



**African Population and
Health Research Center**

Transforming lives in Africa through research

Strengthening learning through play for preschoolers in Kenya: Existing approaches, capacity gaps and policy recommendations

Southern Africa Regional ECD Conference

Lusaka, 29th March 2023

“Play is the most important activity, the central focus and the primary occupation of childhood”

Chandler 1997

“What we learn with pleasure we never forget”

Alfred Mercier

Introduction

- Quality ECE improves school readiness, positively influences learning outcomes, & increases school completion rates
- Positive effects are particularly strong for children who are marginalized
- Play is a valued and ever-present aspect of culture and is believed to promote enjoyable learning if fully utilized
- Challenges with quality and equitable access still exist, particularly effective delivery of content through play-based approaches

Aims of the study



- Determine the existing learning through play (LtP) approaches in preschools and at home
- Establish the capacity gaps in the provision of LtP for preschoolers

Provide policy recommendations based on the study results

Methodology



- Descriptive cross-sectional study using baseline data from a prospective study
- We established parents' and teachers' current LtP approaches across the four domains:
 - Fine motor skills
 - Gross motor skills
 - Language skills
 - Socio-emotional skills

Categorical variables were summarized using frequencies & percentages
Continuous variables were presented using means and standard deviations

Study sites

Three Counties – Kajiado , Nairobi & Kiambu

Ten schools from each sub-county

Study sites selected in consultation with the County and National government officials



Results

Parents' characteristics

- On average parents were 37 years old
- About 28% were males
- Over 80% were married
- 17% did not have any form of education while 7% had university education
- 34% were not employed

