

NURTURING EXCEPTIONAL TALENT FROM EARLY CHILDHOOD: A CASE STUDY OF GWERU PRESCHOOLS

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ABSTRACT

The paper interrogates the ECD curriculum, with a view to show its role in the identification and nurturing of exceptional talent from early childhood. The practices in high and low density centres are interrogated against the nature/nurture controversy. Qualitative data are collected through the observation, questionnaire and interview methods. Twenty respondents from a stratified random sample of 10 out of 31 are used. The writer concludes that identification and nurturing of talent is generally trivialised in all preschools but more so in those in high density suburbs. A distinct pattern is noted between attached and independent preschools. This is linked to attitudes and values, limited comprehension the ECD curriculum and unclear policy provisions. A change in attitudes would facilitate the nurturing of exceptional talent from early childhood.

Key Words: Exceptional talent, ECD, Curriculum

Introduction

Background

The inception of independence in Zimbabwe in 1980 saw government take more interest in preschool education resulting in the introduction of policies that confirmed Early Childhood Development (E.C.D.) as a critical and decisive area, where the foundation of the basic principles and philosophy of Zimbabwe's basic education would be laid'.(Bowora (2011) Major recommendations were made in line with the 1999 Commission of Inquiry into

Education and Training (CIET) to attach existing ECD classes to primary schools. The objective was that every child should have at least one year ECD schooling prior to grade 1 enrolment by 1999 and the aims were, among others, to:

- develop a sense of worth, identity and enthusiasm in the children
- ensure that children benefited from a head start before formal training

A two phased approach was to be adopted from 2005. All primary schools would attach at least one ECD class of 4 to 5 year olds to proceed to grade 1 in 2006. The second phase would see the enrolment of another class of 3 to 4 year olds alongside another 4 to 5 year group in 2006, thus fully incorporating ECD levels 1 and 2 into the formal primary school system. The projections were that ECD service delivery should match international and regional standards in terms of staffing. There was a need to engage energetic and innovative teachers with at least five ‘O’ levels. In the meanwhile, conventional teachers’ colleges would be called in to train ECD teachers.

The research interrogated one aspect of service delivery, the nurturing of talent from early childhood, ten years after the implementation of the new policy. It was noted that there are many areas apart from the academic field, in which children may have special talents. To that effect, different types of sport, performing arts like dance music and theatre quickly come to mind. If the school system is to contribute to the Zim-Asset project these areas have to be explored and developed for career or recreational purposes. Therefore the preschool system had a role to play in the identification of talent in early childhood.

The researcher noted that over the years, Zimbabwe has churned out sports persons and artistes of international standards. The likes of Cloud Chinembiri Kilimanjaro (boxing), Oliver Mtukudzi and Thomas Mapfumo (music), Kirsty Coventry (swimming) and Byron Black (Tennis) are good examples. However, the schools system cannot claim the credit of early identification and nurturing of such talent in most cases. In fact, talent identification has been mostly accidental and sporadic and not the result of well synchronized talent identification and nurturing processes embedded in the formal education structure.

In many cases talented individuals come from impoverished backgrounds and received no benefit in terms of early identification and nurturing in the schools system. The structures

were not there , particularly in the schools for the blacks. Those that succeeded mostly realised their talents by chance and usually, late in life and by default. This was contrary in the case of the whites and the few privileged black families. They went to enabling schools and also got support from their families. The unbalanced racial educational system inherited from the colonial structures that favoured them in that respect.

The problem that spurred this research was whether the formal education system had transformed from this state of inequality defined by the lack of commitment to identify and nurture talent in early childhood. The research sought to explore the role played by preschool education in this respect with a view to recommend the way forward. The research is therefore significant in that it contextualises the nature nurture controversy in Zimbabwe. The debate is ongoing the word over and the talent account is that, ‘geniuses are born’ (Gross 2005:577) as opposed to the environmental position that they are made.

