in the labor workforce, however, for full participation, the quality of the available childcare should be of high standard. Further, with the availability also comes increased productivity in the workplace as parents are able to focus more on their tasks with the peace of mind quality childcare services provide.

## 2.4. Research gaps

Existing research has often focused on isolated aspects of childcare quality or specific developmental outcomes, without fully exploring how these elements interact within the child's ecological system or affect the formation of secure attachments in non-parental care settings. In line with this, longitudinal studies that follow children from different cultures, economic status and regions - over many years i.e. into adulthood – need to be conducted to critically assess the enduring impact of childcare services on the various aspects of development such as academics, social skills, emotional wellbeing as well as economic contribution to society (Human capital). There is also a notable gap in understanding how the characteristics of non-parental childcare environments influence the development of secure attachments and, by extension, child development across cognitive, social, and emotional domains. The integration of Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory and Bowlby's Attachment Theory in this research, provides a robust theoretical foundation for examining the effects of non-parental childcare and underscores the complexity of child development as influenced by multiple interacting systems whilst highlighting the need for further research to explore these dynamics comprehensively.

Additionally, with current research findings representing the context of center-based settings e.g. daycares and early start centers/programs, the concept of child development is largely skewed towards such establishments and academic achievement. As such more research in informal/home based/kinship childcare needs to be conducted to assess how it impacts child development across all domains as well as inform caregivers on what needs to be provided for the child within these care settings to ensure his/her development. It is to this limitation/gap in literature that this research will provide context specific data drawn from the available and accessed childcare services, its quality and its influence on workforce participation for parents in Kalingalinga area of Lusaka Zambia.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.0 Introduction**

This chapter delineates the research methodology, data collection techniques adopted in the study to gather data to assess the quality of childcare services for child development in Kalingalinga in Zambia. Recognizing the complexity of this topic, the study employed a qualitative approach to capture a holistic view of childcare's contribution from multiple dimensions. Additionally, the chapter outlines the study population, sample size, sampling techniques, data collection instruments, data analysis procedures, and ethical considerations that guided the study.

#### **3.1 Research Approach**

This study employed a qualitative research approach to assess the quality of childcare services in Kalingalinga for child development. The qualitative approach was selected because it allowed for a comprehensive exploration of how various aspects of childcare settings influence developmental outcomes in children. Semi-structured questionnaires were administered, and observation checklists were completed to gather statistical data on various childcare services, parental observations, perceptions around childcare services and child developmental outcomes. Additionally, the open-ended questions allowed for the capture of respondent views, experiences, perspectives and observations making it possible to delve deeper into the nuances of childcare experiences. This approach aligns with Creswell (1994), facilitating a rich, contextual understanding of the phenomenon under study.

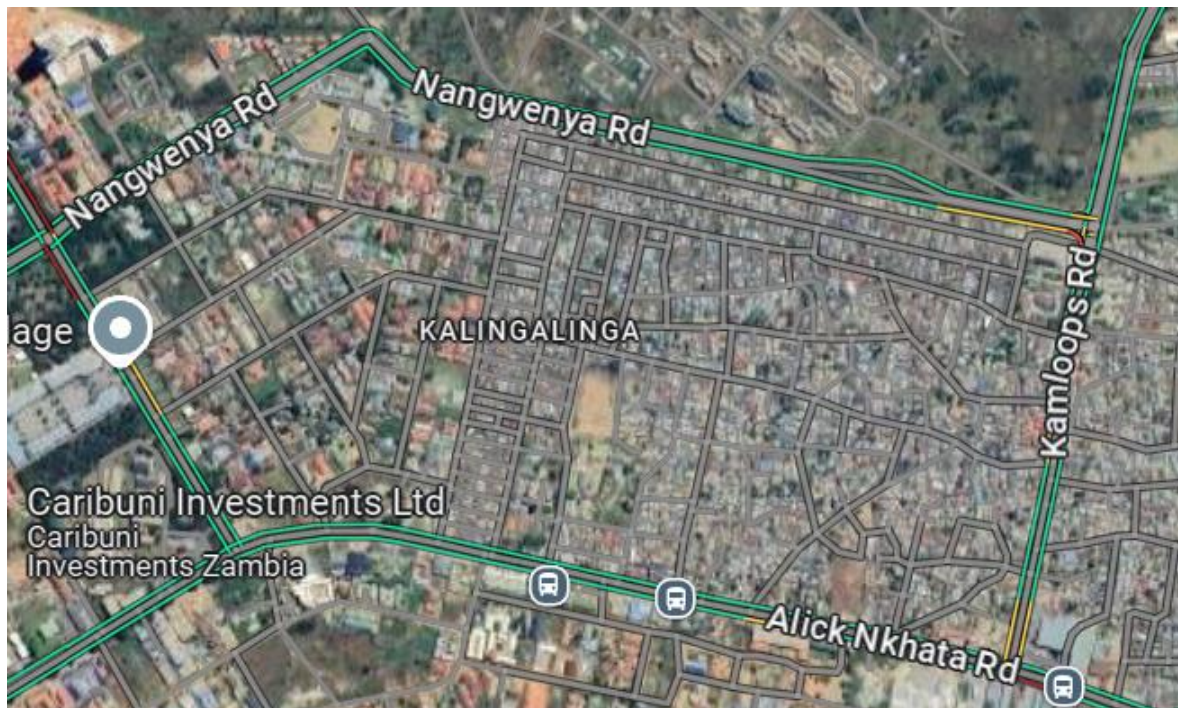
#### **3.2 Research Design**

Within the qualitative framework, this study used a descriptive research design to assess the quality of childcare services available and accessed within Kalingalinga. This was done by describing the characteristics of available childcare services, understanding factors that determine their selection and how these services influence workforce participation. According to Creswell (2009) the descriptive research design describes the characteristics of a population or phenomenon primarily to gain a better understanding of

the phenomenon and form a foundation for further investigation. The study data was gathered via semi-structured interviews with parents, caregivers, and early childhood educators, complemented by observations of childcare environments. This design allowed for the integration of descriptive statistics and qualitative data during the analysis phase, enhancing the understanding of how non-parental childcare contributes to child development in peri-urban Lusaka.

### 3.3 Study Area

The study was conducted in Kalingalinga – a settlement within the urban setting of Lusaka, specifically located at 15.4038° S, 28.3301° E. Situated east of Lusaka, Kalingalinga is a low-income, high-density area with a total population of 38,862 (i.e. 18,677 male and 20,185 female) and a total of 9,713 households of which 3,422 are female led households (ZSA:2022).



*Figure 2. Map of Kalingalinga (source internet)*

Kalingalinga, was initially an unplanned settlement within Lusaka, which was later regularized under the 1972 Government Policy towards upgrading squatter settlements. It was upgraded through a joint project between the local council and the German Technical Assistance (GTA) project in 1987 through the provision of a school, clinic,

market and community center (GTZ report No. 175). Additionally, the installation of water standpipes, provision of home improvement loans as well as installation of streetlights were- made available to families as means to improve living conditions of the community (ibid).

Over the decades, the area has continued to develop, because of government as well as private investments by local and foreign nationals. Some of the marked developments are the construction and marking of roads within the community, upgrading of housing units as well as construction of modern structures such as a mall, shops and other businesses of varying scale, which have created employment opportunities for the people in the community. Despite the marked development, Kalingalinga is still considered one of the underserved areas within Lusaka as it continues to face social and economic challenges that affect quality of life for children and families. This is because of continued poor water, sanitation and waste management services, limited health and education services, congested housing setups as well as reliance by majority of families on informal sources of income which can be unreliable and insufficient for household needs. According to data provided by city population ([www.citypopulation.de](http://www.citypopulation.de)), Kalingalinga has 9,410 children aged 0 – 9 years old. With the continued challenges that the community faces as indicated above, the area provides an ideal demographic where a study accessing the quality of childcare services for child development can generate empirical data to inform improved planning and implementation for development including investment in the early years for a more productive society.

### **3.4 Study Population**

The study population included personnel from childcare centers/providers serving children aged 0-6 years in the Kalingalinga area within Lusaka, along with parents and guardians involved in both formal and informal employment.

The population was intentionally selected to align with the study's objective of exploring the developmental effects of early childcare experiences in low-income urban settings in Lusaka. The childcare providers encompassed a variety of centers, such as formal, community-based care initiatives, and informal caregivers, illustrating the diverse childcare services within the study area.

The parents/guardians were selected from varying socio-economic backgrounds and employment types to offer insights into the impact of available childcare services and their quality on child development outcomes as well as on parental workforce participation. This allowed the study to capture detailed perspectives and experiences, providing a thorough understanding of early childcare services and their role in supporting child development and facilitating economic participation in urban, low-resource contexts.

### **3.5 Sampling Techniques**

The sampling strategy for the quantitative component employed stratified random sampling to ensure representation across different types of childcare settings. The stratification criteria included day care, in-home care, family-based care and early learning centers within the location of study. This approach ensured that data was collected from a cross-section of childcare environments to enhance the validity of the findings. For the qualitative strand, purposive sampling was used to select parents/guardians in both formal and informal employment sectors to reflect a range of experiences and perspectives related to childcare. This approach allowed to capture detailed and context specific insights across those facing challenges and those with positive childcare experiences and how these childcare services impact both child development and parental economic participation.