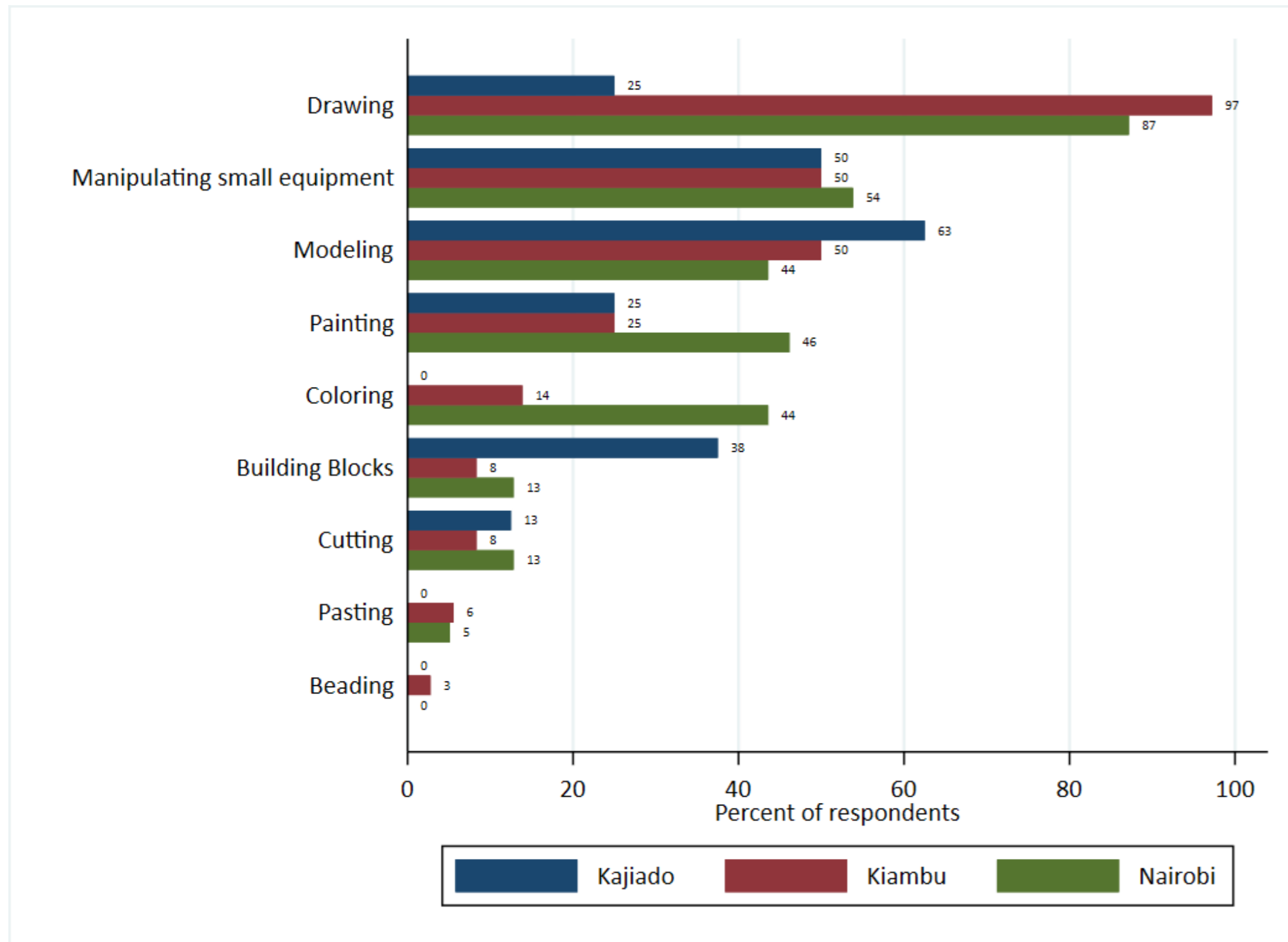
Teachers' characteristics

- On average teachers were 41 years old
- Only 3% were males
- 95% had college level education where majority had diploma training
