Integrative Review Article

by Zainab Ayob

Exploring caregivers'/parents' perceptions on their role in early childhood development and stimulation programmes for 3-4-year-old children within sub-Saharan African context: An Integrative Review

ABSTRACT

Caregivers/parents play an integral role in their child's development. Many caregivers/parents from low resource communities within sub-Saharan countries face challenges in providing early childhood development (ECD) and stimulation. In South Africa, there are policies in place to ensure that caregivers/parents receive the support they require; however, systemic factors negatively impact the service delivery of early childhood development. This integrative review aimed to appraise and synthesise the evidence and policies relating to the caregivers'/parents' role in early childhood development and stimulation programmes for 3-4-year-old children. The integrative review followed the five steps highlighted by Whittemore & Knafl (2005). A total of 21 records were included in the review. The findings of the review are presented according to the Ecological Systems Theory. Findings highlight the factors that influence the caregivers'/parents' daily practices and child-rearing. Among these influences are contextual factors, culture, and poverty. There are policies and intervention programmes in place to support and assist caregivers/parents in facilitating early childhood development. However, there is poor implementation and knowledge of support structures, policies, and intervention programmes at a community level. This, therefore, suggests that government departments need to advocate and promote facilities in place to assist caregivers/parents further.

Keywords: early childhood development; policies; intervention programmes; low resource context; stimulation.

INTRODUCTION

Being within the child's immediate ecosystem (the microsystem), caregivers/parents have a critical role in ensuring the child's appropriate well-being and development for optimal functioning[1]. Providing access to stimulation, care, health and nutrition within early childhood has a significant impact on a child's life course, from enhanced school performance to improved adulthood outcomes [2]. Caregiver/parent responsive care may be impacted by several factors, including poverty, declining mental health, food insecurity, lack of resources for play, and limited understanding of child development [3]. Parenting intervention programmes are promoted to overcome the effect of these adversities and encourage better developmental outcomes and practices for young children [4].

Policies and cultural practices, found in the macrosystem, have a cascading influence on caregivers/parents' practices within the microsystem [3]. South Africa has commendable policies related to early childhood development; however, there is limited implementation of these policies [5]. The National Integrated Plan (NIP) highlights the need to upgrade the service provision of zero-four-year-old early childhood development stimulation within the home and community setting [6]. Contrarily the Children's Act neglects to emphasise the importance of involving the caregiver/parent in stimulation before formal schooling [7]. South Africa requires further commitment, attention, and intersectoral planning for policy implementation to ensure effective early childhood development programmes [8].

A global study on early childhood development inequalities in low/middle-income countries discovered that sub-Saharan Africa had the highest disadvantage across all child development indicators [9]. These indicators included exposure to risks of stunting, attending early learning facilities, home stimulation, and the progression of early child development, according to the Early Childhood Development Index (ECDI). Within South Africa, as of 2018, 49.2% of zero to four-year-old children remained at home with their caregivers/parents with minimal stimulation conducted [10]. Approximately 46.8% of the children staying at home were not read to or assisted with drawing and colouring activities [10]. This is substantiated by a study on early learning programme outcomes, which revealed limited caregiver/parent engagement in stimulation, such as reading or playing with children within the home environment [11].

Children between three-five-years old require appropriate stimulation for school readiness, which can be accomplished within the home environment, early childhood facility, community programmes or through the media [12]. Caregivers/parents are faced with numerous challenges when raising a child and are often unaware of what can be done to overcome these challenges [13]. Supporting caregivers/parents through intervention programmes significantly impacts parenting practices, caregiver/parent-child interaction and the child's development [14,15]. The integrative review was conducted to explore policies and literature to determine the caregivers'/parents' role in ECD and stimulation. This integrative review was guided by the research question "What evidence exists on the role of caregivers/parents in early childhood development and stimulation programmes for three-four-year-old children?"

METHODOLOGY

The integrative review was guided by the five steps highlighted by Whittemore & Knafl (2005) guided the methodology. This framework includes problem identification, literature search, data evaluation, data analysis and interpretation and representation of results [16].

Step 1: Problem Identification

The research question was guided by the PCC (Population, Context, Concept) framework, as per the Joanna Briggs Institute (2005). The population included caregivers/parents, the context referred to low socio-economic environments and the concept comprised of early childhood development and stimulation programmes. This was undertaken to determine the evidence of caregivers'/parents' role in the early childhood development and stimulation of 3-4-year-old children.

