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THE RELEVANCE OF EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND EDUCATION
CURRICULUM AND ITS PRACTICE IN SELECTED REGIONAL
STATES OF ETHIOPIA

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**The Relevance of Early Childhood Care and Education Curriculum and its
Practice in Selected Regional States of Ethiopia**

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the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Curriculum Design and Development

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The Relevance of Early Childhood Care and Education Curriculum and its
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Abbreviation and acronyms

- DAP - Developmentally Appropriate Practice
- DAC - Developmentally Appropriate Curriculum
- DALE- Developmentally Appropriate Learning Environment
- ECCE - Early childhood care and education
- MOE - Ministry of education
- MOH- Ministry of Health
- NAEYC- the National Association for the Education of Young Children
- REB - Regional Education Bureau
- UNESCO- United Nations Education,social, and Cultural Organization
- WEO -Woreda Education Office
- KGE - Kindergarten Education
- TEP- Teacher Education Program

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relevance of ECCE curriculum and its practice in Ethiopia focusing on three regions (Addis Ababa, Hawassa and Debrebirhan). The study attempted to air out the incorporation of guiding principles and basic elements in the ECCE curriculum, the suitability of preschool learning environment for the practice, the correspondence of teacher education curriculum to ECCE curriculum, the appropriateness preschool teachers' practice for children and other factors affecting the practice. To attain the main objective of the study, the mixed approach of descriptive survey and explanatory sequential designs were used. Data were gathered from 362 preschool teachers and 221 graduating class preschool teacher-trainees, fifteen sample preschool classes, and documents. Questionnaires, checklists for document analysis and observation, interview and discussion were the instruments used for data collection. The collected data were analyzed using various statistics like frequency, percentage, average, and χ^2 test.

The ECCE syllabus communicates the philosophical, psychological and sociological bases for ECCE curriculum but not at explicit and required level. The historical base and technological changes were not totally communicated in the syllabus. The syllabus was also indicated the objectives, thematic areas, four developmental directions, teaching methods, assessment approaches, and resources for teaching the themes for preschoolers. But, the emotional, moral and spiritual aspects of development, the ethics and values of the society were not indicated in the syllabus. The instructional methods in the syllabus were far from appropriateness for preschoolers and insufficient to use them for the teachers. The assessment means did not consider the different learning styles of children. Tests were used frequently as assessing means instead of taking notes and observing children in action. Thus, the curriculum, instructional strategies, assessment means, and resources in the syllabus seemed to be found in need of amendment.

The learning environment in the sample preschools of Ethiopia did not seem conducive to the proper implementation of the ECCE curriculum. Insufficient spaces for indoor activities, absence of learning centers and unfit types of equipment for children were common phenomena in many sample preschools. Teaching and play materials as posted pictures in many preschools were at sub-standard level and did not attract attention of children. The outdoor environments for children did not seem conducive for different physical and motor activities. Thus, the learning environment (in-door and out-door) has limitations for facilitating children learning and development.

The Teacher Education Program (TEP) courses do not create balance among the three knowledge areas (content, pedagogical, and child development and learning). The child development and learning knowledge area is represented only by two out of forty-two courses so that it is highly marginalized. The subject-related pedagogical knowledge area did not involve courses that acquaint trainees with specific teaching methods for natural and social sciences as well as ethics and aesthetic/art subjects. The courses for general teaching/active learning methods have been totally forgotten. Action research courses were with limited contribution for practice. The contribution of TEP in acquainting trainees with the contents of the ECCE curriculum was not favored at the required high level. The correspondence of TEP curriculum to the ECCE syllabus is found either at a low or medium level. So, the relevance of TEP courses for implementing the ECCE curriculum has limitations. So, the training has limited benefit.

The preschool-teachers were not properly practicing the five key functions though they rated their accomplishment positively. The methods used by teachers in teaching the three age levels children were similar so that they did not seem appropriate for all children. Similarly, the assessments employed were unfit for preschoolers. So, the preschool curriculum practice was inappropriate for children of the three age levels.

The conditions like support from others, provision of services, nature of the program, and resources were facilitating the ECCE curriculum practices at medium level. But, the funding mechanisms, pushing down the curriculum, group size and adult-child ratio, space for program and the provision of health services were hindering ECCE curriculum practice. The development process of curriculum materials; the nature of objectives and contents, and administration were also creating challenges in practicing ECCE curriculum. Working on the contents of the material, the classroom conditions, teacher education program, and in the creation of know-how, attitude, and sense of responsibility on concerned bodies were considered as means of alleviating the problems.

Thus, the ECE and teacher education program curricula are in need of revision. Following developmentally appropriate practice in coaching children seems vital. The factors affecting preschool education practice need to get attention from concerned bodies. The teacher practice and learning for preschool education needs further studies for the future betterment of the program.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. **Background of the Study**

In the sequential human development process, the early childhood period is a very critical and crucial time for the development and learning of children due to its far-reaching effects on the later life of the individuals. Many societies increasingly recognize the significance of early childhood years and the effect of the period on the later learning and development of children (Dodge, 2004). The development and learning of children in the period can be achieved through comprehensive early childhood care and education (ECCE) program that encompasses both “care” that involves health, nutrition, and hygiene in a secure and nurturing environment and “education” that includes stimulation, guidance, participation, and learning of the developmental activities. “Care” and “education” must be seen as inseparable and reinforce each other to ensure the complete development of a child (Awopegba, Oduolowu, and Nsamenang, 2013).

The Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) program has the goal to provide all children with a variety of experiences that allow them to learn and develop their maximum potential in all aspects of development (Ministry of Education (MOE), 2010). This goal can be achieved through the implementation of a relevant and then quality curriculum in a suitable learning environment by qualified teachers who can implement developmentally appropriate practice at preprimary schools. The ECCE program goal can also be realized through the application of a holistic approach that supports the survival, growth, development, and learning of children focusing on health, nutrition, hygiene, and cognitive, social, physical, and emotional development up to primary school time in the formal, informal and non-formal settings(MOE, 2010; Mulugeta, 2015).

The care and education services given to early childhood period children should be made relevant to the developmental levels and unique needs of each child in the social and cultural contexts of the society. As a result, early childhood care and education services have become the focal discussion issues for researchers and policymakers in the field to make it relevant for children. The relevance of early childhood care and education can be assessed focusing on the

appropriateness of the curriculum and its practice for the developmental levels and the needs of children of the period in the cultural and social context of the society. The appropriateness of the curriculum and its implementation for children can enhance the role of ECCE services in achieving the overall development of the children.

The relevance of curriculum and its implementation for children as a function of the suitable learning environment and fit teacher education program for the early childhood period care and education can base on the ideas of various scholars from the field of psychology of learning and development. This means that various ideas/perspectives about learning and development (like the maturationalists, mental health, behaviorists, constructivists, and humanistic ideas) can be taken into account in making early childhood care and education relevant for children. The maturational and mental health perspectives suggest the need to design children's learning considering the unfolding nature or the role of biology and the behavioral model indicates the role of environmental factors in child development and learning. Whereas, the perspective of the constructionists deals with the role of both biology and interactions of children with the physical and social (people like adults and peers) world as important sources for helping and instructing them (Kagan and Kauerz, 2012). Besides, the humanistic perspective suggests ideas as to the need to consider motivation and the formation of self-concept to promote human potential by making "school fits to the child" instead of making "the child fits to the school". Moreover, other life perspectives as a particular religious and/or cultural orientation can also be considered as a guide to making the care and education programs relevant for children of the period in the different social and cultural contexts in society. These various perspectives about learning and development are required to explain the holistic development of children by actively engaging children in experiential learning and social life activities in the educational practice in preprimary school settings (Wong, 2001).

On top of this, the implementation of the ECCE curriculum demands fit teacher training courses for the level that equip teachers with a balance of the three professional knowledge areas: child development, content, and pedagogy(Kostenik, Rupiper, Soderman, &Whiren, 2012) that can be put in a triangle with equal three sides in that the content knowledge forms the base, the knowledge of child development and learning and knowledge of effective teaching strategies form the other two sides of the triangle (Kostenik, Soderman, &Whiren, 2011) as another point

in the study. The ideas of making the conditions of learning (as the physical and social learning environment, program structure, and routine conditions) conducive for children could also be considered as main issue of making the implementation of curriculum relevant for children (Harms, Clifford, and Cryer, 2005).

Generally, the relevance of the ECCE curriculum and its practice for children of the period can be studied and understood on the bases of ideas of scholars that are taken into account in the curriculum development and the works of scholars (like Jean Piaget, Erikson, and Lev Vygotsky) who have been predominantly influencing the early childhood settings and practices in many countries (Kumtepe, 2005). Besides, some other early time pioneers and contributors like John Dewey and Maria Montessori as well as Jean Jacques Rousseau, Robert Owen, and Friedrich Froebel in the field, and the ideas gained from the Current research (Aggarwal, 1985) can be taken into account in understanding the relevance of curriculum and its practice for children.

There fore, in conducting research in the area of ECCE, the theoretical framework has been drawn always from an eclectic range of ideologies and theories to inform curriculum developers and implementers (Wood and Hedges, 2016) due to the reason that discussion on current practice about early childhood education base on the recognition of the foundation built from the outstanding work of different well-known educators in the field. This means that studies on the relevance of the ECCE curriculum and its practice can be conducted based on the best and fit ideas taken from different theorists. Thus, sticking strictly to one perspective cannot be sufficient to make the ECCE program curriculum relevant for children in different contexts. The various ideas /perspectives in combination contribute their parts to use as the base for the practitioners of early childhood education programs to ensure developmentally appropriate practice (Kagan and Kauerz, 2012) that is serving as principal foundations for the development of curriculum models (Goffin, 2003). For instance, some of best known and widely used early childhood care and education programs (like Creative Curriculum, the Montessori Education, Reggio Emilia, and High Scope program) are designed on the base of different perspectives to demonstrate the developmentally relevant practice principles in their operations as examples of how relevant curriculum might be translated from theory to practice (Goffin, 2003 and Dodge, 2004).

In developing African nations including Ethiopia, the relevance of early childhood care and education program for providing relevant instruction for children could be under question mark due to the nature of its curriculum, the learning environment for implementation, and the training of the responsible professionals who develop and implement the curriculum and make learning environment conducive for children (Awopogba et al., 2013). More specifically, it is learned from curriculum documents and experiences that the teaching and assessing approaches, the arrangement of the learning environment and learning materials, and the collaboration among concerned bodies for the provision of care, support, and education for children of the early childhood period in Ethiopia seem under question mark. This is for the reasons that the relevance of the curriculum documents as a guide for implementation of care and education services for children of different age levels, unique needs, and the social and cultural contexts at schools, home, and community environments seem to have draw back to use as the base for laying the foundation for leading practical life in the future life of children within the society. So, challenges are common in making the ECCE curriculum appropriate and its practice responsive to the needs of children of the period in many African countries (Awopegba et al, 2013). Similarly, the problems seem more serious in the Ethiopian context for the fact that the preprimary school education curriculum and its implementation commented as inappropriate for the age level, the unique needs of the individual child, and the social and cultural context of the children of the period in the society by many concerned bodies (MOE, 2010). Besides, as learned from practical experience, most learning materials for ECCE are imported from the culture and social life of the community outside of the indigenous knowledge of Ethiopians, and preschoolers in Ethiopia are expected to sit for long on the chair to learn different subjects as adults, learn contents as graders, and sit for an exam and pass the exam to be promoted to the next level as the higher grade levels learners. Moreover, the analysis of the existing practical situations in Ethiopia indicates less level of stimulation, care, and quality education to be relevant for the developmental level of children in the early childhood period. Thus, minimizing the problems and improving the care, stimulation, and quality of education to enhance the social benefits of education at the level can be possible with a relevant curriculum and its proper implementation by trained teachers in a suitable learning environment fit for the practice at the given level of education in the country.

In Ethiopia, early childhood care and education program started in 1911 at Dire Dawa to provide the service to children of the French Rail Road workers (Demeke, 2007). But, ECCE was given with an “Ethiopianized” curriculum in the country starting from 1973 that was further revised in 1989 and then after ten years in 1998 before the currently working curriculum was prepared in 2001 for the level (MOE, 1998, 2001 E.C.).

Today, the ECCE program of Ethiopia has a national policy framework with a vision that states “ensuring all children rights to healthy start of life, nurture in a safe, caring and stimulating environment and developing to the fullest potential” to shape children as a productive citizen, for enabling them to enjoy a better quality of life, and then contribute to the growth of the society considering the period as a critical time that requires due attention and a great deal of investment (Ministry of education, Ministry of Health, and Ministry of women’s affairs (MOE, MOH, & MWA), 2010). The early childhood period care and education program for children in Ethiopia has been organized in the formal preprimary school educational program and different non-formal alternative forms like “O” class, child-to-child, and accelerated school readiness programs to realize the vision. The different forms of early childhood period care and education programs have curriculum materials with different approaches to implementing the curriculum. The formal ECCE program as the most neglected area in Ethiopia (MOE, MOH, & MW A, 2010&Mulugeta, 2015) has many problems in terms of curriculum standards and guidelines, culturally relevant materials like story books, teachers’ training programs for preschoolers, and payment for attending preschool education(MOE, 2010; MOE, MOH,& MWA, 2010).

The relevance of curriculum and its practice for the age range and the differential needs in the cultural and social contexts of children of the early childhood period is a pressing issue that needs due attention from concerned bodies. So, this becomes an initiating factor to conduct a study on the relevance of the curriculum and its practice including the conduciveness of the learning environment, and the correspondence of teachers’ training courses with the ECCE curriculum for children of the formal pre-primary schools in Ethiopia as the focus of attention.

