

**A Comparative Study of the Practices of Early Childhood Care and
Education across Private, Government, International and
Missionary Preschools in Addis Ababa**

By

Mahmud Reshad Abdo

June, 2020

Addis Ababa University

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Addis Ababa University

DECLARATION OF THE CANDIDATE

I, the undersigned, declare that this dissertation entitled “A Comparative Study of the Practices of Early Childhood Care and Education across Private, Government, International and Missionary Preschools in Addis Ababa” is my original work. It has not been presented for any academic study at any other university. All sources and materials used for this work are duly acknowledged.

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CONFIRMATION OF THE ADVISOR

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

- AAEB** – Addis Ababa City Education Bureau
- ACEI** - Association for Childhood Education International
- ADEA** - Association for the Development of Education in Africa
- CASEL** - Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning
- DAP** - Developmentally Appropriate Practice
- ECCE** - Early Childhood Care and Education
- ECD** - Early Child/Childhood Development
- ECE** - Early Childhood Education
- ECEC** - Early Childhood Education and Care
- EFA** - Education for All
- EPPE** - Effective Provision of Preschool Education
- ESAA** - Education Statistics Annual Abstract
- ESDP** - Education Sector Development Program
- GGA** - Global Guidelines Assessment's
- GMR** - Global Monitoring Report
- IICBA** - International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa
- IIEP** - International Institute for Educational Planning
- INGO** - International Non-Governmental Organization
- IPC** - International Primary Curriculum
- ISCED** - International Standard Classification of Education
- KG 1** - Kindergarten level 1 (also called Nursery level or 1st year class)

KG 2 - Kindergarten level 2 (also called 2nd year class)

KG 3 - Kindergarten level 3 (also called preparatory or 3rd year class)

LCD - Liquid Crystal Display

MoE – Ministry of Education

NAEYC - American National Association for the Education of Young Children

NGO - Non-Governmental Organization

OECD - Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development

OMEP - World Organization for Early Childhood Education (Organización Mundial para la Educación Prescolar)

PE - Physical Education

PoG - Parent of Government Preschool

PoM - Parent of Missionary Preschool

PoP - Parent of Private Preschool

ProG - Principal of Government Preschool

ProI - Principal of international Preschool

ProM - Principal of Missionary Preschool

ProP - Principal of Private Preschool

Q&A - Question and Answer

SDG - Sustainable Development Goal

TB - Terabyte

ToG - Teacher of Government Preschool

ToI - Teacher of International Preschool

ToM - Teacher of Missionary Preschool

ToP - Teacher of Private Preschool

TV - Television

UNESCO - United Nations Education, Science and Culture Organization

UNICEF - United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund

ZPD - Zone of Proximal Development

ሀ, ፀ - The 1st and the 32nd letters of Amharic Alphabet

Operational Definition of Terms and Phrases

Amharic - The local language of the study area.

Chapel Time - *A worship* time of missionary preschool.

Semester – It is the end of the first half of an academic period of a year which nearly stays for 5 months.

Government Preschool – It is a public preschool that owned and funded by the state.

“International” Preschools - Private preschools that adopt foreign curriculum

Mid or Quarter - It is an academic period which is near the middle of a semester.

Miss - A Preschool or kindergarten teacher.

Missionary Preschool – It is a preschool which founded by Christian missionaries.

Private Preschool – It is a preschool that belongs to one particular person or group of people.

Prospective Teacher Graduates - Teacher candidates who were enrolled in a teacher education program and in their final year of education

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Abstract

In Ethiopia, it has been recently that the larger society has understood the benefits of early childhood care and education, and until recent times, many have claimed that it is overlooked by the government and left for the private and other religious and charitable organizations which are not accessible for and affordable by the larger community. Aware of what is going on in this area around the world, parents and education professionals are asking about the ways how children are learning and the access and types of care they are getting from their teachers and the preschools. Above all, teachers' qualification and training is a key discussion point of the area. This study is, therefore, a comparative exploration of the practices of early childhood care and education across private, government, international and missionary preschools of Addis Ababa, The Capital City of Ethiopia. Through this major objective, the study has tried to undertake a close observation of the home (parents) and the preschool (facilitators) interaction in the process of child care and education. It also explored the extent at which teachers/schools actually consider child-centeredness and play-based learning approaches accompanied by developmentally appropriate and culturally relevant practices in their day-to-day practice. Besides, the study has noted the type (s) of spoken language (s) that is (are) in use as medium of teacher-child and parent interaction and instruction and the participation of parents in their children's learning. In Ethiopia, the guiding principles of early childhood care and education, in one-way or another, have been drawn from the theoretical insights of Piaget's foundational cognitive theory and Vygotsky's contemporary sociocultural theory; and to consider its objectives, the study is also informed by the theoretical understandings of these theories. This study has employed qualitative research approach as a research methodology and it also used a comparative multi case research design. The central subjects of the study were teachers, children, parents, diploma early childhood care and education prospective graduate teachers of 2019 and officials of the area chosen based on purposive and snowball sampling techniques. The data collection processes were held through interview, observation and focus group discussion. Finally, the study concluded that most children are not given the opportunity to learn by themselves; and most participants agreed that play has great benefits for childrens' learning; however, the implementation did not match with this understanding. The study also showed that early childhood care and education practices are not developmentally appropriate and culturally relevant; and the holistic aspect of child care is not well understood and implemented throughout all study preschools. The other finding of the study is that the focus of the assessment was mainly developed to measure the knowledge or the understanding level of children, and mostly conducted through paperwork. The study also revealed that the participation of parents on the learning their children is low, especially, in government preschools. Therefore, to improve the area, all rounded interventions are needed; we need to revisit our early childhood

care and education training program and its implementation. The government, professionals, training institutes, preschool owners and the society as a whole has to work hand-to-hand.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background to the Study

Early childhood care and education has become a central issue for governments in many countries (OECD, 2006). There is a growing body of evidence that children starting strong in their learning and well-being will have better outcomes when they grow older (OECD, 2012). It is one of the contemporary issues requiring close attention because of its critical role in laying the foundation for lifelong learning and development, and in closing the achievement gaps between the disadvantaged and advantaged (Marope & Kaga, 2015). The early years are a time of remarkable brain development that lays the foundation for later learning (UNESCO, 2006). Brain connections multiply exponentially in the first three years, and the potential for ensuring optimal development is very high up to age eight. It is imperative that this true window of opportunity is fully used and strengthened to ensure long-term benefits, not just for each individual child's development but also for the larger community (UNESCO & UNICEF, 2012).

Children, especially, the disadvantaged ones and societies can reap the proven benefits of quality ECCE. Through its compensatory effects, ECCE helps children from disadvantaged backgrounds to have an equally strong start in school and in life (Marope & Kaga, 2015). An intervention during the early years can compensate for vulnerability and disadvantage, regardless of underlying factors such as poverty, gender, race/ethnicity, caste or religion. Whatever the policy, there is consistent evidence that the benefits of early childhood programs are high for vulnerable and disadvantaged children, facilitating the reduction of social inequality (UNESCO, 2006)

Depending on diverse contexts, the phrase "early childhood care and education" has a range of names and definitions, in different countries, institutions as well as between different stakeholders; and these terms are a reflection of variations in the foci of services and the age group covered (Rao & Sun, 2010). For example, UNESCO refers to early education as "early childhood care and education (ECCE)". The concept is understood to entail a comprehensive or holistic approach to child care and development (UNESCO-IICBA, 2010). Likewise the OECD calls it "early childhood education and care (ECEC)", the World Bank calls it "early child

development (ECD)”, UNICEF calls it “early childhood development (ECD)” and Education International refers to services for young children as “early childhood education (ECE)” (Marope & Kaga, 2015; UNESCO & UNICEF, 2012; Kobe University, 2016 and Education International ECE Task Force Study Report, 2010). Besides, one of the critical challenges facing studies into any aspect of ECCE consists in using terms accurately because various forms of early care and education have been distinguished including preschool, nursery school, prekindergarten, day care, child care, day nursery, early childhood education, family day care etc. (Kagan, et al, 2006 in Burger, 2013). In Ethiopia it takes the description given by UNESCO – “early childhood care and education” (National Policy Framework for Early Childhood Care and Education, 2010). However, in this study, ECCE, early childhood education, and preschool education were used interchangeably.

Similarly, in relation to its age range, ECCE has had somewhat an ambiguous place within the education sector. Ministries of education have often limited their purview to one or two years of preschool provision prior to primary schooling, while other ministries cover the provision for younger children’s care and protection (Marope & Kaga, 2015). It has to be noted that, there is no universally recognized consensus on the age period to which early childhood refers. There are country specific age differences (UNESCO-IICBA, 2010). Professional organizations concerned with early childhood, such as the Consultative Group on Early Childhood Care and Development, OMEP (World Organization for Early Childhood Education) and the US-based National Association for the Education of Young Children, typically consider the early childhood period as covering the time from birth to 8 years (Rao & Sun, 2010 and Burger, 2013) and it is conventionally recognized as the age range of early childhood and it is during these years that the foundation for future learning is set; which a child learns to walk, talk, establish an identity, print, and count (UNESCO, 2006 and Browne & Gordon, 2011) and by 8 all children around the world are expected to be in primary school and children’s transition to primary school may occur as early as age 4, but nowhere is it supposed to occur later than age 8 (UNESCO, 2006). However, most other groups consider the early childhood period as lasting from birth to primary school entry, which is 6 or 7 years in most countries (Rao & Sun, 2010 and Burger, 2013).

The notion of ECCE suggests that care and education are not separate processes for children during their first years of life (Burger, 2013). In this respect, care and education are parts of a whole: both are needed to foster holistic growth, development and learning (UNESCO, 2006). Education and care in the early years, according to the National Research Council in the United States, are “two sides of the same coin” (Burger, 2013). In the vast majority of cases, the term ECCE is used as a collective term to cover any kind of formal institutional programs and services that share the objective of nurturing children’s development, growth, and learning under compulsory school age or up to approximately eight years even though these programs and services may draw on a variety of approaches and are funded, operated, and regulated by different administrative bodies (Burger, 2013).

There is an increasing focus on early childhood education quality globally, reflecting a growing political awareness that education starts earlier than primary school and that high quality in early years influences children’s learning and development in a lifelong perspective (Ringsmose & Müller, 2017). Quality is a multifaceted concept and is, necessarily, culturally determined. It is impossible (and probably undesirable) to produce a single ‘blueprint’ for quality in ECCE and apply it – universally – in everyday education settings throughout the world. Needs, opportunities, priorities and individual choices vary and if early childhood settings are to be of good quality then one factor which determines its worth is the extent to which the provision is meaningful and appropriate to those who use it (Nutbrown, 2006).

The past decade has provided more evidence that good quality ECCE, both in families and in more structured programs, have a positive impact on the survival, growth, development and learning potential of children (UNESCO, 2006). Evidence equally shows that it is not just access to ECCE programs that matters, but that the quality of those programs matters even more (Rao & Sun, 2015). Participation in good quality ECCE is linked with achievement at subsequent levels of education and contributes to the quality of the education system as a whole (UNESCO, 2006). An effective ECCE program should ensure a strong connection between home and school (Awopegba, Oduolowu & Nsamenang, 2013). The findings of Effective Provision of Preschool Education (EPPE) study suggest that high quality ECCE yields beneficial effects that last up till

secondary school, even when primary school is of mediocre quality (Melhuish, 2013 cited in Vandebroek, 2015).

There is a strong consensus among researchers that high quality ECCE is an excellent investment for the society. Studies suggest that spending money on high quality ECCE can lead to economic wealth in the future. They said that investments in ECCE generate very high rates of return for participants, the public and the government over time (Awopegba, Oduolowu & Nsamenang, 2013). James Heckman the 2000 Nobel-prize winner in economics cited in Awopegba, Oduolowu, and Nsamenang (2013) argues that if children have a high-quality early childhood education they will be better able to use higher education and job training later in life (Awopegba, Oduolowu & Nsamenang, 2013).

Internationally, there is a growing need for quality ECCE as greater numbers of families migrate to urban areas and a large number of mothers enter the workforce. However, the programs available for young children vary greatly in quality (Bergen & Hardin, 2013). While many countries have recently focused on expanding provision for young children, there has been at the same time a significant international trend to define and measure the effectiveness and ‘quality’ of that provision (Waller, 2005).

Although a growing number of policy-makers elsewhere realize the early years are a springboard for future academic and economic success and for reducing poverty, access to good quality ECCE is still not widespread, particularly in the poorest countries (UNESCO, 2006). In developing countries a lack of resources for ECCE services has made it difficult to provide services beyond the capital and larger cities, and to improve the quality of those services that already exist, in terms of infrastructure, facilities, and trained and adequately remunerated teachers (Education International ECE Task Force Study Report, 2010). In spite of the growing interest, ECCE remains one of the under-resourced sectors in African countries. Consequently, the sub-sector suffers from poor quality of infrastructure, teaching materials, lack of a coordinated and culturally appropriate curriculum, and a scarcity of qualified teachers and child caregivers who are sensitive to the children’s cultural realities (Awopegba, Oduolowu & Nsamenang, 2013).

In ensuring quality ECCE, facilitators or caregivers have a great role. They are an enabler of the curriculum, who is expected to fulfill various roles in the course of their duties in ensuring that children attain appropriate and relevant standard education. Hence, they must possess the required competences in working with children and their parents (Awopegba, Oduolowu & Nsamenang, 2013). Similarly, the Nutbrown Review (2012) in Nutbrown & Clough (2014), argued that if those working with young children have the necessary skills, knowledge and understanding, they have the potential to offer the decisive experience all young children deserve. According to Mitchell & Taylor (2015), knowledge, skills and beliefs about children and teaching and learning are gained through appropriate teacher education/training and professional development (Mitchell and Taylor, 2015). Professional development needs to be extended to principals and teachers in the school sector to ensure a shared understanding of kindergarten pedagogy and practice (Heymann & Cassola, 2012). Professional development opportunities of kindergarten/preschool staff tend to focus on pedagogies and instructional practices, curriculum implementation, language and subject matters, monitoring and assessment, and communication and management (OECD, 2012). If those working with young children have the necessary skills, knowledge and understanding, they have the potential to offer meaningful experience all young children deserve (Nutbrown & Clough, 2014).

1.1.1. Theoretical Framework of the Study

Increasing internationalization is attracting interest in studying and discussing the many different traditions worldwide for establishing and operating child care centers. In particular, interest has focused on the differences in relation to educational philosophies and everyday practices in this field. Discussions are gravitating toward how everyday educational practices should safeguard and promote children's well-being as well as developmental and learning conditions to optimize educational quality (Müller, 2017). In this regard, theories and philosophies provide direction for program structure, and structure is necessary for any program in several areas: classroom space, guidance techniques, instructional methods, materials, curriculum, and assessment (Browne & Gordon, 2011). How children learn, develop and grow is a phenomenon that has fascinated many people over time, thus there are many theories, or possible explanations, for how children learn (Edwards, 2009).

Early childhood development theories are springboards for those involved in child care and learning. They are the frameworks on which care and learning activities for children are built. The theories provide useful guides to parents, caregivers and teachers, researchers and others on how to handle children's care and learning at the critical stage of early childhood (Awopegba, Oduolowu & Nsamenang, 2013). Over time, ECCE has been informed by a number of theories and philosophies, and in this twenty first century, many of which have been foundational to the work that is conducted with young children. They tend to influence the way teachers view young children, how children learn and grow. These views, in turn, influence teachers' beliefs and values about how they can best meet young children's needs within an educational context (Edwards, 2009). From various theories of ECCE (Cognitive Theory, Social Theory, Cultural-Historical Theory, Activity Theory, Ecological Systems Theory, Postcolonial Theory, etc.), there are two major developmental theories that influence the existing pedagogical practices of the field in particular ways around the world. These are Piaget's foundational cognitive theory and Vygotsky's contemporary socio-cultural theory.

In early childhood education as Carr (1998) stated in Edwards (2009), developmental theory (especially, many of Piaget's ideas) has been very influential for at least the past three decades. In more recent times, Vygotsky's socio-cultural explanations for development have increasingly interested teachers (Edwards, 2009).

Piaget's foundational theories have served to emphasize on aspects of early childhood education that have long been valued, such as open-ended activities, the role of play in learning and the provision of natural materials (Edwards, 2009). Piaget believed that children learn best when they are actually doing the work (or play) themselves, rather than being told, shown, or explained to, which were the dominant teaching methods of the twenty first century. He concluded that teachers should prepare a stimulating environment and also interact with the children to enhance their thinking (Browne & Gordon, 2011). Piagetian theory has emphasized the idea that learning occurs as individuals explore and engage with their worlds and education should take account of the child's natural interests and stage of development (Edwards, 2009 and Pound, 2011).

Vygotsky's contemporary theory, on the other hand, emphasizes the role that social and cultural experiences of children play in informing their development, and help teachers to provide their children with learning experiences that are sensitive to children's needs according to the community context (Edwards, 2009). This theory focuses on the child as a whole and incorporates ideas of culture and values into child development. He emphasized the deep role of culture in children's learning. In his view, children's development was more than just a response to personal experience. Rather, they are influenced in fundamental ways by their family, community, and socioeconomic status (Browne & Gordon, 2011). According to the socio-cultural theory the social and cultural context in which children were born served to define how they would develop and what they would teach (Edwards, 2009).

In the process of learning, Piaget's child is an isolated individual who attempts to adapt to the world around him or her. Vygotsky's child, by contrast, is the child in society (Greig, 2013). However, both theories and their followers gave attention for the importance of parents and the home learning environment, and play-based education (Conkbayir & Pascal, 2014). They said that during early childhood education, play is the major vehicle of learning (Nutbrown & Clough, 2014). For them, play is a natural activity for children and is the core of developmentally appropriate practice where it allows children the opportunity to create, invent, discover and learn about their world. Play offers children the opportunities to make choices, decisions, solve problems, interact with one another, with adults and pursue their interests, experience learning as fun and exciting and build language and literacy skills (Awopegba, Oduolowu & Nsamenang, 2013). In this regard, irrespective of preschool teachers and parents roles (who facilitate or direct what children are learning and doing), these theories, therefore, complement each other.

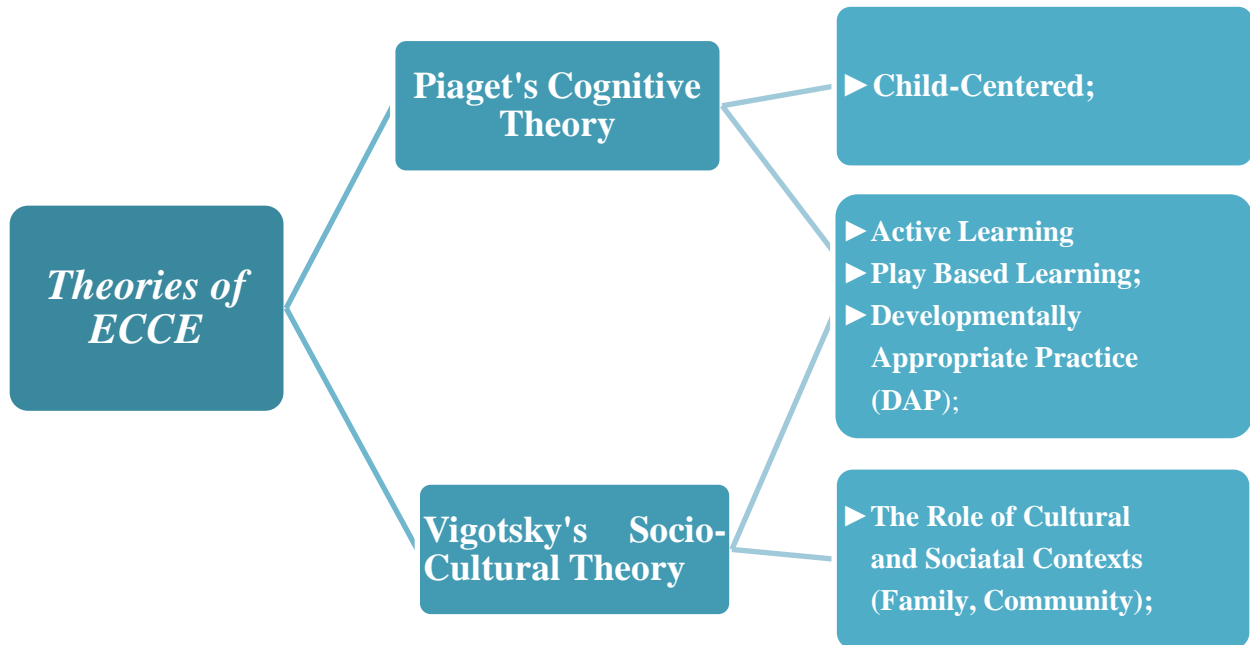


Figure 1: Theories of ECCE

These Piaget’s and Vygotsky’s theories are, especially, helpful to guide developmentally appropriate instructional practice (DAP) in early childhood education (Browne & Gordon, 2011). The concept of developmental appropriateness has two original basic dimensions: age appropriateness and individual appropriateness. Age appropriateness has to do with matching curriculum and instruction to the developmental level (physical, social, emotional, and cognitive) of the children being served. Individual appropriateness has to do with responsiveness to the unique modes of learning and capabilities of each child in a program (Rust, 1993). Age appropriateness is also based on “what is known about child development and learning” and individual appropriateness on “what is known about the strengths, interests, and needs of each individual child” (Browne & Gordon, 2011).

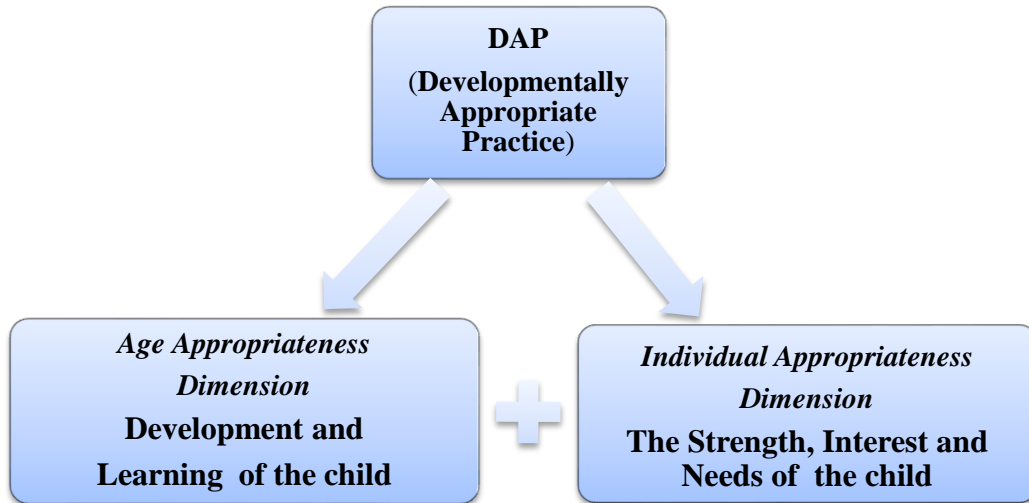


Figure 2: DAP (Developmentally Appropriate Practice) (Browne and Gordon, 2011)

Cultural appropriateness or cultural competence which was included in 1997 is a third critical dimension and it is based on “knowledge of the social and cultural contexts in which children live”. Therefore, a developmentally appropriate program takes into consideration the child’s age, individual abilities, and the culture of her home and family (Browne & Gordon, 2011).

Theoretical frameworks and concepts, of course, tell about the way how researchers have understood and considered their research problems; and to show the position of the subject matter of the study and its importance across different contexts, they may, therefore, support and strengthen their idea by different scholars who devised similar theories around the area. Therefore, this study is informed with theoretical insights from Piaget’s foundational cognitive theory and Vygotsky’s contemporary socio-cultural theory; because, it is the researcher’s belief that children are always in the process of learning, and most of the time, they learn through in these two ways; the former one, mainly, let children to learn by themselves, and at the same time the later approach also help them to learn from others. The researcher, therefore, believed that the sociocultural approach is one way of children’s learning approach which supports them to find their innate talent through the eyes and practices of others which, of course, let them to question, create and recreate, adapt, change, learn, relearn and unlearn continuously by their own. In this regard, the role of friends, families and the community are to ignite and stimulate the potential what children already have and to introduce a new knowledge and practices. Therefore, children, mainly, in one-way or another or in any circumstances, learn through themselves; and

the role of others is facilitating this way of learning. In addition, these learning theories are also the dominant learning approaches that guide the practices of ECCE around the world. Many countries still apply Piagetian approaches (e.g. North America and West), some exercise Vygotsky's approach (e.g. Eastern Europe and Asia) and there are also countries which employ the mixture of these two (e.g. Asia, Africa, and Nordics) and Ethiopia is among the last one.

The National Policy Framework for Early Childhood Care and Education (2010) of Ethiopia asserted that parents and other caregivers are the most important persons in the life of a child. They play a key role in children's development. The framework, the education policy and all ESDP documents, further, give emphasis to child-centered, play-based, culturally relevant, developmentally appropriate and holistic approaches of ECCE programs. It signifies the great importance of play on child's learning. The documents also recommend the mother tongue as medium of teacher/caregiver-child instruction and communication in early childhood care and education program. These guiding principles that shaped ECCE in Ethiopia, in one way or another, have been drawn from the two developmental theories that have been presented above (cognitive theory and socio-cultural theory) and that is why these theories are chosen as the theoretical frameworks of this study; because, the study is about the practices of preschool teachers and children in the course of care and education provision. Therefore, the concepts that emanate from these two theories have guided the overall approach of this research. In general, the conceptual framework of the study is summarized as follows.

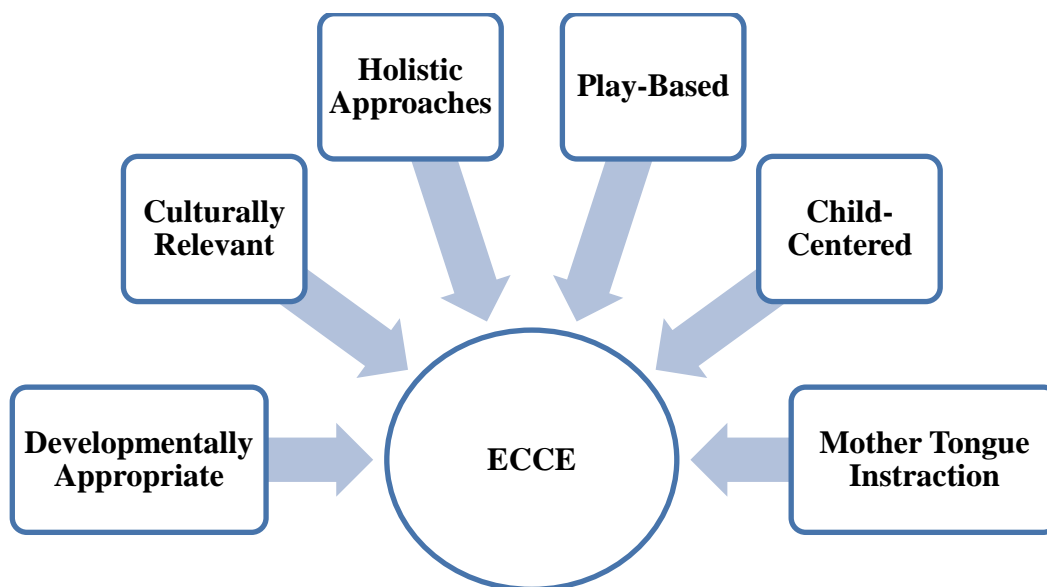


Figure 3: Conceptual Framework of the Study

1.2. Statement of the Problem

In Ethiopia, the concept of ECCE as Sumner (1986) mentioned in UNESCO-IICBA (2010) dates back to the 17th century Ethiopian philosophers Zar'a Ya'aqob and his follower Walda Haywat. The first modern kindergarten was established in Dire Dawa for the children of French consultants who were helping the construction of the first railroad of the country. Previously, the coverage and access to pre-school education for children was very limited in Ethiopia and was limited to major towns and it hardly exists in the rural areas (UNESCO-IICBA, 2010). The study of Ministry of Education of the country clearly indicated that ECCE in Ethiopia is still in its early development stage (National Policy Framework for Early Childhood Care and Education, 2010) and most of the preschools are run by private individuals, religious institutions, and nongovernmental organizations (UNESCO-IICBA, 2010 and Tassew and Mesele, 2017), which is also indicated in the strategic operational plan and guidelines for ECCE of the country and the strategy encourages private investors, faith-based organizations and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) into the delivery of ECCE (ESDP V, 2015 and ESAA, 2017). However, with the introduction of "O Classes and Child to Child" programs, the expansion of ECCE is growing every year, even though many children are still out of the school. For instance, the access which was 5.2%* in 2010/11 (ESAA, 2011) has increased significantly to 34% in 2013/14 (ESAA, 2015 and ESDP V, 2015) and by 2014/15 it was 39% (ESAA, 2017). In 2015/16 the enrollment rate became 49% (ESAA, 2017); in 2016/17 and 2018/19 the rate was 45.9% (ESAA, 2016) and 41% (ESAA, 2018 and UNICEF, 2019), respectively; with wide regional variations and slight decrease year after year; however, by 2020, the country is projected to achieve an average of 80% GER in preprimary education program (ESDP V, 2015).

In Ethiopia, ECCE covers the period from prenatal up to the primary school, and in describing the developmental needs of the child two age cohorts have been used: prenatal to 3+ years and 4 till 6+ years (National Policy Framework for Early Childhood Care and Education, 2010). According to the Ministry of Education document, ECCE which was formerly called preprimary education encompasses Kindergartens, "O" class and Child to Child programs (Ministry of Education of Ethiopia EMIS & ICT Directorate, 2015). These age arrangements are summarized in the diagram below.

* The data didn't include "O class and child to child" ECCE programs

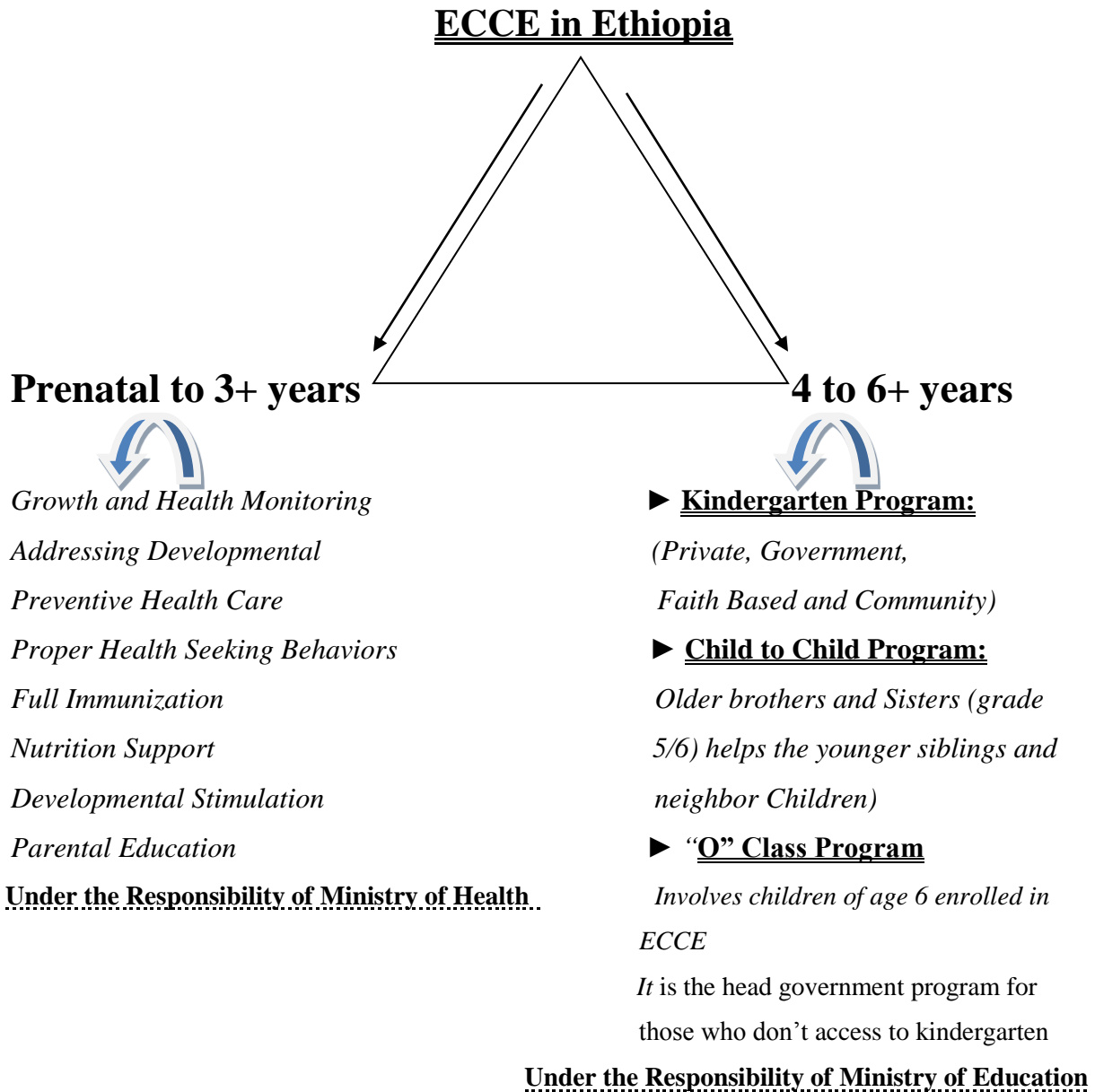


Figure 4: ECCE in Ethiopia (National Policy Framework for Early Childhood Care and Education, 2010)
(Ministry of Education of Ethiopia EMIS and ICT Directorate, 2015)

In relation to ECCE, the Ethiopian Education Sector Development Program V document states that ECCE has become one of the priorities for the education sector of the country. According to the document ECCE will be one of the potential inputs to the overall improvement of quality of education, reduction of drop out and repetition rates in later stages of formal schooling and it is

more cost effective to institute preventive measures and support for children at early stage instead of compensating for the disadvantage as they grow older (ESDP V, 2015).

Cognizant of the above stated rationales, the Ethiopian government has given due attention to early childhood care and education in the Education and Training Policy. However, there are concerns with the quality of ECCE and these are related with scarcity of teacher supervision and the unavailability of manuals and guidelines. The concerns over quality raise the wider question of the role of the government in the provision and regulation of ECCE and in quality assurance of ECCE programs (ESDP IV, 2010).

In support of the above statement, until recent time, many claim that ECCE in Ethiopia is overlooked by the government and it is entirely left for the private, other religious and charitable organizations which are not accessible to and affordable by the larger community. As it was said above this is done to encourage the participation of private investors and other institutes in the expansion of preschool education (ESDP V, 2015 and ESAA, 2017); and because of resource scarcity, government priorities were towards other levels of education (Tassew and Mesele (2017). Especially, children's parents and education professionals are asking about the ways children learn, and the access and types of care they get from their teachers and the school. The concerns further extend to the major roles and responsibilities that teachers and parents play on children care and education. Above all, teachers' qualification and training is a key discussion agenda of early childhood care and education in this country. Tsegai (2015) in Fantahun (2016) said that most of the preschool teachers are untrained or have very limited trainings and similar gaps and challenges of ECCE are also indicated in Ethiopia Education Development Roadmap of 2018-2030 (MoE, 2018).

According to Fantahun (2016), the major challenges of ECCE in Ethiopia are related to physical resources, curriculum and pedagogy, ECCE facilitators/teachers and caregivers, the participation of children parents and the community as a whole. In his review, Fantahun found that both ECCE curriculum and its teaching strategy are developmentally inappropriate. Reports and few empirical studies, Girma (2014), indicate that the state of ECCE in the Ethiopian context remained sub-standard compared to many African states. According to UNESCO Cluster Office

Addis Ababa (2006) report cited in Girma (2014), none of the preschools visited by the office met the standards set by Ministry of Education (Girma, 2014).

Hence, this study has tried to highlight the existing and actual situation of these concerns, specifically, focusing on the practices of preschool teachers and children in the course of care and education provision in some selected preschools of Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. To achieve this goal, the study, therefore, has considered key practices of early childhood care and education like child centered education, play based learning, the appropriateness and relevance of the ECCE practices, language use and assessment techniques of the preschools which, of course, are connected with theoretical frameworks of the study.

1.3. Objective of the Study

The main objective of this study was the comparative exploration of the practice of early childhood care and education across private, government, international and missionary preschools of Addis Ababa. Through this major objective, this research has attempted to undertake a close observation of the home (parents) and the school (facilitators) interaction in the process of child care and education. In early childhood education the practices of child-centeredness and play-based learning which accompanied with developmentally appropriate and culturally relevant practices are fundamental elements of the area. Therefore, this study has also examined the extent at which teachers/schools actually considered these basic components in their day to day practices. In the process of child care and learning, language and family participation are also given great emphasis. Hence, the study has observed the type (s) of spoken language(s) that is (are) in use as medium of teacher-child/parent interaction and instruction, and the participation of parents in their children's learning.

1.4. Basic Research Questions of the Study

Based on the above objectives, the study has attempted to answer the following basic research questions.

- How do teachers practice child-centered approaches and play-based teaching/learning methods?
- To what extent are the care and education practices of the teachers developmentally appropriate and culturally relevant for the child?
- What spoken language-(s) is-(are) used as medium/media of teacher-child and parent communication and instruction?
- What assessment techniques do they use?
- How are parents engaged in their children's learning?

1.5. Significance of the Study

Even though ECCE has a long root in Ethiopia, it is well recognized by the larger society very recently. Cognizant of what is going on in this area around the world, parents and education professionals are, therefore, asking about the ways children learn, and the access and types of care they get from their teachers and the school. The concerns further extend to the major roles and responsibilities that teachers and parents play in children care and education. Above all, teachers' qualification and training is a key discussion point of ECCE in Ethiopia. In relation to these concerns, this study, therefore, has revealed many important lessons and contributed to the knowledge of the field as well. Furthermore, it is believed that the research would also give some important insights for policy makers, educators, researchers, governmental and nongovernmental organizations and for other stakeholders who are working and studying on early childhood care and education, particularly, in Ethiopian.

1.6. Scope of the Study

Nowadays, ECCE is a critical issue throughout the world. It has got great attention at continental, regional, national and local levels. Similarly, this study has given emphasis on a comparative study of private, government, “international” and missionary preschools of Addis Ababa, the capital city of Ethiopia. The reason why this study area was chosen was that Addis Ababa is an excellent place where a large number of kindergarten schools of all types found in various forms than other parts of the country. Furthermore, to consider the issue under study, which this research has focused on, those preschools which are relatively found in better condition, and significant differences and variations, therefore, are found to appropriate to investigate the study issue. The reason why these preschools were chosen was that to observe whether they are, really, better or not, and if it is so, they would become a lesson for other preschools, as well.

1.7. Limitation of the Study

In conducting any kind of research, especially, rigorous type like this kind, there is always a challenge; this might be shown at different sections of the study (during data collection, sampling, writing up, methodology and the like). Likewise, in conducting this study, a few constraints, especially, during data collection time, were encountered. These include:

- Children and parents of two “international” and one private preschool didn’t participate in this study because of lack of permission from the preschools;
- The two “international” preschools were also not willing to video assisted classroom observations;
- Some, especially, few preschool principals lacked confidences to respond and explain the interview questions ;
- In one of the chosen preschool, there was inappropriate attitude towards research, in general; however, after some discussions on the importance and ethical issues of the study,

the condition got improved and they became positive to participate in the study; and; finally,

- Some participants were not accessed easily; there were repetitive appointments, especially, on the part of ECCE officials.

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

In this section of the study, different related literatures of the study were reviewed; and they were structured in the form of main and subtopics. Conceptualization, importance and quality of early childhood care and education and its play based learning approach were some of the major themes that were included in this chapter. Besides, theoretical and philosophical foundation, developmental and cultural appropriateness of early childhood care and education, and its medium of instruction and professionals were also among the main topics of the literature review part of the study.

2.1. Conceptualization of Early Childhood Care and Education and its Importance

The early childhood years are formidable years in the growth and development of cognition, language, social, emotional and physical competence (Robinson & Di'Az, 2006). Beginning at birth, ECCE is the building block of children's long-term development, well-being and health, and builds the competencies and skills that enable people to learn throughout life and to earn a livelihood (UNESCO, 2016). It is coming to be seen as the first stage in the process of producing a stable, well-prepared workforce for the future; and thus it lays a foundation for long-term success in an increasingly competitive global market (Dahlberg; Moss & Pence, 2007).

The first eight years of a child's life is a period of tremendous growth and development. Brain connections multiply exponentially in the first three years, and the potential for ensuring optimal development is very high up to age 8. It is imperative that this true 'window of opportunity' is fully used and strengthened to ensure long-term benefits, not just for each individual child's development but also for the larger community (UNESCO & UNICEF, 2012). Early intervention programs are based on the premise that 'beginning early' means a greater chance of being successful (Nutbrown & Clough, 2014). Therefore, ECCE is no doubt fundamental to a child's overall development and the child's later educational achievements and future success (Awopegba, Oduolowu, & Nsamenang, 2013).

A growing body of research recognizes that ECCE brings a wide range of benefits (OECD, 2012) and it has become a central issue for governments in many countries (OECD, 2006). It is one of the contemporary issues requiring close attention given its critical role in laying the foundation for lifelong learning and development, and in closing the achievement gaps between the disadvantaged and advantaged (Marope & Kaga, 2015). It supports children's well-being and progressive preparation for primary school entry, an important transition that is often accompanied by increasing expectations of what children should know and be able to do. Children's early experiences and environments have lasting influence on their future success in education and life, which takes place during the first few years of life (UNESCO, 2016 and Nightingale & Payne, 2013). ECCE services are the heart of the community and play pivotal roles in building democratic communities, family resilience, and family wellness; in presenting possibilities for inclusion, racism, and language barriers (Duncan & One, 2012).

ECCE reduces inequalities and is particularly important for those children who typically have less stimulating family environments and fewer resources for learning in the home and in the community (Rao & Sun, 2010). Children – especially the disadvantaged ones – and societies can reap the proven benefits of quality ECCE. With quality ECCE, children are healthy, happy and curious, and well prepared for primary school. They achieve more and grow into successful lifelong learners. Through its compensatory effects, ECCE helps children from disadvantaged backgrounds to have an equally strong start in school and in life (Marope & Kaga, 2015). Research indicates that ECCE can be a powerful instrument for helping to break the cycle of poverty in many countries (UNESCO & UNICEF, 2012). Intervention during the early years can compensate for vulnerability and disadvantage, regardless of underlying factors such as poverty, gender, race/ethnicity, caste or religion (UNESCO, 2006).

It complements the roles of parents and other care givers in raising children during the early years, results in easier transition to primary school, better completion rates, reduced poverty and social equality. Children from poor families, immigrant children and children from other vulnerable groups may particularly benefit from ECE's before compulsory schooling (Education International ECE Task Force Study Report, 2010). Well-designed ECCE programs can produce larger and long-term effects which is sufficient to close half the achievement gap between

disadvantaged children and other children through the end of secondary school (Marope & Kaga, 2015). Today's children are tomorrow's elders and leaders. They are everything that every country needs; hence the foresight is in investing in today's children for a healthier nation in the future (Awopegba, Oduolowu, & Nsamenang, 2013).

The physical, mental, social and emotional functioning of young children differs from that of older children and adults, and comprises distinctive stages and milestones of development. Numerous progressive transformations occur in children's physical, mental, cognitive and socio-emotional facilities from earliest infancy to the beginning of schooling. These transformations mark the acquisition of skills and capacities, ways of relating, communicating, learning and playing (UNESCO, 2006). The preschool years are playing a more important role in the education process than at any time in history and have assumed a more important place in the process of schooling. It is the road to success in school and life begins long before first grade (Morrison, 2004).

Social-emotional competence which is the core value of ECCE for all children comprising the ability to calm oneself when angry, initiate friendships, resolve conflicts respectfully, make ethical and safe choices, contribute constructively to the community. A meta-analysis of 200 research studies conducted by the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) shows that children who attend programs that focus on social-emotional development do better academically, have higher rates of attendance, and are safer in school (Heymann & Cassola, 2012 and Marope & Kaga, 2015). The cognitive gains of ECCE are related with the growth and development of brain which is faster than any other organ of the body during infancy and toddlerhood. Brain researchers have discovered that 90 per cent of brain development is completed by the age of three and conscience and personal responsibility are established. Brain development is activity-dependent. The implication of this is the fact that stimulation of the brain is essential during this sensitive and formative period (period in which the brain is developing most rapidly) (Awopegba, Oduolowu, & Nsamenang, 2013).

In terms of economic language, there is a strong consensus among researchers that high quality ECCE is an excellent investment for the society. Studies suggest that spending money on high quality early childhood education can lead to economic wealth in the future. They say that investments in early childhood education easily pay for themselves over time by generating very high rates of return for participants, the public and the government (Awopegba, Oduolowu, & Nsamenang, 2013). James Heckman the 2000 Nobel-prize winner in economics in Awopegba, Oduolowu, & Nsamenang (2013) argues that if children have a high-quality early childhood education they will be better able to use higher education and job training later in life (Awopegba, Oduolowu, & Nsamenang, 2013). ECCE is also an important instrument for promoting gender parity. When young children attend ECCE programs, their older sisters or other female kin are relieved of care responsibilities, a common barrier to girls' enrolment in primary school. Some evidence regarding primary school outcomes indicates that girls benefit more than boys from participation in ECCE (UNESCO, 2006).

ECCE is claimed to be one of the most powerful equalizers, however, there are still a number of gaps to fill before we can rely on ECCE to work towards more equal societies. First, we need to acknowledge that in many countries, it is precisely the poorest that are less enrolled in high quality ECCE. Second, all studies concur in saying that only high quality can yield the expected positive results. And third, labeling ECCE as the greatest of equalizers may cast a shadow over other essential aspects of policies to combat child poverty (Marope & Kaga, 2015). Therefore, a child's exposure to high-quality early childhood facility, Reynolds & Ou, (2004) in Awopegba, Oduolowu, & Nsamenang, (2013) will not only increase readiness for formal schooling, but also causes positive long-term improvements in the child's school performances and social outcomes.

2.2. Quality of Early Childhood Care and Education

ECCE can bring a wide range of benefits – for children, parents and society at large. But all these benefits are conditional on “quality”. Expanding access to services without attention to quality will not deliver good outcomes for children or the long term productivity benefits for society. Furthermore, research has shown that if quality is low, it can have long-lasting detrimental effects on child development, instead of bringing positive effects (OECD, 2012). The benefits

that accrue are contingent on the quality of services that are provided, as poor quality ECCE can have “long-lasting detrimental effects on child development” (Grieshaber, 2017). The effectiveness of any preschool program is related directly to the quality of that program and the amount of the program that is actually received (Zigler, Gilliam & Jones, 2006).

In many western societies a consensus has emerged that early childhood provision should be individualized and play-based and that adults should be non-directive and ‘facilitate’ learning rather than ‘teach’. This general belief underpins notions of quality in early childhood education (Blatchford, 2004). In past eras, quality was seen more as a luxury than a necessity, merely a handmaiden to quantity... Today quality matters and it matters a lot (Dahlberg, Moss and Pence, 2007) and it becomes the major goal of ECCE (Morrison, 2004). Quality in early childhood education settings has become a major discussion point in world countries where children in their before school years are increasingly being cared for outside of the home (Hruska & Gunn, 2017). Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) states in its Target 4.2 that: “By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education.” The World Education Forum (Incheon, May 2015) also advocated for a global commitment to investing in equitable and comprehensive quality ECCE (UNESCO, 2016).

The evidence of positive effects from quality ECCE is remarkably consistent around the globe (Marope & Kaga, 2015). There is an increasing amount of national and international evidence to show that quality ECCE has a positive long-term effect upon children’s later development. Governments, worldwide, have at last begun to recognize that early childhood education matters. However, successful quality early education is more than providing children with a few facts or cognitive skills, it is about empowering children and providing them with the opportunity to ‘learn how to learn’ (Curtis & O’Hagan, 2003). The past decade has provided more evidence that good quality ECCE, both in families and in more structured programs, have a positive impact on the survival, growth, development and learning potential of children. Participation in good quality ECCE is linked with achievement at subsequent levels of education and contributes to the quality of the education system as a whole (UNESCO, 2006). The latest findings of Effective Provision of Pre-School Education (EPPE) study suggest that high quality ECCE yields

beneficial effects that last up till secondary school, even when primary school is of mediocre quality (Melhuish, 2013 cited in Marope & Kaga, 2015).

While many countries have recently focused on expanding provision for young children, there has been at the same time a significant international trend to define and measure the effectiveness and ‘quality’ of that provision (Waller, 2005). Internationally, there is a growing need for quality ECCE as greater numbers of families migrate to urban areas and more mothers enter the workforce. However, the programs available for young children vary greatly in quality (Wortham, 2013).