### **3.6 Sample Size**

Based on the statistics presented in the labor force survey report (ZSA:2022), 50.8% of the population in Lusaka province fall within the labor force population with only 33.2% of this population being employed. Based on these statistics it was extrapolated that 50.8% of the 38,862 (i.e. 19,742) people lie within the labor force with 33.2% (i.e. 6,554 people) being gainfully employed. To derive a representative sample size, the standard/general sample size formula was used as indicated below.

$$n = \frac{N \cdot Z^2 \cdot p \cdot (1 - p)}{(N - 1) \cdot E^2 + Z^2 \cdot p \cdot (1 - p)}$$

Where:

- N is the total population size (6,554).
- Z is the Z-value (e.g., 1.96 for a 95% confidence level).
- p is the estimated proportion of the population (0.2 for acceptable variability).
- E is the desired margin of error (5%).

For a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error our caregiver sample size for this study will be as follows:

$$n = \frac{6,554 \times 1.96^2 \times 0.2(1-0.2)}{(6,554-1) \times 0.05^2 + 1.96^2 \times 0.2(1-0.2)}$$

$$n = \underline{237} \text{ parents/caregivers gainfully employed}$$

Daycares, creches and early learning centers providing care for children between 0-6 years, were identified for the quantitative strand, ensuring representativeness while considering practical constraints. For the qualitative component, a purposive sample of 237 participants—comprising parents, childcare providers, and early childhood educators—was targeted to provide diverse insights into the childcare experience. However, out of the 237 participants, responses were received from 184 participants only with 53 participants choosing not to participate in the study.

### **3.7 Data Collection/Instruments**

Quantitative data was collected using observational checklists designed to assess developmental outcomes of children 0-6, with variables including cognitive skills, social behaviors, and emotional well-being. Further, semi - structured questionnaires were administered to parents as well as childcare providers to corroborate recorded observations. Qualitative data was gathered through semi-structured questionnaires and observational visits to childcare settings, focusing on the quality of care, caregiver-child interactions, and the overall childcare environment. All data collection instruments were recreated using KoboToolbox, a data collection software allowing for the electronic collection of data and creation of a raw data set for ease of analysis.

### **3.8 Data Analysis**

Using the dataset created through Kobo Toolbox, responses to closed ended questions was coded and entered to the statistical software SPSS, where it was analyzed by employing descriptive statistics as well as crosstab analysis to examine relationships between childcare characteristics and expected developmental outcomes. Qualitative data was analyzed thematically, through identification and interpretation of patterns and themes in the data. The convergence of statistical and qualitative data was utilized to integrate the findings during the data analysis phase to provide comprehensive insights.

#### **3.8.1 Validity and Reliability**

As a means of validating and ensuring reliability, triangulation of data across the different sources was done. Creswell (2014) indicates triangulation as a strategy that can be employed to ensure internal validity of study data. This is achieved by collecting data through multiple sources like interviews, observations and analysis of documents. To ensure reliability and validity of the study findings, triangulation by collecting data from multiple sources, including literature review, interviews with parents, caregivers and childcare providers as well as observation of childcare facilities was conducted. Study findings were crossed checked across the various data sources to enhance credibility. To ensure reliability, consistency in data collection methods through the use of standard semi-structured questionnaires and observation checklists was maintained.

### **3.9 Ethical Considerations**

Ethical considerations are essential for conducting any research or study. For this study to assess the quality of childcare services and their impact on child development with integrity and respect for all participants, the following principal ethical factors were applied by the researcher during the study.

**Informed Consent:** Study participants were informed of the nature, purpose, and potential risks and benefits of their participation in the study. This entailed delivering correct information in comprehensible language and guaranteeing that participation was consensual and free from coercion (Resnik, 2020). Particular attention was given to securing consent from vulnerable populations, including low-income individuals and parents with poor educational backgrounds.

**Confidentiality and Anonymity:** Ensuring the confidentiality of participants' data was essential, especially given that the study encompassed sensitive information on family income and parental job status. All personal data such as names, identification numbers or places of work were collected thus anonymizing the participants to safeguard their identities. Access to identifiable information was restricted solely to the study team, and stringent data protection protocols were implemented in accordance with relevant data protection legislation (Smith, 2019).

**Non-Maleficence:** The idea of non-maleficence, or "do no harm," was maintained throughout the investigation. This guaranteed that participants were shielded from any physical, psychological, or emotional harm due to their involvement (Beauchamp & Childress, 2013). Special emphasis was placed on alleviating the load on low-income individuals who may have encountered stress or discomfort when addressing their personal situations.

**Altruism:** The study aims to positively impact society by producing evidence that can guide policy to improve childcare services and increase parental workforce participation. The researcher ascertained that the prospective advantages of the study, especially for vulnerable groups, are above any associated dangers (Sieber, 2018).

**Justice and Equity:** The study complied with the principles of justice and equity by guaranteeing equitable participant selection. Emphasis was placed on preventing the exploitation of vulnerable communities, guaranteeing equitable distribution of both the burdens and rewards of the study (Resnik, 2020). This entailed incorporating a varied sample that accurately reflected different income levels, genders, and employment types within the urban areas being examined.

**Ethical Approval:** Before initiating the study, ethical permission was obtained from the UNILUS Research Ethics Committee - an accredited ethics review board. This phase guaranteed that the research adhered to national and international ethical norms (Smith, 2019).

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **PRESENTATION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS**

#### **4.0 Introduction**

This chapter presents the data that was collected using semi-structured questionnaires and observation checklists with regards to assessing the quality of childcare services and their impact on child development. Conducted using a mixed method approach the study received responses from parents of children 0 – 6 years as well as childcare providers (i.e. teachers, caregivers and teaching assistants) from various early learning centers and family-care providers within the Kalingalinga area. Findings presented were guided by the specific objectives of the study as follows:

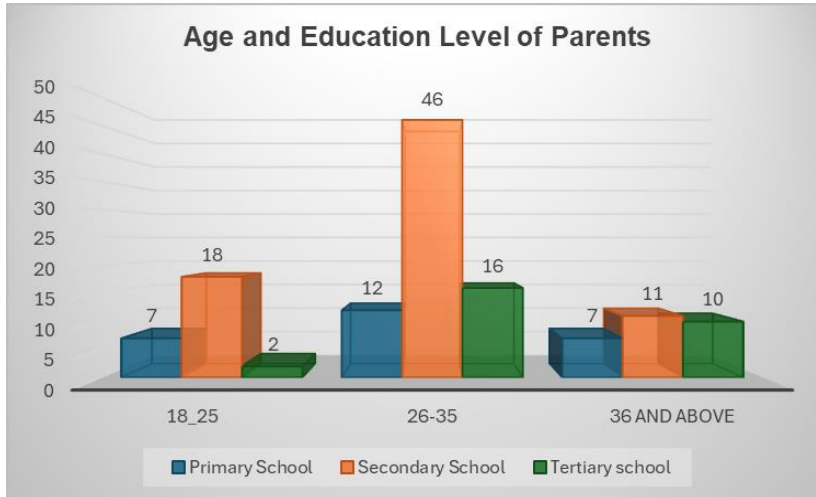
- i) To identify key characteristics of childcare services provided and accessed within Kalingalinga
- ii) To analyze the impact of the current childcare services on the holistic development of children in Kalingalinga
- iii) To investigate how the availability and quality of childcare services influences parental workforce participation

#### **4.1 Demographic Information**

Using descriptive statistics, this section will highlight the demographic characteristics of parents, childcare providers and children who responded to the administered questionnaires as well as those that were observed during the study. The demographic characteristics will include variables such as the age, marital status and education level of parents, roles and years of experience of childcare providers as well as age ranges of children 0-6 observed during the research.

### 4.1.1 Parent data

Findings from the study show that respondents representing parents of children 0 – 6 years old were taken from different age groups and educational level. This ensured that diverse experiences and perspectives are captured to assess the quality of childcare services in Kalingalinga. A total of 129 parents were interviewed with the majority i.e. 57%



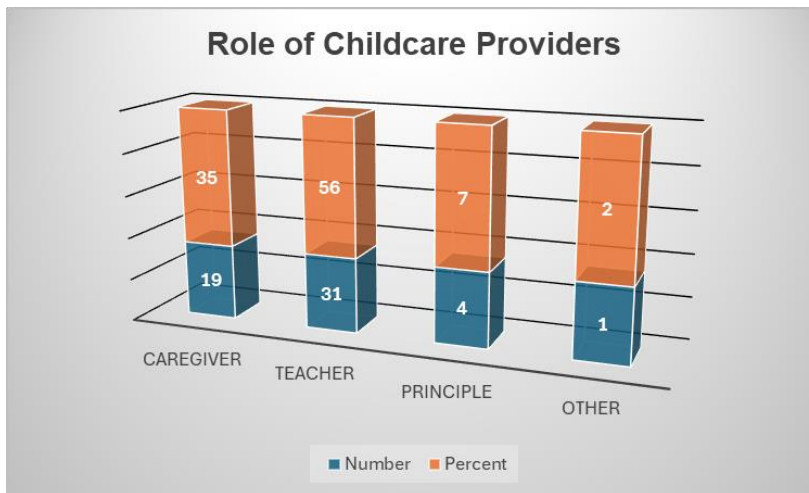
**Figure 3:** Age and Educational level of Parents of Children 0 - 6 years

**Source:** Field Survey 2024

education and 20% (26) only attained primary level education as indicated in Figure 3. In addition to varying ages and educational background, respondents also represent varying marital status, from single to widowed. In line with this, demographic data indicates that 49% (63) are married, 28% (36) are single, 17% (22) separated, 5% (6) divorced and 2% (2) widowed.