Step 2: Literature Search

The literature search was conducted through electronic databases and online sites. The search databases included ScienceDirect, Taylor & Francis, PubMed, JSTOR, Lancet, Google Scholar and Research Gate. Additional sources were gained through the references of research articles. The keywords for the literature search included terms such as "caregiver and/or parent", "under-resourced areas or low socio-economic areas" together with "understanding and/or perceptions of early childhood development" or "parenting practices" or "stimulation" or "stimulation programmes".

Step 3: Data Evaluation

The literature located through the various databases were evaluated through the inclusion criteria, to determine the value towards the study [16]. Through the initial search of literature, 90 potential articles were identified. Literature that did not meet the inclusion criteria were excluded from further review. The inclusion and exclusion criteria are provided in Table I and the process for literature selection provided in Figure 1.

Table I: Inclusion and exclusion criteria for the literature search

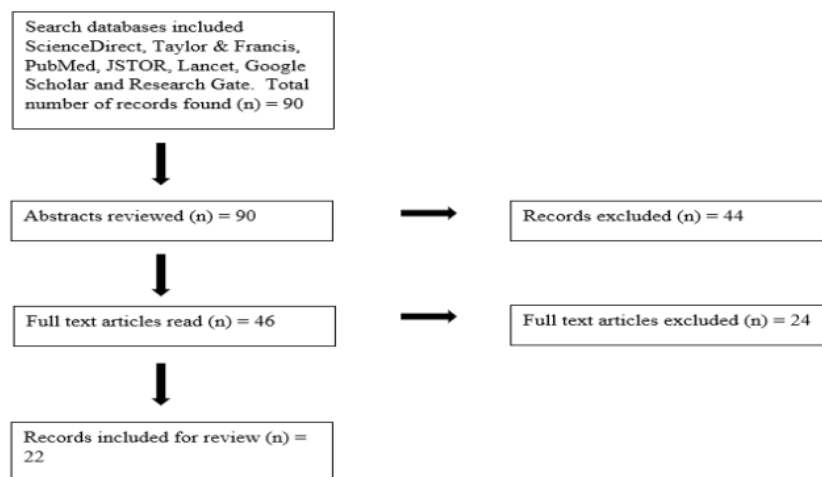| Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
- Early childhood development and stimulation literature from low resourced contexts within sub-Sharan Africa. -Policies regarding early childhood development and stimulation will be included. This includes national policies, policies in KwaZulu-Natal and municipal policies -The literature and policies published between 2010-2020 will be selected for the review. -Grey literature, such as literature and policies from unpublished thesis/dissertations, reports, and organisation documents will be included.	-Literature and policies within upper income and middle income countries out of Africa will be excluded. -Literature and policies older than 10 years will be excluded.

Step 4: Data Analysis

The data obtained from the articles were categorised according to the emerging patterns and themes. This was achieved by the iterative process of comparing data and clustering similar information.

Step 5: Interpretation and Representation of Results

The results of the data were comprehensively reported through the integration and discussion of the themes that emerged.

Search databases included ScienceDirect, Taylor & Francis, PubMed, JSTOR, Lancet, Google Scholar and Research Gate. Total number of records found (n) = 90

Abstracts reviewed (n) = 90 → Records excluded (n) = 44

Full text articles read (n) = 46 → Full text articles excluded (n) = 24

Records included for review (n) = 22

Figure 1: Process of literature selection

RESULTS

The literature search produced a total of 90 records, of which 44 records were excluded after reading the abstract. A further 24 records were excluded after a full review due to redundancy and not meeting the inclusion criteria. Twenty-two records that met the inclusion criteria were further reviewed, including a study each from Uganda, Tanzania, Botswana and two from Ghana. The remainder of the studies (17) were from South Africa. Table II below provides the characteristics of the articles selected for the review. Six themes emerged within the study were congruent with Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory's structures, that is the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystem. The themes included caregiver/parent engagement in early childhood development, parenting practices, parenting intervention programme strategies, policies, and cultural perspectives. The evidence of themes correlating with the literature is tabulated below in Table III.

