KENNETH ODHIAMBO OKELO'S CURRICULUM VITAE

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PROFESSIONAL PROFILE

Developmental Psychologist and Early Childhood Development (ECD) specialist with comprehensive theoretical knowledge of child development. I possess extensive research experience investigating factors affecting child development and the interactions between the Nurturing Care Framework (NCF) components and interventions to enhance children's developmental outcomes. My portfolio features leading influential studies such as the Saving Brains project, the Siaya study, and the Zambia study at the African Population Research Centre (APHRC), alongside foundational work at Kidogo Early Years.

I have a proven record of co-creating initiatives, demonstrated by my role in designing and developing the Africa Birth Cohort and the Communities of Practice (CoP) model. I am skilled at adapting programmes to local contexts and engaging stakeholders across sectors. My abilities include leading plenary and breakout sessions with diverse groups and translating complex discussions into practical actions to inform strategic planning and policy development.

EDUCATION

University	Degree	Year	Field
The University of Edinburgh	PhD	2025	Developmental Psychology - P*assed thesis with no corrections*
Kenyatta University in Kenya	MEd	2017	Early Childhood Education
Jomo Kenyatta University in Kenya	PGD	2016	Project Management
Kenyatta University in Kenya	BEd	2013	Early Childhood Education

EXPERIENCE (RESEARCH AND TEACHING)

University of Southern California (USC)

Post-Doctoral Research Consultancy *January 2026 – Present*

- Research counterpart in Kenya, and liaison for the *Msingi Bora Familia* project and provide local oversight of the local implementation partner's field activities.
- Support engagement with the Government and other ECD stakeholders.

African Population and Health Research Center (APHRC)

ECD Co-Creation Consultancy *December 2025 – Present*

- Work with the project team to develop a co-creation concept note, including the plan/framework, guide, tools, session structure, content, and time frame.
- Co-facilitate actual co-creation sessions working together with the project team, including coordinating plenary and break-out sessions, ensuring participation and driving the discussions through the key aspects of the platform. Rapturing and Collating feedback from the sessions, synthesise and document the information gathered on each day.

- Support the team to constitute a technical working group (TWG) from the wider team who will carry forward the co-creation of the platform.
- Reach out to individual stakeholders or teams for further information as needed
- Consolidate the information generated from different workshops in Nairobi and produce a comprehensive co-creation report, share this with the project team for their review and input, and with which he/she will refine and finalise the report.
- Work with the project team to identify key information from the cocreation that will inform the specification of the ECD data visualisation platform in terms of the host, indicators, interoperability, features, etc., as will be indicated by the project team.

African Population and Health Research Center (APHRC)

Research Officer/Intern *March 2025 – November 2025*

- **Africa Birth Cohort Co-creation:** Played a critical role in the conceptualisation and development of the Africa Birth Cohort proposal. Co-facilitated the co-creation workshops with a community of collaborators, including Nairobi City County Department of Health, Nutrition, and Wellbeing, working closely with Principal Investigators to align objectives.
- **Stakeholder Engagement:** Manage plenary sessions of mixed backgrounds and break-out sessions, synthesising discussions into actionable strategies to inform the next steps for both the African Birth Cohort proposal and ECD Data Visualization project.
- **Project Management:** Contribute to the Data Visualization project by training field workers, supervising fieldwork, and managing qualitative data analysis.
- **Reporting:** Lead the preparation of ECD project progress reports and publications.

Department of Psychology, School of Philosophy, Psychology and Language Sciences, University of Edinburgh

Tutor & Research Assistant September 2022 – February 2025

Core Responsibilities

- **Capacity Building:** Mentored students on dissertation writing and research methods; facilitated small group tutorials to clarify complex course content.
- **Research & Analysis:** Conducted advanced statistical data analysis for linked administrative health data projects.
- **Partnership Building:** Initiated a proposal teaming agreement between the University of Edinburgh and APHRC (2024).

African Population and Health Research Center (APHRC)

Research Officer *May 2018 – September 2022*

- **Co-creation of CoP:** Led the co-creation and contextualization of the **Communities of Practice (CoP)** model to improve the quality of childcare centers in Nairobi's informal settlements.
- **Policy Engagement & Advocacy:** Coordinate policy engagement activities to disseminate ECD research findings to government stakeholders and technical working groups.
- **Project Management:** Managed/supported integrated ECD projects, including supervision of fieldwork, data management, and donor reporting. Examples of projects managed include:
    - Evaluation of the effectiveness of the community-based parenting empowerment project implemented in Kisumu rural in Kenya and Chamuka district in Zambia to improve parenting and children's developmental outcomes