Policy-makers around the world increasingly recognize the importance of improving the quality of ECCE in addition to improving access (Heymann & Cassola, 2012). The evidence is clear that children in high-quality preschool programs show better developmental outcomes than children who attend lower quality programs. The importance of program quality cuts across all income levels, but it is particularly salient for children from low-income families. While preschool settings differ from home settings for all children, the difference is often greater for children who live in poverty (Frede, 1998 as cited in Zigler, Gilliam & Jones, 2006). Therefore, by compensating for disadvantage in the home and community, quality ECCE can offer disadvantaged children a good beginning in life and help them start primary school on an equal footing with the advantaged children (Marope and Kaga, 2015). Quality ECCE is an important strategy for working toward equal societies and should be made available particularly for disadvantaged children. Several studies show that quality in early childhood environments is a very important investment for society as a whole, reducing social problems and health problems and securing the sustainability of the society (Ringsmose & Clausen, 2017).

Much has been written about the need to ensure that we provide quality education for our young children and there is general agreement that a quality setting will involve the child, the family and the community. Many people subscribe to this view but few really analyze the meaning of the word ‘quality’ in this context. Quality is a relative-value-based concept that is totally subjective, but any definition we use must be as inclusive as possible. Different interest groups, for example parents, early childhood educators, stakeholders and even children themselves, will

have a different view on what they call good-quality early childhood programs (Curtis & O'Hagan, 2003).

Quality is easy to recognize but difficult to define in a concise straightforward way! Quality has become a national buzz-word and a universal business and educational aim. Policy documents often present quality as objective, real, universal and knowable, but there is broad agreement that quality is a socially constructed, culturally bound, context-specific and dynamic concept (Dahlberg et al., 2007). Quality in early childhood services is a constructed concept, subjective in nature and based on values, beliefs and interest, rather than an objective and universal reality. Quality child care is, to a large extent, in the eye of the beholder (Dahlberg, Moss & Pence, 2007). Quality in ECCE may mean different things for different people (such as for children, parents and ECCE staff); it can be defined at different levels (such as at structural and system levels or at process or program levels). Effective policy levers that can encourage “quality” may vary by country, considering country-specific contexts such as the political, financial and technical feasibility of implementing such levers (OECD, 2012). It has been argued that definitions of preschool quality should be culturally and contextually relevant. Given wide variations in economic development, resource availability, and in cultural beliefs, definitions of high quality will vary across contexts. Nevertheless, there is some agreement about the factors which define high preschool quality regardless of circumstance. These include the physical and psychological environment, curriculum, learning and teaching approaches, teacher-child interactions, program management, and community integration. Among these, teacher-child interactions are considered the most important determinant of quality and teachers interact with young children through the curriculum (Rao & Sun, 2010).

Researchers have been debating for years about the concept of ‘quality’ in ECCE. Judgment of quality involves values, and what is a ‘high quality’ center to one parent may be quite low in the eyes of a local authority officer or indeed another parent (Sylva et al., 2010). It is probably impossible to share a common definition of quality and therefore we must move towards a common understanding of what each person means by the term (Curtis & O'Hagan, 2003). ‘Quality’ is not universal but is a relative concept, depending on cultural values and beliefs about the nature of the children and childhood (Waller, 2005). The subcultures and plurality of values

in societies often mean that no one definitive definition of quality exists. It is a relative concept that varies depending on one's perspective... Indeed, quality is both a dynamic and relative concept so that perceptions of quality changes as a variety of factors evolve (Dahlberg, Moss & Pence, 2007). Quality is a multifaceted concept and is, necessarily, culturally determined. It is impossible (and probably undesirable) to produce a single 'blueprint' for quality in early childhood education and care and apply it – universally – in everyday education settings throughout the world. Needs, opportunities, priorities and individual choices vary and if early childhood settings are to be of good quality then one factor which determines its worth is the extent to which the provision is meaningful and appropriate to those who use it (Nutbrown, 2006). It is problematic to transfer effective ECCE programs from one society to another in standardized fashion because the prospects for program effectiveness are deeply embedded in local conditions (Heymann & Cassola, 2012). The Global Guidelines Assessment's (GGA) definition of quality takes into account individual and local variations, as well as a global perspective of what constitutes quality early care and education, stating that, "A quality early childhood curriculum is focused on the whole child and considers physical, cognitive, linguistic, creative, and social/emotional growth (Wortham, 2013).

Although a growing number of policy-makers elsewhere realize the early years are a springboard for future academic and economic success and for reducing poverty; access to good quality ECCE is still not widespread, particularly in the poorest countries (UNESCO, 2006). Many countries are challenged by the lack of consistent regulations, resources, and support for early childhood programs (Wortham, 2013). While the existence of adequate resources for learning, including having professionally qualified early childhood educators, is a prerequisite for high quality programs, many developing countries lack the resources to attain standards for quality set in the developed world. In fact, many programs in the developing world would be considered of extremely poor quality using the benchmarks of the developed world and western observers may argue that children are better off staying at home than attending these low quality programs (Rao & Sun, 2010). In developing countries, in particular, a lack of resources for early childhood education services has made it difficult to provide services beyond the capital and larger cities, and to improve the quality of those services that already exist, in terms of infrastructure, facilities, and trained and adequately remunerated teachers (Education International ECE Task

Force Study Report, 2010). In spite of the growing interest, ECCE remains one of the under-resourced sectors in African countries. Consequently, the sub-sector suffers from poor quality of infrastructure, teaching materials, lack of a coordinated and culturally appropriate curriculum, and a scarcity of qualified teachers and child caregivers who are sensitive to the children's cultural realities (Awopegba, Oduolowu & Nsamenang, 2013). Overall, good quality ECCE is holistic and is concerned with more than children's academic achievement (Rao & Sun, 2010).

2.2.1. Quality Indicators of Early Childhood Care and Education

Today, quality is a major goal for preschool programs. It is often elusive; therefore, it needs some standards to guide its planning and decision making (Morrison, 2004). There are many suggestions of early childhood education quality indicators; most of the time, the quality of ECCE program is typically assessed in terms of structural and/or process dimensions. Structural measures of programs include staff-child ratios, staff qualifications, teaching experience and stability, health and safety factors, and the physical setting, and process measures refer to the quality of interactions between staff and children (Rao & Sun, 2010). The process quality dimension defines—who is involved and how it is done; understood quality to be a *subjective, value-based, relative* and *dynamic* concept, with the possibility of *multiple perspectives* or understandings of what quality is; and argued that work with quality needs to be *contextualized*, spatially and temporally, and to recognize cultural and other significant forms of *diversity* (Dahlberg, Moss & Pence, 2007). The other option includes outcome dimension which encompasses cognitive development, school readiness, academic skills, parents' satisfaction with provision (Dahlberg *et al.*, 2007).

The other suggestion given as measures of quality ECCE is the four interacting dimensions of *society, teachers, children and learning contexts* (Sheridan, 2011). The *society dimension* focuses on the collective knowledge of society and societal intentions relating to views of child, childhood and preschool. This dimension also encompasses norms and values, traditions, cultural and contextual specifics and the traditions concerning children's learning in preschool (Sheridan, 2011). Links between home and school are critical for melding the two communities of practice together in promoting quality (Anning *et al.*, 2004). Children learn a great deal from the adults

around them, not only from the planned learning opportunities but also from the rituals and routines of daily living. The attitudes of the adults and other children and the social relationships that are formed are as crucial to children's development as the activities in which they are engaged (Curtis & O'Hagan, 2003).

In examining quality provisions in the early years, the role of the teacher should be viewed as central to any critique (Blatchford, 2004). The focus of *teachers dimension* is teachers' professional competence. The dimension embraces the teachers' attitudes and values and their views of the child, knowledge and learning. It is a question of being part of the child's learning processes and to combine the child's interests and intentions for learning with the goals in the preschool curriculum (Sheridan, 2011). The *dimension of children* focuses on children's wellbeing, learning, development and participation from a child perspective and the perspective of the child. Central in this dimension is children's' meaning making, communication and interaction, both with one another and with preschool teachers (Sheridan, 2011; Curtis & O'Hagan, 2003). The *dimension of learning* contexts highlights the observable quality in preschool. It shows how teachers, children and objects interact and, in practice, are related to one another. The focus of this dimension is on how contents, pedagogical processes, communication and interaction are formed to support children's learning and development, and to enable them to participate and influence ongoing processes and activities in preschool (Sheridan, 2011). Here, the interaction between the caregiver and the child, or process quality, is a critical element for ECCE. With lower teacher-child ratios and smaller group sizes, children can receive more individual attention and teachers can more effectively cater for diverse learning needs (Rao & Sun, 2010).

Smith (1996) as cited in Podmore (2004) further lists the following nine criteria for quality in early childhood services. These are: sensitive and responsive interactions between adults and children; adult-child ratios; staff training and education; staff stability; curriculum and program focus; peer group harmony; communication with parents; favorable staff wages and working conditions; and safe and healthy physical environments (Podmore, 2004). According to ACEI (the World Organization for Early Childhood Education) and OMEP (World Organization for Early Childhood Education) (1999) as cited in Wortham (2013), the basic elements of quality

ECCE services include: attention to environment features and resources; developmentally and culturally appropriate curriculum; well-educated early childhood staff; meaningful parent and community involvement; and attention to the needs of diverse young children, including those with disabilities (Wortham, 2013).

In the preschool setting, where quality and learning depend on interpersonal relationships, high teacher turnover can disrupt children's attachments and educational progress. The link between wages and turnover is understandable and undeniable, and both are clearly associated with quality. Teacher wages significantly predicts classroom process quality even after teacher-child ratio, group size, and teacher education and training were controlled. In other words, higher wages allow schools to staff their programs with higher-skilled teachers and improve work force stability (Zigler et al, 2006).

2.3. Early Childhood Care and Education Professionals

The first few years of a child's life are a period during which the child will learn more than in the rest of his or her lifetime (Greig, 2013). It is a unique and precious stage in the human life cycle where children's environments and experiences impact on child development and contribute to shape children's behaviors, intellect, and well-being. The significance of positive development during early childhood years for later educational achievement, successful interpersonal relationships, and positive adult citizenship is widely recognized. Societies therefore have a responsibility to ensure safe, healthy, nurturing and responsive environments for their youngest members (Burger, 2013). In the past, these needs were met at home and in the community, but now being met also in centers and classrooms to complement home-based approaches by the help of early childhood education professionals-preschool teachers and caregivers (Awopegba, Oduolowu & Nsamenang, 2013). There is widespread recognition that quality pre-primary education supports learning and development at the time and in later years and that teachers "are the main determinants of quality" (Mitchell & Taylor, 2015).

ECCE caregivers and teachers are the most critical providers of stimulation, care and support for young children all over the world. They must possess the required competences in working with children and their parents. The caregiver is an enabler of the curriculum who is expected to fulfill various roles in the course of his or her duties in ensuring that children attain appropriate and relevant standard care and education (Awopegba, Oduolowu & Nsamenang, 2013). Young children are very sensitive to adult moods and attitudes, therefore, a teacher who shows calm and confidence, strength and support, will inspire a more relaxed, comfortable atmosphere in which children can learn and grow. However, if the teacher is punitive and harsh, the tone of the classroom will reflect that (Browne & Gordon, 2011).

ECCE is changing very rapidly and it is undergoing dramatic transformation and reform: First, there has been a tremendous increase in scientific knowledge about young children and how they learn. This new knowledge encourages professionals to view young children in different ways and realize they are more capable and eager to learn at a very young age. Second, educators have developed research-based programs and curricula that enable children to learn literally from the beginning of life. Combined, these and other changes are dramatically altering our views of how young children learn and how teachers teach. As a result, the field of early childhood education is entering a new era, and it requires professionals who are up to date and willing to adapt so that all children will learn and succeed in school and life (Morrison, 2004).

The knowledge about early childhood education and early childhood teacher education is continuously changing (Fromberg, 2003). The public increasingly recognizes the importance of children's early years in learning and development. Today, more than ever, the public and politicians are interested in improving the quality of education and teaching (Morrison, 2004). Influences such as globalization and neoliberalism have shaped government, INGO and NGO policies and funding in particular ways, which have then been instrumental in changing or re-conceptualizing ECCE. Part of these changes has been the addition standards to the ECCE repertoire, which has brought a subsequent focus on professionalism because of the link between the quality of early childhood services and more highly educated staff (Grieshaber, 2017). Since the period of early childhood is a remarkable time of brain development that lays the foundation for later learning, it cannot be achieved without virile and well trained management and teaching

personnel. It is one of the key recommendations for reaching the goals of ECCE as highlighted in the UNESCO 2007 Global Monitoring Report dedicated to ECCE and captioned “Strong Foundation”, was the need for “upgrading of ECCE staff, particularly through flexible recruitment strategies, appropriate training, quality standards and remuneration that retains trained staff” (UNESCO-IICBA, 2010).

Ongoing training and professional development are essential if teachers are to implement a curriculum effectively. In the case of kindergarten curriculum, professional development needs to be extended to principals and teachers in the school sector to ensure a shared understanding of kindergarten pedagogy and practice (Heymann & Cassola, 2012). Professional development opportunities of kindergarten/preschool staff tend to focus on: pedagogies and instructional practices; curriculum implementation; language and subject matters; monitoring and assessment; and communication and management (OECD, 2012). If those working with young children have the necessary skills, knowledge and understanding, they have the potential to offer meaningful experience all young children deserve (Nutbrown & Clough, 2014). The knowledge, skills and beliefs about children and teaching and learning are gained through appropriate teacher education/training and professional development (Mitchell & Taylor, 2015).

Different countries use different names to describe ECCE teaching staff. To mention some of the titles used to describe the diverse workforce found in ECCE programs and institutions are: teachers, educators, pedagogues and carers /care givers (Education International ECE Task Force Study Report, 2010), early childhood teachers, nursery workers, child minders, day care staff, auxiliary nurses, volunteer helpers (UNESCO, 2006) and facilitators which interchangeably used with teachers in this study, and their qualification is vary greatly by country (OECD, 2012 & UNESCO, 2006), and regardless of the wide range of qualifications for staff working in the ECCE sector, there is a general agreement across international policy documents for at least 60 per cent of staff being trained at a bachelor degree level (Marope & Kaga, 2015). However, international reports suggest that more than 20 % of preprimary teachers lack professional training (UNESCO, 2006 as cited in Wortham, 2013).

In the first years of this century, the quality of early years provision and the need for a well-trained and appropriately qualified workforce were key issues (Nutbrown & Clough, 2014). There is a 'positive relationship between the qualification levels of the staff and the ratings of center quality. The higher the qualifications of the staff the more progress children made (Nightingale & Payne, 2013). It is the high quality early childhood professional, not the curriculum, assessments, and strategies, that has the greatest effect on children's learning and development (Browne & Gordon, 2011). Higher qualifications are found to be strongly associated with better child outcomes. It is not the qualification by itself that has an impact on child outcomes, what matters on the ground is the ability of the staff to create a high-quality pedagogic environment that makes the difference for children. More specialized education and training of staff is found to be strongly associated with stable, sensitive and stimulating interactions in ECCE settings (OECD, 2012). An early childhood professional has the personal characteristics, knowledge, and skills necessary to teach and conduct programs so that all children learn (Morrison, 2004).

As concerns about the quality of ECCE have increased globally, so has the need for reliable and valid tools to help ECCE staff design new programs and better understand the quality of existing programs (Wortham, 2013). It is quite clear that there is a strong relation between staff qualifications and outcomes for children and that qualification levels are one of the most salient predictors of quality. Professionals who have more formal education and more specialized early childhood training provide more stimulating, warm and supportive interactions with children (OECD, 2006 as cited in Marope & Kaga, 2015).

Being an early childhood professional goes beyond degrees and experiences (Morrison, 2004). Teachers of young children should be thoroughly grounded in child development as well as in early childhood pedagogy (Rust, 1993). An early childhood educator is a person who is knowledgeable about typical and atypical child development, models of early childhood curriculum from historical to current times, the workings of families, the workings of schools, current issues in the field, the role of the teacher as the facilitator of development and learning, and the person who is able to apply all that information to the early childhood classroom (Miller, 1996). According to Nightingale & Payne (2013) professional knowledge, understanding and

skills, to planning, assessing and evaluating learning opportunities, to creating a safe, supportive and challenging environment, to having a commitment to professional development, to establishing effective relations with stakeholders and parents and ensuring anti-discriminatory practice are important competencies of early childhood staff. Particularly important for educators is understanding how young children learn, referring naturally to an holistic view of learning relating to all aspects of development – intellectual, linguistic, emotional, physical, social, cultural, gender-related, moral and spiritual, are very important qualities of early childhood educators (Nightingale & Payne, 2013).

Teaching is a distributed activity. It does not take place in an isolated classroom, because learning does not only take place in that classroom: children are learning all the time, and bring what they have learned elsewhere into the classroom (Wardekker, 2012). Today we would also stress the need for teachers to become culturally competent: to accept and understand cultural differences, have a working knowledge of the cultural backgrounds of the children in the class, and appreciate that this may be the children's first experience outside their own culture (Browne & Gordon, 2011). Within today's diverse society, attention to children's socio-cultural contexts and family cultures requires an interdisciplinary, holistic preparation that provides a stronger platform on which teachers might build curricula with children (Fromberg, 2003).

An early childhood professional is a multidimensional person (Morrison, 2004) and her or his role is critical in the life of a child (Awopegba, Oduolowu & Nsamenang, 2013), and the roles she or he performs have been described in many ways. These are: storyteller, traffic, director, conflict mediator, custodian, file clerk, mediator, carpenter, poet, plumber, adult educator, parent, musician, purchasing, resource, faculty member, agent nurse, program, staff supervisor, business, planner, personnel, manager, treasurer, director, employee, employer, psychologist, sociologist, and scientist (Browne & Gordon, 2011). The early childhood educator also wears many other hats. This person needs to be resourceful, organized and an organizer, a good listener, a keen observer, and an excellent manager (Miller, 1996). An early childhood education professional also engages in teaching and caring of children, working with parents and families, collaborating with community partners, and assuming all the other roles and responsibilities involved in the profession. This dimension includes knowing children; developing a philosophy

of education; planning; assessing; reporting; reflecting and thinking; teaching; collaborating with parents, families, and community partners; engaging in ethical practice; and seeking continued professional development opportunities (Morrison, 2004).

As Jones (1994) cited in Browne and Gordon (2011) early childhood teachers, like young children, are constructivists. The complexity and unpredictability of teaching call for on-the-spot decisions, and those decisions are based on developmental and learning theory and constructed from the teacher's own experience and practice. Teachers also need to know the theory, history, and traditions of the field and the social and political climate of the day. Phillips (1994) defines teaching in Browne and Gordon (2011) as those "daily acts of creation" that are constructed from the teacher's own repertoire of skills, knowledge, and training added to what he or she observes about children and his or her interactions with their families.

2.4. Early Childhood Care and Education and Medium of Instruction

Language is what we use to translate experiences into a means of communication and thinking and its development begins in infancy and continues throughout life. It is received by the eyes and ears. Children learn language through listening to models, imitating those models, receiving feedback, refining their language, and using their language to share ideas. Language is critical to all learning and as such is a very important part of early childhood environments. It is something that is inherent in all activities and should be integrated into all activity areas in an early childhood classroom. It is also a critical component of every interaction between peers, between children and adults, and between adults. It must be remembered that to hear appropriate language from children, language-rich environments dense with interesting words that express interesting ideas as well as routine events must be provided for them. Language and literacy development play an integral part of an early childhood classroom. When children experience the freedom to explore materials and follow their own ideas as well as the ideas of their peers, they continue to be curious and this curiosity brings them richer language experiences and richer literacy experiences (Greig, 2013).

Early childhood programs have to pay particular attention to the languages of instruction used. The colonial or political history in some countries as well as globalization has led to the official or foreign language being seen as a means of upward social mobility and the mother tongue is seen to be subordinate (Rao & Sun, 2010). In many countries, there is a perception that using a native language may hinder economic progress. There is also the worry that children will be left behind to suffer relative economic hardship because of their perceived inability to engage more successfully in business or economic activities (UNESCO & UNICEF, 2012). However, research has clearly indicated that children learn better in their mother tongue and should do so at least until age eight, although the official/ foreign language can be introduced orally earlier. With appropriate bridging programs, children can transfer the reading and writing skills they have already acquired in their mother tongue to the second language by primary school age (Rao & Sun, 2010). This kind of bilingual ECCE programs, have the advantages of a strong local identity and a global communication network for the children, and offers an opportunity to empower communities for local as well as global challenges. Mother tongue based education is thus important in building bridges and empowering communities (UNESCO & UNICEF, 2012).

It is obvious that teachers and students need to communicate with each other for effective learning to take place. Their relationship is only a step away from that of parent and child, who interact meaningfully in their home language or “mother tongue.” So why do schools throughout the world continue to use languages that children do not understand, languages that teachers themselves may have difficulty speaking? Teaching through a foreign language has been called “submersion” because it is comparable to holding learners under water without teaching them how to swim. When the school fails to use a language that the learner speaks and understands well, the school fails the learner in virtually every way, and the results are limited access to schooling; high repetition, failure, and dropout rates; poor quality of education; and low self-esteem, all of which are well documented (Heymann & Cassola, 2012). The language used in the home is important to the development of young children. By the age of 5, provided they do not have language difficulties, all children have acquired the adult grammar for the main constructions of their native language and this is true across all cultures and in all languages. From a very early age, children are learning through language, they are learning to use language and they are learning about language (Wyse & Bradford, 2008).

When the child's mother tongue is a language other than English, this diversity must also be celebrated in the classroom, because to reject the language is to reject the child and it is quite easy for children to lose their home language in the early years. Therefore, teachers should allow them to use their language along with the second language as much as possible. When children are proficient in their home language as well as the second language, they are able to relate the stories of their parents and grandparents and this helps to infuse their cultural identity into the classroom. When they have a good grasp of the vocabulary and concepts of their first language, they are better able to grasp the vocabulary and concepts of the second language. Similarly, when students can do something in one language, it easily transfers to the second language and therefore the teacher knows that the child understands the concept (Wynne, 2007). According to UNESCO (2006) it is easier to become a competent reader and communicator in the mother tongue and once a child can read and write one language, the skills are transferable to other languages. The positive effects of mother tongue based schooling are incontrovertible. Unlike submersion programs that use a foreign medium of instruction, programs in learners' own languages offer them an opportunity to: learn to read and write in a language they understand; learn a second (and possibly third) language orally and in writing; experience success in learning curricular content; feel pride in their home language(s) and culture(s); participate actively in class; demonstrate what they have learned; get help with schoolwork from their family members; become bi(multi)lingual and bi(multi)literate; and participate productively and equitably in society (Heymann & Cassola, 2012).

The concept of mother tongue education or the use of a language familiar to the child as a medium of instruction has been supported by research. Research has proven that using the learners' mother tongue or home language which refers to the language or languages spoken at home by children is crucial to effective learning. This will be useful when teachers and caregivers are also native speakers of the children's mother tongue or home language as it makes it easier for teachers and caregivers to communicate knowledge. The use of mother tongue as medium of education leads to a higher competency in all curricular subjects than the foreign languages. A child will learn to read and write only that which he or she understands and makes meaning. Therefore, teachers and caregivers need to develop skills for teaching and practicing concepts that are been taught, class organization and management styles consistent with the

cultural norms. They should be aware of the need for creativity in the use of local materials for designing culturally sensitive and conducive learning environments for children in their local communities (Awopegba, Oduolowu & Nsamenang, 2013). Some educationists have argued that the only countries likely to achieve EFA are those where the language of instruction is the learners' mother tongue (UNESCO, 2008 cited in Awopegba, Oduolowu & Nsamenang, 2013). Countries that do not provide access to L1 education experience the lowest levels of literacy and educational attainment worldwide (Heymann & Cassola, 2012). L1 means first language, native language, mother tongue, or arterial language. It is the language(s) a person has learned from birth or within the critical period of their life (Awopegba, Oduolowu & Nsamenang, 2013).

Evidences show that parents are more likely to communicate with teachers and participate in their children's learning when local languages are used (UNESCO, 2006). The difference in the language of the school and those spoken at home excludes the involvement of the parents and the local communities from the educational process of their children, especially if parents are illiterate in the foreign language used in schools. Therefore, In order to have equal access to a high quality education for children, their mother tongue must be valued and respected in the educational systems (Awopegba, Oduolowu & Nsamenang, 2013). Children acquire languages quickly in the early years, and early childhood programs offer them the opportunity to develop their self-esteem by using their mother tongue while acquiring a second (and sometimes a third) language. Although UNESCO has encouraged mother tongue instruction in early childhood education since 1953, mono-lingualism in the official or dominant language is still the norm around the world and this is a challenge facing most ECCE programs is to respond to the needs of linguistically and culturally diverse children and their families (UNESCO, 2006).

Several international conventions have supported the fact that children from local communities are entitled to start their educational journey that enables them to make the necessary connections between their values and those presented to them in their learning centers. When these culturally relevant connections are absent, there would be learning challenges leading to absenteeism, failure in the learning process and disinterestedness in schooling (Awopegba, Oduolowu & Nsamenang, 2013). Learning in a language not one's own presents a double challenge. One must learn a new language and new knowledge contained in that language.

Furthermore, young children can perceive that languages are valued differently. When a linguistic and cultural discontinuity exists between home and preschool, indigenous and other minority language children may perceive that their language and culture are not valued — a perception that lowers their self confidence and self-esteem and interferes with their learning. These challenges aggravate the risks to indigenous children’s attendance, engagement in learning tasks, and retention in the first years of school, and may create immense obstacles to garnering parents’ interest and involvement in their child’s education. As a result access, quality, and equity of education will be a big problem. Studies show that home-language-based instruction can increase a child’s self-esteem and cultural pride and promote a smooth transition between home and school, thus fostering an emotional stability that translates to cognitive stability (Heymann & Cassola, 2012). Linguistic specialists argue that children who learn in their mother tongue for the first six to eight years perform better in terms of test scores and self-esteem than those who receive instruction exclusively in the official language (Thomas & Collier, 2002 cited in UNESCO, 2006).

Benson, a leading scholar in the field of multilingual education, contends that, worldwide, children’s home language has been established as the most efficient language for early literacy and content area instruction. Similarly, Dutcher, drawing on extensive involvement in early education in majority world contexts, also concludes that young children develop literacy and cognitive skills and master content material most easily when they are taught in a familiar language. Hence, several robust studies show that cognitive and academic language skills, once developed and subject knowledge, once acquired, transfer readily from one language to another (Heymann & Cassola, 2012).

2.5. Early Childhood Care and Education and Parent Participation

The basic role of the parent does not change from society to society or over time. Children need to be nurtured, fed, clothed, touched, and communicated with in verbal and nonverbal ways (Miller, 1996). Children are best understood and supported in the context of their family, culture, community, and society. Decades of research show the positive effects on achievement when children’s families are involved in their education. The family is the primary source from which

the child develops and grows and is needed to reinforce the learning, attitudes, and motivation if children are to succeed (Browne & Gordon, 2011). The most positive outcomes are achieved during the early childhood period when parents and teachers work together within a framework of shared decision making (Berger, 1987 as cited in Miller, 1996). Regardless of a child's socio-economic status, early childhood programs that create an effective synthesis of school, family and culture have profound importance in helping children to realize their intellectual and social potential (Rust, 1993). Parents are the first teachers that children encounter and the teaching that parents provide is carried out in the most naturalistic environment children ever encounter, the home (Miller, 1996).

To involve parents in their children's learning is not so much born of new and innovative ideas but is deeply rooted in a view that, as Vygotsky might have said, children's learning is social; and the first social group in which most children learn is their immediate family (Nutbrown & Clough, 2014). Froebel also placed great importance on parents as educators and believed it was teachers who should promote and support this (Nightingale & Payne, 2013). From a Vygotskian perspective, meaningful practices should be arranged for interaction between parents and teachers which create new learning opportunities (zone of proximal development). Such practices indeed offer valuable contexts for learning when appropriate help is available (Vos & Weijers, 2012).

The benefits of parent involvement in schooling of children schooling are widely recognized by educators. It is a broad term that encompasses a number of ways in which parents can support their children's education (Henrich & Jones, 2006). Families are as much a part of the process of early care and education as are caregivers, educators, particular facilities, different curricula, pedagogical practices, quality standards, and regulations etcetera (Burger, 2013). Building a welcoming program for the child is not possible without welcoming his or her parents and their involvement is a key ingredient in raising the quality of ECCE provision. ECCE starts at home with parents, other family and community members providing for the care, protection, upbringing and education of young children (Marope & Kaga, 2015). Parents are children's first and most enduring educators. When parents and practitioners work together in early years settings, the results have a positive impact on the child's development and learning (Nutbrown,

2006). Research in the past three decades has shed light on parents' roles in their own children's learning and prompted the development of programs to involve parents more systematically in their own children's education (Nutbrown & Clough, 2014).

Home and school partnerships provide support for the developing child. Children whose parents help them at home do better in school and parents who participate in school have children who are more diligent in their efforts to learn and are better behaved. Therefore, it is important to keep this in mind when nurturing parent teacher relationships and parent-school relationships. As professionals in early childhood education, regardless of the conditions under which teachers come to know children and their families, there remains an obligation to learn as much as one can from the parents and to work in partnership with them to create the most appropriate environments and approaches for young children as is possible (Miller, 1996). Through close home-school relationships, parents can find ways to become more effective as their children's first and most important teachers (Browne & Gordon, 2011).

Parents' interest in the education their children and their involvement with their children in learning activities, from talking about school experiences, to assisting with homeworks, to participating in after-school activities such as culture and athletic clubs, can have a tremendous positive impact on children's academic success and retention in school (Heymann & Cassola, 2012). Findings also suggest the powerful role ECCE services might play in collaborating with families in order to meet educational aims. Over the past decades, research on parent/ teacher collaboration has shown that when communities, parents and teachers work together as partners with shared, meaningful, educational aims in mind, the potential for improving children's learning outcomes is enhanced (Mitchell & Taylor, 2015).

Parental partnership and engagement is critical in enhancing ECCE staff knowledge about the children, especially, in ensuring high quality children's learning at home and communicating with the staff which is strongly associated with children's later academic success, high school completion, socio-emotional development and adaptation in society (OECD, 2012). Evidence has shown that family factors and processes are typically more predictive of child functioning than childcare factors and processes in childcare institutions for young children in their first

years of life (Burger, 2013). Families have a unique contribution to make in the child's schooling. They have different knowledge about the child from what the teacher has. They know the child's history: physical, medical, social, and intellectual. Families provide the context with which the teacher can view the whole child. As the teacher will soon learn, the family already knows what makes their children happy or sad or how they react to changes in routines. Thus, families have a wealth of intimate knowledge about their children that the teacher is only just beginning to discover (Browne & Gordon, 2011).

When parents feel welcome and a vital part of a child's program, it is easier to establish a pattern of parent as partner in education which is crucial to the future success of the child. Once this partnership is well established, parents feel comfortable raising their concerns about their children, asking for advice from teachers, or just sharing. A relationship based on respect and trust affords those who have the educational responsibility for children the opportunity to share developmental information about the child. Shared information helps parents, teachers, and other involved professionals to make appropriate decisions about children and their educational programs and allows for planning ahead for transitions (Miller, 1996).

Close collaboration between educators and families is now widely accepted evidence and effective home-setting links can have a positive impact on children's achievement, development, behavior, attitudes to school and continuity. Additional benefits to parents/carers include increased confidence and self-esteem and greater insight into children's development and ECCE experiences (Nightingale & Payne, 2013). According to Henrich & Jones (2006) parent involvement during preschool influences children's academic success through four interrelated pathways: Parent involvement in preschool is linked to involvement in supportive activities at home; Parent involvement in preschool and at home has direct effects on children's concurrent academic performance; Parent involvement in preschool and at home has effects on children's social behavior and motivation, which should in turn affect their school performance; and Parents who are involved in preschool are more likely to continue to be involved in elementary school, and this continued participation is associated with better academic achievement and behavioral adjustment (Henrich & Jones, 2006).

A family-centered approach to school relationships supports the growth of the family as well as the child. When families have a meaningful partnership with their children's teachers, it raises their sense of importance and diminishes some of the isolation and anxiety of child rearing. By empowering families and allowing them to participate in decisions affecting their children's education, teachers can help families see themselves as part of the solution. Families represent a wide range of cultural backgrounds, so it is important that their contributions be sought out, acknowledged, and used. Families whose linguistic and cultural backgrounds are different from the teacher need to share their perspectives so that issues relating to basic routines such as eating and sleeping may be understood in their cultural context. The same is true for a family's expectations about their child's experiences in the classroom (Browne & Gordon, 2011).

Even though there is a challenge of language and communication between teachers and parents, sharing information and involving parents, taking into account their preferences, values, respecting ethnic, cultural, linguistic, religious and other forms of diversity are very important elements that facilitate children's learning. Approaches include providing bilingual ECCE programs, establishing good communication and participation networks between schools and parents, involving parents in class activities and suggesting home activities that may help prepare children for school (UNESCO, 2006). Only through building such a partnership can families of diverse cultural backgrounds become true contributors to their children's education and care and this is especially important for low income and minority children; their family's presence can heighten a sense of belonging. Children gain when families are able to monitor their children's progress and reinforce the educational goals at home (Browne & Gordon, 2011).

Early years' curricula encourage practitioners to build on children's home experiences. Research into the kinds of activities that young children engage in at home and considerations of how to link these to their experiences in preschool settings can therefore make an important contribution to practice. It is now widely recognized that children's learning begins in the home, and early years practitioners around the world are encouraged to recognize this and to build on children's home experiences. In order to do this, practitioners need to understand more about the kinds of activities likely to be available to young children at home. Much of the research in this field has focused on early language and literacy experiences, but there is growing interest now in

children's early experiences with digital technologies. Such technologies, which include not only computers, mobile phones and games consoles, but also many toys, musical instruments and domestic appliances, are now widely available in the home and increasingly accessible to young children (McPake & Plowman, 2010).

According to Miller (1996) teachers have the potential to gain much from parent-teacher relationships and to mention some of the ways in which parents add to teachers through developed relationships are: First *increased knowledge enabling teachers to be more effective with each child*: - Teachers have much to learn from parents concerning the habits, interests and means through which the children communicate their needs. Second *positive feedback which increases teacher feelings of competence in their profession*: - When a teacher hears positive things from a parent, the teacher is gratified and fortified. Third *parental resources to supplement and reinforce teacher efforts in providing an enlarged world of Learning*: - Parents may have access to information and community resources not readily available to teachers or that particular teacher. Fourth *a source of advocacy*: - When parents are familiar with the work teachers do, they are in a position to be advocates for these teachers.

Similarly, to list some of the benefits which parents gain from the parent-teacher relationships what Miller (1996) has mentioned are: Feelings of support in the difficult task of parenting; knowledge and skills gained to help in child rearing; enhanced parental self-esteem from receiving positive feedback on their parenting actions; and feeling included in their child's life away from home. And to point out some of barriers to effective parent-teacher relationships are: Security in carrying out established role; Communication problems; Lack of understanding of cultural differences in practice; Fears of criticism; Teachers who hide behind "professional" masks; Fear of failure; Reactions to role; Time; Busyness; School a place for children not parents; Administrative policies; and Personal problems.

In general, educational partnership between parents and school is for the benefit of children's development, and when the school takes parents seriously and makes them feel welcome, the basis for joint responsibility is laid. When parents become meaningfully involved in their children's activities and development at school, the need for reflecting the children's

developmental opportunities at home is born. When parents join in classroom practices, a new zone of proximal development opens in both parent and teacher development in becoming educational partners. These perspectives also increase the parent's self-esteem and even support the "empowerment of parents" and ultimately, the children will be benefited (Vos & Weijers, 2012). The roles played by parents and families are key to the success of a child's education. Parents benefit from education and attention during the developmental years just as children do. Regardless of whether the child has disabilities or not, parents should be an important consideration in planning for and implementing early childhood programs. When parents feel welcome and comfortable, they will participate in school programs. Teachers, children, specialists, other parents, and administrators all benefit from parent participation (Miller, 1996).

2.6. Theoretical and Philosophical Foundations of Early Childhood Care and Education

Increasing internationalization is fueling interest in studying and discussing the many different traditions worldwide for establishing and operating child care centers. In particular, interest has focused on the differences in relation to educational philosophies and everyday practices in this field across the globe. Internationally and nationally, discussions are gravitating toward how everyday educational practices should safeguard and promote children's well-being as well as developmental and learning conditions to optimize educational quality (Ringsmose & Müller, 2017). Although critics argue that globalization leads to cultural homogeneity and there is a world trend toward standardization of global practice, all societies are under the influence of globalization which has led to growing interconnectedness and interdependence of people and institutions throughout the world (Choy, 2017). The main difficulty with the tidal wave of globalization is using western societies as the main reference point for standards and neglecting the possible role played by non-western countries. This phenomenon is also experienced in early childhood education (Wallerstein's, 2004 as cited in Choy, 2017). Knowledge construction in early childhood education has tended to be dominated by perspectives on what matters for countries in the north, with limited attention being directed to the research needs and activities of countries in the south. What is evident is that perspectives from both outside of early childhood education and research taken from the northern continents have primarily shaped what the

government pays attention to, which in turn shapes policy and curriculum in particular ways (Davey, 2015).

The first few years of a child's life are a period during which the child will learn more than in the rest of his or her lifetime (Greig, 2013). If you are working with young children, it is important to have a set of values and principles which guide what you do in practice (Nightingale & Payne, 2013). Teaching young children in the 21st century requires that we do things differently (Blaise & Ryan, 2012). Applying the same teaching techniques, and delivering or providing the same content that was considered to be relevant in society and in education in previous times, is not sufficient in the current educational climate where educational goals and needs are rapidly shifting (Yelland & Kilderry, 2005).

Around the world, philosophies of early childhood education vary (Ringsmose & Müller, 2017). Over time, early childhood education has been informed by a number of philosophies and theories, many of which have been foundational to the work that is now conducted with young children. The theoretical perspectives that inform educators' work have a profound influence on how they decide to work with young children and the type of educational experiences educators provide for them. The education of young children has historically drawn on theories of development and a range of philosophical beliefs regarding learning and the nature of childhood. The theories and philosophies that inform early childhood education tend to influence the way teachers view young children, including the way young children learn and grow (Edwards, 2009).

Working with young children requires being able to begin to see them in all their possibilities and potentials. It requires being able to understand how they learn and grow in different contexts. This seeing and understanding cannot be done without effective developmental theory (Walsh, 2005). Developmental and learning theories form the cornerstone of our knowledge about children (Browne & Gordon, 2011). They are springboards for those involved in child care and learning to take off. They are the frameworks on which care and learning activities for children are built. The theories provide useful guides to parents, caregivers and teachers, researchers and others on how to handle children's care and learning at the critical stage of early childhood

(Awopegba, Oduolowu & Nsamenang, 2013). The foundational and contemporary theories of development and learning that inform early childhood education and care define children and influence our pedagogical practices in particular ways. Foundational theories have served to emphasize aspects of early childhood education that have long been valued, such as open-ended activities, the role of play in learning and the provision of natural materials. Contemporary theories emphasize the role that children's social and cultural experiences play in informing their development, and help teachers provide learning experiences that are sensitive to children's needs according to the community context (Edwards, 2009).

There are several educational learning theories that can be applied to classroom practices (Wynne, 2007). The constructivists Piaget and Vygotsky both share an interest in the relationship between the inner, biological, individual child and the outer, environmental, social child – that is, the extent to which a child's knowledge is determined biologically and culturally, compared with the child's freedom to act independently and creatively. Both theorists agree that the child is both determined and a determiner of knowledge and understanding (Greig, 2013).

2.6.1. Jean Piaget's Theory of Learning (Cognitivism vs Constructivism)

The first major developmental psychologist to influence classroom practice was, of course, Jean Piaget (Whitebread, 2008). Jean Piaget was interested in how humans learn and develop intellectually, beginning at birth and continuing across the life span. He devoted his life to conducting experiments, observing children (including his own), and developing and writing about his theory, the *cognitive theory* approach to learning. Piaget has enriched our knowledge about children's thinking, and his influence on early childhood education continues to be significant. Many early childhood programs base their curricula totally on Piaget's theory about how children learn (Morrison, 2004). On the positive side, the most important contribution of Piaget's work was to alert educators to the child's active role in their learning, and the importance of mental activity. Piaget showed how children actively attempt to make sense of their world and construct their own understandings (Whitebread, 2008).

The writings of Piaget had a great impact upon educational thinking in many parts of the world during the second half of the twentieth century. He emphasized the link between cognitive/intellectual development and learning, believing that the child constructs its own understanding about things (Curtis & O'Hagan, 2003). Because Piaget believed that we construct our individual knowledge and meanings of the world through our own explorations of it, because of this, he is often referred to as an individual constructivist (MacNaughton, 2004).

Piaget's theory is about cognitive development, which seeks to explain how individuals perceive, think, understand, and learn (Morrison, 2004). He has had an enduring influence on our understanding of early learning. For him the child is an active enquirer trying to make sense of his/her world by constructing an intellectual map for him/her (Waller, 2005). His learning theory consists of four learning stages: sensory motor stage (from birth to age 2); pre-operation stages (ages 2 to 7 or early elementary); concrete operational (ages 7 to 11 or upper elementary); and formal operational (ages 7-15 or late elementary/high school). He believed that children passed through this series of stages to develop from the most basic forms of concrete thinking to sophisticated levels of abstract thinking (Wynne, 2007), and each period is dependent upon the previous stage (Curtis & O'Hagan, 2003). He advocated that "self-education . . . what the child learns by himself, what none can teach him and what he must discover alone" (Fuller, Bridges & Pai, 2007). For Piaget thinking and learning is a process of interaction between a person and the environment. He believed that children actively construct knowledge on an ongoing basis. They are developing and constantly revising their own knowledge (Browne & Gordon, 2011).

Piaget had emphasized the importance of the child interacting with the physical environment, and his followers in the educational sphere argued that the role of the teacher should be that of an observer and a facilitator. The general view of this approach was that attempting to directly teach or instruct young children was a mistake. It was claimed that whenever teachers attempted to teach children something, they simply deprived the children of the opportunity to discover it for themselves (Whitebread, 2008). Piaget argued that adult-child and peer relations influence every aspect of development (Blatchford, 2004). Piaget (1977/1980) as cited in Smith (2009) "education, for most people, means trying to lead the child to resemble the typical adult of his society (whereas) for me, education means making creators, even if there aren't many of them,

even if one's creations are limited by comparison with those others (p 324)". Piaget ideas about knowledge development were taken up by educationalists who believed that learning experiences for young children would be most useful when they were designed to meet the child's current level or stage of development (sensory-motor, preoperational, operational and formal operational). This idea, combined with a continued emphasis on providing children with opportunities to interact with materials, contributed to the notion of 'developmentally appropriate practice', otherwise known as DAP (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997 as cited in Edwards, 2009). This theoretical orientation has informed constructivism (Davey, 2015). The activities are developmentally appropriate so as to challenge the child's thinking but not too difficult so as to invite failure (Furth & Wachs, 1975).

2.6.2. Lev Vygotsky's Theory of Learning (Social Constructivists)

The Russian psychologist Lev Vygotsky (1896–1934), a contemporary of Piaget, increasingly inspires the practices of early childhood professionals (Morrison, 2004). He left a huge legacy for the field of early childhood education by generating a theory of development that we have come to know as socio-cultural or cultural-historical theory (Davey, 2015). He has made a considerable contribution to the discussion on learning and of how young children learn. He focused on the effects of society on children's learning and development. He criticized Piaget for apparently ignoring the context of situations and the cultural and historical factors that he believed affected children's learning (Curtis & O'Hagan, 2003). He is often referred to as the father of the social constructivists because he gave much greater emphasis to the role of social contexts as drivers in our capacity to construct meaning (MacNaughton, 2004).

Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory focuses on the child as a whole and incorporates ideas of culture and values into child development. He emphasized the deep role of culture in children learning. He believed that the child is embedded in the family and culture of his community and that much of a child's development is culturally specific. Rather than moving through certain stages or sequences (as Piaget proposed), children's mastery and interaction differ from culture to culture. Children's learning is, therefore, quite influenced by what their social world values (Browne & Gordon, 2011). Vygotsky and his followers argue that learning is fundamentally a

social, cultural, and historical process. To explain students' learning at the classroom level, socio-cultural theory emphasizes the social dimension of learning and the tools used for thinking and communication (Herrenkohl & Mertl, 2010).

Vygotsky's child is the child in society. The social nature of the child is present right from the beginning when the infant arrives into a complex world of social relationships and culture – a culture which itself has an historical development. Vygotsky does not accept that a child is in the position of creating a conceptual world 'from scratch', but believes that they need instead to appropriate the conceptual resources of the pre-existing cultural world which are transmitted to them by parents, adults and peers (Greig, 2013). Vygotsky believed that the social and cultural context in which children were born served to define how they would develop and what they would learn. According to this perspective, a child would be born into a social and cultural context that contained the knowledge and beliefs of the community that had developed over time (this is why socio-cultural theory is sometimes referred to as cultural-historical theory) (Edwards, 2009).

Vygotsky has revealed that learning involves both internalization and externalization (Edwards, 2017). He believed that children acquired the knowledge and tools held by their communities via an interaction between two planes of development called the intrapersonal (the individual) and the interpersonal (two or more people) planes (Edwards, 2009 and Oers, 2012). According to Vygotskian view, meaningful learning is fundamental for learning that aims to promote broad cultural development and practice. In this perspective meaningful learning always and necessarily covers two dimensions: it should be focused on the appropriation of *cultural meanings*, which results in learning outcomes that have exchange value in the community (knowledge, abilities and personal qualities that have societal significance), while it should also be related to the learner's own value system (motives, interests, convictions) and be instilled with *personal meaning*, which adds personal value to the appropriated cultural meanings (Oers, 2012). Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory dictates that learning is active and constructed, as does Piaget's cognitive theory. However, they differ in the nature and importance of interaction. Piaget insisted that, although children needed to interact with people and objects to learn, the stages of thinking were still bound by maturation. Vygotsky claimed that interaction (cooperative

learning) and direct teaching were critical aspects of a child's cognitive development and that a child's level of thinking could be advanced by just such interaction (Browne & Gordon, 2011).

Perhaps the most significant idea within Vygotsky's model of human learning is that of the 'zone of proximal development' (Whitebread, 2008). The zone of proximal development is generally seen as the core concept of Vygotsky's view of development-promoting learning (Oers, 2012). The socio-cultural paradigm involves both children and teachers working together towards the upper ends of their zones of proximal development (Jordan, 2004). The child's movement from the interpersonal to the intrapersonal level of development is described by Vygotsky as occurring within the zone of proximal development (ZPD). This concept is more easily understood when we consider that the term 'proximal' means 'nearest'. Development in the zone of 'nearest development' refers to what children are capable of achieving independently and what they are capable of achieving with the assistance or support of an adult or more capable peer (Edwards, 2009). Faced with any particular task or problem, a child can operate at one level on their own, described as their 'level of actual development'. But they can perform at a higher level when supported or 'scaffolded' by an adult or more experienced peer, described as their 'level of potential development'. Vygotsky and his followers have argued, therefore, that children learn most effectively through social interaction, when they are involved in jointly constructing new understandings within their zone of potential development (Whitebread, 2008 and Greig, 2013).

For Vygotsky, learning and development were always intertwined and education was central to both (Edwards, 2017). When the child learns something new, it is possible for him to move toward new steps of development. Therefore, children's learning and development are two different – but interconnected – processes (Müller & Isbell, 2017). Within Vygotsky's socio-cultural approach, teachers are given a completely different role. They do not just follow the development of the children, but have to set socially valued goals depending on the shared values of teachers and parents. They do not just try to encourage the children indirectly by offering them the right environment; they also invite children to actively participate in their world as adults. Beside this, they will accord a great deal of importance to the cooperation of children amongst themselves (Edwards, 2009).

2.7. Early Childhood Care and Education and Children Learning

Watching the natural play and activity of young children provides us with the vehicle for understanding the ways in which children learn. A young child at play or work invests great energy in the activity. The child is really striving to perfect skills, attempt new behaviors and make sense of the world (Miller, 1996). The act of learning, that is how children learn, has been very strong and thoroughly developed during the whole history of preschool. There has been a certain consensus about the fact that children are different from adults, which is a kind of developmental perspective. From a school perspective, it is said that young children have limited powers of concentration. Children are not driven by long-term goals like adults, but are interested in here and now questions, and the concrete rather than the abstract is always in the mind of the child (Sommer, Prambling-Samuelsson & Hundeide, 2010). Preschool children have a limited concentration span and an increased desire for physical-motor action/moving about (compared to older children and adults) – further, they have difficulties in following instructions and to comprehending ordinary clock time – all these skills are required for attending typical school-like formal teaching sessions. However, even very young children can be disciplined to control their bodily restlessness, taught to follow adult instructions, and trained in concentrating for longer periods of time (Alexandra & Lindqvist, 2017).

Children can learn from everything they experience, whether planned or not. The context a child exists in is subject to influences both external and internal. For this reason, parents and practitioners must observe, listen and respond to the needs and interests emanating from the child (Nightingale & Payne, 2013). The pedagogy of the teacher is what underpins the educational experience of the child. The first step a teacher must take is to create a holistic learning environment and atmosphere where the children are comfortable, happy and at ease (O'Connor, 2017). Every educator is aware that there are some children who do not appear to be able to concentrate on a task and whose attention flits from one activity to another. However, many of these 'flitters' will focus on a task, once they find one of interest and/or once there is an adult who is willing to support their learning (Curtis, & O'Hagan, 2003).

