Vol. 8 No. 2 November, (2025)
JOURNAL OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND TOURISM EDUCATION
ISSN: 2659-0794 (PRINT) ISSN:2659-0808(ONLINE)
Content Available at: **https://jeate.k-injo.com/index.php/Jete**

The Education And Skills Development Of Children In Care Homes: The Place Of The Social Work Professional In The Development Of A Child In The Care Facility.

Ageh Philip Egbara agehphil@gmail.com	A	Department of Social Work University of Benin, Benin City, Nigeria.
Omorogiuwa, T.B.E Tracy_4life@yahoo.com	B	
Ofili Sunday Ibobor sunday.iborbo@uniben.edu.ng	C	

Keywords

Skills, Development, Children, Care homes, Social Worker

Correspondence Email:
agehphil@gmail.com

Abstract

This paper presents the importance of social workers in rendering professional services for education and skill development of children in care homes. The roles of social workers in the running of care homes, and the development of child educational/skills through advocacy, team work and collaboration can help solve the various learning challenges that affect children in care homes. The article opined that child education/skills development in care-homes has a comprehensive plan that is not only depended on the care givers, but the expertise knowledge of psycho-social counsellors (social workers) who solve the leaning problems of children in special needs. The roles of a social worker in care home include guiding the children, the care giver with relevant information about the agencies through counseling, linking them to other relevant organizations and philanthropists who can assist them accomplished their educational needs. The challenges of child education/skills in care homes include, transition from children to adult learning disabilities, lack of good learning infrastructures, low agencies budget for the education of children in care homes, low esteem of children due

	to discrimination and the need for professional social workers to render both counseling, collaborative and advocacy roles to enhance the education/skills development of children in care homes. It recommended that the registration, licensing and operation of care homes should not be done without the membership of social worker's professional among the founder/cofounders of care homes, the enacting of an enabling law that will strengthen the operationalization of care homes supervised by the coordinating ministries designate and the social work counsel of Nigeria to avoid quarks in the operation of care homes and to ensure proper child education/skills development.

Introduction

There is high emergence of care homes in contemporary times. According to Powell et al. (2004), more than 59 registered residential institutions in Zimbabwe were accommodating about 3,013 children. According to Chibwana and Gumbo (2014), the relative desire of policy makers to improve the lives of children in Zimbabwe led to the significance increase of number of care home to 415 in the year 2014. According to Chibwuna and Gumbo (2014) and Kurfi (2014), the number of orphans and vulnerable children in Kano metropolis has significantly increased from 500 children per square meter to about 1000 children per square meter. These situations led to increase number of care homes built by policy makers to mitigate the suffering of these children and to ensure proper child development (Chibwuna, Mustapha & Kurfi (2014).

Nigeria in recent time has a high number of children who are poor, vulnerable and are placed in Care Homes (Edinyang, et al., 2020). However, there are some children roaming around without being placed in care homes, they are often maltreated, imprisoned and sometimes knocked down by vehicles using motorable roads in the city of Calabar (Edinyang et al. 2020). Therefore, vulnerable children are considered as the offspring of complex contemporary urban environments which represent one of the most serious global challenges in Care-Homes. It is in line with this, that United Nations (2020) stated that more than 150 million children worldwide in recent years are not privileged to be under any care-home, hence they are classified as street children many of whom are forced to earn a living in degrading ways,

such as begging, searching for garbage and selling simple goods as street vendors in poor neighborhood homes and cities.

The care of children who are vulnerable in Calabar metropolis has become a serious concern to many including religious leaders, which has led to the building of more care homes that accommodated over 380 children by the Brotherhood of the Cross and Star (Imowo, 2023). According to Eyo (2013), many children who are in care homes lived luxurious lives in some welfare homes and orphanages. They are some lucky children who were being helped by some influential individuals, religious leaders and agencies of government. These ones are place most often in the care homes run by the governor and his aids. One of the notable care homes is the mother Elizebeth Redeemed children home in Calabar metropolis control by the spiritual leader, his holiness leader Olumba, Olumba Obu of the brother hood of the Cross and Star (Eyo, 2013). This home upon establishment in 2013 houses about 90 children, but today the care home houses up to 200- 300 children. There are several other children care homes in Calabar metropolis some of which include Infant Jesus motherless home, run by the Catholic Arch Diocese of Calabar, housing between 100 - 120 children, the Destiny children care home run by the wife of the former governor her excellency Obioma Liel Imoke with a housing capacity of between 150 -300 children (Eyo, 2013). The establishment of care home in Calabar metropolis was to ensure proper placement and development of children who are orphans and vulnerable. According to Shonkoff et al., (2012), early childhood development, provides a critical foundation for lifetime education, work productivity, physical and mental health and the social wellbeing of child development both in conventional child rearing practices and care-homes. Richler, et al., (2017), opined that approximately 250millions representing (43%) of vulnerable children in 2010, world over were under the ages of five years from low-income countries and are at high risks of poor early child development in private and care-homes.