Table II: Characteristics of the articles that were selected for review

Title	Authors	Year	Country	Method	Contribution
Parents as partners: building collaborations to support the development of school readiness skills in under-resourced communities	Catherine Pitt, Rosemary Luger Ann Bullen and Diana Phillips	2013	South Africa	Qualitative	Explored caregiver/parent education on stimulation and home learning activities to improve school readiness.
The South African National Curriculum Framework for children from Birth to Four Comprehensive Draft One	Hasina Ebrahim & Margaret Irvine	2012	South Africa	Report	This framework aimed to assist caregivers/parents, practitioners, and government with children's care before birth to four years old.
Informal settlements: informal early childhood development centres	The Project Preparation Trust of KZN	2014	South Africa	Report	Reviewed literature and policies pertaining to ECD centres.
Early childhood development services in South Africa: What are the next steps? South African Child Gauge 2013	Nadi Albino & Lizette Berry	2013	South Africa	Report	Emphasized the caregiver/parent-child relationship and provided strategies for intervention programmes.
Caring for children: Relationships matter: South African Child Gauge 2017	Lizette Berry and Elmarie Malek	2017	South Africa	Report	Discussed the important interactions for child development and the factors that compromise care in South Africa.
Contextualising school readiness in South Africa: Stakeholders' perspectives	Erica Munnik & Mario Smith	2019	South Africa	Qualitative	Discussed adverse experiences (in context), community factors, educational factors and familial factors that impact school readiness.

Title	Author(s)	Year	Country	Method	Summary
Early means early: understanding popular understandings of early childhood development in South Africa	Linda M. Richter, Mark Tomlinson, Kathryn Watt, Xanthe Hunt & Eric H. Lindland	2019	South Africa	Anthropological method through frameworks institute	Explored the beliefs of public members and policy stakeholders regarding early child development. The perceptions of the stakeholders impact the steps to improve ECD delivery in SA.
Family-based activity settings of children in a low-income African context	Sadna Balton, Kitty Uys & Erna Alant	2019	South Africa	Qualitative	Explored the different activities three-five-year-old engage in within the family setting and the impact on child development.
A Feasibility RCT Evaluating a Play-Informed, Caregiver-Implemented, Home-Based Intervention to Improve the Play of Children Who Are HIV Positive	Elelwani Ramugondo, Anande Ferreira, Donna Chung, and Reinie Cordier	2018	South Africa	Randomised control trial	Guidelines to assist with the implementation of intervention programmes with caregivers/parents.
Integrating Evidence and Context to Develop a Parenting Program for Low-Income Families in South Africa	Jamie M. Lachman, Liora T. Sherr, Lucie Cluver, Catherine L. Ward, Judy Hutchings, Frances Gardner	2016	South Africa	Qualitative	Focused on an intervention parenting program in a low socio-economic community which aimed to reduce the risk of child maltreatment, improve positive parenting, and reduce child behaviour problems.
National Integrated ECD Policy	Department of Social Development	2015	South Africa	Policy report	Policies in place for birth to seven years of age.
Parent Education Programmes for Early Childhood Development: Reflections of Practitioners	Jessica Baker	2014	South Africa	Mixed methods	Explored the practitioner's reflections on how intervention programmes can improve.
Effective early childhood development programme options meeting the needs of young South African children	Lauren-Jayne Van Niekerk, Michaela Ashley-Cooper & Eric Atmore	2017	South Africa	Mixed methods	Reviewed the current ECD options in South Africa. This analysis provided guidelines to assist policy makers in developing future efficient ECD programmes.
Interventions Promoting Early Childhood Development in South Africa	Kristin Neudorf, Tonya R. Thurman & Tory M. Taylor	2011	South Africa	Case Study	Promoted ECD to various stakeholders while simultaneously attempting to improve current ECD programme implementation across multiple sectors.
When can parents most influence their child's development? Expert knowledge and perceived local realities	Carol M. Worthman, Mark Tomlinson, Mary Jane Rotheram-Borus	2016	South Africa	Qualitative	Explored the perspectives of caregivers/parents on the opportune time to influence child development. Highlighted the need to educate caregivers/parents on ECD importance.
eThekwini Municipality Early Childhood Development Launch	eThekwini Municipality	2015	South Africa	Report	Local municipal report of improvement of ECD services within a community in South Africa.