Children's entry into out-of-home educational settings such as child care or preschool often constitutes their first experience in the larger social context. They move from the relatively self-contained circle of home, family, and neighborhood to the broader world of school, with teachers, peers, and new activities, events, and expectations (Klein, 2001). Children are remarkable people that interpret what they hear, see, feel, and smell and they experience situations in ways that not necessary will be compatible to the ways adults construe their world (Sommer, Prambling-Samuelsson & Hundeide, 2010). The predominance of 'formal' learning activities for young children leaves them little time to develop their understandings of the world through creative and imaginative experiences, the bedrock of quality early years practices (Rinaldi 2005 as cited in Smid, 2010).

Young children are already predisposed to communicate and make meaning through multiple modes, as observation in any preschool or kindergarten will show. However, when they come to school it becomes apparent that traditional forms of print literacy are privileged and promoted in a range of activities that characterize the 'literacy hour' (Yelland, et al, 2008). The intention of the work in preschool is not that children should reach a certain level of achievement in different content areas, but that they should be supported in developing meaning in the direction of the goals to strive for. Although preschool is supposed to work towards developing the child and his or her personality, the contemporary preschool is directed more towards the pedagogical assignment. Teachers therefore attach importance to specific content-related questions and, not least, to how these can be developed in practice. Traditionally, in school the focus is on subjects, syllabus and lessons, while preschool focuses on themes, i.e. on integrating phenomena existing in the children's surrounding world, such as 'the sea', 'the shop', 'the farm', etc. These are themes in which specific aspects of literacy and mathematics will appear in a context that makes sense to children (Pramling-Samuelsson, 2011). A common argument against providing services to young children in schools is that the education establishment is a rigid, centralized bureaucracy slow to adapt to the needs of increasingly diverse populations. Further, development in the early years is highly individual, so young children need a variety of curriculum approaches. Many fear they are unlikely to find them in schools, where standardized curricula are the norm and the focus is solely academic (Helburn & Bergmann, 2002 as cited in Finn-Stevenson, 2006).

Every child is different and this makes teaching challenging and difficult, but the pedagogical aims of teachers are similar- promoting broad development in *all* children (Nellestijn & Peters, 2012). Early childhood professionals know that children's approaches to learning are important. Teachers, teacher educators, and others are looking for specific evidence to support their commitment to developing positive approaches to learning. They are also looking for research-based strategies to use in their classrooms, to recommend in their teacher preparation programs, or to use in policy advocacy (Hyson, 2008). Teachers use their knowledge of child development and learning to identify the range of activities, materials, and learning experiences that are appropriate for a group or individual child (Morrison, 2004 & File, 2012). Given the increasing diversity within educational settings and the multitude of different needs among children in early childhood programs, it seems apparent that educators would need a vast array of instructional strategies to utilize and incorporate into their day. If an educator has only been trained in one type of instructional approach, they may not be able to offer their students the most appropriate instruction to help them succeed (Casey & Carter, 2016). In order to create a solid foundation for children's participation in shared activities, a teacher should tune in to the knowledge and abilities of that child, and to his motivations and his skills. To promote the child's development the teacher can also introduce this child to new areas of knowledge and skills that he/she needs to perform his or her task in that shared activity (Nellestijn & Peters, 2012).

What a child does, a child learns. The more often a child engages in an experience, the more the learning that is based on the experience is cemented. This is one reason that children love to repeat the same activity. Knowledge is not something that is poured into the child by an external source, but something the child has to construct for herself or himself (Miller, 1996). In early childhood education we imagine a child who is allowed to act and take the initiative, although the teacher sets the frame. However, within the frame, room must be made for the children's perspectives and expressions (Sommer, Prambling-Samuelsson & Hundeide, 2010). When the children are able to operate independently, taking initiatives, setting their own goals, accessing resources as they are required, supporting and helping one another, working together cooperatively and so on, it can release the teacher from the roles of traffic policemen, fire-fighter and general troubleshooter, and allow them to spend more time in more educationally productive activities, and at a deeper educational level, there is now strong evidence to suggest that

developing the skills of 'self-regulation' is crucial to becoming an effective learner (Whitebread et al, 2008).

When making an observation of a young child at play at home or in school, seeing the child working hard to complete a puzzle might be a common sight. What would also be a common sight would be to see the child dump the puzzle over and begin to redo it immediately upon completion of the puzzle. An adult with a strong knowledge of child development understands that repetition is comforting as well as challenging to a young child. Children invent their own challenges when repeating tasks. A child might want to see if he or she could repeat the task with one hand, in less time, or without any assistance from an adult or peer. The child may also enjoy completing the same puzzle because the sense of accomplishment it brings is worth repeating (Miller, 1996). Providing multiple opportunities for children to make choices is considered an essential element of high quality early childhood programs. By freeing the curriculum from teacher authority, early childhood educators believe that they are assisting all children to become independent problem solvers and skillful social negotiators (Ryan, 2005).

It is vitally important that teachers of young children allow sufficient flexibility in their classroom organization for children who have been inspired by a particular experience to pursue their interest. Allowing opportunities for child-initiated activities enhances children's sense of ownership and responsibility in relation to their own learning. When children have access to a range of materials for their own purposes, they will have the opportunity to make choices about activities. Understand that a beautiful teacher-made role-play area or display may not be as valuable for the children's learning as one to which children have contributed. Therefore, adopting a flexible approach to timetabling which allows children to pursue an activity to their satisfaction, avoiding unnecessary interruptions (Whitebread et al, 2008). Furthermore, good teaching is based on a theory, a philosophy, goals, and objectives. Teachers must show love and respect for all children and collaborate with children as a means of promoting development, and should dedicate to the teaching profession. Children's learning is enhanced through the use of concrete materials and teaching should be based on children's interests and move from the concrete to the abstract, planned, systematic process, child centered rather than adult or subject centered. Teachers should plan so they incorporate all types of intelligence in their planning and

activities. Remember that observation is a key means for determining children's needs (Morrison, 2004).

It is highly important that the educator pays due attention to every child and that she is able to make real contact with the child. Children are not identical. Every child develops in his own way and learns in his own manner (Nellestijn & Peters, 2012). As anyone who works with infants, toddlers and preschoolers, it is much easier to engage young children in activities of their own choosing than it is to impose adult selection and direction on their learning. However, preschoolers still engage in a fair amount of self-directed activity while still requiring adult supervision and assistance (Krogh & Slentz, 2001).

2.8. Early Childhood Care and Education and Developmentally Appropriate Practices

There has traditionally been a strong association between understandings about child development and early years teaching (Whitebread, 2008). Since its entry into the professional education dictionary, the term developmentally appropriate practices (DAP) and the concept it represents have been adopted and used extensively by educators, policy makers, and businesses. Both the concept and the term have affected early childhood program practices; national, state, and local policies for curriculum and assessment; marketing of commercial early childhood materials and programs; and standards for early childhood educator preparation. Perhaps most importantly, new conversations are occurring among early childhood professionals about how to promote optimal growth, learning, and development of all young children (Raines & Johnston, 2003). The contemporary discourse of developmentally appropriate practice which assumes that practice, or at least the worthiness of practice, can be determined by knowledge of children's development, has reflects the universalism of the grand systems (Walsh, 2005).

Developmentally appropriate practice (DAP) which is largely Piagetian constructivist approach has been influential in ECCE for several years (Nightingale & Payne, 2013). Even though, developmental theory serves as a guide for developmentally appropriate practice (Browne and Gordon, 2011), it has also drawn from a number of theoretical perspectives. Essential theorists

whose work bases DAP include Dewey, Piaget, Erikson, Vygotsky, Rogoff, and Gardner. Research on early childhood development, teaching-learning practices and programs have also provides a further foundation for developmentally appropriate practices (Raines & Johnston, 2003). The constructivist theories of Piaget and Vygotsky are especially helpful in guiding us to developmentally appropriate instructional practice (Browne & Gordon, 2011). However, Piaget's maturational and cognitive theory which informed constructivism has influenced the rise of developmentally appropriate practice (Davey, 2015).

Age appropriateness and individual appropriateness were the original basic dimensions of developmentally appropriate practices (Raines & Johnston, 2003). Age appropriateness is based on "what is known about child development and learning" and individual appropriateness on "what is known about the strengths, interests, and needs of each individual child". Age appropriateness has to do with matching curriculum and instruction to the developmental level (physical, social, emotional, and cognitive) of the children being served. Individual appropriateness has to do with responsiveness to the unique modes of learning and capabilities of each child in a program (Rust, 1993). Cultural appropriateness which included in 1997 is a third critical dimension and it is based on "knowledge of the social and cultural contexts in which children live". Therefore, a developmentally appropriate program takes into consideration the child's age, individual abilities, and the culture of her home and family. When developmentally appropriate elements are taken into consideration, the bonds between families and teachers are strengthened and the best interests of the children prevail (Browne & Gordon, 2011).

Developmentally appropriate practice, which published by the American National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) in *Early Childhood Programs Serving Children from Birth through Age 8* in 1987 has entered the vocabulary of early education and care profession throughout many countries (Krogh & Slentz, 2001). The NAEYC guidelines for developmentally appropriate practice focus on curriculum, adult-child interaction, relations between home and program, and developmental evaluation of children (Miller, 1996).

Charles (1998) in Ryan (2005) argues that developmentally appropriate classrooms promote equity in educational outcomes for children from varying cultural backgrounds because they ensure access and participation in activities, and provide opportunities for children to learn in their own unique ways (Ryan, 2005). Appropriate practice emanates from children's developmental needs and interests, as well as from their familial, social and cultural environments (Nightingale & Payne, 2013). Teachers should, therefore, continuously make cultural connections that are relevant and empowering for all students and communicate academic and behavioral expectations. Teachers must establish a classroom climate that is culturally respectful and engaging for students. In a culturally sensitive classroom, teachers maintain equity and fairness in student interactions and curriculum implementation (Wynne, 2007).

When one speaks about developmentally appropriate curriculum, one speaks about curriculum planned to be appropriate for the age span of children within the program. When planning developmentally appropriate curriculum, all aspects of development need to be taken into consideration (Miller, 1996). Learning and development are most likely to occur when new experiences build on what a child already knows and is able to do and when those learning experiences also entail the child stretching a reasonable amount in acquiring new skills, abilities, or knowledge. After the child reaches that new level of mastery in skill or understanding, the teacher reflects on what goals should come next; and the cycle continues, advancing children's learning in a developmentally appropriate way (Casey & Carter, 2016). Developmentally appropriate practice is based on knowledge about how children develop and learn. To guide their decisions about practice, all early childhood teachers need to understand the developmental changes that typically occur in the years from birth through age 8 and beyond, variations in development that may occur, and how best to support children's learning and development during these years (Morrison, 2004). It is equally important that schools are ready for children and able to provide the developmentally appropriate teaching and learning opportunities that yield the greatest benefits for young children (UNESCO, 2016).

Knowing whether materials, equipment, or curriculum content is right for children requires a strong knowledge of child development. When an individual teacher knows about the typical physical, social, emotional, language, and cognitive development of children, then that teacher will understand what needs to go into the framework of an age-appropriate classroom and age-appropriate activities. A teacher who does not have command of this information will have difficulty with planning and implementing activities that are comfortable for children while still encouraging them to grow and develop. Child development knowledge affords teachers the opportunity to see the uniqueness in each and every child. Although we know that children develop along predictable patterns and timetables, there is considerable variation within each individual child. Teachers cannot decide to interact with children in just one way just as they cannot have one curriculum set in stone or one way of presenting curriculum to all children. There is no one magic prescription that makes all things right for all teachers and all children. If that were the case, life in the classroom would be static, dull, and boring (Miller, 1996). Some children may not take very long to catch up with their peers, but others may need extra help all the way through the school years. For children who are more advanced, supports should also be put in place to challenge them in ways that fit their developmental age. However, the chronological age of the child must be kept in mind when planning activities so as not to introduce topics to children beyond their years (Wynne, 2007).

In developmental appropriateness, sources of knowledge about the world are multiple, the teacher but one of them, and the child is viewed as an active seeker, constructing understanding through mental and physical interactions with people and with materials. When practice is developmentally appropriate, classroom activities bore the following characteristics (Wien, 1995).

- o The child chooses activity from a broad range of possibilities provided by the teacher, and both teacher and children contribute to the design and implementation of activities. Power over what to do is shared among children and adults, with the adult holding responsibility for the group.
- o Children control the agenda for their own activity where they are able to assert it. A broad range of constructive responses is tolerated by teachers.

- o Teachers provide a wide range of activities and materials, among which children may choose and with which they plan and carry out their intentions in many different ways.
- o Activities are in general individual or done in small groups.
- o Different activities occur simultaneously, with some children working individually, some with teachers, and a flexible schedule of events permitting spontaneous activity.

2.9. Early Childhood Care and Education and Learning through Play

One of the fundamental principles in early childhood pedagogy is the importance of play to children's learning and development. The commitment to a play-based curriculum can be traced through theory and ideology into early childhood programs in many different countries. Good quality play is linked to positive learning outcomes in the cognitive, emotional, social and psycho-motor domains. There is substantial evidence that through play, children demonstrate improved verbal communication, high levels of social and interaction skills, creative use of play materials, imaginative and divergent thinking skills and problem-solving capabilities (Wood, 2004). Children learn many things through play. Play activities are essential for their development across all developmental domains—the physical, social, emotional, cognitive, and linguistic (Morrison, 2004). Historically, play has been considered the most important element in child development. For children of a young age, especially, play is an indispensable element of the learning process. Play provides learning opportunities; preschool children enhance their mental capacity for creativity and develop social and self-regulation skills (Akman & Özgül, 2015). Within the educational arena, play is widely recognized as a leading context for the child's acquisition of communication and collaboration skills and provides an important context for well-being, learning and development (Siraj & Asani, 2015).

2.9.1. Historical and Theoretical Foundations of Play and Learning

Early childhood education has been informed by a rich variety of beliefs and values over many generations of theorists and educators. Many of these ideas are still present in some form in multifaceted combinations of theories, images of the child and pedagogy. Long held views and traditions can be traced from the eighteenth century through to contemporary thinking about

pedagogical play. These include Rousseau's ideas about childhood innocence and protection; Froebel's notion of children being at work when playing in the children's garden; Dewey's focus of the active learner working on real life problems; Boyce's embedding of content knowledge in play; through to Piaget's exposition on the construction of knowledge through active exploration during play (Edwards, et al., 2014).

The construct of play has been the focus of interest for scholars for hundreds of years, and as fundamental to childhood experience and to ECCE in particular has its roots in early Greek (Plato and Aristotle) and Roman philosophy (Lillvist & Sandberg, 2015 and Harrison & Robinson, 2017). It has a long and significant history in the scholarly literature, particularly apparent in relation to its place in the early years of human development and learning. From as far back as philosophers such as Plato, play has been identified as a source of learning about self, other and the world. Plato asserted, "Let your child's education take the form of play (p 62)". As early childhood education has become increasingly formalized over the centuries, play has been identified as a fundamental tenet of childhood pedagogy (Harrison & Robinson, 2017).

Play has been at the center of early childhood curriculum from the beginning of our history in early childhood education to present-day models—from Rousseau, Pestalozzi and Froebel's kindergartens to Montessori's method, and Rudolf Steiner's Waldorf schools to Reggio Emilia curriculum (Wisneski & Reifel, 2012). Preference for play as a primary mode of teaching and learning can be traced to Rousseau's philosophy (Krogh & Slentz, 2001). Play theories can be divided into two categories: classical theories and modern theories. The classical theories emerged in the 19th century and attempt to explain the focus and the source of children's play activities. The modern theories appeared after 1920 and focused on understanding the effects of play with respect to the development of the child (Akman & Özgül, 2015). However, the notion that children learn through play began with Froebel, who built his system of schooling on the educational value of play. Froebel believed that natural unfolding (development) occurs through play. Since his time, most early childhood programs have incorporated play into their curricula or have made play a major part of the day (Morrison, 2004). Other prominent names who have discussed the importance of play in learning include Freud, Erikson, Montessori, John Dewey,

Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky (Beckett, Lynch & Pike, 2017; Akman & Özgül, 2015; Morrison, 2004 and Nutbrown & Clough, 2014).

Freud believed that play has a significant role in the emotional development of a child. According to Freud, play may possess a cathartic effect that cleanses a child of negative emotions concerning traumatic events (Akman & Özgül, 2015). For Freud, “It will be seen that children repeat everything in their games which has made an impression on them in life, and that in doing so they abreact the strength of the experience and make themselves masters of the situation, as it were (Schousboe & Winther-Lindqvist, 2013: 2).” According to Erikson, play advances in stages that reflect the psychosocial development of children. Children form case models that assist them in learning to manage real life through play. Erikson emphasized that play is a mirror of a child’s psychosocial development. Through play, a child creates new models to cope with real emotions, thoughts and events (Akman & Özgül, 2015). Erikson sees play as a manifestation of the child’s ability to control reality through experiments and planning. Through play, the child learns to participate in all kinds of real social and societal activities (Schousboe & Winther-Lindqvist, 2013).

Montessori viewed children’s active involvement with materials and the prepared environment as the primary means through which they absorb knowledge and learn. She thought of play as children’s work and of the home and preschool as “workplaces” where learning occurs through play (Morrison, 2004). John Dewey also advocated and supported active learning and believed that children learn through play activities based on their interests. Dewey thought, too, that children should have opportunities to engage in play associated with everyday activities (e.g., the house center, post office, grocery store, and doctor’s office). He felt that play helps prepare children for adult occupations. Many curriculum developers and teachers base play activities, such as a dress-up corner, around adult roles (Morrison, 2004).

Jean Piaget and Lev Vygotsky, especially, provide critical foundational information about the nature of play in educational settings (Beckett, Lynch & Pike, 2017). According to Piaget, children are interested in the play type that relates to their cognitive development level. Piaget’s constructivist theory posits that children acquire knowledge through their own experience and

not from the knowledge that is presented by families and teachers. For example, young children develop mathematical understanding and knowledge by interacting with their environments. Play-based mathematical activities provide a child with the opportunity to try more than one solution and to observe and improve social interaction (Akman & Özgül, 2015). Piaget believed play promotes cognitive knowledge and is a means by which children construct knowledge of their world. According to Piaget, through active involvement, children learn about things and the physical properties of objects; gain knowledge of the environment and their role (s) in it; and acquire logical-mathematical knowledge—numeration, organization, classification, time, space, and number. Piaget believed that children learn social knowledge, vocabulary, labels, and proper behavior from others (Morrison, 2004).

Piaget argues that learning and development involve two processes, assimilation and accommodation (Beckett, Lynch & Pike, 2017 and Greig, 2013) and he explains play as part of the assimilation process. His view was that in play, the player is more likely to assimilate the external world to fit in with the child way of ‘seeing’ or perceiving the world, rather than to adapt herself to or accommodate the external world. According to Piaget, play provides support to assist children in undertaking the transition from sensory-motor stages of intellectual development to conceptual and operational (imaginative) thinking. However, the role of the adult or teacher in Piagetian theory generally entails setting up the physical environment and observing, rather than taking a collaborative role in play (Beckett, Lynch & Pike, 2017).

Another strong advocate and visionary in the realm of play was Vygotsky (Ng’asike, 2015). According to Bodrova (2008) and Johnson et al. (1998) as cited in Akman & Özgül (2015) Vygotsky’s view with respect to play is a comprehensive one. He separated development into three levels: “Actual development” (independent performance), “potential development” (aided performance) and the zone of proximal development, or the distance between the actual and potential development levels. Play can contribute to development by operating as a stepping stone within the zone of proximal development and can enable children to reach higher levels of performance (Akman & Özgül, 2015). Vygotsky contends that ‘the child’s greatest control occurs in play’, play creates the ‘highest level of pre-school development’ (Rogers, 2015). He believed play to be a vehicle that would help children to reach their potential level from their

actual current level of development, which he referred to as the zone of proximal development (ZPD) (Maher and Smith 2017). He thought that play is the source of development and creates the zone of proximal development (Hakkarainen & Bredikyte, 2015; Schousboe & Winther-Lindqvist, 2013 and Fleer, 2009). The concept of the zone of proximal development proposed by Vygotsky refers to the distance between a child's actual achievement on a task when working alone and his or her potential ability to achieve in a different social setting (Beckett, Lynch & Pike, 2017).

Unlike Piaget, Vygotsky viewed the social interaction that occurs through play essential to children's development. He believed that children learn through social interactions such as cooperation and collaboration that promote and enhance their cognitive development. Thus, play promotes cognitive development and provides a way to develop social skills (Morrison, 2004). Vygotsky's developmental theories are more sensitive to the child's social environment, given that they show how the social and collaborative aspects of play enhance developmental processes. Vygotsky recommends that play and the playful exploration of ideas enable the development of new skills and abilities through the open, flexible and social nature of the playful interaction than didactic instruction. Thus the creative and imaginative power of play can take children to a new developmental level and it is a crucial element of children's development in which children come to understand the world and their place within it (Beckett, Lynch & Pike, 2017). Vygotsky believed that through play children develop social competence and that play is a way for young children to learn about the cultural norms and values of a society. Vygotsky considers play to be a leading activity for the preschool child as play propels development. He said that "in play a child is always above his average age, above his daily or normal behavior; in play it is as though he were a head taller than himself (Greig, 2013: 124; Schousboe & Winther-Lindqvist, 2013: 2 and Fleer, 2009: 6)."

2.9.2. Definitions of Play in Early Childhood Care and Education Context

As the concepts of play as a pedagogical choice are complex, deep reflective abilities are essential (O'Connor, 2017). Play has deep roots, not only in ourselves but in most other animals but what play is for is not entirely clear (Brierley, 1994). It is easily recognized, but it is difficult

to define (Harrison and Robinson, 2017). There are a plethora of definitions for play, many of which contradict one another and none of which are universally agreed upon (Pike, 2017). Although the word ‘play’ features in early years documents and policies, it is neither clearly articulated nor well understood by practitioners or policy-makers. In relation to this, Powell and Wellard analyzed a sample of 44 English policy documents from 2000 to 2006 and they found that there is ‘no single’ coherent government message about how play is understood and constructed (Smid, 2010). Play may be viewed differently depending on personal characteristics, such as age, gender, culture, social class, features of the environment (e.g. space, weather and equipment) and cultural factors (e.g. behavioral conventions and fashions). These are some of the factors which are known to influence play and the difficulty in defining it. Consequently, while authors agree that it is best not to define play, most of them have attempted to identify the general characteristics of/criteria for play (Greig, 2013).

For young children, fundamental learning is intrinsically related to meaningful play activities (Pompert, 2012). It basically refers to the way an activity is carried out (Oers, 2012). It is well established as a pedagogical approach with early childhood education (O’Connor, 2017). Play-based learning is an integral part of children’s development, and its positive implications for young children have been the focus of many major research papers over recent decades (Maher & Smith 2017). Research continues to focus on definitions of play, children’s roles and interests in play and how play is supported in various forms of early years provision in a variety of international contexts (Nutbrown & Clough, 2014).

According to scholars, learning and playing are natural, intertwined processes in early childhood. Certain researchers have defined the relationship between play and learning as “inseparable” and “complementary” and have suggested that the connection between play and learning has led most people to perceive play and learning as vital, at least for young children. Play has a crucial role as a “learning medium” that helps young children to explore their environment, practice novel situations, and seek knowledge (Akman & Özgül, 2015). Play and childhood usually go together; however, different cultures may view play and childhood differently. In the Greek language, for example, the word for play comes from the word for child, and a separate word is used for organized games or contests, mostly associated with adult life. The English ‘play’

comes from the Anglo-Saxon ‘plega’, which referred to play or rapid bodily movement and was also used to mean performing with musical instruments. In Roman languages there is no difference between play and games and they use one word for both (Greig, 2013). In relation to early childhood education, play has also numerous descriptors, like play-based curriculum, play-oriented curriculum, play as pedagogy, play as curriculum, and play-centered programs (Wisneski & Reifel, 2012).

2.9.3. Play-Based Early Childhood Education and the Role of the Teacher

The maxim that ‘children learn through play’ constitutes a pedagogical given in early years settings that have been influenced by developmental, play-based curriculum philosophies. From this perspective, the role of the practitioner is viewed as manager of the learning environment and facilitator of children’s development, but less frequently as that of teacher (Anning, Cullen, & Fler, 2004). Childhood education professionals should recognize that play is the most effective and natural way for a child to learn (Bredekamp & Coople, 1997 as cited in Akman & Özgül, 2015). Over 35 years later many teachers continue to struggle to ‘fit’ play into their pedagogic repertoire, and, though it is recognized that play has a place in the early years, some practitioners still lack the necessary skills, support and confidence to make children’s play an integral part of learning and pedagogy (Nutbrown & Clough, 2014). Play based pedagogy starts with a commitment to play which is build through an understanding of its value within children’s learning. It is also supported by the incorporation of a number of principles that underpin it (O’Connor, 2017). Taking advantage of meaningful teaching opportunities in the context of play are fundamental professional abilities of teachers in a play-based curriculum (Oers, 2012). Teachers have a powerful influence on the quality of children’s play experiences. One of the ways in which teachers can support the development of play in very young children is through the creation of opportunities to engage in play activities (Tait, 2017). The teacher’s role is equally important in learning and play, something not always visible in practice where teachers often withdraw when children play. The teacher’s role is important for giving support and inspiration, for challenging and encouraging the child’s willingness and desire to continue the process of making sense of the world (Sommer, Prambling-Samuelsson & Hundeide, 2010). Smid (2010) has explained that only observation of their play will show observers what, e.g.

individual children bring to their learning, what they already know and can do, how they approach learning and how they interact with others, and this will be different for each child.

There remains a need to understand play as something children do in their own right and the ways in which adults seek to manipulate children's play to encourage specific learning objectives (Nutbrown and Clough, 2014). Children usually play within the family compound, within audible range (and sometimes within sight) of adults and older children, but they are not being directly supervised. Adults should scaffold children's play both by providing objects and activities that maximize learning and by directing and expanding on children's play routines, and often, adults are encouraged to be active play partners (Gaskins, 2015). Freedom is an important ingredient in young children's learning. Children should be free to make choices within their play and be supported in these choices by the educator through pedagogy, engagement and connection and through the environment the educator has created. Freedom as a principle within pedagogy essentially underpins that children are free to express their intrinsic developmental wisdom within their play choices. Children often understand their learning needs at a deep and natural level, and as such, their choices should hold educational weight with the educator. This wisdom requires support which is expressed through the human connection mindfully offered by the educator and by the preparation and design that they have applied to the learning environment, inclusive of the atmosphere and materials. Providing for freedom in play begins with the concept that freedom in play does not negate the role of the educator. He/she is an active partner in this process and supports the child's educational growth through freedom, connection, pleasure, integration and extension (O'Connor, 2017).

Children learn by constructing their own knowledge through play. The more competently children play, the more clearly they will understand their world. Teachers provide the opportunity for children to play and to develop through play. Teachers organize the environment, mediate disputes during points of conflict, and with beginning players, assume the role of teacher as player. As children master independent play, the teacher supports constructive learning as a play watcher who observes, reflects, builds hypotheses, and plans (Perry, 2001). In terms of pedagogy of play, there are certain practices which we must adopt, as practitioners, if we are to sustain our youngest children's innate learning and development potential. Anyone who spends

time observing children in play contexts and noting how, through actions and words, children are able to give clear indications of prior experiences and learning will soon be convinced of play's merits for children and the need for practitioners to get to grips wholeheartedly with a powerful – and playful – pedagogy (Smid, 2010). Teachers are the key to promoting meaningful play, which promotes a basis for learning. What they do and the attitudes they have toward play determine the quality of the preschool environment and the events that occur there. Therefore, teachers have the following responsibilities for supporting a quality play curriculum (Morrison, 2004: 290):

- o Plan to implement the curriculum through play and integrate specific learning activities with play to achieve specific learning outcomes. Play activities should match children's developmental needs and be free of gender and cultural stereotypes. Teachers have to be clear about curriculum concepts and ideas they want children to learn through play;
- o Provide time for learning through play. Include it in the schedule as a legitimate activity in its own right;
- o Structure time for learning through play. Create both indoor and outdoor environments that encourage play and support its role in learning;
- o Organize the classroom or center environment so that cooperative learning is possible and active learning occurs;
- o Provide materials and equipment that are appropriate to children's developmental levels and support a nonsexist and multicultural curriculum;
- o Educate assistants and parents about how to promote learning through play;
- o Supervise play activities and participate in children's play. In these roles, help, show, and model when appropriate and refrain from interfering when appropriate;
- o Observe children's play. Teachers can learn how children play and the learning outcomes of play to use in planning classroom activities;
- o Question children about their play, discuss what children did during play, and about what they have learned through play;
- o Provide for safety in indoor and outdoor play;

2.9.4. Play-Based Early Childhood Education and its Contradictions

In a play children are the ones taking the initiative. This might be a way to let the child's perspective come through. Play is also considered to be joyful, light-hearted, and driven by children's interest. Play is viewed as process-orientated and children are active physically, emotionally, and intellectually. The child sets the goals, goals that may be changed whenever the child wishes. Adults generally think of play from the child's perspective and respect their freedom to choose. Although we always claim that children learn when they play, we do not want them to play when they are supposed to work on a specific task decided by the teacher. Therefore, preschool differentiates between play and learning in everyday practice (Sommer, Prambling-Samuelsson & Hundeide, 2010). The democratic idea that every child has a right to play in his or her own way characterizes early childhood educational contexts. However, children in ECE contexts may be expected to participate in play activities that are maintained over time in collaboration with other children, regardless of the play materials offered (Kultti & Prambling-Samuelsson, 2017). Linking a play and pedagogy has long been a controversial area, because of the ideological commitment to free play and free choice. Although accepting that children learn and develop through play, and that play is a motivating force for children's learning, many teachers are pressurized by the very full first school curriculum and large classes to neglect play as a means of teaching, and they leave children to play on their own. In addition, many parents' expectations are that children will 'work' when they come to school, not 'play' (Nutbrown & Clough, 2014).

There is a wide variety of play practices in contemporary early childhood programs, ranging from a total lack of play (no classroom play time or recess) to a more moderate amount of play, both indoors and out. While recognizing a few play-based programs with a significant part of the school day set aside for free play and projects, many who make use of play curricula are feeling pressure to reduce the time for play and substitute academics and test preparation. Public school systems intentionally advertise their early childhood-preschool programs as "academically based" as opposed to "play based" (Wisneski & Reifel, 2012). Play as Papatheodorou (2008) cited in Smid (2010), is regularly divorced from 'real' work and learning that takes place, particularly in schools. No wonder then that practitioners themselves find it so difficult to

understand and justify play as a powerful basis to their pedagogical practices. It seems accepted that play should be part of extended schools but play in schools and settings is suffering from not being 'trusted' in itself to provide a secure basis for learning and assessment of children's knowledge, skills and understanding. Rather, practitioners are encouraged to utilize play to their own ends to meet children's learning outcomes and, thus, reduce it to what play can be used for, which obscures the essential nature, purposes and complexities of play.

The study conducted by Wong, Wang and Cheng (2011) indicated that the assumptions that play is beneficial to children's learning is well-established in the realms of research, academia and in some educators' belief systems. There has not been the necessary acceptance across society in general, nor, importantly, amongst parents that play is a legitimate vehicle for learning in the formal school setting. Parents present a common view of society towards play: In a society where academic achievement is highly valued teachers and parents hesitate to think of play as essential to child development; they are more likely to see it as an obstacle to children's academic success and future career prosperity. (Wong, Wong, & Cheng 2011 as cited in Maher & Smith, 2017). The challenge for early childhood professionals and advocates of play is how to alter the perceptions of society. Theory is not enough; people need to see appropriate, well-executed play-based programs in action if they are to believe in the value of play as a vehicle for learning. Play as a learning tool has been an academic focus for well over a hundred years now. Throughout this time, it has moved in and out of favor with teaching professionals (Maher & Smith 2017).

The research findings from the Irish Neighborhood Play Project, according to O'Connor (2017), present an interesting portrait of the reality of play within modern childhood in a developed Western society. Through naturalistic observations and parental surveys involving over 1700 families across 240 communities, the findings show dramatic generational changes in engagement with play. Reductions in risk-taking, levels of freedom, play involving nature, child-initiated play and child-directed play have declined over the course of a single generation. Adult supervision and involvement within children's neighborhood play is also a common feature of modern childhood. Where the generation before enjoyed greater levels of freedom within their neighborhood play and greater amounts of time spent outdoors, the modern child experiences the

reverse. Limitations on freedom are the result of parental fears about safety, particularly in relation to traffic, abductions and hazards in the environment (O'Connor, 2017).

Miller and Almon (2009) (in Wisneski & Reifel 2012: 176) have alerted the public and the education community to concerns about the lack of play in early childhood education in their document - Crisis in the Kindergarten: Why Children Need Play in School. Based on this research, regarding children's play and curriculum in kindergartens, the following report has been highlighted.

- o Teacher-directed activities, especially instruction in literacy and math skills, are taking up the lion's share of kindergarten classroom time.
- o Standardized testing and preparation for tests are now a daily activity in most of the kindergartens studied.
- o Free play, or "choice time," is usually limited to 30 minutes or less per day. In many classrooms there is no playtime at all.
- o Most classrooms do not have enough materials for all children to engage in play at once; blocks, dramatic play materials, and sand and water for play and exploration are in particularly short supply.
- o Teachers say that major obstacles to play in kindergarten are that the curriculum does not incorporate it, that there is not enough time, and that administrators do not value it.
- o Most teachers say that play in kindergarten is important, although few teachers or administrators are able to articulate the relationship between play and learning.
- o There are wide variations in what teachers and principals mean by "play."
- o Many classroom activities that adults describe as play are in fact highly teacher directed and involve little or no imagination or creativity on the part of children.

2.10. Policies, Programs and Curriculums of Early Childhood Care and Education

The patterns and routines of daily life provide an authentic curriculum for young children around the world. Whether the context be a rich village life, an urban environment or an impoverished settlement, through participating in and observing activities and relationships around them, young children learn the necessary values, skills and knowledge (Marope & Kaga, 2015).

In most countries, ECCE programs are developed for different reasons, with different aims and philosophies (UNESCO, 2006). Similarly, policies on ECCE and its governance vary greatly between countries (Education International ECE Task Force Study Report, 2010), and the ECCE policies and its provision vary according to the age and development of the child, and can be organized in formal, non-formal and informal arrangements (UNESCO, 2006). It is becoming a growing priority, and has received increased policy attention, in many countries during the past years. Equitable access to quality early childhood education is increasingly viewed by policy makers as a way of strengthening the foundations of lifelong learning for all children and supporting the educational and social needs of families (Education International ECE Task Force Study Report, 2010). It is attracting the favorable attention of national and international policy makers and politicians, identified as a ‘good’ sector of the welfare state deserving of expansion and investment (Miller, Dalli & Urban, 2012). It has become a subject of increasing public interest in a great number of countries and among several international organizations and foundations. The subject is on the agenda not only of many practitioners but also of economists, politicians and other stakeholders. In some countries, the heightened interest has converted into growing levels of services for young children. This interest has been spurred by a number of societal changes in economically more developed countries. They include the increase in female labor force participation, immigration, declining fertility rates, changing patterns of family organization, and a concern for the well-being of children from low-income and poor families (Burger, 2013).

The time has come to move ECCE up the policy agenda in the developing world and among international donors. The national profiles indicate that in just more than half (53%) of the world’s countries there is at least one formal ECCE program before pre-primary education. This

program typically provides organized custodial care and, in some cases, health services and educational activities. The most common names given to the programs are day care services, crèches, centros infantiles, nurseries and early childhood development programs (UNESCO, 2006). In the middle of the 1990s early childhood education curricula began to appear in many places of the world, something that had long been common in compulsory school. Now, many countries have developed their own specific curriculum for early years (Sommer, Prambling-Samuelsson & Hundeide, 2010).

The 2010 Moscow World Conference on ECCE which showed that only 80 countries worldwide have legislation relating to some aspects of ECCE within the education system, while 30 countries have adopted policies to incorporate one to two years of compulsory pre-primary education into their basic education programs. However, only a few countries have enacted separate comprehensive ECCE legislation (Marope & Kaga, 2015). While the contribution of early childhood education towards broader social, economic and education goals is being recognized, the sector remains under-developed in a number of countries (gaps in provision and inadequate quality in services), due in part to a lack of investments, as well as the diversity of bodies and actors involved in its organization and provision that may not be well coordinated and/or regulated (Education International ECE Task Force Study Report, 2010).

Strengthening knowledge on the various approaches and practices on early childhood education adopted in different countries can contribute towards the improvement of policy on early childhood education through the identification of successes and challenges encountered in different contexts (Education International ECE Task Force Study Report, 2010). Greater efforts are also required in the development of comprehensive national policies and operational plans to implement holistic ECCE to ensure the rights of young children and capitalize on the positive benefits. It is also necessary to ensure that ECCE policies form part of the long-term national socioeconomic development agenda that seeks inclusion, social justice, growth and sustainable development. Most of the existing ECCE policies and plans of action are disconnected from such major national development policies and strategies. An important consequence is that ECCE activities receive little national funding and are often treated as projects dependent mainly on donors and civil society, which is not sustainable (Marope & Kaga, 2015). In developing

countries, in particular, international agencies, NGOs, faith-based organizations, local communities and private institutions are often involved in the organization, provision and funding of early childhood education services (Education International ECE Task Force Study Report, 2010).

As ECCE is now conceptualized differently from the past, i.e., through discourses of human capital theory, globalization, and investing in the early years, there are policy mechanisms to assist with ensuring that young children develop into productive citizens and contribute to the economy. As a result, many governments now invest on ECCE when they have not previously indicated the intensity of the changes that have occurred in educational policy making in the past 20 years (Grieshaber, 2017). Although countries still face many difficulties in expanding and improving their ECCE programs, a more favorable policy environment is emerging. Governments can help shape this environment by ensuring that there are adequate resources, including public funding. They also play an important role by designing strong national policies, fostering coordination among sectors and stakeholders, regulating and monitoring quality, and making a concerted effort to reach disadvantaged children and others with limited access to ECCE. Developing countries have generally given less policy attention to early childhood education and the lack of a national ECCE policy truly represents a missed opportunity. Where ECCE does get attention, it is usually geared towards ages 3 and up, and focused on the years before primary school entry, leaving opportunities for younger children overlooked (UNESCO, 2006). Although there has been an expansion of ECCE in Africa as a whole since 2007, the importance of developing a strong teaching and caregiver-staff as well as relevant curriculum framework and modules cannot be over emphasized (Awopegba, Oduolowu & Nsamenang, 2013).

In Africa, at least 76 per cent of countries are engaged in ECCE policy planning or implementation (19 countries have developed ECCE policies and 20 are engaged in a planning process). It is widely accepted that young children benefit from a healthy, safe, and enriched environment—conditions that are not in place in most of Sub Saharan Africa (Garcia, Pence and Evans, 2008). The challenge facing Sub Saharan Africa (SSA) is not only that of adopting a compulsory pre-primary education policy, but more so that of contextualizing ECCE programs in

particular and educational curricula in general within the stark realities and cultural meaning systems of diverse realities of African countries. Children who learn in their local context could make a smooth transition from ECCE to primary education, and beyond that cultural values and practices that are capable of adding values to the lives of the children to make them functional members of their society are ensured (Awopegba, Oduolowu & Nsamenang, 2013). When it comes to ECCE, achieving universal access does not mean providing a universally standard experience under standardized terms and conditions Heymann & Cassola, 2012).

A universal model of early childhood provision does not exist and that high quality programs are based on circumstances in a country. However, given the relatively low participation and poor quality of many programs in developing countries, it may be helpful to learn from and adapt experiences of others in meeting the challenge of expanding and improving ECCE (UNESCO, 2006). Therefore, strong programs, regardless of context, can share some characteristics, and these included, according to UNESCO (2006: 153):

- o Focusing on and offering support to parents during children's earliest years;
- o Integrating educational activities with other services, notably health care, nutrition and social services; and
- o Providing relevant educational experiences during the pre-school years and easing the transition into primary school.

Educational policy analysts Rizvi and Lingard (2010) in Grieshaber (2017) have recognized that globalization has reconfigured the state and its authority in developing public policies, and that national and local policies are now linked to globalized educational policy discourses, pressures from international organizations and global policy networks, and other globalization effects. These processes of globalization continue to transform educational policy, and especially ECCE policies. For instance, OECD is a major policy player in the member countries and it has produced four highly significant reports about ECCE, (Starting Strong 2001; Starting Strong II 2006; Starting Strong III 2012; Starting Strong IV 2015), which act as blueprints for governments to make policy and funding decisions, and the same is true for UNESCO, UNICEF, the World Bank and others.

Early childhood programs are meant to ensure children's holistic development by supporting and complementing efforts of parents and other care givers during the early years and easing the transition to primary school. Such programs are extremely diverse and no global model exists. However, all successful ones ensure continuity of support as the child moves from the family to a program outside the home and eventually into primary school. One way to smooth the transition is by engaging with parents. Centre-based programs, including pre-schools, for children from age 3 to school entry age require pedagogies and curricula that take into account the specificity of children's development and the social context within which they live (UNESCO, 2006). Effective policies should be based on a differentiated analysis of how many children from which social background and under which expanded programs reach conditions of access (Marope & Kaga, 2015). Therefore, governments have the primary responsibility of formulating ECCE policies within the context of national plans, mobilizing political and popular support, and promoting flexible, adaptable programs for young children that are appropriate to their age (UNESCO, 2006).

By definition, ECCE involves multiple sectors, programs and actors. At national level, in most countries, ECCE policies and programs are divided between two or more administrative departments or ministries. Comprehensive early childhood policies provide governments with the authority and guidance needed to implement programs for young children, and to develop strong policies for young children, the political, social and economic conditions need to be supportive (UNESCO, 2006). According to UNESCO-IIEP (2006) as cited in UNESCO (2006) a review of major policy documents reveals that, although all education plans give some attention to early childhood, most do not take the holistic approach to ECCE. UNESCO, UNICEF, the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA) and various early childhood networks have encouraged countries to develop holistic ECCE policies that address every aspect of care, education, health and nutrition for all children under 8. In practice, however, most countries focus mainly on pre-primary education, from age 3 until the start of primary school, and pay much less attention to the non-education aspects of ECCE or the needs of children under 3 (UNESCO, 2006).

An effective ECCE requires both a relevant curriculum and skilled practitioners who understand and are able to implement the curriculum requirements, recognize that children develop rapidly—physically, intellectually, emotionally and socially --during their early years. ECCE practitioners should ensure that all children feel included, secure and valued and the early years experience should build on what children already know and can do. No child should be excluded or disadvantaged because of ethnicity, culture or religion, home language, family background, special educational needs, disability, gender or ability. Parents and practitioners need to work together in an atmosphere of mutual respect within which children can have security and confidence. To be effective, an early years curriculum should be carefully structured and there should be opportunities for children to engage in activities planned by adults and also those that they plan or initiate themselves. Practitioners must be able to observe and respond appropriately to children and well-planned, purposeful activity and appropriate intervention by practitioners will engage children in the learning process. For children to have rich and stimulating experiences, the learning environment should be well planned and well organized. Above all, effective learning and development for young children requires high-quality care and education by practitioners (Nutbrown, 2006).

In Marope and Kaga (2015: 110), the European network Diversity in Early Childhood Education and Training provides the following guiding principles for a respectful curriculum.

- o Every child, parent and staff member should feel that he/she belongs. This implies an active policy to take into account family cultures and preferences when constructing the curriculum.
- o Every child, parent and staff member is empowered to develop the diverse aspects of his/her different identities. This implies that the curriculum fosters multiple identity building and multilingualism by building bridges between the home and the institutional environment as well as with the local community.
- o Everyone can learn from each other across cultural and other boundaries.
- o Everyone can participate as active citizens. This implies that staff should develop an explicit anti-bias approach and take appropriate action to involve all parents.
- o Staff, parents and children work together to challenge institutional forms of prejudice and discrimination. This includes a critical study of availability and access policies, as well as structural discrimination, as explained below.

- o The construction of a curriculum that welcomes each child and that provides a holistic nurturing environment in which every child can grow to its full potential can therefore not be constructed without involving the family. It is not possible to build a welcoming curriculum for the child without welcoming his or her parents.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, the way how the study was conducted is discussed in detail. In this section, different reasons, justifications and procedures with detail descriptions are given for the selection of research methodology, research design, sampling techniques and data collection tools of the study.

3.1. Research Methodology

In any education system, ECCE is a critical issue because it is about babies, kids and children' so it needs a thorough, close up and specific investigation. Therefore, it was found that qualitative research methodology was an appropriate approach to deal with the issue under study. According to Creswell & Poth (2018) qualitative research is conducted because the problem or issue needs to be explored and ... a complex, detailed understanding of the issue is needed. Taylor, Bogdan and DeVault (2016) have also said that qualitative studies focus on those issues whom the society ignores, and in this specific study, ECCE is among the overlooked issues. Hatch and King (2015) have believed that the unique ability of qualitative inquiry to explore the lived realities of young children and the adults who work with them makes it an invaluable research tool. As much as at any time in the past, the field of early childhood education needs well designed, rigorously done, qualitative studies that reveal for inspection what is going on in all types of settings that include young children and those who educate and care for them.

As we know the nature of qualitative research mainly deals with holistic approach of peoples' everyday life, especially, on those cases that need much attention and it has the power to present a complete view of a specific case in detail description by its own nature. According to Taylor, Bogdan and DeVault (2016), qualitative researcher looks at settings and people holistically where people, settings, or groups are viewed as a whole. Thus, in this study, the approach helps to know the holistic practice of teachers and children throughout their teaching, learning and caring activities. Therefore, the philosophical assumption of the methodology of the study is the nature of reality. In other words, methodology has an ontological base, because, it deals with different views of participants and their rich experiences. Creswell & and Poth (2018) believe

that when researchers conduct qualitative research, they are embracing the idea of multiple realities. Evidence of multiple realities includes the use of multiple forms of evidence in themes using the actual words of different individuals and their perspectives.

3.2. Research Design

The selected design of the study was comparative multi case design, because, this approach clearly shows the existing condition of the issue under study in comparative perspective. A case study research, as Creswell and Poth (2018) noted, often follows a qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a real-life, contemporary bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information (e.g., observations, interviews, audiovisual material, and documents and reports). Rossman and Rallis (2017) pointed out that case studies are complex and multilayered. They are particularly useful for their rich description and heuristic values. By providing detail and complexity, case studies illuminate the reader's understanding, thereby extending comprehension of some complex set of events or circumstances. Gall and Borg (2007) in Edmonds and Kennedy (2017) have described a case study as (a) the in-depth study of (b) one or more instances of a phenomenon (c) in its real-life context that (d) reflects the perspective of the participants involved in the phenomenon.

As it was discussed earlier in this study diverse groups of participants from different types of schools and bureaus were involved. Thus, to explore multiple perspectives of participants who came from different settings in comparative approach, multi case study method was employed. Bogdan and Biklen (2007) have said that in multi-case studies or in comparative case studies, two or more case studies are done and, then compared and contrasted. According to Rossman and Rallis (2017), when more than one case is studied, the researcher can conduct cross-case analyses. These analyses respect the integrity of each case and then seek commonalities across cases as well as differences.

3.3. Participants of the Study

In this study different groups of participants were involved; and the central participants of the study were teachers, children parents as well as prospective diploma graduates of ECCE. Children and ECCE officials were also among the participants of the study. These participants were chosen purposefully from those schools whose current achievement on ECCE is relatively better, but in Addis Ababa City administration (the capital city of Ethiopia).

According to Addis Ababa City Administration Education Bureau, there are 1100 preschools in the city. Amongst these schools 769 are private, 171 are government, 26 belong to churches, 17 are missionary, 8 are international, 6 are of public, 5 are of community, 3 are the property of mosques and the remaining 95 are other types of preschools (Addis Ababa City Administration Education Bureau, 2017). In 2017 the Bureau conducted an inspection on 601 private and 75 government preschools which was 68% of the total. The inspection considered the three elements of quality education (input, process and output) which were broken down into 26 standards (where, input has 7, process 14 and output 5 standards).

Hence, based on the sum of the achievement scored on each standard during inspection process, evaluation was made for the participant schools. The evaluation, as shown in the table below, has four (4) levels of achievements and measured in percentages (%):

Table 1: - *Preschools Levels of Achievement*

Level/Rank	Score (Achievement)
1	50% and below
2	50% - 69.99%
3	70% - 89.99%
4	90% - 100%

Therefore, based on the given rank or leveling in the table above - except one which was chosen through snowball sampling technique which referred by one participant school informant, all preschools of private, government, international and missionary which relatively achieve a better result in their respective type/category was participated in this study, purposefully; and this approach has also help to observe the comparative perspectives of the study. Prior to this, a shallow visit was made to these preschools. Similarly, participant teachers, children and parents of each preschool were also chosen based on their best achievements. In addition, in this study, an official of Ministry of Education, Education Bureau Personnel of the city and diploma ECCE prospective teacher graduates of 2019 were involved. Therefore, the numbers of participants that were involved in the study from each type of preschools (cases in the study) are presented in the following table.

