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Safety Practices Adopted by Administrators and Teachers of Pre-Primary Schools in Enugu State, Nigeria

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Abstract

The study investigated safety practices adopted by administrators and teachers in pre-primary schools in Enugu State. Specifically, it determined safety practices presently being adopted by administrators and teachers in the activity areas in private and public pre-primary schools in Enugu state; constraints to adoption of needed safety practices; and ways administrators and teachers could be assisted in adoption of needed safety practices. It Survey design was adopted. Population was all (2,242) registered pre-primary schools with (11,911 teachers and 2,242 administrators) in Enugu state. Multistage sampling was used to select 400 administrators and 660 teachers. Questionnaire were used for data collection. Data were analyzed using frequencies, percentages, mean and standard deviations and t-test at 0.05 level of significance. Findings show only two safety practices adopted by administrators; adequate ventilation and light (63%), and controlling noise (66%) in the pre-primary schools. Teachers adopted 24 and 27 safety practices in private and public pre-primary schools respectively, including; children are arranged in the classrooms for proper supervision during activities (54.1%) (64.0%); adequate toilet hygiene (60.1%) (68.4%) and others. Other findings are 16 constraints to adaptation of safety practices by administrators and teachers. These include, lack of training for preschool workers on safety procedures (3.05±1.40); among others. Further findings are 10 ways of enhancing adoption of safety practices ($\overline{X} \geq 2.50$). Three recommendations were made, including, training and retraining of pre-primary school workers on safety practices.

Key words: Safety, Practices, Activity, Areas, Adoption, Constraints, Preschool, Children, Administrators, Teachers.

Introduction

Pre-primary school education also called early childhood education or preschool education, refers to organized learning experiences for children/preschoolers typically between the ages of about three and five years. The education is designed primarily to introduce very young children to a school-type environment, that provide a bridge between the home and a school-based atmosphere (International Standard Classification of Education, 2020; Kishore, 2023). Pre-schoolers are young children in this developmental band whose needs differ substantially from older pupils: they require age-appropriate furniture and learning materials, close adult supervision, safe play spaces, responsive caregiving and health protection.

The core purpose of pre-primary education is to support rapid cognitive, socio-emotional and motor development during the critical window of brain growth, provide foundational pre-literacy and numeracy skills, and prepare children for successful transition into formal schooling. Beyond cognitive gains, quality pre-primary schools contribute to children's health, social skills and long-term economic outcomes; but these benefits depend on safe, healthy learning environments.

Pre-primary school environment, while designed for learning and play, can present injury risks as children carry out daily activities in the classrooms, play grounds, restrooms and the compound in general (Albeta & John, 2020; Applebury, 2021). Preschoolers are naturally curious and love to explore their environment, which can lead to safety risks such as falls, cuts and scrapes, burns, choking, playground accidents and poisoning (Choi, lee, & Jang, 2021; Kaarle, 2024). Preschoolers are characterized by rapid mental and physical development; and these manifest in increased physical strength and coordination, cause and effect experimentation, memory skill increase and display of independence (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2020; Olga, et al., 2025). According to Kaarle (2024), preschoolers are active learners; constantly exploring their environment with the tendency to climb higher heights, run faster and jump from greater heights. The safety of pre-primary school children is therefore, of more importance than those of other age groups because they are more vulnerable to threats due to the level of activities and curiosity associated with the stage of life (Go'es, *et al.*, 2023). Therefore, keeping children safe becomes paramount among the roles of pre-primary school workers/caregivers (teachers and administrators). The United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of the Child accorded every child the right to safety and good health (MacKay & Vincenten, 2014).

In order to achieve this, caregivers of children need to adopt various safety practices and precautions that ensure that children are free from the occurrence of risk of injury, ill health or danger. According to the-primary Infrastructure Health and Safety Association (2020), safety practices comprises all the preventive and remedial procedures and processes put in place at work place so that human lives, equipment and the overall work environment are not endangered. Oswalt, *et al* (2020) noted that caregivers/workers' responsibility in children safety involves educating children on appropriate safety precautions, setting clear limits to children's behaviours as well as provision of safety gadgets, equipment and environment for the children as they engage in learning activities. Such environment also prevents avoidable deaths and life threatening injuries, it encourages their social and intellectual learning and overall development (Applebury, 2020; Dike & Otu, 2024). However, various human and environmental factors could constrain the efforts of preschool administrators and teachers in achieving optimal safety situations.