On top of this, to bring change in all the developmental aspects of early childhood period children (physical, cognitive, social, emotional, moral, and so on), the relevance of ECCE practice should be maintained considering the six basic components of high-quality programs

that give a roadmap for policymakers in order to minimize early childhood care and education problems. The six core components of a quality program as supportive areas for policymakers include a professional and stable teacher workforce, effective leadership, developmentally (or age) appropriate curriculum, comprehensive family engagement activities, a multilevel continuous improvement system, and a sustainable and sufficient set of funding mechanisms. In accordance to these components, interpersonal interactions, physical environment, and program support structure are also key influential factors of quality that enable the ECCE program relevant for children (Workman and Ullrich, 2017).

Following this, if the ECCE curriculum is delivered in a suitable learning environment by qualified teachers, it ensures relevant practice for children of the early childhood period. The question that states “To what extent the early childhood care and education curriculum, including the learning environment and the courses for training of teachers for the level are relevant to ensure appropriate Practice for bringing quality in the area?” should be a question to be raised in this connection. The question of quality is the demand of the time so to bring quality in preprimary education in the country, conducting a study about the relevance of the ECCE program curriculum and its practice seems a necessity and has paramount significance in any country including Ethiopia. Thus, the serious problem of the time, i.e., quality problem in education, is the other initiating factor for the researcher to conduct the research in the areas starting from this foundational level of education to motivate others for further work. So, conducting a study about the early childhood care and education program focusing on the appropriateness of the curriculum and its practice for children, the suitability of the learning environment for the practice to bring quality to the ECCE program and then to make the practice developmentally appropriate has important implications. Besides, in line with this, seeing the correspondence of teacher education courses with the ECCE curriculum and the balance of professional knowledge in the courses as well as the other factors affecting the implementation of the practice to suggest mechanisms for the future betterment of the program could be very essential in the country like Ethiopia to initiate concerned bodies for actions. Thus, this study can focus on the investigation of the relevance of the ECCE program curriculum and its practice in Ethiopia taking three regional states as focal study areas.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

The early childhood period is a decisive time for brain development and for laying the foundation for the formation of body tissues (Rushton and Lakin, 2001). The period is a crucial time in forming an attachment with significant people, creating readiness of children to learn basic academic, social, and self-help skills, and in creating preconditions for personality, moral, and emotional developmental aspects with comprehensive early childhood care and education programs (Awopogba et al., 2013).

In Ethiopia, the need for providing comprehensive care and education services for early childhood period children have been communicated in a policy document. The policy framework states the need of enhancing quality, accessibility, and equitable distribution of the services for children through more efficient partnerships and capacity-building programs organized in four basic pillars: parental education, health, and early stimulation program (Birth to 3+years), pre-school community-based kindergarten (4 to 6+ years), & community-based non-formal school readiness programs (MOE, 2010).

One of these four basic pillars of partnerships and capacity-building programs (i.e., the preschool community-based kindergarten program service) is delivered on the base of curriculum for preschoolers in a formal public and private school system. The curriculum of ECCE for the formal school system (i.e., preschool community-based kindergarten) in Ethiopia has been brought in the form of a syllabus to ensure relevant and then quality care and education services for children. The ECCE syllabus of Ethiopia as document of curriculum involves five thematic areas: caring for the proper development and physical growth, creating an acceptable relationship with others, using language properly, using calculation and concept of mathematics in daily life, and studying and adjusting with the environment due to interaction with it (MOE, 2010). The syllabus as curriculum document is expected to incorporate various developmental domains and its preparation should consider the guiding principles of learning and development for ECCE as learned from experience and international literature. Moreover, the ECCE syllabus should inform the teachers about the appropriate methods of instruction and fit assessment mechanisms for children. The learning environment for the implementation of the ECCE curriculum should indicate conducive and appropriate conditions for the age levels and the social

and cultural context of children in the period. On top of this, for the reason that the knowledge, theories, and belief systems of teachers influence the instructional plans, decisions, and actions, including the curriculum implementation and then the curriculum does not stand apart from teachers (Dodge, 2004); the pre-school teacher education courses should correspond with the ECCE curriculum and equip the teachers with the needed knowledge, skills, and attitudes that enable them to give the appropriate care and support, and to properly coach learning and development of early childhood period children. This may be evidenced when preschool teachers engage in facilitating children's learning and create an enabling learning environment for preschool classes (Wall, Litjens, & Taguma, 2014 and Westbrook et al., 2013).

Contrary to this, as learned from experience in the actual practice at certain preschools of Ethiopia, instead of facilitating learning and creating enabling environment for preschoolers decisions were made on children's learning based on assessment approaches applicable at higher levels of schooling. Preschoolers like grade learners were expected to sit for assessment techniques like tests and examinations to be promoted to the next level or to be detained at the same class level for an additional year. Concerning this, the researcher experienced a decision made on preprimary school kids who were made to stay in the same class level for an additional year. This experience leads to the assumption that "the inappropriate decision made on the preprimary school children may result from either due to the inappropriate curriculum and its practice, or inappropriate learning conditions for the developmental level of children and /or due to gaps of knowledge from the part of the practitioners on how to arrive at appropriate decision-making practice about children's learning". Thus, this assumption initiates the curiosity of the researcher to conduct a study on the relevance of the early childhood care and education curriculum and its practice to disclose the extent of appropriateness of the ECCE service in satisfying the developmental needs of children of the period.

On top of this, the research outputs about the curriculum and its practice for children in preprimary schools seems to be limited even at the global level, especially in developing countries. In Ethiopia, studies in the area of ECCE were only targeted at foundations (Demeke, 2007), status (Tirussew, 2007; Tirussew et al 2009); problems in academic achievement (Tsegie, 2007); strategies and approaches (Augustine, 2007); pathways (Woodhead and Martin, 2009); and child well-being (Tigist, 2009) at national level in the previous time. Recently, studies in the

area of ECCE were dealing with status and challenge (Animaw et al, 2015; Mihert, 2015; Mulugeta, 2015); Practice, challenges, and prospects (G/Egzibher, 2014 and Yalew, 2011); quality (Rahel, 2014; Girma, 2014), contribution (Andualem, 2014), and contributions and impact (Yigzaw, and Srinivas, 2017) of ECCE in specific sites. Other studies in ECCE targeted at teachers and the profession (Kassahun, 2017 and Manaye, 2017), and the impact of cultural practices on achievement in numeracy and literacy skills (Mebratu, 2017) and reflection on the current practice of developmental appropriateness and cultural responsiveness of ECCE in Ethiopia (Girma, 2019). Thus, all earlier and recent research outputs about ECCE were targeted at general issues at the national level or specific settings in Ethiopia. But, the issues of curriculum like the contents of the curriculum at primary schools are the areas that did not get full attention from researchers (Meskerem, 2017). This is also true for the curriculum of preprimary school education. For the fact that there is limited research in the area of curriculum and its practice, conducting a study on the relevance of preschool care and education curriculum and its practice to air out the status and prevailing conditions of the curriculum works in promoting appropriate practice in the Ethiopian preprimary schools context with the help of empirical evidence seems issue that needs investigation to fill the research gaps in the area. The relevance of early childhood care and education program is actualized properly only when the curriculum for the program is well-planned to have the expected quality for proper implementation, the environmental conditions for the implementation of the curriculum are properly fit for the purpose, and the teachers for the level are with appropriate training for implementing learning experiences for children (Bredekamp and Copple, 2009). With this fact in mind, in this study, it was tried to investigate whether the preschool care and education curriculum and its practice including the learning environment for practice as well as the courses of teacher education programs are relevant in satisfying the developmental needs of preprimary school children of Ethiopia. Specifically, the fitness of the curriculum and its practice for children; the suitability of the learning environment; the correspondence of courses of the teacher training to the ECCE curriculum, and conditions affecting the curriculum practice were the main focal areas for the study with reference to three regional states of Ethiopia (Addis ababa from central region, Hawassa from the Southern Nation and Nationalities region, and Debrebrhan from the Amhara region).

1.3. Research Questions

In the research process, it was tried to explore the answer of the following research questions.

1. Does the ECCE curriculum of Ethiopia involve elements that address the requirements of relevant curriculum for preschool children of different age levels? To what extent the curriculum involves the elements that meet the requirements of relevant ECCE curriculum for children as reported by professionals?
2. Does the ECCE learning environment involve elements conducive for the implementation of the curriculum in preschools in Ethiopia? To what extent the learning environment involves elements that meet the requirements of relevant ECCE curriculum practice fit for children?
3. Do the courses for training ECCE teachers correspond to the ECCE curriculum in Ethiopia? To what extent do the courses relate to elements of relevant ECCE curriculum and equip teachers with the balance of three knowledge areas (child development, content, and pedagogy) to promote the practice?
4. To what extent do the preschool teachers follow the guidelines of appropriate practice to make the curriculum fit for children in the actual preschool setting in selected regions of Ethiopia?
5. Do the different factors (as process and structural factors like facilities, support, parent involvement, and other factors) influence the implementation of the ECCE curriculum practice? To what extent do these conditions influence the implementation of the curriculum? What measures can be taken in minimizing the negative influence associated with the implementation of the ECCE curriculum in Ethiopia?

1.4. The Objectives of the Study

This study targeted at investigating “the relevance of early childhood care and education curriculum and its practice in Ethiopia focusing on selected regional states”. In studying the relevance of early childhood care and education curriculum, it was planned to focus on exploring the fitness of curriculum elements and their practice for children, the suitability of the learning environment for the practice, as well as correspondence of courses of the teacher education

program to the ECCE curriculum for preschool learners. The intention of studying the ECCE curriculum was to examine whether it incorporates basic guiding child development and learning principles, strategies of instruction fit for coaching children of the period, comprehensive objectives and contents appropriate for preschool children of different ages in the different thematic areas of teaching. It was also aimed at investigating the conduciveness of setting for learning (indoors and outdoors) and the fitness of assessment strategies employed for children as perceived by preschool teachers and other concerned bodies. Besides, the study had the goal of evaluating the fitness of the courses for training teachers to equip them with basic knowledge about child development, contents, and pedagogy that fit for the developmental characteristics of children, and the conditions that help curriculum developers and implementers to make early childhood education curriculum and its practice appropriate for the different developmental aspects of children in line with certain guidelines that enhance the appropriateness of the practice at the classroom level. Thus, the specific objectives of the study are as follows. The study tried to:

- examine the incorporation of required elements in the curriculum (the general guiding principles as standard in preparing ECCE curriculum, comprehensive objectives and/or contents/activities, appropriate approaches of instruction and assessment) that make the curriculum relevant for the preschoolers,
- assess the suitability of the learning environment for curriculum practices in line with the set standard of learning environment for children of early childhood period,
- indicate correspondence of teacher training courses with the ECCE curriculum and the presence of balance among the three knowledge areas for professional of preschool education (knowledge of child development, general pedagogy, and content),
- air out the performance of the teacher in making the practice relevant for children of the early childhood period in Ethiopia, and
- show some influential factors in implementing the preschool curriculum and the measures to be taken to alleviate the identified challenges in implementing the curriculum in Ethiopia.

Thus, the study tried to explore whether the preparation of the curriculum is done in line with the general guiding principles of development and learning as standards for preparing curriculum and whether objectives and contents, teaching approaches, and assessment

mechanisms are appropriately communicated for the implementation of the curriculum, whether the ECCE practice is in line with the guidelines of developmentally appropriate practice, the learning environment is made appropriate for the practice, and the courses for training teachers use to make the curriculum practice relevant for children or not. Thus, in the study, it was tried to investigate the relevance of the curriculum and its practice for children of the country including the conduciveness of the learning environment for the purposes, the correspondence of teachers' preparation with the ECCE curriculum for the benefits of learners of early childhood. Besides, it was tried to show problems faced in implementing the curriculum, and the possible measures to be addressed to alleviate these problems in the study process.

1.5. Significance of the Study

In this study, it was tried to explore the relevance of the planned ECCE curriculum and its practice including the correspondence of courses for training teachers for the level with the ECCE curriculum and the suitability of the learning environment for practicing the curriculum to make it fit for the developmental levels of children of the preschool years. In doing so, it is assumed that the study has its theoretical and practical benefits for policymakers, curriculum developers and implementers/practitioners, parents, and other concerned bodies (like school administrators and supervisors) of early childhood education as well as practical significance for children of the period.

First of all, the study benefits policymakers and curriculum developers of the preprimary school education levels to gain information about the elements involved in making appropriate curriculum for preschoolers. This knowledge may enable the policymakers and curriculum developers to think and then work on developing policy and curriculum in line with expected standards in terms of objectives, contents, and approaches that could act as the base for practicing developmentally fit instruction at the level.

The study can also show the ways of practicing the ECCE curriculum to make it appropriate for preschool children in the future. Thus, practitioners (especially preschool teachers and teacher-trainers) can gain information about the proper implementation of fit curriculum for children. Thus, the curriculum implementers at the classroom level can get benefit from the study to

implement the curriculum using fit approaches taking into account the conditions that create obstacles in their educational practices. Besides, the teachers at the preschool level can gain benefits from the study in that to enhance their understanding of appropriate practice for the different ages and unique needs of learners in their contexts. The study also helps trainer of preprimary school teachers to base their training on the relevant curriculum of ECCE and the developmental needs of children. Thus, preschool teacher-trainers can get benefit from the study to train teachers of the preschool educational level in line with the standard curriculum.