Erickson & Charnes (1994) present a case for the latter when they note that the winning time of the first Olympic marathon is now the qualifying time achieved by thousands of contending athletes. Trying to explain this scenario strongly exalts the effects of greater knowledge about the science of running, diet and training but this need not trivialise genetic influences. Genetic contributions are complex and indirect. Howe (1999) argues that the genetic qualities that matter are those to do with physic, temperament and personality rather than intellect. Against this background the research sought to bring to light the place of ECD education in Zimbabwe with regards to the identification and nurturing of talent in early childhood.

Research question

The research question asked was, ‘What role is played by ECD education in the identification and nurturing of exceptional talent from early childhood?’

To answer the question the following sub-problems had to be addressed:

- What structures are there for identification of talent in preschool education?
- What value is attached to specific talents and their identification at preschool level?
- What are the prevalent attitudes?
- How can the attitudes and practices be explained?

Aims

The research sought to interrogate the prevalent preschool practices and attitudes, which promote the identification and nurturing of special talent at an early age. The research also challenged scholarship to interrogate the ways of redressing the situation and add to the existing body of knowledge.

Significance

Education and pedagogy is a versatile area that will always remain significant, more so for Zimbabwe at a time when Zim-Asset is the talk of the day. The revitalised perception of education as a tool for transformation and development demands that scholarship re-examines the potential of education in wealth creation by way of developing human capital. The present paper is significant in this respect.

The research also contributes to the public debate on the dearth of talent in Zimbabwe in different sporting areas. Zimbabwe has for many years now failed to make it to the world cup in football. It has also not fared well in individual sports at both regional and international levels. Any research that focuses on the dearth of talent in Zimbabwe is therefore significant. The assumption made was that the talent is there to be identified and developed but the question was how best to go about it? A lot could be gained both at individual and national level if focus is put on early childhood.

Literature Review

Defining talent

Literature on talent proffers different definitions of talent. Gardner (1993) defines talent as ‘a precocious sign of bio psychological potential in a particular domain’ like music or math. In other words talent implies the presence of in-born attributes, also referred to as ‘talents’ ‘gifts’ or ‘natural aptitudes’ by different authors. Gardner (ibid) further goes on to define the different types of intelligence in his multi intelligence theory. A similar definition offered by Winner (1996) in Gross (2005) views talent as unlearned domain-specific traits that develop

or come to fruition in favourable circumstances, but cannot be manufactured. This implies that talent develops through maturation.

Gross (ibid: 873) further elaborates that gifted children could be ‘outstanding in either a general domain (such as exceptional performance on an intelligence test) or a specific area of ability, such as music, or sport.’ Such children typically learn and master subjects faster. These are the children who can be said to march to their own drummers, making discoveries on their own and often solving problems intuitively rather than going through logical intuitive stages. Such children are motivated by a rage to master since according to Gross (ibid) they have an intense interest in the area or domain and can focus so intensely that they lose sense of the outside world.

Talents are not present only in conventional fields like drawing or singing. A child who is very good at making conversations and is always able to make his point firmly while debating or arguing on a subject, can make a good lawyer a preacher or a politician.

Howe et al (1998) cite the following assumptions are made about talent which may deepen our insight into what constitutes talent:

- It is partly innate since it originates in genetically transmitted structures
- Its full effects may not be evident in early childhood. Some advance indications may be evident so that trained people may identify it.
- The early indications provide a basis for predicting who will excel
- Only a minority of children are talented
- Talents are relatively domain specific

All this calls for the involvement of scholarship to improve the role of formal education in the identification nurturing of talent in early childhood. Research so far leaves many questions unanswered and even complicates further the nature/nurture controversy. The educational questions as to whether talent will develop alone through maturation or whether it dies without mentorship remains unanswered. To that effect, balancing arguments are presented. In his review of arguments on both sides, Howe et al. (1998), found no evidence to confirm the predictability of outcome that flow from innate attributes. His conclusion was that the differences in early experiences, opportunities, habits training and practice are what

determine whether a talent will come to fruition. This view justifies the thrust of the present investigation.