The Role of the Social Workers in Helping the Education and Skill of Children in Care Facility.

Social workers most often perform the role of an educator when the professional engage in activities that involve teaching, training, sensitization and research, by facilitating information sharing, discovering new knowledge and ideas, and suggesting policies and services that will help in addressing critical issues affecting the care home system (DuBois & Miley (2023). The role of child education and skill development is central. Wilson et al (2008) posits that there are children who regardless of the specific social situation should not be reduce to one form of depersonalized training due to their enrollment in a care facility. Ejembi (2023), opined that children need to be diligently care for in term of education and skills because early childhood education is the bedrock of other levels of child development.

Understanding the current transactional roles of social workers as a process of making the occupant of a care-home understand their needs and to accompany these needs in the process of training in the care-home journey is very vital for social work in care home services (Tanner 2020).

According to Virbaliene and Cizikiene (2024), the purpose of care-homes is to ensure quality education, skill development and social services for children under the care home. The provision of this quality and skills education of the children will help to create an environment where the child can safely grow and developed for a meaningful independence life in the community, care-home and the society in general, (Virbaliene & Cizikiene 2024). Kwan and Cheung (2017) noted that social workers do not only provide direct services to children with disabilities, but rather professional social workers also work with their care giver to them in understanding inclusive education. Social workers working with care home have the functional role of development of children's social competences to enable them gain successful adaptation in the care facility, integrate and lived an active fulfill life among his/her peers in the care home (Virbaliene &Cizikiene 2024). Provision of skills and education in care home will enhance children's successful socialization and integration in to the care facilities and society in general (Virbaliene & Cizikiene 2024).

Vinda and Rita (2016), opined that the most relevant functions, qualification and improvement of social workers in care homes is developing the personal and social skills of children in preparation of their independence living, which is a solution to their behavioral and psychological problems. Vinda and Rita (2016) and Kelly et al., (2010), stresses that, the continuous expansion of the professional competence of social workers, in care homes is a very important aspect of social work in care home facilities, because it will enhance their current knowledge of child education training and the deepening of their skills. According to Hujlund (2011), children education and skill development in care homes or any other social welfare arrangement can only be possible and constantly provided for when the social workers are learned and professional in their working.

Linda and Obed (2015), asserted that to provide a good environment for the smooth transition of children from home (care home) to primary school setting, early child education in Nigeria has made progress from single sector approach to a multisectoral approach where a solid foundation for live long learning and development holder including social worker's working in care home, community leaders and family members. Bolin et al (2018), assertion has shown that social workers have relevant roles to play in inclusive education, training and skill for children with disability in care facilities. Kelechi (2024), submitted that the maximum

learning capacity of a child in any home setting (care homes, family or extended family setting), can only be archive with the services of a school social worker.

According to Kelechi (2024), social workers occupied a very huge function to the success and training of children in school system or care facilities. This success is anchored on the various functions of school social workers, where by extension, it is applicable to social worker's roles in care home. Kelechi (2024); Frey and George-Nicols (2003), enumerable the key roles of a social workers in education and skill attainment of a child to include information; where the social worker can provide actual and authentic information to children on important issues such as sex education, information about the care facility rules, and information about useful instructional material and where to get them for the children in the care facility. The social workers also play the role of emotional and moral education support during the care services in the home because an emotionally unstable child is capable of displaying a serious maladjusted behavior. Wong, (2013) observe that, the provision of psychosocial support as an essential role of social workers in addressing the psychological and educational problems of children with disabilities. The social worker working with school or day care facility offer emotional and educational support to children through developing a relationship base on trust and mutual understanding.