Early Learning Programme Outcomes Study Technical Report	Andrew Dawes, Linda Biersteker, Elizabeth Girdwood, Matthew Snelling and Jessica Horler.	2020	South Africa	Quasi experimen tal pre-test post-test field study design	Comprehensively analysed early learning programmes for three-five-year-old children. Further explored how the home environment and participation affects this.
"Me I don't really discuss anything with them": Parent and teacher perceptions of early childhood education and parent-teacher relationships in Ghana	Sharon Wolf	2020	Ghana	Qualitative	Explored early childhood education and the relationships between teachers and parents of pre-school children. It explores how parents and teachers perceive their respective roles in the child's education and learning.
"So that his mind will open": Parental perceptions of early childhood education in urbanising Ghana	Sarah Kabay, Sharon Wolf, Hirokazu Yoshikawa	2017	Ghana	Qualitative	Explored parent perspectives on early education for children under five years old, within two communities in Ghana.
Grandmothers' developmental expectations for early childhood in Botswana	Marea Tsamaase, Sara Harkness, Charles M. Super	2020	Botswana	Qualitative	Urban and rural grandmothers' perception/expectations on the skills preschool child should acquire. There was a significant cultural component in practices. Limited responses on school readiness.
Is Fathers' Involvement in Young Children's Development and Learning in the Early Years Important? Experiences from the Caregivers in Tanzania	Pambas Tandika Basil & Laurent Gabriel Ndijuye	2019	Tanzania	Descriptive exploratory Design	Paternal involvement in child well-being and development of children in pre-primary school. Discussed fathers' perception on important individuals involved in childcare and development.
Ugandan households: A study of parenting practices in three districts	Neil Boothby, Firminus Mugumya, Amy E. Ritterbusch, Joyce Wanican, Clare Ahabwe Bangirana, Adrienne D. Pizatella, Sophie Busi, Sarah Meyer	2017	Uganda	Qualitative	Identified the community perspectives on parenting practices. It explored caregiver practices that are either harmful or promotive to the child's developmental outcomes.

Theme One: Caregiver/parent engagement in early childhood development and stimulation

Eleven studies discussed caregiver/parent participation, understanding, knowledge and expectations of early childhood development and stimulation. Engagement in home activities and play were not always guided by developmental agendas, rather by cultural practices from a macro level or the perceived routine within their context. A significant proportion of the studies discussed play; however, there were differing views on play, based on caregiver/parent knowledge, culture,

and contexts [17–20]. The child's learning and stimulation are primarily understood as the role of the early childhood facility attended, as opposed to the collaborative role between the caregiver/parent and facility [20–22]. This perception of early childhood development and stimulation compromises the school readiness of the child.

Theme Two: Parenting practices

Parenting practices were alluded to by eleven studies. These practices included nurturing care, discipline, positive/negative parenting, caregiver/parent-child interaction, and parenting roles that influenced early childhood development. Several studies indicated caregivers'/parents' duty to provide nurturing care, warmth, and love as part of their role and associated this with positive parenting practices [13,21,23–25]. Negative practices were accompanied by responses of harsh treatment, child neglect and poverty. Alternative discipline measures presented itself in some studies where corporal punishment was endorsed to promote good behaviour [19,21,22]. The respective role distribution of being a mother or father was observed through the studies. Caregiving was viewed as the mother's responsibility; however, the fathers' inclusion to assist in sharing the responsibility of caregiving and interacting in the intervention programmes was also raised [19]. Furthermore, inequitable parenting roles emerged through parenting practices [13].

Theme Three: Parenting intervention programme strategies

Intervention programmes are in place to provide support to caregivers/parents, promote favourable developmental outcomes and encourage appropriate parenting practices [5,13]. Sixteen studies brought attention to intervention programmes that were implemented with caregivers/parents. The studies that referred to intervention programmes highlighted the significance of the intervention programmes, provided an outline for the content, and discussed the barriers and facilitators to engagement. Programme barriers included poor intersectoral collaboration, insufficient time to engage in the programmes, low socio-economic status and limited resources [5,26]. Programme facilitators included generalisability of programmes, family-based approach and compatibility to environmental and cultural contexts [5,8,27] The content of the parenting programmes included areas which caregivers/parents indicated a lack of knowledge, or where researchers observed a gap of knowledge among caregivers/parents. Prevalent topics discussed with parents included discipline strategies, nutrition, promoting maternal and child health and general stimulation activities such as traditional games [8,13,26].

Theme Four: Poverty

Nine studies reported increased stress levels, unemployment, perilous society and poor access to services/inequality were the outcomes of poverty, which jeopardised the child's early

development and stimulation. Poverty within the low resourced context influenced the ECD facility in which caregivers/parents enrolled their child. Lack of funds, infrastructure and the informal nature of these facilities further contributes to their disadvantaged position. Despite these adverse conditions, these facilities form the central pillar of early childhood development access within low resourced communities as they provide basic needs and amenities for the children [28].

Theme Five: Policies

The policy documents contained areas such as strategies in place to ensure appropriate early childhood development service provision at educational and health facilities, future early childhood development plans and guidelines to encourage access of services, which were referred to by nine studies, In contrast, other studies, indicated how policies could be shifted to ensure a multifaceted approach that would enhance the developmental outcomes of young children [(29,30)]. Policy documents record the general standards required for all ECD facilities to provide an expected service delivery level to all children [5,28].