Misconceptions

Research also shows that the definitions of the gifted and talented are a source of confusion. This explains the many misconceptions held about the gifted, which are yet to be disapproved. These misconceptions may be the cause for certain actions that do not promote talent identification. Gross (2005) identifies the misconceptions below:

- Gifted children are high achievers (McCoach and Siegle (2003)

This is not always the case. In fact contemporary studies abroad (where gifted education is availed) are increasingly focusing on underachievement in gifted education. In the context of Zimbabwe studies like this are bold steps towards filling in the information gap about performance in gifted children.

- All children are gifted

Colman (2005) counters that not all children are gifted but all deserve a chance since every child is unique.

- Gifted children will do fine with or without special programming

Evidence shows that some will but usually if the parents are supportive but in some cases the talent dies. This implies a gap in terms of establishing the full implications of intervention strategies.

- The gifted come from advantaged homes

According to Coleman and Cross (2005) this is only apparent because of the identification process. The present research provides some insights into this view.

- Cooperative work and other forms of group work are an effective way of meeting the needs of the gifted children

Robinson (2003) argues that the advantages of group work are well documented. However group work often results in repetition and boredom for some students. This may also stultify some children as they try to be like their peers.

Dearth of talent in Zimbabwe

Sports reports and reviews be-cry the poor performance of Zimbabwe in different sporting disciplines and other special talent areas. Wikipedia (2014) notes that to-date. Zimbabwean athletes have only won a total of eight Olympic medals, three-gold, and four- silver and one-bronze. All these, in only two sports! Seven medals were won in swimming by Kirsty Coventry in 2004 and 2008; the remaining medal was the result of a surprising victory by the women's national hockey team in 1980. The nation is worried at the limited success so far realised.

Available literature on the prevalence of talent that goes undetected provided the rationale for investigating the identification and nurturing of talent in early childhood. While there is no consensus on the actual prevalence of gifted and talented children, many reports peg it at between 3% and 5% of any population. (Hellar & Kauffman (2003).The figure could be much higher, in view of the fact that some states do not have the mechanisms for identification and are therefore not represented. In any case one person and a hockey team cannot be representative of the percentage of exceptional talent in Zimbabwe.

Further research (e.g. Davis & Rimm, 2004; Patton, 1997) critique the shortcomings of standardized tests as a measure of giftedness. They contend that the results may be **biased** against some students due to cultural or linguistic diversity. Another reason noted by Hollinger, (1995) is that girls who may be gifted and talented are often under-identified because of under-achievement in science and math. All such work point to an information gap with regards to the efficiency of various methods used in talent identification.

Studies on cognitive and physical development confirm that the child's early years are crucial. They are called the formative years for both mental and physical attributes. Over 50% of a child's mature intelligence is developed by the time he turns four, so too are his special interests and talents manifested. At that age, children have peculiar coping strategies of practising and dealing with success, failure, and criticisms through play. The early identification and nurturing of talent is therefore important.

The case for early talent identification is summed up in the proverbial wisdom that you cannot teach old dog new tricks. Jong wrote, “Everyone has talent. What’s rare is the courage to follow it to the dark places where it leads.” To back this up research has proved that 100 in every 100 000 live births are exceptional in one way or another. (Carpenter 1997) Coyle (2005) adds to the debate when he contends that greatness isn’t born, but grown. In other words, prodigious talent is not merely hereditary. He explains that talent development is the complex product of a cutting-edge powerful pattern combining three significant forces. Firstly there should be deliberate methods of practicing. There should also be specific methods of motivating and lastly, expert coaching. Researchers so far have not however, fully resolved questions concerning how early talent emerges and how important the initial signs are for the eventual development. The present research contributed to this standing debate.