- 47% had more than 5 years teaching experience
- 89% are employed by the County government

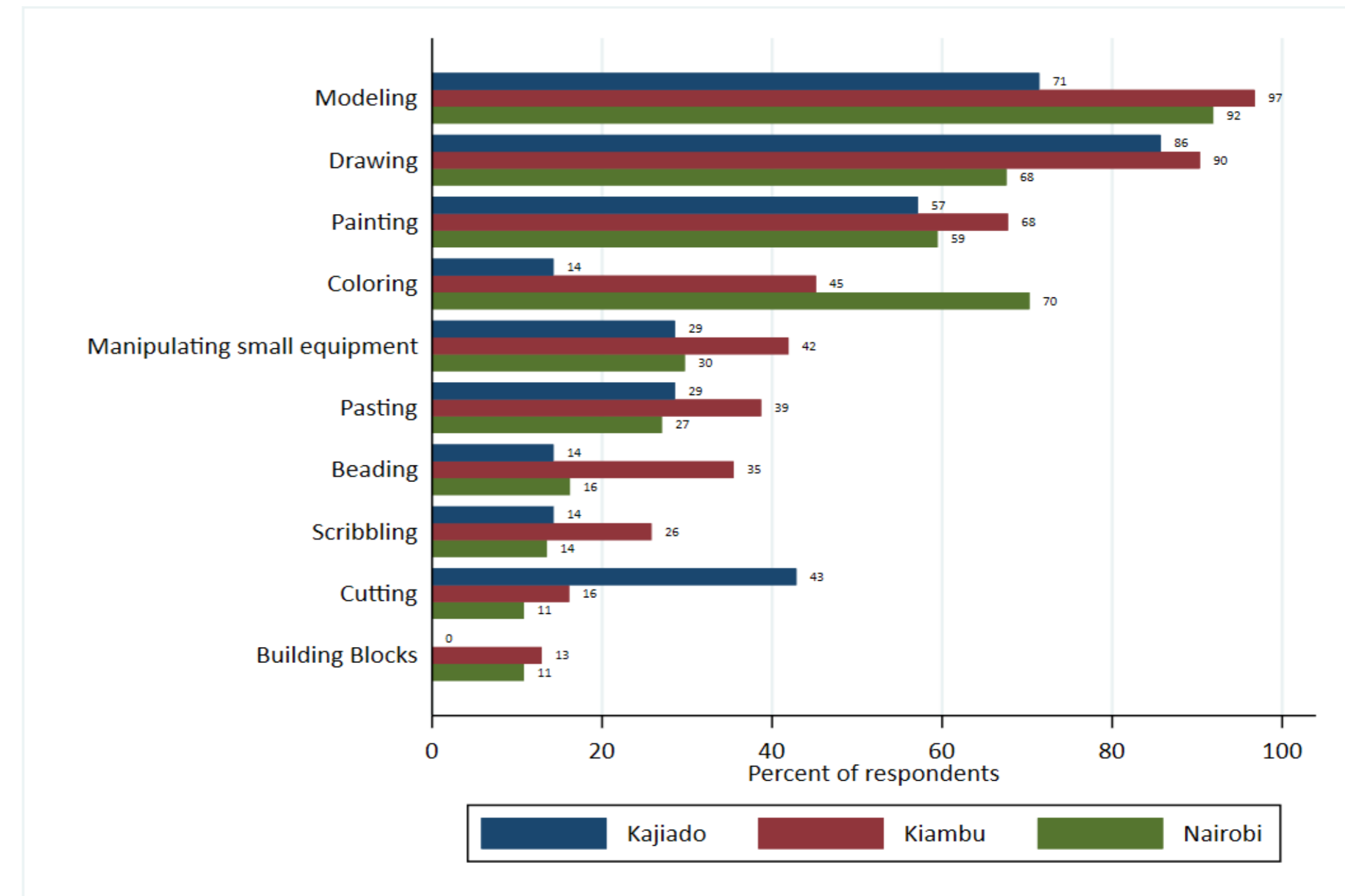
Preschool children under the study were on average 3.5 years old