Theme Six: Cultural Practices

Cultural practices which are filtered through the microsystem and mesosystem were reported by seven studies. Cultural beliefs are nuanced through lessons of morality, respect and promoted behavioural patterns highlighted in several studies, where caregivers/parents discussed the importance of passing on their culture and traditions [18,20,24]. Cultural practices are passed on in the home environment and promoted within their educational/school environment. The cultural practices further influenced how children play, what tasks were engaged in, and the expectations within their age group [17,18,20]. It is therefore imperative that intervention programmes consider culture practices, as this could indicate the success of programme compliance.

Table III: Evidence of themes correlating with the literature.

	MICROSYSTEM		MESOSYSTEM	EXO-SYSTEM	MACROSYSTEM	
	Parent engagement in ECD	Parenting practices	Parenting intervention programme strategies	Poverty	Policies	Cultural practices
Baker, J. (2015)			x			
Tsamaase M, Harkness M & Super C.M. (2020)	x	x				x
Van Niekerk L.J, Cooper M. A & Atmore E. (2017)			x	x	x	

Albino N & Berry L. (2013)			x	x	x	
Munnik E & Smith M. (2019)		x		x	x	
Richter L.M, Tomlinson M, Watt K, Hunt X & Lindland E.H. (2019)	x	x		x	x	
eThekwini Municipality (2015)			x			
Neudorf K, Thurman T.R & Taylor T.M. (2011)			x	x	x	x
Balton S, Uys K & Alant E. (2019)	x	x	x			x
Ramugondo E, Ferreira A, Chung D & Cordier R. (2018)	x		x	x		
Dawes A, Biersteker L, Girdwood E, Snelling M & Horler J. (2020)	x		x	x		
Basil P.T & Ndijuye L.G. (2019)	x	x				
Lachman J.M, Sherr L.T, Cluver L, Ward C.L, Hutchings J & Gardner F. (2016)	x	x	x			x
Ebrahim H & Irvine M. (2012)	x		x		x	
Department of Social Development (2015)					x	
Pitt C, Luger R, Bullen A & Phillips D. (2013)			x			
Boothby N, Mugumya F, Ritterbusch A.E, Wanican J, Bangirana C.A, Pizatella A.D, Busi S & Meyer S. (2017)		x	x			x
Worthman C.M, Tomlinson M, Rotheram-Borus M.J. (2016)	x	x	x			x
Kabay S, Wolf S, Yoshikawa S. (2017)	x	x	x			x
Wolf S. (2020)	x	x	x			
The Project Preparation Trust of KZN (2014)				x	x	
Berry L, Malek E. (2017)		x	x	x	x	

DISCUSSION

The integrative review has provided an insight into the caregiver/parent practices in ECD, stimulation and the support available for them at different levels. This is explained through the Ecological Systems Theory. The microsystem contains the caregiver/parent practices, who directly influence the child's development, being within the immediate sphere of the child. The mesosystem comprises the intervention programmes provided to caregivers/parents to develop their skills to promote adequate stimulation and parenting practices. The exosystem incorporates the influence of poverty, which has an indirect effect on the child. The macrosystem contains the systemic components such as culture and policies that may be within the outermost sphere, but nuances through the child's development.

Microsystem

Respondents in the studies indicated positive and negative parenting practices, which helped provide an understanding of how caregivers/parents perceive practices to promote or limit early child development. Positive practices in the Ugandan study were associated with childcare, adequate nutrition, a clean home, protection and investment in the child's education; and negative parenting was associated with opposing practices [24]. In the South African study, similar results were found relating to positive and negative parenting practices [25]. Although promotive education factors were explored in both studies, the finer details regarding stimulation and early development in early childhood were obscured by the focus on the nurturing care and child-rearing that should take place. This was additionally observed in the limited understanding of play or activity engagement that was beneficial to the child. In one study, colouring, drawing and pasting were seen as promotive to development; however, this was assumed due to these activities being done at school [17]. Whereas in another study, the children participated in home and self-care tasks, however this was viewed as a means to promote self-reliance, rather than promote developmental skills [20]. Although this provides a stimulatory nature, the caregiver/parent remain unaware that this forms an integral component in caring for a child.

Childhood occupation of play was closely nuanced with cultural practices. Within the two Ghanaian studies, caregivers/parents perceived play as a shift away from the child's learning at school and did not understand that play is educational as well [18,22]. Similar perceptions were detected in a South African study [17], however, in another South African study, the caregivers/parents viewed play as a form of building relationships and spending time with the child, however, this was hampered by time constraints [19]. These varying perceptions regarding play indicate how play is conceptualised and the highlights the need to promote understanding of play which will help enhance development. The misconception of play may be due to the limited

contact and collaboration with early childhood development facilities. Conflicting evidence of the caregiver/parent role in the child's school and education was observed. Caregivers/parents viewed their role in collaborating with the educational facility to fulfil needs such as paying fees and provision of nutrition, and not engaging in tasks that provide stimulation for learning and developmental outcomes [20,22]. Teachers were also perceived as surrogate parents and caregivers/parents relied on them to primarily educate their child [29], resulting in a poor estimation of the child's capabilities. This could result from both limited understanding of child development and the stakeholders who have a role in the child's development.