Table 2: Participants of the Study

No of Participants	Types of Preschools				Total
	Private	Government	International	Missionary	
Preschools	6	3	2	1	12
Teachers	24	10	8	5	47
Principals	4	2	1	1	8
Parents	22	10	-	5	37
Children	10	4	-	2	16
AAEB & MOE Officials	-	2	-	-	2
Prospective ECCE Diploma Teacher Graduates	-	-	-	-	5
Grand Total					115

As to the type and number of preschools involved in this study, as shown in the above table six (6) private, three (3) government, two (2) international and one (1) missionary kindergarten schools or pre-schools were selected through purposive sampling techniques. In this study, including one (1) model classroom with its main teacher, five preschool teachers, one principal, five parents and two children from each preschool was selected. However, based on their repetitive responses the number of participants was sometimes reduced by one. Therefore, as shown in Table-2 47 preschool teachers, 8 principals, 37 parents, 16 children, 5 diploma ECCE teacher prospective graduates of 2019 (top students of each section) and 2 Ministry of Education and Addis Ababa City Education Bureau ECCE personnel participated in this study. When we sum up all the participants, as indicated from the grand total in Table -2, they became 115.

One of the limitations of this study was that children and parents of the two “international” and one private preschools, as indicated in Ttable -2, didn’t participate in this study; because, the leaders of preschools failed to ask parents of children to participate in this study. However, as an option, even though it was not accepted, the principal of the private preschool has offered those parents who were working in the preschool and sent their children there. The reason why this alternative was not accepted for this study was that this group of parents might be biased about the preschool and were not also chosen based on the selection criteria of the research. In general, to access the participant groups of, the principals were asked, at least three times, to send the cooperation letter to children parents which request their participation in this study.

In this study, those children and parents who spent a year in the selected preschool participated. The reason why this approach was applied was that at this period of time children became at a good position in their language, cognitive, physical, emotional, social and creative dimensions than their early years, and these abilities were clearly shown when they interacted with their teachers and peers easily. As to the parents of children, when they had this amount of contact with the preschool, they would have a good knowledge to explain what were happening in the preschool in relation to the home and their children’s learning. To summarize this section, the general background of participants of the study is presented in the following table.

Table -3: Participants General Background

A. Preschool Teachers and Principals																		
No	Type of the School	Education Background and Qualification						Field of Study					Experience					
		Not Educated	Elementary	High School	Certificate	Diploma	Degree	Masters	Preschool	English Lang	Psychology	Biology & Chem	Banking,, Purchasing,, business,Adm. Etc.	1-5 years	6-10 years	10-15 years	16-20 years	Above 20 years
1	Government				7	4	1		11			1		2	4	6		
2	Private				10	7	11		13	6	2	2	5	10	10	7	1	
3	International				2	1	5	1	4	1		2	2	3	2	1	2	1
4	Missionary				5	1			6						1	4	1	
B. Prospective ECCE Diploma Teacher Graduates																		
1	Government					5			5									
C. Ministry of Education and Addis Ababa Education Bureau Officials																		
1	Government						1	1										
D. Parents																		
1	Government	1	3	4	1	1												
2	Private		2	4	1	6	8	1										
3	International	-	-	-	-	-	-	-										
4	Missionary			1		2	2											
E. Children																		
No		LKG/KG			UKG/Preparatory													
1	Government	4																
2	Private	8			2													
3	International	-			-													
4	Missionary	2			-													

3.4. Data Collection Instruments

The study has employed qualitative research approach in order to examine important aspects of the problem under study. To achieve its objective the study, therefore, used multiple data collection techniques, such as observation, interview, and focus group discussion (FGD); and this data triangulation approach helped to triangulate or support with the information collected using other instruments. Furthermore, based on the variables of the study, the data collection tools were developed and were constructed in English, but translated to Amharic, a local language just to ease the data collection process, and so that participants could respond and discuss the questions easily in the language. For more elaboration, all the data collection tools were presented in detail below.

3.4.1. Observation (Nonparticipant and Participant Observation)

Observation is one of the major data collection instruments of any qualitative research, and it is used to capture the actual context of a given study. In this study, therefore, it was mainly employed to observe: a) the setup of the preschool and the target classroom; b) the classroom facilitation of the teacher and lesson delivery; c) the practice of child centered and play based learning; d) whether the care and education practices developmentally appropriate and culturally relevant; and e) language usage during interaction and instruction (in and out of the classroom).

In this data collection process twelve preschools were participated. Out of these ten (preschools were observed using video camera and audio recordings, and two “international” preschools which did not permit video camera were observed directly. Furthermore, to conduct the observation in every preschool, one model class room which was facilitated by model teacher with her assistant (s) was chosen. During conducting an observation, including an exam day, 2-3 days were spent in each preschool where video camera and audio recordings were permitted, and one day direct observation was employed in the two “international” preschools. In audiovisual assisted observations, recordings were made without interruption. It began before the class started (at morning 8:30AM) and it continued during lesson delivery till the end of the class (12:00-12:30AM), except during snack and breakfast times. The recordings were also sometimes

held during the afternoon period (2:00- 3:00PM) whenever the activities were different from the morning sessions. The reason why video recordings was chosen because it helped to retain and show/visualize the holistic and natural settings of the case as it was than observing by our naked eyes. Let alone video, it is well understood that a picture worth hundred even sometimes thousand words.

In conducting video or audiovisual based data collection, fear and disturbance of participants were expected. However, to avoid this interruption, the researcher has visited the preschools, teachers and their assistances, and students of the target classrooms for 1-2 days before he began the main data collection processes, so that participants were informed to take part in the study freely. Furthermore, in this study a researcher was employed a kind of participant observation technique partially and this approach let the participants to develop the confidence and trust on the study, hence, they engaged actively without any frustration. However, among the participant preschools, four of them have appreciated this data collection approach and they said that they have never come across it before. According to Bogdan & Biklen (2007), the presence of the researcher could change the behavior of the people he or she is trying to study and these changes are referred to as observer effect; and these scholars believed that almost all research is confounded by this kind of problem. Throughout the history of qualitative methods, practitioners have addressed themselves to this problem and have incorporated procedures to minimize it or take it into account. Qualitative researchers try to interact with their subjects in a natural, unobtrusive, and nonthreatening manner.

3.4.2. Interview (Unstructured Interview)

Conducting an interview is very useful to gather in-depth information about the issue under study. The tool was used for preschool teachers, children, parents, principals, Education Bureau and Ministry of Education ECCE officials or experts, and diploma ECCE prospective teacher graduates of 2019. For each group of participate a different but interrelated interview guide was prepared. In the interview guides, participants were asked about their perceptions, practices, participations, communications, limitations, recommendations and others in relation to early childhood care and education. During an interview sessions the questions were more elaborated

based on participants responses. The amount of time spent on the interviews, in general, the shortest interview session took 10 minutes, the medium one was 30 minute and the longest has taken an hour length. But, the amount of time was reduced to 2-4 minutes when the interviewees were children. And all interviews were captured by audio recorder.

3.4.3. Focus Group Discussion (FGD)

Focus group discussion let the participants take part in an in-depth discussion on few but main open ended questions of the issue under study. The technique was employed in three groups of parents and two groups of teachers, and each group was formed with five members of participants. The reason why this technique was used in this study was to complement the two other data collection tools that have presented above and to explore participants' broader perspectives. To conduct the data collection processes, the discussion questions were modified from interview guides and the discussions were captured by two audio recorders.

3.5. Data Collection Procedures

To begin the data collection process, official and personal cooperative letters were submitted to Ministry of Education, Addis Ababa City Education Bureau and Sub-Cities Education Offices, preschools and to children parents. The letters which were written in English and Amharic highlighted the objective of the study, the scope of the study and presented the researcher. However, the purposes of the research and why they were selected for the study were more elaborated personally by the researcher himself when he met with participants. Therefore, this approach made the data collection process simple. Furthermore, since the study consider multiple sites, it is difficult to collect data from many sites at a time, therefore, the researcher used a strategy to conduct the data collection process at one preschool at a time then move to the next site.

The data collection procedure of video assisted observation began after two weeks of the opening of the preschools. This time was chosen just to observe the natural condition of children before they get into and adapt the preschool culture or context. In each preschool, it was conducted for 2

to 3 days. Time variation occurred due to when the researcher has recognized an adequate amount of data from each preschool, he quitted further data gatherings. According to Bogdan and Biklen (2007), this condition termed as data saturation, the point of data collection where the information you get becomes redundant.

For every observation, there was a shot list which roughly guided the video recording process. These guides were prepared after the target preschool, classroom, the teacher(s) and children have visited for one or two days. The guides have shown the positions and movements of the camera, the contents of the recordings, the angle and framing of the shots (wide, medium and close up shots). Furthermore, to begin the observation, the camera setup and the lighting condition of the classroom was arranged early in the morning before children come to class, and once video capturing underway, the recordings were conducted at different positions (back and forth, near and far, right and left, and around the corners) and angles (high, low and neutral). However, the front position was used when children were engaged in different classroom activities while teachers are playing a facilitation role, only. In addition, to record what was presented, explained, said, questioned and answered by the teachers and children, a livelier microphone which is plugged in voice recorder was attached hidden on the chest of the teachers. Thus, clear and quality audio materials were recorded.

Finally, after the recordings were made, data storing was followed. To do this job, different codes were given for the audiovisual data based on the date and time of the recording, name or type of the preschool, the teacher, the nature of the recorded content while storing the data. Furthermore, things which were not captured through video and audio recordings, including the informal talks, have written on the note book after the completion of the actual classroom observation.

After the completion of collecting the data needed from each observation at every preschool, the researcher has taken 5 to 10 minutes to capture certain neutral footages of the classroom activities and by editing some of the best notes or recordings, just to show an appreciation for what they have contributed on the study, one compiled video was given to the teachers and the preschool when finally left the study site. When teachers and preschools watched the video, they

were so happy that three participant teachers even have said: “this is more than my diploma!” The other teacher has also said: “now this video shows who I am!”

As far as the procedure of an interview was concerned, it was directed by interview guiding questions. The interview was conducted face to face and responses were captured using voice recorder. Based on the depth of the responses given for the questions, the length of each interview session was flexible. The longest has stayed for an hour and the shortest which held with children was taken for 2 minutes. The interview sessions began by asking few easy questions first. Then based on the given response, the duration of the interview could be shorten or lengthen, this was done through reducing the already prepared interview guiding questions or through asking more additional questions which most of the time have taken from respondents responses. In addition, before the beginning of an interview session, to make the discussion organic, the researcher has memorized all the interview guiding questions. The locations where interviews were held with teachers, parents and children were s conducted in their offices, and prospective diploma teacher graduates of ECCE were also interviewed in their campus. Moreover, the files were stored, different codes and naming were given for each of them to separate one from the other.

Similarly while facilitating the focus group discussions, the procedure were almost similar with that was used for an interview. The different thing done here was that more selective questions were forwarded to those group members who gave an in-depth response and two voice recorders were used.

In general, to take a stable and clean footages/pictures and a clear sound, professional video cameras, voice recording and other equipment were used throughout the data collection process. These included: Canon 5D Mark III Professional Camera, Sony Handy cam Camera and Smart Phone were used for video recordings; Sony Digital Voice Recorders and Livelier microphones were employed for voice recording; to shot stable footage, Medium Size Tripod was also used; Backup Batteries and 2 TB Transcendent Hard Disc are among the accessories. In addition, during data collection periods, each observation scripts and recorded videos were given detail

descriptions such as when, at what time, for how long, where, who and what is written or recorded (the content).

3.6. Data Analysis and Discussion

In the data analysis discussion part of the study, the data which were gathered using different data collection techniques were analyzed case by case under different themes. In each theme category, first, cross case analysis were made turn by turn; and then, using the same procedure, data interpretations and discussions were conducted through comparative and triangulation perspectives. The themes were derived based on the basic research questions of the study. For this specific study, the cases were the different types of preschools; which are government, private, “international” and the missionary preschools. The data analysis and interpretation approach of the study almost similar with what is discussed by Creswell and Poth (2018). The authors said that when multiple cases are chosen, a typical format is to provide first a detailed description of each case and themes within the case, called a within-case analysis, followed by a thematic analysis across the cases, called a cross-case analysis, as well as assertions or an interpretation of the meaning of the case (Creswell & Poth, 2018). While analyzing the data, different codes were used to represent the preschools, teachers, principals, parents and children against their respective preschool types (government, private, “international” and missionary); and the subscript numbers which attached to the codes were indicated to show the number of service year (s) of the participant and the number of preschool (s) they have serving, respectively.

As to the audiovisual materials, first transcription of audiovisual data was made by viewing and reviewing of the videos and repetitive listening of the audio files. Here concurrent or simultaneous approach of data analysis and interpretation technique was used where all types of data coexist. Notice that the data analysis, interpretations and discussions were supported by some selected explanatory pictures or photos that were taken from the recorded videos. Finally, after discussions were made with the preschools and parents, one documentary video was produced from the collected videos.

3.7. Validation of the Study

Validity, in qualitative research, has multiple perspectives. Creswell and Poth (2018) suggested that the validation of qualitative research accounts can be checked through the perspectives of the researcher, the views of the participants and the perspectives of the readers or reviewers strategies. In this regard, this study, in one-way or another, has attempted to consider these strategies during the development of data collection instruments and their procedures, during data collection and throughout data analysis and interpretation. In relation to the first strategy, this study used various data sources or data triangulation was made; and therefore, this approach has improved the accuracy and relevance of the data to answer the research questions. Besides, the detail and thick descriptions of data collection procedures, the analysis and interpretation of the study also increased the validity of the study. According to Creswell (2016), an important validity check can also come from participants of the study. With regard to this point, while collecting the data, participants asked their views about the relevance of an interview, group discussion questions and observation contents in relation to the objective and field of the study. Accordingly, some relevant ideas and questions, especially, about the purpose of early childhood care and education, play based learning and about the assessment of children's learning, were considered from their responses. The last strategy of checking the validity of the study was reviewers' perspectives. In this regard, data collection tools reviewed by one colleague of the area and supervisors of the study; and based on the given comments, some changes and improvements made on the contents and structures of data collection tools. In addition, prior to collecting the data, the Amharic translation of each tools also checked by one language expert. Therefore, the three strategies helped to guarantee the validity of the research and are an evidence to answer the research questions and meaningfulness of the study.

3.8. Ethical Issues

In every discipline it is unethical to collect information without knowledge of participants, their informed consent (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998, & Kumar, 1999). Informed consent requires respondents to be adequately aware of the type of information collected from them, why the

information was being sought, what purpose it will serve, how they are expected to participate in the study, and how it will directly or indirectly affect them (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998). It is important that the consent should also be voluntary and without pressure of any kind. Bogdan & Biklen (2007) also said that in conducting any kind of study, researchers have to be ethical to their respondents and towards their profession; and so that they can easily achieve the objectives of the study. Thus, based on these principles, the researcher has followed the following ethical and moral issues throughout the research process.

- The purpose and risks of a study, including possible hazards to physical and psychological wellbeing, was explained to the participants through request letters and oral discussions; and so that they were fully aware about the data gathering techniques and significance of the study. Hence, this situation has eased the data collection process;
- To secure participants from possible harm that might arise as a consequence of their participation, their dignity, privacy and interests were respected and protected throughout the study; and the strong attachment and connection that created with the participants have also assured and kept these ethical and moral issues even after the completion of the data collection process;
- In this study, participant teachers, parents and others were able to terminate or stop their involvement at any time; and prior to the data collection process, they told that they have this right;
- Participants' welfare and convenience are given priority over all other issues; and without the will of the participants, there was no any interference throughout the study. There were thorough discussions on their concerns about the study;
- Participants were informed about the research procedures and for how long the data will be collected; and based on the opportunity they have given, an appropriate and comfortable times and places were arranged for the data collection process;
- All the collected data (audiovisuals and written documents) were held confidentially and were not released to anyone else. In relation to this point, not to reveal the organizational and

personal identity of the participants, the names of the preschools and their individual members are coded throughout the study document; and similarly, not to show individual participants and their preschools, except few neutral ones, all the pictures that used in this study are also chosen and edited very carefully; and finally

- To make the discussion and the data collection processes simple, appropriate language that children and participants can easily understand (Amharic language) was used.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Introduction

In this section of the study data analysis, interpretation and discussion are presented. Here concurrent or simultaneous approach of data analysis and interpretation technique was used. In other words, all the data which were collected through interviews, focus group discussions and observation techniques were analysed concurrently. To enable us to answer the basic research questions, the analyses was structured into seven core themes, and these questions, which were driven from Piaget's cognitive theory and Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, are connected with conceptual framework of the study. These are:

1. The contents and approaches of children's learning;
2. The benefits of early childhood care and education for the participant child;
3. The role of play in children's learning;
4. Language (s) use in and out of the classroom;
5. Parents participation in their children's learning;
6. Assessment of children's learning achievement;
7. Provision of childcare;

While analyzing the data throughout each theme, responses of teachers and principals were considered first; and then responses of parents and children followed; next, diploma ECCE prospective teacher graduates of 2019 responses were also part of the analysis; finally, thoughts of officials and observation results were incorporated. After analysis was made, thorough interpretation and discussion followed across each theme. Accordingly, the following section presented the analysis part of the study theme by theme.

4.2. Data Analysis and Results Presented in Themes

4.2.1. The Contents and Approaches of Children’s Learning

This theme was broken in to three sub themes; the first one (4.1.1.1) considered the daily routines and related issues of the class; the second sub theme (4.1.1.2) focused on the ways how teachers facilitate classroom activities and lessons; and finally, the holistic nature of these activities and lessons were analyzed under the last sub theme (4.1.1.3).

4.2.1.1. The Daily Routines of the Class

The responses of private preschools were summarized for this specific sub theme and it was found that, many of their routines were similar. As soon as the children arrived at school early in the morning, the classroom teachers began to check children’s homework and communication books, and they also prepared class works of the day. In three preschools, teachers started their work through tutoring the “low achiever” children for 30-50 minutes. Most of the times, while the main teachers did the above activities, assistant teachers and the baby-sitters played with and took care of children until the beginning of the lineup ceremony. Except one ¹, in all preschools, the school day began by lineup ceremony which stayed for 30-minute (8:30 AM - 9:00 AM) in front of the flagpole. In the ceremony, different programs, dominantly in English, were presented. Children sang different songs, of the day, the teachers asked children about the date of yesterday, today and tomorrow, consecutively the children called date. In four preschools, each month was represented by what the preschools called as character treats ²; therefore, children also were asked by their teachers to respond to the current character treat of the month.

¹⁻ *In one of the chosen preschool, except every Friday, children did not have the lineup ceremony; instead, they have spent their time around the corners in the classroom.*

²⁻ *Responsibility, Honesty, Cooperation, Caring, Forgiveness, Punctuality, Kindness, Love, Helping Others, etc.*

After they got back to class at (9:00AM) and before the beginning of the lesson of the day, children also repeated what was said on the line up ceremony, quickly; and then they told one story and sang a song. In one of the chosen preschools, every Monday morning, children were expected to present a report about the activities they did during their weekends. The lessons of the day started at about 9:00 AM with revising the lessons on the previous day;, and before they left for snack or meal (at 10:00AM); they learned two subjects for 25-30 minutes each. After they had their food, played and went to toilet, they came back to class at 11:00 AM, and learned another two subjects until lunch time (12:00 AM). After lunch time, they went for play for some time and had a sleep till 2:00 PM, and when they woke up, they took another two lessons.

Except the Amharic (local language) subject, all the lessons were dominantly delivered through English language. The afternoon sessions, most of the time, were recreational or play type lessons like art and drawing, music or songs, physical exercise, stories, films; of course, sometimes there were academic lessons too. About 3:15 PM, it was time to go home. Whenever children left for meal, play and sleep; teachers and baby-sitters had their own food; and prepared and corrected children's class works and homeworks.

For every subject, teachers have prepared annual, monthly, weekly and daily lesson plans using children's textbooks, and every preschool had its own textbooks which were organized by teachers of the preschools, but, one has adapted its textbooks from another country. According to some teacher respondents, when teachers and parents had some concerns on it, the books had to be changed every year. In relation to children's textbooks and lesson plan preparation, ToP (8, 2)³, who has diploma qualification in preschool has said, "I never use students' textbooks dominantly while preparing my lesson plan, because there are some difficult contents in it; therefore, I make some corrections on these contents before I deliver the lesson (Appendix I, p 1)." The other ProP (19, 3), whose qualification was certificate in preschool, said:

The lesson plans were prepared based on students' textbook. For instance, if the text has 80 pages, it will be divided in to four against the numbers of quarters that we have in the year. Therefore, in each quarter of the year, 20 pages of the given book will be accomplished, like that. A quarter has two and half months. (Appendix I, p 1)

³⁻ 8 service years in 2 preschools

She further added that the textbooks were prepared by the school. What the government prepares, the syllabus, is not suitable for this level and it is poor in quality. For instance, the syllabus directs children to start writing from the beginning which is impossible for the children at that age level, because, their fingers are not strong enough, even to hold pencil.

The other ToP ^(5, 1), whose qualification was a first degree in psychology, said:

Main teachers of the school prepare the lesson plan based on students' textbooks and the Teachers' Guidebook. While preparing a lesson plan, we consider the level of our children. As we know all children are not the same, there are fast children; there are also medium and slow learners. Therefore, unless we treat them all, some children, especially slow learners, feel as they are left out. When we prepared children's, textbooks we have used 'Jolly Phoenix Method' this is the approach where stories, songs, physical movements or actions, sound and flash cards will be used to teach a given number or letter. Therefore, while preparing children's textbooks, we have employed these techniques including Internet resources, the current and previous textbook editions of the school. (Appendix I, p 1)

A ToP ^(11, 4), whose qualification is degree in applied biology, said that the textbooks of the preschool were good. However, when the contents are found difficult for the children, they might take up to two days to complete the lesson. The other ToP ^(7, 2), whose qualification is certificate in preschool, also said:

If I plan to teach three Amharic letters per week, then I teach one every day. In addition, every Friday, lessons that have taught during the whole week will be revised. Children learn whatever you teach them. The question is how the teacher teaches a given subject. (Appendix I, p 1)

The practices of government preschools have many similarities with that of private ones. The difference was that in government preschools academic subjects, which were typical feature to private preschools, were presented in the form of theme. For instance, instead of mathematics subject, there was a theme called *understanding numerical concepts in day-to-day activities*. Likewise, there was a theme for language, environment sciences, physical and social development. Therefore, based on the five domains of child development (cognitive, language, physical, social and environmental), a syllabus was organized and teachers have used it as a guide to prepare their lesson plans, they did not have textbooks. In government preschools, except English subject, all lessons were presented in Amharic.

Similarly, the government preschool teachers reported, on children's textbooks and lesson plan preparation (a ToG^(11, 2), who has certificate qualification in preschool), said that:

I have yearly, monthly, weekly and daily lesson plans and prepared based on the syllabus which encompasses the five thematic areas. Each lesson has 25 minutes where 5-minute gave to revise the past lesson, 15-minute used to present today's lesson and the rest 5-minute consumed for the songs. (Appendix I, p 1)

One of the ProG^(9, 3), whose qualification was a degree in chemistry has described the five thematic areas in the following way.

Theme 1:- for appropriate development and physical strength;

Theme 2:- creating acceptable relationship with others;

Theme 3:- appropriate language use;

Theme 4:- understanding the concepts of numbers in day-to-day activities;

Theme 5:- understanding our environment through interaction. (Appendix I, p 1)

She further added that the themes were well prepared, and appropriate to the child and had detail descriptions on how teachers deliver them. According to one respondent teacher, each kindergarten level (KG 1, KG 2, and KG 3), had its own syllabus and served as teachers' guide.

Concerning specific theme considered, many "international" preschool teachers had had similar responses to that of private preschools. What different approach considered here was that, one of the chosen "international" preschool employed an "International Primary Curriculum (they call it as IPC)", and therefore, all the textbooks came from America and adapted based on the school context.

The responses of "international" preschool teachers on children textbooks and lesson plan preparations by, a ToI^(28, 8) respondent, whose qualification was certificate in preschool, said:

My lesson plan was prepared based on children's textbook, because, they [textbooks] are so smart, absolute and contain everything we want. For instance, we have four KG

classes (a level next to nursery), therefore, everyday all of them learn the same content at the same time, because they found at the same age level. (Appendix I, p 1)

The other ToI (20, 6), from the same preschool, whose qualification was diploma in preschool said that the lessons were prepared based on the International Primary Curriculum (IPC) of the school. They prepared in a scientific way, based on children's age and development.

One ProI (7, 3) respondent, whose qualification was Masters in early childhood education said that a teacher who prepares a lesson plan for a given subject, for instance, English, distributed it to other teachers who teach the same level of children. She also added that the textbooks came from America and it had no any resemblance with Ethiopian curriculum. She said "As an international school we have to use the International Primary Curriculum (IPC) which prepared for all parts of the world but adaptable based on your context and its contents are very nice". She added that "the world is getting closer and closer, therefore, we need to have a curriculum which help our students to learn anywhere in the world. That is why IPC is developed; it is easy to practice and adaptable to any context",

One ToI (18, 2) respondent, whose qualification was degree in English language, described:

The textbooks are very attractive for my children. They contain everything what children want. Our textbooks make our preschool special from other preschools. They are very attractive. To understand contents of the textbooks, even sometimes, teachers are not needed, because, they are self-explanatory. Therefore, they are very helpful for the teacher and the children, I like them so much! (Appendix I, p 2)

Other ToI (12, 2) respondent from the same preschool, who has a qualification of degree in business administration said, "The textbooks of the preschool are so excellent and contain everything. However, they depend on the way how teachers present them in their lesson (Appendix I, p 2)."

The practices of missionary preschool were similar with that of government preschools. They used themes instead of academic subjects and government syllabus as a guide to prepare their daily lesson plan, therefore, they did not have textbooks. However, in this missionary school,

every day, there was a time for pray and it has one period (30-minute) length. They held their pray in the church of the school.

ToM (8, 2) respondent, who has a qualification of certificate in preschool, said:

I prepare my lessons based on the five thematic areas, however, when children get in to bad mood and not ready to learn a given lesson, I changed it to play. For instance, what I prepare to teach about letters may be changed to play if their mood is not ok or not motivated for that. (Appendix I, p 2)

Similarly, children also described the subjects and the lessons they were learning; and it was the same as what was explained by their teachers and preschool principals.

An ECCE prospective diploma teacher graduate of 2019 said:

I noted that some teachers have followed the syllabus in their lessons but others didn't use it partially or totally. For instance, at nursery level, the syllabus document in its mathematics theme describes that children at this level should learn 1 up to 10 numbers only, however, what teachers doing was they force children to learn 1-30 or 40 numbers. (Appendix I, p 2)

When the responses of parents considered, a PoP respondent, who was a teacher in government preprimary school, said:

I think the textbooks are above children's level of development, when I compared them with our time, the textbooks seem difficult. Especially, social science seems hard. During our time English and social science are learnt when we were at higher grade levels. However, I couldn't see any difficulties on my child. He understands all easily. (Appendix I, p 2)

Other PoP respondent from the same preschool who has a qualification of masters in accounting, said, "When we compared with our time the textbooks seem difficult. They learn four different subjects and spoken English; there is also homework and study time. They learn and do so many things; therefore, they are highly overloaded (Appendix I, p 2)."

PoG, who is an electronics technician in his profession, also said:

From the past times, education, now, gets difficult and difficult, because, there is an instruction, fill in the blank space, circle the similarities or differences and the like.

Therefore, I think, it is somewhat difficult. For instance, during an exam period there is an instruction which actually children couldn't read it. (Appendix I, p 2)

To summarize what have been presented so far on this specific theme, the following table, especially, presented the contents or subject matters taught across all types of preschools.

Table 4: - Class Schedules and Programs across the Preschools

Types of Preschools	Private	Government	International	Missionary
Contents or Subjects Taught During Morning Session	English Language ⁴	Amharic Language	English Language	Amharic Language
	Maths in English	Maths in Amharic	Maths	Maths in Amharic
	Maths in Amharic ⁵	English Language	Social Science	English Language
	General Science in English ⁶	Environmental Science in Amharic	Amharic Language	Environmental Science in Amharic
	General Science in Amharic ⁵	TV programs	Social and Science ⁸	Pray Time ⁹
	English Conversation / Spoken English ⁷			
	Amharic Language			
Contents of Afternoon Session	music, art, sport, film, PE, TV show, Movies, Spoken English ⁷	TV programs, Play, songs, stories and drawing	Drawing, coloring music/songs, life skills, PE, music and arts	Play, songs, stories and drawing

According to an expert from the Ministry of Education ECCE, early childhood syllabus contains general things, and it is up to the teacher who is expected to facilitate the lesson based on the condition of children. However, what was happening throughout the program was that teachers teach letters only. At 4, or 5 even until they reached age 6 (which correspond to KG 1, GK 2 and

KG 3, respectively) children were learning about letters and letters only. Therefore, this was so tedious and tiresome that when children have reached at grade one, they became so bored.

He further added:

In our country, early childhood education is not given much emphasis so far; it seems, has no responsible body, because everybody does things as he/she like. The regions prepare their own syllabus; even the preschools are doing that. They are teaching their children without the principle which have described in our policy framework. Therefore, I couldn't see any responsible body which corrects this condition. The problem is more than the capacity of the ministry. (Appendix I, p 2)

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- 4- *In one of the chosen preschool, most of the time, English language is taught for double period*
 - 5- *In one of the chosen preschool, Mathematics and General Sciences are given in English and in Amharic languages.*
 - 6- *In two preschools General Sciences also named as environmental Sciences.*
 - 7- *In three preschools, spoken English or English conversation also taught as one subject.*
 - 8- *In one international preschool, social and science are taught separately.*
 - 9- *In missionary preschool there is one period praying program every day in the school church.*

The observation result shows that many of the participant responses were found true. For instance, what were said by respondents about the routines which have been conducted throughout the day like what children did in and out of classroom, how the class begins, what the lessons of the day are and how they arranged, including their lengths of time and the like issues

were similar. However, there were also other things which were considered during an observation sessions. These include:

- o Except one, all private and “International” preschools dominantly used English language as medium of instruction and communication (see P 1-P 4 of private preschool pictures in Appendix J, p 1). However, government and missionary preschools used Amharic language dominantly (see P 1-P 3 of government, and P 1 and P 2 of missionary preschool pictures in Appendix J, p 2). As we saw from P 1 of missionary preschool, the themes were presented in pure academic subject form; besides, the picture (P 1) showed that, there was an English handwriting lesson.
- o All private and “International” preschools had their own textbooks which were prepared based on subject based approach, and organized by the schoolteachers (see P 1-P 5 of private preschool pictures in Appendix J, p 1). However, government (except the one which followed the formats of private preschools) preschools used syllabi. The syllabi were prepared based on thematic approach, and organized by the government (see P 1 of government preschool pictures in Appendix J, p 2), but, government preschools did not have their own textbooks. The missionary preschool also followed the formats of private preschools (see P 1 of missionary preschool pictures in Appendix J, p 2).
- o Teachers opened the lesson of the day by stories and songs, and most of the time, songs were the same. A song, which took 2-3 minutes, was used as a transition from one lesson to another; however, in one of the two “international” preschool songs were not used. However, in all government preschools, songs were Amharic type, dominantly.
- o When children told to say or read something (it can be singing a song or reading a letter (s), a number (s) or a word) again and again by the teacher, except in two private and “international” preschools, their sound is so loud and noisy that it is difficult to hear what they are saying and reading.

- o Well-behaved child, it was repeatedly told to the children by their teachers, was the one who sits properly on his/ her chair with crossed hands and who never say “Miss Me! Miss Me!” but raise his or her hand to answer the questions; this was a feature of all, except in one the "international" preschool.

- o Except one, which had one main teacher, two assistant teachers and two baby-sitters, all private preschools had one main teacher, an assistant teacher and a baby-sitter. However, government and “international” preschools had a main and an assistant teacher. The responsibility of the main teacher was to prepare and teach the lesson; the assistant teacher made ready the necessary materials or teaching aids for the lesson, facilitated class work (which was conducted at every lesson) and playtime (but sometimes she also shared some lessons with the main teacher). The responsibility of the baby-sitter was to follow the cleanness and meals of children, take children out for toilet and play with children. Furthermore, during class time, the assistant teacher and the baby-sitter made children to listen attentively and protect them from doing anything while the main teacher teaches or facilitates the lesson. In the absence of baby-sitter, the assistant teacher takes over the responsibility of the baby-sitter.

- o In private and “international” preschools, three subjects were learnt during the morning session and one was given in the afternoon. In government and missionary preschool four subjects (themes) were delivered in the morning time and the remaining onewere also learnt during the afternoon. The afternoon sessions which began after having some sleep, most of the time, was dedicated to one subject, play times, art, music or songs, film and TV, and it stayed for an hour. Furthermore, during the morning session, missionary preschool children had one period pray time which they called s “Chapel Time.”

4.2.1.2. Teachers Facilitation Role of Classroom Activities and Lessons

When we consider the responses given for this sub theme, the collected data showed that, except few teachers who give some opportunities for children to learn by themselves, many of them dominantly covered all the lessons by themselves. The responses of private preschool

respondents was summarized by, a ToP (7, 2), who had a certificate qualification in preschool, said that they did the majority part of the lesson every day. The other from the same preschool, has strengthened what was said by the former respondent. She said, “I cover 99% of the lesson, because, if I leave everything for children, they will become overloaded and get in to stress (Appendix I, p 2).” Similarly, of the two teachers who came from the same preschool, one said that when the lesson was new, she would take the whole period. The other added, “I use the whole period, because, they are so early to leave everything for them (Appendix I, p 2).”

Most of the period, according to ToP who had certificate qualification in preschool, was covered by her. Another ToP from the same preschool said that the period was almost equally shared, half of it was occupied by her and the remaining half by children, because, she added, “I revise the previous lesson, then introduce and teach today’s lesson, after that, there is Q&A session and discussion, presentation and participation (Appendix I, p 3).” One participant ToP said, “At the beginning I explain and assist the lesson, after that they do by themselves (Appendix I, p 3).” The other from the same preschool said, “I have 30 minutes for every lesson, from this, 10 will be used for explaining the lesson, 5 for reading, 10-15 minutes for writing and the remaining 5 used for checking and correcting their work (Appendix I, p 3).”

According to the ToP::

From 30 minutes, I use 10 minutes for the introduction and to summarize the lesson, and the remaining time is left for the children. To create a cooperative teaching approach and competition among children, I form a group - based on their achievement. (Appendix I, p 3)

From 35 minutes of the lesson, explained a ToP, children cover majority of the period. Her part was only introducing the lesson and asking question. However, every Monday the lesson, all in all, was covered by her, because, it would be a new lesson; but on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, her part would be reduced and children’s part got increased.

Government preschool teachers have also responded almost the same as their private school counterparts. Two ToG respondents from the same preschool said that they covered 70% of the lesson. The other ToG said, “From 30 minutes, my part is around 20 minutes to revise the previous lesson and to teach today’s lesson (Appendix I, p 3).”

A ToG (15, 3), who had certificate qualification in preschool, said:

We have to guide children by everything. If you leave them they will do their own activities, even they use their exercise books to write unnecessary things. Therefore, you have to guide them closely. She added: this is also the word of God. The word of God said, “Guide your child to the right way you go.” The other from the same school also said: “Most of the time it is me that cover the lesson. (Appendix I, p3)

Similarly, the “international” preschool teachers’ responses were almost the same to what has been said by private and government preschool teachers above. Of the three ToI from the same preschool, one said, “Almost I and my children share the period equally (Appendix I, p 3).” The other one described, “Except during Amharic class, almost, I am with them throughout the whole day (Appendix I, p 3).” The third respondent also supported, “Almost I cover everything in my lesson (Appendix I, p 3)”.

According to the ToI,

You can’t leave children alone for a minute, you have to plan early to make them busy, otherwise, the class will be changed in to chaos or it becomes a mess because they are restless. Unless you engage them with different activities, they will become a headache for you. (Appendix I, p 3)

Another teacher from the same preschool explained similar idea, that when children were let free, they would become just like a crowd of cows without a shepherd; they would disturb the class. Therefore, teachers need to guide them always. Children need help and should be under supervision for everything they do, including for what they speak and communicate. They need great follow up like a flower garden. As our mothers and fathers said, she related, “Ones a tree grows like an arch, it will not be straighten later” and children are like that, she said. Therefore, she concluded that children need help and support. This saying was also reflected by private preschool teachers.

From missionary preschool participant, one ToM _(10, 3), who had certificate qualification in preschool, said:

In my preschool the period of one theme is 30 minutes. From this I use 5 for greeting and physical exercise, 10-minute is given for children to copy or write what has written on the blackboard or textbook. If they are bored by the given activity I will jump to the next lesson or theme. In general, from 30 minutes, I lecture them for 10-minute. The rest is used for participation and Q&A sessions. (Appendix I, p 3)

The other ToM respondent said, “In average I cover 40% of the lesson; the remaining 60% is their participation. However, if the lesson is new, my part may get higher. However, after they understood what has taught, this will be reversed (Appendix I, p 3).”

Diploma ECCE prospective teacher graduate of 2019 were part of this study. When we noted their responses for this theme, one of them said:

Now we have finished the three round practicum observations which conducted every year at different government preschools for one month period. However, what we saw there is different from what we learned here at our university. Beginning from their lesson plan, what was going on in the classroom has never matched with our training.” He added, “It is much dominated by direct teaching. (Appendix I, p 4)

The other respondent said that while teaching children, teachers should follow child centered approach, because, it allows children to learn by themselves and become creative. In early childhood education, the teacher is expected to show very few things of the lesson but children should do much of it through their own learning, so they can develop more. A friend of the former respondent has also explained:

Children come with something to school; therefore, the schools should increase and strengthen what children already have. However, I noted that many teachers didn't follow this approach. They don't want to know what children already have, because, they believe that children do not know about anything; because of this they employ direct teaching approach. (Appendix I, p 4)

Finally, one respondent said that children should learn by themselves, however, teachers can make them to learn anything through stress without their need and interest. But this approach is dangerous for them.

The observations showed that teachers occupied much time of the lessons, however, it was reduced for the afternoon lessons, because, much of the afternoon time was a playtime. Almost

all teachers, before they began the day's lesson, they revised the previous lesson for 3-5 minutes through question and answer session. They presented the new lesson in the form of explanation and demonstration using textbooks, charts, flash cards, white board, blackboard and other materials. In addition, one private preschool used LCD projector as a teaching aid (see P 1-10 of private, P 1-3 of government and P 4 of missionary preschool pictures in Appendix J, p 3-4). When the teacher presents her lesson or tell a story, children are told to cross their hands, sit properly and refrain from any activity. If children want to ask or answer the question, they should raise their hands silently; otherwise, they are not given the opportunity. After the teacher has completed her lesson presentation, children, in turn, have done or practiced their classwork (see P 11-13 of private, P 2, 5 and 7 of government and P 6 of missionary preschool pictures in Appendix J, p 3-4). While children were doing their classwork, the teacher moved around the classroom to give more clarification and feedback on the classwork (see P 14-18 of private, P 8 of government preschool pictures below; see also P 1-4 of giving rewards in Appendix J, p 3-4). Therefore, throughout the lesson the presence of the teacher, including assistant teacher (s) and baby-sitter (s), was a must. However, when the lesson was presented in form of demonstration using different materials, it was observed that the involvement of children became high and showed great interest towards such types of lessons and activities (see P 7, 9 and 10 of private and P 2 of government preschool pictures in Appendix J, p 3-4).

4.2.1.3. The Focus of Classroom Activities and Lessons

In the practice of early childhood care and education, the question of what and how children learn are important issues in the area. Therefore, this sub theme of the study has dealt with the extent to which classroom activities and lessons recognized the needs and ability levels of the child. The summary of the responses of participants, which were given for this specific theme, showed that the majority said that the first month of the school year was the time in which teachers recognize the overall condition of the child; and they believed that all children are different in their physical, academic, social and behavioral conditions. They also said that children, based on their academic achievement, are classified into three categories like high, medium and low achievers. One ToP said, "In my class there are 37 children and all of them are different in their achievement, there are higher, medium and low achievers (Appendix I, p 4)."

Another ToP respondent described:

In my class there are three types of learners. The first one is the high achievers who understand everything what you teach them, the second group is the medium achievers who are at average level and the third groups are those who need more support and repetition. (Appendix I, p 4)

A teacher of one of the government preschools said that they made groups of children based on their ability level (active, medium and slow learners) to support one another.

There were also a few respondents who believed that all children are similar in their behavior. Some also thought that children do not understand about cultural, traditional and religious elements, and therefore, these things are not considered in the lessons. Most of them agreed that children spend much of their time on knowledge based activities and lessons; they further added that, the textbooks and the syllabi are dominated by academic contents; however, they said that they are trying to balance all domains of education. They also believed that behavioral and social parts are the key for the development of the child. When what private preschool teachers and principals response examined, most believed that, the lessons and activities what children are learning and doing at school dominated by cognitive domains.

According to one ToP respondent, more emphasis was given for the academic part, because, she said, many teachers worried about to know how much their children understood what they have learnt. Another ToP said:

I think the textbooks dominated by knowledge contents, because, if you see English, it focuses on reading skill, Science is more of knowledge, and Amharic is about letters identification and understanding. Therefore, what children learning are dominated by knowledge, I think. (Appendix I, p 4)

From two ToP from the same preschool, one said, “In our school there is more education or academic things, because, our intention is whether children knew this and that. We teachers always say, this child or that child didn’t understand this letter, this number, this idea and the like (Appendix I, p 4).”

Another ToP also commented, “Our textbooks are dominated by cognitive domain; it has more detail things and explanations that children need to know. Play has given less consideration (Appendix I, p 4).” Another teacher from a different preschool described, “I consider all domains of development but give emphasis for knowledge and the academic part (Appendix I, p 4).” Two ToP preschool said that the textbooks are full of knowledge, and it is their focus too.

A ToP who came from another preschool also said:

Their education is dominated by knowledge, however, what is encouraged by the profession for the children of this level is sing, play, jump, running; we shouldn't rely on education only. They will know everything later, but now the basics are enough for them. (Appendix I, p 4)

According to another ToP:

Children can take everything what you gave them; therefore, you have to take care of what you are going to teach them. If you teach them the wrong idea, it will be difficult for you and can take a long distance to correct that. (Appendix I, p 4)

Similarly, most government preschool teachers and principals have also agreed that children spend much of their time on learning, memorizing and counting. A ToG said, “Even though there are other domains in our lessons, we mainly focus on mental development, because, we force our children to memorize everything what we teach them (Appendix I, p 4).” One ProG, commented, “we try to balance all domains of development but the knowledge part is greater than all, because, we let our children know and understand about many things (Appendix I, p 5).” Another ToG respondent said that the syllabi contain everything in detail, however, the cognitive one somewhat exceeds other domains. Similarly, a colleague of the above respondent said, “At this level we advised to teach children through oral approach, but, covertly, I teach them about how to read and write letters and words, which is forbidden (Appendix I, p 5).”

Teachers and principals of “international” preschools had also similar ideas. ToI respondent said that the textbooks have everything; however, the knowledge part is in dominance, because, there are many explanations, oral discussions, which is a typical feature of the education system of the country. A ToI respondent of another preschool said that English, Amharic and Mathematics subjects including written and many activities were dominated by mental works. According to

another ToI, the textbooks are dominated by academic elements; however, the lessons contain all domains of development.

When we note the view of the following ToI, she said:

It is up to us, the teachers who make children to love or hate what they are learning; children have no problem. The important thing lays on how we present the contents of the subject. If we present the lesson interestingly, children become happy, participate and exercise it well; and unless we present the content based on the level of children and in the language they understand, things will become worse and challenging. Therefore, I couldn't say that this element is more dominated and that one is not, instead, it depends on the way we present it. (Appendix I, p 5)

A missionary preschool teacher (ToM) who agreed on the above comment said that it is up to the teacher to balance all domains of development in her lessons. Another ToM respondent also commented that syllabi contain language, social, environmental, physical and mental elements; however, language is given more emphasis.

Similarly, all diploma ECCE prospective teacher graduates of 2019, except one who observed that language was given more emphasis, also believed that, the education of children mainly directed towards knowledge and facts. According to one respondent, there are many explanations in each lesson, therefore, he said, this approach will never develop the holistic condition of children. He added that children should learn through shouting or speaking loudly; their clean clothes should change to dust when they back home. The respondent further related, “Our education is also inclined to direct teaching, telling and presentation; many of our courses, including practical courses, have little or no practice at all (Appendix I, p 5)” What the other respondent said is that children are learning like grade students without having enough time to play.

When we summarize the observation of parents, they thought that their children were spending much time on their education, even at their home. According to this group of respondents, there were many homework, worksheets, tests and exams, study times and tutorials. They believed that, there were many paper works at school and home. Many of them have also agreed that they sent their children to the school for the sake of knowledge or education, and that the schools have

been chosen based on these measures too. When they explained about the condition of the preschool, most of the time, they associated with methods of teaching and instruction. For instance, many respondents said like “they teach very well”, “their education is good or nice”, and “there method of teaching is good or very good”. A parent of one private preschool (PoP) said, “I chose the school after I compare it with other schools, and I found that it is the best school in our area, because, they give better education (Appendix I, p 5).” Another PoP explained, “I made an assessment around many preschools, but finally, chose this one; because, their education and class size is very good and have better teaching materials and care (Appendix I, p 5).” From one government preschool (PoG), a parent said that except English language, the school is very nice. However, very few parents believed that children, in addition to academics, should learn about social relationship, ethics and should get appropriate care and play.

According to Addis Ababa Education Bureau ECCE official, “private preschools are ‘paper tigers’ - they depend more on paperwork. They spend much time on reading and writing contents (Appendix I, p 5)”. Ministry of Education ECCE official also elaborated that the early childhood education policy framework dictates all rounded development of the child; however, he added, the reality is not like that; children, instead, spend much of their time on one domain only, which is knowledge.

Similarly, what was observed in the classroom was the same as what has already been said by respondents - most classroom lessons and activities directed to the development of cognitive domain. Every day, in all preschools, children have learned four to five subjects or themes (see P 1 – P 5 of private, P 1 of government and P 1 of missionary preschools pictures in Appendix J, p 1-2); and every lesson, including one short song (2-3 minute), stayed for 25-30 minute. In every lesson, children have expected to listen to the presentation or demonstration with great attention and with cross hands (see P 5& P 7 of private, P 6 of government and P 4 of missionary preschool pictures in Appendix J, p 6 of missionary preschool category); (sometimes, it has also a question-answer session); then followed by classwork (see P 1-4 of private, P 1-4 of government and P 3 of missionary preschool pictures in Appendix J, p 5-6); and finally, their work has corrected immediately or later by the teacher (see P 5-8 of private and P 6-7 of

government preschool pictures in Appendix J, p 5-6). There are also home works and some children have a tutorial and study time before the beginning or after the end of the class.

Furthermore, for every lesson, revision was made before giving an exam or a test. They were also told to repeat what they have learned again and again. Teachers also repeatedly say phrases like “do you remember”, “is it clear”, “do you understand”, “who is going to tell or show me”, “who is going to answer or do this question.” Therefore, this was a culture throughout the preschools regardless of their type and language of instruction. Walls of the classrooms were partly or heavily covered by different texts, messages and pictures, even in some preschools, the ceilings, the doors and windows have been stamped by these materials (see P 9-12 of private, P 5 of government and P 1 of missionary preschool pictures in Appendix J, p 5-6). It was also observed in two private and one government preschools that, the teachers told the children to take what they were teaching or telling into their mind and lock with their hand, and children acted the same. However, when the whole or part of the lesson had some practical activities (including drawing, coloring, paper cutting, storytelling, watching TV or Film and indoor playing which most have taken place in the afternoon session), children talked and questioned one another (including the teacher), showed different emotions (like happy, angry, laugh and eager to show their work) and moved their bodies by sitting on or leaving their chairs (see P 13-16 of private and P 8 of government Preschool pictures in Appendix J, p 5-6). Therefore, even though classroom lessons were mainly prepared for the development of cognitive domain, it was observed that, there were also many activities which helped children to develop their social, emotional, physical, language and creative dimensions.

4.2.2. The Benefits of Early Childhood Care and Education for the Participant Child

With regard to this theme, participants have mentioned different ideas about the benefits of early childhood care and education. According to some respondents, ECCE is important for the development of knowledge and formal schooling. They believed that it is a base for formal education. These groups of respondents said that children who attend kindergarten school can identify letters and numbers before they get into grade one. In general, they thought that it is the foundation for the future life of the child and for his lifelong learning. One teacher respondent

from private preschool said that those children who attend ECCE when they pass to grade one, schooling will not be new for them. A teacher from another private preschool also said that she was teaching grade levels for some time, and therefore, she observed that children who did not pass through early childhood education face difficulties.

A respondent from one private preschool explained, “You can see great difference between children who attend kindergarten education from those who are not when they get in to grade one. They sit properly, listen attentively, respond and do classroom activities easily (Appendix I, p 5).” Another teacher respondent from the same preschool also said that children would become active, creative, wise and confident when they enter to grade one from kindergarten education.