(74) representing the ages 26 – 35 years, followed by 22% (28) representing the ages 36 and above, lastly 21% (27) representing the ages 18-25 years. Additionally, findings indicate that 58% (75) attained secondary level education, whilst 22% (28) attained tertiary level

### 4.1.2 Childcare provider data



**Figure 4:** Roles of Childcare providers reached. **Source:** Field Survey 2024

Findings show a diverse group of childcare providers sampled as respondents for the study. Figure 4, highlights that of the 55 respondents reached 19 (35%) were caregivers, 31(56%) were teachers, 4 (7%) were principles with 1(2%) being a relative represented as other.

Similarly, a diversity in levels of experience as childcare providers was recorded, highlighting a representative sample providing unique perspective based on their experiences as childcare providers. Findings showed that 19 (35%) respondents had 1 – 3 years of experience followed by 11 (20%) having 4-6 years and more than 10 years of experience each representing 20%. Followed by 8 (15%) with less than 1 year experience and finally 6 (11%) with 7 – 10 years' experience.

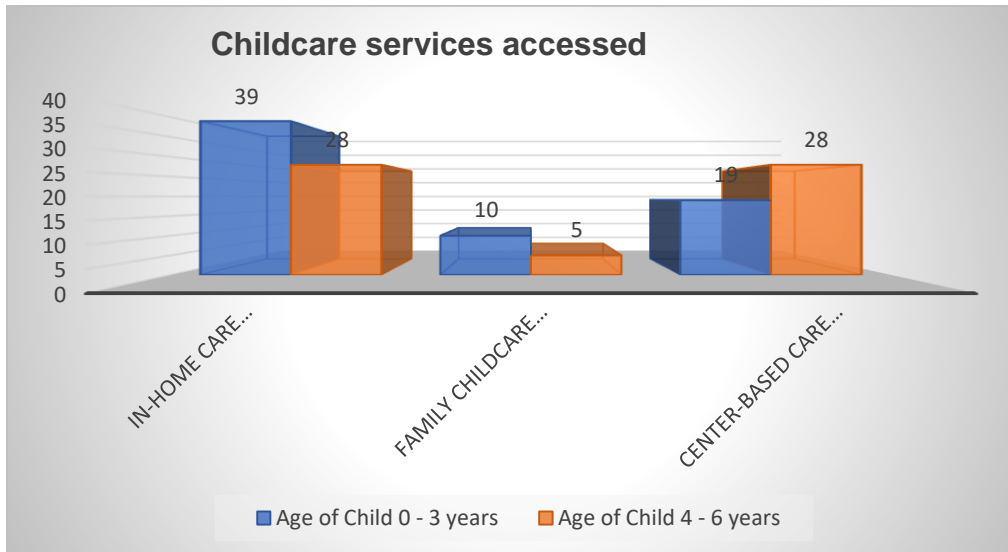
## 4.2. Characteristics of childcare services provided and accessed

Research objective one of this study aimed to identify the key characteristics of childcare services provided and accessed by parents in Kalingalinga.

### 4.2.1 Childcare services accessed

In line with objective one of the study, findings indicate that various childcare services are available within Kalingalinga with parents accessing different services for varying reasons from affordability, availability and preference based on the age of their children. Findings from the 129 respondents surveyed show that 52% of the respondents (i.e. 67 respondents of children 0-6 of which 39 were parents with children 0-3yrs and 28 were parents with children 4 – 6yrs), use in-home care with a maid/nanny. Secondly, 12% of the respondents (i.e. 15 parents of which 10 were parents of children 0-3yrs and 5 were parents of children 4 – 6 yrs) access family childcare where a non-relative provides childcare services to a small group of children from different families. Lastly, 36% of the

respondents (i.e. 47 respondents of which 19 were parents of children 0-3yrs and 28 were parents of children 4-6 yrs) indicated that they accessed center-based childcare services as represented in Figure 5.



**Figure 5:** Childcare services accessed

**Source:** Field Survey 2024

Using crosstabulation analysis, findings showed that respondents were largely inclined to accessing in-home childcare due to availability and affordability of the service particularly for children 0 – 3years old as seen in figure 5. Responses from the study showed that parents felt that in-home care was safer for younger children because caregivers were either relatives or people recommended by people they trust like close friends and family. One respondent said, *“Having my child taken care of by my mother gives me peace of mind because I know she has my child’s best interest and can care for my daughter the same way I would”*. Another parent indicated that using in-home care was very convenient for her. She stated, *“Using a nanny to care for my child at home allows me to observe how she takes care of my child, and I can easily guide her on how to care for my child on a daily basis.”*

Similarly, access to Center-based childcare was largely influenced by availability and affordability with the service mostly catering for children 4 – 6 years old as seen in figure 5. Parents reported that the centers provided an opportunity for children to learn more things and play with friends. A respondent shared *“The pre-school has good teachers*

*who are trained and has books and toys that my child can play with while he is making friends which is good, instead of just watching television at home.”*

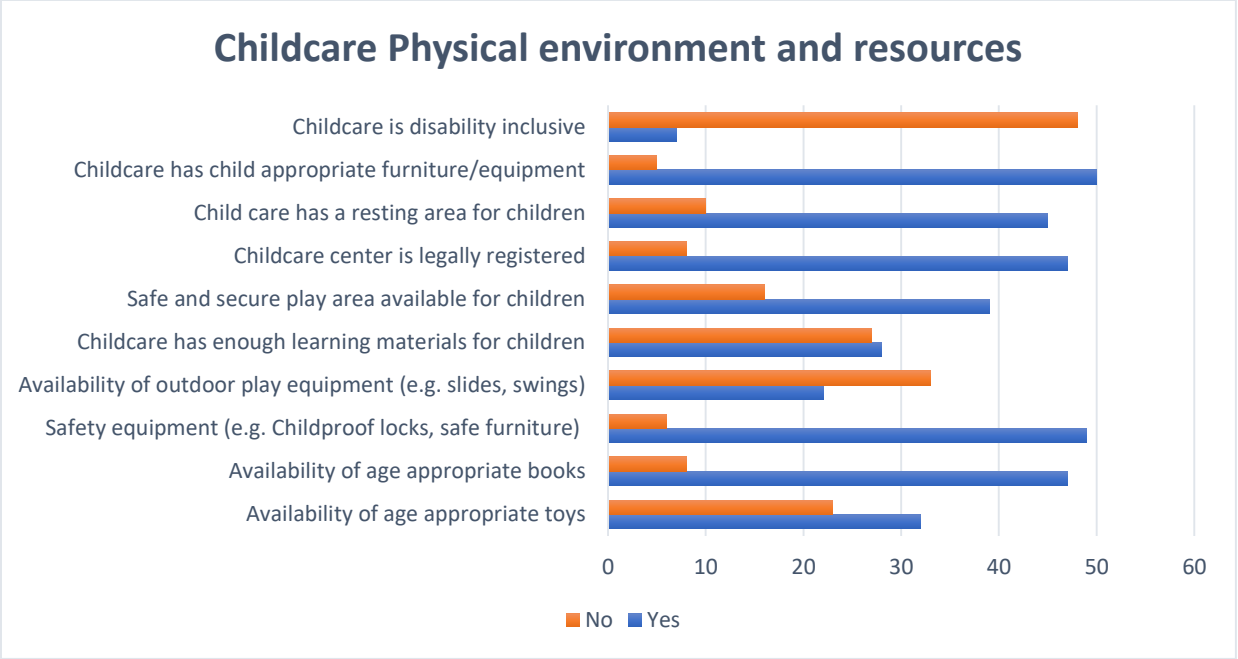
With only 12% of the respondents indicating family-based care as the preferred childcare service, parents who selected this service, said the flexibility and small group arrangement allowed for them to access the service when it was really needed whilst providing their children the opportunity to play with others as well as receive the attention that they need. A mother stated, *“Because I work part time, I don’t always need the service all the time. I am only required to pay when I need to work instead of paying for a full month.”* Table 1 below shows the results of a crosstabulation analysis of the data on the factors influencing childcare as per survey responses.

<b>Factors influencing Childcare</b>			
<b>Childcare service</b>	<b>Availability</b>	<b>Affordability</b>	<b>Preference</b>
In-home care (Maid/Nanny?Relative)	49	38	16
Family childcare (non-relative taking care of a small group of children from different families)	13	7	0
Center-based care (daycare/creche/kindergarten)	36	20	7

**Table 1:** Factors influencing choice of childcare service      **Source:** Field Survey 2024

#### **4.2.2 Physical environment and resources**

To understand the characteristics of the various childcare services within Kalingalinga area, 55 childcare providers were asked to indicate whether their facilities had key components that make childcare centers/facilities conducive for the care and development of children. Findings show that a larger percentage (i.e. 66%) of the responses indicated availability of physical resources whilst 34% indicated lack of physical resources. The detailed distribution of responses based on specific elements of the physical environment and resources are represented in Figure 6.



**Figure 6:** Childcare physical environment and resources **Source:** Field Survey 2024

Data presented in figure 6, shows that available resources include child-appropriate furniture and equipment (50/55), resting area for children (45/55), safety equipment (49/55), age-appropriate books and toys (47/55 and 32/55 respectively), safe and secure play areas (39/55) and legal registration. On the other hand, lacking resources include outdoor playing equipment with 22/55 respondents indicating availability while 33/55 respondents indicated a lack of these resources. Though 28/55 respondents indicated availability of learning materials, 27/55 respondents stated otherwise – therefore highlighting a gap.