Presently, the Nigerian National Minimum Standard for Early Childhood Care Centers developed by the Nigerian Education Research and Development

Council (NERDC) (2024), does not clearly stipulate safety policies for preschool operations. Although the objectives of pre-primary schools included provision of "healthy and safe environment" and "protection and security" of children Federal Republic of Nigeria (2013), there were no documented safety guidelines on how preschool workers should attain the objectives. This omission has left the operators of pre-primary schools without articulated guides for safety practices (Obiweluozor, 2015; Mowen, 2021). According to Dike and Otu (2024), this has detrimental effect on the well-being and development of young children. Nwabiankea & Okeoghone, 2024 also reported that the poor state of public pre-primary school centers in Nigeria had contributed to the development of sub-standard private early childhood education centers in many ways.

In situations like this the poor pre-primary school environment, activities, equipment and materials used therein frequently give rise to different forms of hazards, accidents or injuries as teachers/nannies and the preschoolers interact during indoor or outdoor activities. The Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies (ABCT) (2025) opined that the leading killer of children (ages 1–19) in the world including Nigeria is injury.

Accidents/injuries among preschoolers could be prevented or reduced ensuring safety in the pre-primary school environment if safety percussions are put in place. European Child Safety Alliance (2009), estimated that if all known safety measures are adopted in pre-primary schools approximately 90 percent of the accidents/injuries could be prevented. International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) are scaling up their strategies in the area of child and adolescent injury prevention and have advocated global attention to reduce childhood injuries using a range of strategies, including playground safety and safeguards against injury (Ndubuisi, *et al*, 2020). Little is known about the specific safety measures being implemented by pre-primary school workers in various activity areas in Enugu state. This gap is the focus of this study.

Objectives of the study

The major objective of this study was to investigate safety practices adopted by administrators and teachers (operatives) in private and public pre-primary schools in Enugu State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study determined;

1. safety practices presently being adopted by operatives in the activity areas in private and public pre-primary schools in Enugu state;
2. constraints to adoption of needed safety practices by operatives in activity areas in schools;
3. ways of enhancing adoption of needed safety practices.

Hypotheses (HOs)

There is no significant difference in mean responses of administrators and teachers (operatives) in the private and public schools in Enugu state on:

HO_1: constraints to adoption of safety practices in pre-primary schools.

HO_2 ways of assisting operatives adopt safety practices in pre-primary schools.

Methodology

***Design of the Study*:** The study adopted a descriptive survey design.

***Area of the study*:** The study area was Enugu state located in the South-east of Nigeria. The state has 17 local government areas across the three senatorial zones. The communities in the state have at least one primary with pre-primary and secondary schools funded by the government. There are also a large number of private nurseries, primary and secondary schools in the state. There are over 15 higher institutions in the state.

***Population of the study*:** The population for the study was made up of 2,242 registered private and public pre-primary schools (private = 1,034, public = 1,208) in the six education zones in Enugu state with 11,911 male and female teachers (11,335 from private and 576 from public pre-primary schools) and 2,242 male and female administrators (1,034 from private and 1,208 from public pre-primary schools). Majority of the teachers and administrators had National Certificate in Education (NCE) and First degree as their highest educational qualification with work experience of five years and above. Most of them were females (source: Ministry of Education Enugu state, 2011).

***Sample for the study*:** The sample for the study was 1,060 staff (400 school administrators and 660 pre-primary school teachers) from 400 (18%) pre-primary schools in the six education zones in the state. Multi-stages sampling technique was adopted. Yamane formula was used to select 400 pre-primary schools both private and public for the study. Fifty percent (50%) of each pre-primary school type was randomly selected for the study (188 private and 212 public). Number of pre-primary school types to be selected in each zone was determined. All the pre-primary school class teachers (660) and administrators (400) in the sampled schools were used for the study since their numbers was manageable.

