Testing two approaches to engaging parents of pre-primary students in Kenya

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Photos source: K. King RTI International
Background: The Tayari Programme

*Develop a tested, scalable and cost-effective ECE model* to increase the school readiness skills of pre-primary children in Kenya

**Core components of the program:**

- Development of instructional materials for teachers and students
- Teacher training and ongoing classroom support for teachers
- Promoting improved hygiene practices, water treatment, and health record-keeping in schools

- Program complemented by several small pilot studies to test and establish best practices
Purpose of the Parenting Pilot

To test two different approaches to engaging parents in play-based activities at home to promote their child’s learning and development.

Research questions

1. Is this approach to parent engagement programming feasible in the Kenyan context?
2. What delivery method is more effective in engaging parents in children’s learning and their development in the home?

Photo source: K. King RTI International
Targeted parents of children in Tayari-supported PP1 and PP2 classes in:

- 10 schools (5 per treatment group)
- 3 counties (Uasin Gishu, Laikipia and Nairobi)
- Total: parents of 1,267 children

**Treatment Group 1**
- Weekly face to face meetings

**Treatment Group 2**
- Take home activity sheets

- Each treatment group had 2 urban, 2 rural, and 1 ABET (non-formal school in Nairobi County)
- Both groups received the same materials each week
Activities

Activity 1: Read Aloud
Targeted Skills: Oral language
Materials: Tusome Reader, Kiswahili Title
Description: Parents read aloud to child using prompts and reading strategies

Activity 2: Alphabet Hunt
Targeted Skills: Letter recognition
Materials: Alphabet wheel
Description: When parents and children find all letters in a book, they mark it on their wheel.

Activity 3: Counting Game
Targeted Skills: Number identification, counting
Materials: Number Cards and Counters
Description: Children match the number on a card with counters.

Activity 4: Memory Game
Targeted Skills: Working memory
Materials: Picture cards
Description: Take turns flipping two cards to find a matching pair.
Data Collection

1. Participation
2. Engagement (frequency of use)
3. Satisfaction

**Gooseberry**
- Weekly SMS prompts to parents in both T1 and T2
- Series of 3 questions on attendance, frequency of use, and satisfaction
- Data collected from 411 parents

**Attendance Data**
- Attendance data from kick off and conclusion workshops for both T1 and T2 (triangulated with data from SMS)
- Registration for T1 at weekly parent meetings

**Anecdotal Feedback**
- Informal interviews & discussions at conclusion meetings
- Facilitator weekly reports (T1)
Average attendance rates (%) by treatment group at kick off and conclusion meetings

- Treatment 1 (materials + weekly meetings):
  - Kick Off: 68%
  - Conclusion: 55%

- Treatment 2 (materials only):
  - Kick Off: 80%
  - Conclusion: 54%
Treatment 1 total attendance at weekly meetings, M/F

Kick Off/Weekly meeting 1
Weekly meeting 2
Weekly meeting 3
Weekly meeting 4

Male
Female
Engagement/Frequency of Use

Average frequency of activity use reported by parents

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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Treatment 1</th>
<th>Treatment 2</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>week 1</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>3.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>week 2</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>3.6</td>
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<td>week 3</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>3.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>week 4</td>
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% Parents using activities 4+ times per week

- Group 1: 75%
- Group 2: 47%
Results 3: Satisfaction

% Parents reporting “high satisfaction” with activities (4 or 5 out of 5)

- Group 1: 80%
- Group 2: 63%

Distribution of Parents by average satisfaction and frequency
Summary

Findings show that both approaches are feasible. Parents in T1 reported higher satisfaction with and more frequent use of activity packs with their children.

- **4 USD** the average cost per child for the parent engagement program
- **3 in 4** parents gave activities a very good rating or higher
- **8 in 10** parents used materials with children 3 or more times per week
- **95%** of parents who started the program attended additional weekly meetings
Thank you!