Research findings

Terman’s Stanford Longitudinal study (1925-1959) is arguably the most famous study into giftedness (Gross (2005) and had many implications for the present research. In the longitudinal study, 643 ten year olds nominated by teachers for their intelligence, were assessed and found to in the range between 130 and 190 score on the Stanford-Binet test. On being followed up at various points in life, the following traits were observed in the subjects:

- their physical health and growth were superior
- they walked and talked earlier
- they excelled in reading (learnt before starting school) and general knowledge.

At the average age of 35, the initial level of intelligence had been maintained. It was also noted that 68% of the sample had graduated from college and were established in different careers and continued to progress. Seventy of them managed to be listed as *America Men of Science*, with three attaining the highly prestigious membership to the national academy of Science. Thirty-one made it to the *Who’s who in America* list while ten featured in the directory of American Scholars. No similar longitudinal studies have been conducted in Zimbabwe. These findings therefore indicate a gap in terms of the potential results and implications of early detection and nurturing of talent. The insights made indicate that the nurturing of talent in early childhood could create a pool of talent.

A longitudinal study carried out by Koshy, Mitchel and Williams (2005) give suggestions for the identification and nurturing of talent in early childhood based on actual experience and trials which need verification and trial through further studies. A major finding yielded by the research was that gifted children are often ignored in most initiatives for gifted children. The same findings were confirmed by Williams (2005) who argued that that the gifted children are not easily identified and are therefore often not singled out for special programmes. Therefore there is a need to be able to read symptoms that distinguish the gifted from the rest. The researchers posited that gifted children show significantly advanced abilities in any domain. They are generally more advanced and sufficiently different from their peers

Williams (2005) focused on a particular discipline, soccer. He investigated the perceptual skills required in soccer playing. He noted that skilled players were distinguished by skills developed through practice and experience. Perceptual skills were essential for players in coding, retrieving and recognizing sport specific information. Players also needed the capacity to assess situational probabilities, read the flow of a game and anticipate future events. All these skills had to be nurtured.

Another significant finding was that players develop superior knowledge of eye control movement patterns necessary for seeking and picking particular sources of information. Different search-strategies applied to offensive players and defensive players. Therefore, though talent may be hereditary, the researcher concluded that the making of particular types of players is a result of early identification and nurturing. According to Williams perceptual skills tests offer more potential for the identification of future elite players, a contention that may be further investigated.

The Williams research advances the case for early identification and nurturing of talent in soccer. Future research needs to fill in the information gap with regards to other sporting disciplines in Zimbabwe.

Ngara and Porah (2004) focused on the views held in the Shona culture about giftedness. Their exploratory research revealed that giftedness is viewed as an unusual ability blessed in an individual through ancestry to perform with unparalleled expertise even in challenging domains. They bring a new dimension, ancestral wisdom which may trivialize the roles of nature and nurture in traditional societies. Talent development is seen as a supernatural phenomenon that sprouts and blossoms independently without any human intervention.

The researchers contended that there was a need to fuse together cultural and modern views about giftedness in the school curriculum in order to develop a diversity of talent in children. Future research may want to interrogate the superstitious practices common across arch and are sometimes witnessed in competitions and the implications of the traditional view of talent to the nature/nurture controversy.

Another investigation by Abbott and Collins (2007) explored the prerequisites to success in sports and the comparative efficacy of employing those prerequisites within talent identification. They concluded that talent can be wrongly conceptualised. Rather than separate talent from development, the two must be seen as dynamic and interrelated. They concluded that emphasis should be put on the capacity of the child to develop and the psychological factors that underpin the process. Such findings inspire the thrust of future research to establish exactly how this translates to a school curriculum or the modification of existing ones.

