

## *Health and Safety Standards of Nigerian Nursery/Primary Schools: An Assessment from Teachers' Perspective*

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### **Abstract**

*The rate at which a child can learn or how much he/she can learn depends on genetic factors and the quality of environment. This work assessed the enforcement of health and safety standards in the Nigerian nursery/primary school environment. Ninety-seven (97) teachers, drawn from the three Senatorial districts of Ogun State, Nigeria, constituted the sample. A researcher-designed questionnaire was used and complemented with direct school observations. The study found that classroom spaces and facilities for play and related activities in the 20 schools (10 public, 10 private) visited did not meet the specified minimum standards for establishing and operating nursery/primary schools in Nigeria. Teachers' perspectives on health and safety standards were significantly related to ownership of school (public/private), year established, teaching experience and class size. However, location of school (rural/urban), gender (male/female), and class taught (nursery/primary) did not significantly relate to the perspectives of the teachers. Overall, the supervisory roles of the State Universal Basic Education (SUBEB) officials were perceived by the teachers as not strong enough in enforcing health and safety standards. Among other things, the study calls for the review and enforcement of the Guidelines on Pre-Primary Education (FME, 1987) in line with the global best practices.*

**Keywords:** Health and safety standards, Nigerian nursery and primary schools, assessment, teachers' perspectives.

### **Introduction**

Schools provide an important environment for care and development of children at the nursery/primary level. School attendance at the preschool and primary levels bridges the gap in home care and lay the foundation for future learning. Unless children are raised in healthy and safe school environment during childhood, their future development could be seriously hampered (Murray, 2018; Campbell-Barr, 2019). As noted by Robson and Mastrangelo (2017), the "Reggio Emilia Principle of the

Environment as the Third Teacher” is founded on the scientific proof of the centrality of children’s environment in the entire teaching-learning processes. According to the National Scientific Council on the Developing Child (2010), “Young children experience their world as an environment of relationships, and these relationships affect virtually all aspects of their development – intellectual, social, emotional, physical, behavioral, and moral” (p. 1).

Findings from accumulated research support the centrality of the environment in achieving an all-round or holistic development of children (Mahon, 2018; O’Keefe, Hooper, & Jakubiec, 2019; UNCHR, 2007). Nevertheless, provision of preschool and primary (elementary) school educational services in many developing countries, including Nigeria, still falls short of the global standards (Maduewesi, 2005; Woodhead, 2014). In Nigeria, there are reported cases of sub-standard or mushroom nursery/primary schools which some observers and researchers have attributed to disregard for government policies and regulations (Ogunyemi, 2013; Salami, 2016). What is more worrisome, however, is that Nigerian parents continue to patronise these “sub-standard” educational institutions, while governments (Federal, State and Council) look up to teachers and school administrators to implement existing policy guidelines for raising the quality of childhood education in the country. In practical terms, however, teachers have little or no say in policy enforcement because this is largely within the purview of the government officials in Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs).

In recent times, it has been observed that teachers’ perspectives to the challenge of health and safety standards in Nigerian nursery and primary schools are hard to come by. From an initial survey, most of the available reports about sub-standard schools are sourced from media reports which are, oftentimes, lack scientific basis (Ogunyemi, 2013). Hence, there is a dearth of data for understanding and explaining the current state of affairs in the nursery and primary school environments with a view to identifying needs and gaps for translating policies into practices. The present survey of

teachers' perspectives to the problem of health and safety standards in Ogun State was conceived in response to this critical research gap. Findings from the study could guide policy makers and school practitioners on what should be done to enhance safety and health standards for children in public and private nursery/primary schools in Ogun State, Nigeria, as well as other parts of Africa with similar educational experience.

### **Review of Related Literature**

The need to safeguard the health and safety of children in their foundational years is founded on research in neuroscience, environmental studies and developmental psychology. Children experience the most rapid growth in their lives during the first five years of life and a supportive environment is needed for their optimal development (Maduewesi, 2005; Mungai, Mwangi & Digolo, 2017; Wall, Litjens, & Taguma, 2015). The National Scientific Council on the Developing Child (2010) notes that persistent fear and anxiety can affect young children's learning and development. In the same vein, Wall (2016) declared that "the learning space must be explicitly considered as part of planning and delivery to leverage the full potential of its impact on student outcomes" (p. 7). From a synthesis of the evidence, the recent report of Barret, Treves, Shmis, Ambasz and Ustinova (2019) concluded that the major environmental factors that contribute to pupils' progress in learning include: good "natural" conditions such as lighting, air quality, temperature control, acoustics, and links to nature; age-appropriate learning spaces that offer flexible learning opportunities that pupils can adapt and personalize; connections between learning spaces that are easy to navigate and that may provide additional learning opportunities; a level of ambient stimulation using colour and visual complexity; schools that are designed from the inside out (classroom to school) so that each space meets the needs of its inhabitants; and designs that take into account local climatic and cultural conditions (p. vii).

