



## **Users' perceptions and factors that inform the choice of childcare service utilization: The Nairobi Early Childcare in Slums (NECS)**

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The lack of affordable childcare in poor urban settings prevents women from engaging in paid work. Further, children face significant challenges related to their healthy development due to a lack of proper care when parents are at work. The NECS study was implemented to understand the use of paid childcare and the characteristics associated with these choices; the size of provision of paid childcare; and provider decision-making and behaviour around childcare. The study used a mixed-methods program of research including a household survey, childcare provider mapping, and qualitative research with parents/carers and childcare providers.

The study included both users and non-users of paid childcare. For qualitative aspects, the main themes considered were demand and decision making; what quality care looks like to users; how well current providers met their needs. On average, 96% of the centers operated during weekdays, while less than 10% operated on Sunday. Many of the facilities were small with a large proportion charging Kes.50 per day.

Factors such as caregiving element/caregiver attributes, general day-care outlook, and hygiene standards were key. Non-users expressed reservations on the use of childcare services resulting from perceived, reported, or observed gaps/ inadequacies. Policy strategies should focus on the intervention programs that support the provision of childcare in poor urban areas.