Parents, school administrators, and supervisors can also get benefit from the study to have a better understanding of the peculiar nature of the preschool education curriculum and its practice to contribute their part to the enhancement of learning and development of children at the preschools. If Parents, school administrators, and supervisors get a better understanding of the nature of the preschool education curriculum, they can perform what is expected from them in line with the unique characteristics of the preschool education curriculum in their day-to-day accomplishment of tasks with the preschool teachers. Children can be benefited from the study in that if concerned bodies, especially teachers use approaches fit for children of the preprimary school, the learners can see practical knowledge that enable them joy learning and learning through play and to relate the information they get at school with their life experience. As a result, the study contributes its part in showing ideas as to how the foundation for future productive citizens can be laid at this critical time of education.

1.6. Delimitation of the Study

The relevance of the ECCE curriculum and its practice for preschool children can be studied by focusing on various issues that enhance the quality of ECCE service. But, in this study, the relevance of the ECCE curriculum and its practice for children can be seen by focusing only on the consideration of the basic guiding principles in preparing the curriculum to make it fit for the development and learning of children and the comprehensiveness of objectives and contents, appropriateness of teaching and assessment strategies for ensuring relevant practice for children. Besides, to ensure the relevance of the ECCE curriculum and its practice, it seems advisable to see the correspondence of teachers' training courses to the ECCE curriculum as well as the balance of the three professional knowledge areas (child development and learning, content, and

pedagogy) in training teachers for the level. On top of this, the study explores the suitability of the learning environment for the curriculum practice for children focusing on the utilization of facilitation materials that enhance development and learning, the presence of different learning centers, program structure, and daily routines fit for children. At last, the appropriateness of teachers' practice in creating a caring community of learners and reciprocal relations with the parents of children, planning curriculum activities, and teaching and assessment to enhance learning and development are the other focus of the study. Thus, the essential components of the curriculum and its practice include Performance standards or objectives for children; comprehensive and integrated content in language and literacy, mathematical concepts, and scientific inquiry; Ongoing assessment of children's skills, development, and abilities; Organization of the physical and social environment, program schedule and arrangement of materials in the learning center; Processes and experiences in a learning context that capture the energy of the children's curiosity; and teacher interaction that balances teacher-directed and child-initiated behaviors and the role of the teacher training courses in equipping teachers with balanced knowledge about child development, content, and pedagogy. More specifically, the ECCE curriculum involves the alignment of comprehensive objectives/contents, instructional methods, and assessment. The learning environment involves the different elements that facilitate the practice in the schools like conditions in and out of the classroom. But, the courses of teacher training involve the balance of knowledge about child development, content, and pedagogy that correspond to the preschool education curriculum. The appropriateness of practice can be possible while there is the interaction among the different components in that the teacher, on the bases of knowledge of child development and learning, knowledge of content, and knowledge of pedagogy, plans fit curriculum activities for the developmental levels of children, uses fit instructional /teaching methods for communicating the activities, and assesses the behavioral change of children and the program continuously employing fit assessment mechanisms. In this process, creating a community of learners and reciprocal relations with parents should be very important tasks of the practitioners. By studying the fitness of these different components for children, it is possible to study the relevance of early childhood education program curriculum and its practice including the conduciveness of learning environment for the level and correspondence of teacher education program to the curriculum for promoting the developmental needs of children of the-would-be citizens. Thus, in trying to study

the relevance of early childhood education program curriculum and its practice for the proper development of children, all the elements were not treated in deep in this study. But, this study focused only on some of the indicators of the relevance of the ECCE program curriculum and its practice for preprimary school children of Ethiopia in brief form. Thus, studying the relevance of the ECCE program curriculum to ensure developmentally appropriate practice at the preprimary schools means investigating the quality of the program in bringing the would-be-citizen well-nourished or built-in different aspects of development (cognitive, physical, social, emotional, moral, language, personality, and so on). Besides, the study could not cover all regions of Ethiopia but three regional states of Ethiopia (Addis Ababa from the central region, Hawassa from the Southern Nations and Nationality Region, and Debrbirhan from Amhara region) due to different anticipated limiting factors that could be pointed out in the part of limitation of the study. Thus, the study on the relevance of the ECCE program curriculum for ensuring appropriate practice at the preprimary school of Ethiopia was focusing only on some conditions as communicated in the conceptual framework of the study below.

1.7. The Theoretical and Conceptual Framework of the Study

Research in the area of early childhood care and education program can be conducted based on several learning theories like the developmentalist including mental health, behaviorists, and humanistic theories that their ideas use as the base and incorporate in the developmentally appropriate curriculum and learning conditions (as forwarded in the works of preschool scholars like the Frobel system, Montessori Method, and Waldorf Schools) and constructivists' view of different other theorists whose ideas are considered in the practice of developmentally appropriate instruction (like John Dewey, Jean Piaget, Lev Vygotsky) and the ideas gained from the current research in the area of ECCE (Aggarwal, 1985). Thus, the ECCE as a profession is based on the theories and research of Piaget, Vygotsky, Montessori, Gardner, Katz, and Brazelton among others. The early childhood teaching practice is guided by the intellectual development theory of Piaget and the social constructivist theory of Vygotsky. The views of Vygotsky can be used as a guide for applying scaffold instruction that indicates that children learn best through social and intellectual engagement. Besides, Montessori taught us that learning environments are powerful teachers and that the materials should be carefully designed and selected. Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences can help practitioners to understand that

children can be “smart” in many ways and that each child exhibits certain areas of strength. In connection to this, the ideas of Katz can give a lesson indicating that children learn best when they investigate their world and when they are intensely interested and engaged. Brazelton highlighted the developmental aspects of the early childhood years and the importance of key relationships in the social and emotional development of young children. Besides, recent research in the area of neuroscience has demonstrated without a doubt that the years from birth to five and so are crucial for the development and “wiring” of the brain, establishing the early years as critical for future school and career success (Karen Slattery educational research center for children development, 2017). Thus, to conduct a study about ECCE, different scholars’ ideas are taken as the base for the curriculum planning and practice in early childhood education. The theoretical framework for research in the area of early childhood education has to be drawn always on the eclectic range of ideologies and theories to inform curriculum developers and implementers (Wood and Hedges, 2016). The research on the relevance of the ECCE program curriculum and its practice can use ideas of different scholars as its base taking the best ideas from different theorists. The conceptual framework can be explained as follows.

The relevance of the ECCE curriculum and its practice for the developmental levels of children of the period can be studied focusing on indicators of quality education (contextual, process, input factors). In other words, the relevance of the ECCE curriculum and its practice demands consideration of contextual conditions, suitability of the learning environment, qualified teachers equipped with balanced three knowledge areas, and other factors. In making the curriculum appropriate, the preparation of the curriculum should base on the general principles of learning and development, should involve comprehensive objectives and contents, identification and designing of basic instructional methods and mechanisms of assessment for appropriate practice. In doing so, the curriculum becomes fit for the age level of children, the needs of each child, and the cultural and social contexts of the society in which children live. To make the ECCE program curriculum relevant for children, early childhood education practitioners are expected to make many fit decisions for children in their everyday tasks. Some of the decisions could be decisions in selecting or preparing appropriate curricular materials (the syllabus, textbooks, supplemental materials to be read by children, appropriate teacher’s guides, and activities for children), creating an appropriate learning environment, selecting and applying suitable instructional

strategies, and using proper assessment approaches to decide on how to respond to the age levels and the unique needs of each child in the existing cultural and social contexts.

The preparation of ECCE curriculum fit for children involves the task of creating an appropriate learning environment so it is another issue in making the ECCE curriculum relevant. Besides, an appropriate ECCE program curriculum demands qualified teachers who equip themselves with knowledge of child development, knowledge of content, and pedagogical knowledge. Moreover, to make the ECCE appropriate for the developmental needs of children, the professionals (like teachers and administrators of preschools and curriculum developers and supervisors) should have an orientation about the developmentally appropriate practice fit for early childhood period learners. In doing so, the all-around development (holistic development or wholeness) of the child can be possible. Thus, the relevance of the ECCE curriculum and its implementation can be studied in terms of indicators of relevance and then quality educational systems. So, the diagrammatical representation of the conceptual framework seems as follows.

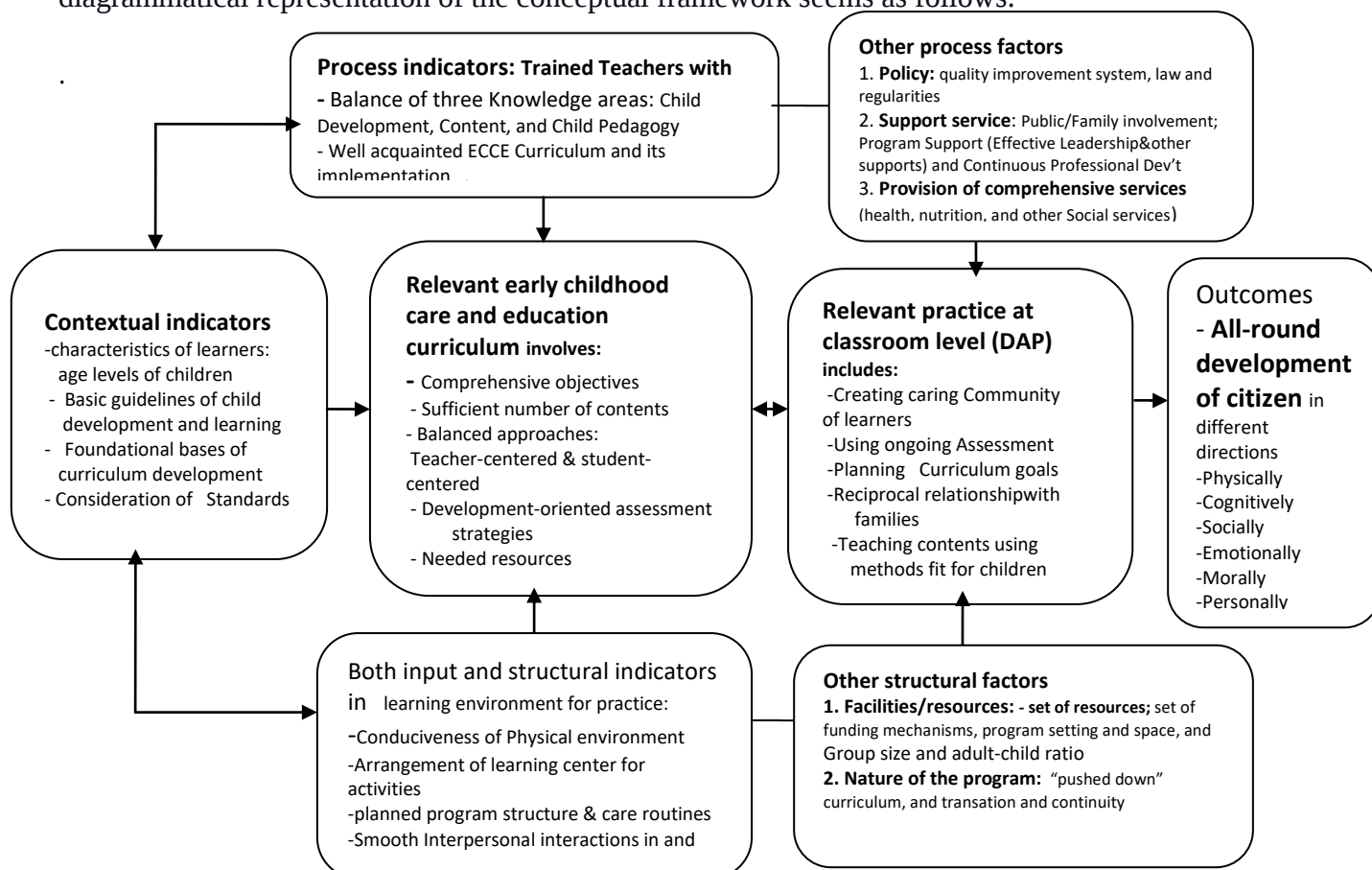


Figure 1: conceptualizing the variables of the study

It is possible to conceptualize factors that affect the quality of education as contextual factors (as learners' characteristics: age and other conditions and principles and standards in the preparation of curriculum documents), process factors (as the correspondence of courses for training of teacher to the ECCE curriculum, the balance of three professional knowledge areas) and input and structural factors (like the fitness of learning environment: physical and social conditions) and other structural and process factors that enhance the appropriateness of the practice to achieve the output of education: the all-round development of children of the period. This means that the relevant ECCE curriculum and its practice could be the function of three basic elements (contextual, input, and process indicators) that facilitate the realization of the practice for laying base in creating physically, cognitively, emotionally, morally, socially, personally well-developed citizen in the future. Thus, relevant early childhood care and education curriculum is possible with appropriate curriculum documents, a suitable learning environment fit for practice, trained teachers for the purpose, and other factors for enhancing relevant practice of five component parts to realize the all-round development of children of the period.