Methodology

Sampling

Ten preschools were randomly selected, five high density and five from the low density. The data collection instruments used were

- Observation
- Questionnaire
- Interview

The researcher spent a total of two hours, spread over two days at each of the 10 preschools during which he analysed the school records and observed the session. An observation guide was used to focus on pertinent areas: curriculum, records, provisions and equipment, curriculum activities and time tabling. A checklist was filled in for the following items and how they were used:

Play and outdoor equipment

- | | |
|-----------|---------------|
| 1. Swing | 7. balls |
| 2. Seesaw | 8 Wendy house |

- | | |
|--------------------|----------------------|
| 3. Slide | 9.construction house |
| 4. Climbing frames | 10.cars |
| 5. Drum tunnels | 11 merry go round |
| 6. Sand pit | |

Classroom setting

1. Play area
2. Music and
3. Art Corner
4. Science Corner
5. Maths corner

Structured questionnaire schedules were administered to 20 teachers (2 from each ECDcentre). The same sample was interviewed using a semi-structured interview guide to triangulate the questionnaire responses the following:

1. The structures for identification of talent in preschool education.
2. The value is attached to specific talents and their identification at preschool level
3. The prevalent attitudes towards talent identification
4. The intervention strategies used by different ECD teachers

The Questionnaires were distributed on day 1 and collected on day 2. To guard against the response effect bias, the researcher first established a good rapport with the respondents. The fact that the researcher had worked for a long time with the Ministry of Education further reduced the suspicion, hostility and indifference that Borg and Gall (1999) cite as possible causes of response effect bias. In view of the fact that the questionnaire responses may be shallow since the method offers no room for deep probing, the interview on day 2 served to clarify some issues and fill in for the nonresponse to some items. There was a 100% return rate since the researcher hand delivered and collected them.

Data presentation and analysis

Structures for identification and nurturing of talent

Data to answer the question of whether there were provisions for early identification were elicited from document analysis. The policy provisions for ECD programmes are outlined in The Education act of 1987 as amended by statutory instrument 106 of 2005. All the ECD centres had the relevant policy documents filed as well as the accompanying detailed curriculum manual used by ECEC trainers. All the ten centres in the study had adequate documents to guide them in implementing the preschool curriculum. The policy documents stipulated the basic requirements in terms of the curriculum content, resources, methodology and timetabling among others.

- **Play and out-door equipment**

The outdoor equipment was not standard in different centres. Apparently all centres established earlier had benefitted from a common donor, who supplied some of the equipment listed above as the required, namely, a swing, a slide, a merry go round a climbing frame and drum tunnels. 70% of the schools had less than 50% of the equipment and this was not optimally utilised. All centres allowed more 50% school time for play but the play was neither well planned nor supervised. Individual attention and talent identification was therefore minimal.

However, the centres fared differently in terms of making use of the equipment. In 60% of the centres the outside play equipment had lost its paint from use and the area where it was located was well trodden as a result of the children's activities. Yet in 10 % the equipment had its original paint and shine and the ground around was firm and the lawn around was well maintained and untrodden. This was also supported by the teachers rating of the different areas of child development focused in ECD education.

In the classrooms, the standard requirements provisions were observed in terms of labelling all the different corners in 8 schools. Teachers had generally attempted to allocate and equip different corners/ centres for different learning/ play activities in all but 2 centres where the labelling was incomplete. The corners were reserved and labelled as:

1. Play area
2. Music and
3. Art Corner
4. Science Corner

5. Maths corner

Rating of special skills and child development areas

The table below shows how the respondents ranked the child development areas.

Physical Development	4
Social development	3
Aesthetic Development	5
Emotional Development	2
Intellectual Development	1

Intellectual development was unanimously highly rated and at number 4 and 5 for physical development and aesthetic development respectively, special talent areas other than academic are trivialised in ECD education. On splitting these areas into corresponding skills areas, the ranking obtained was as follows:

The importance attached to different talent areas

The table below shows the ranking and that emerged from the respondents' responses.

Ranking	Specialist Area
5	Tennis
1	Academic work
4	Music and Dance
6	Hockey
9	Art
3	Athletics
2	Football
7	Drama
8	Chess

Football turned out to be the most favoured of the areas of special talent at number 2, followed by athletics, at numbers 3 and music at 4. Chess is ranked last. In all cases however

identification at preschool level is not guaranteed and even if it were followed-up would be most unlikely.