An additional focus within parenting practice was the discipline strategies that were implemented. Some caregivers/parents used corporal punishment to ensure good behaviour, whereas other caregivers/parents refrained from this to reduce the damage of corporal punishment [19]. This perception of discipline indicates the need for educating caregivers/parents in effective discipline strategies. Literature supports this by recommending effective discipline strategies when educating parents during parenting programmes [13].

Mesosystem

Through the mesosystem, there are parenting intervention programmes that caregivers/parents can implement within the home environment. This assists in providing the child with the necessary learning and stimulation to further promote their development. Across the various studies, home-based programmes for the caregivers/parents were recommended as it was proved to be more effective than other means of programme implementation [5,8,26,27]. However, a recent study contradicts this by stating a direct approach with the children is a better option, as their study revealed that caregivers/parents did not engage in stimulatory activities due to time constraints [11]. This impacts the implementation and continuation of intervention programmes. A family-based approach should also be implemented, as it influences the intervention programme's maintenance [8,27]. Within low socio-economic contexts, it is common for various members within the house to engage in childcare. Therefore, the intervention programme should consider this approach during implementation.

Although there is an observable effort to implement intervention programmes to support caregivers/parents, several barriers hamper this effort. The barriers include lack of advocacy on early child development, inconsistent attendance of programmes due to financial constraints, limited trust in outsiders running these programmes and poor contextual foundation [1,26,27]. Numerous studies recommend the inclusion of contextual and traditional focus, to promote stimulation within the parenting intervention programmes [5,8,13,26]. Neglecting these factors

contribute to the lack of interaction and learning in the intervention programmes [1]. These barriers threaten the consistent attempts at promoting a positive shift in the access to intervention programmes and undermine the progress to improve this.

Exosystem

Poverty was acknowledged as a factor influencing the effectiveness of stimulation programmes. A plethora of studies indicated that low socio-economic status and unemployment impact the child's school readiness, stimulation, and caregiver/parent-child activity engagement within the home environment [11,21,27,29]. Many policies and initiatives have guidelines to combat poverty; however, it is a larger systemic issue that requires the collaboration of multiple sectors over a long period of time. Poverty further results in low attendance of supportive programmes available to caregivers/parents due to lack of transport and finances [27]. A South African study highlighted that participants from the general public focused more on broader contextual issues such as child kidnapping rather than prominent local problems of poverty and violence. This may result from dispirited acceptance of their situation due to the continuous intergenerational cycle of poverty. However, a larger number of people remain cognisant of the more local issues within their communities and therefore request information on protecting their children be incorporated in the intervention programme [19].

Macrosystem

This follows the overarching factors that present itself in the caregivers'/parents' practices, such as cultural practices commonly followed. In the Ghana study, ECD facilities were for the dual purpose of educating the child academically and encourage appropriate cultural practices such as respect and social etiquette [18]. Teaching children respect, good behaviour, and morals indicated positive parenting [24], and opposing behaviour was a negative impression on the caregivers/parents skills. For example, in the Botswana study, some customs indicated that it was disrespectful for children to play in front of adults [20]. Play is a child's natural engagement and is often done near or with adults, so they can be monitored while playing. Although forming part of their culture, lack of engagement in play with the children may have an impact on developing the relationships among caregivers/parents as well as providing stimulation during the interaction within such communities. Culture played an additional role in household tasks and self-care management. Engaging in household tasks and self-care promotes independent, self-reliant adults and further provides an indication of the culture followed [17,20]. This highlights how some cultural practices are more deeply embedded in specific contexts than others and should always be a contributing factor in the approach used.

In South Africa, there are several policies in place to provide support for caregivers/parents and to ensure that the services available are appropriate for the child [31]. There is a specific criterion that early childhood development facilities should meet to be registered with the government. The policies in place are integral for optimal functioning of facilities and to the benefit of the child and caregiver/parent. This review highlights how the policy requirements are impractical as these strict guidelines hamper access to early childhood development facilities and is unrealistic in South Africa, which has a vast range of communities such as urban, peri-urban and rural communities [5]. Within low resourced communities, access to informal structures is prevalent due to convenience and affordability. The evaluation that these facilities are conformed to should not be similar to those of different socio-economic levels [5]. The flexibility of these policies could provide a change in accessing these facilities.