***Instruments for Data Collection*:** A structured questionnaire was used for data collection. It was developed based on literature review and objectives of the study. It was made up of three sections A, B and C, corresponding to the specific objectives. Section A items were structured as 2-point scale of "Practiced =1 and Not practiced = 0" while Sections B and C were structured into 4-point response options of: Section B as "Very Serious Constraint" (VSC) =4; "Serious Constraint" (SC) = 3; "Minimal Constraint" (MC) =2; "No Constraint" (NC) =1. The instrument was validated by three university experts in child development. The reliability of the instrument was carried out in Anambra state and established using the Cronbach Alpha reliability test which yielded the reliability coefficients of 0.93, 0.96 and 0.89 for sections A, B and C respectively. This showed that the items of the instrument had high level of internal consistency.

***Method of Data collection*:** A total of 1,060 copies of questionnaire were distributed by hand with the help of six research assistants. All the 1060 copies (660 teachers and 400 administrators) were retrieved within four weeks. There was a 100 percent return rate of the questionnaire.

***Data Analysis technique*:** Data were analyzed using frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations. Data for

the adopted safety practices were presented as frequencies and percentages while means and standard deviations were used to analyze data on the constraints to adopting optimal safety practices. Hypotheses were tested with t-test at 0.05 level of significance. Any item in section A with percentage 50.0 percent and above was considered as adopted safety practice and items with mean ratings from 2.50 and above were accepted as constraint to adopting needed safety practices and ways to assist in the adoption of needed safety practices.

Results

Table 1a: Frequency and Percentage Responses on Safety Practices Adopted by Administrators in Private and Public Pre-Primary Schools in Enugu State.

S/N	Safety Practices	F (%) $_1$	D_1	F (%) $_2$	D_2
	Classroom				
1	Provision of adequate child sized classroom facilities	71 (37.8)	NA	82 (40.1)	NA
2	Provision of well-equipped first aid kits	59 (31.9)	NA	59 (27.8)	NA
3	Installation of safety devices like fire extinguisher, alarm	45 (23.9)	NA	41 (19.3)	NA
4	Ensure that floor coverings are in good condition	80 (42.4)	NA	73 (34.4)	NA
5	Ensure adequate ventilation and lighting	118 (62.8)	A	134(63.2)	A
6	Noise control	110(58.5)	A	154(72.6)	A
7	Provision of finger jam protectors on the door	52 (27.7)	NA	56 (26.4)	NA
8	Provide ample space for the number of children	78 (37.2)	NA	88 (41.5)	NA
9	Prompt repairs and regular maintenance of facilities	85 (45.2)	NA	94 (44.3)	NA
10	Recruiting qualified teachers and nannies	76 (40.4)	NA	90 (42.5)	NA
11	Organizing safety training for workers	68 (36.2)	NA	65 (30.7)	NA
12	Securing windows and stair cases properly	87 (46.3)	NA	79 (37.3)	NA
	Playground				
13	Provision of sturdy and age-appropriate equipment	76 (40.4)	NA	75 (35.4)	NA
14	Provision of good shade from sun	59 (31.4)	NA	67 (31.6)	NA
15	Cushioning materials are used under equipment	63 (33.5)	NA	51 (24.1)	NA
16	Spacing out equipment at least 12 feet (3.7m) apart	50 (26.6)	NA	56 (26.4)	NA
17	Height of swings, slides etc. are safe distance from the ground	59 (31.4)	NA	64 (30.2)	NA
18	Encircle the playground with a tall safety fence with gates	48 (25.5)	NA	40 (18.9)	NA
	Restroom				
19	Cleaning materials are stored in locked closets	80 (42.6)	NA	65 (30.7)	NA
20	Exposed electrical outlets are covered	74 (39.4)	NA	61 (28.8)	NA
21	Good water supply to improve sanitation	64 (34.0)	NA	51 (24.1)	NA
22	Wash hand basins/toilet bowls mounted at adequate height	49 (26.1)	NA	45(21.2)	NA
	Car Park		NA		NA
23	Provide ample and well-planned parking space	61 (32.4)	NA	86 (40.6)	NA
24	Park located away from heavy pedestrian way	57(30.3)	NA	66 (31.1)	NA
	Dining Area				
25	Provision of adequate eating space	68 (36.2)	NA	77 (36.3)	NA
26	Adequate water supply and safe covered water containers	67 (35.6)	NA	69 (32.5)	NA
27	Appropriate and sufficient eating facilities and utensils	54 (28.7)	NA	46 (21.7)	NA