When asked what challenges childcare providers face in providing quality services, respondents indicated the limited or lack of resources and infrastructure as the biggest challenge. According to one provider *“Having all the necessary furniture, books, outdoor equipment and toys makes it easier to keep the children engaged. Unfortunately, we don’t have enough resources to provide all that is needed.”* In line with disability access/inclusion one provider highlighted a gap in trained and skilled personnel who can handle early childhood development. Study findings have shown that though most of the childcare facilities have the physical resources available, there are limitations to what the

centers can provide, which can affect the quality of childcare services provided and accessed.

#### 4.2.3 Staffing – Qualifications

Data on the qualifications of Childcare providers shows that the majority (45%) of the 55 respondents have certificates in Early Childhood Education, followed by 22% having Diploma’s in Early Childhood Education. The remaining respondents indicated attaining secondary school level (13%) Primary school level (11%), bachelor’s degree (4%) and other (5%) qualifications as presented in Table 2.

Education qualification		
Description	Frequency (n)	Percent (%)
Primary School	6	11
Secondary School	7	13
Certificate in Early Childhood Education	25	45
Diploma in Early Childhood Education	12	22
Bachelor's Degree	2	4
Other	3	5

**Table 2:** Childcare providers education qualification **Source:** Field survey 2024

To receive further insight on how staff qualifications influence the quality of childcare services, the researcher asked childcare providers if they believed that they contributed to the holistic development of the children they care for; one respondent stated *that “Having a diploma has helped me keep children engaged by designing age-appropriate activities and lessons that support their development.”* At the same time another respondent with only secondary level education expressed the need for more training to increase her knowledge in childcare. She said, *“Because I have no formal training, the knowledge I have is from experience and learning from others here and there... but if I receive formal training, I can do more.”*

Parents also gave their thoughts on the qualifications of the childcare providers, and their contribution to child development. One parent *shared “the trained staff in the center know how to take the children and care for them because they understand what they need especially the smaller ones.”* On the other hand, a parent who was using in-home

childcare indicated that formal qualifications were not priority because *“it’s better to leave my child with someone I know and trust even if they have never gone to school.”*

Study findings highlight the varied qualifications amongst childcare providers with most having some formal training in early childhood care and development. This shows that childcare providers understand the importance of hiring trained staff to help support child development. However, qualitative data shows that parental trust in the caregiver in whichever setting also plays a significant role in deciding childcare arrangement regardless of qualification.

#### 4.2.4. Caregiver to Child Ratio

Table 3 shows the Child-to-caregiver ratio as findings based on the data collected to understand the caregiver-to-child ratio. Findings show that 69% (i.e. 38/55) of the respondents indicated attending to more than 15 children per day. This was followed by 15% (i.e. 8/55) indicating that they attend to between 11 – 15 children per day, whilst 13% (7/55) indicated attending to about 6 – 10 children per day and 4% (2/55) indicated attending to between 1-5 children per day.

**Caregiver-to-Child ratio**

Number of Children	Frequency (n)	Percent (%)
1 - 5	2	4
6 - 10	7	13
11 - 15	8	15
More than 15	38	69

**Table 3:** Average number of children attended to daily by a caregiver

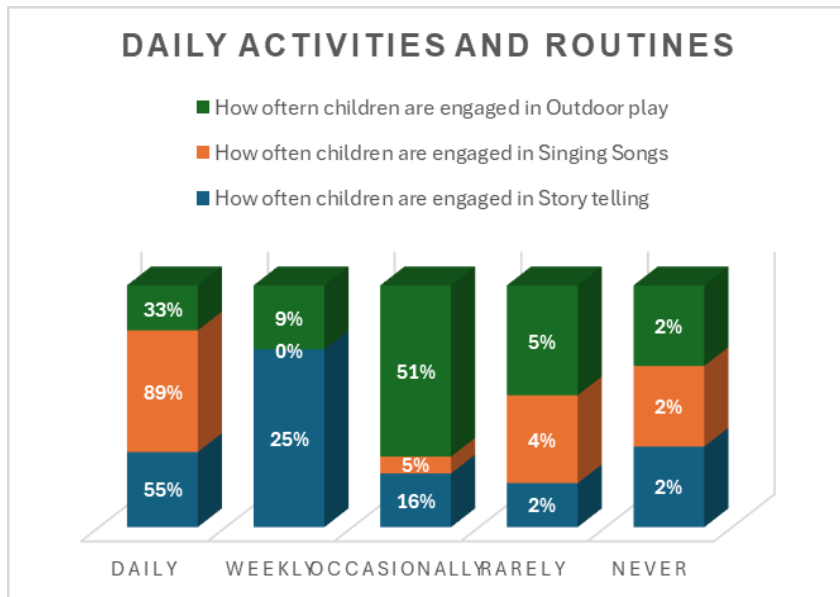
**Source:** Field Survey 2024

These findings show that many of the providers are caring for big groups of children which exceed the recommended child to caregiver ratios for the provision of quality care. In support of these findings, caregivers shared challenges in attending to bigger groups and indicated that the hiring of more staff would ease the burden and ensure the children receive the attention they need. According to one caregiver, *“Taking care of 30 children at a time is a big challenge because I am not able to attend to them according to their needs. I focus on keeping them orderly and rush through meaningful learning activities.”* Another provider shared *“It is difficult to notice when something is going on with a specific*

*child when we have to attend to so many children at once.*” This shows that a high child-to-caregiver ratio. This shows that a high child-to-caregiver ratio not only poses challenges for the providers, but it also diminishes the quality of service that children receive thus affecting their developmental outcomes.

#### 4.2.5 Daily activities and routines

Respondents were asked how often they engaged children in activities and routines that



contribute to their development; from children having sessions to sing songs, play outside as well as storytelling. Findings show that children are engaged in these activities and routines daily at an average of 59%, Occasionally at 24%, Weekly at 11%, rarely at 4% and never at 2% as

Figure 7: Childcare activities and routines in which children are engaged

Source: Field Survey 2024

presented in figure 7. This data shows that though majority of providers include these activities in the children’s daily routines during the hours of care, a significant number don’t engage them frequently. This may have negative implications on children’s development and learning. Responses from childcare providers also indicate that the availability or lack of resources contributes to facilities being able to engage children in these activities. For example, one provider stated, “We don’t have enough space to put a play area outside for the children to play so we just keep them inside and do what we can to engage them.” Another one said “*The children like to sing, dance and play outside, but we are not able to have story time and play outside because we don’t have enough books and have no play ground.*” These results highlight how the lack of resources can stand in the way of quality childcare and concerns aired by care providers suggest that they understand the importance of the routine activities for children’s development, and they

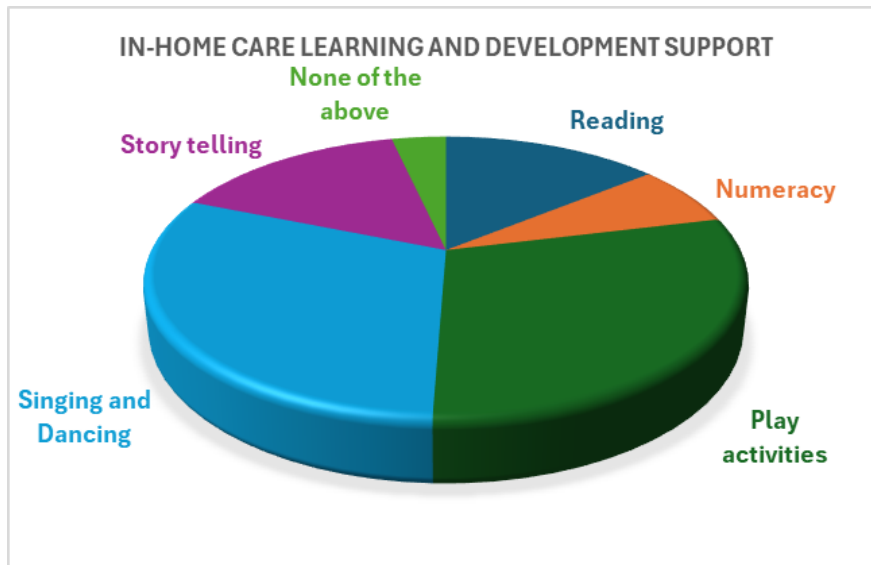
do their best to engage the children to ensure their development despite the challenges being faced.

### **4.3 Impact of the current childcare services on the holistic development of children**

The second objective of the study aimed to analyze the impact of current childcare services in Kalingalinga.