Existing approaches: Fine motor skills

Play activities at home



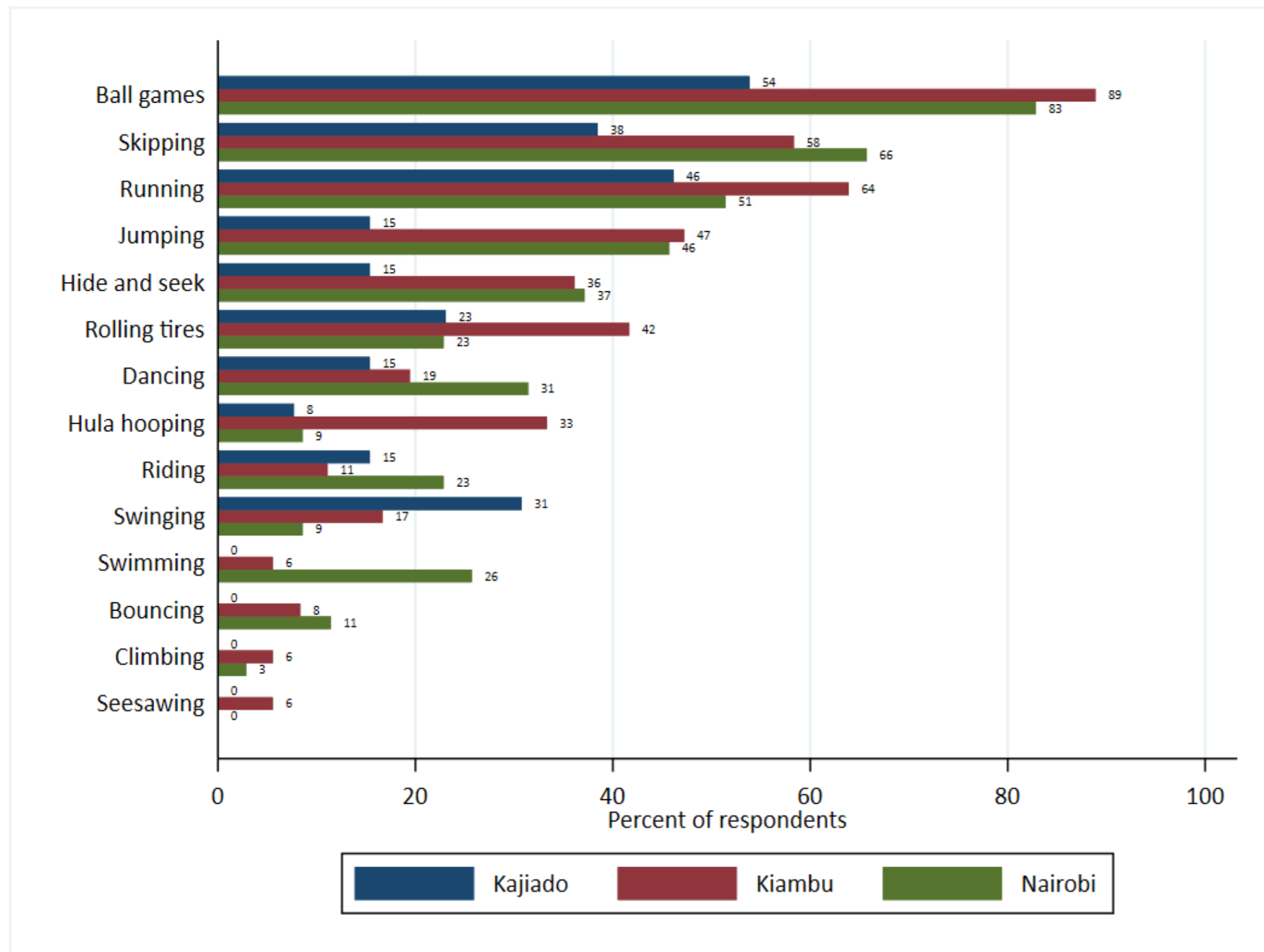
Play activities in school



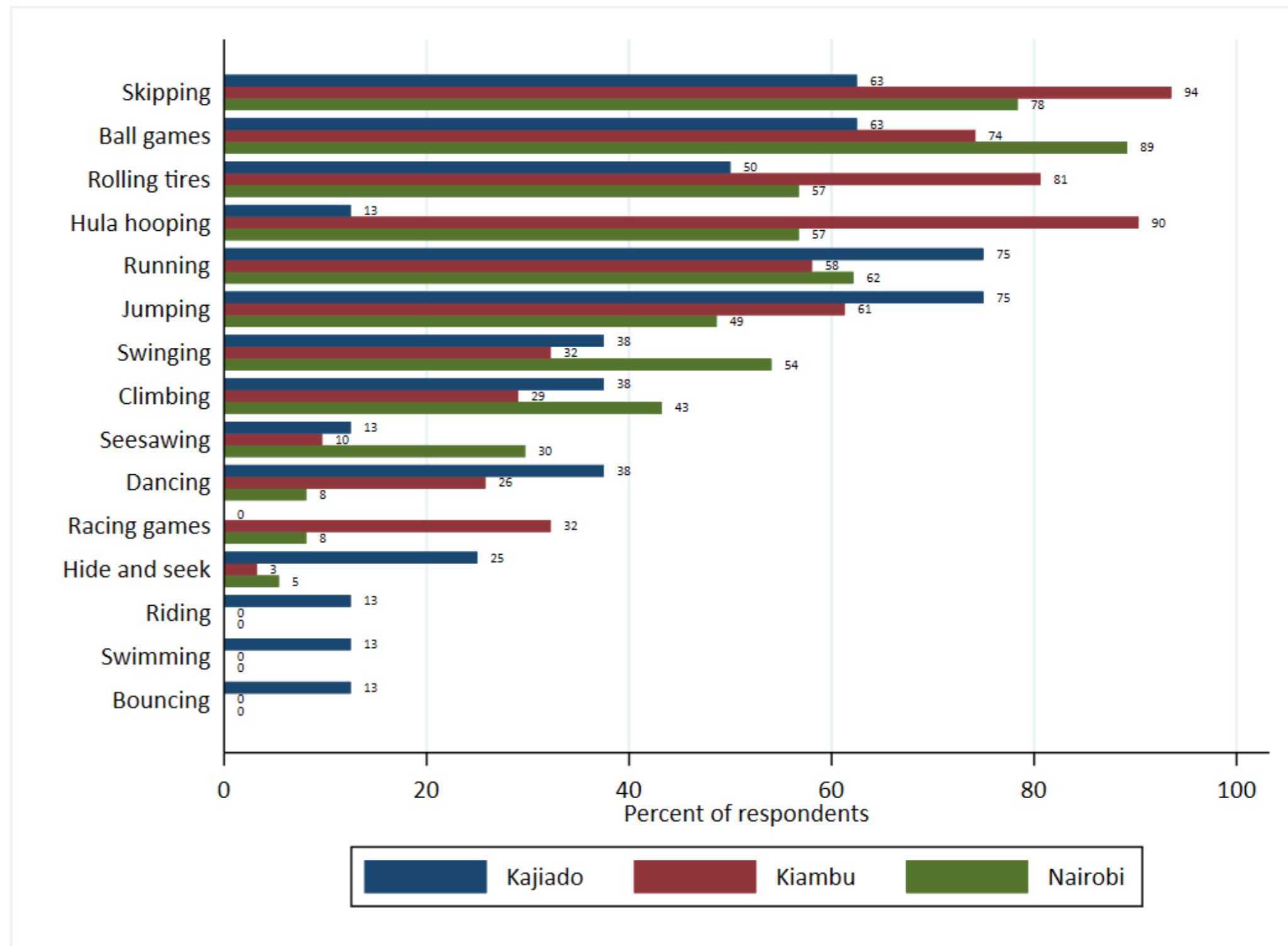
Majority of the parents reported drawing and manipulation of small objects while majority of teachers reported modeling and drawing as the main activities