- **Time tabling, teaching and documentation**

All preschools had standard timetables and curriculum guides prescribed by Ministry of Education which emphasised learning through play and the avoidance of formal instruction. Provisions were made for free play, supervised play, music and dance with a lot left to the teacher’s discretion. The documentation was found to be basic and no information was captured about individual talent or acumen. School reports and communication with parents referred mostly to the conventional areas associated with schooling, speaking, listening, reading writing and numeracy. In preschools that were privately run the record keeping ranged from scanty to non-existent.

Teacher training and attitudes

An important section of the study focused on the teachers with a view to show whether the teacher training, attitudes and practices enabled talent identification and nurturing. Of the 10 private preschools observed all were run by paraprofessionals and untrained personnel. Paraprofessionals are not formerly trained but have attended training work-shops conducted by ECEC trainers from ministry of education district offices. While the teacher pupil ratio ranged between 1:20-25 in all the ECDs attached to primary schools, the ratio varied from 1: 20-50 in the private ECD centres. Theoretical grounding all-round, and in particular talent identification was apparently lacking.

Intervention strategies

TABLE 1

The table below summarises the 20 respondents’ response to item 7 in the questionnaire. The figures below each response show how the respondents value the suggested interventions to take when they identify talent

	Action	A	B	C	D	E
a.	Communicate with parents	2	4	5	6	3
b.	Group them with other children	4	6	4	4	2

	with similar interest					
c.	Provide them with extra and more challenging tasks?	2	10	3	2	3
d.	Encourage them	8	3	5	2	2
e.	Recommend them for early Promotion	4	3	6	3	4
		20	26	23	17	14

Key [A. Strongly agree, B. Agree, C. Not sure, d. Disagree, E. Strongly disagree]

At least 49% of the respondents would do the right thing where talent is identified; communicating with the parents, encouraging them providing extra work and grouping them with others who have the same interests. 23% were not sure and 31% were not aware of their obligation to act in cases where talent was identified. It was evident that teachers valued intellectual development as the yard stick for school readiness. Consequently work given was geared towards preparation for formal schooling and talent was not their concern.

The observation and interview schedules further confirmed this observation. It was established that there are disparities in the attention given to developing the intellectual, physical, social, aesthetic and emotional development the child. On physical development, 34% did not have adequate play equipment and space for free play. Some schools were housed on residential stands not designed for the preschool purposes. Of the remaining 66 only 20% had adequate equipment, the rest used the host schools' infant school equipment which was not appropriate for the five to six year olds. Currie (2001) summarises the case for physical development in his contention that children's physical environment should be such that the child learns through manipulation of play equipment which facilitates discovery and exploration. In the process individual traits and talents are exposed.

46% of the respondents valued the development of aesthetics and provided adequate materials and practice. The preschool manual recommends the scissors, crayons, paste, beads, puzzles, material for collage and glue, paint and paint brushes among others, in line

with Van Staden's (1997) observation that the early years of life are characterized by a strong need to create and appreciate artefacts. This lays the foundation for future artists. In the remaining 54% the provisions of equipment and time for aesthetic development ranged from zero to minimal.

This could be explained by the quality of training or lack of it, evident in the preschool teachers and the poor funding of ECDS. The teachers in the private ECD centres were all para-professionals and did not have adequate theoretical grounding. Their practices were therefore mostly intuitive. The funding in these ECD centres was also not uniform while in the attached ones there was no full commitment by school heads who still viewed the responsibility over ECD centres as an unnecessary burden.

Conclusions

The policy on ECD makes for provisions that learning should be mostly through play. This presents opportunities for the early identification of exceptional talent. However the translation of the policy is marred by different factors, like the training background of the teachers and the perceived requirements of formal education. It was observed that teachers tend to encroach on the primary school syllabus at the expense of the preferred informal nature that the ECD curriculum should take. The ECD environment is not optimised to let children discover themselves and be discovered in the process. This is evidenced by the poor attitude towards and the resulting poor supervision.