The relevant curriculum for appropriate practice can be viewed by focusing on its preparation and the elements incorporated in it. The preparation of the relevant curriculum should be done in line with the standard principles that guide the curriculum and its practice and the curriculum should include fit and sufficient objectives and integrated contents for children and the use of fit methods of instruction and fit mechanisms of assessment. The suitable learning environment for children of the period includes the physical (space and furnishings) environment, social environment, program structure, care routines, and proper arrangement of learning centers for language and reasoning activities. The teacher education program could be studied focusing on the balance of the three knowledge areas (knowledge of child development, content knowledge, and knowledge of pedagogy) in the courses and the correspondence of the program courses to the ECCE curriculum. When all these elements are thought out properly, appropriate practice can be put into effect for the age level, unique needs, and the social and cultural contexts of children to enhance the achievement of ECCE program goals, i.e., the goal of developing all-round citizen. So, in studying the relevance of the ECCE curriculum and its Practice in the early childhood period, the focus could be on the investigation of the status of the developmental appropriateness of the curriculum, learning environment, and teacher education program in such

a way that they are capable for promoting relevant practice at the preprimary schools. Thus, studying the relevance of the ECCE curriculum and its practice at pre-primary schools in countries like Ethiopia could contribute a lot to the endeavor of developing children of the period considering their level of development to make the program fit for them.

1.8. Limitation of the Study

Different factors were creating obstacles in the research process. The factors that were obstacles in the study, to mention some, were limited resources, problem in getting data on time due to problems at the global level as COVID-19 and at the national level as unrest in a different part of the country, and the absence of readymade/standardized instruments for data collection. The other obstacle for the researcher was the challenge to get the needed information in some cases from different concerned bodies for they made appointments and did not keep their words. As a result, meeting the time for the program as to the expectation of the institute could not be made actualized as needed on the part of the researcher. but, taking necessary measures for the different problems, it is tried to arrive at this level.

1.9. Operational Definitions of Terms

- Age appropriateness refers to the fitness of a program for the typical development of a child within a specific age span during planning learning experiences and making the learning environment conducive for the learners.
- Context is social and cultural condugion in which individual children are reared in a given society or community or home and school environment
- Curriculum is “the total experiences, activities, and events that occur within an environment designed to foster children's learning and development.” It is a planned document communicating objectives, contents, methods of teaching and assessment, and other resources in an educational system for planning the education process for a given period (a term, session, lesson period, etc) that uses to achieve society’s educational goals by being functional and relevant to needs.
- Developmentally Appropriate practice refers to the practice implemented basing knowledge of child development for making it suitable for children of a certain age and stage levels

considering the needs of the individual child as well as the cultural and social context of the child.

- Early childhood care and education (ECCE) program is an organized program for children up to age six to offer education services and/or care for them in the early childhood period.
- Individual appropriateness shows the fitness of a program for a child's unique needs with his or her pattern and timing of development that demands planning of the curriculum to respond to individual differences
- Relevance of early childhood care and education curriculum refers to the appropriateness of the early childhood program curriculum in enhancing the developmental needs of children by providing quality and developmentally appropriate practice for the preprimary school children.
- Relevant curriculum document is appropriate curriculum documents for learners, for instance, fit syllabus for children of a given age, unique quality/ individuality, and contexts at certain developmental levels.
- Relevant curriculum practice refers to the implementation of fit set curricular activities for children of the different age level within their contexts so that they become capable cognitively, physically, and emotionally in a certain stage considering every learner's individuality
- Suitable learning environment refers to learning conditions that involve sufficient space and adequate furnishings with good program structure, personal care routines, materials for language learning, and learning centers for different activities by creating fit interpersonal interactions with children.
- Trained teachers refer to teachers who are equipped with knowledge of child development and learning, subject matter knowledge, and knowledge of pedagogy fit for children of a certain age, unique characteristics, and contexts concerning the curriculum they teach.
- Preprimary school education refers to education for children before the appropriate age of primary school education, especially up to age 6 years, more specifically for children of age 3-6.
- Preprimary school children refers to children whose age is not arriving at the age of starting primary schools (age 3-6)

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1. Introduction

In trying to study “the relevance of early childhood care and education (ECCE) curriculum and its practice in selected regional states of Ethiopia”, the related literature was organized under five main headings taking in line with the basic research questions. First of all, the essence, indicators, approaches, principles, and goals of the ECCE program at global and national levels as well as the focus and gaps of research about program and curriculum of ECCE in Ethiopia were explored. Secondly, the appropriateness of the ECCE curriculum for promoting the needs of children targeting at the principles to be considered in preparing a relevant curriculum, the comprehensiveness of objectives and integrity of contents for children of the period, and the effectiveness of the suggested caring, teaching and guiding or coaching methods for children and the methods of assessing the development and learning of children considering their age, unique needs, and contexts were reviewed. In connection to this, the suitability of the learning environment (in terms of space and furnishings, interpersonal interactions, program structure, care routines, and arrangement of learning centers for language and reasoning activities) for the proper implementation of the ECCE curriculum were reviewed. In the third place, the correspondence of teacher training program courses to the ECCE curriculum and the contribution of the courses in equipping the teachers with a balance of the three essential knowledge areas (knowledge of child development and learning, knowledge of contents or subject matter fit for children, and pedagogical knowledge) that use in helping, guiding and coaching children of the early childhood period were explored. In the fourth place, the tasks of teachers in applying the guidelines of developmentally appropriate instruction at classroom levels to make the curriculum fit for the age level, individuality, and contexts of children focusing on the five basic appropriate functions of teachers of early childhood period children, and the use of other practical guides associated with the developmentally appropriate practice were explained. Finally, the different conditions that influence the ECCE curriculum development and implementation and then the possible measures that can be taken into account for the future betterment of the program were issues touched in reviewing the literature.

2.2. Relevant Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Program

2.2.1. The Essence and background of Relevant ECCE Program

The relevance of ECCE program can be conceptualized in relation to its uses to enhance relevant practice for children of the period. Relevant practice is the provision of appropriate instruction for children of the different age level, individuality, and contexts (social and cultural) as learners. The age appropriateness provides information about typical development within a specific age span to plan a learning experiences and environment. The individual appropriateness shows the need to consider the uniqueness of each child's pattern and style of development in planning curriculum to respond to individual differences. The contextual appropriateness indicates the cultural and social responsiveness of the curriculum in that respecting the social and cultural context in which the children live (Kostenik, Rupiper, Soderman, &Whiren, 2012) and the consideration of these three types if appropriateness make the instruction developmentally appropriate practice. The concept of developmental appropriateness as to Kostenik, Rupiper, Soderman, &Whiren (2012) did not emerge all at once and it is not the product of any one person's thinking for the fact that many ideas in the developmentally appropriate practice as learning by doing through play, learning through close observation, inquiry learning, and hands-on learning and the like evolved over hundreds of years from different scholars. In accordance to this, Kostenik, Soderman, &Whiren (2011) pointed out that many philosophers and child advocates of early time have contributed ideas that use to lay the foundation for the releant ECCE practices. Some of them were John Amos Comenius, Jean Jacques Rousseau, Robert Owen, Friedrich Wilhelm Froebel, Maria Montessori, Arnold Gesell, Jean Piaget, Lev Vygotsky, Margaret McMillan, John Dewey, and Patty Smith Hill. They further reported the contribution of each of the schollara as follows. For John Amos Comenius (1592–1670) material for children's learning is divided in line with age levels, multisensory learning is more important for children, and parents should be involved in their children's education. Robert Owen (1771–1858) advocated multiage groupings of children of 2-5 years in the infant school (a forerunner of preschool), positive discipline, and hands-on learning and field trips as a way of learning. In connection to this, Friedrich Wilhelm Froebel (1782–1852) stressed the need to lead the child to observe and think and the significance of play and the value of the childhood period as an important time and created the first curriculum—including a planned program for children

to follow, routines (songs, finger plays, and circle time), and specialized objects for learning (called *gifts-objects* for children to handle). For Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778), a child should be treated as a child, not as a man, every child has individual patterns of development, the natural curiosity of children is a strong source of learning, and school should be made to fit the child. Similarly, Arnold Gesell (1880–1961) said that all abilities of children are subject to laws of growth and the teacher's task is to guide growth and develop age-related norms for children's growth and development. Similarly, as to Margaret McMillan (1860–1931) teacher of children is expected to make a brain and nervous system that determine all that comes after, *focused on whole-child learning through play and sensory experience working with parents and doing home visits, and specially trained teachers for young children.* Besides, Maria Montessori (1870–1952) implied the greatest sign of success for a teacher . . . is to be able to make children work alone, advocated active, self-directed learning through play and freedom within limits, and the multiage class with child-scaled furnishings and the use of developmentally appropriate educational materials. Jean Piaget (1896–1980) showed that goal of education is to create creative, inventive, capable people who can do new things, and are discoverers and children learn through experimentation with objects. For John Dewey (1859–1952), “Education is a process of living so that children's learning is put into practice through doing hands-on activities, projects, and a child-centered, integrated curriculum, value play, and respect children's individuality. In the same manner, Lev Vygotsky (1896–1934) advised that the only good kind of instruction marches ahead of development and leads it, and language, culture, and social interaction influence children's learning giving emphasis to the role of appropriate instruction, and Patty Smith Hill (1868–1946) indicated that observing and following children lead to promote hands-on learning, experimentation, and self-discovery, and wrote a kindergarten manual to define best practices for young children and founded the National Committee on Nursery Schools (1926) that became the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) (Kostenik, Soderman, &Whiren, 2011). The ideas of earlier time scholars mentioned above are used to shape the ECCE curriculum and its practices to become appropriate for children. So, relevant ECCE practice has roots in different scholars in different countries starting from very far past time (Kostenik, Rupiper, Soderman, &Whiren, 2012).

Further, the Ethiopian philosophers Zara Yacob (1592-1685) and his disciple Wolde Heywot (later time) have been mentioned as early time scholars who were providing advice as to how goals and contents of education can be made fit for children and as to how children could be treated appropriately in the Ethiopian contexts in the 17th century. Zara Yacob indicated the role of rational reasoning and personal reflection as methods of teaching children about life. Similarly, Wolde Heywot was providing advice for parents in his writing on how to rear, care for, and educate their children indicating age-appropriate methods of arriving at truth like allowing them to make an inquiry and critical examination (Demeke, 2007). Thus, the earlier time Ethiopian philosophers had been thought about need to use appropriate practice, as good practice in developing and guiding children in line with their developmental level, even before Europeans and western educators.

Therefore, starting from an earlier time, different educators indicated that early childhood period children need a relevant education, suitable learning environment, appropriate approaches of learning and fit assessment mechanisms for their developmental/ age, individual /unique, and contextual needs . Besides, they further indicated that professionals of early childhood education need special training to provide appropriate support services for children considering the age, unique, and contextual needs of children. But, various conditions like the trend of “pushing down” curriculum from grade levels to preprimary schools, the practice of whole-class teacher-directed instruction alone, and grading using standardized tests seem common in the actual practice of early childhood care and education program. These conditions have been the causes that initiated widespread calls for school reform in the early 1980s (Kostelnik, Soderman, & Whiren, 2004). Kostelnik, Soderman, & Whiren (2004) further indicated that the debates as to the contents (what to teach) and approaches of teaching (how to teach) at early childhood period have resulted in many calls for changes by various organizations. Thus, in response to the debates , the largest leading professional organization in the field of early childhood education, the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) in the USA, published a position paper to introduce the concept of developmentally appropriate practice (DAP) (NAEYC, 1986) that was followed by position statement outlining both appropriate and inappropriate practices for programs serving children up to age eight (Bredekamp,1987) and further revised to provide guidelines for making the care and education relevant for children

(NAEYC, 1997, 2009). The guidelines for appropriate practice dictate curriculum developers in their works to take into account different basic sources of curriculum like child development knowledge, individual characteristics of children, knowledge of various disciplines, knowledge of various cultures, parents' desires, and knowledge of children's need functional in a society (Spodek, 1991 cited in Kostelnik, Soderman & Whiren, 2004). The guidelines can boost the quality of educational experiences for young children (Johnson & Johnson, 1992 cited in Kostelnik, Soderman & Whiren, 2004) in that providing a "safe, nurturing environment that promotes the physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development of young children in response to the needs of families" (Bredekamp, 1987) to realize the developmental appropriateness of the practice.

Thus, the relevant ECCE program creates opportunities for children to have a developmentally appropriate practice that has the target to open up the instruction to move away from the focus on academic skills and the formal teacher-directed drill and practice approach to instruction through active participation of children in their learning to produce long-term gains in children's cognitive development, social and emotional skills, and life-coping capabilities for the reason that such idea or philosophy has long-lasting benefits for children (Kostenik, Soderman,&Whiren, 2011).

2.2.2. Goals, Indicators, Basic ideas and principles of Relevant ECCE

The goal of early childhood education is to provide all children with experiences that allow them develop to their maximum potential. For this reason, many societies recognize the significance of early period education and its effect on the later learning and development of children (Dodge, 2004). As a result, the relevance and then the quality of child care and education have become the focal discussion issues for researchers and policymakers in the field.

According to UNESCO (2004) , the framework to be considered in providing relevant and then quality education include :1)Learner Characteristics (as aptitude, perseverance, readiness for school, prior knowledge, barriers to learning, and demographic variables); 2) Context (as public resources for education, parental support, national standards, socio-cultural and religious factors, peer effects, and time available for schooling and homework); 3) Enabling Inputs (as teaching and learning materials, physical infrastructure and facilities, and human resources); 4) Teaching

and Learning (as learning time, teaching methods, assessment, and class size); and 5) outcomes (as skills in literacy and numeracy, values, and life skills).