Bolin et al., (2018); Kelechi (2024), advocated that other roles of a social workers in school or care home include teaching of skills to children especially areas where the school or care home has neglected such as basic reading skills, basic social relationship skills among peer, especially opposite sex in the agency, other functions are group work which the professional uses to address the problem of the children whenever they have difficulties in coping with agency regulations. The social workers also have the responsibility of offering services to children from different background. Vandeh, et al., (2014) agreed that the situation could be challenging to the extent that the social worker who is an educators need to find a way by which the needs of their clients are met.

This is important because children of a care home come from different ethno-religion background with different behavioral imbalances, the social workers help to teach and mold the children to a personality that will not be harmful to the care home (Balli, 2016; Kelechi, 2024). The social workers also render guardian educational services to the families, where a child is still under guardian visit of the family to the child in the care home by ensuring that the parent interest on the child is reinforce and also by clarifying any areas where the child is having difficulty. Above all the social worker suggest to parent or agency guidance the skills and techniques that may be employed in their care home for the benefit of the children (Crowder. 2017; Kelechi, 2024). The social worker also has the responsibility of rendering

services to educate the agency (care home) personnel by providing information's that will enhance the education and skill development of the children (Mutulayova & Pesatova (2013). This is done by providing information to agency, care giver concerning children with special needs, consult teacher and the curriculum that is best for the children. The social worker served as a link between the care-home staff and the other circular world child development programs, to ensure that the agency staffs training programs is in line with best global practices (Kelechi, 2024).

Ceka and Muratati (2016), advocated that the social worker working with children in care-home, also provide services to the host community in order to achieve the educational and skills development of the children. The care home or agency is the primarily community, where the care and education of the child is anchored, this social worker have to ensure constant interaction between the community (care-home) the host indigenous community and the family members (Ceka & Murati 2016). Eyitayo and Elizabeth, (2022) asserted that social workers make improvise in producing certain things that will satisfy the children needs. There is vocational unit where they train the children to make candles, Vaseline, tie and dye, sew clothes, made materials with carton, there are machines that assists in their production. These are done to assist the students that could not be placed in the classroom so as to make them to be independent (Kottha, 2015). This interaction will ensure that all challenges that will mitigate agency functions and communal functions to the education and skill development of the children are apprehended and nod on bud (Ceka & Murati 2016). Social worker plays a very important role in the growth, development education and skills of children in schools and care home facility (Eyitayo & Elizabeth 2022).

The Challenges and Approximate Learning Risk Face by Children place in Care Facilities

Kensington and Chelsea (2024) observed that thousands of children undergo transition from children to adult learning disability services. This transition is usually very challenging for young people and their families or carers because they often struggle to access any form of support especially when the child is turning to the age of eighteen years. These challenges hinder effective and efficient learning process of the child especially when the educational needs are not met. Care givers always lament the lack of educational infrastructures, financial and material support for the children in care facilities to develop vocational skills. This factor prevents them from becoming self- reliance and independent, the difficulty of people finding information about support in their area and the need for guidance to complete official paperwork, including financial support for their housing is also a major challenge.

Factors, such as uneasy pressure on the local authority budget (care facilities), have led to the decline in the number of children benefiting from respite. Finding respite care, including carer's breaks, is difficult, with professionals highlighting the shortage of services and the impact that it has had on the lives of the carers and children they work with (Kensington and Chelsea 2024). This implies that the educational needs of many children in care facilities will certainly be inadequate for child development in care homes.

Cluver and Gardner (2006), observed that children in residential care facilities face discrimination as a major challenge. Mukushi et al., (2019), collaborated that the abandonment of children by their parent causes high sense of discrimination among them and low self-esteem which affect their learning ability in school. According to Cluver and Garner (2006), children in care facilities are label as orphans, which is provocative and can lead to reduce self – esteem and learning abilities. This implies that the social work professional working in care homes have serious roles to play in conducting a psycho-social counselling on these types of children in order to enhance their learning ability.

Conclusion

The increasing population of children owing to the high fertility rate in Nigeria, has post a serious challenge on the development of a child in the Nigerian society. This situation has significantly influenced many children to become vulnerable and the eventual spread of care homes and facilities that help to carter for the education, growth and development of the children. The development of a child in any formal organizations be it government or non-governmental need the services of professional social workers among the list of other professional for effective and efficient child development.