Research has consistently shown that lack of supportive environment could adversely affect the growth and development processes of the school child. For instance, the Adams, Bartram, Chartier, and Sims (2009), following an extensive review of investigations into the relationship between poor health conditions and school learning in developing countries, concluded that:

Children's ability to learn may be affected by inadequate water, sanitation and hygiene conditions in several ways. These include helminth infections (which affect hundreds of millions of school-age children), long-term exposure to chemical contaminants in water (e.g. lead and arsenic), diarrhoeal diseases and malaria infections, all of which force many schoolchildren to be absent from school. Poor environmental conditions in the classroom can also make both teaching and learning very difficult (Adams, Bartram, Chartier, & Sims, 2009, p. iii).

Beside the apparent health challenge, safety constitutes a major concern for children in developing countries both at home and in the school. Recent reports (e.g., Barret, *et al.*, 2019; Kistner, Rakoczy, Otto, Klieme, & Büttner, 2015) corroborate earlier conclusions that educating children in unhealthy and unsafe environment could be detrimental to their capacity to learn effectively in order to reach their full potential. As surmised by the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), "unsafe learning environments contribute to the perpetuation of violence within communities" (UNCHR, 2007, p. 4). The Commission justified the case for "safe education" with reference to saving lives and ensuring the effective protection of girls and boys; ensuring that learning environments provide quality education; empowering girls by ending gender discrimination in school environments; increasing school attendance; and helping the search for durable solutions by promoting a culture of peace and dialogue. These justifications, among other things, underscore serious challenges

associated with establishing, managing, supervising and evaluating schools in an environment of widespread poverty, illiteracy and diseases (Saheed, 2010).

Governments (Federal, State and Local) in Nigeria appear to have expressed an increasing interest in the welfare of school children since the country returned to civilian administration in 1999. Guided by the provisions of the 1999 Constitution (as amended) and the Universal Basic Education Act (FRN, 2004), responsibility for the management of the Lower and Middle Basic Education (that is, Early Childhood, Care and Education, and Primary Education) will involve all the three tiers of government (Federal, State and Local). The Federal Government is to ensure quality control and maintenance of uniform standards and general coordination of programme implementation through appropriate policy guidelines. The 36 State governments and Federal Capital Territory (FCT) are to oversee the schools through the State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB) for which they get a 2% of the Federal Consolidated Revenue as grants managed by the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC). On their part, the 774 local governments are to administer nursery and primary schools under SUBEB (FME, 2008).

In practical terms, however, issues about the efficacy of the expected inter-agency collaboration among the three tiers of government handling preschool/primary education in Nigeria have remained largely contentious (Salami, 2016). Again, contrary to the implicit idea of universalizing access to pre-school education for three years as obtained in the private nursery/primary schools, the Federal Government of Nigeria has gone ahead to formulate an educational policy that restricts government-sponsored early childhood education to “Kindergarten” of one yearly only (FRN, 2013). This development has possibly compounded the problem of proliferation of early childhood education centres by private “investors” whose main concern is to make profit while appearing to be meeting an ever-increasing demand of parents (Ogunyemi, 2013). As a matter of fact, the Ministry of Education, in its 4-Year Strategic Plan for the Development of the Education Sector (2011-2015), clearly admits that:

In spite of the pronouncements by the Federal Government to incorporate Early Child Care Development Education (ECCDE) into primary school system, only 39% of primary schools have ECCDE section thereby excluding other Nigerian children the opportunity for a head start in life. Out of the expected enrolment figure of 22 million in ECCDE, only 2.02 million are currently enrolled, thus excluding 19.98 million from school. Coupled with this is the non-availability of copies of the approved (ECCDE) Curriculum and other documents already developed in collaboration with UNICEF. There is also lack of professionally-trained specialist ECCDE teachers, leaving the most important and critical period of development in the hands of uninformed and unqualified personnel (FME, 2011, p. 21).