Existing approaches: Gross motor skills

Play activities at home



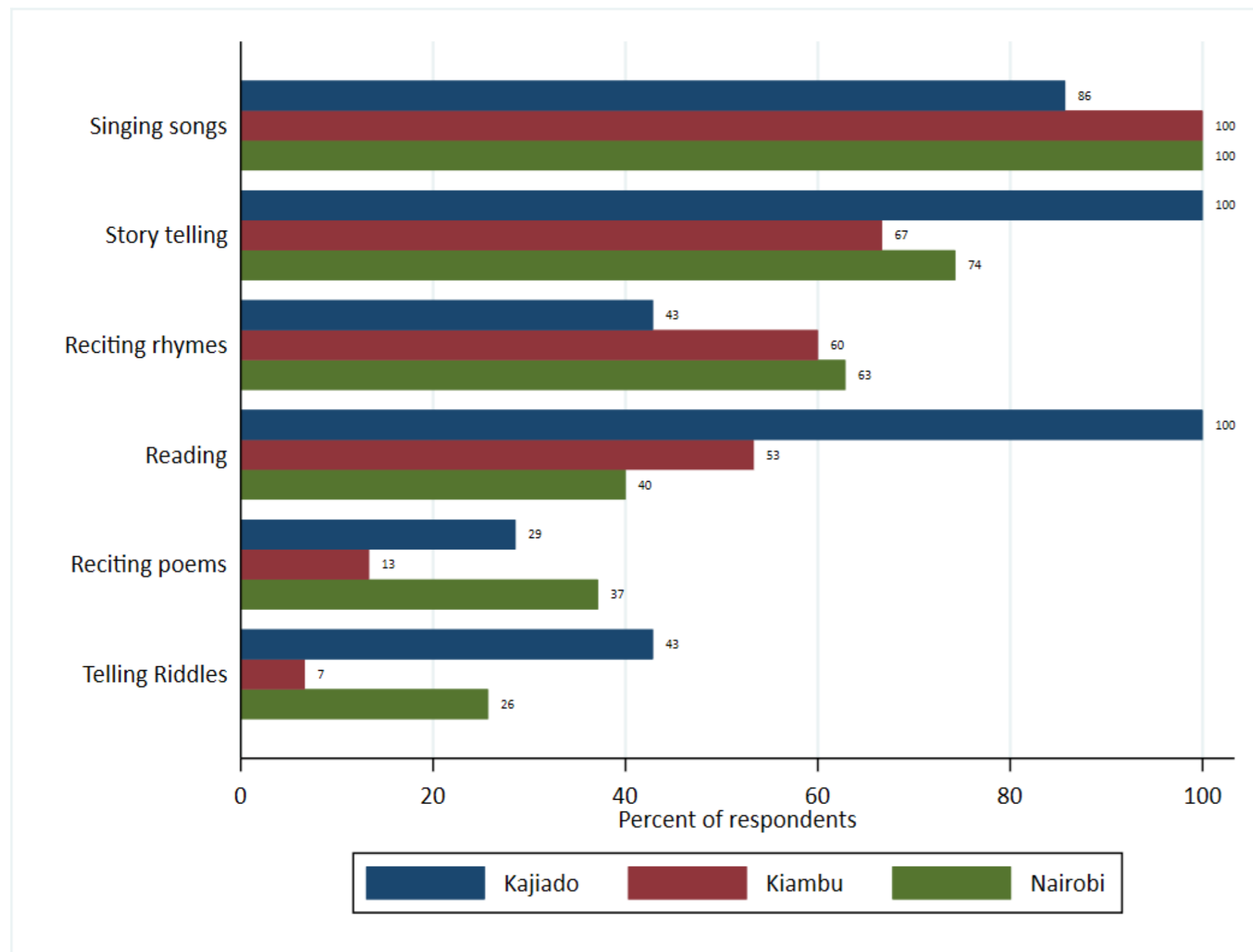
Play activities in school



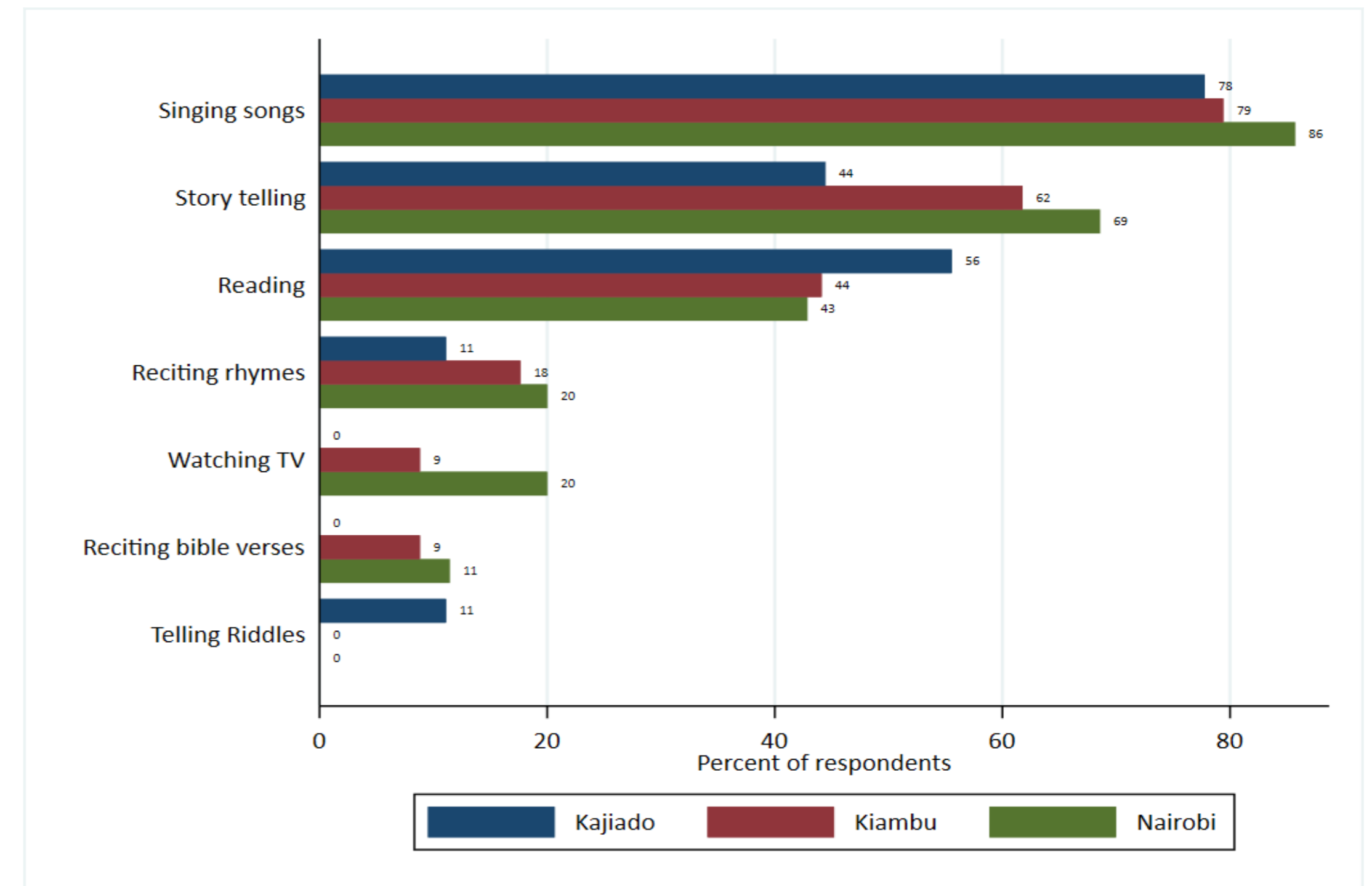
Ball games and skipping are the main activities reported by majority of parents and teachers