#### **4.3.1 In-home Childcare services and holistic development of children**

To analyze the impact of in-home childcare services on the holistic development of children, the 67 out of 129 respondents that indicated using in-home childcare services were asked if the nannies engaged their children in educational and physical activities during hours of care. 57 affirmed that their nannies do engage their children in physical activities such as outdoor play and exercise whilst the remaining 10 indicated once a week (1), rarely (1), never (3) and do not know (2). With regards to children being engaged in educational activities 51 respondents affirmed whilst 16 indicated that their children were not engaged in educational activities. These results show that in-home caregivers are more likely to engage children in physical and social activities than in educational activities. This was further supported by parent responses where a mother indicated *“it is easy for my maid to play with my child and tell stories, but I have never seen her read or teach my child numbers because she herself did not finish school.”*



**Figure 8:** In-home care learning and development support Source: Field work 2024

In response to a multi-response question on how maids/nannies support child learning and development needs within home care, findings show more responses for play activities, singing and dancing, followed by reading and storytelling followed by numeracy with the least responses indicating none of the activities being engaged for children in home care. Findings presented in Figure 8, indicates that children receiving in-home care are stimulated well with regards to their physical, social and emotional development. However, a gap exists with regards to their cognitive stimulation and development, which may diminish their chances of performing well once in school. Further, the data shows a low level of engagement in reading activities for children in home care which may contribute to delays in children’s language and speech development. A statement from one of the mothers said *“The nanny doesn’t know how to read or write, even her english is not good, so I don’t expect her to be able to teach my child. There is enough time to learn when he goes to school.”*

This shows that though in-home childcare is the most accessed, the reasons for its selection are not for the development of the child however It is more for having someone to look after the child. It suggests that parents believe the development of children can be delayed until one goes into school which points to a gap in knowledge and importance of access to quality early childcare and stimulation for better develop outcomes in children.

### 4.3.2 Family and Center – based Childcare and holistic development of children

To analyze the impact of family and center-based childcare services on the holistic development of children; 62 of the 129 respondents who indicated accessing family or center-based childcare were asked to indicate if their selected childcare services contribute towards their children’s development. In line with this, respondents were asked to indicate if the childcare services had enough caregivers who were knowledgeable in early childhood development to attend to all the children enrolled, if the childcare had available resources such as toys, books and learning materials as well as indicate if the children were engaged in physical activities. With regards to the childcare services having enough caregivers to look after the children in their care, 40 (65%) agreed whilst 22 (35%) responded not enough caregivers. These results show that though majority feel that caregivers are qualified, a significant number feel that childcare providers are lacking in knowledge and skills. According to one mother *“ever since my child started going to the school, I have seen improvements in her, she is becoming more intelligent and its because the teachers are properly trained and know what they are doing. So, I am happy.”*

Results showing the knowledge of caregivers as well as availability of resource in family and center-based care are presented in Figure 9.

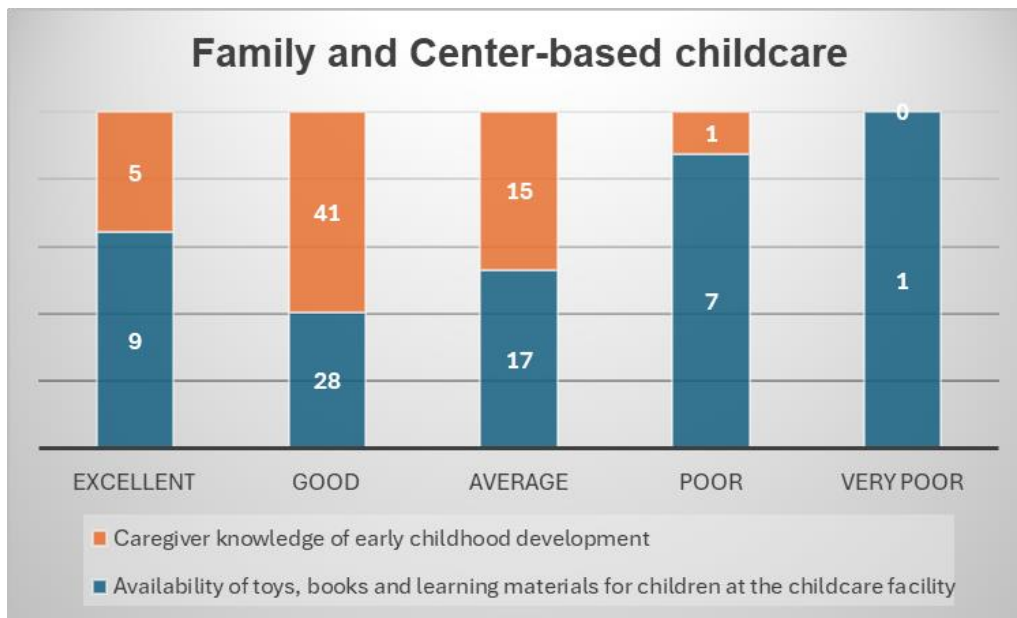


Figure 9: Parent responses on caregiver knowledge and resources Source: Field Survey 2024

Further the respondents indicated that they felt that caregivers coupled with their knowledge in early childhood development were able to adequately support their children's emotional and education needs. Interview responses have supported these finds with 76% (47) of respondents agreeing to statement whilst 24% (15) disagreed. A respondent said, *"one time when I came to pick up my child from the center I found that she was crying and her aunty (caregiver) was comforting her and encouraging her,"* another respondent also shared *"the first time I brought my child to the school, he cried so much I wanted to go back with him, but the teacher carried him and comforted him, nowadays I don't struggle with leaving him, he even runs to the teacher."* These findings show that childcare providers can attend to the emotional needs of children and support them while they are in care, therefore creating a safe environment and helping the children form healthy attachments with their caregivers which is important for their social and emotional development.

Respondents were also asked to indicate their observations with regards to their children's emotional, social, communication and language skills development since being admitted in the childcare service. 94% of the respondents indicated observing improved social and communication skills in their children since being enrolled/admitted in the childcare centers. To support these findings a respondent shared *"before bringing my child to the center, he was very clingy and cried a lot when not given attention, but now I have seen that he is not crying anymore and likes to mix with other children."* Another mother shared *"I have noticed that my child is talking well, and I can hear his words more."*

#### **4.4 Childcare services and their influence on parental workforce participation**

The third objective of the study aimed at investigating how the availability and quality of childcare services in Kalingalinga influences workforce participation by parents particularly women.

#### 4.4.1 Parental workforce participation

To understand if availability of childcare services influenced workforce participation, parents were asked to indicate how the availability of childcare services had affected their ability to maintain regular work schedules. Out of 129 respondents, 67 (52%), indicated that having childcare services available made it much easier to maintain a regular work schedule, 36 (28%) responded that it made it somewhat easier whilst 26 (20%) indicated it had no impact. A crosstab analysis between the different childcare services and workforce participation was done for in-depth understanding as presented in Table 4.

Workforce participation due to availability of childcare				
Childcare services accessed	Makes it much easier	Makes it somewhat easier	No impact	N/A
In-home care (Maid/Nanny/Relative)	42	12	13	0
Family childcare (non-relative taking care of a small group of children from different families)	5	6	4	0
Center-based care (daycare/creche/kindergarten)	20	18	9	0

**Table 4:** Workforce participation and childcare availability *Source: Fieldwork survey 2024*

#### 4.4.2 Challenges with Childcare and Workforce participation

Respondents were asked if challenges with their childcare service affected their work attendance or punctuality and if they have had to change jobs or reduce work hours; 28% indicated that challenges had affected their attendance and punctuality and 4% responded that these challenges had pushed them to change jobs or reduce the number of hours worked per day. Results from parent interviews collaborate these findings with many mothers stating that the availability, accessibility and reliability of childcare services has allowed them to continue working and earn a living. A mother of two under 6 children shared, *“if I did not have my mother and maid to help me care for my children, I don’t think I would be working today.”* Another mother responded, *“because I couldn’t find a good nanny for my child, I had to stop working and start my own business to help support us. The business allows me to work from anywhere so I can still care for my child incase my current maid decides not to show up.”*

#### **4.4.3 Affordability of childcare**

With studies showing that affordability of childcare services influences workforce participation of parents particularly women, respondents were asked to indicate if this factor influenced their participation. By asking them the cost of their accessed service, if they found them affordable and if this affected their ability to work. Responses show that accessed services in Kalingalinga are varied in terms of cost. The majority (97%) of indicated childcare costs amounting to less than or equal to ZMW800 per month whilst 3% indicated costs upwards of ZMW800 up to ZMW1,300 per month.

For family and center-based services, 45% (28/62) respondents indicated they found the services affordable, 15% (9/62) stated the services were expensive whilst 40% (25/62) indicated neutrality.

Responses from participants accessing in-home childcare indicated that 31/67 found the service expensive/less affordable whilst 29/67 stated the service being more affordable than other services, 3/67 indicated not knowing whilst 4/67 indicated other because they don't pay for the service as those providing the care were relatives. A respondent shared, *"I got a relative from the village to help me care for my child while I work so I don't have to pay her anything because I take care of her, buy her clothes, provide shelter and food."*

Contrary to these findings however, when parents were asked if they had experienced financial challenges in maintaining in-home childcare providers, 72% (48/67) responded no, whilst 28% (19/67) responded yes indicating that the majority are able to afford their selected service with no challenges. These results show that as long as parents can afford the accessed childcare service, they can continue to participate in the workforce and maintain regular work as represented in table 4, above.

#### **4.4.3 Employer support for childcare**

Parents were also asked whether they received childcare support in any form from their employers. Survey data shows that 8% indicated receiving significant or some support whilst 35% and 57% indicated no support or non-applicability respectively. Qualitative data from the interviews showed that support provided was in different forms. A respondent said, *"I am allowed to have flexible hours to allow me exclusively breast feed my child."* Another mother shared *"when I have to travel for work, I am allowed to travel*

*with my child and an allowance is provided to help me support someone to care for my child while I am working.”*

Results however show that majority of parents are not receiving childcare support from employers and as such must rely on themselves to ensure their children are cared for whilst they work. A respondent indicated, *“I have to depend on myself and what I earn to make sure that my child is cared for while I work, I am not supported in any way by my employer.”* On the other hand, a self-employed mother stated, *“because I work for myself, I have the flexibility to attend to my child as well as supervise her care most of the time, though this too has its challenges during busy months.”*

These findings show that very few employers are providing childcare support to their employees. Further, the little support that is provided is not sufficient in that it is periodical and triggered by events e.g. medical emergencies, work travel etc.