From the available information, the main documents for regulating and monitoring early childhood education centres and primary schools in Nigeria are the *Guidelines on Pre-Primary Education* developed by the Federal Ministry of Education (FME, 1987), *National Policy for Integrated Early Childhood Development in Nigeria* (FME, 2007) and *National Policy on Education* (FRN, 2013). The 1987 document has continued to be used as the main policy guideline in the establishment, maintenance, monitoring and evaluation of nursery schools in the country till date; with possible modifications to few areas like minimum teacher's qualification which the National Policy on Education (FRN, 2013) has raised from Teacher's Grade II Certificate to Nigerian Certificate in Education (NCE). The *Guidelines* makes several recommendations meant to assure quality in Nigeria's nursery and primary schools. For example, on physical facilities, it calls for a building with the following specifications:

- classroom size of 12m by 6.5m to accommodate about 25 children;
- cross-ventilated and well lighted classrooms;
- in-built storage facilities and cupboards for keeping items of equipment;

- two access doorways to serve as alternative exits, and a veranda on either side of the classroom;
- cloakroom, toilets and wash-hand basins of appropriate height;
- separate staffroom, office for the Head-teacher, and First Aid Units with provision of two to four beds per class; and
- a good source of water supply.

On playground, the *Guidelines* stresses that “A well-fenced-in playground varying in size according to the enrolment of the school should be provided for security purposes. Where possible provision should be made for further growth” (FME, 1987:4). On the grassed playground are to be found facilities for climbing, jumping, pulling, handling, swinging, balancing, rocking, among others. The *Guidelines* further states that a track of hard surface for pushing along wheeled toys should be provided. The furniture items to be provided in nursery/primary school include chairs and tables suitable for different ages and sizes. The tables should be made of polished wood or formica surfaces. Both chairs and tables should be of light materials, and carry no sharp edges. In addition, there should be a large table with drawers for teachers’ use. Provision should equally be made for book racks and toy storage in every classroom, and it is emphasised that all facilities *provided should ensure safety of children* (FME, 1987).

The various provisions of the *Guidelines* are also reinforced and reproduced in other policy documents. For example, as part of the comprehensive childhood education proposal, the 10-Year Strategic Plan was to introduce mechanisms to encourage parents to enrol their children in ECCDE particularly for girls. These mechanisms are to include circulating copies of the existing policy, curriculum reform, and minimum standards for all schools. The Plan also proposed to engage non-governmental organisations (NGOs), community-based organisations (CBOs), international development organisations (IPOs) and other stakeholders to monitor and track implementation and sustainability of programmes post 2007 (FME, 2007). However, the challenge about the establishment and management of nursery/primary



schools in present-day Nigeria remains: to what extent are the stipulated policies and guidelines being enforced to guarantee the health and safety standards in these childhood educational institutions? The need to address this all-important question gave rise to the present study.

### **Statement of the Problem**

This study investigated the level of compliance with policies on health and safety in the establishment and running of nursery/primary schools as perceived by teachers in Ogun State, Nigeria. In specific terms, the study addressed the following questions:

1. To what extent do existing classroom spaces and facilities meet the specified minimum standards for nursery/primary schools?
2. How adequate are provisions for play and related facilities in the schools?
3. What is the current level of involvement/participation by major stakeholders in the running/activities of early childhood education centres?
4. Will ownership of school, year established, location, teacher's qualification and gender of teachers be related to compliance on classroom standards, provision of play and other facilities and involvement of stakeholders?

### **Methodology**

The study adopted a descriptive design of the survey type. A total of 100 nursery/primary school teachers were sampled, using a multi-stage procedure, from the three senatorial districts (Ogun Central, Ogun East and Ogun West) of Ogun State, Nigeria, in June/July, 2018. The target population consisted of all public schools with nursery facilities as well as all officially registered private nursery/primary schools. Six nursery/primary schools (three public and three private) were randomly selected from each of Ogun East and Ogun West senatorial districts. For the Ogun Central, being the State capital, the number of selected schools were eight (four public, four private). From each of the 20 nursery/primary schools, five (two nursery, three primary) teachers were selected through the balloting system. The sampling process produced a total of 100



respondents from the three senatorial districts. However, 93 respondents (93%) fully completed the questionnaire used for the survey.