Table 1a continued

28	Have functional and adequate sinks and wash basins	54 (28.7)	NA	45 (21.2)	NA
	Compound				
29	Ensure the gate leading to the outside is always locked	69(36.7)	NA	54(25.5)	NA
30	Provide a tall perimeter fence	52 (27.7)	NA	40 (18.9)	NA
	Sick Bay				
31	Provision of adequate ventilation and good light	60(31.9)	NA	59 (27.8)	NA
32	Trained staff are posted to the sick bay	47(25)	NA	26 (12.6)	NA
33	The room is equipped with appropriate facilities and drugs	45(23.9)	NA	26 (12.6)	NA
34	Provision of a room for first aid and temporary isolation	39(20.7)	NA	22 (10.4)	NA

$F(\%)_1$ = Frequency and percentage scores in private pre-primary Schools; $F(\%)_2$ = Frequency and Percentage Scores in Public pre-primary Schools; D1 = Decisions for private pre-primary schools; D_2 = Decisions for Public pre-primary schools; NA = Not Adopted; A = Adopted

Table 1a shows, based on the 50% cut off mark, that administrators adopted only two out of 34 safety practices, namely: adequate ventilation and lighting (63%), and controlled noise in the preschools (66%).

Table 1b: Frequency and Percentage Responses on Safety Practices Adopted by Teachers in Private and Public Pre- Primary School in Enugu State.

S/N	Safety Practices	$F(\%)_1$	D_1	$F(\%)_2$	D_2
	Classroom				
1	Children arranged for proper supervision during activities	172(54.1)	A	219(64.0)	A
2	Posting safety rules and signs on walls	138(43.4)	NA	180(52.3)	A
3	Prompt reporting of any fault or damaged equipment	163(51.3)	A	192(56.1)	A
4	Ensure proper use of equipment	166(52.2)	A	221(64.6)	A
5	Clearing work surface immediately after use	175(55.0)	A	214(62.6)	A
6	Maintain good posture during activities	169(53.1)	A	222(64.9)	A
7	Accessible power outlets covered	154(48.4)	NA	211(61.7)	A
	Play ground				
8	Prompt repair and maintenance of equipment	162(50.9)	A	199(58.2)	A
9	Children not allowed in playground without supervision	153(48.1)	NA	197(57.6)	A
10	Playground kept free of broken glass, sharp objects, chemicals etc.	171(53.8)	A	203(59.4)	A
11	Toys cleaned and stored away at end of daily use	149(46.9)	NA	191(55.8)	A
12	Children made to stay a safe distance from moving equipment	169(53.1)	A	211(61.7)	A
13	Children dressed properly for outdoor activities	169(53.1)	A	224(65.5)	A
14	Children made to obey rules and take turns	170(53.5)	A	227(66.4)	A
	Rest room				
15	Children effectively supervised as they use restroom	163(51.3)	A	217(63.5)	A
16	All water containers are properly covered	164(51.6)	A	216(63.2)	A
17	Effective repairs and maintenance broken or cracked bowls	86(27.0)	NA	109(31.9)	NA
18	Clean up water and urine spills immediately	174(54.7)	A	212(62.0)	A
19	Ensure adequate toilet hygiene	191(60.1)	A	234(68.4)	A
	Car Park				
20	Monitor drop off and pick up sessions	149(46.9)	NA	161(47.1)	NA
21	Provide traffic signs for users	140(44.0)	NA	163(47.7)	NA