- Evaluation of the effectiveness of community and health facility nurturing care intervention in Bondo sub-County in Kenya on parenting and children's developmental outcomes
- Improving the quality of child-care centres through supportive assessment and 'communities of practice' in informal settlements in Nairobi
- Evaluating the effectiveness of the Kidogo model in empowering women and strengthening their capacities to engage in paid labor opportunities through the provision of quality childcare: a study protocol for an exploratory study in Nakuru County, Kenya
- Development and feasibility testing of a mobile phone application to track children's developmental progression in Nairobi informal settlements, Kenya

- **Proposal Development:** Contribute to ideation and proposal writing to secure funding for early childhood development research.
- **Stakeholder Coordination:** Lead stakeholder engagement activities, maintaining relationships with implementing partners and ecosystem actors.
- **Evidence Generation:** Contribute to scientific writing and the preparation of progress reports to inform donor and partner decision-making.

EXPERIENCE (IMPLEMENTATION & SCALING UP INTERVENTIONS)

Kidogo Early Years July 2016 – May 2018

Learning Manager

Core Responsibilities

- **Model Co-creation:** Facilitated co-creation sessions with stakeholders to develop the Kidogo training model, incorporating the **Training of Trainers (ToT)** and **Communities of Practice (CoP)** models.
- **Program Design:** Managed the "Kidogo Teacher Training Program," developing curricula and training materials for scale.
- **Operational Scale-Up:** Developed and implemented teacher recruitment plans in collaboration with the operations team to expand program reach.
- **Quality Assurance:** Conducted teacher mentorship and follow-ups to ensure fidelity of implementation.

Research Assistant February 2016 – July 2018

- **Impact Evaluation:** Coordinated a case-control impact evaluation in collaboration with Aga Khan University.
- **Data Systems:** Determined relevant indicators and tools to collect data at output, outcome, and impact levels.
- **Data-Driven Decision Making:** Analysed quantitative/qualitative data to identify trends and provide recommendations for programmatic improvement.

PUBLICATIONS FROM 2022 TO DATE

1. **Okelo**, K., Murray, A.L., King, J. *et al.* (2025). Association between maternal mental health, the COVID-19 pandemic, and children's developmental outcomes in Scotland: A linked administrative health data analysis. *Archives of Public Health Journal*.

2. Hardie, I., Marryat, L., Murray, A., King, J., **Okelo, K**., Fenton, L., Stevely, A. K., Boardman, J. P., Lombardo, M. V., Stock, S. J., Wood, R., & Auyeung, B. COVID-19 public health and social measures (PHSM) and early childhood developmental concerns in Scotland: an interrupted time series analysis. *The Lancet Regional Health – Europe*. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lanepe.2025.101525
3. Hardie, I., Murray, A.L., King, J., **Okelo**, K., et al. (2025). Early childhood developmental concerns following SARS-CoV-2 infection and COVID-19 vaccination during pregnancy: a Scottish population-level retrospective cohort study. The Lancet Child & Adolescent Health
4. **Okelo**, K., Murray, A.L., King, J. *et al.* (2025). Examining the potential mediating role of maternal mental health in the association between socioeconomic deprivation and child development outcomes. *Maternal and Child Health Journal*.
5. Hardie, I., Murray, A.L., King, J., **Okelo**, K., et al. (2024). Investigating low birth weight and preterm birth as potential mediators in the relationship between prenatal infections and early child development: a linked administrative health data analysis. J Epidemiol Community Health.
6. **Okelo**, K. O., Kitsao-Wekulo, P., Onyango, S., & Wambui, E., King, J., Murray, A. L., Auyeung, B. (2024). Sociodemographic predictors of parenting stress among caregivers in disadvantaged settings: evidence from Kenya and Zambia. *Scientific Reports*.
7. **Okelo**, K., Murray, A.L., King, J. *et al.* (2024). Parental stress and child stimulation practices: examining associations with child developmental outcomes over time in Kenya and Zambia. *BMC Psychol*ogy.
8. Nampijja, M., Muendo, R., Owino, G.E., Onyango, S., Mutisya, M., Abiero, M., **Okelo, K**., Ngarega, M., Kitsao-Wekulo, P. and Okengo, L., (2024). Play-based Pedagogies for Early Learners in the African Context: A Scoping Review. *African Journal of Education, Science and Technology*.
9. Onyango S, Nampijja M, Otwate P, Langat N, Oloo L, **Okelo K**, Kitsao-Wekulo P. (2024). Nurturing care practices for children with developmental disabilities in sub-Saharan Africa: A scoping review protocol. PLoS One.
10. Nampijja M, Langat N, Oloo L, **Okelo K**, Muendo R, Kiyeng M, Amboka P, Abboah-Offei M, Ray A, Kitsao-Wekulo P, Kimani-Murage EW, Elsey H. (2023). Predictors of quality of childcare centers in low-income settings: findings from a cross-sectional study in two Nairobi slums. Front Public Health.
11. Wambui E, Nampijja M, **Okelo KO**, Muendo R, Onyango S, Kimani-Murage EW, Kitsao-Wekulo P. (2023). Perceptions of the influence of a mobile phone-based messaging platform on caregiver ECD knowledge, attitudes and practices: a qualitative exploration in an informal settlement in Nairobi. BMC Prim Care.
12. Oloo L, Elsey H, Abboah-Offei M, Kiyeng M, Amboka P, **Okelo K**, Kitsao-Wekulo P, Kimani-Murage E, Langa't N, Nampijja M. (2023). Developing an intervention to improve the quality of childcare centers in resource-poor urban settings: a mixed methods study in Nairobi, Kenya. Front Public Health.
13. Nampijja M, Langat N, Oloo L, Amboka P, **Okelo K**, Muendo R, Habib S, Kiyeng M, Ray A, Abboah-Offei M, Kitsao-Wekulo P, Kimani-Murage E, Li J and Elsey H (2023) The feasibility, acceptability, cost and benefits of a “communities of practice” model for improving the quality of childcare centres: a mixed methods study in the informal settlements in Nairobi. Front. Public Health.