# **CHAPTER FIVE**

## **DISCUSSION OF STUDY FINDINGS**

### **5.0 Introduction**

In line with the specific study objectives to assess the quality of childcare services and child development, this chapter discusses the findings of the study as presented in the previous chapter. The discussion will draw interpretations from the presented findings in line with empirical literature findings whilst highlighting similarities and differences between the categories for comprehensive understanding of the quality of childcare services in Kalingalinga and its impact on child development.

### **5.1 Characteristics of provided and accessed childcare services**

Study findings showed that parents of children 0-6 years in Kalingalinga are accessing various childcare services namely in-home childcare, family childcare and center-based childcare. The choice of childcare service is largely determined by the availability and affordability with a few respondents indicating preference. Of the childcare services, in-home childcare was found to be the most accessed particularly for children 0-3 years (i.e. 39 of 129) as well as for children 4-6 years of age (i.e. 28 out of 129). This resonates with findings of the study conducted by Chaudry et al. (2011) where it is indicated that the choice of childcare services in low – income working families was restricted by various factors thus limiting their options and leaving them to settle for less quality options.

Further, findings - regarding the physical environment and resources of the accessed childcare services - showed that though the majority (66%) of childcare providers indicated having the required physical resources conducive for stimulating child development, 34% indicated not having these resources, with the most lacking resources being inclusive infrastructure, outdoor play equipment and learning materials. Similarly, staffing qualifications were found to be limited with majority (45%) having certificates in early childhood development whilst those providing childcare within the homes did not hold any qualifications as they were hired based on being relatives, recommendations from family and friends or simply experience as maids/nannies with no requirement for them to be trained and having formal childcare qualifications. According to childcare

literature, because in-home childcare services are the most accessed, this indicates that majority of children 0-6 years within Kalingalinga are being cared for by underqualified caregivers with limited knowledge in childcare and development and as such denying children the opportunity to attain holistic development. Additionally, findings regarding child-to-caregiver ratio in center and family-based childcare indicate a high percentage (69%) of respondents attending to more than 15 children per day instead of the recommended 1 to 5 children below 7 years per caregiver, to ensure adequate care, support and attention for emotional and social development of the children. Various studies have shown that a high child to caregiver ratio reduce the quality of care, safety, well-being and development in the various childcare settings. Burchinal (2016), indicates that key characteristics for quality childcare services include access to trained caregivers, proper child-to-caregiver ratio and safety of the physical environment. In line with this, findings from the study indicate an inadequacy of accessed childcare services thus jeopardizing the holistic development of children 0 – 6years.

## **5.2 Impact of current childcare services on the holistic development of children**

The value of a childcare service is measured by its accessibility and quality. Numerous literatures have highlighted that the better the quality of a childcare service the better the developmental outcomes for children. According to Burchinal et al. (2016), children enrolled in structured childcare facilities in low-income areas demonstrate better outcomes particularly cognitive, language development and functioning compared to those in informal care environments. However, due to poor quality of services in the low-income urban areas characterized with overcrowded classrooms and undertrained caregivers, holistic development of children is often hindered (Kalindi and Matanda: 2016). To analyze the impact of childcare services on the holistic development of children, various aspects of childcare in Kalingalinga were reviewed. This was done by asking respondents questions regarding caregiver knowledge in ECD, sufficiency of caregivers in childcare centers, availability of resources and learning materials as well as activities that children are engaged in during childcare hours.

Findings of the study show that for in-home care, children are engaged in activities such as numeracy, reading, storytelling, outdoor play activities etc., that support their learning and development. However, as the caregivers (nannies/relatives) are not trained in childcare and development, these activities may not meet the global standard for age appropriate and adequate stimulation for development. Additionally, the emphasis on engaging in 'social' activities, a bias towards stimulation for physical, social and emotional development hinders the children's capabilities of cognitive development creating an imbalance in their development. In line with writings by Kalindi and Matanda (2016) this shows that in-home caregivers do not have the required qualifications and skills to fully support children as such hindering their holistic development.

Furthermore, findings from family and center-based care indicate varying responses regarding caregiver sufficiency, ability to support children's emotional support, physical activity as well as availability of resources. Most of the responses were positive i.e. 76% indicating centers having enough caregivers to care for the children, 66% indicating that they felt caregivers had adequate knowledge in early childhood development and 45% indicating centers having available resources such as toys, books etc. At the same time, we see that a significant number of childcare providers indicated an inadequacy of learning materials, high child to caregiver ratio, absence of outdoor play area as well as limited age-appropriate toys and books within the centers (refer to Figure 6). The contrast between the responses from parents and childcare providers, also indicates a lack of knowledge amongst parents on what may be required or what contributes to their children's development for a better future. These gaps coupled with other responses that do not support the affirmative, highlighting a need for more to be done to ensure that childcare services being provided and accessed are of quality and support holistic child development.

### **5.3 Childcare services and their influence on parental workforce participation**

Childcare services are an integral part of ensuring infants and young children are cared for while parents engage in economic activity for their livelihood. According to Kimmel (2006) and Hofferth & Collins (2000) the availability of affordable and quality childcare

services ensure the safety and well being of children as well as increase participation of mothers in the labor force. Not only in the informal sector but in the formal sector also allowing them to work more hours and pursue higher-paying jobs.

Findings from the study agree with assertions by Kimmel (2006) as well as Hofferth & Collins (2000) as they have shown that out of the 129 respondents 80% (103) parents indicated that availability of childcare services either made it easier or somewhat easier for them to participate in the workforce whilst the remaining 20% (26) indicated it did not have any impact. It is important to note that presented findings are only speaking to availability and not quality of the childcare service accessed. Further when asked of any childcare support from employers most parents indicated little or no support which may affect increase in workforce participation as well as limit progression for women in the labor market. The limited participation may translate into less income for the family and reduced quality of care for the children in line with nutrition, health, opportunities for early learning and so on and lead to adverse effects on their development particularly in low-income populations.

According to Kalindi and Matanda (2016), the reliance on informal, low quality childcare arrangements in low-income urban areas forces parents to prioritize childcare over work due to its unreliability. Though findings corroborate the reliance on informal care, findings from the study also showed that regardless of the challenges parents have faced with their selected childcare service, majority have not had to leave work or change jobs as a result with only 4% indicating having changed jobs or left work due to challenges with their childcare service. Additionally, only 28% of the respondents, indicated job attendance and punctuality being affected by childcare challenges. This shows that instead of changing or leaving work it is more important for parents to earn a living and provide for their children despite childcare challenges. Coupled with limited or no childcare support from employers, there is need to ensure that available and accessible services are of high quality and reliable to be able to provide the flexibility and peace of mind for parents particularly women to fully participate in the labor market.

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **6.0 Introduction**

In line with study findings, this chapter highlights the conclusion on the quality of childcare services within low-income urban areas and provides recommendations for childcare providers, parents and policy makers that will contribute towards improving the quality of childcare services for the holistic development of children. The chapter will also identify areas for possible research in the future to build on presented findings and build an increasing body of evidence in line with childcare services and child development in Zambia.

#### **6.1 Conclusion of the study**

The main objective of the study was to assess the quality of childcare services and their influence on the holistic development of children in Kalingalinga. To achieve this, the study focused on collecting primary and secondary data to understand the characteristics of childcare services provided and accessed by families in low-income urban areas particularly Kalingalinga area; the influence these services have on the holistic development of children as well as the influence/impact that the services have on parental workforce participation.

The assessment of the quality of childcare services has shown several gaps in the various childcare services provided and accessed that diminish the quality of service therefore, limiting the development of children 0 – 6 years of age. The findings have revealed that childcare services though accessible, are not adequately equipped with qualified caregivers, play and learning resources as well as enough caregivers to provide the care and support required for the children's optimum development. The high caregiver to child ratio in family and center based childcare centers, limits the attention and care each child needs to develop their physical and cognitive skills, foster safe attachments which are critical for their social and emotional development. Further, where a child may need additional/special attention, caregivers are not able to support them adequately because majority of caregivers do not have the know-how and must attend to more than

10 children below 6 years per day. Additionally, with majority of the centers not being inclusive, children with special needs/disabilities are excluded and robbed of the opportunity to attain their developmental milestones. The limited availability of resources and materials such as toys, books, outdoor play areas also highlight the limited quality of the childcare services in the area. However, even with the limited resources, children are continually engaged in activities that stimulate and encourage their development as such though the quality of childcare may be low, what is available contributes positively to their development albeit not holistic.

Furthermore, despite the limitations revealed, the study findings have also shown that child development is not only reserved for those children with access to family or center-based care but is also attainable for those relying on in-home care as evidenced by the attainment of age-appropriate developmental milestones by most children being care for within their own homes. The opportunities provided to the children to interact with other children within the neighborhood allows them to develop their physical, social and emotional skills as they interact with their caregivers and neighbors, family and friends. As indicated by Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory, a child's development is influenced by various factors/systems that are not only limited to the family but the community and society at large. In this regard, the provision of complementary services within the community will go far to encourage adequate and holistic development for the children particularly those receiving in-home care.