In accordance to the five framework variables, the relevance of the educational system and its practice can be analyzed in terms monitoring indicators of education quality. They are: 1) Context indicators (factors that affect learning, e.g. student characteristics, socio-economic conditions, cultural aspects, the status of the teaching profession, and local community issues) which are challenging to measure due to their qualitative nature and use tools like surveys, classroom observations, inspection reports, and self-evaluations to collect data, 2) Specific Input indicators (resources that facilitate learning, e.g., planned financial, material, and human resources to be delivered in the planned quantities at all levels of the system) that are relatively easy to measure for inputs are often “countable” and management processes involve keeping records of many inputs automatically, 3) Social and institutional Process indicators (information on *how* activities of educational program are conducted – whether they are carried out to the desired standard of quality, and how specific educational processes are conducted in practice, e.g. the application of standards, teaching quality, time on task, school climate, and educational leadership) that concern with qualitative issues that may be obtained through surveys and pedagogical observations, inspection reports, and self-evaluations; and 4) Output or outcomes indicators (information on the effects of the program activities to see whether the program objectives are attained that reveal how the education system is performing in terms of subject knowledge, competencies, repetition, progression and completion rates, and employer satisfaction) may be obtained through national examinations, international assessments, surveys, and systematic field observations (Scheerens, Luyten, and van Ravens, 2011).

The ECCE program can be made relevant for children of the period depending on the consideration of different theoretical foundations. The theoretical bases (learning theories and pedagogies) as the framework for the ECCE and its practice have been rooted in the views of different professionals for conducting research in the area. The differences in the theoretical foundations of programs results from the variations in the physical characteristics and the clients served in the ECCE program. A brief overview of five theoretical perspectives prevalent in today's early childhood education program is given below to show how each perspective becomes a base for ensuring appropriate educational practice in the early childhood period.

I. The Maturationist Perspective enables practitioners to carry out programs designed primarily to support the natural unfolding developmental capacities of children. Scholars with this view believe that the proper program for each child can best be determined by referring to norms for that age range so that the activities and materials for children should support their current levels of functioning. In line with this, the self-discovery of children should dominate the program. As a result, attempts to train children before they are “ready” for certain kinds of learning are believed to be ineffective or even harmful. If children do not seem ready to engage in certain tasks, they are left to “grow into” them without intervention. This practice is known as giving children “the gift of time.”

II. The Mental Health Perspective underscores the significance of early personality development programs in line with the work of Sigmund Freud and Erik Erikson. For this view, early childhood programs can help prevent mental illness by enhancing children’s sense of well-being by using play-based activities. Children should be allowed to choose the activities in which they will participate in free play for it is a primary vehicle for involvement. So, practitioners should provide materials such as sand, water, clay, and blocks to help children gain personal satisfaction as they act on their emotions and internal drives. Teachers assume that children will become emotionally functional human beings with support but little direct intervention from adults.

III. The Behavioral Perspective focuses on children’s achievement of specific behavioral outcomes (e.g., reciting the alphabet, tying a bow, counting to 10) rather than internal affective processes by teaching children “academics” and basic self-help skills using direct instruction and external rewards to achieve goals and to shape the behavior of children in certain directions in steps of (a) targeting the desired behavior, (b) establishing a baseline, (c) selecting relevant reinforcers, (d) sequencing instruction, and (e) applying reinforcers systematically until the goal is achieved (Kagan and Kauerz, 2012). While the maturational and mental health perspectives focus on the dominant role of biology, the behavioral model focuses on environmental factors in child development and learning. The next model combines or synthesis the two extreme polar views/models.

IV. The Constructionist Perspective focuses on the holistic nature of children that is influenced both by biology and by children’s interactions with the physical and social world .for this view,

through interacting with people and objects, children could be challenged to explore new ideas and attempt tasks that are slightly beyond their current capabilities to gradually master new knowledge and skills. This view suggests that children benefit from opportunities for self-discovery *and* direct instruction and from chances to play freely *as well as* participate in teacher-directed activities. Currently, the constructionist view dominates the early childhood scene in terms of research and program implementation. The DAP is most closely associated with the constructionist approach to early childhood education, it can also be observed in well-executed programs more closely aligned with maturational, mental health, and behavioral orientations (Kagan, and Kauerz, 2012). The other perspective that could be used as the base for the development and learning of children focuses on the affect issues that need due attention at schools is the humanistic perspective.

V. The Humanistic perspective focuses on how children can develop their potential giving care to “affective issues” (i.e., emotional and social factors) that affect learning. The perspective is built on the theory of Gestalt (learning by perceiving the changing environment as a whole), Abraham Maslow (working on the hierarchy of human needs for self-actualizing the child), and Carl Rogers (shaping the lives of a child in non-directive approaches). The perspective focuses on the needs of children as human beings who are affected by their biology, culture, and environment to promote potential through motivation and formation of self-concept targeting “fitting the school to the child” instead of “fitting the child to the school”. Besides, appropriate ECCE programs may be designed around certain life perspectives such as a particular religious or cultural orientation.

Generally, the views of different theorists have been used as a base for designing and practicing relevant ECCE program for children. The design and implementation of relevant ECCE program consider the ideas of John Dewey, Jean Piaget, and Lev Vygotsky; early time educators who are considered pioneers and contributors in the area of preschool education like Jean Jacques Rousseau, Robert Owen, and Friedrich Froebel; and forerunner contributor for the development of the field in bringing theories into practice like Maria Montessori as well as the ideas gained from the Current research (Aggarwal, 1985). In line with this, Dewey, Vygotsky, Piaget, and Erikson proposed an interactive, constructivist view of learning (Bredekamp, 1987) indicating active engagement for the development of cognition in the experiential and social world for

young children and caring interaction with others for social and emotional development as other focal points of relevant practice at preprimary school settings (Wong, 2001). The practice in ECCE is based on intellectual development and social constructivist theories so that the idea of Vygotsky guides practitioners to scaffolding instruction through the social and intellectual engagement of children. Besides, Montessori indicated that learning environments are powerful teachers in which materials should be carefully designed and selected. Moreover, scholars like Gardner, Katz and Brazelton can be mentioned among others as contributors to the modern time early childhood care and education of children. While Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences creates an understanding that a child can become smart in many ways and that each child exhibits areas of strength, Katz taught that children learn best when they investigate their world and when they are intensely interested and engaged and Brazelton highlighted the developmental aspects of the early childhood years and the importance of key relationships in the social and emotional development of young children (Karen Slattery educational research center for child development, 2017). On the basis of prior time foundation, current research is also reshaping early childhood education over the past 40 years. Recent research in the area of neuroscience has demonstrated without a doubt that the years from birth to five and so are crucial for the development and "wiring" of the brain, establishing the early years as critical for future school and career success (Karen Slattery educational research center for child development, 2017).

Thus, in the study of ECCE, one has always to follow an eclectic range of ideologies and theories to have basic ideas about the relevant curriculum for children (Brooker et al., 2014 cited in Wood and Hedges 2016) and the crucial approach/model for early childhood education and its practices is eclectic for the reason that the best practice of all curriculum models is utilized rather than narrowly focusing on one curriculum model (Karen Slattery educational research center for child development, 2017). According to Bredekamp & Copple (1997, 2009) the theoretical foundations of early childhood care and education lead to the need of considering twelve development and learning principles in the design and implementation of ECCE program following eclectic approach. They further listed the principles as: 1) Domains of development (physical, social, emotional, and cognitive) are interrelated and the child develops holistically 2) Child development occurs in a relatively orderly and predictable sequence, 3) Development

proceeds at varying rates within and among children, 4) Early experiences have both cumulative and delayed effects on children's later development, 5) Children's development proceeds in predictable directions toward greater complexity, organization, and internalization, 6) Development and learning occur in and are influenced by multiple social and cultural contexts, 7) Children construct their knowledge in an attempt to gain an understanding of the world around them as active learners, 8) Children's learning is influenced by the interaction of biological maturation and the environment, 9) Play is an important vehicle for children's social, emotional, and cognitive development, as well as a reflection of their development, 10) Development advances when children have opportunities to practice newly acquired skills as well as when they experience a challenge just beyond the level of their present mastery, 11) Children's learning styles differ and they show what they know in various ways, and 12) Children learn best when their physical and emotional needs are met and as they feel safe and secure.

Relevant ECCE program can be ensured through the relevant curriculum that fits the developmental needs of children. The relevant curriculum is also the base for relevant practice. The relevance of curriculum and its practice mainly bases on the appropriate learning environment and the teacher training courses that correspond to the curriculum for learners. Thus, the preparation of the curriculum for the ECCE program should consider these principles to foster relevant practice. Besides, as National Research Council (2001) indicated children of age 3-6 need new educational goal statements such as; young children profit from quality ECCE settings, the needs of children and their families are rapidly changing, all children are given opportunities to thrive and grow, the need to be responsive to the various cultural environments of children, discoveries change the understanding of the forces of nature and nurture, and successful practices around the world influence the development of the model on early learning environments.

2.2.3. The Goals and Approaches of ECCE in Ethiopia

The ECCE (Kindergarten (KG) education) program in Ethiopia focuses on the all-round development of children encouraging their curiosity to learn and helping them sense the world around them in the preparation for a full life in and out of school (life skills and education). So, kindergarten education in Ethiopia has the goal to help children develop their emotional, cognitive, physical, and social domains encouraging their ability and enthusiasm to continue to

learn in both informal and formal environments and develop their social and educational skills (MOE, 2009). The children in the period are at a similar stage of cognitive development (pre-operational stage) though some slight cognitive differences may appear among them. In line with this, the pre-primary education in Ethiopia consists of two stages: *Stage 1*: 4–5 years and *Stage 2*: 5–6 years after nursery class (3-4). It is further stated that children learn much from each other—especially from older and more experienced than the self so that it is important for the age groups to mix, spending time together in both independent and facilitated play (MOE, 2009). The document of MOE (2009) further indicated that in Ethiopia, the approaches to education in kindergarten should include a child-centered approach where children can learn through play in an informal environment at their own pace. Free play encourages the child to engage in learning voluntarily, experimenting and making their discoveries both independently or with other children and adults to contribute to the formation of their identity, expression, and social learning. Besides, adults can develop tasks for children in line with their needs and level of understanding. All children learn differently at different speeds so adults need to be sympathetic to each child’s interests and needs, considering the individuality of each child and avoiding a blanket approach. Thus, children should learn by integrating rather than compartmentalizing their learning and experimentation so that adults must understand the rich opportunities for learning many areas of the curriculum within one activity. For example, science, mathematics, narrative and social skills may be learned during a creative arts project with art and motor skills. Children need to experience the relevance of their world before they separate themselves from it and begin to analyze it in a detached way. Besides, the specific approaches followed in the preschool education settings of Ethiopia include learning through free and facilitated play—such as sports, dance, music, visual arts, and role-play; learning using the mother tongue as a medium of instruction and for storytelling; learning using hands-on activities with a creative approach—facilitating open-ended projects with a focus on the process rather than the final product that allows the child experiment and discovers independently; making children learn and communicate through all their senses including physical, sensory, sound and visual, and teaching an integrated curriculum where all areas of learning are learned together (MOE, 2009).

2.2.4. The Focus and Gaps of Research about ECCE Program in Ethiopia

The research in the area of ECCE in Ethiopia is a recent phenomenon that focused on limited areas. Research outputs in ECCE were published in proceeding and journals starting from the first decade of 2000. In the previous time, the research outputs about ECCE were focused on issues like foundations (Demeke, 2007) and status (Tirussew , 2007; Tirussew et al 2009) of ECCE in Ethiopia; the problems and academic achievement of institutionalized children (Tsegie, 2007); strategies and approaches to reaching orphans and vulnerable children in Ethiopia through education (Augustine, 2007); pathways through ECCE in Ethiopia (Woodhead and Martin, 2009); and Child well-being and education in Ethiopia: access to schooling in a rural context (Tigist, 2009). Recently, studies about ECCE were focused on the current status and challenges of ECCE in Ethiopia (Mulugeta, 2015) and in West Amahara sub-regions (Animaw et al, 2015; Mihert, 2015); Practice and challenges of ECCE in A.A. (G/Egzibher, 2014); practice, challenges, and prospects of provision of Kindergarten education in government programs (Yalew, 2011), and ECCE in sedentary and agro-pastoral societies: practiced and integrated (Yigzaw, 2015); quality of ECCE in government ECCE centers in Bole and Kirkos sub-cities in Addis Ababa(Rahel G. 2014) and the quality of ECCE in Addis Ababa from the caregiver-child interaction, parental perception, and social competence of children (input-process-output) (Girma, 2014) in Ethiopia. Besides, other recent studies about ECCE focused on the contribution of community-based ECCE centers in creating access to and delivering quality education for orphan and vulnerable children in Addis Ababa (Andualem, 2014), and the impact of attending preschool education on their later academic achievement of students in Dessie (Amogne, 2014). Besides, due to the expansion of ECCE centers in different regions of Ethiopia, different outputs of studies about the ECCE of Ethiopia were published focusing on practice, benefits, opportunities, challenges and prospects, and quality as well as contributions and impact of ECCE as main issues at a specific setting like in Jijiga (Yigzaw, and Srinivas, 2017) and in south Gonder Zone Town (Melese, 2017). But, other few studies were conducted about the ECCE teachers and the profession at Mettu Town (Kassahun, 2017) and in Addis Ababa (Manaye, 2017), and another study on the impact of cultural practices on achievement in numeracy and literacy skills at Wolaita Sodo Town (Mebratu, 2017) and reflection on the current practice of developmental appropriateness and cultural responsiveness of ECCE program in Ethiopia (Girma, 2019).