14. Abboah-Offei M, Amboka P, Nampijja M, Owino GE, **Okelo K,** Kitsao-Wekulo P, Chumo I, Muendo R, Oloo L, Wanjau M, Mwaniki E, Mutisya M, Haycraft E, Hughes R, Griffiths P, Elsey H. (2023). Improving early childhood development in the context of the nurturing care framework in Kenya: A policy review and qualitative exploration of emerging issues with policymakers. Front Public Health.
15. **Okelo, K.,** Onyango, S., Murdock, D. *et al.* (2022). Parent and implementer attitudes on gender-equal caregiving in theory and practice: perspectives on the impact of a community-led parenting empowerment program in rural Kenya and Zambia. *BMC Psychol* **10,** 162 (2022).
16. **Okelo K**, Onyango S, Nampijja M, Kitsao-Wekulo P et al. (2022). Evaluating the effectiveness of the Kidogo model in empowering women and strengthening their capacities to engage in paid labour opportunities through the provision of quality childcare: an exploratory study in Nakuru County, Kenya: Protocol of a feasibility study. Humanities & Social Sciences Communications.

SCHOLARSHIPS AND AWARDS

- MITIS Fellowship 2018- Kenyan leaders with a vision for transforming teaching and learning.
- 2024: Selected Mentor for Mastercard Foundation Wits-Edinburgh Sustainable African Futures Doctoral Programme Fellows (WESAF) by the Royal Society of Edinburgh
- 2023: Edinburgh Teaching Award Associate Fellow
- 2022: The University of Edinburgh Postgraduate PhD Scholarship
- 2018: MITIS Fellowship: Kenyan leaders with a vision for transforming teaching and learning
- 2017: Scaling up Innovations Training by Grand Challenges Canada
- Other: Communication Science Training by Stellenbosch University
- Other: Play-based Learning by Play Africa, facilitated by Oxford University
- Other: Trainer of Trainees (ToT) on care for child development
- Other: Trainer of Trainees (ToT) Competency-based curriculum

PROPOSALS & COLLABORATIONS, COMPLETED PROJECTS AND CONFERENCES ATTENDED

Pending Proposals

- Impact Acceleration Grants (£30,000): Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC). *Awaiting feedback.*
- The University of Edinburgh College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences (CAHSS) Knowledge Exchange and Impact Grant (£15,000): University of Edinburgh (CAHSS). *Awaiting feedback.*

Collaborations Initiated

- Discovery Award Proposal (2024): Initiated a proposal teaming agreement between the University of Edinburgh and APHRC (to be submitted).
- British Academy Proposal (2020): Initiated a proposal teaming agreement between APHRC and Kidogo Innovations, which was submitted to the British Academy and was successful.

Completed projects

- PhD thesis with four chapters published between 2022 and 2025
- Four projects supported while at APHRC between 2018 and 2022, with three manuscripts published and project reports submitted to funders and partners.

Conferences attended

- Attended the ECD Network for Kenya conference in 2023 and presented my thesis on the contributions of parental stress on parenting practices and children's developmental outcomes
- Attended the ECD Network for Kenya conference in 2025 and presented the scoping review findings of the ECD data visualization project.

PROFESSIONAL REFERENCES

Available on Request