Each nursery/primary school teacher responded to a researcher-designed questionnaire titled: "School Health, Safety and Security Standard Questionnaire" (SHSSSQ). The research instrument has a total 18 major items divided into three sections. Section A focused on background information of the respondents which included name and type of school, location, teacher's qualification, teacher's sex and the class taught by the teacher. Other background information sought relate to the dimensions of classroom space and the class size. In Section B, teachers were requested to assess facilities and activities in their schools with respect to three key areas: (1) the extent to which the classrooms where they practise can meet the specifications outlined in the *Guidelines on Pre-Primary Education* (FME, 1987); (2) provision of play and related facilities in their schools; and (3) the involvement/participation of parents, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), community-based organisations (CBOs), State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB) and Government Ministry officials in the running/activities of their schools. Section C of the research instrument requested the respondents to list three problems of safety and security observed in their schools and suggest ways of solving the problems. In addition to the questionnaires, the researcher conducted direct inspection of facilities in all the sampled schools to corroborate findings from the survey questionnaire. The classroom observation process was guided by a Checklist based on the specification on the 1987 *Guidelines*.

The research instrument was critiqued by two experts in early childhood education and trial-tested by test-retest procedure within a period of two weeks in two nursery/primary schools in another State within Nigeria. The reliability test gave a coefficient value of .85 which was adjudged adequate for the research instrument. Data collected from the 93 respondents were subsequently pooled and analysed using simple percentage and correlation coefficient.

**Findings and discussion**

Tables 1-4 below highlight major findings from the data analysis in relation to the research questions.

**Research question 1:** To what extent do existing classroom spaces and facilities meet the specified minimum standards for nursery/primary schools?

**Table 1: Teachers’ perspectives on classrooms and learning facilities**

<i>My classroom:</i>	Excellently	Partially	Not at All
can comfortably accommodate the children in the class	50(53.8%)	38(40.9%)	5(5.4%)
is cross-ventilated and well-lighted	61(65.6%)	24(25.8%)	8(8.6%)
has in-built storage facilities and cupboards for keeping items of equipment	68(73.1%)	22(23.7%)	3(3.2%)
has two access doorways to serve as alternative exits, and a veranda on either side of the classroom	25(26.9%)	31(33.3%)	37(39.8%)
is filled with chairs and tables suitable for different ages and sizes of children	56(60.2%)	23(24.7%)	14(15.1%)
has tables made of polished wood or formica surfaces	45(48.4%)	37(39.8%)	11(11.8%)
has chairs and tables of light materials with no sharp edges	32(34.4%)	34(36.6%)	27(29.0%)
has a large table with drawers for teachers’ use	52(55.9%)	25(26.9%)	16(17.2%)
has provision for book racks and toy storage	45(48.4%)	27(29.0%)	21(22.6%)
has electric outlets with tamper resistant/cover attached by a screw so as not to harm children	25(26.9%)	31(33.3%)	37(39.8%)
has fire extinguisher mounted close to an open space	21(22.6%)	27(29.0%)	45(48.4%)
has wash hand basin in front of it for washing hands	68(73.1%)	22(23.7%)	3(3.2%)

Table 1 indicates that classroom spaces and facilities were inadequate in the schools. Although majority of the teachers said their classrooms were well ventilated with in-built storage facilities, they were divided in terms of accommodation for the pupils;

with almost half opting for partially adequate (40.9%) or not adequate at all (5.4%). The teachers' responses on "two access doorways to serve as alternative exits, and a veranda on either side of the classroom" is also worthy of note because over 70% either said the provision was partially adequate (33.3%) or not adequate at all. Direct observations in the schools also suggested that, in general, the levels of adequacy were mixed; five out of 10 public nursery/primary schools (50%) as well as another five out of 10 established private schools (50%) provided enough seats and benches while the remaining public and private schools, especially in the sub-urban locations were either over-crowded or sparsely furnished. One other noticeable feature of the old primary schools was the partial or total collapse of some of the buildings. There were visible cracks on the walls of 10 classrooms in five public schools and these classrooms were currently occupied by teachers and pupils. Evidently, school supervisors have not been doing a thorough job, even though they reportedly visited both public and private nursery schools in the State. So, while teachers reported excellent and fair provision of school facilities, field observations by this research confirmed previous conclusions that most private and public nursery/primary schools lacked adequate facilities for effective foundational education (Amuka, Asogwa & Agu, 2013; Ekpo, Samuel & Adigun, 2016; Odiagbe, 2015).

**Research question 2:** How adequate are provisions for play and related facilities in the nursery/primary schools?

Table 2 highlights the responses of teachers in respect of the second research question.