All the research works about ECCE in Ethiopia focused on general issues either in national or specific settings of the country and /or type of reflection based on secondary data. The studies about ECCE in Ethiopia that are published in some journals and proceedings as mentioned above did not touch on issues of ECCE that need to be addressed through further research. Some of the issues untouched by researchers include curriculum and related issues like the relevance of contents of curriculum for learners of different schooling levels including the primary school education contents (Meskerm, 2017). Likewise, the curriculum for preprimary school education in Ethiopia is one of the areas that did not get full attention from researchers. Thus, the relevance of the ECCE curriculum and its implementation at the ground levels for satisfying the developmental levels, and unique needs of each child in the social and cultural contexts of the children in Ethiopia is the area that needs due attention from researchers who need to conduct studies in the area of education. Preschool curriculum research becomes necessary to make the practice best fit in producing educationally meaningful effects in the learning and development of children, facilitated by the learning conditions, and the preparation of fit professionals for the practice. So, in researching the relevance of the ECCE curriculum and its practice, the target is to satisfy the developmental needs of children by ensuring the quality and appropriateness of practice in the preprimary education of Ethiopia.

2.2.5. The Curriculum of ECCE Program in Ethiopia

The provision of care and education services for children of the early childhood period in Ethiopia bases on a policy framework for ECCE. The policy framework focuses on enhancing the quality, accessibility, and equitable distribution of the services for children through more efficient partnerships and capacity building programs organized in four basic pillars: parental education, health and early stimulation program (Birth to 3+years), pre-school community-based kindergarten (4 to 6+ years), and community-based non-formal school readiness programs (MOE, 2010). Thus, the ECCE program in Ethiopia could be the formal education (education given in the preschools) and the non-formal (child-to-child and 0-class arrangements).

The curriculum of ECCE for the formal school system (i.e., preschool community-based kindergarten) in Ethiopia has been brought in the form of a syllabus to ensure relevant and quality care and education services for children of the period. The syllabus of the preprimary school education in Ethiopia is the one that was prepared in 2009 with five thematic areas (MOE,

2009). The five learning areas of the kindergarten curriculum consists of: Relating with others, taking care of myself, my environment, developing literacy and developing numeracy in an integrated way. The “Relating with others” as learning area focuses on helping children to learn and form relationships, a sense of belonging and understanding with others. “Taking care of the self” as the second learning area of the curriculum helps children to explore themselves: i.e. one’s body parts, self-concept, confidence and self-esteem and express the self freely and independently and to keep oneself safe and avoid accidents. “My environment” as another learning area helps children know more about the immediate natural and social environment to satisfy their eagerness and curiosity and “Developing literacy” as another learning area enables children to develop basic communicative skills, life skills, and social values through learning mother-tongue learning letters, key words and sounds, listening and responding to stories and oral communications that can be a positive, enjoyable activity. The “Developing numeracy” as fifth area of learning helps children to develop the concept of direction, space, quantity, size, and number learning to sort and classify an object, identify common objects around them and describe their geometric features and positions. The grouping facilitates understanding of various activities by representing interrelatedness of contents so that one group of activities influences the outcome of another group's activities and forms the basis for the progression of skills in the other group(MOE, 2009). The adequacy and relevance of the learning areas in the curriculum are the untouched area by researchers. Besides, the delivery and assessment mechanisms for the contents and nature of the learning environment for curriculum implementation require attention from researchers. It seems advisable to study the fitness of the contents in terms of coverage and relevance for Ethiopian children. The ECCE syllabus as a guiding document communicates the philosophy and basic guides, basic thematic areas, structures and utilization, specific objectives and contents in the thematic areas, and some indicators of competency checks in the three-year levels under each thematic area. The syllabus as a document of the curriculum should be prepared with the assumption to incorporate the various developmental domains considering the guiding principles for relevant ECCE curriculum preparation as indicated in international literature.

In studying the the relevance of preprimary school education curriculum and its practice in Ethiopia, one can depend on the education and training policy of the country that communicates

the objectives and guidelines of early childhood education (MOE, 1994) and international experiences communicated in scientific documents (e.g., Alaska's Early Childhood Investment, 2016, Texas Education Agency, 2007, California Department of Education, 2007) for comparison. The guidelines for developmentally relevant practice have been accepted as starting point for the discussion of the curriculum in early childhood education and provided a more constructed and organized perspectives to assess the effects of various ECCE approaches. The position statement of the Developmentally Appropriate Practice guidelines (Bredekamp, 1987) fostered many efforts to create an instrument to measure the constructs in the area. As a result, there have been many instruments utilized in research to measure the appropriateness of curriculum and its practice like the Learning Environment Rating Scale (LERS), Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS) as Developmentally Appropriate Curriculum Review Checklist, the Classroom Practices Inventory (CPI) and so on, which are communicated by different organs such as NAEYC and National After School Association (Workman and Ullrich, 2017). So, conducting a study on the relevance of the ECCE curriculum to ensure relevant practice (DAP) at preprimary schools can be considered a vital task to gear children learning to become appropriate for their developmental levels, uniqueness, and contexts in the future all over the world, especially in developing countries like Ethiopia uses different measures mentioned above and other measures prepared for the purpose from the review organized about relevant curriculum , teacher education program for ECCE and curriculum practice for children as follows .

2.3. The Relevant Preprimary Schools Curriculum for Practice

2.3.1. Conceptualizing Relevant Curriculum for Children

Curriculum has been defined in different ways. It can roughly be defined as the content, learning experiences, objectives, and a plan for instruction. It is also referred to textbooks or training manuals. But, by examining curriculum theory and practice, the curriculum is something that takes place within the minds of the learners, whose influence will persist well into the future and it is also a powerful instrument to either oppress or liberate a given people. As to curriculum scholars, the philosophy of education, the setting of educational policies, the preparation of teachers, and the ultimate learning experience within the classroom are all part of the curriculum for the reason that scholars are well aware of how much these factors influence curriculum

theories and practice (Lunenburg (2011) as cited in Solomon Belay,2012). But, for this research, curriculum means the educational documents that use as a base for guiding the school activities including its implementation in the learning environment by qualified teachers in the preprimary schools. More importantly, it refers to the documents, developed by the national and regional curriculum offices, like the syllabus, textbook, teacher's guide, supplemental materials, and some guidelines sent to schools piece by piece.

Curriculum as the nationally (centrally) prepared textbooks or syllabus or teacher's guide could be the narrow view that is sometimes shared by policymakers and ordinary people. As curriculum implementers, teachers are responsible for the direct implementation of what the textbooks/syllabi/teacher's guides dictate and the documents involves the objectives, the content, and the method of instruction, as well as assessment mechanisms. The term curriculum refers to mainly the materials like syllabus, the textbooks, and written guidelines used by teachers and students in the learning environments arranged in line with the documents and the practice based on the materials.

Relevant curriculum is simply developmentally appropriate curriculum that involves three types of "appropriateness": age, individual, and context in that the document is designed basing information about what students can do cognitively, physically and socially, emotionally at a certain age by being responsive to each child's unique needs in the social and cultural contexts (NAEYC, 1997, 2009). In relevant curriculum, there should be consideration of the range of abilities among different age level children in different cultural background of child;s family and society due to the reason that all children could not develop at the same rate.

The ECCE "curriculum can simply be conceptualized as all the organized educational experiences for children by early childhood care and education practitioners that can be used at classroom or beyond, involving educators, family members, and other people in the community. The ECCE curriculum, in its written form, includes stated goals and objectives, strategies and activities aimed at supporting all aspects of children's development and learning, and methods of assessing children's progress and program effectiveness. *Thus, the* curriculum should be planned appropriately based on the knowledge of theory and research about how children develop and learn, with special attention given to individual children's needs and interests with program goals in the context in which they live (Kostelnik, Soderman, & Whiren, 2004). Relevant Curriculum

has a major impact on children's learning by denoting the best possible practices, environments, and pedagogies appropriate for learners especially for young children. To make the ECCE developmentally appropriate, the elements of the curriculum as objective, contents, methods of teaching, and assessment mechanisms as well as the learning environment for its implementation are used as the base for promoting the practice.

The relevance of the education program at all school levels can be evaluated by focusing on the appropriateness of the curriculum and its practice in terms of the elements of the quality education indicators like the suitability of the learning environment for the practice, and the relation of teacher education program to the curriculum practice, and other contextual, process, and input factors. In other words, relevant ECCE programs for the age, unique needs, and contexts of children of the period can be achieved through relevant ECCE curriculum and its practice. Thus, assessing the relevance of curriculum and its practice is one of the broad principles of quality education. Conversely, the relevance of the ECCE curriculum and its practice for children of the period can be assessed in terms of the contextual, input, and process indicators of quality curriculum focusing on the appropriateness of the curriculum documents, the conduciveness of the learning environment, and the correspondence of courses of teachers' training program with the curriculum to promote appropriate practice at preprimary schools, respectively. Besides, the ECCE curriculum can be made relevant for children of the period depending on the consideration of different theoretical foundations.

The overall goal of using relevant curriculum for children and the child development principles combined with knowledge of effective early learning practices is supporting excellence in early childhood education. The ECCE curriculum can be made relevant for children when it is well-planned considering different perspectives to have the expected quality for implementation. The practice can also be enhanced through learning conditions fit for the purpose, and qualified teachers with appropriate training for practicing fit learning experiences for children (Bredekamp and Copple, 2009). Thus here we can see the framework for relevant curriculum, its components, teacher training Program, and its practice and condition influencing the practice as well as measures for minimizing the negative influence of conditions in the same order to use the theoretical concepts or ideas with actual curriculum in Ethiopia.

2.3.2. The Framework for Relevant ECCE Curriculum and its Practice

Though there are debates among educators as to the relevant curriculum for children, many ECCE professionals have been highly recommended the developmentally appropriate curriculum (DAC) as a relevant curriculum for young children due to its focus on experience-driven education, developmental theories, child-centered approaches, play-based approach, teacher-family-support, and environment (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997). The relevant ECCE curriculum (i.e., developmentally appropriate curriculum) is the one by which children learn from their meaningful past-present-future learning experiences in the period for it values children's lived experiences (Wong, 2001). The developmentally appropriate curriculum has its underlying rationale, principles, and meaning (NAEYC, 1986). This is the curriculum that reflects guiding principles or beliefs about children and their learning as (a) children are competent and eager learners, (b) they should learn by integrating the specific subject areas of learning (like math, science, language) with their experiences (like cooking, gardening, constructing); and (c) they need exposure to all domains of development – physical and motor, language, cognitive, social and emotional and a single domain does not take precedence over any other (Kagan, and Kauerz, 2012). The relevant curriculum focuses on whole-child development through the child's interactions with adults in appropriate environments (Wong, 2001). The relevant ECCE curriculum links to learning theories and pedagogies like behaviorist theories that lead to didactic models of direct instruction about facts to the entire class of children, developmentalist theories that provide chance for children to develop at their own pace to enable children to direct their learning, constructivist theories that present advanced pedagogy to children as active partners within the socio-cultural environment including teachers and peers, and humanistic theories that consider children as human beings with their own needs, motivation and self-concept to make them participate in self-regulating learning with the use of positive feedback to enhance their different levels of needs and help them form identity of their own by minimizing frustration (Wong, 2001 and Kostelnik, Soderman, & Whiren, 2004).

The underlying principles of the developmentally appropriate curriculum are highly consistent with the different developmental theories due to the reason that the appropriate curriculum emphasizes age, individual, and context appropriateness. For instance, the DAC bases on the maturational theory of Gesell that states development and intelligence are determined at birth

and specific skills occur at predictable stages. The developmental constructivist theory of Piaget influences DAC by highlighting the adaptation of intelligence to the environment and showing that thinking is qualitatively different at the four stages of cognitive development learning through the use of symbolic representation to organize ideas and using senses and motor activities. The *multiple* intelligence theory of Gardner also contributes ideas *to the development of DAC* indicating the different learning preferences of children. *Besides, the* psychosocial theory of Erickson is valuing DAC for it identifies the needs of children at different ages/stages, beginning with a need for trust for infants, autonomy for toddlers, an initiative for preschoolers, and industry for school-age children and highlights the importance of social interaction in development (Wong, 2001).

In line with this, Wong (2001) further indicated that DAC has adopted strategies from the behavioral theory of Skinner to promote children's learning focusing on the importance of the environment in shaping all aspects of behavior using consistent positive reinforcement to ensure the repletion of behavior for future use. The socio-cultural theory of Vygotsky is also accepted in DAC's principles for the fact that it believes in the social and cultural forces that shape intellectual ability using language as a primary tool for conveying society's values and highlighting the scaffolding effect from adults in assisting children's learning in the "zone of proximal development". In addition to this, DAC considers the humanistic theory of Maslow in **the** fulfillment of certain needs of children (physiological and social-emotional needs) to enhance their motivation for learning. Finally, DAC emphasizes the influence of social interaction in learning through *imitation* as advocated by the social learning theory **of** Bandura. The DAC focuses on the child-centered curriculum for the reason that children become the primary source of the curriculum with real and attainable goals in school focused on students' interests and active experience. So, *DAC* has been recommended to enhance children's meaningful and joyful learning using well-connected subject-matter. In DAC, *assessment* is a process of identifying an individual child's development and needs to be accompanied by parents' concerns rather than as a tool to evaluate children's academic performance. The DAC has also emphasized on play-based approach on the base of the thoughts of Froebel, Montessori, and Piaget about the value of children's free play (Wong, **2001**). It considers playing as an effective vehicle for promoting young children learning and as the essential ingredient /tool for

children to learn communication, socialization, the world around them, understand themselves and others, and practice some of the skills they will use in the future and the play-based practices enhance children's development and facilitate learning (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997). The other essential part of DAC is the creation of interactive, stimulating, healthy, and safe learning environments for children for the reason that physical and social environments can shape one's experience and experiential learning involving children in human interaction *and situation* [environment] (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997).