In line with the impact on parental involvement in the workforce, findings of the study have shown that because parents particularly mothers are able to access affordable care for their young children, they are able to engage in gainful employment whether formal or not which supports the care, nutrition and health of their children. However, with the limited support provided by employers as well as the low level of education of the majority of parents, the quality of work and opportunities for progression are significantly hindered. This inadvertently affects the quality of health, nutrition, education, safety and security that is required for the optimum growth and development of children in low-income areas such as Kalingalinga.

## **6.2 Recommendations**

In line with the identified gaps, the study recommends the following:

### **Creation of community play parks/childcare spaces**

- Provision of complementary services by local government within low-income communities by setting up play parks/childcare spaces accessible to all where children and caregivers can access age-appropriate toys, books, and outdoor play equipment. Community spaces should also have community members trained in early childhood development and care, on a rotational basis to provide additional guidance and support to caregivers and parents who visit the spaces with their children.
- This recommendation can be achieved within two years with funding from local government and community involvement for ownership and sustainability.

### **Infrastructure and resources at childcare centers**

- Local government and the ministry of education to allocate budget towards the improvement of infrastructure (age-appropriate furniture) and resources (toys and books) at childcare center's to make them more inclusive as well as conducive for infants and young children as they spend time in care.
- This recommendation can be achieved within the next two to three years in line with government efforts to annex early childhood education and development classes in all primary schools. Further, partnerships with private sector organizations and non-governmental organizations can go far in supporting and achieving the recommendation.

### **Increase parental knowledge in ECD**

- Through training of community ECD champions and attaching them to the health facilities or community spaces, parents can be visited on a monthly basis and provided with knowledge on the importance of early childhood development and its benefits as well as how they can support their children and the childcare providers of choice.

- This can be an ongoing program within the already existing structures of the ministry of health, education, community development and social services as well as the municipal councils with an initial timeframe of two years.

### **Increased monitoring of childcare services**

- To ensure quality childcare services are provided to families in low-income urban areas, increased monitoring by regulators will contribute towards childcare centers ensuring they meet the minimum standards for the provision of quality childcare.

### **6.3 Areas for further research**

The study though significant, has not exhausted all areas that need to be investigated for the improvement of childcare services for development in Zambia. Findings of the study have simply provided a base which can be built upon to provide the much-needed evidence to improve the quality of services and the development of children in Zambia for a better future. Some areas for future research could be:

- i) Assessing school readiness of children, a comparative study of accessed childcare services
- ii) Long-term effects of informal childcare on the growth and development of children
- iii) Analyzing the influence of childcare services on human capital development.

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# APPENDICES

## APPENDIX A

### RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRES



#### School of Post Graduate Studies

#### **TOPIC: ASSESSING THE QUALITY OF CHILDCARE SERVICES FOR CHILD DEVELOPMENT IN ZAMBIA**

Dear Respondent,

My name is Claire Kangombe, a student at the University of Lusaka (UNILUS) studying for a Master of Arts in Development Studies. As part of the requirements to complete my qualification, I am conducting a study to assess the quality of childcare services for child development in Lusaka.

I am requesting your participation in the study following your consent. Your insights and experiences will help me understand the caregiving environment better and identify ways to support caregivers and improve service quality. Please note that the information is purely for academic purposes and will only be shared with the University of Lusaka (UNILUS) as partial fulfillment for the attainment of a master's degree in development studies. Further, please note that all information you provide will be kept confidential, and your name will not be associated with your responses.

**(For Parents and guardians)**

**Background Information**

1. Age: Please state your age (in years)

18-25  26-35  36 and above

2. Gender:

Male  Female

3. What is your marital status?

Single  Married  Separated  Divorced  Widowed

4. What level of education have you attained?

Primary school  Secondary school  Tertiary school  Other (specify)

5. Do you have a child(ren) 0 – 6 years of age?

Yes  No  If yes how many? \_\_\_\_\_

6. What kind of Childcare services do you use for your children

a. **0 to 3yrs**

In-home care (Maid/Nanny/relative)  **[Skip to section D]**

Family childcare (non-relative taking care of a small group of children from different families)

Center-based care (daycare/creche/kindergarten)

**b. 4 to 6yrs**

In-home care (Maid/Nanny/relative)  **[Skip to section D]**

Family childcare (non-relative taking care of a small group of children from different families)

Center-based care (daycare/creche/kindergarten)

7. How did you choose this childcare service and what factors influenced your decision?

Availability  Affordability  Preference (please explain)

**Section A: Characteristics of Childcare Services**

8. How easy is it for you to find suitable childcare services in your area?

Very Easy  Easy  Neutral  Difficult  Very Difficult

9. What means do you use to travel to access childcare services?

Walk  Bicycle  Drive (bus/taxi- etc.)  Other (Specify)  \_\_\_\_\_

10. How long does it take you to travel to your childcare service?

Less than 10 minutes  10-20 minutes  20-30 minutes  above 30 minutes

11. What are the main reasons you chose your current childcare service?

(Select all that apply)

Location/Proximity  Affordability  Quality of care  Recommendations from others  Availability of spaces  Other (please specify):  \_\_\_\_\_

### **Affordability**

12. How much do you spend per month on childcare services?

Less than 200 ZMW  200-500 ZMW  500-800 ZMW  More than 800 ZMW

13. Do you think the cost of childcare services in your area is affordable?

Very Affordable  Affordable  Neutral  Expensive  Very Expensive

14. Does the cost of childcare impact your ability to work or pursue employment?

Yes, a lot  Yes, a little  No impact  Not applicable

### **Facilities and Resources**

15. How would you rate the cleanliness of the childcare facility?

Excellent  Good  Average  Poor  Very Poor

16. How would you rate the availability of toys, books, and learning materials for children?

Excellent  Good  Average  Poor  Very Poor

17. Do you feel there are enough caregivers to look after the number of children in the facility?

Yes  No  Don't Know

### **Training and Qualifications of Staff**

18. How would you rate the caregivers' knowledge of early childhood development?

Excellent  Good  Average  Poor  Very Poor  Don't Know

19. Do you believe the caregivers adequately support your child's emotional and educational needs?

Yes  No  Don't Know

If yes, please explain \_\_\_\_\_

## Section B: Impact on Child Development

### Holistic Development

20. Since enrolling in this childcare service, have you seen improvements in your child's communication and language skills?

Yes, significant improvement  Yes, some improvement  No change

Decreased skills

If yes, please explain \_\_\_\_\_

21. How would you rate your child's emotional development since starting at the childcare service?

Excellent  Good  Average  Poor  Very Poor

Please provide more details

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22. Has your child developed better social skills (e.g., interacting with peers, sharing) since attending this childcare service?

Yes, significantly  Yes, moderately  No change  Skills have declined

Please provide more details

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### Physical and Emotional Well-being

23. How often is your child(ren) at the facility engaged in physical activities?

Daily  A few times a week  Once a week  Rarely  Never  Don't Know

24. How satisfied are you with how the childcare service handles behavioral issues?

Very Satisfied  Satisfied  Neutral  Dissatisfied  Very Dissatisfied

**Section C: Influence on Parental Workforce Participation**

25. How does the availability of childcare services affect your ability to maintain a regular work schedule?

Makes it much easier  Makes it somewhat easier  No impact  Makes it harder   
 I do not work

26. Have you ever had to change jobs or reduce work hours due to childcare issues?

Yes, frequently  Yes, sometimes  Rarely  No

If yes, please share your experience

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**Workplace Support**

27. Does your workplace provide any support for childcare (e.g., flexible hours, financial help, childcare in the workplace)?

Yes, significant support  Yes, some support  No support  Not applicable

If yes, please specify support provided

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28. How often do childcare challenges (e.g., availability, cost, quality) affect your work attendance or punctuality?

Never  Rarely  Sometimes  Often  Always

**Additional information**

29. What do you think is the greatest challenge you face in finding good quality childcare in your area?

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30. In what ways do you feel childcare services could be improved?

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31. How has the childcare service impacted your life as a parent?

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**Questions for Parents/Caregivers with Children Cared for at Home by a Maid or Nanny**

**Section D: Key Characteristics of Childcare Services Provided at Home**

1. What were the main reasons you decided to have your child, cared for at home rather than using a formal childcare center?

Affordability  Availability  Preference (Please explain)

2. How did you select your current maid or nanny?

Recruitment/maid Centre  Recommendation by family/friends

Advertisement and interviews  Other (Specify)

3. What criteria were important to you?

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4. Have you used formal childcare services in the past?

Yes  No

If yes, why did you switch to home-based care?

### **Childcare Arrangement Details**

5. What is the typical daily schedule for your child when being cared for by the maid or nanny?

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6. How many hours per day does the maid or nanny spend caring for your child?

