

**Resolution.** The resolution was adopted after several stakeholders said nursery school children are being subjected to learning content above their age.

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# Govt bans homework for nursery children

**KAMPALA.** The government yesterday directed pre-primary schools to stop giving homework and tests to nursery school-going children and also ordered schools not to use interviews to select those joining Primary One (P1).

Mr Aggrey Kibenge, the Education ministry undersecretary, said the ministry will issue a directive to all nursery school owners to stop the practices.

He said the ministry will also educate parents to know that nursery schools should be a play stage to activate the children's senses before they join P1.

Mr Kibenge made the remarks while summarising key issues that emerged during a two-day Education sector review workshop held at the conference hall of Office of the Prime Minister in Kampala.

"There is going to be training of all caregivers and sensitising parents on early childhood development. On entry examinations to P1, a circular will be issued to stop the vice and we shall monitor compliance," Mr Kibenge told education stakeholders at the 14th sector review workshop that ended yesterday.

The resolution was adopted after several stakeholders said nursery school children are be-

ing subjected to learning content above their age. They also questioned why the little children are seen on school buses as early as 5am and leaving school after 5pm. They demanded that the schools be monitored on the time they open and close.

Dr Tommy Mukasa Lusambu, the Assistant Commissioner in charge of Primary Education, in a separate interview said they will soon implement an earlier plan to have every government primary school have a nursery school section. The plan was halted last year for lack of funds.

To date, the country depends on private providers who have been operating haphazardly until recently when the Education ministry formulated a framework to guide those interested in investing in early childhood development.

Other issues that emerged during the sector review meeting was the need for the ministry to endeavour to address the high numbers of refugees that have flocked to schools, stressing even more, the already congested classrooms.

The stakeholders also agreed to tackle the high levels of head teacher, teacher and pupil absenteeism and empowering



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parents and learners to get more involved in demanding accountability from school administrators.

The Education Development Partners led by Mr Hugo Verbist, the Belgian ambassador to Uganda, applauded the sector for the numerous schools constructed but asked the ministry officials to refocus their ener-

gies on the achievements in the children's learning outcomes.

"We have been looking at photographs of construction sites in multiple schools. This is important for accountability but I think a sign of our collective success will be when we are here discussing how actual levels of learning and skill's development among Uganda's children are changing over time alongside the important discussions and investments the sector makes in infrastructure and access," Mr Verbist said.

"What we need is to be clear on our collective expectation of what a Ugandan child at the end of Primary Two or Primary Six should be able to do. For example, in Reading and Mathematics assess the extent to which girls and boys are reaching these benchmarks or not," he added.

Education minister Janet Museveni launched the Education sector three-year plan starting 2017/18 to 2019/20. The plan commits to ensuring equitable access, quality and relevance, efficiency and effectiveness.

The Education permanent secretary, Mr Alex Kakooza, said the ministry requires Shs17.9 trillion to achieve the plan.

Currently, only Shs7.7 trillion is available.