The classroom practice using DAC can minimize children's stress for fact that appropriate learning environments have beneficial effects on children's motivation, encourage collaborative teacher-family support that develops identity, security, and care in the early childhood period so that good communication and rapport between families and teachers help build mutual understanding and guidance, and provide greater consistency for children (Bredekamp, 1987). Besides, appropriate learning environments can foster and enhance children's learning of language, culture, motor skills, and cognitive thinking (Wong, 2001). It is used as the base to create a caring community of learners to learn under the cooperative support and guidance of teachers and parents.

Thus, DAC has varieties of theoretical bases so that it may not be limited to the ideas of one or two theories but rather synthesized ideas from many theories that could be considered as the base for its design and implementation. The development and implementation of a developmentally appropriate curriculum for children follow an eclectic approach in that borrowing fit ideas for the purpose and combining them in the way they work for the development and learning of children.

Currently, DAC is enjoying wider acceptance due to its beneficial effect on children's emotional well-being which is an important prerequisite to intrinsic motivation and optimal learning; and cognitive development, as well as its relevant theory-based beliefs as mentioned above (Bredekamp and Copple, 1997).

2.3.3. The Elements of Relevant ECCE Curriculum

The ECCE curriculum as a document that guides practitioners to implement quality early learning programs involves standard objectives, contents, instructional methods, assessment mechanisms, and sets of resources for further reading to improve its implementation. In other

words, the curriculum document describes the content to be taught to achieve objectives with appropriate methods of teaching the content as well as the means of assessment to gather information about the achievement of the objective. The contents should be scientifically-researched information that considers the age level, culture, and socially and linguistically appropriate skills for children of the various developmental stages. The ECCE curriculum materials as guides with learning standards should be powerful resources to help practitioners plan the content for children. But, the decisions about the ECCE curriculum bases on three sources: the children themselves, their families, and the teachers or adults with whom they interact (NAEYC & NAECS/SDE, 2003). According to NAEYC & NAECS/SDE (2003) the interests, developmental levels, temperaments, and needs of children provide important information about the experiences to be provided for children as the backbone of the curriculum to define the types of activities and experiences that are presented through intentional classroom planning. Practitioners who consider the interests and strengths of children in developing new skills can help children to maximize their opportunities to learn. The cultures and backgrounds of families provide valuable insight to curriculum providers. Hopes and aspirations of every family for their children's goals, along with family values and customs, can influence the types of activities for children. Families' linguistic preferences and lifestyles are important elements to be considered to provide an important picture and element of the curriculum. The insight of teachers into their cultural backgrounds and experiences, personalities, interests, and needs, as facilitators of children's skill development, provide the third element that guides the programs' curriculum design. Teachers who combine personal experiences with their knowledge of child development and their familiarity with the children and families build strong opportunities for children's learning and development in order to scaffold learning based on children's prior knowledge to introduce new ideas and information. So, the children, teachers, and families in combination offer essential and valuable information that helps to create the framework for the curriculum. The curriculum involves common learning standards for early childhood as basic elements. But, the activities may vary for children of different age levels, content may differ for a rural and an urban classroom and in different situations. The other important components of the curriculum for children of the period are a suitable learning environment and daily schedule. The curriculum and its practice need a carefully designed classroom environment that is stimulating, yet warm and welcoming - a positive setting for successful learning experiences. The environments should

incorporate materials and equipment that are fit culturally and linguistically and age-appropriate to create opportunities for active engagement (or hands-on learning). The Daily Schedule for children involves everyday routines that offer rich opportunities for learning like hand washing for meals, opportunities for child-initiated exploration and engagement with materials and equipment that capitalize on children’s interests and needs, and a well-balanced complement of active and quiet times, teacher-directed and child-directed indoor and outdoor activities for individual, small group and large group experiences. So, a mental model of appropriate curriculum that promotes a balance of planned experiences in helping children progress toward defined goals and the experiences that emerge from children’s interests and events to be “incorporated into the program in ways that comply with standards and curriculum goals” can be put as follows diagrammatically.

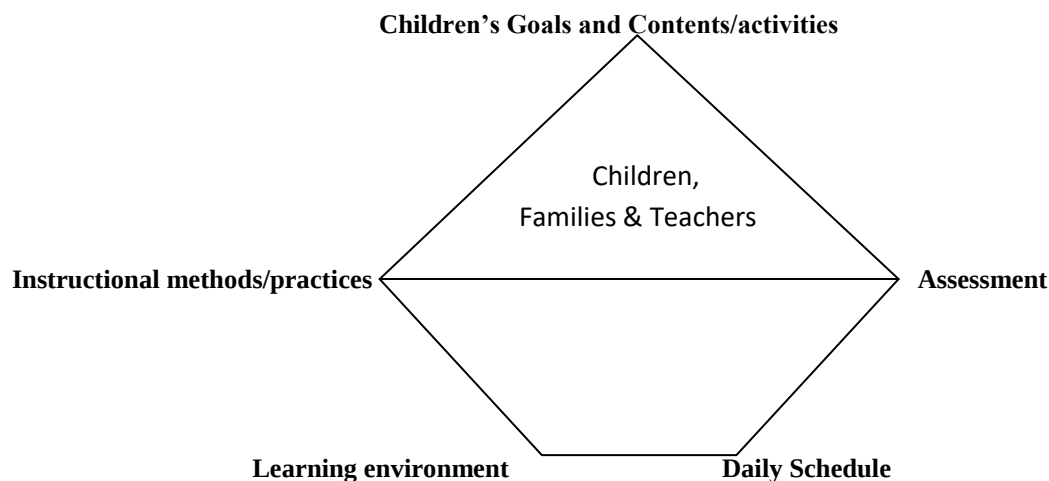


Figure 2: Mental Model of Curriculum

The easy way to understand a curriculum is to think of it with this curriculum mental model. The five points in the figure outline important “points” to remember in implementing a relevant curriculum for children. The goals for Children should be challenging, yet achievable that include experiences and activities; the instructional methods involve observations to make careful, intentional decisions about what children should learn in line with the learning standards as a guide considering the resources needed for developing activities and experiences that motivate children for exploration and active engagement; Assessment of individual children use to determine how children are learning or making progress in skill development for determining adaptations or revisions if needed to enhance learning; Learning environment reflects the key

learning areas as learning standards which is inviting and stimulating and keeping the children involved in learning, and Daily Schedule includes both routines and planned experiences to build children's growth and development and learning opportunities through a balanced and varied schedule that is flexible, yet consistent. Thus, the ECCE curriculum has two groups of elements: 1) basic elements of curriculum as a document that include the learning standards, objectives/goals, the contents/learning activities, methods of instruction or instructional practices, and assessment mechanisms, and 2) subsidiary/ additional components that include learning environment and schedules helpful to implement the document on a daily base. So, in studying the developmentally appropriate curriculum for children, the basic components of the curriculum as a document and the subsidiary elements of the curriculum for its implementation can be seen separately in the study. Such a type of curriculum demands qualified teachers for implementation.

2.3.3.1. The Basic Elements of relevant ECCE Curriculum

The ECCE needs a relevant curriculum as a guiding document. The ECCE curriculum documents (like the syllabus and other curriculum materials) could include materials prepared on the bases of the policy document. The syllabus as a curriculum document includes objectives, contents, methods of instruction and assessment means, and other resources. So, the basic elements of the curriculum as the document can be conceptualized diagrammatically as follows.

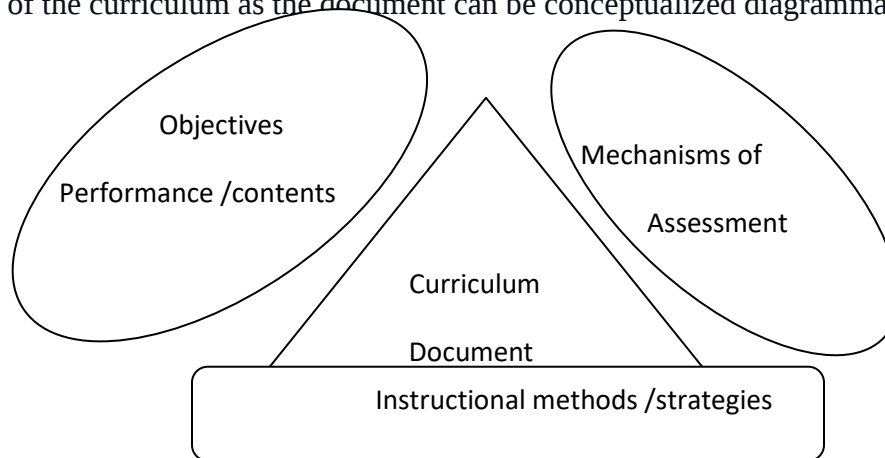


Figure 3. Basic elements of curriculum

In the early childhood period, children have different needs in terms of objectives to achieve, content to learn, approaches to follow, and assessment means to be exposed for. In the early childhood period children may be benefited from a standard curriculum that incorporates fit

objectives and contents, and fit approaches of instruction and mechanisms of assessment that are accepted as core and common for different societies worldwide. So, the standard objectives, contents, and approaches for instruction and assessment in preschool education can be explained as follows.

2.3.3.1.1. The Objectives and Contents of the ECCE curriculum

Preprimary school education should have its own goals to guide activities. The goals of preprimary school education may vary by place and individual programs, but all should have certain common essential goals. Some of the common and basic goals that should be achieved by preprimary school education programs worldwide could include the development of various skills like social or interpersonal skills, self-help or intrapersonal skills, approaches to learning, learning to learn, academics, language and literacy, character education, music and the arts, wellness and healthy living, and independence skills (Alaska's Early Childhood Investment, 2016, and Mc Quillan, M. K. et al., 2007). So, the brief explanation for the skills is given as follows.

Social and Interpersonal Skills: Children as social beings should learn about social interactions: getting along with other children and adults and developing good relationships with teachers, helping others and developing caring attitudes, playing and working cooperatively, and following classroom rules in leading school life.

Self-Help or Intrapersonal Skills: In preprimary school, children must learn how to manage their behavior and their affairs: taking care of personal needs, such as dressing (e.g., tying, buttoning, zipping) and knowing what clothes to wear, eating skills (e.g., using utensils, napkins, and a cup or glass; setting a table), health skills (e.g., how to wash and bathe, how to brush one's teeth), and grooming skills (e.g., combing hair, cleaning nails)

Approaches to Learning: In preprimary schools period, all children are not equally ready to learn though some may always be ready and eager to learn. So, professionals should understand that early learning should be accompanied by an emphasis on supporting children's motivation to learn and helping them develop positive dispositions toward learning. Thus, such dispositions to learning include self-regulation of attention and behavior, effective social skills to create a positive relationship with others, positive attitude toward learning, self-motivation for learning,

listening skills, ability to set goals, and ability to develop and follow plans, understanding, accepting, and following rules and routines, and finding more than one solution to a question.

Learning to learn skills: children starting from an early period must learn how to learn. Learning how to learn is as important as learning itself for the reason that learning depends on the acquisition of learning skills. This category involves skills that promote a good self-image and high self-esteem, knowledge of self, family, and culture, sense of self-worth, persistence, cooperation, self-control, motivation to learn, growing confidence, responsibility for age-appropriate tasks, and turn-taking during activities with other children.

Academic skills: In the preschool curriculum, academic skills have a more central place. Some of the key areas of knowledge in academic skills include: names, addresses, phone numbers, colors, sizes, shapes, and positions, such as under, over, and around, numbers and prewriting skills, shape identification, letter recognition, sounds, and rhyming, simple sentence structure, simple addition and subtraction, and ways to handle a book (California Department of Education, 2007)

Language and Literacy skills have given great emphasis in helping preschool children to become literate. To develop language and literacy skills, preschoolers must work on a variety of capabilities: Oral language skills, Vocabularies, Conversations with other children and adults, Proficiency in language, Literacy skills related to writing and reading, Letters of the alphabet, Listening comprehension, Motivation to read, Print awareness, and Ways to use and appreciate books (Texas Education Agency, 2007)

Character Education: schools with the help of parents identify, worldwide in many cases, the character traits they want all children to demonstrate. Children need multiple opportunities to learn and demonstrate character traits such as; positive mental attitude, persistence, respect for others, cooperation, honesty, trustworthiness, and sensitivity

Music and the Arts: Brain research supports the use of music and the arts to encourage learning in all areas. Preschoolers can learn about music and arts in many ways like learning varied materials (e.g., crayons, paint, clay, markers) to create original work, different colors, surface textures, and shapes to create form and meaning, and art as a form of self-expression, music activities, varieties of simple songs, movement to the music of various tempos, and dramatic play with others.

Wellness and Healthy Living: children should be healthy to achieve their best. Helping children learn about healthy habits can help them do well in school. Healthy habits include good nutritional practices, new foods, a balanced menu, essential nutrients, management of personal belongings, the ability to dress oneself appropriately, and personal hygiene, such as washing one's hands and blowing one's nose.

Independence skills: are skills that help children have confidence they need to achieve in school activities: doing things for themselves, taking responsibility for passing out, collecting, and organizing materials, and learning self-direction.