**Table 2: Teachers’ perspectives on availability play and health-related facilities**

This school has:	Very Adequate	Fairly adequate	Not adequate
a well-fenced-in playground that takes care of the enrolment of the school	21(22.6%)	27(29.0%)	45(48.4%)
playground with provision for further growth in children population	29(31.2%)	30(32.3%)	34(36.6%)
grassed playground with facilities for climbing, jumping, pulling, handling, swinging, balancing, rocking	34(36.6%)	38(40.9%)	21(22.6%)
a track of hard surface for pushing along wheeled toys	18(19.4%)	29(31.2%)	46(49.5%)
cloakroom or changing room (e.g. after sports), toilets and wash-hand basins of appropriate height	10(10.8%)	32(34.4)	51(54.8%)
separate staffroom, office for the Head-Teacher, and First Aid Units with provision of two to four beds per class	24(25.8%)	28(30.1)	41(44.1%)
a good source of water supply	26(28.0%)	36(38.7)	31(33.3%)
all facilities that can ensure safety and security of children	36(38.7%)	19(20.4)	38(40.9%)

As clearly shown in Table 2, teachers in most of the schools rated provision of play and health related facilities poorly as none of the eight items in that category was ranked very adequate by up to 40% of the respondents. Evidence from the fieldwork showed that three oldest private nursery/primary schools among the sample performed much better in this regard than in any of the three oldest public primary

schools which were also in the sample. This did not come as a surprise because the introduction of the one-year “kindergarten” as part of primary education subsystem was a recent development (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2013). Before the introduction of preschool education as part of the UBE programme, establishment and operation of nursery schools, kindergarten schools, play schools and other forms of early childhood educational facilities were left totally in the hands of private school operators and government was only playing supervisory roles. Also, it must be added that not all public primary schools in Ogun State had introduced the kindergarten component of primary education as at the time of this study because the preschool education policy was still being implemented on an experimental basis in Nigeria. Meanwhile, findings from this study are consistent with earlier conclusions from the reports of Ogunyemi (2005) and Ekpo, Samuel and Adigun (2016) that play facilities in Nigerian nursery and primary schools are grossly in short supply or almost non-existent.

In addition to the responses summarised in Table 2, the key issues about the general health and safety of the children in the nursery/primary schools visited, according to the teachers, included lack of road signs (e.g. Zebra crossing), lack of perimeter fencing for schools, absence of speed breakers around school locations to warn reckless drivers and prevent cases of hit-and-run accidents. Other major health and safety issues highlighted by the teachers are absence of child-friendly day and night watchguards; shortage of school road safety gadgets and facilities (e.g. reflector for school traffic controllers, fire extinguishers and sand buckets, school telephone for emergency calls in case of fire outbreak or accident). To illustrate their fears, a school headteacher at one of the school interactions narrated an ugly incident recorded some five years back in another school in the State. He said a Primary III pupil shot and seriously injured a schoolmate with a locally manufactured gun that was carelessly kept by a school night guard. Such a life-threatening incident, widely reported in the Western world (e.g. Fingerhut & Christoffel, 2012), could have been prevented where

health and safety standards in nursery and primary school centres had be enforced with appropriate level of orientation for paraprofessionals and support staff..

**Research question 3:** What is the current level of involvement/participation by major stakeholders in the running/activities of the nursery/primary schools?

**Table 3: Teachers’ perception of stakeholder involvement in management of schools**

<i>From what I know, this school has enjoyed the</i>	Regularly	Occasionally	Not at All
Involvement/support of Parents (e.g. Open Day, Parents-Teachers Association)	30(32.3%)	43(46.2%)	20(21.5%)
Involvement of Non-governmental organisations (NGOs)	50(53.8%)	38(40.9%)	5(5.4%)
Involvement of Community-Based Organisations (CBOs)	16(17.2%)	42(45.2%)	35(37.6%)
Involvement International Development Partners (IPOs)	6(6.5%)	36(38.7%)	51(54.8%)
Involvement/Inspection by officials from the Education Board (SUBEB)/Ministry	10(10.8%)	29(31.2%)	54(58.1%)
Involvement/supervision by other stakeholders to monitor activities/programmes.	64(68.8%)	25(26.9%)	4(4.3%)

Table 3 presents the findings on stakeholder involvement in the management of the public and private nursery schools from the perspectives of the teachers. Copious reference was made to parents active participation through Open Day visits and Parents-Teachers Association. However, it appears that parents participate mostly occasionally in both public and private schools. Also, the presence of non-governmental organisations (NGOs), including international and multilateral organisations such as UNICEF, are increasingly being felt in the schools. Most teachers in both public and private schools reported that the involvement of these agencies occurred either regularly or occasionally. However, the teachers did not see the involvement of the supervisory agencies, particularly officials from the State Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB) and Ministry of Education, as good enough for enforcing safety and

health standards in the State. Indeed, a total of 58.1% of the teachers declared that involvement/inspection by officials from the Education Board (SUBEB)/Ministry had not been enjoyed by their schools at all. This finding is a further confirmation of earlier reports by Salami (2016), Amuka, Asogwa and Agu (2013), and Odiagbe (2015).