The following idea also strengthens what was said by the above respondents. This ToP said:

ECCE has great benefits for children; if we send children directly to grade one, they will not be able to read and write anything. However, if they begin early, they will enter to grade one with so many knowledge and skills, and therefore, they will not face any difficulty. (Appendix I, p 5)

According to a ToP respondent children will become very fast student if they attend kindergarten education. She also added, “It is said that what children have learnt until age 7 will not forget throughout their life (Appendix I, p 5).” Two ToI respondents associated the importance of ECCE with the following “Ethiopian saying”, and they said, “There is one saying in Amharic, ‘ተጣሞ ያደገ ዛፍ ማቃናት አይቻልም’, which means ‘if a tree grows like curvature, it will be difficult to straighten later (Appendix I, p 6).”

According to some participants, early childhood education also has social benefits. On this idea, one respondent from private preschool said that early childhood education helps children to develop their social relationship like sympathy, provision, communication, etc. He added that they develop these elements at this level - at preschool level- and education is a secondary issue. Other respondent similarly said that it is here, at kindergarten, that children experience how to hug and kiss someone and give love.

A few also related the benefit of ECCE with play. These groups of respondents have said that children who attend preschools would finish their playtime before they join to formal education. A teacher of one private preschool said that ECCE helps children to play and learn.. They argued that if children did not play during this period of time, they would start to play when they joined to grades so that they would forget their education. However, if they played at KG, they would give attention to their education, because, they had exhausted and completed their play there, at KGs. A ProI said:

I have grown up with my mother and I have learned 1001 things from her without got in to kindergarten. However, to day I and my husband are spending the whole day on our job. Therefore, it is difficult for our child to leave her alone at home. Therefore, the only option that we have is to send her to kindergarten school. Here children can get so many things what they couldn't get at their home. You can consider kindergarten teachers, as the second mother of the child. Education at preschool is a secondary matter. Therefore, if children couldn't do anything in their home, KGs are the best places where children must stay at. (Appendix I, p 6)

Government preschool teachers have also raised related ideas. They believed that early childhood education is a base for all levels of education. They argued that it helps children to develop their mental, social, physical areas and language abilities and to know their environment, understand their family members, and learn how to help themselves and cooperate with others. A ToG participant described, “They [children] know many things at their home but here it is more than that. There are children, who couldn't sit, eat and write but here we help them to develop such things by their own” (Appendix I, p 5). Similarly, another ToG explained, “Actually, children learning began from their home; however, they have developed it here at KGs” (Appendix I, p 5). When we consider the following two ToG responses, they are somewhat different from the previous responses. A respondent said that when children come to preschool, they do not know anything and it is here that they start to understand about many things. The other teacher, in support of the above statement, said that children start to know everything here. She added that they start to know and do things like eating, dressing, writing, reading, carrying, giving and other things as well and in their home it is the family who did everything for them, but, here we let them do things by their own. Therefore, it is a base for their future life. Similarly, a respondent from ToG also said that it is here that children will develop good or bad attitude towards their future education.

Missionary preschool teachers also mentioned important points about the benefits of early childhood education. They also shared what have already been said by previous respondents too. One participant teacher from this preschool (ToM) said that 50% of the child's future life will be created within 5-7 years old. Therefore, she added, "What children will know and do during their later life will be developed here" (Appendix I, p 6). On the other hand, a ToM respondent said: "Children will be ready for many things if they attend preschool education" (Appendix I, p 6).

The responses of diploma ECCE prospective teacher graduates of 2019 about the benefit of early childhood education, were just like many previous respondents, dominantly associated with knowledge and formal school readiness. One participant said that early childhood education helps children to know what the education is from the beginning. According to another respondent, early childhood education helps children to get knowledge from its root, because, she added, if they enter to grade one directly, it will be difficult for them to learn ABCs at that level. Therefore, these suggest that early childhood education helps children to understand things very early.

Likewise, parents and children have mentioned indiscriminately that the purpose of early childhood education is for better education and knowledge development. A parent from private preschool (PoP) said that she sent her child to let her know what she had to know at this level. Two parents from government preschools (PoG) said that early childhood education makes children to be clever in their education in their latter ages. Another parent from missionary preschool (PoM) said that her child has told her about what he has learned every day, in detail. A PoP respondent said, "What we don't know during our childhood time, our children, now, get to know them very quickly (Appendix I, p 6)." Very few parents, however, believed that early childhood education is important for strengthening social relationship, moral and ethical elements of the child.

When children's responses summarized, on the purpose of going to school, the majority said that they go to school for the sake of knowledge, education, learning. Many said that they go to school to learn, read and write; some said that they go to school to learn ABCD's, *uu*'s¹⁰ and

numbers; and others also said that they go to school to learn letters, words, English, Amharic and numbers. The private preschool child said that he goes to school to learn about what he don't know. The other child from missionary preschool mentioned that he goes to preschool to learn and study. A child from one government preschool has responded that he goes to school to be a clever student and to learn about letters and words.

4.2.3. The Role of Play in Children's Learning

One of the major topics that were observed in this study was the role of play in children learning. Therefore, this theme has discussed about the understandings of participants towards the issue, and many of them believed that play has great benefits for children's learning. When we consider the views of teachers and principals, most of them assumed that children will learn better if their education is presented in the form of play. They also said that when children learn through a play, it is a play for children, but, at the same time, it is education and teaching something that they hardly recognize whether they are learning when teachers teach them through play. Others also mentioned that play is a natural behavior of children, so that no one can stop them from that because they are restless throughout the day. This group of respondents said that children would get bored quickly so that they couldnot sit and learn like an adult for a long period of time. A ToI said that children prefer to spend all of their energy on their play and they are energetic than adults. Another ToI from the same preschool said that play is one-way of teaching method and children should play first before they go to learn anything. She further added, "Though play you can see children's imagination; you can see future artists, engineers, doctors" (Appendix I, p 7). According to ToM, "for kindergarten education, play is the key, not education; it is a means which unlocks children's education" (Appendix I, p 7).

¹⁰⁻ *ሀሁ's – the first and its branch letter of Amharic language.*

A participant teacher from one private preschool, who mentioned the talent of one child who draws amazing pictures, as an example, said:

Some children whose academic achievement is low have showed an amazing talent and creativity while playing with materials, then we teachers said to one another that the talent of this boy or that girl is what he or she is doing now, not his or her education. (Appendix I, p 6)

A ToP believed that play should be the work of the child in which he/she should not be left; she told her experience that when children are engaged in a play, they will become active throughout the day than those who are not participated. According to a ToM, children would not accept lecture type of teaching and learning approach. She also added that if teachers use play and songs in their lesson, they can get children's attention, otherwise, she explained, they would never listen to their teacher, even for five minutes; they get sleepy. Therefore, she said, there is a great difference when they learn with and without play and songs.

As to ToP, when children learn through play, the lesson would become attractive and children could retain what they have learned for a long period of time. A participant ToP from the same preschool also said that through play, children can catch what they have learned, and she added, "When you teach them through songs, they will become so immersed that they will listen you with great attention (Appendix I, p 6)." Another ToP respondent said that when children learn through play, they could understand what they learn easily and become so happy. A ToG said that during play, children would become extremely happy, and anyone can easily identify their happiness from their face. The other ToG respondent also said:

Children don't want to worry. They want to learn through relaxation and happiness, and I believe that children should learn like that. Children need your attention; otherwise they will go to their world. If you are with them they will also with you. If not, they will forget you forever. (Appendix I, p 6)

They would not, said another ToG, follow or listen to the lesson what a teacher is teaching if there are no play and songs in it. Some participant responses have also showed that children will not forget what they learn through play. This implies that when children learn through play, they give more attention during lesson presentation. On the contrary, they said that if children learn without play, they would get bored and forget what they have learned quickly. They will not answer the questions about what they have learned very soon.

Therefore, most teacher and principal respondents agreed that in the early childhood education, play should not be separated from education - they believed that they have to go together. A ToP said that, at ECCE level, children should learn all in all through play. Another teacher from the same preschool said that “if we do not let children play, we giveaway something which is essential for their life”. Therefore, she said that education should not be separated from play. A ToM said, “You can’t separate play from education. When you ask children after you teach them with and without play, there is a great difference” (Appendix I, p 7).

According to few respondents, children’s attention span is very short, as one ToP said “it is up to 10 minutes” (P 6), other ToG even said, “up to 5 minutes” (Appendix I, p 6) in a given lesson, and as one ToM said, “You can’t force them to sit and learn any lesson; you can’t use direct teaching approach unless it is mixed with play” (Appendix I, p 7). A ToI, however, said, “At preparatory level (5-6 ages), you can teach children any lesson for 20-25 minutes with good concentration” (Appendix I, p 7).

In the contrary there were participants who have thought that education should be separated from play, except sometimes when it is appropriate. A ProM said “You cannot make or take everything to play” (Appendix I, p 7). The ToP said that education, all in all, should not be a play, because, children can be attracted towards the play one so that they may ignore their education, and therefore, they will forget the essence or value of education. Therefore, education and play should be given separately and that is the better approach. Another respondent from the same preschool said, “For children, play is the backbone of their education, but, I never support that everything should be play, and a given play should also benefit some lessons ” (Appendix I, p 6).

Similarly, a ToG said that in early childhood education, play should not be much, because, children will give much emphasis for their play. One ToG respondent said, “As to me, there should be education and there should be also play - since they are children, however, their play should not be so much, because, they will not know and learn what is expected from this level” (Appendix I, p 6).

A ProM said that children education should not be all in all play based – for him play and education are different things. Play based education does not mean that they will stay without

education, or it does not mean that they spend the whole day in the field. It is used only when children get bored in their education. Similarly, a ToG said, “Not only play, side by side, we have to teach them to identify some numbers and letters as well” (Appendix I, p 6). The other ToG also said:

As to me play and education should be separated. Play is play, education is education. Therefore, we have to separate one from the other. It is not only play, children should read books. There are children who ask questions like where is my exercise book? Is there anything I write? Do we have a test/ an exam? (Appendix I, p 7)

Furthermore, almost of the respondents said that children prefer out of class play than inside, and when children were told to get back to class from play out of the classroom, they were not happy. A respondent said that children give much attention to play and when they were told to go back to class from play outside they were not ok. She further added that when children, finished their class work, and told that they could play out of the classroom, they did whatever their teachers ordered them. Many respondents also said that children prefer outside play even for the whole day. They said that if a teacher told children like “if you finish your job quickly, you will go out for play” they would become extremely happy. According to ToG, during free play which held at outside the classroom, children do amazing things. A ToP added that a child who is silent in the classroom will become active when he or she plays at the field and will show different behavior. Another ToG also said that when a teacher calls the word “᠘ᠵ” Which means “outside” while teaching, children become so happy, show smile and their face become so bright. A government preschool respondent said that whenever children go back to class with their unfinished play from outside, it will become difficult to get their attention to begin the lesson, because, they will continue to play what was left from outside and will discuss about it.

Most respondents classify children’s play into educational and free play. The former one was chosen for a given lesson by the teacher and most of the time they are played as songs; and the later type which is preferred by children themselves is most of the time held at the field. One respondent said that in the class the plays are selected based on the lesson, and when children are out of class, they play their own - that is free play. Likewise, children also mentioned that they played with different songs in and out of the classroom. Some, even, described the types of

Amharic and English songs they sang; and a few children also named Trapeze, Slide, Tag or Chasing and Football as their outdoor plays.

What diploma ECCE prospective teacher graduates of 2019 believed that children should learn through play. According to these respondents true education for children is when they learn with the help of play, songs and with different corner activities. One said that play is the work of children, and she added, “Where children are found, there is play, and vice versa, therefore, childhood and play are inseparable things, and they have to learn through that” (Appendix I, p 7). However, they said that what they observed at different government preschools was different from the reality. They said that children were learning just like grade students. A respondent explained what he has observed during his preschools visits that teachers were using direct teaching and demonstration throughout their lessons, and added that children were learning seriously for a long period of time sitting on their chairs. He said that children spent much of their time in the classroom, though there were good environments outside. Another respondent explained what preschool teachers told him that parents were complaining about inadequacy of their children’s education, and said that children came back home without learning anything, because of that, the lessons were more dominated by academic contents. One respondent also said that play is related with many things; however, he added that for many teachers it is only a song.

Parents considered play based education, as it has already observed from the responses of teachers and principals above, it is difficult to bring children towards their homework and study program while they are playing in or out of the home. According to these respondents, children spend much of their time on homework and study programs when they are at home. This group of parents believed that children education should be separated from play, because, they were afraid that their children really learn and get to know what they learn through play. A PoP said: “If she (her child) learns through play that will be good but I am afraid whether she could miss what she has learned” (Appendix I, p 7). Another mother from the same preschool said that if education as a whole becomes play, children will miss the essence of education; therefore, she added, education should be separated from play. According to PoP respondent, children have to know when to play and at what time they come back to their homework and study programs, if

we let them play every time, their brain will become dull; and another PoG said that, the brain will think totally about play only. From the same preschool PoG said that education, totally, should not be play, because, she said, children will not have moral.

A mother of one government preschool learner said, “My child wants to play more, but I never let him do that, instead I force him to study hard, because he has not much time for play” (Appendix I, p 7).

A mother from one private preschool said:

I don't agree with the idea that children should learn through play. Instead education should be separated from play. We should not send our children to school for the purpose of play, it is for education, and children also have to know this, they go to school to learn something. From the beginning children love play, and if we make their education a play based approach, they will totally immersed in to play, so that they will forget their education. Therefore, I never support this approach. Instead she (my child) should focus on her education. (Appendix I, p 7)

However, few parents have believed that play is important for children education and they said that they have to be mixed together. A PoG said that education should be given in the form of play. For instance, she added, “Last night while I tutor him (her child), he refused to follow me; but when I taught him in the form of play, he began to understand and got involved actively” (Appendix I, p 7). The PoP also explained that children should learn through play, however, she elaborated, “When our child let her play, she refused to do so, because she (her child) said: ‘Miss (the teacher) will hate me, if I didn't do my homework and study hard!’” (Appendix I, p 7)

One private preschool parent respondent said, “For children, play without education is better than learning without play” (Appendix I, p 7), therefore, he added that education without play is impossible, and it is very limited to teach a six-year-old child to sit and concentrate on a given lesson for a long period of time. He/she get bored and couldn't understand what he/she is learning. However, the respondent said, if it is given the form of play, they can understand and remember what he/she has learn easily. Therefore, education should be mixed with play.

A mother of missionary preschool child said:

When my child plays with materials at home, he doesn't like to talk to anyone. He makes the materials as cars, trains, plain, etc. When he plays with the materials he talks loudly

as if his friends are playing with him. He calls their names like 'Mister X! Bring that one here; Mister Y! Take this one to there; do it like this and like that! Don't touch! And he does like that. When people come to our home while he is playing, we give them (our guests) a sign to keep quit, because he gets disturbed. Therefore, if these things are included in his education, I will be happy. (Appendix I, p 8)

Play, for early childhood education officials, is the only way that children should learn through. They believed that child education is more enhanced through play. However, according to these respondents, preschool teachers and parents didn't believe on that. Addis Ababa city Education bureau ECCE official said that most of the time teachers and parents associate children's' learning with written things which we never advise at all. This respondent further said that preschool teachers, even though it is somewhat improving, they don't believe in play based child education; they have doubt on this approach, because, he said, they trained dominantly through academic system. Parents have also believed that children will not learn anything through play based education, and they even mention some schools whose children knew so many things. Similarly, ministry of education ECCE official said that children are learning about letters and numbers throughout their preschool level without playing. He said that children mainly are learning academic elements at all kindergarten levels of education (KG 1, KG 2, and KG 3) which is difficult for their later education. Therefore, he added that it needs more attention.

The observation result showed that many respondents believed on play based education, however, in practice it is not like that. Before and after the lesson children play their own free plays, but the types of play that teachers used for a given lesson must be chosen by the teacher, and were dominantly songs and music, and even, this was observed in two private, two government and one "international" preschools only. Others use songs and music as a transition to one lesson from another. It was observed that, in addition to songs and music, three private, all government and missionary preschool teachers have supported their lessons through different teaching aids and materials (see P 8, 10 and 11 of private; P 1, 2 and 4 of government and P 3 of missionary preschool pictures in Appendix J, p 7-8). In addition, in three private and all government preschools, TV programs are used to support different lessons (see P 4 and 5 of private, P 3 of government preschool pictures in Appendix J, p 7-8). However, most government preschool TV programs have been taken from a program called "Tsehay Memar Tiwedalech" which is broadcast every Saturday for 15-20 minutes by the Ethiopian TV channel for children. It

was also noted that children became happy when they color the picture of something. Especially, when they draw their own picture (which in observed in one private and one government preschool), they became more immersed and happier (see P 6 of private, P 5 of government and P 4 of missionary preschool pictures in Appendix J, p 7-8). Two government preschools have also different corners which were made from local materials, but, it is not much observed when children have played with. Besides, two private preschools have some corners which children have played with freely (see P 8 of private preschool pictures in Appendix J, p 7), however, because of shortage, it is a problem for a child to spend much time or every day with the material (s) he or she likes most. Therefore, he/she should leave for others who wait their turn. This is also true for playground materials. When children let out of the classroom for play, they express their happiness by saying “Yaaaaa!” And when the time is up, many of them are not happy to come back to class (see P 1, 3 and 9 of private and P 2 of missionary preschool pictures in Appendix J, p 7-8). It also considered that when the teacher turn her face to the blackboard or whiteboard to write and show something, children laugh, talk and do anything with the material which sit in front of them. They do the same thing when the teacher left the classroom; do her work or when she became silent for sometimes. Furthermore, while the teacher has delivered her lesson, children have turned their attention towards the song which other classroom (s) children were singing, and they became smile and sing the song silently.

4.2.4. Language (s) Use In and Out of the Classroom

The way how children learn, in one-way or another, is related to the use of language; and it has been given a great place in the practices of early childhood care and education. So, this study considers the practice and belief of preschool teachers, principals, parents and ECCE officials towards the use of language in children learning. When we summarize the responses of participants, except one which used both Amharic and English languages interchangeably, all private and “international” preschools used English language as a media of instruction, and they also employed the same language for formal and informal communication, flexibly. However, the other two categories, government and missionary preschools, used Amharic language dominantly during lesson delivery and communication. Now we are going to see in detail about what have been said on this theme.

All private preschool respondents believed that English language is easier than Amharic for children throughout the lessons. They said that when the lesson is presented through English language, it will become easy for children to read and write the content than Amharic. Amharic becomes difficult for children, according to these respondents, because, the language has so many branch and family letters which are difficult for the child to remember all. Furthermore, some added that, the shapes of some Amharic letters are very challenging to write and memorize, not only for the child but also for the teacher as well. As one said, this is true throughout all subjects which is given in Amharic language. However, most added, when it comes to formal and informal communication, Amharic is easier than English language. According to these groups of respondents, children can learn anything in English, but it is difficult for them to express their need, idea and feeling using the same language.

Two respondents from different preschools said that when children learn through Amharic, they become so happy and give much attention for their teacher, understand what they have learnt, talk as they want, tell their inner feeling and participate actively. Another respondent believed that children should learn through their mother tongue language, and when children learn English lesson, it should be translated to their own language, otherwise, they will not understand what they learn; even English subject. A teacher of one preschool said, “When I teach them in English they become silent but when I explained it to Amharic they start to understand and participate actively” (Appendix I, p 8). Another teacher said that forcing teachers, children and parent to use English language in the school and at home, it creates stress and boredom on all of them. According to one respondent, there is no doubt that children learn more through Amharic, because it is the language which children communicate with their neighbors, friends, family and teachers. She added “Even though, our medium of instruction is English many of our works are held in Amharic” (Appendix I, p 8).

Furthermore, one respondent explained what she experienced at one time and she said:

The language of our school is English; and at one time this child, in and out of the classroom, got shy for a long period of time; and when I ask him his wellness like ‘are you ok?’ his answer was ‘yes’, and this situation continues for some time without any

change. But at one time I decide to talk to the boy in Amharic language after the end of my class and I did it. At that time the boy told me about his family problem in detail. He is living with his father who divorced from his wife (the mother of the child), because of that the child gets in to boredom and stress. After I hear his story I became sympathetic and talk to his father to improve his condition. Therefore, because I talked to the child in Amharic, I could easily understand everything about him. (Appendix I, p 8)

Another respondent, in the contrary, explained the importance of English language in children education, and she said:

If children learn through their own language throughout their education life, it will be ok. However, if it is gone for some levels of education, it will become harmful for the children and they will not be successful in their later life. This is a reality. Therefore, it is better for the child to learn his education in English language. In this matter, you may mention (the researcher) the experiences of so many countries that use the local language in their education system; but this thing doesn't work in our country, because, everything is in English and when you go up to the higher level of education, you get English. Therefore, I believe that children, from the beginning, should learn through English language. It is also, 100%, the preference of parents too. It is also a business for private schools. Therefore, let children to practice the language, even by mixing with their mother tongue language, because practice makes perfect. (Appendix I, p 8)

Similarly, in relation to English language, the following teacher explained her experience like “at one time I applied for a job; my academic result was very good; and my experience was more than what was expected by the employer; however, I lost the job because the interview was in English. In our country everything is in English, even to teach Amharic and Mathematics you are interviewed through English. Therefore, children should learn through this language” (Appendix I, p 9).

In support of English language instruction and communication another teacher said, “Amharic is accessible anywhere and it is understood easily, however, if children could not learn English now, they will spend much time on dictionary when they grow up. This is our real experience which we passed through when we were at grade 7 and up” (Appendix I, p 9)

The government preschool teachers’ practices and beliefs towards the language of instruction and communication could be summarized that they applied the guide of the government, which is Amharic language. They believed that children learn more through Amharic language. One respondent said that children also learn some easy English words, but they will not tell

everything in detail about them to their friends, families, environment, etc. when they asked in English. A teacher of another preschool said that many of the children's parents cannot understand English; therefore, it is difficult for them to help or support their child if they are communicated through English language. A teacher from another preschool said that even though Amharic is easy for children, its letters are difficult for them than English, because, the alphabets are more than 230, but English has 26 alphabets only.

Another respondent said that Amharic is difficult for children because it has more branch letters like ለ ሉ ሊ . . . , however, in English; "A" is "A2, it doesn't have any branch letters. Similarly, the following teacher also supported the idea of the former two respondents, and she said:

By the way when it comes to communication, Amharic is easy for children; however, when you teach them, English is easier than Amharic. Because, you know the numbers of our letters and how many types of ሀ's, ፀ's and other we have. Therefore, it is difficult for them to write and read them. We teachers as well spend much time in teaching Amharic letters than English. Therefore, without any doubt, Amharic is difficult for them (Appendix I, p 9).

The language of "international" preschools is dominantly English as one respondent said that except Amharic subject, all subjects (English, mathematics and social science) are taught in English. However, she added that during outside play they use Amharic. A teacher of one "international" preschool said that although children learn through English, they have some difficulty to express as they like their idea. The following respondent said:

Those who spend for two years in the school, most of them can speak English. However, those who join us in between from other preschools and those whose parents use Amharic dominantly, have some difficulties. Therefore, we use both languages in the classroom, because the later ones will fill as they are neglected. (Appendix I, 9)

This respondent said that English is the medium of the preschool and they force children towards that. However, she said, most children, specially, the newcomers prefer Amharic - they have a fear on English. For instance, she added, "Every Monday morning is an English speaking day, and when we encourage them to speak the language with us (teachers), children so afraid and get back. However, when it is Amharic they speak as they like (Appendix I, p 9)."

Missionary preschool teachers agreed on what have been mentioned by other respondents in favor of Amharic language. They believed that children should learn through their mother tongue. They further added that children should also learn some simple English words. According to one respondent, there is a difference when children learn through Amharic and in English. When they learn in Amharic they can understand what they learn immediately. However, when it is in English they get some difficulties. Another teacher said that Amharic is the medium of the preschool, because, she added, “We don’t want to make our children get into stress and become worry (Appendix I, p 9).”

When the reflections of teachers, principals and even ECCE officials were put together with regard to the preference of parents towards the language of the school, all, without any difference, observed that children parents have inclined to English language. According to one private preschool teacher, parents send their children to private school for the sake of English language. Another government preschool said “in our society, when you speak English, you are a “ፈረንጅ”, means a “foreigner”, and an advanced person” (Appendix I, p 9). A teacher of missionary preschool said that when the child say “cat” instead of “ድመት” (which means *cat*), the parent become so happy and consider his or her child as he or she knows everything. One teacher said that when children say some simple English words, parents became so happy that they don’t bother about the progress of their children on other domains of developmental. Another teacher said that, the language of the school is English, and most parents believed that approach was helpful for their children. However, parents prefer Amharic to communicate with their children.

In favor of English language, another respondent said:

As we know at higher level of education, English is the media of instruction and when you apply for any job you are interviewed through the same language. It is the reality of the country. Therefore, you can’t blame the preference of parents towards English language. (Appendix I, p 9)

Considering the reaction of diploma ECCE prospective teacher graduates of 2019, they believed that children should learn through their own language and they also observed that Amharic is the language of instruction and communication in government preschools, where they are expected to work at after their graduation. However, they said, all the courses that they have taken were

given through English. These participants said that this was a problem for them to do their job effectively. One respondent has said, “You trained through English but you do in Amharic, it is very difficult! Therefore, in our training Amharic language is so undermined” (Appendix I, p 9)..

The following respondent further explained his experience like:

We have trained through English and English only, and that is the foreign English. The curriculum is a foreign language, it is very difficult. Everything is in English but at school children are learning in their own language, which is Amharic. (Appendix I, p 9)

When the responses of parents examined, many of them believed that children should learn through both languages, Amharic and English. However, most private preschool parent respondents felt that English should be given more emphasis than Amharic.

A mother of one child said:

I don't support that everything should be in English, but my child should know English language very well. Most of the time my child tested me in English, and at one time, she asked me in English to give her a soft paper, then I got confused for some time to respond her question. Therefore, I don't like the language if it has a negative impact on our communication. (Appendix I, p 10)

According to mother respondent, most of the time, her child asks her in English. Another respondent said that her child challenges her in English but she (the mother) couldn't speak the language and did not have a problem to support her child. When one mother explained about the experience of her school, she said, “Their education is more of English and children have great difficulty on speaking Amharic language. It is easy for my child to create a word by any English letter than Amharic” (Appendix I, p 10). When a mother of one child has explained about the attention that English is given in her child's preschool, she said, “Amharic has no more teaching aids like songs and videos, but English (Appendix I, p 10).” Similarly, another mother said:

My child is not active in Amharic like English. This is, I think, because of the approach Amharic is taught. For instance, Mathematics is given in both languages, however, to write the word 'One' in English is easier for her than to write 'አንድ', (which means 'One') in Amharic. (Appendix I, p10)

The same idea was raised by the following parent, however, she inclined towards English. She said, “My child has a difficulty on Amharic language, because, English has 26 letters but

Amharic has more than that. However, I prefer English for my child, because, it will let him to be competitive in his later life (Appendix I, p 10).”

In the contrary, most parents from Amharic language dominant preschools said that their children have a problem on English language. From all parent respondents of missionary preschool, three of them said that English language is difficult for their children. Another parent said that preschools should give more emphasis for Amharic, because, he added, it is the language of business, culture and communication of the country. But many, he added, prefer the English one. One parent from one government preschool said that his child has a problem to name some English words like dog, cat, but he knows Amharic very well. However, nearly all respondents agreed that children should learn through both languages.

According to early childhood education officials, children should learn through their own language, and they believed that, the only way that children can understand a given lesson is, if and only if it is taught through their first language. According to these respondents, it is also supported by many pedagogical principles. A respondent from Ministry of Education said that, not only children, preschool teachers themselves should train through their own language. He further added that this point clearly described in the policy framework of early childhood care and education of the country, however, he said, the reality on the ground is different from this. The respondent said that parents themselves send their children to the preschool whose medium of instruction is dominantly in English. According to this person children may learn through English language but later they will hate their education. In conclusion, this respondent said that many research works and literatures confirmed that children learn better when they have learned in their own language.

The the observation results t agreed with the responses of participants. Beginning from the lineup ceremony which was held before the start of the actual class, private, except one, and “international” preschools, use English language as a media of instruction (see P 1-7 of private preschool pictures in Appendix J, p 9), and it is also used for communication between children and teachers, but in “international” and one private preschools only. However, government, missionary and one private preschools used Amharic language dominantly (see P 1-6 of

government and P 1, 3-6 of missionary preschool pictures in Appendix J, p 10). Furthermore, in English dominated preschools, Amharic has given as one subject (see P 8-11 of private preschool pictures in Appendix J, p 9), and in Amharic dominated preschools, English is taught as one subject (see P 7 of government and P 7 of missionary preschool pictures in Appendix J, p 10). The way how the classrooms are decorated by different written materials and pictures has also reflected the language of the preschool. It is observed that children learn English contents (most of the time this include letters and some simple words) better than Amharic language, and it is also true for other subjects. Furthermore, children use English to ask permission to do or take something, to go to the toilet, to respond their attendance in and out of the classroom. However, it was found that English language is difficult for children and for most teachers during communication, therefore, when they are free, and talk and play with their friends, they use Amharic. In one “international” preschool, while playing outside the classroom, most of them have communicated with Amharic but there are three or four children who tried to speak in English but stopped quickly when it became difficult to express their idea. Whenever they come to the teacher to ask for something while playing, they used English, even to those who asked her in Amharic, she responded through English.

It is also observed during storytelling period that most children were so immersed by Amharic stories than English ones, and this was noted in three private, two government and “international” preschools (see P 13-15 of private, P 8 of government and P 8 of missionary preschool pictures in Appendix J, p 9-10). When they hear Amharic stories, they listen to the story with great attention, became happy, laugh and show different facial expressions and body movements. However, when they were told English stories, which most of them were written based on the foreign context, they heard but did not give attention. Instead they got on the side to talk with their friends, did their own activities, or moved their neck sideways to watch different things. In one of the “international” preschool, it was observed that while telling an English story, the teacher has asked the last letter of the word where she stopped at, but, only two to three children are involved to respond to the question. When children have learned through English, most became silent, but when it was translated to their own language, they became happy and participated actively, and have raised their hands to answer questions with confidence. This was also observed during English subject lesson in three private and in all Amharic dominated

preschools (see P 2-4 of missionary preschool pictures in Appendix J, p 10). Similarly, it was observed in one private preschool that the teacher has used Amharic letters to explain about the sounds of English letters (see P 12 of private preschool pictures in Appendix J, p 9). In addition, in one private preschool on exam day, it was noted that children took two exams (Amharic and English subjects), however, when the teacher asked about which one was better for them to begin with, they responded their choice with great voice by saying “Amharic!”

4.2.5. Parents Participation in their Children’s Learning

This theme of the study discussed about the participation of parents on the care and education of their children, and examined the reaction of teachers and principals on this matter. The data showed that all participants believed that parent involvement would bring a difference on children’s learning. However, it is observed that the level of participation varied greatly. According to many private preschool respondents, the participation of parents was not satisfactory; however some from the same preschools have also said that it is good and is improving. Similarly, “international” and missionary preschool respondents, except two, agreed that, the parents’ involvement is great. With regard to government preschools, almost all respondents said that, the participation was very low. The responses of those respondents who believed that the participation of parents is good, indicated that parents are very concerned about the care and education services of their children and it is getting improving. These respondents also said that parents help their children during homework time, support them to do their worksheets, fulfill the necessary materials, accept the advices of the school and give comments, prepare a balanced diet meal and even hire a tutor when they are uneducated family.

According to ToP, parents give comment on the strength, weakness, difficulties and easiness of the lessons and activities that are given for their children. Another respondent added that he follows and asks the progress and achievement of his child. The other teacher also said that those who have time constraints and uneducated parents even hire a tutor for their children. A ToP said that a child, who gets family support, is easily identified from his or her face. Similarly, a ToI said that many parents are concerned about their children; they ask about their children when

they bring to and take them from the school; they also attend when there is a conference or a meeting.

Comparing with her time, a teacher of missionary preschool said:

I think children of this generation are so lucky, because, they have the support of their parents. However, when we were a child, because our parents not well educated, we couldn't get the necessary support from them. Therefore, these days, family follow up is very good; they ask the progress of their children frequently. (Appendix I, p 10)

In the contrary, there were teachers and principals who agreed that parent participation was low. On this idea, one private preschool teacher said, "In general, I can say that parent participation is not good. They expect everything from the teacher and the school, therefore, she added, it is difficult for a child to be successful in his or her education without the participation of his/ her parents" (Appendix I, p 10). Supporting the idea of the above teacher, another teacher explained, "The participation of parents is very low. Everything is loaded on us. We ourselves do everything for our children" (Appendix I, p 10).. According to ToP, many parents send their children to the preschools just to get relief from them, not for the purpose of education. Even, she added that it is their wish to have a weekend class for their children. An "international" preschool teacher also said that many parents underestimate their children; they consider them as irresponsible child; so, she said that it is a challenge. By continuing her idea, she said that many parents send their children to the school but do not follow them what happen after that. Respondents of government preschools, in general, believed that parent participation was very low, because, they said that these parents lived in low standard of living condition and were not well educated. Many of them were involved in tedious types of jobs, therefore, got tired when they came back to home.

The parent participants believed that their participation is very important for the education of the child, however, most of their responses related to academic issues. They give support for their children while they are doing their homework and worksheets, facilitate a study time, give a tutorial and even hire a tutor. A parent of a child from private preschool said that he helps his child when she is doing her homework, worksheets and give a reward when she scores a good result. Another mother said that in addition to giving a tutorial, she further ask her child to tell

what he has learned every day. A parent from a private preschool has said, “I am not educated; therefore, I hire a tutor for my child (Appendix I, p 10).” Another from missionary preschool also said that he tutors his child and buys additional supplementary books. One respondent of government preschool said, “To make my child clever, every night, I let him summarize what he has learnt at school” (Appendix I, p 10). Another from the same preschool also reflected the idea of the above respondent that, including Saturday and Sunday, she tutors her child. According to one ECCE official, at this time, teachers and parents have good relationships and children tell everything they experience in the school to their parents.

4.2.6. Assessment of Children’s Learning Achievement

In this theme of the study, teacher’s assessment mechanism, especially, the learning achievements of children were considered. The theme has examined the focus of the assessments (what is assessed) and the techniques and processes of the assessment (how is assessed). Therefore, when we summarized the reactions of the respondents, most agreed that assessments have been conducted for the purpose of knowing the understanding level of children; or to know whether children understood the concepts of the lessons or not. In addition to that, many government preschool respondents said that the assessments have been conducted based on the four basic skills of language development (listening, speaking, writing and reading). For most of them, the assessment techniques and processes are more or less the same. These includes, tests, exams (mid or quarter and final or semester), worksheets are the main techniques of assessment; and are administered or given at the interval of two weeks, a month and two or two and half months. Classwork, homework, presentation, demonstration, question and answer session, observation are also other techniques of assessment, almost for all of them.

Besides, most respondents said that most children never feel anything when they take an exam or a test, and their result is not given to them but sent to their family. However, they saw that few children felt bad when they made a mistake (s) on their exam or test. They also said that, except the first three who score a good result, they have never compared and ranked their children, however, in many preschools, parents ask the reason why their children have no any rank. Private and “international” preschools give 1st, 2nd and 3rd rankings and government and

missionary preschools give A, B, C levels for the first three children who score a good result, and some also use the five rating scales (excellent, very good, good, satisfactory and low) interchangeably. It has also been known in three private and one “international” preschool that children who scored a good performance on their exam, test or class participation also rewarded a title of “Star of the Week, Star of the Month.” Now let us see some of the important responses given for the assessment of children at preschool level.

When private preschools examined, a ToP said, “We assess our children through tests and exams, homework and class work, work sheet and based on textbook activities” (Appendix I, p 10). Another respondent said that, in every quarter (two and half months), they conduct an assessment based on 80 performance measures including tests, exams and worksheets. According to ToP, in every month there is a test, work sheets, and every quarter there is a final exam, further, in every lesson, the teacher also records the number of responses given by children for the asked questions. Similarly, the following teacher has explained the types and times of assessments, and she said, “In each quarter we have 2 tests, 2 work sheets, and at the end of each quarter there is one final exam. We also see their reading, writing, listening skills from their exercise and workbooks” (Appendix I, p 11).

The ToP described, “I assess them through tests and by asking sudden question from the past lessons which they have learned some months ago,” furthermore, in every quarter, we have a question and answer session” (Appendix I, p 11). A partnet of the above respondent also said, “I let them (children) present what they have learned, again” (Appendix I, p 11). Another teacher said that she let children to teach some contents. According to the following ToP:

Every two weeks they have test, every week there is a work sheet, and if a child scores a low result, we call his or her parent. Besides, I give them a piece of paper having few questions like a quiz; as a result, I can identify the clever and weak children. (Appendix I, p 11)

The following three ToP respondents have commented that, the assessments may not reflect the overall condition of the child. The first teacher said, “If children able to read and draw, I believe that they will know everything; It is not about whether they score a good result on a given test or

an exam or not, and answer the questions or not (Appendix I, p 11).” The other one added, “I never compare my children, because, I believe that all of them are smart by themselves. Now, I spend 8 years in this profession; therefore, when I assess my children I follow them whether they add something on what they already have” (Appendix I, p 11), and the third respondent explained:

They have an exam but we never make them to fill that, instead, we facilitate it as a class work activity. By the way, you can't decide the potential of your children by a given test or an exam, because, what they answered may forget after some time, what you ask them may forget later. Therefore, they are not constant. Because of this, their test and exam results do not show their potential. We test our children just for the purpose of fulfilling the formality of the assessment. (Appendix I, p 11)

Concerning exams in government preschools, a teacher said that the assessment considers every activities of the child, during learning, playing, singing and participation, and they never put numerical values on their report card except A, B, C letters. The other ToG said, “We test our children to know how much they understood what we have taught them and to show their academic level for their families, so that they will support their children accordingly” (Appendix I, p 11). Similarly, a teacher from other government preschool said, “We record their changes and everything they do every day, and they have also a test every month. Parents also ask questions like ‘Is there an exam’, which they have experienced in their past education. This respondent has said that when children take an exam or test, she keeps children not to copy from one another, because she believed that they would be accustomed to it in the future.

This ToG also explained the assessment approach of her preschool as follows:

We have an assessment sheet to assess children's performance. Mainly, we use observation and classroom participation in addition to tests. At KG-1 the assessment is conducted through oral, tracing, bolding and observation. At KG-2 they have some written assessments and their result is described using the five rating scales like excellent, very good, good, satisfactory and low. Therefore, based on their achievement, we put these things on their report card. But the numerical value remains with us. For instance, excellent represents a score greater than 90%. (Appendix I, p 11)

As to the reaction of “international” preschool respondents, the ToI said that they conduct an assessment to check whether children understood the concept of what they have learn. For

instance, she added that in relation to Mathematics, children have assessed their level of understanding about the number and quantity concept. A teacher from the same preschool said that, the thing is how much children understood what they have learned. In general, the question is do they know the thing or not. The ProI described that in their assessment, they note about how was the child? And how does he now? How does his relationship with his friends and teachers? Is he dependent? Does he participate? How about his reading and writing? How does his social skills? Therefore, she added that they consider all rounded performance of the child. Another ToI commented that children should practice to take an exam or a test, because, she believed that it prepares them for the same activity which they get at elementary level.

A teacher of missionary preschool described that children are assessed through tests, observation, questioning and oral expression. The exams and tests also included filling the blank space or letter or number, matching and coloring. Another teacher from the same preschool elaborated that results children got from their tests, exams and worksheets were recorded; because, parents want to know the performance of their children in numerical terms., According to one respondent, teachers never told to children When there was a test, rather they informed parents to prepare their children for the test or exam.

With regard to respondents' feelings about thier exams when thye collect an exam, a test, etc., they showed different bad emotions. According to a ToP, there were children who did not like to have an error in their exam or test, and when it happened, they became sad and angry. Most of the time, she added, children made a mistake when they rush to finish their exam. A colleague of the above respondent also said that children show their exam results one another, and there are children who feel bad or cry when their exam or test result is lower than others. Another ToP explained that sometimes children's parents come to school and ask about the result of their children and say that their child knows all the questions when he studied at home, but what happened to him or her here on the exam or the test.

A respondent of government preschool said that children do not want to have a mistake not only on their exam papers but also on their exercise books; and according to a ToG this is the behavior of all children.

A respondent from other government preschool said:

There is a child in my class who has a potential, and when he couldn't get the answer of the question on a given test or an exam, he becomes silent for a long period of time with deeper immersion. I have also experienced similar situation on other children too. Therefore, I know them very well as they have potential, but during exam time they miss what they know, because they rush to finish the exam quickly. (Appendix I, p 11)

An international preschool teacher also explained that many children do not worry about their test or exam result, but, she added that, there are some children who are very wise and have good understanding about education; that they feel bad whenever they fail to answer a question on a test or an exam. A colleague of the above respondent further described:

There are children who think much and get sad and angry when they miss a question. I think this is natural, because, naturally there are children who don't want to be a loser, a lesser and get wrong. Therefore, you can get these kinds of children, naturally. (Appendix I, p 12)

In one “international” preschool, a teacher said that the names and photographs of children (two or three from each class) who perform well in a given month are boldly posted on the board of the campus with the title of “Star of the Month.” She added that there are children who feel bad when they do not find themselves on the poster. Even some parents ask the time when the turn will be of their children.

According to a missionary preschool respondent, children may become happy or sad because of very minor things. Therefore, these kinds of feelings are also observed during an exam or a test. A teacher has recalled what she experienced at one time and said that a child who scored less than her friends has cried very seriously when she received her report card. Therefore, she said, sometimes unexpected emotion may have been seen on children.

The answers of parents about the techniques and procedures of assessment, and the feelings of their children, showed almost similar with teachers' and principals' responses. Most of them said that there are worksheets, tests, exams at different intervals of time, including, homework, and classwork. Furthermore, the teachers and principals said that the feelings of children are also

considered in the responses of parents. Let us mention some of the important observations of parent respondents.

The PoP said that her child was assessed through tests, exams, worksheets; and his final result was recorded in the form of percentage (%), but finally, changed to A, B, C grades. Another mother from the same preschool mentioned that every two weeks there was a test and work sheet assessment. One respondent also said that she (the parent) never feel good when her child scores a low result in his exam or test. The PoP similarly described that she expects a good result from her child; therefore, she when her result gets down, she feels bad. Another parent from other private preschool explains about the feelings of her two children after taking an exam or a test in the following way:

There are tests and work sheets; however, sometimes I found that it is above their level. When my child misses one question on a given test or an exam, he becomes unhappy and angry. The other child even cries for the whole day and refused to take any meal. (Appendix I, p 12)

In addition, the above respondent presented his general view on the techniques and amounts of assessment that are given for his child:

In every quarter they have tests, mid-exam and final exam, and I think their assessment is somewhat over, in each quarter they (children) took up to six exams (Four short tests, a mid and one final exams). Therefore, it should be decreased. However, I and my child never give attention for the result he has scored. Instead I focus on his knowledge. I consider what he know and understand from his learning not the 'X' and '√' marks. (Appendix I, p 12)

In relation to preschool assessment, another PoP further explained about what she experienced from her child:

At one time, during the first quarter of the year, my child got the first rank, but in the second quarter, because she missed some questions, she became the second, and as a result she became sad and angry, and she hated a child who became the first rank, much. Until very recently, she wouldn't like to talk to him, and when he came to her, she became shy and angry, provided that both of them came to school by the same minibus. (Appendix I, p 12)

The parent participants from government preschools observed that the father of a child explained that when his child got an error on his test, he became confused; and the child asked his father that his friends have not got an “X” mark on their test or exam paper, why was it there on his exam? At one time, according to PoG, her child missed one mark on a drawing exam, as a result she cried very seriously.

A mother of one child from another government preschool said:

When he was at KG 1, I remember, there was a matching exam and he got 28/30, then he asked me about how he made a mistake. At that time I went to ask his teacher but I didn't want to clash with her, instead I preferred to cool my child's anger. (Appendix I, p 12)

Furthermore, a mother of a child from missionary preschool said that when her child made a mistake in her exam or test, the child cried a lot, and told her mother that she made the mistake when she was working quickly to finish the test before other children. Another respondent from the same preschool said that when her child got a mistake in his test or an exam, he became disturbed and cried. However, she knows that he did well at home but lost it whenever he took a test and an exam. Another PoM said that when his child got an error on his test or exam, the child thought that it was the deed of his teacher.

Similarly, the observations of diploma ECCE prospective teacher graduates of 2019 were the same as previous respondents. They said that teachers assess the learning performance of children through exercise books, tests, exams, worksheets and written activities which mainly test the understanding level of children. Therefore, one said that their assessment approach was not appropriate, because teachers did not consider all domains of development.

The ECCE officials also agreed that the assessment approaches of preschools had serious problems. According to the Addis Ababa education bureau official, this is mainly the problem of private preschools, because, he said that they test children and put the result in the form of 10/10, 9/10, 8/10, etc. However, he added that this practice was changed now in government preschools. He further explained that observation was the only and the advised technique of assessment for this level of education. However, he said that private preschools set a time table when the test and an exam would take place which is completely forbidden by the government. He further explained:

There are private preschools which write the exam result of children in the form of percentages (like 80%, 90%, and 100%) on their report card, but there is no such thing in the government preschools. Instead we advise them to rating scales like excellent, very good, good, etc. to differentiate one child from the other; furthermore, we advise them to consider all rounded conditions of the child. (Appendix I, p 12)

Ministry of Education ECCE official similarly believed that preschool teachers have a very limited knowledge about the assessment of preschool children, because, he said that they administer children tests and exams, regularly. At this level, he said, “You can’t test children one today and the other tomorrow, instead let them free and observe their interest, activities and perspectives” (Appendix I, p 12). Therefore, he believed that, the assessment techniques of children should be observation, follow up and giving support which should consider all development domains of the child. However, he added, “what is happening now is, you teach them about letters today then you test them tomorrow” (Appendix I, p 12).

It is well observed that children are mainly assessed through regularly given tests, exams and worksheets (see P 1-8 of private and P 1-5 of government preschool pictures in Appendix J, p 11-12). However, classwork, homework, participation are also considered (see P 9 of private preschool picture in Appendix J, p 11). All preschools have an exam or test schedule, however, it was practically observed in three private and one government preschools. Their schedules were so close that children might sit for the same exam or test at the same day and time throughout the preschools. Before taking any test or an exam, revisions are made for each lesson, and parents are also informed about the schedule to prepare their children for the exam or test. Except drawing, all exams and tests are prepared in written form to measure the understanding level of children. Even though teachers and principals said that children don’t know whether they are taking an exam or a test, it was observed that children knew that very well.

For instance, during observation in one private preschool, the teacher and children have exchange the following conversation during about an exam day.

The teacher: “Children! What are we going to do, today?”

Children: “We are going to take an exam”

The teacher: “Have you prepared for that and studied hard?”

Children: “yes!”

The teacher: “Which one is better for you to begin with?”

Children: “Amharic!”

The teacher: “Don’t copy from one another”

Children: “ok!”

In another government preschool the teacher has also asked her children like “are you studying hard for the exam?” and then children have replied positively.

It was also observed that children have taken two exams during the morning session of the day, and at the same session, after taking the two exams, revision was followed for the next exams. When there was an exam, the afternoon sessions were closed. During an exam period the classroom setup was changed; chairs and tables were arranged to protect copying (see P 4 private and P 4 of government preschool pictures in Appendix J, p 11-12); and the teachers have also given warnings to children not to copy from one another and told to hide their exam paper, and be silent (see P 3 and P 8 of private, and P 5 of government preschool pictures in Appendix J, p 11-12). In one private preschool, it was observed that children were scattered in the class, and some of them even hide themselves in to the corners and were covered by different classroom equipment (see P 4 of private preschool pictures below). It was also observed in one private and one government preschools that children did not sit silently whatever warnings were given them; they were talking and copying from one another, especially, at the time of completion (see P 2 and P 7 of private and P 5 of government preschool pictures in Appendix J, p 11-12). Furthermore, teachers themselves did the exam papers, particularly, for those children who had some challenges (see P 3 of private preschool picture in Appendix J, p 11). At the time of exam, it was also commonly observed that children who could not finish exams at a given time have got in to stress (see P 4 and P 6 of private preschool pictures in Appendix J, p 11).

In one private preschool observation the father of a child has come to the preschool to ask about the exam result of his child and he asked the teacher the reason why his child has scored that only. He further added that his child was crying, because he was not among those who were posted on the billboard which was placed outside - near the gate of the campus (see P 10 of private preschool picture in Appendix J, p 11). In this preschool, from each classroom, names and photos of five children who scored better results were posted. This practice was also

observed in another private and one “international” preschool which gave a title of “Star of the Week” and “Star of the Month” for children who scored better (see P 11 of private preschool picture in Appendix J, p 11).

4.2.7. Provision of Childcare

In early childhood care and education, it is well-known that, child care is as important as the education dimension. Many even said that care and education are inseparable entities; they are, as some named, both sides of the same coin. Therefore, in this theme, the knowledge and practice of participants towards childcare dimension of early childhood care and education was observed. In general, the summarized responses of participants have shown that care is about the school infrastructure (the wideness of the preschool and the classrooms, class size, outdoor equipment, the textbooks, etc.), staff quality, diet and cleanness of the child and the preschool. Hence, the following presentation has shown the major responses of participants give for the understanding and practices of child care around preschools.

