

Early Childhood Education: The Experiences of Parents of Infants (0-3 Years) In Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria.

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- **Abstract:** Whereas early childhood education is critical to the development and overall wellbeing of a child, of great implication is the extent of the parent-child bonding and the environment of the family. Family life has experienced various changes in a changing society. Constant migration to urban settings in search for means of survival and self-actualization has produced dual-worker families, additional stress on the primary caregivers, role adjustments, and the use of alternative childcare centres, among others, resulting in the use of multiple caregivers, split attachment, and unstable growth environment with potential adverse effects in the child's developmental process. The aim of this study is to examine the experience of parents of infants (0-3 years) in Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria, and how these challenges impact on early childhood education. The study used quantitative research method. Three hundred parents of infants (0 - 3 years) in Port Harcourt Metropolis, selected through multi-stage sampling technique, constituted the sample population. The data was analyzed using descriptive statistics of simple percentage. Findings reveal that whereas these parents had overwhelming understanding of the critical nature, timing, and implications of early childhood education, migration of one or both parents to the city for economic reasons (83.2%); lack of job on the part of the husband (76.4%), and the inability of the husband's salary to take care of family needs (81.4%) constituted major challenges giving rise to dual worker-families and necessitated the use of alternative childcare services laden with adverse implications for the infants.
- **Keywords:** childhood, implication, bonding, migration, caregivers, infants, salary,