Table 1b continued

22	Ensure adults take children to classroom after drop-off	154(48.4)	NA	185(54.1)	A
23	Children are not allowed to play at the park	158(49.7)	NA	190(55.6)	A
	Dining area				A
24	Protect foods from insects, rodents and other animals	166(52.2)	A	196(57.3)	A
25	Keep floor free from spills and peels	171(53.8)	A	204(59.6)	A
26	Ensure eating hygiene and proper table manners	189(58.8)	A	226(66.1)	A
	Compound				
27	Proper disposal of refuse	179(56.3)	A	201(58.8)	A
28	Keep compound free from overgrown and fallen tree branches	186(58.5)	A	232(67.8)	A
29	Children are not allowed to climb trees	179(56.3)	A	230(67.3)	A
30	Children are taught to walk and not run	165(51.9)	A	215(62.9)	A
31	Compound cleaning by children well supervised	169(53.1)	A	220(64.3)	A
	Sick bay				
32	Medical record of each child kept in folders	170(53.5)	A	139(40.6)	NA
33	Medical facilities and drugs out of children's reach	168(52.8)	A	167(48.8)	NA
34	Regular replacement of expired drugs and first aid items	155(48.7)	NA	155(45.3)	NA
35	Prompt disposal of medical waste.	149(46.9)	NA	147(43.0)	NA
36	Proper administration of drugs	150(47.2)	NA	142(41.5)	NA

$F(\%)_1$ = Frequency and percentage scores in private pre-primary Schools; $F(\%)_2$ = Frequency and Percentage Scores in Public pre-primary Schools; D_1 = Decisions for private pre-primary schools; D_2 = Decisions for Public pre-primary schools; NA = Not Adopted; A = Adopted

Table 1b shows that teachers in the private pre-primary schools adopted 24 safety practices out (≥ 50%) of the 36 practices listed which include among others; ensuring adequate toilet hygiene (60.1%); ensure eating hygiene and proper table manners (58.8%). The Table also shows that teachers in the public pre-primary schools adopted 28 out of the 36 safety practices (≥ 50%).

Table 2: Mean Responses, Standard Deviation and t-test on the Constraints to Adopting Best Safety Practices

		Administrators			Teachers				
S/N	**Constraints**	$\bar{X}_1$	$\bar{X}_2$	$\bar{X}_{g1}$	$\bar{X}_3$	$\bar{X}_4$	$\bar{X}_{g2}$	**t ($\bar{X}_{g1}$ $\bar{X}_{g2}$)**	**R**
	Human factors								
1	Lack of appropriate skills and experience in using equipment	3.13	3.17	3.15	2.65	2.95	2.75	0.04	A
2	Barriers in language (dialects) of communication	2.90	2.91	2.91	2.93	3.05	2.99	0.01	A
3	Insufficient time allocated to activities	2.99	2.83	2.91	2.81	3.00	2.91	0.00	A
4	Unqualified and inexperienced teachers and nannies	2.96	2.74	2.85	2.88	3.03	2.96	0.01	A
5	Poor attitude of teachers and nannies to children	2.87	2.81	2.84	2.89	3.01	2.95	0.01	A
6	Provision of facilities not based of an age of children.	2.94	3.02	2.98	2.93	2.99	2.96	0.00	A

Table 2 continued

7	Physical, health challenges of staff and preschoolers	2.81	2.85	2.83	2.88	2.98	2.93	0.01	A
8	Unavailability of documented safety policy	2.88	3.05	2.97	2.90	3.07	2.99	0.00	A
9	Lack of training for preschool workers on safety	2.94	3.14	3.04	2.98	3.19	3.09	0.01	A
10	Inadequate child/staff ratio	2.85	2.94	2.90	2.94	3.15	3.05	0.02	A
	Environmental factors								
11	Inadequate infrastructure	3.00	3.16	3.08	3.01	3.11	3.06	0.00	A
12	Lack of fund for repair or replacement of faulty facilities	3.07	3.27	3.17	2.98	3.29	3.14	0.12	A
13	Lack of proper refuse disposal facilities like incinerators	2.91	3.07	2.99	2.96	3.25	3.11	0.01	A
14	Poor power supply.	3.01	3.18	3.10	3.05	3.24	3.15	0.01	A
15	Location of schools close to bushes and forests	2.95	2.92	2.94	3.00	3.09	3.05	0.01	A
16	Unavailability of adequate safety facilities like first aid box and fire alarms	3.05	3.16	3.11	3.08	3.16	3.12	0.00	A
17	Lack of proper drainage system or blocked water ways	2.96	2.89	2.93	2.94	3.20	3.07	0.03	A

$\bar{X}_1$ = Mean for Private School Administrators; $\bar{X}_2$ = Mean for Public School Administrators; $\bar{X}_{g1}$ = Grand Mean for Private and Public Administrators; SD_1 = Standard deviations for Administrators; $\bar{X}_3$ = Mean of Private School Teachers; $\bar{X}_4$ = = Mean for Public School Teachers; $\bar{X}_{g2}$ = Grand Mean for Private and Public, School Teachers, SD_2 = Standard deviations for Teachers; t ($\bar{X}_{g1}$ $\bar{X}_{g2}$) = t-test result; R = Remark; A = Agreed.