The education and skill development of children who are in a care facility can be possible when professional social workers (school social workers) are engage to render their expertise services such as counseling, advocacy and other interventions to children in the care facility. Social workers help in educating and helping the children in care homes to aquire skills most importantly in areas where the care givers are deficient. These services will enhance children participation in their daily learning within the care home and in their various educational carriers.

Recommendation.

The various recommendations will help to enhance child educational development in care home:

1. The registration/ licensing of care homes in Nigeria should be properly guided by the coordinating ministries such that no care homes/facility in Nigeria should be given

operational license without the adequate engagement of social workers among the team of workers that will run the care facility. This will enable school social workers to render assistance to special children to enhance their educational development.

2. The establishment and administration of care homes should be organized in such a way that the promotion, advocacy and interventions of the rights of children (best interest of the child) is upheld. The social work professional should be allowed to see into the administration of the care homes because this will help to protect children rights of education/skills development in care facilities within the Nigeran sphere.
3. Children are better developed using certain skit, which social workers advocacy collaboration and linkages to other agencies, individuals, government and non-governmental organizations (NGO) can help to provide for the needs of the children education and skills development in the care facilities.
4. The national and state coordinating ministries of social welfare should as a matter of urgency collaborate with National Association of Social Worker (NASOW), to checkmate all forms of quarks who operate care homes without good education/skills facilities for an enhance child educational development in the care facilities.
5. There should be an enabling law that will strengthen the operationalization of care homes. This law should in-cooperate the social work council in Nigeria to ensure that professional social workers supervised the education and skill development of children in care facilities.

References

Balli, D. (2016). Role and challenges of school social workers in facilitating and supporting the inclusiveness of children with special needs in regular schools. Academic International Scientific Journal, 7(14), 148-157.

Bolin S.J., Rueda H.A., Linton K.F. (2018) 'Grand Challenges in School Social Work: Collaboration and Constraint in School Social Workers' Sexuality Support for Children with Disabilities', *Children & Schools* 40(1): 25–34.

Ceka, A. & Murati, R. (2016). The role of parents in the education of children. *Journal of education and practice, 7 (5);* 61-64. https:/www.script.org.reference.

Chibwana, M. W. T. & Gumbo, N. (2014). Assessment report of the alternative care system for children in Zimbabwe. Innbruck: SOS Children's Villages International.

Cluver, L. & Guardner, F. (2006), The Psychological Welbeing of Children Orphanaged by AIDS in Cape Town, South Africa. Anals of General Psychiatry, 5 (8) https//:doi.org/101186/1744-859x-5-8

Crowder. (2017). The changing role of student support staff: A sample of school social worker responses. Centre for MH in schools and student/learning supports. Smhp.psych.ulca.edu/hot top (MH-Mental Health) Hot Topics.

DuBois B.L., Miley K.K. (2013) *Social Work: An Empowering Profession*. New York: Pearson Higher Ed.

Edinyang, S.D., Opoh, F,A., Odey, E., Ushie, D., & Adams, A.O. (2020) Parental Educatinal Level and increase in Street Children in Calabar Metropolis Cross River State Nigeria. Meditaranian Journal of Social Sceinces, 11(3), 71 doi. 10.36941/mjss-2020-0031

Ejembi, (2023). Impact of social work services and child care in Benue south senatorial district. *Scholarly journal of social science research,* 2(8): 55-56. www.ijaar.org/SjSS

Eyitayo, O.A. & Elizabeth, A. A. (2022). Changing Roles of Social Work Educators in Schools

Eyo, C., (2013). The many Faces of Calabar Orphans. Daily Trust News, Saturday 26th January for Students with Special Needs in Osun State, Nigeria. Journal of Advances in Education and Philosophy 6(5):281-287 DOI: 10.36348/jaep.2022.v06i05.004

Frey A., George-Nichols N. (2003) 'Intervention Practices for Students with Emotional and Behavioural Disorders: Using Research to Inform School Social Work Practice', *Children & Schools* 25(2): 97–104.