The National Integrated Early Childhood Development Plan (2015) further encourages the collaboration with early childhood development facilities, and in conjunction with the South African National Curriculum Framework (2012), future plans for parenting programmes are in place. Yet there is limited communication across sectors to target caregivers/parents to facilitate their understanding of stimulation, learning, engagement in play and how to support their children [31]. The National Integrated Early Childhood Development Plan (2015) further stipulates the education of positive discipline strategies and to step away from corporal punishment. The public acknowledges that the government plays a role in early childhood development, yet remain unaware of what the role entails [21]. Furthermore, these respondents further indicated that children had too many rights, limiting their engagement in corporal punishment. The policy initiative attempts to dissolve inappropriate discipline; however, the public's perspectives negate this initiative. Increased awareness of this may promote further positive practices.

LIMITATIONS

Majority of the literature were the perspectives of the female caregivers/parents, responses of the male caregivers/parents were limited, thus not providing a holistic overview of perspectives. Of the studies reviewed, most of the locations in South Africa were in the Western Cape, which may impact generalising finding to the KwaZulu-Natal context. Furthermore, some studies had a small sample size which also affects generalising to other contexts.

CONCLUSION

Caregivers/parents form a crucial part of the child's ecosystem, yet caregivers/parents do not have adequate support to improve early childhood development. This results from several factors, such as unawareness of services, poor access and limited intersectoral collaboration. The review

shows that intervention programmes can bridge the gap in early childhood development outcomes; however, several factors such as context and culture must be considered. The guidelines for the success of intervention programmes provide a valuable resource for community practitioners who strive to improve early childhood development through caregiver/parent support.

REFERENCES

1. Pitt C, Luger R, Bullen A, Phillips D, Geiger M. Parents as partners : Building collaborations to support the development of school readiness skills in under-resourced communities. 2013;33(4):1–14.

2. Atmore E, Van Niekerk L, Ashley-Cooper M. Challenges Facing Early Childhood Development Sector in South Africa. Natl Dev Agency. 2012;(April).

3. Unicef. Unicef's Programme Guidance for Early Childhood Development. 2017;1–36.

4. Hall K, Sambu W, Berry I, Giese S, Almeleh C. South African Early Childhood Review 2017. 2017;1–46. Available from: www.elom.org.

5. Van Niekerk L, Ashley-Cooper M, Atmore E. Effective early childhood development programme options meeting the needs of young South African children. Cape Town; 2017.

6. Budlender D. Development of a subsidy model for home- and community-based early childhood development services for children 0-5 : Community Agency for Social Enquiry. 2010;(February).

7. Rich EG, Roman N V. Legislative Policies and Culture on Parenting Practices: improving the parent-child relationship in South Africa. Rev Políticas Públicas. 2019;23(1):389.

8. Albino N, Berry L. Early childhood development services in South Africa: What are the next steps? 2013;78–81.

9. Lu C, Cuartas J, Fink G, Mccoy D, Liu K, Li Z, et al. Inequalities in early childhood care and development in low/middle- income countries : 2010 – 2018. 2020;2010–8.

10. Statistics South Africa. General Household Survey [Internet]. General Household Survey 2018. 2019. Available from: www.statssa.gov.zainfo@statssa.gov.za

11. Dawes A, Biersteker L, Girdwood L, Snelling M. The Early Learning Programme Outcomes Study Technical Report. Claremont Cape Town; 2020.

12. Ebrahim H, Seleti J, Dawes A. Learning begins at birth: Improving access to early learning. South African Child Guage. 2013;(2000):66–71.

13. Baker J. Parent Education Programmes for Early Childhood Development: Reflections of Practitioners. Stellenbosch University; 2015.

14.   Henningham HB, Boo FL. Early childhood stimulation interventions in developing countries. IZA Discuss Pap. 2010;5282(5282):63.

15.   Rao N, Sun J, Wong JMS, Weekes B, Ip P, Shaeffer S, et al. Early childhood development and cognitive development in developing countries. 2014;(September).

16.   Whittemore R, Knafl K. The integrative review: updated methodology. J Adv Nurs. 2005;52(5):546–53.

17.   Balton S, Uys K, Alant E. Family-based activity settings of children in a low-income African context. African J Disabil. 2019;1–14.