Table 2 shows that administrators and teachers agreed to all the 17 items as constraints to adopting safety practices in the pre-primary schools ($\bar{X} \geq 2.59$). The Table shows no significant differences between the mean responses of administrators and teachers ($p<0.05$).

Table 3: Mean Responses, Standard Deviation and t-test on Ways of Enhancing Adoption of Safety Practices by Administrators and Teachers to Adopt Best Safety Practices

		Administrators				**Teachers**			
S/N	**Ways of Enhancing**	$\bar{X}_1$	$\bar{X}_2$	$\bar{X}_{g1}$	$\bar{X}_3$	$\bar{X}_4$	$\bar{X}_{g2}$	t	R
1	Safety should be given consideration during building construction	3.55	3.74	3.65	3.45	4.46	3.46	0.02	A
2	Provision of adequate and appropriate facilities	3.47	3.63	3.55	3.37	3.42	3.40	0.01	A
3	Qualified and experienced workers should be employed in preschools	3.59	3.72	3.66	3.14	3.49	3.32	0.03	A
4	Provision of documented working safety policies for preschool operation	3.09	3.63	3.36	3.22	3.56	3.39	0.00	A
5	Organizing seminars and trainings on safety for preschool staff	3.51	3.73	3.62	3.44	3.54	3.49	0.01	A

Table 3 continued

6	Collaboration with other related professional example, social welfare, fire brigade etc. in enforcing safety policies	3.49	3.56	3.53	3.42	3.50	3.46	0.01	A
7	Use of posters and films showing safe working postures	3.39	3.50	3.45	3.24	3.30	3.27	0.02	A
8	Organize a safety day or week each term for preschoolers	3.39	3.50	3.45	3.28	3.30	3.29	0.02	A
9	Reward preschoolers who obey safety rules	3.39	3.61	3.58	3.36	3.38	3.37	0.02	A
10	Condemning behaviours that default safety rules	3.36	3.40	3.49	3.34	3.34	3.34	0.01	A

$\bar{X}_1$ = Mean for Private School Administrators; $\bar{X}_2$ = Mean for Public School Administrators; $\bar{X}_{g1}$ = Grand Mean for Private and Public schools Administrators; SD_1 *= Standard deviations for Administrators, $\bar{X}_3$ = Mean of Private School Teachers; $\bar{X}_4$ = Mean for Public School Teachers; = Grand Mean for Private and Public, School Teachers, SD_2 Standard deviations for teachers;* t ($\bar{X}_{g1}$ $\bar{X}_{g2}$) *= t-test results.*

Table 3 shows that administrators and teachers agreed on 10 ways of enhancing adoption safety practices in pre-primary schools. All the items obtained mean scores ranging from (3.27 to 3.66). The mean responses also show that the variables identified can significantly ($p < 0.05$) improve the adoption of best safety practices, showing that both administrators and teachers share the same view on the factors that could enhance the adoption of safety practices in pre-primary schools.

Discussion

The findings of the study showed that there was a very poor level of adoption of listed safety measures by the administrators of the pre-primary schools under study. Out of 34 safety practices highlighted, the administrators adopted only noise control and ensured adequate ventilation and light in the preschool classrooms. Adequate ventilation and lighting are required in pre-primary schools to maintain good air quality and improve the comfort of children (Choi, *et al*, 2021). This is in line with the findings of Kerstin & Jonas, (2021) who found that noise in pre-primary schools could lead to chaotic situations and aggravate aggression among children.

On the part of the teachers, the study found that they ensured considerable level of safety precautions in most activity areas of the school except at the car park and the sick bay. The playground provides children the avenue to explore their world and enhance their gross motor skills; and this in turn exposes them to various risks of falls, bruises and cuts (Jennissen, *et al*, 2018). The teachers also adopted measures that protected children from accidents associated with dining rooms. This is in line with Applebury (2021), who reported that children's health can be affected by what they eat and drink at school, hence when teachers supervise children's feeding and maintain adequate food hygiene, they help to reduce the risk of food poisoning and choking.