Existing approaches: Language skills

Play activities at home



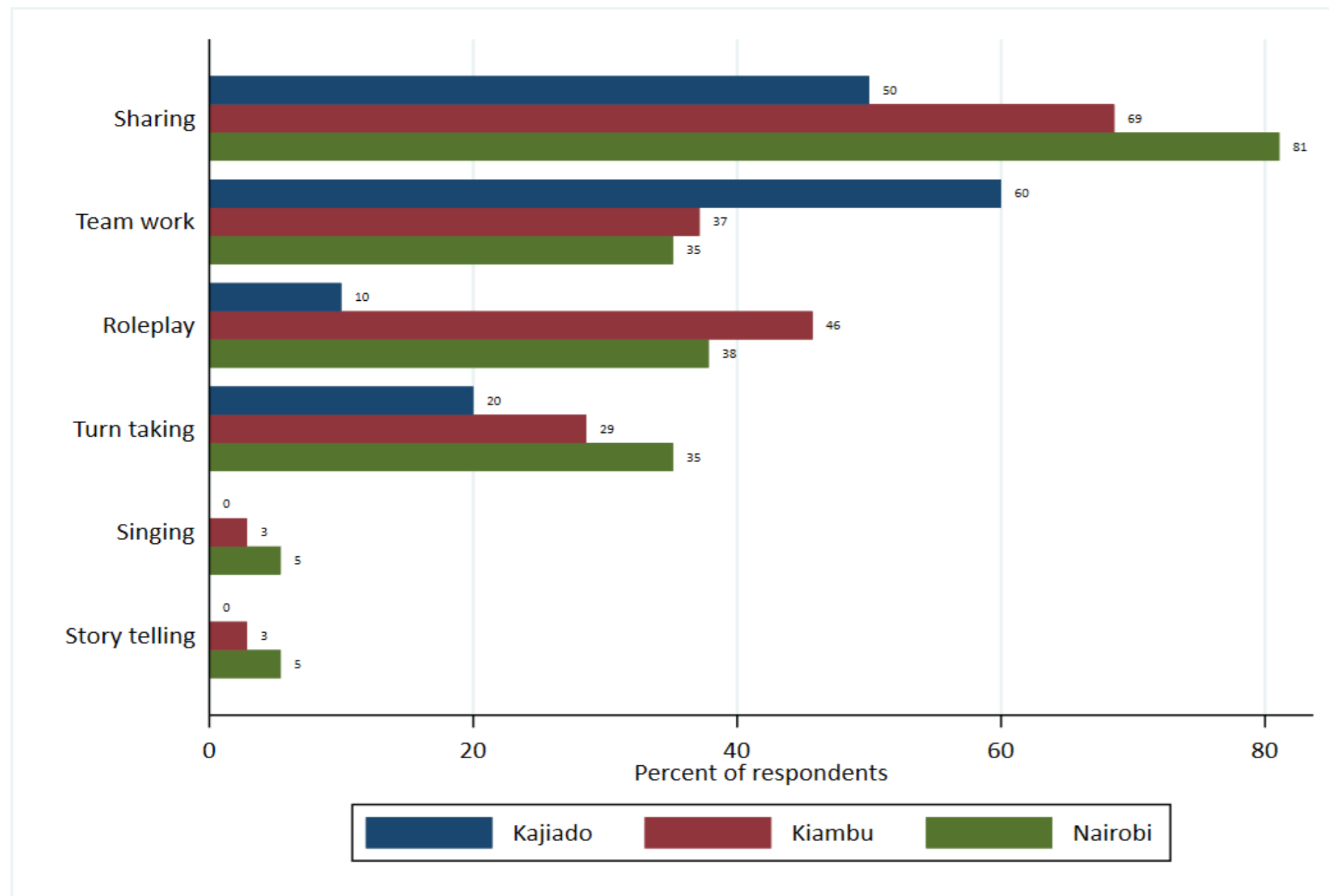
Play activities in school



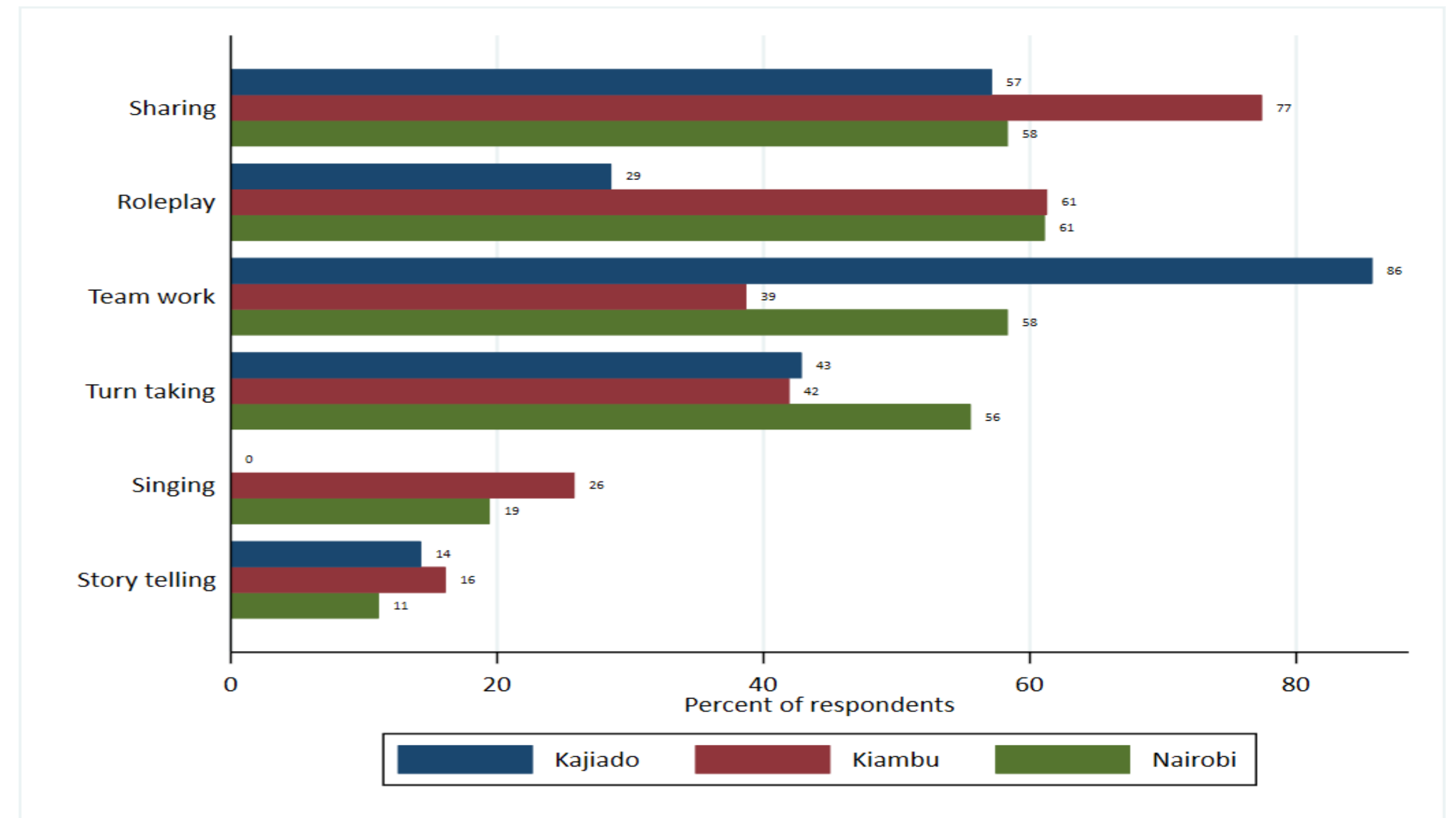
Singing which promotes language development was reported as the main activity at both home and school

Existing approaches: Socio-emotional skills

Play activities at home



Play activities in school



Sharing which promotes socio-emotional development was also the main activity at home and school

Capacity gaps

Weak linkage between
parents at home and
teachers in schools

Limited male involvement
in promoting learning

Inadequate skills in
teachers to effectively
use LtP for all children

Policy recommendations



- Sensitization and awareness for parents and teachers to support LtP in school & home
- Increase regular capacity building for teachers through training on LtP
- Increase ECDE budgetary allocation to support the development LtP equipment in school.
- Partnerships with local, national and international organizations on provision of LtP resources

Any
Question



Photo courtesy of CRS



**African Population and
Health Research Center**

Transforming lives in Africa through research

THANK YOU



@APHRC



@aphrc

www.aphrc.org