1– 4 hours  4 – 8 hours  More than 8 hours

7. Do you provide any specific guidelines or routines for the maid or nanny to follow with your child?

Yes  No

If yes, please explain \_\_\_\_\_

### **Cost and Affordability**

8. How much do you spend per month to pay a maid or nanny?

Less than 800ZMW  800 – 1000 ZMW  1000 – 1300 ZMW  More than

1300 ZMW

9. Do you feel that having a maid or nanny is more or less affordable than using a childcare center?

More affordable  Less affordable  Don't Know  Other (Specify)

10. Have you experienced any financial challenges in maintaining home-based childcare?

Yes  No

**Training and Skills of the Maid or Nanny**

11. What kind of training or experience does your maid or nanny have in childcare?

Certificate in Childcare  Certificate in Child health and nutrition  None

Other (Specify)  \_\_\_\_\_

12. Have you provided any training or guidance to the maid or nanny on how to care for your child?

Yes  No

If yes, explain \_\_\_\_\_

13. How confident are you in the maid or nanny's ability to handle emergencies or challenging situations?

Very confident  Fairly confident  Neutral  Not Confident

**Section E: Impact of Home-based Care on Child Development**

**Holistic Development**

14. Have you observed any changes in your child's development since being cared for by a maid or nanny? (e.g., communication skills, behavior, emotional development)

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15. How does your maid or nanny support your child's learning and development?  
(Select all that apply)

Reading  Numeracy  Play activities  Singing and Dancing

Story telling  None of the above  Other (Specify) \_\_\_\_\_

16. Do you feel that your child is developing social skills adequately while being cared for at home?

Yes  No

If no, please clarify \_\_\_\_\_

### **Physical and Emotional Well-being**

17. How often does the maid or nanny engage your child in physical activities (e.g., outdoor play, exercise)?

Daily  A few times a week  Once a week  Rarely  Never  Don't

Know

18. What strategies does the maid or nanny use to handle your child's emotional needs or behavioral challenges?

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19. How would you rate the emotional bond between your child and the maid or nanny?

Very Strong  Strong  Neutral  Weak  Very Weak

Additional comment

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## Learning and Socialization

20. Does the maid or nanny engage your child in educational activities?

Yes  No  If yes, what kind of activities? \_\_\_\_\_

21. How does the lack of interaction with other children (if applicable) impact your child's social development?

Doesn't easily socialize  Aggressive towards other children

Social development not affected  Don't know

22. Do you organize playdates or group activities to provide socialization opportunities for your child?

Yes  No  If yes, how often? \_\_\_\_\_

## Section F: Influence of Home-based Care on Parental Workforce Participation

### Impact on Work Schedule and Career

23. How does having a maid or nanny at home impact your ability to work or pursue employment?

Makes it much easier  Makes it somewhat easier  No impact

Makes it harder  I do not work

24. Does having home-based childcare allow you greater flexibility with your work schedule compared to formal childcare?

Yes  No  If yes, explain how \_\_\_\_\_

25. Have you ever had to adjust your work arrangements due to issues with your maid or nanny?

Yes, frequently  Yes, sometimes  Rarely  No

If yes, what were the challenges?

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26. Does your workplace provide any support for childcare (e.g., flexible hours, financial help, childcare in the workplace)?

Yes, significant support  Yes, some support  No support

If yes, please specify support provided

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### **Reliability and Flexibility of Home-based Care**

27. How reliable is your maid or nanny in terms of punctuality, commitment, and consistency?

Very reliable  Fairly reliable  Unreliable  Other (Specify) \_\_\_\_\_

28. Does the flexibility of having a maid or nanny at home affect your ability to attend work meetings, stay late, or take on additional work responsibilities?

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29. In what ways, if any, does the presence of a maid or nanny at home reduce your stress related to balancing work and family responsibilities?

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## **Section G: Overall Satisfaction and Future Plans**

### **Satisfaction with Home-based Care**

30. Overall, how satisfied are you with the care your child receives from the maid or nanny?

Very Satisfied  Satisfied  Neutral  Dissatisfied  Very Dissatisfied

31. What do you consider to be the strengths of having home-based childcare?

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32. What challenges or limitations have you encountered with this childcare arrangement?

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### **Improvements and Future Preferences**

33. If you could make improvements to the care provided by your maid or nanny, what would they be?

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### **Additional questions for Deeper Insights**

34. Can you share an example of how having a maid or nanny has impacted your family's daily life?

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35. How do you think the home environment, compared to a formal childcare setting, benefits or limits your child's development?

Benefits:

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Limits:

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**(A questionnaire for Childcare providers)**

**Section 1: Background Information**

1. Please state your age and role in the facility

a) Age (in years):

18-25  26-35  36-45  46-55  56 and above

b) Role at the facility: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Gender: Male  Female

3. Educational Level Completed:

Primary school  Secondary school  Certificate in Early Childhood

Education  Diploma in Early Childhood Education  Bachelor's degree

Other (specify):  \_\_\_\_\_

4. How long have you worked as a caregiver?

Less than 1 year  1-3 years  4-6 years  7-10 years  More than 10  
years

5. How many Children (0 to 6yrs) do you currently care for?

1-5  6-10  11-15  16 or more

6. What are the age ranges of the children in your care?

\_\_\_\_\_

7. What are the operating hours of the center/facility (e.g. 6 am to 8pm)?

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## Section 2: Physical Environment and Resources

8. Are the following resources available for children's use?

a) Age-appropriate Toys:

Yes  No  Don't Know

b) Age-appropriate books (picture books)

Yes  No  Don't Know

c) Safety equipment (e.g., childproof locks, safe furniture):

Yes  No  Don't Know

d) Outdoor play equipment (e.g., slides, swings):

Yes  No  Don't Know

9. Do you feel there are enough learning materials for all children in your care?

Yes  No  Don't Know

10. Is the play area safe and secure for children?

Yes  No  Somewhat (please specify):  \_\_\_\_\_

### Section 3: Daily Activities and Routines

11. How often do you engage in the following activities with children?

a) Storytelling:

Daily  Weekly  Occasionally  Rarely  Never

b) Singing songs:

Daily  Weekly  Occasionally  Rarely  Never

c) Outdoor play:

Daily  Weekly  Occasionally  Rarely  Never

12. Typically, how many children does a caregiver attend to daily (child-to-caregiver ratio) in your center?

1-5  6-10  11-15  More than 15

13. Approximately, how many hours in a day does a child(ren) spend in the center/facility?

Less than 1 hour  1-2 hours  3-4 hours  More than 4 hours

14. Approximately how much time is dedicated each day to educational activities?

Less than 1 hour  1-2 hours  3-4 hours  More than 4 hours

Provide examples of educational activities

---

**Section 4: Health and Nutrition Practices**

15. Do you provide meals for children at the center/facility?

Yes, always  Yes, sometimes  No

a) If yes, how many meals/snacks are provided daily?

1 meal  2 meals  3 or more meals  Snacks only

b) If No, please explain

---

16. What hygiene practices are regularly followed with the children? (select all applicable)

Handwashing (before meals and after toilet)  Daily bathing

Cleaning toys daily  Other (specify): \_\_\_\_\_

17. Does your center/facility have access to clean drinking water?

Yes  No

18. What is the main source of drinking water?

Tap  Covered Borehole  Water Kiosk  Mineral Water  Other

(Specify) \_\_\_\_\_

19. Does the center/facility have toilets for the children?

Yes  No  Other (Specify) \_\_\_\_\_

(Interviewer to insert any other observations here – type of toilet, number of toilets, height of toilet etc.)

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### **Section 5: Parental Communication and Engagement**

20. How often do you communicate with parents about their child's progress?

Daily  Weekly  Monthly  Rarely (e.g. once in three months)

21. What methods do you use to communicate with parents?

Verbal updates during pick-up/drop-off  Written reports  Phone calls or messaging  Scheduled parent meetings  Other (specify):  \_\_\_\_\_

22. Do parents give feedback on your caregiving practices?

Frequently  Occasionally  Rarely (e.g. only when there's an issue)  Never

### **Section 6: Challenges in Caregiving**

23. What are some of the main challenges you face in caregiving?

Limited resources/materials  High child-to-caregiver ratio  Lack of training opportunities  Insufficient support from management  Other (specify):  
\_\_\_\_\_

24. What support or resources would help improve the quality of care you provide?

Access to training programs  More staff  Additional learning materials

Improved facility resources (e.g., furniture, toys)  Other (specify): \_\_\_\_\_

### **Section 7: Perceptions on Child Development**

25. Do you feel that your role positively influences children's development?

Strongly agree  Agree  Neutral  Disagree  Strongly disagree

a) If agreed, please explain

\_\_\_\_\_

26. How knowledgeable do you feel about child developmental milestones (e.g., language, motor skills)?

Very knowledgeable  Somewhat knowledgeable  Not knowledgeable

27. What activities do you believe are most important for promoting children's development?

Physical play (running, jumping)  Cognitive activities (puzzles, reading)  Social

activities (group play, sharing)  Emotional support (comforting, encouragement)

Other (specify): \_\_\_\_\_

### **Additional Comments:**

28. Please share any other thoughts or suggestions on how childcare services can better support children's development in your area.

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**Observations (to be completed by the interviewer):**

29. Childcare center is legally registered

Yes  No

30. The Center/Facility has a resting area for the children (e.g. beds, mattresses etc.)

Yes  No

31. The center has child appropriate furniture/equipment

Yes  No

32. Is the center inclusive (e.g. disability access and equipment)

Yes  No





UNIVERSITY OF LUSAKA

SCHOOL OF POSTGRADUATE STUDIES

SUBMISSION OF DISSERTATION FOR EXAMINATION

Name of student: ... Claire Kangombe.....

Student number: ...MDS23121091.....

Programme of study...Master of arts in development studies

Dissertation title: Assessing the quality of childcare for development in Zambia


Signature of student:  .....

Date: .....January 17, 2025.....

Supervisor's Comments:

I recommend/ do not recommend this dissertation for submission for examination (If you do not recommend, kindly provide a written report and attach hereto).

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