

The impact of HIV / AIDS is profoundly reflected in the lives of children whose very survival and development are at stake. Literature reviewed indicates that orphan care structures exist within the community. However, no comprehensive study has been done on the constraints to HIV / AIDS orphan care in the Early Childhood Centres, their needs, care and problems faced in their early years. The purpose of this study was to determine the constraints facing I-IIV / AIDS orphan care in the Early Childhood Centres. The specific objectives of the study were to; identify the socio economic and demographic characteristics of both caregivers and orphans; identify the needs and problems of children orphaned by HIV / AIDS in the Early Childhood Centres, establish the nature of community participation in care and support of orphans in the Early Childhood Centres; and determine the care and support provided to the children orphaned by HIV / AIDS in the Early Childhood Centres. The study was guided by Maslow's Theory, Psychosocial Theory and Ecological Model. This study adopted an Expost Facto study design in selected Early Childhood Centres in Matayos Division, Busia district, Western Province, Kenya. The interview guide was administered to caregivers and the orphans. The sample of the study consisted of 120 HIV / AIDS orphans, 120 guardians and 10 Early Childhood Teachers. Both quantitative and qualitative data was prepared for analysis using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistics (percentages) were used in the type of care, problems, needs encountered by HIV / AIDS orphans and the caregivers. Pearson's Products Moment Correlation Statistics was used to measure relationships between variables. The Hypotheses were tested at a = .05 level of significance. The study revealed that 53.3% HIV / AIDS orphans from the ECD centres lived with their grand parents. The findings further showed that (33.33%) HIV / AIDS orphans fall in the age between 5 to 6 years. The findings of this study show that more than half of the caregivers (61.3%) were married, while 35.8% guardians were widowed. The results further indicate that the needs of the HIV / AIDS orphans are not met adequately in relation to clothing, shelter, food, education. 82.6% guardians provided second hand clothing, and more than a half (81.8%) HIV / AIDS orphans lived in grass thatched houses, while 79.1% HIV / AIDS orphans attended clinic when sick. The study further revealed that 32.5 % HIV / AIDS orphans indicated clothing as a need that was not met while 19.8% indicated shelter as a need not met, and 9.0% revealed education needs as not met, and 2.6% revealed psycho-social needs as not met. The study further revealed that 29.4% ECD teachers indicated food and medical attention was required for HIV / AIDS orphan care while 23.5% ECD teachers indicated HIV / AIDS orphans needed psycho-social support. At the same time 89.5% HIV / AIDS orphans received assistance from Kenya Orphans Rural development programme (KORDP) in the form of food and medication. A weak positive but insignificant correlation was found between level of education and orphan care. The study also revealed a weak non significance relationship between the occupations of guardians on the level of orphan care. Based on the findings of the study, a multi - sectoral approach is recommended for HIV / AIDS orphan care to look into the needs of the orphans. Training programmes are recommended to sensitize the ECD teachers working with the HIV / AIDS orphans on psychosocial care which will eventually boost the self esteem of the growing orphans.