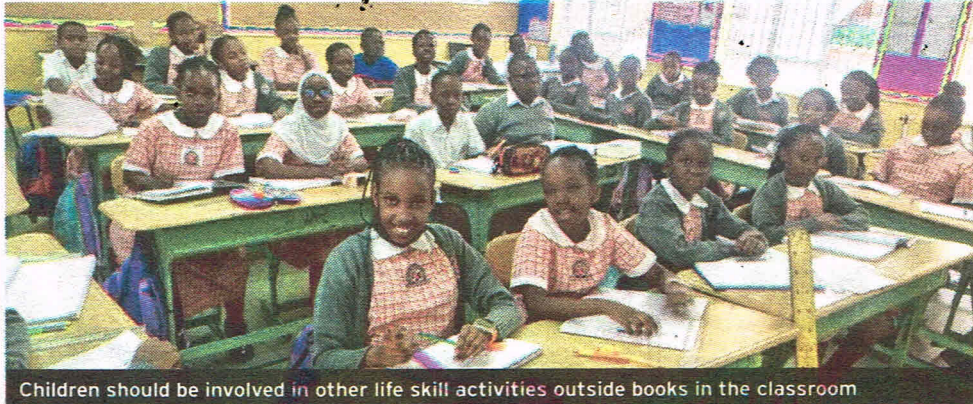


MANDY CALLS FOR MORE CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES IN SCHOOLS

# CHILDREN HAVE A RIGHT TO PLAY

PHOTO BY MAUREEN NAKATUDDE



Children should be involved in other life skill activities outside books in the classroom



By Maureen Nakatudde

Every parent dreams of their children being the best doctor or lawyer. But have the parents ever asked the cost it takes to get to that?

A teacher in one school who celebrated producing some of the best students in the country revealed the hard truth.

"These good results do not come on a bed of roses," he intimated. "Children work extremely hard and forgo a lot of things."

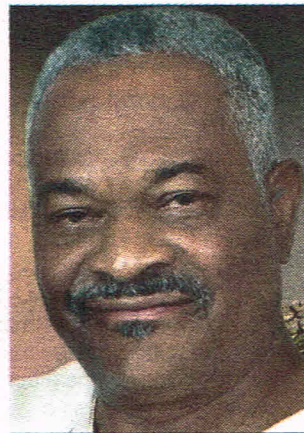
In fact, that teacher went on to confess that the students are in class by 4:30 am and they retire at 11 pm. The health experts recommend eight hours of sleep for a healthy, normal body, but if students can barely sleep,

what effect does it have on their bodies?

Mary Ogutu, a physical fitness coach in Wakiso, revealed that students would want to work out, but their parents are more concerned with high grades than sports activities.

However, Fagil Mandy, an education consultant and physical fitness coach, revealed that this can have side effects on children's education: they get bored and do not learn properly. "Children like making friends and playing at school," he says, "When this is no longer the case, some children take a disinterest in learning."

Even though academics can launch one into having



Educationist Fagil Mandy

a great career, they cannot fulfill all the children's aspirations. "Academics alone cannot bring out all the talent in a learner," Mandy noted. Mandy says some children

are meant to be sportsmen, singers, and actors; however, with the rigorous school academic timetables, such talents are not realised.

According to Mandy, sports activities set learners on the path of self-discovery and seeking new knowledge, but when this is not done, there is often a gaping hole there.

Just as exercise is good for adults, children also benefit from it. "Children have emotional outbursts like anger," says Mandy.

"Sports activities can help in cooling off that steam."

Dr. Fred Bakidde, a medical doctor at Healthy Centre IV, Mpigi district, says physical activities strengthen children's immune system.