The teachers also adopted adequate safety measures in the rest rooms and compounds. At the sickbay, they reported keeping drugs and medical equipment out of children's reach as recommended by Mowen & Bragg (2021). This could prevent children from drug misuse,

medication poisoning and other forms of injuries.

The study further found various human and environment related factors that constrained the administrators and teachers from adopting best safety practices required at pre-primary schools. When pre-primary school workers are not properly trained on best safety practices and do not have documented safety policy to refer to at work, they become ill equipped to protect the children in their care. Mowen & Bragg, (2021) noted that it is very common for pre-primary school children to get hurt at school, therefore it is mandatory for teachers to have up to date training on safety practices required at pre-primary schools. Furthermore, Inadequate child/adult ratio in pre-primary school is a safety risk factor because when teachers have too many children to mind, they experience more stress and consequently lose control of the situations. Employment of unqualified and inexperienced workers is another important constraint highlighted in the study. This corroborates the report of Akinrotimi & Olowe (2016) that most private and public pre-primary school teachers in Nigeria do not have any training in early childhood education while some of them do not possess any teaching qualification.

The environmental constraints to adopting best safety practices in pre-primary schools include lack of fund to repair and maintain faulty facilities, poor power supply, inadequate safety gadgets, and poor infrastructures among others. These are in agreement with findings of Akinrotimi & Olowe, 2016; Dike &Otu, 2024 in the situations where fund is not made available for prompt repairs of broken or damaged equipment, it does not only put the equipment out of use, but increases the chances that they constitute environmental hazards. In like manner also unavailability of adequate safety gadgets in pre-primary schools such as fire alarms, fire extinguishers, sand buckets and first aid kits could be very risky to the safety and wellbeing of school children agrees with the findings of (Mowen & Bragg, 2021).

The findings of the study also reveal the opinions of administrators and teachers on various ways they could be assisted to adopt best practices regarding safety in pre-primary schools. The major ways include, among others, safety consideration at construction level of pre-primary school buildings, organizing safety trainings for staff, collaboration with other related professionals such as fire service in enforcing safety policies. These findings are consistent with those of Go'es, et al., (2023) reported that the design of pre-primary school classrooms is a strong factor in the number of safety issues encountered by children during learning activities. Furthermore, when qualified staff are employed and properly trained on best safety practices required in pre-primary schools, in collaboration with safety professionals such as the fire service, they become better equipped with the skills and competencies to protect the children and handle emergency situations at school. Mowen & Bragg (2021) in line with findings opines that pre-primary school worker must be given proper trainings on basic first aid administration, performing child cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) as well as recognizing signs and symptoms of abuse on children.

Conclusion

The pre-primary school administrators in private and public pre-primary schools in Enugu State adopted only noise control and adequate ventilation and lighting safety practice in the schools. The teachers in both private and public pre-primary schools adopted over 70% of the listed safety practices in various activity areas. Lack of adequate funding, unqualified and inexperienced worker as well as lack of laid down safety policies from the government were among the constraining factors identified affecting better adoption of safety practices in the pre-primary schools in Enugu state. Safety consideration at the design and construction stages of building pre-primary schools, employment of qualified pre-primary school workers, training and retraining of pre-primary school workers on safety practices, adequate funding of pre-primary schools and prioritizing safety in pre-primary schools by commending compliance to safety rules and condemning acts of safety misconducts include the possible ways identified that will help administrators and teachers better adopt safety practices in the schools.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. The pre-primary education unit of the state ministry of education should trained and retrained the administrators, teachers and all working with the pre-primary school children on safety issues in the activity areas.
2. Inspectors from zonal education board should ensure that identified safety practices in the pre-primary school activity areas are implemented in the schools during their school supervision/inspection to ensure safety in the schools.
3. Pre-primary school administrators and teachers should set up reward systems whereby behaviours that adhere to safety rules are commended while the ones that default safety rules are condemned to instill the sense of safety in the minds of the children.

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