18.   Kabay S, Wolf S, Yoshikawa H. "So that his mind will open" : Parental perceptions of early childhood education in urbanising Ghana. Int J Educ Dev [Internet]. 2017;57(January):44–53. Available from: http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.ijedudev.2017.08.013

19.   Lachman JM, Sherr LT, Cluver L, Ward CL, Hutchings J, Gardner F. Integrating Evidence and Context to Develop a Parenting Program for Low-Income Families in South Africa Integrating Evidence and Context to Develop a Parenting Program for Low-Income Families in South Africa. J Child Fam Stud. 2016;(March).

20.   Tsamaase M, Harkness S, Super CM. Grandmothers' Developmental Expectations for Early Childhood in Botswana. New Dir Child Adolesc Dev. 2020;2020(170):93–112.

21.   Richter LM, Tomlinson M, Watt K, Hunt X, Lindland EH. Early means early : understanding popular understandings of early childhood development in South Africa. Early Years [Internet]. 2019;39(3):295–309. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1080/09575146.2019.1613346

22.   Wolf S. "Me I don't really discuss anything with them": Parent and teacher perceptions of early childhood education and parent-teacher relationships in Ghana. Int J Educ Res [Internet]. 2020;99(September 2019):101525. Available from: https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijer.2019.101525

23.   Berry L, Malek E. Caring for children: Relationships matter. South African Child Guage. 2017.

24.   Boothby N, Mugumya F, Ritterbusch AE, Wanican J, Ahabwe C, Pizatella AD, et al. Ugandan households : A Study of parenting practices in three districts. Child Abuse Negl [Internet]. 2017;67:157–73. Available from: http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2017.02.010

25. Worthman CM, Tomlinson M, Rotheram-borus MJ. When can parents most in fl uence their child' s development ? Expert knowledge and perceived local realities. Soc Sci Med [Internet]. 2016;154:62–9. Available from: http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.socscimed.2016.02.040

26. Neudorf K, Thurman TR, Taylor TM. Interventions Promoting Early Childhood Development in South Africa. 2011.

27. Ramugondo E, Ferreira A, Chung D, Cordier R. Research Article A Feasibility RCT Evaluating a Play-Informed , Caregiver-Implemented , Home-Based Intervention to Improve the Play of Children Who Are HIV Positive. 2018;2018.

28. The Project Preparation Trust of KwaZulu-Natal. Informal settlements: Informal early childhood development centres. 2014.

29. Munnik E, Smith M. Contextualising school readiness in South Africa : Stakeholders' perspectives. South African J Child Educ. 2019;1–13.

30. Ebrahim H, Irvine M. The South African National Curriculum Framework for children from Birth to Four Comprehensive Draft One. 2012.

31. Department of Social Development. National Integrated Early Childhood Development Policy 2015. 2015;1–140. Available from: https://www.unicef.org/southafrica/SAF_resources_integratedecdpolicy.pdf

Integrative Review Article

10	www.pubfacts.com	<1%
	Internet Source	

11	www.psppd.org	<1%
	Internet Source	

12	"Promoting Healthy Human Relationships in Post-Apartheid South Africa", Springer Science and Business Media LLC, 2021	<1%
	Publication	

13	Marea Tsamaase, Sara Harkness, Charles M. Super. "Grandmothers' Developmental Expectations for Early Childhood in Botswana", New Directions for Child and Adolescent Development, 2020	<1%
	Publication	

14	moam.info	<1%
	Internet Source	

15	docplayer.net	<1%
	Internet Source	

16	ajod.org	<1%
	Internet Source	

17	repository.nwu.ac.za	<1%
	Internet Source	

18	hvc-tulane.org	<1%
	Internet Source	

pubdocs.worldbank.org

19   Internet Source   <1%

20   "Parental Perceptions on ECD Provisioning In Mdantsane District, Eastern Cape", Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences, 2014.
Publication   <1%

21   Haruna Chiroma, Absalom E. Ezugwu, Fatsuma Jauro, Mohammed A. Al-Garadi, Idris N. Abdullahi, Liyana Shuib. "Early survey with bibliometric analysis on machine learning approaches in controlling coronavirus", Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory, 2020
Publication   <1%

22   Sarah Kabay, Sharon Wolf, Hirokazu Yoshikawa. ""So that his mind will open": Parental perceptions of early childhood education in urbanizing Ghana", International Journal of Educational Development, 2017
Publication   <1%

23   Submitted to Embury Institute for Teacher Education
Student Paper   <1%

24   www.scielo.br
Internet Source   <1%

25   Zaida Orth, Brian van Wyk. "Rethinking Mental Health Wellness Among Adolescents: An   <1%

Exclude quotes   On   Exclude matches   < 10 words
Exclude bibliography   On