When the reactions of private preschools teachers and principals observed, the ToP said that children have great mind, even though they are physically small; therefore, she added that they need great care. According to this respondent, care is about what children are learning, where they are playing, what their food is and how the building of the school is. The other respondent from the same preschool commented that preschools are greatly vary in caregiving, because, she added, there is no any standard for that, and she said that, the quality of the staff is low and it is reflected on the care dimension. Another ToP also explained that emphasis should be given for the contents what children are learning, because, she said that they will damage the brain of children. We have to, she described, observe global practices. Furthermore, she added, parents should also follow the condition of their children; they have to create good relationship with the preschools. “If we care about the child”, one teacher said, “the academics portion shouldn’t be too much. Otherwise, we would damage their brain (Appendix I, p 12).” According to ToP participant:

At this level, children need more treatment than academics or education. However, we are not doing like that; we give more emphasis for the knowledge part. We are only considering their English skill and on some specific activity what they can do. Therefore, we have to do more to shape children in holistic way. (Appendix I, p 13)

The other ToP also said:

We have to have a guidance and counseling center for our children. For instance, children, sometimes, get disturb or shy in and out of the classroom, however, knowingly or unknowingly, many teachers don't want to respond these conditions, because of the workload or burden they have. Therefore, it is not an easy thing; it should be treated in guidance and counseling center, separately. (Appendix I, p 13)

In order to give care for the children, a colleague of the above respondent has mentioned the following idea; she said that children shouldn't fear their teachers. Most of the time parents use teachers as a weapon to induce fear on their children when they refuse to respond what their parents told to do something at the home. When parents say "I will tell for your Miss (the teacher)", most children get in to frustration. Therefore, parents shouldn't use teachers as a tool to refrain their children from their deeds. Instead, parents should work on their children to accept and respect what their families told and do. The other thing is that parents should get trainings on child rearing and caring, because we know our children more than their parents. Actually, she said, it shouldn't be like that. Similarly, a teacher of another preschool said that parents should follow their children; because, they pay for the education of their child, they expect everything from the school; therefore, she added that this type of parent`s view will harm the child. In the contrary, one private preschool mother said that preschools made children to undermine their parents; they don't accept what their families said; they only listen their teachers.

According to one teacher, in order to give an appropriate care for the child, the class size should be decreased or the number of teachers should be increased, and teachers and parents should work together, however, she added that it has often been taken as the work of teachers only.

A colleague of the above respondent described:

When we talk about child care, teachers' workload has to be considered. Early childhood education is very tiresome work. You play with children and do everything with them; therefore, this should be understood well. Children are restless; you move here and there with them which is so tiresome for you, therefore, it should be well understood. (Appendix I, p 13)

Another respondent also explained, "Preschool teachers should be well trained in order to give an appropriate training and colleges or institutions should be established to train qualified preschool teachers, and the program should be upgraded from certificate to degree" (Appendix I, p 13). According to one teacher, she often observes the meal of children and its contents.

Government preschool teachers have also raised similar issues like private preschool teachers. They believe that class size, the classroom condition (including sleeping and dining hall) and playground have great impact on the delivery of appropriate care for the child. However, many agreed that these things are not fulfilled in public preschools. They, especially, said that, the number of children per class is very high that it is very difficult for the teacher (s) to give the right care for all children. According to the ToG, "if it is said that children must be cared appropriately, there should be many teachers, many wider classrooms and play equipment" (Appendix I, p 13). Another ToG said that, the playground of the school is so stony and rough that many children get injured while they are playing. Furthermore, she said that, the school has no any textbooks; as a result, it increases the workload of the teacher and consumes the time of caring children, because, she said that everything is written and prepared by hand which takes much time.

While explaining her preschool, the ProG said:

When we talk about care, I don't think the facilities are appropriate for our children in this school. The compound is, totally, inappropriate for the children. We don't have enough toilet rooms; we don't have any playground materials. Our play materials made of metals which injures our children while they are playing. We don't have clean dining and sleeping rooms. Therefore, beginning from the building, the school needs so many things. (Appendix I, p 13)

A colleague of the above respondent also said that it is better to a child no to send to school before the age of four, she said that it is so difficult to give the necessary support for the child.

From an “international” preschool, a teacher has associated care with the interest of children, and she said:

In our school there is a shortage of play materials, as a result, children play turn by turn. Therefore, this thing will affect the interest of children, because those who wait on their turn will loose interest while others playing with the materials. (Appendix I, p 13)

According to another ToI, there should be safe environment for children. Classrooms and playgrounds should be comfortable for all children, and let them play by their interest.

While explaining about the care of children, ToI also described, “Our classrooms are small in size; therefore, this thing restricts the movement of our children during play and other classroom activities. Therefore, this condition doesn’t give comfort for children and teachers” (Appendix I, p 13).# Similarly, another respondent said, “If we want consider about the care of the child; he or she should have much playtime, play materials and corners. However, in our country many kindergarten schools have no such things” (Appendix I, p 13). In addition, the following ToI relates care with the load of their education, and she said:

At this level, the education of children shouldn’t be difficult, as such. They have to learn little by little, like a soup. More writing, more reading, more working are very difficult for children, because, I afraid am that if things become like this, children will hate their later education. (Appendix I, p 13)

The missionary preschool respondents have also believed that, the condition of the school is very important for the care of the child; however, they have given great emphasis for the training of teachers for the care and education of children, because they believed that teachers are the key agents to give an appropriate care and education for the children even more than their parents. The ToM said, “When I take children from their parents I check whether they are healthy or not through observation” (Appendix I, p 13).

Many of parents’ reactions also related with the responses of teachers and principals. They believed that, the infrastructure of the school is very important for the care of children;

especially, the shortage and (in) appropriateness of playground and play materials. There are also parents who connect care with the education load of children. Therefore, some agreed that their children are cared very well and got satisfied by the preschool, however, there are parents who have some concerns on their preschool. Let us see some of them. The PoP said that everything is ok! She added that her child is so happy that he doesn't sometimes want to back to home. Two respondents from the same preschool have also said that, the playground and the classrooms of the preschool is more than enough. According to another PoP, the preschool follows the progress of her child so that she is so happy.

To the contrary, there are PoP who have some concerns. A mother of a child, for instance, said that the education of the preschool is very nice, but she added, the preschool gives a tutorial for three days per week which is difficult for the care of her child. Another mother also explained, "They have to consider them as children. Many things are overloaded on children. There is more homeworks; things seem above their age level (Appendix I, p 13)."

"The school is good", said one PoP respondent, but, she added the class size, play materials and the playground should be made well for the care of children. Supporting the previous idea, the following parent commented that the school is very good; however, they have to work more on playground and its size, because sometimes she afraid that children will collide one another while they are playing around. Another also said that because the playground is not covered by grass, it injures children, for instance, at one time, her child fall down from the playing bar and injured seriously.

A parent from one government preschool said that some bad smells come in to the school from outside the campus which is dangerous for the health of children. Therefore, he said that, the school should work hard to secure its cleanness, because children are very sensitive. If one gets a common cold and by other diseases, other children, including teachers, will be infected immediately. Therefore, he added, the school should work on this, and children want to see clean environment too. Another government preschool mother said that if teacher want to take care of children, they have to also protect them from learning bad words and let them to know about ethics and moral.

Likewise, the diploma ECCE prospective teacher graduates of 2019 believed that, the care dimension of early childhood education is very important, and they relate it more with non-education elements like the setups of the preschools and its materials. For instance, one respondent observed that most preschools have not enough materials, dining and sleeping rooms. Their compound is not comfortable for play; they are rocky with ups and downs, therefore, he added, in this condition, it is difficult to talk about the care of children. The other further described that some preschools are closer to the main road which many vehicles are moving throughout the day, therefore, he said that it is dangerous and difficult to secure the care of children. According to one respondent, some teachers are so happy with children and worry for everything that, the child is doing, however, she added that, there are teachers who don't care about children.

As to ECCE officials responses, they believed that children should get more care than their education; however, they said, many preschools give emphasis for the education part. According to Ministry of Education ECCE official, it is difficult to separate care from the education of children. If the education portion became good, child care will become the same; and the opposite is true for both. However, he added, as already said, the education part has so many problem, therefore, it is directly or indirectly will be reflected on the care dimension. Therefore, finally said, our preschools and teachers need so many things to improve this situation.

The observation result has also revealed that it is difficult to talk about care without the education of children or vice versa; therefore, both exist together. As it has noted from participants' responses and observations previously, the education portion, especially, the mental works have given much emphasis than other domains of child development. As a result, directly or indirectly, the care dimension will be affected. It is observed that children have spent much time on education; they learn four to five subjects per day; in every subject there is a classwork; every day there are one to three homework; there is a study time and tutorials, including the assessments (tests, exams, worksheets) (see P 9-12 of private preschool pictures in Appendix J, p 13). Thus, children are forced to do, learn and know so many things. Consequently, children became highly overloaded and got in to stress; and then their health condition will be affected. It

is also observed that teachers are so busy through out the day that it is difficult for them to give the appropriate care for all children; especially, in government preschools. Furthermore, in all preschools, except two private and one “international”, children sit shoulder to shoulder, therefore, they have seated in such a way that when one child infected by any disease, it is very easy to pass it to another children, including teachers and baby-sitter (s) (see P 10 and P 12 of private, P 5 of government and P 2-3 of missionary preschool pictures in Appendix J, p 13-14). Preschools, especially with smaller classroom size, which have used the chalkboard for writing have affected by the powder which is harmful for the children, especially, for the front-benchers (see P 11 of private, P 6 of government and P 3 of missionary preschool pictures in Appendix J, p 13-14). In addition, except in two private types, the playground of all preschools is hard surfaced and rocky, and its playing tools are made up of metal or steel materials (see P 1-6 of private, P 1 of government and P 1 of missionary preschool pictures in Appendix J, p 13-14).

When children are told to read or say something in and out of the classroom, except in “international” and three private preschools, their sound was so loud that children sometimes cover their ears by their hands. It is observed in two private preschools that children who couldn't answer the question or finished the test or an exam quickly, the teacher told other children to say them the following bad words, repeatedly.

Looser! Looser! Ye! Ye! Ye! Winner! Winner! That is ok! And,
Shame on you! Shame on you! Shame on you!

In one “international” preschool it was observed that a child has asked his teacher, repeatedly, to give him a permission to go to a toilet, however, she did not accept his request, and she said to the researcher that if she let one child out, other will follow, turn by turn. Therefore, she added that to believe the request of a child, he or she should ask repeatedly, otherwise, his or her question might be not true.

However, the baby-sitter (s) and assistant teachers have tried to address the need and mood of the child in and out of the classroom, and check the meal of children. Furthermore, two private and one “international” preschool has a nurse who follow up the health and care of children.

Furthermore, in one of the two “international” preschool there is one special need teacher who gives support for those in need.

4.3. Comparison and Discussion

Based on the thematic analysis made above, a cross-sectional comparative discussion and interpretation has been conducted in the section ahead; and it is presented under seven core thematic areas.

4.3.1. The Contents and Approaches of Children’s Learning

This subsection is divided in to three parts. These are: the daily routines of the class; teachers’ facilitation role of classroom activities and lessons; and recognizing the mental, physical, social/cultural, language and behavioral backgrounds of the child.

4.3.1.1. The Daily Routines of the Class

The analysis part of this theme revealed that, regardless of their category, all private, government, “international” and missionary preschools have many common practices and the similarity is almost the same across the cases. The types of subjects children are learning, the activities they are doing, the beginning and ending times of the lessons, the way lesson plans are prepared and presented, the types of songs and plays children are singing and playing are very similar across all preschools. However, within each category, minor variations are observed. When we look at the case of private preschools, it is observed that the majority teachers or facilitators have no relevant education background. Addis Ababa Education Bureau ECCE official commented that it is rare to get a teacher who graduated in early childhood care and education in private preschools. However, these preschools have prepared their own instructional materials by their own teachers or copied from other places or countries. With access to Internet anybody can get the practices of other school systems or observe how people do things in their

own approach, however, how to contextualize these practices in a given area or school and understanding their relevance is a problem; and what is observed in this study is related with this idea. According to Nutbrown and Clough (2014), the quality of early years provision and the need for a well-trained and appropriately qualified workforce are the key issues of ECCE. If those working with young children have the necessary skills, knowledge and understanding, they have the potential to offer meaningful experience all young children deserve (Nutbrown & Clough, 2014). Although there has been an expansion of ECCE in Africa as a whole since 2007, the importance of developing a strong teaching and caregiver staff as well as relevant curriculum framework and modules cannot be over emphasized (Awopegba, Oduolowu & Nsamenang, 2013).

Preschools, regardless of their sources, copy or use different instructional materials without considering the age and development levels of children; and these children have spent their time almost on the same lessons and activities throughout the day. MOE ECCE official commented that children are learning the same thing throughout their kindergarten levels, KG 1, KG 2, and KG 3. In this study, parents also said that children become so busy by classroom and home activities; as a result, they believed that what children are learning is above their level of development and understanding. During an informal talk, it is also recognized from two private preschool principals that they know what is important for these children; however, if they want to apply the right approach in their preschools, they are afraid that they may lose their business and it will become difficult for them to retain children for a long period of time, because, they said that parents don't like this approach, instead, the preschools should show what is not existed and actually practiced there to attract children's families. This, therefore, indicated that the quality of early childhood care and education highly affected by these kinds of inappropriate practices and wrong beliefs, which can, of course, extend to the whole education system.

Sometimes, there are preschools with big names without having any special constituents, and this is what is observed in one of the two "international" preschools. By many aspects, it is one of the least preschools from all which considered in this study. The data shows that the campus and the classrooms are not good as whole – its classroom is as small as a bedroom; more than that, all teacher respondents are not relevant for the field or qualified with early childhood care and

education. When the second “international” preschool examined, some of its staff has attended some early childhood education courses; for instance, the principal has graduated by early childhood care and education with MA qualification and among the four participant teachers, two of them have a certificate of early childhood education. What is special in this preschool is that they use an International Primary Curriculum (IPC) which come from America; and they believed that it is self-explanatory or an excellent guide for the teacher as well as for the children. However, having 99% of local children, the question is, how much it becomes effective to use this foreign curriculum without having well qualified teachers or facilitators. One teacher of this preschool said that children with the same level are always learning the same lesson. What classroom “A” children have learnt, classroom “B, C, D ...” children have also learned at the same time, and she added that, the whole lesson of a given subject is prepared by one teacher then spread for others who teach the same level of children throughout the classrooms. The principal of the preschool has also agreed that, the effectiveness of the curriculum depends on the teacher, therefore it is difficult, she said.

The patterns and routines of daily life provide an authentic curriculum for young children around the world. Whether the context be a rich village life, an urban environment or an impoverished settlement, through participating in and observing activities and relationships around them, young children learn the necessary values, skills and knowledge (Marope & Kaga, 2015). It is also true that, the world is so closer today than before; therefore, it is important to consider the practices of others. If it is critically considered, it is important to remember that learning the strengths and weakness of other education practices is very helpful to understand and strengthen once own practices, however, it should be also well recognized that once best achievement will never always produce the same result when it has applied in other contexts, and even will not remain the same for the achiever too. Because quality is dynamic and relative, what is best today will not remain as it is forever, it changes through time with the advancement and changes of the society.

Even though many government preschool teachers certificated with early childhood care and education, they criticized the way how they are trained; and prospective diploma ECCE graduates also agreed on this idea. They said that many of the courses that they have learned are

not relevant for the actual school practices. They further added that government preschools have syllabus guides; however, in their trainings, it is not given emphasis, because, their contents and language of presentation is different from what they have learned. Therefore, as one graduate said, teachers have no confidence to apply the syllabus in their context; instead, they prefer academic subjects than themes. This is also recognized through respondents' reflection and researchers' observation, for instance, one teacher said that she is teaching children the way how they can read and write a text which is, she added, forbidden at this level. Therefore, knowledge, skills and beliefs about children and teaching and learning, according to Mitchell & Taylor, are gained through appropriate teacher education or training and professional development (Mitchell & Taylor, 2015). Professional development opportunities of kindergarten or preschool staff tend to focus on pedagogies and instructional practices, curriculum implementation, language and subject matters, monitoring and assessment, and communication and management (OECD, 2012). Furthermore, when we examine the case of missionary preschool, except "Chapel Time" which is a time for pray, the practices are the same as that of government counterparts. In the absence of well qualified staff and teaching aids, it is important to have well detailed guides or resources with many choices like themes of the syllabus.

4.3.1.2. Teachers Facilitation Role of Classroom Activities and Lessons

The analysis of this theme showed that many children, throughout all private, government, "international" and missionary preschools, are not given the opportunity to learn by themselves; instead, teachers dominantly direct classroom lessons and activities by their own, and it is also confirmed by interviews and observation results. From a school perspective, it is said that young children have limited span of concentration (Alexandra & Lindqvist, 2017; Sommer, Prambling-Samuelsson & Hundeide, 2010). They are not driven by long-term goals like adults, but are interested in here and now questions, and the concrete rather than the abstract is always in the mind of the child (Sommer, Prambling-Samuelsson, Hundeide, 2010). They have difficulties in following instructions and to comprehending ordinary clock time which all of these skills are required for attending typical school-like formal teaching sessions (Alexandra & Lindqvist, 2017). Preschool teachers, while presenting their lessons, may use different teaching aids like textbooks, charts, flash cards, white board, TV or LCD, blackboard and other materials,

however, according to this study, they are spending maximum amount of time than children. Browne & Gordon (2011) commented that based on the belief that knowledge is constructed by the learner rather than transferred from the teacher to the child; learning is an active process in which children will have choices and make decisions on significant parts of their learning.

Child-centered instructional approaches which also referred to as indirect, learner-centered, or student-centered methods of teaching allow a child to explore the environment independently and results in learning opportunities that are selected by the child. The approach is frequently described as non-invasive; based on free will of the child, promoting self-esteem, and not relying on external motivation such as rewards or punishment (Casey & Carter, 2016). Similarly, one respondent said that in the process of early childhood care and education, teachers should follow child centered approach, because, it lets children to learn by themselves and help them to be creative. He further added that in early childhood education, the teacher only shows very few things of the lesson but children do much of it through their own learning; therefore, he finally, concluded that children can develop more. In child-centered teaching approach, according to Sommer, Prambling-Samuelsson & Hundeide (2010), a child is allowed to touch, smell, manipulate, create, and talk about the topic he or she is learning about.

However, this approach was not accepted by many teachers, principals, and even by parents as well; because, many of them have some doubt with this kind of teaching approach. Therefore, when we critically examined the reason why, especially, preschool teachers are using direct teaching approach, three speculations are presented in the following way.

- o Throughout their education system, preschool teachers dominantly have been trained through direct teaching approach; therefore, it is easy for them to apply it in their context. In support of this idea, one prospective ECCE diploma graduate said that, the approach preschool teachers are using is directly copied from the way they were trained;
- o The other thing is preschool owners, except government preschools, may force these teachers to apply the method; and finally,

- o To attract and address the needs of children's families and not to lose their business, preschools, whether they like it or not, may consider the preference of parents.

4.3.1.3. The Focus of Classroom Activities and Lessons

This theme has considered the important point of this study; and is based on the analysis made on the issue above, the following interpretation and discussion is presented. In the process of care and education provision, recognizing the holistic conditions of the child is a critical issue. Many scholars commented that ECCE includes a wide range of integrated programs planned and delivered to enhance the cognitive, social, emotional, nutritional and physical development of children during the early years of life or prior to the time they begin primary school (Awopegba, Oduolowu & Nsamenang, 2013; UNESCO & UNICEF, 2012; Rao & Sun, 2010). It supports children's survival growth, development and learning (UNESCO-IICBA, 2010). Social-emotional skills such as self-awareness, self-discipline, persistence, and empathy are as vital as cognitive skills (Heymann & Cassola, 2012 and Marope & Kaga, 2015). A classroom lesson or activities which couldn't address the mental, physical, social or cultural, language, behavioral and creative backgrounds of the child in equal proportion, will not be effective at the end. It is well documented that the dominance of one domain will affect others; as a result the growth and development of the child will be distorted, and the impact will continue throughout its life. Morrison (2004) said that domains of children's development—physical, social, emotional, and cognitive—are closely related. Development in one domain influences and is influenced by development in other domains.

The analysis result of this study also pointed out that almost all children of private, government, “international” and missionary preschools are spending much of their time, at preschool and in their home, on education and on knowledge dominated activities which are mainly focus on the development of cognitive domain. It is observed that, every day, children are expected to learn four to five lessons which most of the time presented in the form of subjects, do classwork and homework. In addition, to evaluate the understanding level of children, worksheets, tests, and

exams are given every two weeks and month (s), respectively; and based on their performance, they will be classified in to three categories like high, medium and low achievers. Therefore, these all things suggested that children are spending much of their time on academic contents. Developmental appropriateness, according to Wien (1995), argues that learning is child-centered and holistic, stating that children must be permitted to be active decision makers about their own activity, they learn with their entire body and not simply the mind. Hence, when we examine the reasons why this domain was given more emphasis, the following two comments are considered.

- o *The academic background of teachers:* - all teachers have passed through the same type of education system which gives more emphasis for the acquisition of knowledge; and the trainings they took at higher institutes are also prepared in favor of this, provided that many of them have also no relevant qualification. This idea is also supported by two principals, especially, two diploma ECCE graduates said that courses, including those which need rigorous practices, are jumped over by simple and shallow presentations. Therefore, teachers who learn and trained through this way may apply the same experiences in their actual classroom contexts, which is knowledge dominated approaches.
- o *Parents influences:* - for most parents, a clever and successful child is the one who memorizes the lessons what he or she has learned and when scores a better result in his or her tests and exams. The reason why, therefore, parents give attention for this thing is that because it is relatively easily for them to recognize its result in written form than other domains. Therefore, knowingly or unknowingly, they don't bother about other aspects which contribute a lot for the holistic development of their children.

However, when the whole or part of the lesson has some practical activities, children talk and question one another (including the teacher), show different emotions (like happy, angry, laugh and eager to show their work) and move their body while sitting on or leaving their chair. Therefore, even though classroom lessons and activities are mainly prepared for the development of cognitive domain, it was observed in all preschools that, there were also some activities which help children to develop their social, emotional, physical, language and creative dimensions.

4.3.2. The Benefits of Early Childhood Care and Education for the Participant Child

As we read from the literature, early childhood care and education has so many benefits for the participant child and its family which can extend to the whole society. It helps children to develop their mental, physical, social, language and emotional abilities or capabilities. However, when we consider the analysis part of this theme, most responses are directed to the mental or to the academics and educational gains of early childhood care and education, although very few believed on its holistic benefits. Because, for many participants of private, government, “international and missionary preschools, the benefit of ECCE is associated only with knowledge development, some also believed that early childhood care and education is used to get the child ready for the first grade or primary level type of formal education and lifelong learning; there are also respondents who agreed that ECCE is important for the improvement of reading and writing skills of children. Therefore, regardless of any case or preschool category, most responses which given for the purposes of ECCE are inclined towards education, knowledge construction and learning or to formal education. It is true that, the cognitive gains of ECCE are related to the growth and development of brain which is faster than any other organ of the body during infancy and toddlerhood (Awopegba, Oduolowu & Nsamenang, 2013). However, social-emotional competence which is the core value of early childhood care and education for all children comprising the ability to calm oneself when angry, initiate friendships, resolve conflicts respectfully, make ethical and safe choices, contributes a lot (Heymann & Cassola, 2012). Therefore, early childhood care and education is no doubt fundamental to a child’s overall development and the child’s later educational achievements and future success (Awopegba, Oduolowu & Nsamenang, 2013). Furthermore, ECCE complements the roles of parents and other caregivers in raising children during the early years, results in easier transition to primary school, better completion rates, reduced poverty and social equality. Children from poor families, immigrant children and children from other vulnerable groups may particularly benefit from ECE’s before compulsory schooling (Education International ECE Task Force Study Report, 2010). Well-designed ECCE programs produce larger and long-term effects which is sufficient to close half the achievement gap between disadvantaged children and other children through the end of secondary school (Marope & Kaga, 2015).

4.3.3. The Role of Play in Children's Learning

As far as this theme is concerned, many private, government, “international” and missionary preschool respondents believed that play has great benefits for children's learning. Especially, most teachers and principals have agreed that children will learn better if the lessons and activities are presented through play. They believed that play is a key for children education; it is a natural behavior for the children which makes them happy; it lets children learn a given lesson with great immersion and imagination; it gives the opportunity to show the talent and creativity of children. They also believed that what children learn through play will become attractive and can be retained for a long period of time; otherwise, they will become bored and forget what they have learnt quickly, whatever it is important, if they learn without play. As a result, for most teachers and principals play should be embedded with education. Harrison and Robinson identified play as a fundamental tenet of childhood pedagogy (Harrison & Robinson, 2017). Through play, the child learns to participate in all kinds of real social and societal activities (Schousboe & Winther-Lindqvist, 2013). For young children, fundamental learning is intrinsically related to meaningful play activities (Pompert, 2012). It basically refers to the way an activity is carried out (Oers, 2012). It is well established as a pedagogical approach with early childhood education (O'Connor, 2017). Play-based learning is an integral part of children's development, and its positive implications for young children have been the focus of many major research papers over recent decades (Maher & Smith 2017).

While summarizing the benefits of play-based early childhood education, Smid (2010) said that play is closely interconnected with emotional and cognitive developments. He said that children who engaged in play situations show greater evidence of problem-solving abilities, creativity, higher levels of cognitive and self-regulation. He further added that play promotes the development of conflict resolution skills in young children. Highly social and cooperative play in classrooms has clear links with learning, progression and identity formation (Smid, 2010). According to Piaget, play provides support to assist children in undertaking the transition from sensory-motor stages of intellectual development to conceptual and operational (imaginative) thinking. However, the role of the adult or teacher in Piagetian theory generally entails setting up the physical environment and observing, rather than taking a collaborative role in play (Beckett,

Lynch & Pike, 2017). Play can contribute to development by operating as a stepping stone within the zone of proximal development and can enable children to reach higher levels of performance (Akman & Özgül, 2015). Vygotsky contends that ‘the child’s greatest control occurs in play’, play creates the ‘highest level of preschool development’ (Rogers, 2015).

Therefore, the above comments showed that most teachers and principals have recognized the advantage of play based education, however, when it comes to the actual practice, there is a problem. According to some participant responses and observation results, the actual classroom practices don’t reflect and match with the knowledge they have about play. Play, for most private, government, “international” and missionary preschool participants, is about songs which most of the time is used as a transition from one lesson to another; for some it is also about using different teaching aids like flash cards, flip chart, coloring or drawing, etc. and participating children in Q&A sessions of the lessons. However, play, in early childhood care and education, is much more than that. According to Miller and Almon (2009) in Wisneski and Reifel (2012), most teachers say that play in kindergarten is important, although few teachers or administrators are able to articulate the relationship between play and learning. They said that many classroom activities that adults describe as play are in fact highly teacher directed and involve little or no imagination or creativity on the part of children (Wisneski & Reifel, 2012).

Furthermore, except free play, most teachers and principals believed that it will become very difficult for the teacher to let children free and do things by their own. For instance, two respondents, the principal of one private and the teacher of an “international” preschool who have served for many years in this profession said that it is a chaos for the teacher to let children free and do things by themselves. However, it is recognized that children, while they are sitting or learning a given lesson in the classroom, whether they are controlled by teacher (s) and baby-sitter (s) or not, use any opportunities to free themselves, to talk to one another, move and do what they like. It is also considered that almost all types of free plays which children play or do by themselves around the corners and at playground have no connection with the lessons what they have learned. It is also recognized from the data that children lose interest towards play, during playtime lessons, because of the shortage and irrelevant play materials; they may not get what they want and couldn’t spend much time on the equipment what they are interested in.

Besides, all participants are well experienced that children love outside play much more than inside the classroom, and they believed that outdoor play gives children the opportunity to explore their own potential; however, they have given limited time for that.

Moreover, it is observed that many parents, from the beginning, concerned with the idea of play based education, because, they said that, with this approach, children may not learn and know what is expected at this level, therefore, they suggested that play should be separated from education. This belief, therefore, might shape the way how children are learning, because as already speculated in theme 3 previously, preschools, especially private and “international” types, may apply the approaches which parents prefer most, in order to retain their business, so that they may more inclined towards the academics than play or play based learning. Therefore, as Smid (2010) mentioned, parents need help to understand the power of play as children’s main means of learning.

4.3.4. Language (s) Use In and Out of the Classroom

According to the analysis made on this theme, all private, except one, and “international” preschools are using English language as a media of instruction and flexibly as a means of formal and informal communication. Government and missionary preschools, however, are using Amharic language, dominantly. It is also indicated from the responses of teachers and principals that children learn better in English language than Amharic (local language). Most of them have justified that Amharic has so many branch letters with their families when it is compared with 26 English letters. It is also realized, especially, from private and “international” preschool respondents that when the same subject or content is delivered in both languages, the one which is presented in English, in addition to English subject, is easy for children. Therefore, they taught that Amharic lessons, including Amharic subject, are difficult for children, however, almost all prefer it for communication than English; especially, when they are told Amharic stories, it is observed that children became so happy that they listen them with great attention.

According to Wynne (2007), when the child’s mother tongue is a language other than English, this diversity must also be celebrated in the classroom, because to reject the language is to reject

the child and it is quite easy for children to lose their home language in the early years. Therefore, teachers should allow them to use their language along with the second language as much as possible. When they have a good grasp of the vocabulary and concepts of their first language, they are better able to grasp the vocabulary and concepts of the second language. Similarly, when students can do something in one language, it easily transfers to the second language and therefore the teacher knows that the child understands the concept (Wynne, 2007). To justify the reasons why, therefore, Amharic becomes so difficult for children to learn, the following five observations are considered. These are:

- o Teachers and principals who, especially, work at private and “international” preschools, whether they like it or not, are forced to focus on English than Amharic language; however, most believed that children can learn and communicate better with their own language. Even to teach in English, it is observed that most, except for counting numbers, letters and for some simple words, have no enough and relevant skill on the language, even though they are supported with many materials. Heymann and Cassola (2012) have also question the reason why do schools throughout the world continue to use languages that children do not understand and which teachers themselves may have difficulty with. They commented that teaching through a foreign language has been called “submersion” because, when the school fails to use a language that the learner speaks and understands well, it is comparable to holding learners under water without teaching them how to swim.
- o It is also, according to one private preschool principal, a strategy to maintain their business, to compute with other preschools and attract parents, because, almost all teacher and principal respondents commented that children parents prefer English language much more than Amharic. However, the analysis indicated that many parents prefer both languages equally, but, they have recognized that private preschools give more emphasis for English language than Amharic. In many countries, there is a perception that using a native language may hinder economic progress. There is also the worry that children will be left behind to suffer relative economic hardship because of their perceived inability to engage more successfully in business or economic activities (UNESCO & UNICEF, 2012). However, research has clearly indicated that children learn better in their mother tongue and should do

so at least until age eight, although the foreign language can be introduced orally earlier. With appropriate bridging programs, children can transfer the reading and writing skills they have already acquired in their mother tongue to the second language by primary school-age (Rao & Sun, 2010).

- o The way teachers and principals trained through also contributes for this, because, almost all of them are trained through English. This idea is also agreed with what ECCE diploma prospective graduates said, they pass through the same fashion. Awopegba, Oduolowu & Nsamenang (2013) believed that, the use of mother tongue as medium of education leads to a higher competency in all curricular subjects than the foreign languages. A child will learn to read and write only when he or she understands and makes meaning. Therefore, teachers and caregivers need to have the knowledge and skills that are consistent with the cultural norms of the child.

- o The other challenge is children parents themselves, because, as they give for English, they may not encourage and support their children to understand and learn with their own language. Evidences have shown that parents are more likely to communicate with teachers and participate in their children's learning when local languages are used (UNESCO, 2006). The difference in the language of the school and those spoken at home excludes the involvement of the parents and the local communities from the educational process of their children, especially if parents are illiterate in the foreign language used in schools (Awopegba, Oduolowu & Nsamenang, 2013).

- o The other most important point is the methods or the approaches how Amharic language is taught or presented is so difficult that it may become a problem for the children to understand the language easily. For instance, one ECCE diploma prospective graduate has recognized that while writing or copying letters, numbers and words on their textbooks, children are not shown where to start and end. This respondent further explained with example that when children are told to write any letter, they have to know whether they start from up or down, vertical or horizontal, right to left or the opposite way and end in what way. However, he observed during his repetitive government preschools visits that this approach is not considered. Furthermore, one private preschool respondent said that Amharic is not

supported with so many teaching aids as that of English. She added that English subjects are supported by audiovisual and colorful materials; however, Amharic types have no such things.

4.3.5. Parents Participation in their Children's Learning

It is well recognized that preschool care and education is a crucial period of the child, and most of the time, for its success, many agencies have expected to be involved. Among these supports, the intervention and contribution of the home is equally important as that of the school for the growth of the child. Children who get an appropriate and holistic parent support and follow up, they will bring a difference in their overall development. Zigler, Gilliam & Jones (2006) have said that parental involvement is a key for early childhood care and education as that of physical space and materials; teacher qualifications, teacher-child ratios; positive teacher-child relationships. Parents' interest in their children's education and their involvement with their children in learning activities, from talking about school experiences, to assisting with homework, to participating in after-school activities, can have a tremendous positive impact on children's academic success and retention in school (Heymann & Cassola, 2012). Findings, according to Mitchell and Taylor (2015), also suggested that the powerful role ECCE services might play in collaborating with families in order to meet educational aims. They said that over the past decades, research on parent/ teacher collaboration has shown that when communities, parents and teachers work together as partners with shared, meaningful, educational aims in mind, the potential for improving children's learning outcomes is enhanced (Mitchell & Taylor, 2015). The construction of a curriculum that welcomes each child and provides a holistic nurturing environment in which every child can grow to its full potential can therefore not be constructed without involving the family, and it is not possible to build a welcoming curriculum for the child without welcoming his or her parents (Marope & Kaga, 2015). Hence, preschools should welcome parents and appreciated as partners of education (Vos & Weijers, 2012).

Similarly, this study indicated that private, government, "international" and missionary preschool participants agreed that the involvement of parent on their children's care and education has a great impact on all domains of child development. However, what is practically considered in

this study, in general, is that parent participation is not as expected; especially, in government preschools even though it is getting improving. While supporting their children, most of parents have also inclined towards the academic components; because, their contribution mainly focus on helping their children on homework and worksheet activities, facilitate a study time and give tutorial, and worry about the test or exam results and even ranks of their children. This orientation, actually, has taken from preschools, because, these preschools, as it has discussed previously, spend much of their time on the same activities, that is knowledge and cognitive domain development, and they guide and advise parents to follow their approaches, accordingly.

4.3.6. Assessment of Children's Learning Achievement

In the process of early childhood care and education provision, examining the focus and techniques of assessment is an important issue, because, it helps to measure the effectiveness of the program. Mindes (2014) has noted that once teachers identified or developed learning goals and objectives for a specified period—week, month, quarter, semester, or year—and planned the activities to carry out these goals, they need to select a method to assess the progress. Assessment in ECCE, according to Nutbrown, is the process of identifying the details of children's knowledge, skills and understanding in order to build a detailed picture of the child's development and subsequent learning needs Nutbrown (1999). It is a part of the process of understanding what children know, understand and can do so that future teaching steps can be appropriately planned (Nutbrown, 2006). Children are assessed because teachers and parents want to know what the children are learning. It sets the tone for a child's overall educational experience, highlights the child's strengths and builds a foundation to address the limitations or needs of the child. In other words, assessment can help teachers to discover who children are, what they can (and cannot) do, and how we can help children grow and learn (Browne & Gordon, 2011).

Assessment of young children must cover all aspects of a child's development and must be concerned with attitudes, feelings, social and physical characteristics. . . . Learning is not compartmentalized under subject headings for young children (Linfield et al, 2008). A good assessment tool monitors progress in each developmental area so that plans can be made to

challenge the child physically, socially, emotionally, creatively, and intellectually. A child develops as a whole, and each area of growth influencing and being influenced by what changes take place in other areas; therefore, teachers should see the interrelationships among areas of development (Browne & Gordon, 2011). Therefore, assessments that include multiple domains, modes, and perspectives (physical and motor development, social and emotional development, language usage, cognition and general knowledge, and approaches toward learning) are particularly important for young children. They should capture the breadth of children's development, including all five domains (New & Cochran, 2007).

However, the analysis of this study showed that, the focus of the assessment is mainly developed to measure the knowledge of children which mostly conducted through paperwork. The study showed that most private, government, "international" and missionary preschools learning assessments have conducted for the purpose of knowing the understanding level of children; or to know whether children understood the concepts of what they have learnt or not. Throughout all preschools, the assessment techniques and their procedures are almost the same, and these include, tests, exams (mid or quarter and final or semester), worksheets, and administered and given at various time intervals (from two weeks to one or two month (s). In addition, classwork, homework, presentation, demonstration, question and answer session, and observation are among the techniques. Mindes has noted that many early childhood professionals believe that tests do not measure children's thinking, problem-solving ability, creativity, or responsibility for their own learning (Mindes, 2014). Children know so much more than they are 'taught,' and what is tested may not be the important learning that the children have done" (Bergan & Feld, 1993 as cited in Browne & Gordon, 2011). Howard Gardner, whose work on multiple intelligences is well known, affirms that young children do not function well in common test situations, nor do the test results necessarily reflect children's true knowledge or skills. He further added that most tests focus on cognitive and language skills; such a narrow focus ignores other areas of development (Browne & Gordon, 2011).

Therefore, the purpose and approaches of assessments of all preschools aren't considered the holistic development of the child; even the knowledge part is not measured in the way which is presented above, because, to assess the mental capacity of children is more than testing and

presentation. To observe the achievement of children on a given domain, we need to use various techniques with careful design, and scoring a better result on a given test or an exam will not guarantee for the mental capacity of the child. In relation to this idea, one respondent said that a given test will not decide the potential of a child, because, she added that what they respond now may forget later, therefore, she said, tests and exams have conducted for the sake of fulfilling the formality. It is also observed in three private preschools that children copy one another while taking an exam. Similarly, another respondent also said that parents are asking the reason why their children are failed to answer questions of an exam or a test what they know well. Therefore, as Ministry of Education ECCE official said, preschool teachers have limited knowledge about assessment, because, he observed that, by the name of assessment, teachers are testing their children regularly, instead of observing their needs, interests, perspectives and give support, accordingly. In relation to the importance of observation, Nutbrown (2006) said that it is a crucial part of understanding and assessing children's learning. It is the key to identifying and supporting children's learning, and celebrating each child's achievements and it provides an insight into each child's world (Linfield et al, 2008). Observing young children in action is the key to early childhood assessment (Browne & Gordon, 2011). Miller said that early childhood classrooms contain multiple activities and multiple opportunities for observation as a means of assessment (Miller, 1996).

Furthermore, the negative effects of these types of assessments also showed on many children, which sometimes extended to parents. Children who cannot score a good result on a given assessment (s) and couldn't get the symbolic or material rewards of the teacher have revealed different bad feelings like sadness, unhappiness and even crying which have also extended to parents. Therefore, these bad emotions will have a negative impact on the future education and development of a child.

4.3.7. Provision of Childcare

In the process of early childhood care and education provision, the dimension of child care is as important as education, and the success of one can enhance the effectiveness of the other, and vice versa; therefore, one can't exist without the other. Marope and Kaga (2015) have also

indicated that children's care and educational needs are intertwined. Poor care, health, nutrition, and physical and emotional security can affect educational potentials in the form of mental retardation, impaired cognitive and behavioral capacities, motor development delay, depression, difficulties with concentration and attention. They further said that unlike other areas of education, ECCE places strong emphasis on developing the *whole* child – attending to his or her social, emotional, cognitive and physical needs – in order to establish a solid and broad foundation for lifelong learning and well-being. Likewise, UNESCO has commented that early childhood care and education programs should be comprehensive-focusing on all of the child's needs and encompassing health, nutrition and hygiene as well as cognitive and psycho-social development. They should be provided in the child's mother tongue and help to identify and enrich the care and education of children with special needs (UNESCO, 2006).

In the same way, in this study, child care has given a great place in all private, government, “international” and missionary preschools; however, it is mostly related to preschool materials and infrastructures like classrooms, dining and sleeping rooms, playgrounds and its equipment, including class size (especially, in government preschools). Definitely, these things are very important to provide the right child care. For instance, in this study, it is recognized that the playground of all preschools, except in two private types, is hard surfaced and rocky, and its playing tools are made up of metal or steel materials which are not appropriate with the dynamic movements of children, therefore, they are injurious. In this study, child care also rarely related to the load of education, and in this case, there is a claim that children are highly overloaded by so many academic subjects or contents which is above their development level. However, child care is more than what are said above; it is about recognizing the what, how, who, when and where of the lessons; it is about the needs, interest, mood and motivation of children; it is about the education, psychology and personality of teachers, caregivers, support staff, parents and other stakeholders.

As it is discussed under the past themes, especially in the subtheme 1.3, the education portion lacks to consider the holistic features of children; it gives more emphasis for the knowledge elements where academic subjects or lessons are organized and presented by most unqualified

teachers; therefore, this situation, directly or indirectly, has a negative impact on the quality of child care.

Preschool education, according to MOE ECCE official, has so many problems in which its consequences will be reflected on the care dimension. Another official from Addis Ababa Education Bureau said that most private preschool teachers have no relevant qualification, because, he added, there is a thought that anybody who can read and write can teach children about letters and numbers. Therefore, lacking the necessary professional knowledge, skills and attitudes, it is difficult for the teachers and caregivers to address the diverse and dynamic needs of children. Awopegba, Oduolowu & Nsamenang (2013) have noted that the caregiver must be aware of all aspects of the child's development- mental, physical, social, emotional, spiritual and moral development. He needs to plan his or her daily activities for the children to provide opportunity to help the child to develop his or her full potential.

Similarly, most parents, throughout all preschools, have also given more attention for the academics portion that they underestimate the importance of child care and other dimensions of ECCE. Therefore, they have to know the advantages of these elements for the holistic development of their children. Furthermore, it is observed in all private, government, "international" and missionary preschools that teachers and caregivers are also overloaded by so many activities that it is difficult for them to give appropriate care for all children.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

This chapter attempts to highlight the conclusions, recommendations and implications of the study. Here, based on the major findings which obtained from data analysis and discussion section of the study (in chapter four), conclusions are made; and then recommendations and implications are followed.

5.1. CONCLUSIONS

- The study showed that many children, throughout all preschools, are not given the opportunity to learn by themselves, instead, teachers dominantly direct classroom lessons and activities by their own. While presenting the lessons, teachers may use different teaching aids like textbooks, charts, flash cards, white board, TV or LCD, blackboard and other materials; however, when compared with children, teachers use maximum amount of time of a given lesson.
- In relation to the role of play on early childhood care and education, the study found that most participants, in all preschools, including few parents, have a better knowledge about play based childhood education, therefore, it is agreed that play has great benefits for children's learning. However, when it comes to implementation, there is a problem - the actual classroom practices didn't reflect and match with the knowledge teachers have about play. Play based early childhood education for most of them is about songs which most of the time is used for a transition from one lesson to another; it is also about using different teaching aids like flash cards, flip chart, coloring or drawing, etc. and participating children in Q&A sessions of the lessons. It is also found that, except free play, most private, government, "international" and missionary preschool teachers and principals believed that it

will become very difficult for the teacher to let children free and do things by their own. It is also recognized that children of all types of preschools prefer to play outside to inside the classroom; however, they are given limited time for that. The study result has further confirmed that almost all types of free plays which children play or do by themselves around the corners and at playground have no connection with the lessons what they have learned in the classroom. Moreover, most parents of all preschools are concerned with the notion of play based education, because, they afraid that children, through this approach, may not learn and know what is expected at this level, therefore, they have suggested that, in the provision of early childhood care and education, play should be separated from education.

- One of the findings in this study was that ECCE is not developmentally appropriate and culturally relevant. Almost all children of private, government, “international” and missionary preschools spent their time on the same lessons and activities throughout the day and are overloaded by so many contents – the contents, whether they are presented in the form of subjects (private and “international” preschools) or themes (government and missionary preschools), are the same; and there is no anything which came from the child and his or her family and the society. In general, the study concluded that, the early childhood care and education practices are not developmentally appropriate and culturally relevant throughout all preschools.

- In this study, the benefits of ECCE are inclined towards education, knowledge construction and learning or to formal education. As a result, almost all children of all types of preschools are spending much of their time, at preschools and in their homes, on education and knowledge dominated activities. It is found that, every day, throughout all preschools, children are expected to learn four to five lessons, which most of the time presented in the form of subjects, do classwork and homework. The study has also shown that when the whole or part of the lesson has some practical activities, children talk and question one another (including the teacher), show different emotions (like happy, angry, laugh and eager to show their work) and move their body. Therefore, even though classroom lessons and activities mainly prepared for the development of cognitive domain, it is also considered

throughout all preschools that, there are few activities which help children to develop their social, emotional, physical, language and creative dimensions.

- The other important element considered in this study was about child care; and in all preschools, it has been given a great place; however, it is mostly related to preschool materials and infrastructures like the number and size of classrooms, dining and sleeping rooms, playgrounds and its equipment, including class size (the number of children per teacher (s) and the wideness of the classroom, specially, in government preschools). In private preschools, it is also, rarely, related with the load of education in which case there is a claim that children are highly overloaded by so many academic subjects. Therefore, the holistic aspect of child care is not well understood and implemented throughout all preschools.
- It is found that all private, except one, and “international” preschools are using English language as a medium of instruction and flexibly as a means of formal and informal communication. Government and missionary preschools, however, are using Amharic language, dominantly. It is also understood that the same subject which has been organized in both languages, but the one which is presented in English is easier for the children than that of Amharic. On the other hand, almost all children prefer the Amharic language for communication than English.
- The study also indicated across all preschools that the objectives and techniques of assessment are not appropriate for this level of education. The focus of the assessment mainly developed to measure the knowledge of children and mostly conducted through paperwork. It has shown that most assessments are conducted for the purpose of knowing the understanding level of children; or to know whether children are understood the concepts of what they have learnt or not. Furthermore, throughout all preschools, the assessment techniques and their procedures are almost the same - there are tests, exams (mid or quarter and final or semester), worksheets, and administered and given at various time intervals (from two weeks to one or two month/s. In addition, classwork, homework, presentation,

demonstration, question and answer session, and observation are among the techniques. Moreover, the negative effects of these types of assessments have also been seen on many children, which sometimes extended to parents. It is confirmed that children, who cannot score a good result on a given assessment/s and couldn't get the symbolic or material rewards of the teacher, have revealed different bad emotions like sadness, unhappiness and even cry which have also disturbed parents.

- The majority of the participants of the study believed that the involvement of parents on their children's care and education has a great impact on the overall development of the child; however, the study showed that parent participation, especially, in government preschools, is low, although, it is getting improving in other types of preschools. Their contributions have also inclined towards the academic components - helping children on their homework and worksheet activities, facilitate a study time and give tutorial or recruit a tutor and worry about the test or exam results and even ranks of their children.

5.2. RECOMMENDATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

- The study has revealed that child centred education which is the core of early childhood care and education is impossible for the teacher to practice in the classroom, especially, because of the restless situation of children. However, child centered education, which was coined from developmental principles, has long been advocated as the best and most equitable approach to teaching young children. In a child centered education, the curriculum begins with the needs and interests of the child and responds to the unique characteristics of childhood (Ryan, 2005). Child centered instructional approaches which is also referred to as indirect, learner centered, or student centered methods of teaching allow a child to explore the environment independently and results in learning opportunities that are selected by the child. It is based on free will of the child and not relying on external motivation such as rewards or punishment (Casey and Carter, 2016). It is shown in children's actions – that is, the active child – being allowed to touch, smell, manipulate, create, and talk about the topic he or she is learning about (Sommer, Prambling-Samuelsson & Hundeide, 2010). Therefore, to improve this gap, continuous professional development interventions, mainly, through

practical orientation, are needed for all ECCE teachers and teacher trainees or facilitators, principals and officials of the area. In addition, for parents, continuous awareness creation programs have to be facilitated on child centered education.

- The other important point that is noticed in this study is the problem of developmentally appropriate and culturally relevant early childhood care and education practices. It is believed that developmentally appropriate practice is emerged from the knowledge of how children develop and learn (UNESCO, 2016) and derived from children’s developmental needs and interests, as well as from their family, social and cultural environments (Nightingale & Payne, 2013). However, these core elements of early childhood care and education are not considered throughout all preschools. Knowing whether materials, equipment, or curriculum content is right for children requires a strong knowledge of child development. When an individual teacher knows about the typical physical, social, emotional, language, and cognitive development of children, then that teacher will understand what needs to go into the framework of an age-appropriate classroom and age-appropriate activities. A teacher who does not have command of this information will have difficulty with planning and implementing activities (Miller, 1996). This concept encompasses so many basic components of the area; and it is indicated that ECCE which lacks the fundamental elements of developmentally appropriate and culturally relevant practices, will have an adverse effect on the overall development of the child. Hence, continuous professional development programs are also needed on this concept.