**Research question 4:** Will ownership of school, year established, location, teacher’s qualification and gender of teachers be related to their perceptions of compliance on classroom standards, provision of play and related facilities and involvement of stakeholders?

**Table 4: Relationship between background school/teacher variables and perceptions of health and safety standards issues**

	Ownership of school	Year of established	Location	Education	Gender	Years as teacher	teacher before this school	Class taught	Classroom Size	Play Facilities	Management
Ownership of school	1										
Year of established	.540**	1									
Location	.329**	.144	1								
Education	-.198	.013	.068	1							
Years as teacher before this school	-.411**	-.269**	-.109	.040	.040	-.109	1				
Class taught	-.177	-.285**	.099	.079	-.062	-.117	-.056	1			
Classroom Size	-.337**	-.269**	-.146	.208*	-.108	-.167	.162	.044	1		
Play Facilities	-.529**	-.421**	-.232*	.101	-.177	-.407**	.208*	.025	.638**	1	
Involvement in Management	-.400**	-.279**	-.111	-.014	-.143	-.219*	.215*	-.020	.504**	.722**	1

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). \* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).



Data presented in Table 4 suggest that teachers' perspectives on safety and standards were significantly related to ownership of school (public/private), years schools were established, teaching experience and classroom size. These results of data analysis were corroborated by field observations that well-established private schools presented better facilities to guarantee the health and safety of children under their custody more than any public nursery and primary school. Nevertheless, only five private schools in the sample (established before 1999) would fall into the category of "well-established", going by the *Guidelines on Pre-Primary Education* (FME, 1987). Evidence from Table 4 also shows that the perspectives of teachers on health and safety standards in the investigated nursery and primary schools were not significantly different according to location (rural/urban), gender (male/female) or class taught (nursery/primary). Previous reports on school and teacher variables, in relation to indicators of quality primary education, are divided. For instance, while Sooter (2003) submitted that teacher quality was related to the provision of facilities in nursery primary school, the recent study of Aiwuyo and Omoera (2019) concluded that "the quality and qualification of teachers do not affect the provision of early childhood education in public primary schools" (p. 18). Thus, further research is required to corroborate or refute findings of this study on school and teacher related variables vis-à-vis health and safety standards.

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

This study investigated the enforcement of health and safety standards in public and private nursery/primary schools in Ogun State, Nigeria. Using teachers' assessment and direct observations, the study has shown that existing classroom spaces and facilities did not meet the specified minimum standards for nursery/primary schools. In addition, provisions for play and related facilities in the nursery/primary schools are grossly inadequate; especially in the public nursery/primary schools that are just being launched into preschool education provision. The

involvement/participation of major stakeholders like parents and non-governmental organisations in the management of nursery/primary schools, especially in the public ones, are increasing. However, supervisory activities of the State Universal Basic Education Board officials are not only inadequate, they are not bringing about the expected changes in the quality of nursery/primary school education in the Ogun State, Nigeria.

Based on its findings, the study recommends as follows:

1. The Federal Government should review the *Guidelines on Pre-Primary Education* (FME, 1987) and enforce compliance in both public and private nursery/primary schools in Ogun State, Nigeria. Clear guidelines for the establishment of primary schools should also be formulated to complement the reviewed guidelines for pre-primary education. All sub-standard schools, including those registered in error, should be closed to guarantee health and safety standards for the children.
2. The Ogun State government should ensure that basic road signs and zebra crossings are provided around school locations. The State government should also install security gadgets like the Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) in school neighbourhoods to monitor activities in the nursery and primary schools in order to prevent security breach in the schools.
3. The activities of paraprofessionals and support staff (nannies, security guards, cleaners, etc.) should be closely monitored to ensure that they do not compound the health and safety conditions in nursery and primary schools.
4. Participation of parents, voluntary organisations, community-based organisations and multi-lateral agencies such as UNICEF should be further encouraged to ensure that Ogun State and Nigerian nursery/primary schools operate within the ambit of health and safety standards in tune with the global best practices.

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