



Effectiveness of Early Childhood Education Programmes on Cognitive Development in South African Urban Centers: A Longitudinal Assessment Study

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Abstract

Early childhood education (ECE) programmes in South Africa aim to enhance cognitive development among urban children, laying foundations for future academic success. The study employed a mixed-methods approach combining structured surveys with cognitive assessments conducted at baseline and follow-up intervals over two years. Data were collected from 300 participants aged 2-5 years, randomly selected from 10 urban ECE centres in Johannesburg. Early detection of developmental delays was noted among 40% of children receiving regular ECE services compared to 20% without such programmes. ECE programmes significantly improve cognitive development and offer timely intervention for early learning needs. Further research is recommended focusing on scalability and sustainability. Implementing evidence-based ECE curricula, integrating professional training for educators, and expanding access to services are suggested to maximise benefits. Early Childhood Education, Cognitive Development, South Africa, Urban Centers

Keywords: *African geography, cognitive development, longitudinal studies, early childhood education, urban centers, qualitative methods, quantitative methods*

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