- One of the major findings of the study is that many teachers, specially, from private and “international” preschools have no relevant qualification; and those who are certified with some ECCE have also lack of appropriate training for the area. However, the quality of early years provision and the need for a well-trained and appropriately qualified workforce are the key issues of ECCE. If those working with young children have the necessary skills, knowledge and understanding, they will also have the potential to offer meaningful experience all young children deserve (Nutbrown & Clough, 2014). The knowledge, skills and beliefs about children and teaching and learning are gained through appropriate teacher education/training and professional development (Mitchell & Taylor, 2015). Professional

development opportunities of kindergarten/preschool staff tend to focus on pedagogies and instructional practices, curriculum implementation, language and subject matters, monitoring and assessment, and communication and management (OECD, 2012). Therefore, to produce well qualified professionals of the area, ECCE training institutes should revisit their curriculum, guides, manuals, their staffs, in general their practices; above all, the early childhood care and education policy framework of the country need to be revised based on the current development of the area.

- The other thing which is found in this study is knowledge and education components are given more emphasis than other domains of child developments. In Ethiopia, this is the long rooted belief and it extends to all education levels until higher education. In Ethiopian society, knowledge and mental activities are highly praised than other components of child development and it is reflected throughout the curriculums, as well. In the process of care and education provision, recognizing the holistic conditions of the child is a critical issue. Many scholars commented that ECCE includes a wide range of integrated programs planned and delivered to enhance the cognitive, social, emotional, nutritional and physical development of children during the early years of life or prior to the time they begin primary school (Awopegba, Oduolowu & Nsamenang, 2013; UNESCO & UNICEF, 2012; Rao & Sun, 2010). A classroom lesson or activities which couldn't address the mental, physical, social or cultural, language, behavioral and creative backgrounds of the child in equal proportion, will not be effective at the end. According to Morrison domains of children's development—physical, social, emotional, and cognitive—are closely related. Development in one domain influences and is influenced by development in other domains (Morrison, 2004). Therefore, to deliver appropriate child care and education, we need to consider the holistic approaches of child development.

- The other core component of ECCE which was observed in this study is about play based education; and it is found that participants have good knowledge about the benefits of play based childhood education. It is well established as a pedagogical approach with early childhood education (O'Connor, 2017). It basically refers to the way in which an activity is carried out in early childhood education (Oers, 2012). However, the study has shown that

there is a serious problem during implementation – what teachers employed as play based education in their classroom didn't actually reflect that. According to Miller and Almon (2009) in Wisneski and Reifel (2012), most teachers say that play in kindergarten is important, although few teachers or administrators are able to articulate the relationship between play and learning. They said that many classroom activities that adults describe as play are in fact highly teacher directed and involve little or no imagination or creativity on the part of children (Wisneski & Reifel, 2012). Therefore, all people who engaged in the care and education of children, including parents, should encourage and facilitate play based learning approaches for all children - the curriculum, the guidebooks or textbooks and resources, lessons, classroom setups, playgrounds and equipment need to be prepared and created, accordingly. Specially, preschool teachers and principals who take the lion share of the practice need to update themselves continuously.

- The other gap that is observed in this study is about the holistic nature of child care, it is not well understood and practiced, and most of the time, it is associated with preschool infrastructures and classroom materials. However, child care is more than that; it is mainly about recognizing the what, how, who, when and where of the lessons; it is about the needs, interest, mood and motivation of children; it is about the education, psychology and personality of teachers, caregivers, support staff, parents and other stakeholders; it also considers the nutrition and hygiene of children and the preschool as a whole. Therefore, in the provision of early childhood care and education, it should be well understood that education and care are inseparable entities, if one becomes good; the other will also show the same outcome and the opposite also true for both. According to Marope and Kaga (2015), unlike other areas of education, ECCE places strong emphasis on developing the *whole* child – in order to establish a solid and broad foundation for lifelong learning and well-being of the child, the social, emotional, cognitive and physical needs of the child should be attend. Therefore, those who are working in the area of ECCE program need to know that knowledge development only, as it is observed in the above point, will not create the whole child, unless it accompanied with physical, social, emotional and language development components. When the wholeness of ECCE becomes effective, the education and care need of the child will be addressed.

- Language of instruction and communication is also the other component of this study; and it was observed that English is the dominant language in private and “international” preschools, however, in government and missionary preschools Amharic is the dominant language. According to the findings of this study, most participants believed that children learn better in English than Amharic language. However, many similar studies have found the opposite result. For instance, Heymann and Cassola said that, the positive effects of mother tongue based schooling are incontrovertible, it offer children an opportunity to: learn to read and write in a language they understand; learn a second (and possibly third) language orally and in writing; experience success in learning curricular content; feel pride in their home language(s) and culture(s); participate actively in class; demonstrate what they have learned; get help with schoolwork from their family members; become bi(multi)lingual and bi(multi)literate; and participate productively and equitably in society (Heymann & Cassola, 2012). Similarly, there is a strong belief among researchers that the use of mother tongue as medium of education leads to a higher competence in all curricular subjects than the foreign languages. A child will learn to read and write only that which he or she understands and makes meaning (Awopegba, Oduolowu & Nsamenang, 2013). When the school fails to use a language that the learner speaks and understands well, the school fails the learner in virtually every way, and the results are limited-access to schooling; high repetition, failure, and dropout rates; poor quality of education; and low self-esteem, all of which are well documented (Heymann & Cassola, 2012). Hence, it is essential to recognize this truth and work towards mother tongue based education. We need to also consider the experiences of other countries on this matter; their achievements and challenges will help us to improve our own problems.

- The study has also showed that, the focus of the assessment is mainly developed to measure the knowledge of children and mostly conducted through paperwork which tests, exams and worksheet assignments predominantly used to assess children. According to Browne and Gordon (2011), in choosing an appropriate assessment system, it is important to understand what a developmentally appropriate, valid, relative, and ethical assessment looks like. They said that before choosing any assessment tool or procedure, know the age group and the

purpose as well as the children's cultures, languages, abilities, and disabilities. Early childhood organizations are concerned that excessive emphasis on assessment could result in inappropriate changes to early childhood environments if, for example, teachers were to focus children's learning activities on specific items of a test rather than provide a range of classroom experiences related to the broad developmental constructs being assessed (New & Cochran, 2007). Therefore, observation is a crucial part of understanding and assessing children's learning (Nutbrown, 2006). It is the key to identifying and supporting children's learning, and celebrating each child's achievements. It provides an insight into each child's world (Linfield et al, 2008). Observing young children in action is the key to early childhood assessment (Browne & Gordon, 2011). Observing children at play informs us about what they have learnt through the taught curriculum, their interests and what makes sense to them. The observation process enables early years educators to identify appropriate ways to further support and extend the children's learning, and to signpost progress in their learning and development (Linfield et al, 2008). Therefore, we need to change the attitude and practice of assessing children's learning. Many parents, regardless of their education level, want to see the school performance of their children through tests, exams and other similar activities; and whether, they believe it or not, preschools and teachers work to address the needs of the parent. That is why, the attitude and practice of teachers, parents and other stakeholders have towards the assessment of children's learning has to be improved. Continuous professional and awareness creation interventions are needed.

- Finally, the study has shown that in the process of child care and education provision, even though it is improving in some types of preschools like in private, parent participation is low; and their contribution has mainly shifted to the academics component. However, families are as much a part of the process of early care and education - as are caregivers, educators, particular facilities, different curricula, pedagogical practices, quality standards, and regulations etcetera (Burger, 2013). Parental involvement is a key ingredient in raising the quality of ECCE provision. Building a welcoming program for the child is not possible without welcoming his or her parents (Marope & Kaga, 2015). To involve parents in their children's learning are not so much born of new and innovative ideas but are deeply rooted in a view that, as Vygotsky might have said, children's learning is social and the first social

group in which most children learn is their immediate family (Nutbrown & Clough, 2014). In general, the involvement of parents on their children's care and education has immense advantages. Therefore, schools need to create a simple and convenient communication channel with parents; because of their time constraint and type of career, for most of them, going to school regularly, may not be appropriate. Hence, if preschools can resolve this problem, parent participation will be improved.

Glossary

Child-Centered - designed to promote a child's personal qualities focused on the needs, interests, safety, and well-being of children.

Cognitive Theory - any theory of mind that focuses on mental activities, such as perceiving, attending, thinking, remembering, evaluating, planning, language, and creativity.

Constructivism – it is a learning theory which suggests that humans construct knowledge and meaning from their experiences.

Continuous Professional Development - The continuing education or training that is often expected or required for all professionals in education.

Dire Dawa – A city in east-central Ethiopia which located at 452 kilometers (281 miles) from the capital city of Addis Ababa.

Holistic Learning Approach – It is a learning approach which considers all aspects of the learner's personality (cognitive, social, physical, emotional and moral qualities) for more effective and comprehensive learning.

Jean Piaget (1896–1980) - Swiss child psychologist and epistemologist: his theoretical and research work on the stages of cognitive development in children was enormously influential; and he was also a central proponent of the theoretical perspective known as constructivism.

Lev Vygotsky (1896–1934) - Russian psychologist: known for his sociocultural theory of cognitive development emphasizing the interaction of children's natural abilities with the cultural mediators of written and oral language; he held that developmental stages are partially driven by education and that education should take place in the zone of proximal development.

Not Educated – Uneducated or illiterate

Scaffolding – It is a teaching style that supports and facilitates the student as he or she learns a new skill or concept, with the ultimate goal of the student becoming self-reliant.

Walda Haywat – He was the 17th century Ethiopian philosopher who was the student of Zar'a Ya'aqob.

Zar'a Ya'aqob – He was the 17th century Ethiopian philosopher.

Zone of Proximal Development – It is a concept within the sociocultural theory which refer to the difference between a child's actual level of ability and the level of ability that he or she can achieve when assisted by, or working in cooperation with, older or more experienced partners (e.g., adults or more knowledgeable peers).

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Appendix A1

ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF GRAGUATE STUDIES CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL AND COMPARATIVE EDUCATION AND POLICY STUDIES

Information and Request Letter

Dear Parent or Guardian,

My name is Mahmud Reshad and I am a doctoral student of International and Comparative Education and Policy Studies Department in Addis Ababa University. Currently, I am writing my thesis *entitled “A Comparative Study of the Practice of Early Childhood Care and Education across Private, Government, International and Missionary Preschools of Addis Ababa”* for the partial fulfilment of the requirements for PhD in International and Comparative Education.

The main objective of this study was an in-depth exploration of the practices of preschool teachers and children in the course of care and education provision. The study participate children, parents, teachers, school principals, Addis Ababa City Education Bureau and Ministry of Education officials, and mainly conducted at preschool settings. Therefore, based on the information obtained from the preschool, you are actively participating on the teaching and learning activities of your child. Thus, you and your child are kindly requested to participate in this study and be assured that the data collected will not be used for other purposes.

Hence, please give your permission by signing this request form.

Name: _____ Signature: _____

Your Child’s Name: _____

Thank you!

Mahmud Reshad

Appendix A2

አዲስ አበባ ዩኒቨርሲቲ

የድህረ ምረቃ ትምህርት ክፍል

የዓለም አቀፍ ትምህርት ንፅፅሮች እና ፖሊሲ ጥናት ማዕከል

የትብብር ደብዳቤ

የተከበሩ ወላጅ፡

ስሜ ማህሙድ ረሻድ ይባላል። በአዲስ አበባ ዩኒቨርሲቲ በዓለም አቀፍ ትምህርት ንፅፅሮች እና ፖሊሲ ጥናት ትምህርት ክፍል የሶስተኛ ዲግሪ (ፒ ኤች ዲ) ትምህርቱን በመከታተል ላይ እገኛለሁ። በአሁኑ ሰዓትም በአዲስ አበባ ከተማ አስተዳደር ውስጥ በሚገኙ የመንግስት እና የግል ቅድመ መደበኛ (ኬጂ) ትምህርት ቤቶች የትምህርት አሰጣጥ ላይ የመመረቂያ ጥናቱን በማዘጋጀት ላይ እገኛለሁ።

ይህ ጥናት የቅድመ መደበኛ (ኬጂ) ትምህርት ላይ ያሉ ህፃናት ተማሪዎችን፣ ወላጆችን፣ መምህራንን፣ ርዕሰ መምህራንን፣ የአዲስ አበባ ትምህርት ቢሮ እና የትምህርት ሚኒስቴር ሃላፊዎች የሚሳተፉበት ሲሆን ጥናቱም በዋነኝነት በትምህርት ቤት አካባቢ የሚካሄድ ነው።

በመሆኑም ልጄ ከሚማርበት ወይም ከምትማርበት ትምህርት ቤት ባገኘሁት መረጃ መሰረት እርሶ በልጄ ትምህርት ጉዳይ ላይ ጥሩ የሆነ ተሳትፎ እንደሚያደርጉ ስለተረዳሁ በዚህ ጥናት ውስጥ ተሳትፎ እንዲያደርጉ ከታላቅ አክብሮት ጋር ተመርጠዋል። በዚህ ጥናት የሚሰበሰበው መረጃ በዋናነት ትኩረት የሚያደርገው ህፃናት በምን ዓይነት መንገድ በመማር ላይ እንደሚገኙ እና የመምህራን የማስተማር መንገድ ላይ ሲሆን፣ የሚሰበሰበውም መረጃ ከታለመለት ዓላማ ውጭ ለሌላ ጉዳይ የማይውል መሆኑን አጥብቄ ላረጋግጥሎ እፈልጋለሁ።

ስለዚህ ለዚህ ቃለ መጠይቅ ፍቃደኛ ከሆኑ በዚህ የትብብር ደብዳቤ ላይ ስሞን እና ፊርማዎን በማኖር እንዲያረጋግጡ በትህትና እጠይቃለሁ።

የእርሶ ስም: _____ ፊርማ: _____

የልጄ ስም: _____

ለተሳትፎዎ በድጋሚ አመሰግናለሁ!

Appendix B1

ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF GRAGUATE STUDIES CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL AND COMPARATIVE EDUCATION AND POLICY STUDIES

Interview and Focus Group Discussion (FGD) Guiding Questions for Children Parents

Dear Parent (s) / Guardian (s):

My name is Mahmud Reshad and I am a graduate student of International and Comparative Education and Policy Studies Department in Addis Ababa University. Currently, I am writing my thesis *entitled “A Comparative Study of the Practice of Early Childhood Care and Education across Private, Government, International and Missionary Preschools of Addis Ababa”* for the partial fulfilment of the requirements for PhD in International and Comparative Education.

The study participate children, parents, teachers, school principals, Addis Ababa City Education Bureau and Ministry of Education officials, and mainly conducted at preschool settings. Dear parent(s), in order to achieve the objectives of the study, the following interview and focus group discussion (FGD) guiding questions are designed to collect data from you. Therefore, you are kindly requested to participate in this study and be assured that the data collected will not be used for other purposes.

Thank you!

Date: -----

Education Background: -----

Interview / FGD Time: Begin: ----- **Completed:** -----

1. Can you tell me your education background, please?
2. Why do you send your child to school? And how do you explain its value for your child?
3. How do you view the learning condition of your child and what do you aspire from it?
4. How do you choose the school? Do you have good relationship? How often do you visit the school?
5. What mode of learning do you prefer for your child, is it child initiated type or direct teaching style? Why?
6. How do you support your child's learning?
7. How your child spend his/her time when he/she is at home? Does he/she play or do his/her homework? Can you estimate, how much time does he/she take to finish the homework?
8. How does the feeling of your child when he/she goes to and comes from school?
9. What comes to your mind when you hear about children play? Do you think separated from learning or integrated to learning?
10. Do you think the lessons and the activities of the text books are relevant and appropriate to your child?
11. What lessons and activities of the school are difficult for your child?
12. How does the school recognize the home culture, language and your child's background in its teaching learning practices?
13. How does the learning achievement of your child assessed? Do you and your child comfortable with that? What do you suggest?
14. Can you mention few important elements of quality preschool education which your child couldn't get from the school?
15. Finally, what do you suggest to improve the quality of your child's education?

Appendix B2

አዲስ አበባ ዩኒቨርሲቲ

የድህረ ምረቃ ትምህርት ክፍል

የዓለም አቀፍ ትምህርት ንፅፅሮች እና ፖሊሲ ጥናት ማዕከል

ለወላጆች የተዘጋጀ ቃለ መጠይቅ እና የቡድን መወያያ ጥያቄዎች

የተከበሩ ወላጅ:

ስሜ ማህሙድ ረሻድ ይባላል። በአዲስ አበባ ዩኒቨርሲቲ በዓለም አቀፍ ትምህርት ንፅፅሮች እና ፖሊሲ ጥናት ትምህርት ክፍል የሶስተኛ ዲግሪ ትምህርቱን በመከታተል ላይ እገኛለሁ። በአሁኑ ሰዓትም “በአዲስ አበባ ከተማ አስተዳደር ውስጥ የሚገኙ የመንግስት እና የግል ቅድመ መደበኛ ትምህርት ቤቶች የትምህርት እና እንክብካቤ አሰጣጥ” በሜል ርዕስ ላይ የመመረቂያ ጥናቱን በማዘጋጀት ላይ እገኛለሁ።

ይህ ጥናት የቅድመ መደበኛ ትምህርት ላይ ያሉ ህፃናት ተማሪዎችን፣ ወላጆችን፣ መምህራንን፣ ርዕሰ መምህራንን፣ የአዲስ አበባ ትምህርት ቢሮ እና የትምህርት ሚኒስቴር ሃላፊዎች የሚሳተፉበት ሲሆን ጥናቱም በዋነኝነት በቅድመ መደበኛ ትምህርት ቤት አካባቢ የሚካሄድ ነው።

በመሆኑም በዚህ ጥናት ውስጥ እርሶ ስለተካተቱ በዚህ ቃለ መጠይቅ ወይም የቡድን ውይይት ላይ በመሳተፍ የጥናቱ አንድ አካል እንዲሆኑ ስጋብዝዎ ከታላቅ አክብሮት ጋር ሲሆን፣ ይህ የሚሰበሰበው መረጃ ከታለመለት ዓላማ ውጭ ለሌላ ጉዳይ የማይውል መሆኑን አጥብቄ ለማስገንዘብ እፈልጋለሁ።

አመሰግናለሁ!

ቀን: _____ የትምህርት ደረጃ: _____

ቃለ መጠይቁ/የቡድን ውይይቱ የጀመረበት ሰዓት: _____ ያበቃበት ሰዓት: _____

1. አባቱን የትምህርት ደረጃዎን ሁኔታ ሊነግሩን ይችላሉ
2. ልጅን ወደ ትምህርት ቤት ለምንድን ነው የሚልኩት/ካት ፤ ይህን በማድረግ ልጅ ምን ይጠቀማል/ትጠቀማለች ብለው ያምናሉ
3. የልጅን የትምህርት ሁኔታ እንዴት ይገልፁታል ፤ ከሚማረው/ከምትማረው ትምህርትስ ምን ይጠብቃሉ
4. የልጅን ትምህርት ቤት እንዴት መረጡት ፤ ከትምህርት ቤቱ ጋር መልካም የሆነ ግንኙነት አሎት፤ ትምህርት ቤቱን ምን ያህል ጊዜ ይጎበኛሉ
5. ልጅ በምን ዓይነት መንገድ ትምህርቱን/ቷን ቢማር/ብትማር ይመርጣሉ፤ በራሱ/ሷ መንገድ ቢማር/ብትማር ይሻላል ወይስ ሙሉ በሙሉ በመምህሩ/ሯ ቁጥጥር ስር ሆኖ ቢማር/ብትማር ይበጃል
6. የልጅን ትምህርት እንዴት ባለ ሁኔታ ነው እገዛ በማድረግ ላይ የሚገኙት
7. ልጅ ቤት በሆነ/ች ጊዜ ጊዜውን/ዋን እንዴት ባለ ሁኔታ ነው የሚያሳልፈው/የምታሳልፈው ፤ ይጫወታል/ትጫወታለች ወይስ የቤት ስራውን/ዋን ይሰራል/ትሰራለች፤ የቤት ስራው/ዋ በሚሰራበት/በምትሰራበት ወቅት በግምት ምን ያህል ጊዜ ይወስድበታል/ይወስድባታል
8. ልጅ ወደ ትምህርት ቤት ሲሄድ/ስትሄድ እና ወደ ቤት ሲመለስ/ስትመለስ ስሜቱ/ቷ ምን ይመስላል
9. የልጆች የጫወታ ነገር ሲነሳ ምን ይሰማዎታል፤ የትምህርቱ አካል መሆን አለበት ብለው ያምናሉ ወይስ የልጆች ጫወታ ከትምህርት ጋር መቀላቀል የለበትም ይላሉ
10. ልጅ የሚማርባቸው/የምትማርባቸው መፅሃፍት ውስጥ የሚገኙ ፅንሰ ሃሳቦች ጠቃሚና ልጅን ይመጥነዋል/ይመጥናታል ብለው ያምናሉ
11. ልጅ ትምህርት ቤት ከሚማራቸው/ከምትማራቸው ትምህርቶች ወይም ፅንሰ ሃሳቦች ውስጥ የቱ/የትኞቹ ይከብዱታል/ይከብዳታል
12. የልጅ ትምህርት ቤት የልጅን የቋንቋ ሁኔታ ፣ ቤተሰባዊ ባህል እና የመሳሰሉትን ነገሮች በመማር ማስተማር እንቅስቃሴው ውስጥ እንዴት ባለ ሁኔታ በማስተናገድ ላይ ይገኛል
13. ትምህርት ቤቱ የልጅን የትምህርት ስኬት እንዴት እና በምን ዓይነት መንገድ ነው የሚመዘነው፤ በሁኔታው ደስተኛ ኖት፤ በዚህ ላይ ምን ሃሳብ ይሰጣሉ
14. ልጅ በሚማርበት/በምትማርበት ትምህርት ቤት ማገኘት ያልቻለው/ችው፤ ነገር ግን ለቅድመ መደበኛ ትምህርት እጅግ አስፈላጊ ናቸው ብለው የሚሏቸው ነገሮች መጥቀስ ይችላሉ

15. በመጨረሻም የቅድመ መደበኛ ትምህርት ጥራት ለማሻሻል ምን ቢደረግ ጥሩ ነው ብለው ያምናሉ

Appendix C1

**ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF GRAGUATE STUDIES CENTER FOR
INTERNATIONAL AND COMPARATIVE EDUCATION AND POLICY STUDIES**

Interview Guiding Questions for ECCE Prospective Teachers

Dear Participant:

My name is Mahmud Reshad and I am a graduate student of International and Comparative Education and Policy Studies Department in Addis Ababa University. Currently, I am writing my thesis *entitled “A Comparative Study of the Practice of Early Childhood Care and Education across Private, Government, International and Missionary Preschools of Addis Ababa”* for the partial fulfilment of the requirements for PhD in International and Comparative Education.

The study participate children, parents, teachers, school principals, Addis Ababa City Education Bureau and Ministry of Education officials, and mainly conducted at preschool settings. Dear participant, in order to achieve the objectives of the study, the following interview guiding questions are designed to collect data from you. Therefore, you are kindly requested to participate in this study and be assured that the data collected will not be used for other purposes.

Thank you!

Date: ----- Qualification: ----- Experience: -----

Interview Time: Begin: ----- Completed: -----

1. Did you attend early childhood care and education when you were a child? How was it?
2. How do you explain the benefits of early childhood education for the child?
3. How do you relate what you have learnt at college with the actual classroom practices of the preschools?
4. How do you see the role of play in children learning? Should it be separated from learning or integrated to learning? How?
5. How do you consider the approaches of children's learning? Do you think they should learn by themselves or directed by their teachers? How?
6. What do you understand by 'child-centeredness' and active learning method?
7. How did you see the use of language as medium of instruction and communication at preschools? And what is your position on this matter?
8. How did you get the difficulty level of children's text books and teachers' guides?
9. Do classroom activities and lessons recognize the physical, mental and emotional level of the child? (Do they enjoy the activity? Are they interested and involved? Do they take their own initiatives?)
10. In your classroom, which core developmental qualities are given more emphasis (Cognitive, Social, Emotional, Communication, Physical)? How?
11. What do you consider the assessment of children's learning and its approaches?
12. What do you suggest to improve the quality of preschool education?

Appendix C2

አዲስ አበባ ዩኒቨርሲቲ የድህረ ምረቃ ትምህርት ክፍል የዓለም አቀፍ ትምህርት ንፅፅሮች እና ፖሊሲ ጥናት ማዕከል

ለእጩ መምህራን የተዘጋጀ ቃለ መጠይቅ

የተከበሩ እጩ መምህር/ት፡

ስሜ ማህሙድ ረሻድ ይባላል። በአዲስ አበባ ዩኒቨርሲቲ በዓለም አቀፍ ትምህርት ንፅፅሮች እና ፖሊሲ ጥናት ትምህርት ክፍል የሶስተኛ ዲግሪ ትምህርቱን በመከታተል ላይ እገኛለሁ። በአሁኑ ሰዓትም “በአዲስ አበባ ከተማ አስተዳደር ውስጥ የሚገኙ የመንግስት እና የግል ቅድመ መደበኛ ትምህርት ቤቶች የትምህርት እና እንክብካቤ አሰጣጥ” በሜል ርዕስ ላይ የመመረቂያ ጥናቱን በማዘጋጀት ላይ እገኛለሁ።

ይህ ጥናት የቅድመ መደበኛ ትምህርት ላይ ያሉ ህፃናት ተማሪዎችን፣ ወላጆችን፣ በትምህርት እና በስራ ላይ የሚገኙ መምህራንን፣ ርዕስ መምህራንን፣ የአዲስ አበባ ትምህርት ቢሮ እና የትምህርት ሚኒስቴር ሃላፊዎች የሚሳተፉበት ሲሆን ጥናቱም በዋነኝነት በቅድመ መደበኛ ትምህርት ቤት አካባቢ የሚካሄድ ነው።

በመሆኑም በዚህ ጥናት ውስጥ እርሶ ስለተካተቱ በዚህ ቃለ መጠይቅ ላይ በመሳተፍ የጥናቱ አንድ አካል እንዲሆኑ ስጋብዝዎ ከታላቅ አክብሮት ጋር ሲሆን፤ ይህ የሚሰበሰበው መረጃ ከታለመለት ዓላማ ውጭ ለሌላ ጉዳይ የማይውል መሆኑን አጥብቄ ለማስገንዘብ እፈልጋለሁ።

አመሰግናለሁ!

ቀን: _____ የትምህርት ደረጃ: _____

ቃለ መጠይቁ የጀመረበት ሰዓት: _____ ያበቃበት ሰዓት: _____

1. የቅድመ መደበኛ ትምህርት ተምረዋል፤ እንዴት ነበር የተማሩት
2. የቅድመ መደበኛ ትምህርት ለህፃናት ምን ዓይነት ጠቀሜታዎች ያሉት ይመስሎታል
3. በኮሌጅ ትምህርት ቆይታዎ በንድፈ ሃሳብ እና በተግባር የተማሯቸው ኮርሶች በተጨማሪም ትምህርት ቤት ካለው እውነታ ጋር ያላቸው ጠቀሜታ እንዴት ያዛምዱታል ፣ በምን ላይ ያተኮሩ ኮርሶችን ቢማሩ/ቢካተቱ የተሻለ ነበር ብለውስ ያምናሉ
4. በልጆች ትምህርት ዙሪያ ጨዋታ ለእርሶ ምን ማለት ነው፣ በትምህርታቸው ላይ ምን ዓይነት ተፅዕኖ ያለው ይመስሎታል፤ ከትምህርታቸው ጋር መያያዝ ወይስ መለያያየት አለበት ብለው ያምናሉ፤ እንዴት
5. ልጆች እንዴት መማር አለባቸው ብለው ያምናሉ፣ ሁሉንም ነገር በራሳቸው መንገድ እንዲማሩ እድል መስጠት ያስፈልጋል ብለው ያምናሉ ወይስ በመምህራን መመራት ይኖርባቸዋል ይላሉ
6. ህፃናት ተኮር እና አሳታፊ የማስተማር ዘዴ ጋር በተያያዘ ምን ዓይነት ግንዛቤ አሉት
7. የክፍል ውስጥ የማስተማሪያ እና የመግባቢያ ቋንቋ አጠቃቀም ምን መምሰል አለበት ብለው ያምናሉ
8. የህፃናቱ መማሪያ መፅሃፍት ክብደት እና ቅለቱን እንዴት አገኙት
9. ህፃናቱ ክፍል ውስጥ የሚማሯቸው ሃሳቦች እና የሚሰሯቸው ነገሮች አይምሯዊ፣ አካላዊ፣ ማህበራዊ፣ ስነ ልቦናዊ እና የቋንቋ ሁኔታቸውን ያገናዘቡ ናቸው (በሚማሩት እና በሚሰሩት ነገሮች ደስተኛ ናቸው፣ በንቃት ይሳተፋሉ፣ ያለ ችግር ስራቸውን ያከናውናሉ)

10. እርሶስ ልጆችን በሚያስተምሩበት ወቅት በይበልጥ ትኩረት የሚደርጉት በየትኛው/ዎቹ የህፃናት እድገት መስራቶች ላይ ነው (ለአይምሮ እድገት፣ ለማህበራዊ እድገት፣ ለአካላዊ እድገት፣ ለቋንቋ እድገት ወይስ ለስነ ልቦና እድገት)፣ እንዴት
11. የልጆችን የትምህርት ስኬት እንዴት እና በምን ዓይነት መንገድ መለካት ወይም መመዘን አለበት ብለው ያምናሉ
12. የቅድመ መደበኛ ትምህርት ጥራት ለማሻሻል ምን ቢደረግ ጥሩ ነው ብለው ያምናሉ

በዚህ ቃለ መጠይቅ ላይ በመሳተፍ ስለተባበሩኝ በድጋሚ አመሰግናለሁ።

Appendix D1

**ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF GRAGUATE STUDIES CENTER FOR
INTERNATIONAL AND COMPARATIVE EDUCATION AND POLICY STUDIES**

Interview and Focus Group Discussion (FGD) Guiding Questions for Teachers

Dear Participant (s):

My name is Mahmud Reshad and I am a graduate student of International and Comparative Education and Policy Studies Department in Addis Ababa University. Currently, I am writing my thesis *entitled “A Comparative Study of the Practice of Early Childhood Care and Education across Private, Government, International and Missionary Preschools of Addis Ababa”* for the partial fulfilment of the requirements for PhD in International and Comparative Education.

The study participate children, parents, teachers, school principals, Addis Ababa City Education Bureau and Ministry of Education officials, and mainly conducted at preschool settings. Dear

participant(s), in order to achieve the objectives of the study, the following interview and focus group discussion (FGD) guiding questions are designed to collect data from you. Therefore, you are kindly requested to participate in this study and be assured that the data collected will not be used for other purposes.

Thank you!

Date: ----- **Qualification:** ----- **Experience:** -----

Interview / FGD Time: Begin: ----- **Completed:** -----

1. Can you explain how do you spend the whole day in the classroom, please? How about children?
2. Do you prepare a lesson plan? Based on what? How?
3. In your day to day classroom activities do you consider children's background (education, language, religion, culture and the like)? How?
4. How do you explain the benefits of early childhood education for the child?
5. How do you see the role of play in children learning? Should it be separated from learning or integrated to learning? How?
6. Do you direct every classroom activity by yourself or do you give a chance for children to learn by themselves? How?
7. What do you understand by 'child-centeredness' and active learning method?
8. How does the use of language in your classroom? And how is the reaction of children and parents?
9. Does the child feel at home? (when he or she is in and out of the classroom)
10. Do parents participate in their children's learning? How?
11. How children's text books are prepared? By who?
12. Do classroom activities and lessons recognize the physical, mental and emotional level of the child? (Do they enjoy the activity? Are they interested and involved? Do they take their own initiatives?)

13. In your classroom, which core developmental qualities are given more emphasis? (Cognitive, Social, Emotional, Communication, Physical). How?
14. How do you assess the learning achievement of children? What assessment techniques have you used?
15. Can you mention few important elements of preschool education which are not found in your classroom or school?
16. What do you suggest to improve the quality of preschool education?
17. Finally, what is your specialization and certification? How do you trained? And where?

Appendix D2

አዲስ አበባ ዩኒቨርሲቲ

የድህረ ምረቃ ትምህርት ክፍል

የዓለም አቀፍ ትምህርት ንፅፅሮሽ እና ፖሊሲ ጥናት ማዕከል

ለመምህራን የተዘጋጀ ቃለ መጠይቅ እና የቡድን መወያያ ጥያቄዎች

የተከበሩ መምህር/ት፡

ስሜ ማህሙድ ረሻድ ይባላል። በአዲስ አበባ ዩኒቨርሲቲ በዓለም አቀፍ ትምህርት ንፅፅሮሽ እና ፖሊሲ ጥናት ትምህርት ክፍል የሶስተኛ ዲግሪ ትምህርቱን በመከታተል ላይ እገኛለሁ። በአሁኑ ሰዓትም “በአዲስ አበባ ከተማ አስተዳደር ውስጥ የሚገኙ የመንግስት እና የግል ቅድመ መደበኛ ትምህርት ቤቶች የትምህርት እና እንክብካቤ አሰጣጥ” በሜል ርዕስ ላይ የመመረቂያ ጥናቱን በማዘጋጀት ላይ እገኛለሁ።

ይህ ጥናት የቅድመ መደበኛ ትምህርት ላይ ያሉ ህፃናት ተማሪዎችን፣ ወላጆችን፣ መምህራንን፣ ርዕስ መምህራንን፣ የአዲስ አበባ ትምህርት ቢሮ እና የትምህርት ሚኒስቴር

ሃላፊዎች የሚሳተፉበት ሲሆን ጥናቱም በዋነኝነት በቅድመ መደበኛ ትምህርት ቤት አካባቢ የሚካሄድ ነው።

በመሆኑም በዚህ ጥናት ውስጥ እርሶ ስለተካተቱ በዚህ ቃለ መጠይቅ ወይም የቡድን ውይይት ላይ በመሳተፍ የጥናቱ አንድ አካል እንዲሆኑ ስጋብዝ ከታላቅ አክብሮት ጋር ሲሆን፤ ይህ የሚሰበሰበው መረጃ ከታለመለት ዓላማ ውጭ ለሌላ ጉዳይ የማይውል መሆኑን አጥብቄ ለማስገንዘብ እፈልጋለሁ።

አመሰግናለሁ!

ቀን: _____ የትምህርት ደረጃ: _____ ልምድ: _____

ቃለ መጠይቁ/የቡድን ውይይቱ የጀመረበት ሰዓት: _____ ያበቃበት ሰዓት: _____

1. አጠቃላይ የክፍል ውስጥ እና የትምህርት ቤት የአለት ውሎዎን እና ስራዎን በአጭሩ በገልፀልኝ
2. ሌሰን ፕላን (የትምህርት እቅድ) ያዘጋጃሉ፤ እንዴት እና ምንን መሰረት በማድረግ
3. በአለት ተለት የማስተማር ስራዎ የልጆቹን የትምህርት፣ የቋንቋ፣ የእምነት፣ የባህል እና የመሳሰሉትን ሁኔታዎችን ታሳቢ ያደርጋሉ
4. የቅድመ መደበኛ ትምህርት ለህፃናት ምን ዓይነት ጠቀሜታዎች ያሉት የመስሎታል
5. የልጆች ጫወታ በትምህርታቸው ላይ ምን ዓይነት ተፅኖ ያለው ይመስሎታል፤ ከትምህርታቸው ጋር መያያዝ አለበት ወይስ መለያያት አለበት፤ እንዴት
6. ልጆችን በሚያስተምሩበት ወቅት ሁሉንም ነገር እርሶ ነው የሚያከናውኑት ወይስ ህፃናቱም እንዲሞክሩ በራሳቸው መንገድ እንዲማሩ እድል ይሰጧቸዋል፤ እንዴት
7. ህፃናት ተኮር እና አሳታፊ የማስተማር ዘዴ ጋር በተያያዘ ምን ዓይነት ግንዛቤ አሉት
8. የክፍል ውስጥ የቋንቋ አጠቃቀም ምን ይመስላል፤ የህፃናት እና የወላጆች ምላሽ እንዴት ነው
9. ህፃናት ክፍል ውስጥ እና ከክፍል ውጭ በሚሆኑበት ሰዓት የቤት ያህል ይሰማቸዋል
10. ወላጆች በልጆቻቸው ትምህርት ላይ ተሳትፎ ያደርጋሉ፤ እንዴት

11. የህፃናቱ መማሪያ መፅሃፍት እንዴት እና በማን ነው የተዘጋጀው
12. ህፃናቱ ክፍል ውስጥ የሚማረቸው ሃሳቦች እና የሚሰራቸው ነገሮች አይምሯዊ፣ አካላዊ፣ ማህበራዊ፣ ስነ ልቦናዊ እና የቋንቋ ሁኔታቸውን ያገናዘበ ነው (በሚማሩት እና በሚሰሩት ነገሮች ደስተኛ ናቸው፣ በንቃት ይሳተፋሉ፣ ያለ ችግር ስራቸውን ያከናውናሉ)
13. እርሶ በሚያስተምሩት ትምህርት በይበልጥ ትኩረት የሚደረገው በየትኛው/ዎቹ የህፃናት እድገት መሰረቶች ላይ ነው (ለአይምሮ እድገት፣ ለማህበራዊ እድገት፣ ለአካላዊ እድገት፣ ለቋንቋ እድገት ወይስ ለስነ ልቦና እድገት)፣ እንዴት
14. እርሶ የልጆቹን የትምህርት ስኬት እንዴት እና በምን ዓይነት መንገድ ነው የሚመዘኑት
15. ለቅድመ መደበኛ ትምህርት ጠቃሚ የሆኑ ነገር ግን በእርሶ ክፍልም ሆነ ትምህርት ቤት ውስጥ የማይገኙ አንዳንድ ነጥቦችን ሊጠቃቅሱ ይችላሉ
16. የቅድመ መደበኛ ትምህርት ጥራት ለማሻሻል ምን ቢደረግ ጥሩ ነው ብለው ያምናሉ
17. በመጨረሻም የት እና እንዴት እንደተማሩ፣ በምን ዓይነት የትምህርት ደረጃ እና የትምህርት ዘርፍ እንደተመረቁ ቢገልፁልን

በዚህ ቃለ መጠይቅ እና በቡድን ውይይት ላይ በመሳተፍ ስለተባበሩኝ በድጋሚ አመሰግናለሁ።

Appendix E1

ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF GRAGUATE STUDIES CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL AND COMPARATIVE EDUCATION AND POLICY STUDIES

Interview Guiding Questions for Children

Dear Parent (s) / Guardian (s):

My name is Mahmud Reshad and I am a graduate student of International and Comparative Education and Policy Studies Department in Addis Ababa University. Currently, I am writing my thesis *entitled “A Comparative Study of the Practice of Early Childhood Care and Education across Private, Government, International and Missionary Preschools of Addis*

Ababa” for the partial fulfilment of the requirements for PhD in International and Comparative Education.

The study participate children, parents, teachers, school principals, Addis Ababa City Education Bureau and Ministry of Education officials, and mainly conducted at children school and home settings. Dear parent(s), in order to achieve the objectives of the study, the following interview and focus group discussion (FGD) guiding questions are designed to collect data from your child. Therefore, you are kindly requested to participate your child in this study and be assured that the data collected will not be used for other purposes.

Thank you!

Interview Time: Begin: ----- Completed: -----

1. How do you spend your time in the school and classroom today?
2. Why do you go to school?
3. What do you like most in the school? Why?
4. What do you dislike at school? Why?
5. What classroom lessons and activities are difficult for you?
6. Do you play at school and in the classroom? How or why?
7. Do you like your teacher? Why?

Appendix E2

አዲስ አበባ ዩኒቨርሲቲ

የድህረ ምረቃ ትምህርት ክፍል

የዓለም አቀፍ ትምህርት ንፅፅሮች እና ፖሊሲ ጥናት ማዕከል

ለቅድመ መደበኛ ተማሪዎች የተዘጋጀ ቃለ መጠይቅ

የተከበሩ ወላጅ:

ስሜ ማህሙድ ረሻድ ይባላል። በአዲስ አበባ ዩኒቨርሲቲ በዓለም አቀፍ ትምህርት ንፅፅሮች እና ፖሊሲ ጥናት ትምህርት ክፍል የሶስተኛ ዲግሪ ትምህርቱን በመከታተል ላይ እገኛለሁ። በአሁኑ ሰዓትም “በአዲስ አበባ ከተማ አስተዳደር ውስጥ የሚገኙ የመንግስት እና የግል ቅድመ መደበኛ ትምህርት ቤቶች የትምህርት እና እንክብካቤ አሰጣጥ” በሜል ርዕስ ላይ የመመረቂያ ጥናቱን በማዘጋጀት ላይ እገኛለሁ።

ይህ ጥናት የቅድመ መደበኛ ትምህርት ላይ ያሉ ህፃናት ተማሪዎችን፣ ወላጆችን፣ መምህራንን፣ ርዕሰ መምህራንን፣ የአዲስ አበባ ትምህርት ቢሮ እና የትምህርት ሚኒስቴር ሃላፊዎች የሚሳተፉበት ሲሆን ጥናቱም በዋነኝነት በትምህርት ቤት እና በቤት አካባቢዎች የሚካሄድ ነው።

በመሆኑም በዚህ ጥናት ውስጥ የአርሶ ልጅ ስለተካተተ/ች በዚህ ቃለ መጠይቅ ላይ ልጅን በመሳተፍ ለጥናቱ አስተዋፅኦ እንዲያደርጉ ስጋብዝ ከታላቅ አክብሮት ጋር ሲሆን፤ ይህ የሚሰበሰበው መረጃ ከታለመለት ዓላማ ውጭ ለሌላ ጉዳይ የማይውል መሆኑን አጥብቄ ለማስገንዘብ እፈልጋለሁ።

አመሰግናለሁ!

ቃለ መጠይቁ የጀመረበት ሰዓት: _____ ያበቃበት ሰዓት: _____

1. በትምህርት ቤት እና በክፍል ውስጥ ዛሬ ምን ምን ስታደርግ ነበር
2. ትምህርት ቤት ለምንድን ነው የምትሄደው/ሄጂው
3. ትምህርት ቤት የምትወደው/ጂው ነገር ምንድን፤ ለምን
4. ትምህርት ቤት የማትወደው/ጂው ነገር ምንድን ነው፤ ለምን
5. ክፍል ውስጥ የምትማረው/ሪው ነገሮች ይከብዱ/ላል/ሻል ለምን
6. በክፍል እና ከክፍል ውጭ ትጫወታለህ/ቻለሽ፤ እንዴት፤ ለምን
7. መምህርህን/ሽን ትወደዋለህ/ትወጅዋለሽ፤ ትወዳታለህ/ትወጃታለሽ

ቃለ መጠይቁን በመስጠት ስለተባበርክኝ/ሽኝ በድጋሚ አመሰግናለሁ።

Appendix F1

**ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF GRAGUATE STUDIES CENTER FOR
INTERNATIONAL AND COMPARATIVE EDUCATION AND POLICY STUDIES**

**Interview Guiding Questions for Ministry of Education Personnel and
Education Bureau Official**

Dear Participant:

My name is Mahmud Reshad and I am a graduate student of International and Comparative Education and Policy Studies Department in Addis Ababa University. Currently, I am writing my thesis *entitled “A Comparative Study of the Practice of Early Childhood Care and Education across Private, Government, International and Missionary Preschools of Addis Ababa”* for the partial fulfilment of the requirements for PhD in International and Comparative Education.

The study participate children, parents, teachers, school principals, Addis Ababa City Education Bureau and Ministry of Education officials, and mainly conducted at children school and home settings. Dear participant, in order to achieve the objectives of the study, the following interview is designed to collect data from you. Therefore, you are kindly requested to participate in this study and be assured that the data collected will not be used for other purposes.

Thank you!

Date: _____ **Qualification:** _____ **Experience:** _____

Interview Time: Begin: ----- **Completed:** -----

1. How do you explain the benefits of early childhood education for the child?
2. What are the guiding principles and philosophies of early childhood education of the country?
3. How early childhood education curriculum, text books, manuals and guideline are prepared? And by who?
4. In relation to lesson planning what is your view? How should be prepared? Based on what?
5. How early childhood education teachers are prepared? And what is/are the relevant specialization or certification for this profession?
6. How do you evaluate the performance of preschools? And what is the result of the supervision?

7. From your observation, what mode of teaching and learning practices dominate more in private and government preschools of the city? Is it direct instruction, child initiated mode of learning or in the middle of the two?
8. From your observation, which core developmental qualities of early childhood education are given more emphasis? (Cognitive, Social, Emotional, Communication or Physical). How?
9. In day to day classroom activities how do you explain the importance of considering children's background (education, language, religion, culture and the like)?
10. How do you see the role of play in children learning? Should it be separated from learning or integrated to learning? How?
11. How do you explain the use of language in preschools?
12. What can you say about children's learning assessment and its techniques?
13. What do you suggest to improve the quality of preschool education?
14. Finally, what is your specialization and certification? How do you trained? And where?

Appendix F2

አዲስ አበባ ዩኒቨርሲቲ

የድህረ ምረቃ ትምህርት ክፍል

የዓለም አቀፍ ትምህርት ንፅፅሮች እና ፖሊሲ ጥናት ማዕከል

ለትምህርት ሚኒስቴር እና ለትምህርት ቢሮ ሃላፊዎች የተዘጋጀ ቃለ መጠይቅ

የተከበሩ የቅድመ መደበኛ ትምህርት ዳይሬክተር:

ስሜ ማህሙድ ረሻድ ይባላል። በአዲስ አበባ ዩኒቨርሲቲ በዓለም አቀፍ ትምህርት ንዕሰሮሽ እና ፖሊሲ ጥናት ትምህርት ክፍል የሶስተኛ ዲግሪ ትምህርቱን በመከታተል ላይ እገኛለሁ። በአሁኑ ሰዓትም “በአዲስ አበባ ከተማ አስተዳደር ውስጥ የሚገኙ የመንግስት እና የግል ቅድመ መደበኛ ትምህርት ቤቶች የትምህርት እና እንክብካቤ አሰጣጥ” በሜል ርዕስ ላይ የመመረቂያ ጥናቱን በማዘጋጀት ላይ እገኛለሁ።

ይህ ጥናት የቅድመ መደበኛ ትምህርት ላይ ያሉ ህፃናት ተማሪዎችን፣ ወላጆችን፣ መምህራንን፣ ርዕሰ መምህራንን፣ የአዲስ አበባ ትምህርት ቢሮ እና የትምህርት ሚኒስቴር ሃላፊዎች የሚሳተፉበት ሲሆን ጥናቱም በዋነኝነት በቅድመ መደበኛ ትምህርት ቤት አካባቢ የሚካሄድ ነው።

በመሆኑም በዚህ ጥናት ውስጥ እርሶ ስለተካተቱ በዚህ ቃለ መጠይቅ ላይ በመሳተፍ የጥናቱ አንድ አካል እንዲሆኑ ስጋብዝ ከታላቅ አክብሮት ጋር ሲሆን፣ ይህ የሚሰበሰበው መረጃ ከታለመለት ዓላማ ውጭ ለሌላ ጉዳይ የማይውል መሆኑን አጥብቄ ለማስገንዘብ እፈልጋለሁ።

አመሰግናለሁ!