A distinct tendency for formal ECD centres (attached to primary schools) was that children spent more time inside the classroom and the work was more supervised and encroaching on formal teaching and record keeping. Play tended to be controlled and less child-centred, with the teachers' roles tending to contain children's enthusiasm and initiative. In the private ECD centres, the time allocated for free play was generally higher and less controlled. Teachers' roles were mostly supervisory and aimed at ensuring the safety of the children. In most cases no individual attention to children who may be outstanding in any respect was given. This again minimises the chances of early talent identification.

From the evidence collected it can be concluded that ECD teachers are generally neither clear about the mandate to identify talent nor equipped to do carry it out. Therefore whatever

transpires is on the teachers' whim or intuition, each according to her capacity. The conclusion reached is that ECD centres across the divide do not optimise their capacity to identify and nurture exceptional talent in early childhood. Identification and nurturing of talent is generally trivialised and a clear pattern is evident between the high density and low density ECD centres.

A last word that could guide future research is the parody of talent without discipline being likened to an octopus on roller skates. There's plenty of movement, but you never know if it is going to be forward, backward or sideways'. The implication is that talent has to be developed and nurtured otherwise it goes waste. One talented person Magic Johnson says from experience, 'Talent is never enough. With few exceptions, the best players are the hardest workers.' Practical questions remain about what has to be done and when.

Recommendations

The identification and nurturing of exceptional talent is everyone's concern; parents, the school and the entire education system. Therefore, the recommendations given have implications for all stake holders. For the policy makers, there should be clear policy provisions and guidelines on early identification and nurturing of talent. This implies that teachers should be adequately trained, so that this important task is standard and systematic rather than being left to the intuition of individuals.

There should also be formal structures support structures including trained mentors at school level for identification and nurturing involving all stakeholders. All in all ECD centres should be transformed to provide enabling environments that foster identification and nurturing of exceptional talent in the context of a nation that looks forward to the maximum development of its human capital in the context of the ZIMASSET project.

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Appendix 1

Appendix 1

Questionnaire For teachers

Instructions

This questionnaire gathers information strictly for the purposes my study. The information collected will be used to help preschool educators to improve in the area of talent identification and nurturing.

Please answer all questions truthfully and independently since only your honest response will be useful.

1. What is your total enrolment?

Boys	
Girls	
Total	

2. How many teaching staff is in the ECD class?

3. What are your qualifications?

Academic		Professional	
O level		Diploma ECD	
ZJC		Para- Professional	
Other		Other	

4. How long has the preschool been running?

5. in that period, have you had any students with special talents?

Yes	
No	

If yes explain. _____

7. Do you keep record of any such children?

Yes	
No	

7. When you identify children with special interest or talents how often do you do the following:

Key

- a. All the time
- b. Most of the times
- c. Some of the times
- d. Never

Action	A	B	C	D
Communicate with parents				
Group them with other children with similar interest				
Provide them with extra and more challenging tasks?				
Encourage them				
Recommend them for early Promotion				

Part B

For this section you are asked to give information to evaluate your opinions and the activities in your preschool.

8. On a sliding scale from 0-10 indicate:

- a. The value that you place to the following areas. Place a star (*) in the appropriate box to show your rating.
- b. The chances of detecting talent in the specific area through the activities you do in the pre-school

Specialist Area	A	B	C	D	E
Tennis					
Academic work					
Designing					
Cookery					
Music and Dance					
Music					
Golf					
Art					

Athletics					
Football					
Drama					

8. What do you think could be done to increase your capacity to identify and nurture talent?

9. What equipment and facilities do you need in your preschool

Appendix.2

Observation & interview guide

1. Enrolment & staffing (qualifications etc.)
2. What are the provisions at your pre-school
3. Do you have any records of how are children
4. Classroom play/learning areas
5. Equipment/ games etc. available
6. Does your staff have any special skills?
7. Activities promote skills development and identification
8. Rating of system identification & nurturing effectiveness
9. Role perception in identification and nurturing
10. Suggestions to improve service delivery