Hujlund, S. (2011). Home as a model for sociality in Danish children, homes. *Journal of social analysis,* 55 (2) 106-120. https://dio.org/10.3167/sa.2011.550206

Imowo, (2023) Olumba Obu Build Multi-Million Naira Home for Less Privileged Children. The Sun News paper Nigeria, 14th June 2023. https://thesun.ng

Kelechi, K. O. (2024). The complementary roles of school social work in the education and development of the Nigerian child. *Journal of interdisciplinary research in education, social science and arts, 1 (3): 1. www.nigerianjournal.online.com*

Kelly M.S., Raines J.C., Frey A., Stone S. (2010) *School Social Work: An Evidence-Informed Framework for Practice*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Kensington, & Chelsea (2024), Four Chanlenges face by People with Leaning Disabilities. Health watch.www.healthwatch.org.uk/blog/2024-10-16/four-challenges-people-face-living-learning-disabilities.

Kottha, C. (2015). School social workers help students and parents. Heights Observer, 8(8).http://heightobserver.org/read/2015/07/31/ school-social-workers-help-students-and-parents

Kurfi, M. H. (2010), Societal response to the state orphans and vulnerable Children. Ohio link Electronic Theses and Dissatation. https://etdohiolink.edu

Kwan V., Cheung J.C.-.S. (2017) 'Social Work Initiatives for the Inclusion of Students with Special Educational Needs', *Practice* 29(2): 107–19.

Linda, N. & Obed, L. (2015). Nigerian integrated early childhood development policy; perspective on literacy. *African journal of childhood education 5 (1); 125-141 htpps://doi.org/10.41021/sajec.v5.1.353.*

Mukhubele, J. C., Mabvurira, V., Mukushi, A. T. & Matlakala, F. K. (2019). Psychosocial challenges faced by children in Residential care facilities. *Southern African Journal of Social Work and Social Development, 31*(2): 18-42. Doi.10.25159/2415-5829/2892.

Mustapha, K., (2014) The state of Orphans andVulnerable Children in Kano Metropolis, Nigeria. Boston University. www.researchgate.net/publication/293071002-the-the-state -orphan-vulnerable-children-in-kano-nigeria.

Mutulayova, T., & Pesatova, I. (2013) in Carr & Shaia (2018) School social workers US partners in the school mission. The Professional Journal for Educators www.kappanonline.org

Powell, G. T., Chinake, D., Mudzinge, W., Maambira & Mukutin, S. (2004). Children in residential care. The Zimbabwean Experience. Harare: Ministry of Public Services, Labour and Social Welfare and UNICEF.

Richler,L.M., Daelmans, B., & Lombardi, J. (2017) Investigating in the Foundation of Sustainable Development: Partways to scale up for Early Childhood Development. Lancet 2017;389:103-118.

Shonkoff, J.P., Richler, L., Van Der Gang, J.,Bhutta Z.A. (2012) An Integrated Science and Early Childhood Development. Pediatric 2012: 129. Doi:101542/ped.2011-0366.

Tanner, D. (2020). The love that dare not speaks it name: the role of compassion in social work practice. *The British journal of social work,* 50(96): 1688-705. Doi.1093/bjsw/bszi27

UN (2020), Covid-19 impact; The pandemic plunged an estimated …… www. Unitednation.com

Vandeh, C. M., Gbaa, D. J., & Awambe, K. E. (2014). Improvisation of instructional materials in an inclusive environment in Nigeria. National Journal of Inclusive Education, 2(1).

Vinda, G. & Rita, R. (2016). The qualification, improvement of social workers working in children's care homes in the context of their restructuring: Society integration education; 3 (pp 324)/ doi.10.1770/sie2016vol/3.1455

Virbaliene, R. & Cizikene, J. (2024). The role of social worker in developing children's independence in community care homes proceeding of the international scientific conference,1(13)807-819.
Seimas.irs.it/portal/legal/act/it/TAD/609e30e255dfi.ebalf86445a2cs

Wilson, K. Ruch, G. Lymber, M., Cooper A. (2008) social work: An introduction to contemporary practice. Pearson Longman press 5 London (pp. 512-536). https://durham-respository.worktribe.com/output/1679600,

Wong J.H.C. (2013) 'Psychosocial Recovery for Children Disabled in an Earthquake: School Social Work in Dujiangyan, China', *Journal of Social Work in Disability and Rehabilitation* 12(1–2): 102–15.