ቀን: _____ የትምህርት ደረጃ: _____ ልምድ: _____

ቃለ መጠይቁ የጀመረበት ሰዓት: _____ ያበቃበት ሰዓት: _____

1. የቅድመ መደበኛ ትምህርት ለህፃናት ምን ዓይነት ጠቀሜታዎች ያሉት ይመስሎታል
2. የኢትዮጵያ የቅድመ መደበኛ ትምህርት ፖሊሲ/መመሪያ የሚከተላቸው መርሆዎች ምንድን ናቸው
3. የቅድመ መደበኛ ትምህርት ስርዓተ ትምህርት እና መማሪያ መፅሃፍት እንዴት እና በማን ነው የሚዘጋጁት
4. የትምህርት እቅድን (ልሰን ፕላን) በተመለከተ ምን ዓይነት አመለካከት አሉት፣ ሲዘጋጅስ ምን መሰረት መደረግ አለበት

5. የቅድመ መደበኛ ትምህርት መምህራን የትምህርት ደረጃቸው እና መስካቸው ምን መሆን አለበት፤ እንዴትስ ነው የሚሰለጥኑት
6. በቅድመ መደበኛ ትምህርት ቤቶች ላይ የምታደርጉት ክትትል እና ቁጥጥር በምን ዓይነት መንገድ ነው፤ እንዴት ነው የምትመዘኗቸው፤ ወቅታዊ ውጤታቸውስ ምን ይመስላል
7. በእርሶ ምልከታ በቅድመ መደበኛ ትምህርት ቤቶች አካባቢ በይበልጥ ትኩረት የሚሰጠው በየትኛው የማስተማር ዘዴ ላይ ነው (መምህርት ተኮር ነው፤ ህፃናት ተኮር ነው ወይስ ሁለቱንም ደባልቆ መጠቀም ላይ ነው)
8. በእርሶ ምልከታ የቅድመ መደበኛ ትምህርት ቤቶች በይበልጥ ትኩረት የሚያደርጉት በየትኛው/ዎቹ የህፃናት እድገት መሰረቶች ላይ ነው (ለአይምሮ እድገት፣ ለማህበራዊ እድገት፣ ለአካላዊ እድገት፣ ለቋንቋ እድገት ወይስ ለስነ ልቦና እድገት)፤ እንዴት
9. በእለት ተለት የማስተማር ሂደት ወቅት የልጆቹን የትምህርት፣ የቋንቋ፣ የእምነት፣ የባህል እና የመሳሰሉ ሁኔታዎችን ታሳቢ የማድረግ አስፈላጊነት እንዴት ይገልፁታል
10. የልጆች ጫወታ በትምህርታቸው ላይ ምን ዓይነት ተፅኖ ያለው ይመስሉታል፤ ከትምህርታቸው ጋር መያያዝ አለበት ወይስ መለያያት አለበት ብለው ያምናሉ፤ እንዴት
11. በቅድመ መደበኛ ትምህርት ቤቶች አካባቢ ያለውን የማስተማሪያ እና የመግቢያቢያ ቋንቋ አጠቃቀም ላይ ምን አስተውለዋል
12. በልጆች የትምህርት ስኬት አመዛዘን አስፈላጊነት እና አይነቶቹ ላይ ምን አይነት አስተያየት አሉት
13. የቅድመ መደበኛ ትምህርት ጥራት ለማሻሻል ምን ቢደረግ ጥሩ ነው ብለው ያምናሉ
14. በመጨረሻም የት እና እንዴት እንደተማሩ፤ በምን ዓይነት የትምህርት ደረጃ እና የትምህርት ዘርፍ ላይ እንደተመረቁ ቢገልፁልን

ቃለ መጠይቁን በመስጠት ስለተባበሩኝ በድጋሚ አመሰግናለሁ።

Appendix G1

INTERNATIONAL AND COMPARATIVE EDUCATION AND POLICY STUDIES

Interview Guiding Questions for Principals

Dear Participant:

My name is Mahmud Reshad and I am a graduate student of International and Comparative Education and Policy Studies Department in Addis Ababa University. Currently, I am writing my thesis *entitled “A Comparative Study of the Practice of Early Childhood Care and Education across Private, Government, International and Missionary Preschools of Addis Ababa”* for the partial fulfilment of the requirements for PhD in International and Comparative Education.

The study participate children, parents, teachers, school principals, Addis Ababa City Education Bureau and Ministry of Education officials, and mainly conducted at preschool settings. Dear participant, in order to achieve the objectives of the study, the following interview is designed to collect data from you. Therefore, you are kindly requested to participate in this study and be assured that the data collected will not be used for other purposes.

Thank you!

Date: ----- **Qualification:** ----- **Experience:** -----

Interview Time: Begin: ----- **Completed:** -----

1. Can you explain how do teachers and children spend their time in the school and classroom every day?
2. Do teachers prepare a lesson plan? Based on what? How?

3. In day to day school/classroom activities do teachers consider children's background (education, language, religion, culture and the like)? How?
4. How do you explain the benefits of early childhood education for the child?
5. Do parents participate in their children's education? How?
6. How does the use of language in your school? And how is the reaction of parents?
7. How do you see the role of play in children learning? Should it be separated from learning or integrated to learning? How?
8. What mode of teaching and learning practices dominate more in this school? Is it direct instruction, child initiated mode of learning or in the middle of the two?
9. What do you understand by 'child-centeredness' and active learning method?
10. How children's text books are prepared? By Who?
11. In your school, which core developmental qualities are given more emphasis? (Cognitive, Social, Emotional, Communication, Physical). How?
12. Do the school materials recognize the physical, mental and emotional level of the child? (Do they enjoy the activity? Are they interested and involved? Do they take their own initiatives?)
13. In this school how do teachers assess the learning achievement of children?
14. Can you mention few important elements of preschool education which are not found in your school?
15. What do you suggest to improve the quality of preschool education?
16. Finally, what is your specialization and certification? How do you trained? And where?

Appendix G2

አዲስ አበባ ዩኒቨርሲቲ
የድህረ ምረቃ ትምህርት ክፍል
የዓለም አቀፍ ትምህርት ንፅፅሮሽ እና ፖሊሲ ጥናት ማዕከል

ለርዕስ መምህራን የተዘጋጀ ቃለ መጠይቅ

የተከበሩ ር/መምህር/ት:

ስሜ ማህሙድ ረሻድ ይባላል። በአዲስ አበባ ዩኒቨርሲቲ በዓለም አቀፍ ትምህርት ንፅፅሮሽ እና ፖሊሲ ጥናት ትምህርት ክፍል የሶስተኛ ዲግሪ ትምህርቱን በመከታተል ላይ እገኛለሁ። በአሁኑ ሰዓትም “በአዲስ አበባ ከተማ አስተዳደር ውስጥ የሚገኙ የመንግስት እና የግል ቅድመ መደበኛ ትምህርት ቤቶች የትምህርት እና እንክብካቤ አሰጣጥ” በሜል ርዕስ ላይ የመመረቂያ ጥናቱን በማዘጋጀት ላይ እገኛለሁ።

ይህ ጥናት የቅድመ መደበኛ ትምህርት ላይ ያሉ ህፃናት ተማሪዎችን፣ ወላጆችን፣ መምህራንን፣ ርዕስ መምህራንን፣ የአዲስ አበባ ትምህርት ቢሮ እና የትምህርት ሚኒስቴር ሃላፊዎች የሚሳተፉበት ሲሆን ጥናቱም በዋነኝነት በቅድመ መደበኛ ትምህርት ቤት አካባቢ የሚካሄድ ነው።

በመሆኑም በዚህ ጥናት ውስጥ እርሶ ስለተካተቱ በዚህ ቃለ መጠይቅ ላይ በመሳተፍ የጥናቱ አንድ አካል እንዲሆኑ ስጋብዝ ከታላቅ አክብሮት ጋር ሲሆን፣ ይህ የሚሰበሰበው መረጃ ከታለመለት ዓላማ ውጭ ለሌላ ጉዳይ የማይውል መሆኑን አጥብቄ ለማስገንዘብ እፈልጋለሁ።

አመሰግናለሁ!

ቀን: _____ **የትምህርት ደረጃ:** _____ **ልምድ:** _____

ቃለ መጠይቁ የጀመረበት ሰዓት: _____ **ያበቃበት ሰዓት:** _____

1. የትምህርት ቤቱ የመምህራን አጠቃላይ የክፍል ውስጥ እና የትምህርት ቤት የአለት ስራቸው በአጭሩ ቢገልፁልኝ
2. እዙህ ትምህርት ቤት መምህራን ሌሰን ፐላን (የትምህርት እቅድ) ያዘጋጃሉ፤ እንዴት እና ምንን መሰረት በማድረግ
3. መምህራን በአለት ተለት የማስተማር ስራቸው የልጆቹን የትምህርት፣ የቋንቋ፣ የእምነት፣ የባህል እና የመሳሰሉትን ሁኔታዎችን ታሳቢ ያደርጋሉ
4. የቅድመ መደበኛ ትምህርት ለህፃናት ምን ዓይነት ጠቀሜታዎች ያሉት ይመስሉታል
5. ወላጆች በልጆቻቸው ትምህርት ላይ ተሳትፎ ያደርጋሉ፤ እንዴት
6. የትምህርት ቤቱ የማስተማሪያ እና የመግቢያዚያ ቋንቋ አጠቃቀም ምን ይመስላል፤ የወላጆችን ምላሽ እንዴት ነው
7. የልጆች ጫወታ በትምህርታቸው ላይ ምን ዓይነት ተፅዕኖ ያለው ይመስሉታል፤ ከትምህርታቸው ጋር መያያዝ አለበት ወይስ መለያያት አለበት ብለው ያምናሉ፤ እንዴት
8. በትምህርት ቤቱ በትኛው የማስተማር ዘዴ ላይ ትኩረት ይደረጋል (መምህርት ተኮር ነው፣ ህፃናት ተኮር ነው ወይስ ሁለቱንም ደባልቆ መጠቀም ላይ ነው)
9. ህፃናት ተኮር እና አሳታፊ የማስተማር ዘዴ ጋር በተያያዘ ምን ዓይነት ግንዛቤ አሉት
10. የህፃናቱ መማሪያ መፅሃፍት እንዴት እና በማን ነው የተዘጋጀው
11. በእርሶ ትምህርት ቤት በይበልጥ ትኩረት የሚያደረገው በየትኛው/ዎቹ የህፃናት እድገት መሰረቶች ላይ ነው (ለአይምሮ እድገት፣ ለማህበራዊ እድገት፣ ለአካላዊ እድገት፣ ለቋንቋ እድገት ወይስ ለስነ ልቦና እድገት)፤ እንዴት
12. ህፃናቱ ክፍል ውስጥ የሚማረቸው ሃሳቦች እና የሚሰራቸው ነገሮች አይምሯዊ፣ አካላዊ፣ ማህበራዊ፣ ስነ ልቦናዊ እና የቋንቋ ሁኔታቸውን ያገናዘበ ነው (በሚማሩት እና በሚሰሩት ነገሮች ደስተኛ ናቸው፣ በንቃት ይሳተፋሉ፣ ያለ ችግር ስራቸውን ያከናውናሉ)
13. በዚህ ትምህርት ቤት የልጆቹን የትምህርት ስኬት እንዴት እና በምን ዓይነት መንገድ ነው የሚመዘነው
14. ለቅድመ መደበኛ ትምህርት ጠቃሚ የሆኑ ነገር ግን በእርሶ ትምህርት ቤት ውስጥ የማይገኙ አንዳንድ ነጥቦችን ሊጠቃቅሱ ይችላሉ
15. የቅድመ መደበኛ ትምህርት ጥራት ለማሻሻል ምን ቢደረግ ጥሩ ነው ብለው ያምናሉ

16.በመጨረሻም የት እና እንዴ እንደተማሩ፣ በምን ዓይነት የትምህርት ደረጃ እና የትምህርት ዘርፍ ላይ እንደተመረቁ ቢገልፁልን ቃለ መጠይቁን በመስጠት ስለተባበሩኝ በድጋሚ አመሰግናለሁ።

Appendix H1

ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF GRAGUATE STUDIES CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL AND COMPARATIVE EDUCATION AND POLICY STUDIES

Observation Guide Form

Dear Teacher / Parent:

My name is Mahmud Reshad and I am a graduate student of International and Comparative Education and Policy Studies Department in Addis Ababa University. Currently, I am writing my thesis *entitled “A Comparative Study of the Practice of Early Childhood Care and Education across Private, Government, International and Missionary Preschools of Addis Ababa”* for the partial fulfilment of the requirements for PhD in International and Comparative Education.

The study participate children, parents, teachers, school principals, Addis Ababa City Education Bureau and Ministry of Education officials, and mainly conducted at preschool settings. Dear participant, in order to achieve the objectives of the study, some observation sessions are planned to conduct at your classroom. The observation will be captured by audio and video recordings and the main focus of the observation will be:

- The way how children learn and teachers teach (Is it teacher-directed, child initiated or mixed);
- The way how classroom settings, materials and activities are organized;
- How the child spend her/his time in and out of the classroom;
- How the child interact and communicate (the use of language) with teacher, parents and another children (during play and learning);
- How much time is devoted to play than academics or vice versa;

Therefore, you are kindly requested to permit the observations and be assured that the data collected will not be used for other purposes.

Thank you!

School Name: _____ Name and Grade of the Class: _____

Observation Time: Begin: ----- Completed: ----- No of Observation: _____

Appendix H2

አዲስ አበባ ዩኒቨርሲቲ

የድህረ ምረቃ ትምህርት ክፍል

የዓለም አቀፍ ትምህርት ንፅፅሮሽ እና ፖሊሲ ጥናት ማዕከል

ምልከታዎችን ለማካሄድ የተዘጋጀ ፎርም

የተከበሩ ወላጅ/መምህር/ት:

ስሜ ማህሙድ ረሻድ ይባላል። በአዲስ አበባ ዩኒቨርሲቲ በዓለም አቀፍ ትምህርት ንፅፅሮሽ እና ፖሊሲ ጥናት ትምህርት ክፍል የሶስተኛ ዲግሪ ትምህርቱን በመከታተል ላይ እገኛለሁ። በአሁኑ ሰዓትም “በአዲስ አበባ ከተማ አስተዳደር ውስጥ የሚገኙ የመንግስት እና የግል ቅድመ መደበኛ ትምህርት ቤቶች የትምህርት እና እንክብካቤ አሰጣጥ” በሜል ርዕስ ላይ የመመረቂያ ጥናቱን በማዘጋጀት ላይ እገኛለሁ።

ይህ ጥናት የቅድመ መደበኛ ትምህርት ላይ ያሉ ህፃናት ተማሪዎችን፣ ወላጆችን፣ መምህራንን፣ ርዕስ መምህራንን፣ የአዲስ አበባ ትምህርት ቢሮ እና የትምህርት ሚኒስቴር ሃላፊዎች የሚሳተፉበት ሲሆን ጥናቱም በዋነኝነት በቅድመ መደበኛ ትምህርት ቤት አካባቢ የሚካሄድ ነው። ምልከታው የሚሄደው በምስል እና በድምፅ መቅረጫ ታግዞ ሲሆን፣ አላማውም፡-

- ህፃናት/ልጆች በምን ዓይነት መንገድ በመማር ላይ ስለመሆናቸው ለመመልከት፤
- የመማሪያ ክፍሎቻቸው፣ የመጫወቻ ስፈራዎች እና ቁሳቁሶች ዓይነት እና አዘገጃጀት ለማይት፤
- ህፃናት/ልጆች ጊዜያቸውን በክፍል ውስጥ እና ውጭ እንዴት ባለ ሁኔታ በማሳለፍ ላይ እንደሚገኙ ለመመልከት፤ (የት/ት ጊዜያቸውን፣ የጫወታ ጊዜያቸውን፣ የቋንቋ አጠቃቀማቸውን እና የመሳሰሉት ይገኙበታል)።

በመሆኑም በዚህ ጥናት ውስጥ እርሶ የሚያስተምሩበት ክፍል ለጥቂት ቀናት ምልክታ ለማድረግ ስለተመረጠ የጥናቱ አንድ አካል እንዲሆኑ ስጋብዝ ከታላቅ አክብሮት ጋር ሲሆን፤ ይህ የሚሰበሰበው መረጃ ከታለመለት ዓላማ ውጭ ለሌላ ጉዳይ የማይውል መሆኑን አጥብቄ ለማስገንዘብ እፈልጋለሁ።

አመሰግናለሁ!

የትምህርት ቤቱ ስም: _____ የክፍሉ ስም እና የት/ት ደረጃ: _____

ምልክታው የጀመረበት ሰዓት: _____ ያበቃበት ሰዓት: _____ ቀን: _____

ይህን ምልክታ እንዳላረጅ ስለተባበሩኝ በድጋሚ አመሰግናለሁ።

Appendix I

Summary of Transcribed Interview

This appendix has presented the summary of transcribed interview based on nine major themes.

1. The Daily Routines of the Class

I never use students' textbooks dominantly while preparing my lesson plan. Because, there are some difficult contents in it, therefore, I made some correction on these contents before I deliver the lesson (ToP_(8, 2)).

The lesson plans prepared based on students' textbook. For instance, if the text has 80 pages, it will divide in to four against the numbers of quarters that we have in the year. Therefore, in each quarter of the year, 20 pages of the given book will be accomplished, like that. A quarter has two and half months (ProP_(19, 3)).

Main teachers of the school prepare the lesson plan based on students' textbooks and teachers' guidebook. While preparing a lesson plan, we consider the level of our children. As we know all children are not the same, there are fast children; there are also medium and slow learners. Therefore, unless we treat them all, some children, especially slow learners, feel as they are left out. When we prepared children's, textbooks we have used 'Jolly Phoenix Method' this is the approach where stories, songs, physical movements or actions, sound and flash cards will be used to teach a given number or letter. Therefore, while preparing children's textbooks, we have employed these techniques including Internet resources, the current and previous textbook editions of the school (ToP_(5, 1)).

If I plan to teach three Amharic letters per week, then I teach one every day. In addition, every Friday, lessons that have taught during the whole week will be revised. Children learn whatever you teach them. The question is how the teacher teaches a given subject (ToP_(7, 2)).

I have yearly, monthly, weekly and daily lesson plans and prepared based on the syllabus which encompasses the five thematic areas. Each lesson has 25 minutes where 5-minute gave to revise the past lesson, 15-minute used to present today's lesson and the rest 5-minute consumed for the songs (ToG_(11, 2)).

The five thematic areas are:

Theme 1:- for appropriate development and physical strength;

Theme 2:- creating acceptable relationship with others;

Theme 3:- appropriate language usage;

Theme 4:- understanding the concepts of numbers in day-to-day activities;

Theme 5:- understanding our environment though interaction.

(ProG_(9, 3))

My lesson plan prepared based on children's textbook, because, they are so smart, absolute and contain everything we want. For instance, we have four KG classes (a level next to nursery), therefore, everyday all of them learn the same content at the same time, because they found at the same age level (ToI_(28, 8)).

The textbooks are very attractive for my children. They contain everything what children want. Our textbooks make our preschool special from other preschools. They are very attractive. To understand contents of the textbooks, even sometimes, teachers are not needed, because, they are self-explanatory. Therefore, they are very helpful for the teacher and the children, I like them so much! (ToI_(18, 2)).

The textbooks of the preschool are so excellent and contain everything. However, they depend on the way how teachers present them in their lesson (ToI_(12, 2)).

I prepare my lessons based on the five thematic areas, however, when children get in to bad mood and not ready to learn a given lesson, I changed it to play. For instance, what I prepare to teach about letters may be changed to play if their mood is not ok or not motivated for that (ToM_(8, 2)).

I noted that some teachers have followed the syllabus in their lessons but others didn't use it partially or totally. For instance, at nursery level, the syllabus document in its mathematics theme describes that children at this level should learn 1 up to 10 numbers only, however, what teachers doing was they force children to learn 1-30 or 40 numbers (ECCE prospective teacher).

I think the textbooks are above children's level of development, when I compared them with our time, the textbooks seem difficult. Especially, social science seems hard. During our time English and social science are learnt when we were at higher grade levels. However, I couldn't see any difficulties on my child. He understands all easily (PoP).

When we compared with our time the textbooks seem difficult. They learn four different subjects and spoken English; there is also homework and study time. They learn and do so many things; therefore, they are highly overloaded (PoP).

From the past times, education, now, gets difficult and difficult, because, there is an instruction, fill in the blank space, circle the similarities or differences and the like. Therefore, I think, it is somewhat difficult. For instance, during an exam period there is an instruction which actually children couldn't read it (PoG).

In our country, early childhood education is not given much emphasis so far; it seems, has no responsible body, because everybody does things as he/she like. The regions prepare their own syllabus; even the preschools are doing that. They are teaching their children without the principle which have described in our policy framework. Therefore, I couldn't see any responsible body which corrects this condition. The problem is more than the capacity of the ministry (ECCE Official).

2. Teachers Facilitation Role of Classroom Activities and Lessons

I cover 99% of the lesson, because, if I leave everything for children, they will become overloaded and get in to stress (ToP).

I use the whole period, because, they are so early to leave everything for them (ToP).

I revise the previous lesson, then introduce and teach today's lesson, after that, there is Q&A session and discussion, presentation and participation (ToP).

At the beginning I explain and assist the lesson, after that they do by themselves (ToP).

I have 30 minutes for every lesson, from this, 10 will be used for explaining the lesson, 5 for reading, 10-15 minutes for writing and the remaining 5 used for checking and correcting their work (ToP).

From 30 minutes, I use 10 minutes for the introduction and to summarize the lesson, and the remaining time is left for the children. To create a cooperative teaching approach and competition among children, I form a group - based on their achievement (ToP).

From 30 minutes, my part is around 20 minutes to revise the previous lesson and to teach today's lesson (ToG).

We have to guide children by everything. If you leave them they will do their own activities, even they use their exercise books to write unnecessary things. Therefore, you have to guide them closely. She added: this is also the word of God. The word of God said, "Guide your child to the right way you go." The other from the same school also said: "Most of the time it is me that cover the lesson (ToG).

Almost I and my children share the period equally (ToI).

Except during Amharic class, almost, I am with them throughout the whole day (ToI).

Almost I cover everything in my lesson (ToI).

You can't leave children alone for a minute, you have to plan early to make them busy, otherwise, the class will be changed in to chaos or it becomes a mess because they are restless. Unless you engage them with different activities, they will become a headache for you (ToI).

In my preschool the period of one theme is 30 minutes. From this I use 5 for greeting and physical exercise, 10-minute is given for children to copy or write what has written on the blackboard or textbook. If they are bored by the given activity I will jump to the next lesson or theme. In general, from 30 minutes, I lecture them for 10-minute. The rest is used for participation and Q&A sessions (ToM).

In average I cover 40% of the lesson; the remaining 60% is their participation. However, if the lesson is new, my part may get higher. However, after they understood what has taught, this will be reversed (ToM).

Now we have finished the three round practicum observations which conducted every year at different government preschools for one month period. However, what we saw there is different from what we learned here at our university. Beginning from their lesson plan, what was going on in the classroom has never matched with our training.” He added, “It is much dominated by direct teaching (ECCE prospective teachers).

Children come with something to school; therefore, the schools should increase and strengthen what children already have. However, I noted that many teachers didn’t follow this approach. They don’t want to know what children already have, because, they believe that children do not know about anything; because of this they employ direct teaching approach (ECCE prospective teachers).

3. The Focus of Classroom Activities and Lessons

In my class there are 37 children and all of them are different in their achievement, there are higher, medium and low achievers (ToP).

In my class there are three types of learners. The first one is the high achievers who understand everything what you teach them, the second group is the medium achievers who are at average level and the third groups are those who need more support and repetition (ToP).

I think the textbooks dominated by knowledge contents, because, if you see English, it focuses on reading skill, Science is more of knowledge, and Amharic is about letters identification and understanding. Therefore, what children learning are dominated by knowledge, I think (ToP).

In our school there is more education or academic things, because, our intention is whether children knew this and that. We teachers always say, this child or that child didn’t understand this letter, this number, this idea and the like (ToP).

Our textbooks are dominated by cognitive domain; it has more detail things and explanations that children need to know. Play has given less consideration (ToP).

I consider all domains of development but give emphasis for knowledge and the academic part (ToP).

Their education is dominated by knowledge, however, what is encouraged by the profession for the children of this level is sing, play, jump, running; we shouldn’t rely on education only. They will know everything later, but now the basics are enough for them (ToP).

Children can take everything what you gave them; therefore, you have to take care of what you are going to teach them. If you teach them the wrong idea, it will be difficult for you and can take a long distance to correct that (ToP).

Even though there are other domains in our lessons, we mainly focus on mental development, because, we force our children to memorize everything what we teach them (ToG).

We try to balance all domains of development but the knowledge part is greater than all, because, we let our children to know and understand about many things (ToG).

At this level we advised to teach children through oral approach, but, covertly, I teach them about how to read and write letters and words, which is forbidden (ToG).

It is up to us, the teachers who make children to love or hate what they are learning; children have no problem. The important thing lays on how we present the contents of the subject. If we present the lesson interestingly, children become happy, participate and exercise it well; and unless we present the content based on the level of children and in the language they understand, things will become worse and challenging. Therefore, I couldn't say that this element is more dominated and that one is not, instead, it depends on the way we present it (ToI).

Our education is also inclined to direct teaching, telling and presentation; many of our courses, including practical courses, have little or no practice at all (ECCE prospective teachers).

I chose the school after I compare it with other schools, and I found that it is the best school in our area, because, they give better education (PoP).

I made an assessment around many preschools, but finally, chose this one; because, their education and class size is very good and have better teaching materials and care (PoP).

According to Addis Ababa Education Bureau ECCE official, private preschools are “paper tigers” - they depend more on paperwork. They spend much time on reading and writing contents (ECCE Officials).

4. The Benefits of Early Childhood Care and Education for the Participant Child

You can see great difference between children who attend kindergarten education from those are not when they get in to grade one. They sit properly, listen attentively, respond and do classroom activities easily (ToP).

ECCE has great benefits for children; if we send children directly to grade one, they will not be able to read and write anything. However, if they begin early, they will enter to grade one with so many knowledge and skills, and therefore, they will not face any difficulty (ToP).

It is said that what children have learnt until age 7 will not forget throughout their life (ToP).

They (children) know many things at their home but here it is more than that. There are children, who couldn't sit, eat and write but here we help them to develop such things by their own (ToG).

Actually, children learning began from their home; however, they have developed it here at KGs (ToG).

There is one saying in Amharic, ‘ተጣሞ ያደገ ዛፍ ማቃናት አይቻልም’, which means ‘if a tree grows like curvature, it will be difficult to straighten later (ToI).

I have grown up with my mother and I have learned 1001 things from her without got in to kindergarten. However, to day I and my husband are spending the whole day on our job. Therefore, it is difficult for our child to leave her alone at home. Therefore, the only option that we have is to send her to kindergarten school. Here children can get so many things what they couldn’t get at their home. You can consider kindergarten teachers, as the second mother of the child. Education at preschool is a secondary matter. Therefore, if children couldn’t do anything in their home, KGs are the best places where children must stay at (ProI).

What children will know and do during their later life will be developed here (ToM).

Children will be ready for many things if they attend preschool education (ToM).

What we don’t know during our childhood time, our children, now, get to know them very quickly (PoP).

5. The Role of Play in Children’s Learning

Some children whose academic achievement is low have showed an amazing talent and creativity while playing with materials, then we teachers said one another that the talent of this boy or that girl is what he or she is doing now, not his or her education (ToP).

When you teach them through songs, they will become so immersed that they will listen you with great attention (ToP).

Children’s attention span is up to 10 minutes (ToP).

For children, play is the backbone of their education, but, I never support that everything should be play, and a given play should also benefit some lessons (ToP).

Children don’t want to worry. They want to learn through relaxation and happiness, and I believe that children should learn like that. Children need your attention; otherwise they will go to their world. If you are with them they will also with you. If not, they will forget you forever (ToG).

Children’s attention span is up to 5 minutes in a given lesson (ToG).

As to me, there should be education and there should be also play - since they are children, however, their play should not be so much, because, they will not know and learn what is expected from this level (ToG).

Not only play, side by side, we have to teach them to identify some numbers and letters as well (ToG).

As to me play and education should be separated. Play is play, education is education. Therefore, we have to separate one from the other. It is not only play, children should read books. There are children who ask questions like where is my exercise book? Is there anything I write? Do we have a test/ an exam? (ToG).

You can't separate play from education. When you ask children after you teach them with and without play there is a great difference (ToM).

You can't force them to sit and learn any lesson; you can't use direct teaching approach unless it is mixed with play (ToM).

Though play you can see children's imagination; you can see future artists, engineers, doctors (ToI)

For kindergarten education, play is the key, not education; it is a means which unlocks children's education ToM.

You cannot make or take everything to play (ProM).

At preparatory level (5-6 ages), you can teach children any lesson for 20-25 minutes with good concentration (ToI).

Where children are found, there is play, and vice versa, therefore, childhood and play are inseparable things, and they have to learn through that (ECCE prospective teachers).

If she (her child) learns through play that will be good but I am afraid whether she could miss what she has learned (PoP).

My child wants to play more, but I never let him to do that, instead I force him to study hard, because he has no much time for play (PoP).

I don't agree with the idea that children should learn through play. Instead education should be separated from play. We should not send our children to school for the purpose of play, it is for education, and children also have to know this, they go to school to learn something. From the beginning children love play, and if we make their education a play based approach, they will totally immersed in to play, so that they will forget their education. Therefore, I never support this approach. Instead she (my child) should focus on her education (PoP).

When our child let her play, she refused to do so, because she (her child) said, 'Miss (the teacher) will hate me, if I didn't do my homework and study hard! (PoP).

For children, plays without education are better than learning without plays. education without play is impossible, and it is very limited to teach a six-year-old child to sit and concentrate on a given lesson for a long period of time. (PoP).

Last night while I tutor him (her child), he refused to follow me; but when I taught him in the form of play, he began to understand and got involved actively (PoG).

When my child plays with materials at home, he doesn't like to talk to anyone. He makes the materials as cars, trains, plain, etc. When he plays with the materials he talks loudly as if his friends are playing with him. He calls their names like 'Mister X! Bring that one here; Mister Y! Take this one to there; do it like this and like that! Don't touch! And he does like that. When people come to our home while he is playing, we give them (our guests) a sign to keep quit, because he gets disturbed. Therefore, if these things are included in his education, I will be happy (PoM).

6. Language (s) Use In and Out of the Classroom

When I teach them in English they become silent but when I explained it to Amharic they start to understand and participate actively (ToP).

Even though, our medium of instruction is English many of our works are held in Amharic (ToP).

The language of our school is English; and at one time this child, in and out of the classroom, got shy for a long period of time; and when I ask him his wellness like 'are you ok?' his answer was 'yes', and this situation continues for some time without any change. But at one time I decide to talk to the boy in Amharic language after the end of my class and I did it. At that time the boy told me about his family problem in detail. He is living with his father who divorced from his wife (the mother of the child), because of that the child gets in to boredom and stress. After I hear his story I became sympathetic and talk to his father to improve his condition. Therefore, because I talked to the child in Amharic, I could easily understand everything about him (ToP).

If children learn through their own language throughout their education life, it will be ok. However, if it is gone for some levels of education, it will become harmful for the children and they will not be successful in their later life. This is a reality. Therefore, it is better for the child to learn his education in English language. In this matter, you may mention (the researcher) the experiences of so many countries that use the local language in their education system; but this thing doesn't work in our country, because, everything is in English and when you go up to the higher level of education, you get English. Therefore, I believe that children, from the beginning, should learn through English language. It is also, 100%, the preference of parents too. It is also a business for private schools. Therefore, let children to practice the language, even by mixing with their mother tongue language, because practice makes perfect (ToP).

At one time I applied for one job; my academic result was very good; and my experience was more than what was expected by the employer, however, I lost the job because the interview was in English. In our country everything is in English, even to teach Amharic and Mathematics you are interviewed through English. Therefore ... children should learn through this language (ToP).

Amharic is accessible anywhere and it is understood easily, however, if children could not learn English now, they will spend much time on dictionary when they grow up. This is our real experience which we passed through when we were at grade 7 and up (ToP).

By the way when it comes to communication, Amharic is easy for children; however, when you teach them, English is easier than Amharic. Because, you know the numbers of our letters and how many types of *U*'s, *θ*'s and other we have. Therefore, it is difficult for them to write and read them. We teachers as well spend much time in teaching Amharic letters than English. Therefore, without any doubt, Amharic is difficult for them (ToG).

Those who spend for two years in the school, most of them can speak English. However, those who join us in between from other preschools and those whose parents use Amharic dominantly, have some difficulties. Therefore, we use both languages in the classroom, because the later ones will fill as they are neglected (ToI).

Every Monday morning is an English speaking day, and when we encourage them to speak the language with us (teachers), children so afraid and get back. However, when it is Amharic they speak as they like (ToI).

We don't want to make our children get into stress and become worry (ToM).

In our society, when you speak English, you are a “ፈረንጅ”, means a “foreigner”, and an advanced person (ToM).

As we know at higher level of education, English is the media of instruction and when you apply for any job you are interviewed through the same language. It is the reality of the country. Therefore, you can't blame the preference of parents towards English language (ToM).

You trained through English but you do in Amharic, it is very difficult! Therefore, in our training Amharic language is so undermined (ECCE prospective teachers).

We have trained through English and English only, and that is the foreign English. The curriculum is a foreign language, it is very difficult. Everything is in English but at school children are learning in their own language, which is Amharic (ECCE prospective teachers).

I don't support that everything should be in English, but my child should know English language very well. Most of the time my child tested me in English, and at one time, she asked me in English to give her a soft paper, then I got confused for some time to respond her question. Therefore, I don't like the language if it has a negative impact on our communication (PoP).

Their education is more of English and children have great difficulty on speaking Amharic language. It is easy for my child to create a word by any English letter than Amharic (PoP).

Amharic has no more teaching aids like songs and videos, but English (PoP).

My child is not active in Amharic like English. This is, I think, because of the approach Amharic is taught. For instance, Mathematics is given in both languages, however, to write the word 'One' in English is easier for her than to write 'አንድ', (which means 'One') in Amharic (PoP).

My child has a difficulty on Amharic language, because, English has 26 letters but Amharic has more than that. However, I prefer English for my child, because, it will let him to be competitive in his later life (PoP).

7. Parents Participation in their Children's Learning

In general, I can say that parent participation is not good. They expect everything from the teacher and the school; therefore, it is difficult for a child to be successful in his or her education without the participation of his/ her parents (ToP).

The participation of parents is very low. Everything is loaded on us. We ourselves do everything for our children (ToP).

I think children of this generation are so lucky, because, they have the support of their parents. However, when we were a child, because our parents not well educated, we couldn't get the necessary support from them. Therefore, these days, family follow up is very good; they ask the progress of their children frequently (ProM).

I am not educated; therefore, I hire a tutor for my child (PoP).

To make my child clever, every night, I let him summarize what he has learnt at school (PoG).

8. Assessment of Children's Learning Achievement

We assess our children through tests and exams, homework and class work, work sheet and based on textbook activities (ToP).

In each quarter we have 2 tests, 2 work sheets, and at the end of each quarter there is one final exam. We also see their reading, writing, listening skills from their exercise and workbooks (ToP).

I assess them through tests and by asking sudden question from the past lessons which they have learned some months ago; furthermore, in every quarter, we have a question and answer session (ToP).

I let them (children) present what they have learned, again (ToP).

Every two weeks they have test, every week there is a work sheet, and if a child scores a low result, we call his or her parent. Besides, I give them a piece of paper having few questions like a quiz; as a result, I can identify the clever and weak children (ToP).

If children able to read and draw, I believe that they will know everything; It is not about whether they score a good result on a given test or an exam or not, and answer the questions or not (ToP).

I never compare my children, because, I believe that all of them are smart by themselves. Now, I spend 8 years in this profession; therefore, when I assess my children I follow them whether they add something on what they already have (ToP).

They have an exam but we never make them to fill that, instead, we facilitate it as a class work activity. By the way, you can't decide the potential of your children by a given test or an exam, because, what they answered may forget after some time, what you ask them may forget later. Therefore, they are not constant. Because of this, their test and exam results do not show their potential. We test our children just for the purpose of fulfilling the formality of the assessment (ToP).

We test our children to know how much they understood what we have taught them and to show their academic level for their families, so that they will support their children accordingly (ToG).

We have an assessment sheet to assess children's performance. Mainly, we use observation and classroom participation in addition to tests. At KG-1 the assessment is conducted through oral, tracing, bolding and observation. At KG-2 they have some written assessments and their result is described using the five rating scales like excellent, very good, good, satisfactory and low. Therefore, based on their achievement, we put these things on their report card. But the numerical value remains with us. For instance, excellent represents a score greater than 90% (ToG).

There is a child in my class who has a potential, and when he couldn't get the answer of the question on a given test or an exam, he becomes silent for a long period of time with deeper immersion. I have also experienced similar situation on other children too. Therefore, I know them very well as they have potential, but during exam time they miss what they know, because they rush to finish the exam quickly (ToG).

There are children who think much and get sad and angry when they miss a question. I think this is natural, because, naturally there are children who don't want to be a loser, a lesser and get wrong. Therefore, you can get these kinds of children, naturally (ToM).

There are tests and work sheets; however, sometimes I found that it is above their level. When my child misses one question on a given test or an exam, he becomes unhappy and angry. The other child even cries for the whole day and refused to take any meal (PoP).

In every quarter they have tests, mid-exam and final exam, and I think their assessment is somewhat over, in each quarter they (children) took up to six exams (Four short tests, a mid and one final exams). Therefore, it should be decreased. However, I and my child never give attention for the result he has scored. Instead I focus on his knowledge. I consider what he know and understand from his learning not the 'X' and '√' marks (PoP).

At one time, during the first quarter of the year, my child got the first rank, but in the second quarter, because she missed some questions, she became the second, and as a result she became sad and angry, and she hated a child who became the first rank, much. Until very recently, she wouldn't like to talk to him, and when he came to her, she became shy and angry, provided that both of them came to school by the same minibus (PoP).

When he was at KG 1, I remember, there was a matching exam and he got 28/30, then he asked me about how he made a mistake. At that time I went to ask his teacher but I didn't want to clash with her, instead I preferred to cool my child's anger (PoG).

There are private preschools which write the exam result of children in the form of percentages (like 80%, 90%, and 100%) on their report card, but there is no such thing in the government preschools. Instead we advise them to rating scales like excellent, very good, good, etc. to differentiate one child from the other; furthermore, we advise them to consider all rounded conditions of the child (ECCE Officials).

You can't test children one today and the other tomorrow, instead let them free and observe their interest, activities and perspectives (ECCE Officials).

What is happening now is, you teach them about letters today then you test them tomorrow (ECCE Officials).

9. Provision of Childcare

The academics portion shouldn't be too much. Otherwise, we will damage their brain (ToP).

At this level, children need more treatment than academics or education. However, we are not doing like that; we give more emphasis for the knowledge part. We are only considering their English skill and on some specific activity what they can do. Therefore, we have to do more to shape children in holistic way (ToP).

We have to have a guidance and counseling center for our children. For instance, children, sometimes, get disturb or shy in and out of the classroom, however, knowingly or unknowingly, many teachers don't want to respond these conditions, because of the workload or burden they have. Therefore, it is not an easy thing; it should be treated in guidance and counseling center, separately (ToP).

When we talk about child care, teachers' workload has to be considered. Early childhood education is very tiresome work. You play with children and do everything with them; therefore, this should be understood well. Children are restless; you move here and there with them which is so tiresome for you, therefore, it should be well understood (ToP).

Preschool teachers should be well trained in order to give an appropriate training and colleges or institutions should be established to train qualified preschool teachers, and the program should be upgraded from certificate to degree (ToP).

If it is said that children must be cared appropriately, there should be many teachers, many wider classrooms and play equipment (ToG).

When we talk about care, I don't think the facilities are appropriate for our children in this school. The compound is, totally, inappropriate for the children. We don't have enough toilet rooms; we don't have any playground materials. Our play materials made of metals which injures our children while they are playing. We don't have clean dining and sleeping rooms. Therefore, beginning from the building, the school needs so many things (ProG).

In our school there is a shortage of play materials, as a result, children play turn by turn. Therefore, this thing will affect the interest of children, because those who wait their turn will lose interest while others playing with the materials (ToI).

Our classrooms are small in size; therefore, this thing restricts the movement of our children during play and other classroom activities. Therefore, this condition doesn't give comfort for children and teachers (ToI).

If we want consider about the care of the child; he or she should have much playtime, play materials and corners. However, in our country, many kindergarten schools have no such things (ToI).

At this level, the education of children shouldn't be difficult, as such. They have to learn little by little, like a soup. More writing, more reading, more working are very difficult for children, because, I afraid that if things become like this, children will hate their later education (ToI).

When I take children from their parents I check whether they are healthy or not through observation (ToM).

They have to consider them as a child. Many things are overloaded on children. There is more home works; things seem above their age level (PoP).

Appendix J

Some Selected Pictures of Classroom Observation

1. The Daily Routines of the Class

Pictures A: - Private Preschools Programs and Classroom Setups

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
1:30-2:30	የሀገሩን አቀጣጫ	የሀገሩን አቀጣጫ	የሀገሩን አቀጣጫ	የሀገሩን አቀጣጫ	የሀገሩን አቀጣጫ
2:30-2:50	የሰንጠረዥ አማካኝ ልምድ	የሰንጠረዥ አማካኝ ልምድ	የሰንጠረዥ አማካኝ ልምድ	የሰንጠረዥ አማካኝ ልምድ	የሰንጠረዥ አማካኝ ልምድ
2:55-3:15	Mat time	Mat time	Mat time	Mat time	Mat time
3:15-3:45	Amharic	English	spoken	General science	English
3:45-4:15	ሒሳብ	maths	Amharic	Spoken	Amharic
4:20-4:50	ቁርስና አረፍት ስለት	ቁርስና አረፍት ስለት	ቁርስና አረፍት ስለት	ቁርስና አረፍት ስለት	ቁርስና አረፍት ስለት
4:55-5:25	General science	ሳይንስ	ሒሳብ	ሒሳብ	maths
5:25-5:55	Math	General science	English	ሳይንስ	ሳይንስ
6:00-6:50	ምላሳ ሰዓት	ምላሳ ሰዓት	ምላሳ ሰዓት	ምላሳ ሰዓት	ምላሳ ሰዓት
7:00-7:50	መጻፍት ሰዓት	መጻፍት ሰዓት	መጻፍት ሰዓት	መጻፍት ሰዓት	መጻፍት ሰዓት
7:55-8:35	H/Writing	Art	Music	Art	H/Writing
8:35-8:55	Sport	ቤተ-መጻሕፍት	ሃገር ጨዋታ	ኮርነር ጨዋታ	Music
8:55	ወደ ቤት	ወደ ቤት	ወደ ቤት	ወደ ቤት	ወደ ቤት



Pictures B: - Government Preschools Programs and Classroom Setups



P1



P2

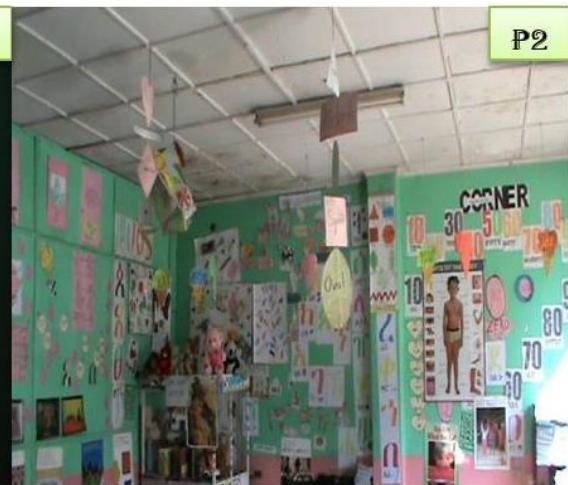


P3

Pictures C: - Missionary preschool programs and classroom setups



P1



P2

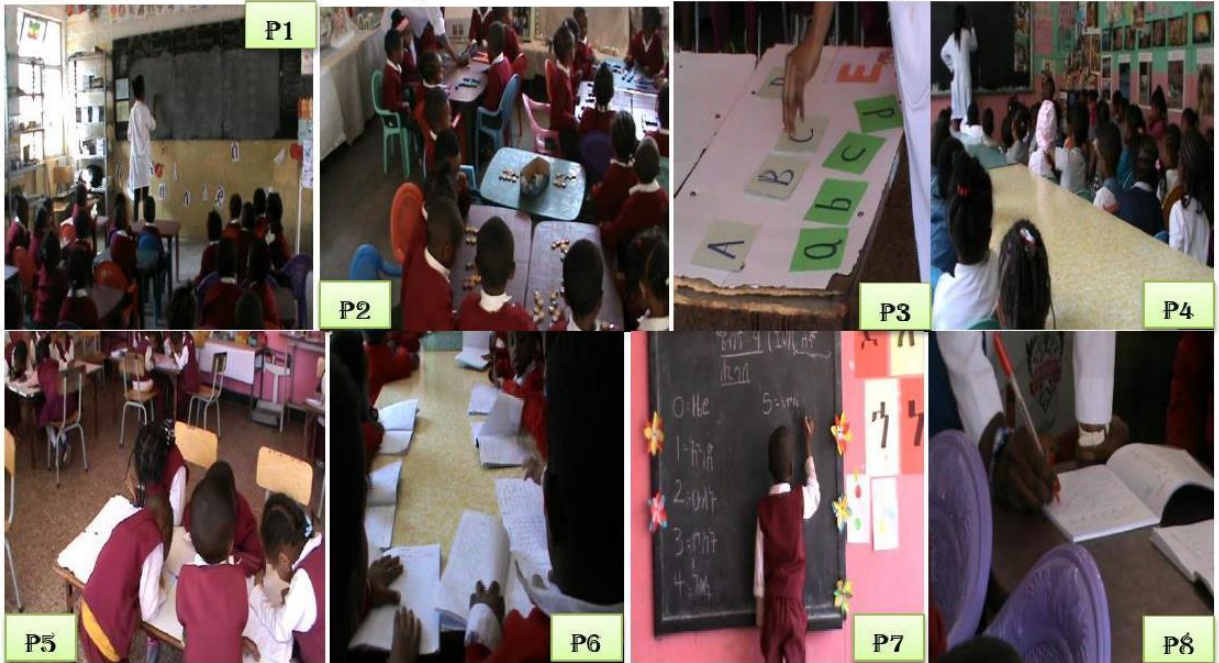
2. Teachers Facilitation Role of Classroom Activities and Lessons

A. Photos of Teachers' Presentations, Using Teaching Aids, Classwork, Exercise Correction (Private Preschools)





B. Photos of Teachers' Presentations, Using Teaching Aids, Classwork, Exercise Correction (Government and Missionary Preschools)



C. Giving Rewards



3. The Focus of Classroom Activities and Lessons

A. Private preschools



B. Government Preschools



C. Missionary Preschool



4. The role of play in children's learning

A. Private Preschools Children Play Time Pictures



B. Government Preschools Children Play Time Pictures



C. Missionary Preschool Children Play Time Pictures



5. Language (s) use in and out of the classroom

A. Private preschools Language Usages



B. Government Preschools Language Usages

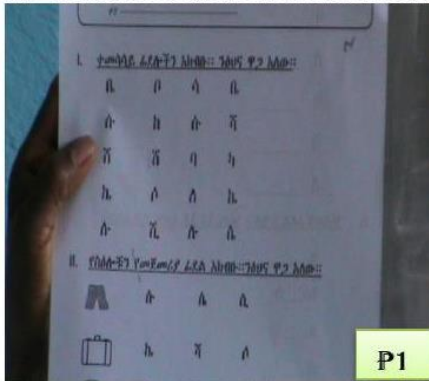


C. Missionary Preschools Language Usages



6. Assessment of children's learning achievement

A. Private Preschool Children are Taking an Exam



P1



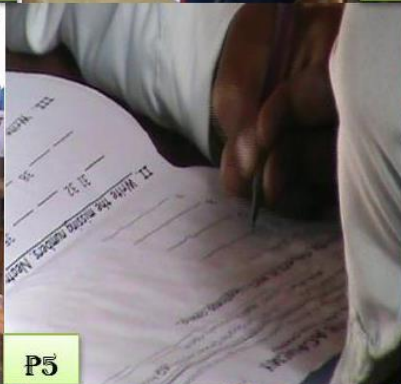
P2



P3



P4



P5



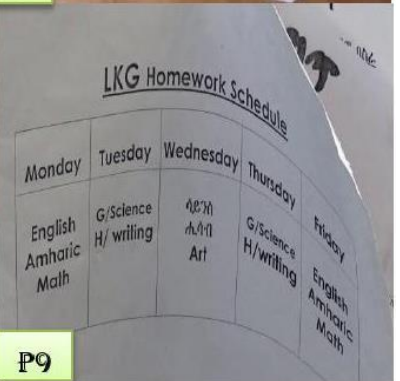
P6



P7



P8



P9

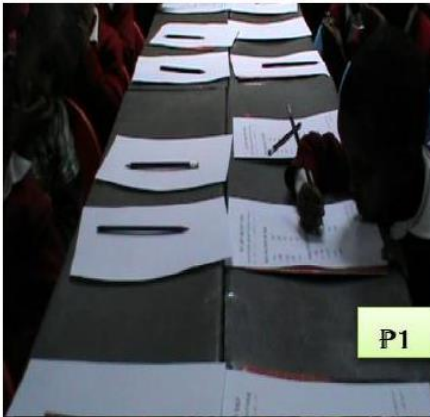


P10

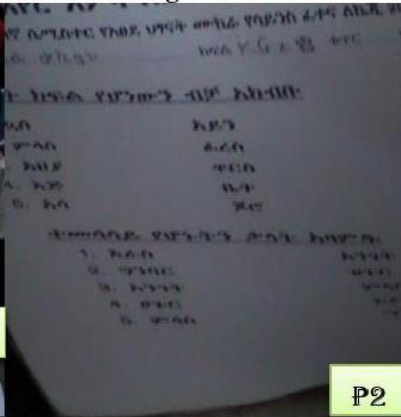


P11

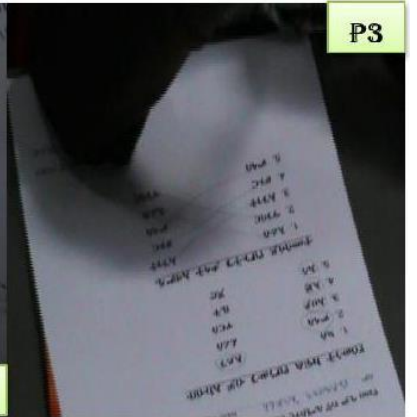
B. Government Preschool Children are Taking an Exam



P1



P2



P3



P4



P5

7. Provision of Childcare

A. Private Preschools



B. Government Preschools



C. Missionary Preschool