To achieve these objectives, the contents in the preprimary school curriculum are drawn from current child development science, early childhood teaching and learning science, interests and ideas of the children, and the values of the community. The content areas contribute in reflecting the rights of the child that can be actualized through a proper pedagogy of preschool education. Thus, at the preprimary school level, children follow a curriculum that addresses five core knowledge areas of readiness or content areas for child development: (1) Physical well-being and motor development, movement, and coordination; (2) Language development, oral language, nursery rhymes, poems, finger plays and songs, storybook reading and storytelling, emerging literacy skills in reading and writing; (3) Social and emotional development, autonomy, and social skills; (4) Approaches to learning, and work habits; and (5) Knowledge acquisition and cognitive development, mathematical reasoning and number sense, orientation in time and space, scientific reasoning and the physical world, music, and visual arts (Alaska's Early Childhood Investment, 2016). In addition to this, the preprimary school education curriculum involves issues that focus on achieving self-help or interapersonal, learning to learn, character education, and independence skills (Alaska's Early Childhood Investment, 2016).

2.3.3.1.2. The Instructional methods in the Relevant ECCE Curriculum

Early childhood professionals should respond by changing and evolving the approaches that best assist children in reaching their full potential – cognitively, socially, physically, and emotionally. Scott (1993) recommends that educators reviewing a curriculum for young children should see whether the curriculum promotes interactive learning and encourage the child's construction of knowledge, encourage active learning and allow children to make meaningful choices, fosters

children's exploration and inquiry, rather than focusing on “right” answers or “right” ways to complete a task. So, the relevant curriculum for children should dictate them to do things better – not right or wrong. The planning of such a curriculum can be geared in such a way that it enables children to participate at their level, allow flexibility with no “right” or “wrong” outcome, learn actively through participation, explore and think, socialize and interact with others, learn through their senses, experience things “hands-on”, get choices, foster their positive feelings about themselves, respecting individual differences and cultural diversity, being adaptive to beneficial things, acknowledging their physical needs, and reflect the goals and philosophy of the center (NAEYC,2009). Though the methods of instruction could be many, here about ten effective and appropriate teaching strategies are communicated in literature for the teacher to use. NAEYC (2005) indicated different ways of promoting excellence in early childhood education curricula for practitioners. The methods are as follows. 1. Acknowledge what children do or say shows let them sense the positive attention by commenting and just sitting nearby and observing, 2) Encourage persistence and effort instead of praising and evaluating the child's doings, 3) Give specific feedback rather than general comments, 4) Model attitudes, ways of approaching problems, and behavior toward others for children by showing rather than just telling them, 5) Demonstrate the correct way to do something showing the procedure needed to do a task, 6) Create or add a challenge so that a task goes a bit beyond what the children can already do, 7) Use questions as means of provoking children’s thinking, 8) Give assistance with cues or hint to help children work on the edge of their current competence, 9) Provide information, directly giving children facts, verbal labels, and other information, and 10) Give directions for children’s actions or behavior (NAEYC, 2005). So, an effective preschool teacher chooses strategies that fit a particular situation. It is important to consider what the children already know and can do to achieve the learning goals for the specific situation. By being flexible and observant, the preschool teacher can determine which strategy may be most effective. Often, if one strategy doesn’t work, another strategy will be used, or combining methods of different varieties could be the recommended approaches by different scholars in all schooling levels including the preprimary school education level.

2.3.3.1.3. Assessment Methods in Relevant Curriculum

Assessment in the ECCE occurs within the context of everyday experiences as the teachers and other staff members observe and record the behaviors of every child throughout the day. This

starts with the information and observations shared by family members as the child moves from home to the preschool. The systematic observations inform about how to support children's strengths and abilities and provide the foundation for meaningful parent-teacher conferences about a child's progress.

The systematic and ongoing assessment of children's development and learning is considered an integral part of curriculum and instruction to achieve kindergarten readiness. Assessment needs to be valid, reliable, useful, and timely so the results can inform curriculum development and instruction. This type of assessment provides valuable information on children's learning and informs curriculum planning and teaching across all domains of development and learning for monitoring the progress of individual children and the program. The assessment enables teachers to find out information about what children already know and to do adjustments in the planned curriculum to children with an accurate picture of their capabilities. Thus, teachers must observe children over time; know that information from one brief encounter may be incomplete or distorted, and use the information to adjust curriculum and instruction. More than this, assessment data should bring benefits for children to have more individualized instruction and make children stay in the program, or to have groupings based on developmental maturity. An appropriate assessment aids the teacher's efforts to meet the individual needs of each child and make program improvements by forming partnerships with families. NAECY (2009) indicated many guiding principles for assessment procedures of children as: integrating assessment with the curriculum goals, objectives, and contents; assessing to give benefits to the child, like adjusting the curriculum or individualizing instruction and improving the program; and using assessment focuses on all the domains of children's development and learning and their dispositions and feelings by routinely observing activities and interactions of children, listening to them as they talk, and using children's mistakes to understand their learning. Moreover, assessment should provide teachers with useful information to fulfill their responsibilities; to support children's learning and development, plan for individuals and groups, and to communicate with parents; involve regular and periodic observation of the child in a wide variety of circumstances over time; rely primarily on procedures that reflect the ongoing life of the classroom and typical activities of the children; and avoid approaches that place children in artificial situations, impede the usual learning and developmental experiences in the classroom, or divert children from their natural learning processes.

Assessment in the preprimary schools can be possible through the use of different tools such as observation, anecdotal records, portfolio, interviewing, and conversation in the form of question-answer, performing in a play, music, and art activities. For instance, an ongoing observation is the crucial means of assessment in meeting the constantly changing needs of young children that gives teachers and parents information about the child's development (social, emotional, cognitive, and physical, language and literacy), how to plan curriculum for the individual child and the group, individual interests, child's coping and problem-solving skills, temperament, their expression of family culture, and behavior as a response to the environment. Similarly, anecdotal records are the other main way of collecting objective, descriptive, and factual information from children. The rest are additional assessment tools in preprimary schools.

Assessments should also rely on demonstrated performance during real activities; and utilize different tools and a variety of processes that are representative work of children (artwork, stories they write, tape recordings of their reading), records of systematic observations by teachers, records of conversations and interviews with children, teachers' summaries of children's progress as individuals and as groups. Besides, assessment recognizes the diversity of learners and allows for differences in styles and rates of learning; supports children's development, and should not threaten children's psychological safety or feelings of self-esteem and parents' relationships with their children. Assessment should not undermine parents' confidence in their children's abilities, nor does it devalue the language and culture of the family. Likewise, assessment should demonstrate children's overall strengths and progress; enhance the teacher's role as a collaborative process involving children and teachers, teachers and parents, school and community; address what children can do independently and what they can demonstrate with assistance. It uses to collect and records each child's growth, development, and learning systematically at regular intervals and is a regular process that uses for periodic information sharing between teachers and parents about children's growth, development, and performance. The method of reporting to parents does not rely on the letter or numerical grades but rather provides more meaningful, descriptive information in narrative form. (NAECY, 2009). Practically, assessment in the actual learning context of Ethiopia seems to be realized

contrary to these rules. So, studying the existing practice and reporting the result could be another issue of the study.

Generally, the ECCE curriculum should incorporate a strong literacy component and academic options that meet the standards for school readiness and help in supporting children's emerging skills in reading and writing in a developmentally appropriate manner. Besides, the curriculum should allow teachers to help children develop positive character traits and set the foundation for the high moral character in adulthood. The primary focus of the curriculum is to emphasize the importance of developing the whole child, in four learning domains, including social-emotional, physical, creative expression/aesthetic, and cognitive development which includes language and literacy development, and mathematical and scientific thinking. In the appropriate curriculum, the opportunities for art, movement or music, science, math, block play, social studies, sand, water, dramatic play, and outdoor play are provided on a daily base for children.

The contents in the ECCE curriculum are selected based on observations of children's interests, questions children ask, or shared experiences within the natural environment. The Preprimary school learning experiences are integrated across content areas and are augmented with a variety of multicultural and gender-free activities and materials that are adapted to meet the special needs of individual children including children with disabilities. The ECCE curriculum can help children reach a deeper understanding of a subject as they can make meaningful connections across several disciplines.

These connections are achieved through the implementation of inquiry-based projects or themes with hands-on experiences. So, the teaching approaches should be well planned and intentional to help children cumulatively master more complex skills and knowledge. Communication occurs throughout the day, with mutual listening, talking, or responding, and encouragement to use reasoning and problem-solving skill besides play and hands-on experiences.

A research-based assessment tool with a clear protocol that measures children's progress in all learning domains is critical.

The new approach that is required in selecting, developing, and using an appropriate curriculum for preprimary school children should fit the individual student's needs and level instead of

adjusting the child to the curriculum. A relevant curriculum should challenge students, but not overwhelm them at the right level to help students work with scaffolding and support from a teacher at the beginning and eventually achieve mastery of tasks independently. The curriculum should allow children to progress in their unique way though they learn and develop in predictable sequences and steps. To make choices about the curriculum for students, the teacher needs to understand three things: progress of learning and development, individual needs of students, and the existing contexts. So, the teacher chooses teaching that fits the developmental level, the needs, and the contexts of children based on data gathered about a student's ability based on current research and instructional practices and collaborative discussion with other professionals to keep up to date on curriculum development. Thus, the foundations for a relevant curriculum are the needs and interests of each child in a given society for it recognizes and appreciates children's levels of development, growth, and interest accommodating a child's physical, emotional, social, and cognitive readiness (Wong, 2001). Such a curriculum consists of numerous activities to choose from daily in that allowing the teacher to incorporate a balance of teacher-directed and child-initiated activities. This allows the teacher to use planned learning experiences considering children's interests and abilities and to offer different strategies like field trips, community service projects, and special visitors in the classroom that will help the children build a sense of belonging in the larger world around them. Thus, appropriate curriculums offer open-ended activities that allow children to make choices with objectives for the activities. Child-initiated activities allow children to learn independently through exploration and discovery with the guidance and supervision of the teacher. With teacher-directed activities, children are given specific teacher instructions and are expected to follow a specific plan as outlined under the direction of the classroom teacher. In both teacher-directed and child-initiated activities, the selected curriculum should include objectives for the planned outcome of the activity and provide a well-rounded, engaging learning environment that stimulates children's growth in all developmental domains.

The developmentally appropriate curriculum uses guidelines to determine developmentally appropriate practices that include, for instance, allowing children to explore their environment, and getting hands-on experience in learning activities with little supervision or direction. In this process, there should be a balance between group activity and independent/solo activity, very

important for children who are introverted or easily overwhelmed. A balance between active, high-energy activity and quiet, thoughtful activity can also be important in helping children to learn and develop in line with their unique needs in any context. When selecting a curriculum, teachers should consider the development of the children to ensure the suggested activities in the curriculum are adaptable to the varying skill levels of each child in the group.

Generally, early childhood professionals, who dedicate themselves to working with young children, find that each new day presents an opportunity to help them become all they can be. A child's natural curiosity and eagerness to explore combined with a nurturing teacher and a well-rounded curriculum can provide a magical recipe to enhance learning and growth in all areas of child development. A curriculum, which can offer teachers a multitude of ideas in an easy-to-use format makes the burden of program planning lighter and provides the classroom teacher more time to meet the individual needs of each child. The Implementation of curricula in the form of interactions and instruction engaging children in tasks is informed by an ongoing assessment of children's progress towards early learning and development standards and kindergarten readiness goals.

As to Kagan and Kauerz (2012,), in implementing pre-primary school curriculum, scholars and major national organizations in the field have recommended indicators of effectiveness that entwine curriculum and pedagogy as follows: Children are active and engaged, Goals are clear and shared by all, Teachers have frequent, meaningful interactions with children, Curriculum is evidence-based, comprehensive, and aligned with learning standards and appropriate assessments, and builds on children's prior learning and experiences.

Preprimary school education that demands a developmentally appropriate curriculum can be put into effect through active learning, employing play but not through traditional lecturing methods. In a developmentally appropriate classroom, the teacher provides lots of organized activities involving children actively in their learning: writing, reading, building with blocks, doing project work, and making choices, and children's hands-on experiences and social interaction around content. In math, for example, students grasp concepts better when they grapple with real-life problems and work with manipulative (Scott, 1993). Practically, the existing curriculum in Ethiopia does not seem to involve all these elements. One of the various emphases of this study

is trying to show whether the needed elements are included or not in the existing pre-primary school curriculum in Ethiopia. Thus, whether the Ethiopian early childhood care and education curriculum is organized in line with these ideas and to what extent its organization fit the standard could be seen in this study. There should be standard objectives, contents, and approaches in the curriculum for preprimary school education. So, the curriculum for pre-primary school education in Ethiopia should be prepared following these guiding points. Here, it is tried to see whether the preschool curriculum in Ethiopia is made in line with this guide or not. As a whole, the objectives of preprimary education, and the contents areas in the curriculum could be delivered in the form of routine through daily activities to enhance child's physical, cognitive, social, and emotional development that guide what to teach (content) and how to teach (learning experiences and strategies for teaching), and even where to teach (the suitability of the environment for learning/ socialization). Besides, in line with the curriculum, the learning environment should also be appropriate for the developmental level of children. Moreover, proper support with an appropriate relationship is needed in teaching preschoolers. So, studying the fitness of these conditions for children of early childhood period could be the other target of the study. The learning environment is a very important component in preprimary school education for the proper implementation of the curriculum that should be emphasized in this study. So, the learning environment as a very essential component in the preprimary education program is treated here as another element of this study.

2.3.3.2. Learning Environment as part of Relevant Curriculum

The learning environment can be considered as a subsidiary curriculum component that supports and uses as a base for implementing the curriculum. The learning environments for young children must be physically safe, socially enhancing, emotionally nurturing, and intellectually stimulating. The classrooms for children should be well equipped and carefully designed, with sufficient and appropriate materials and toys. These carefully designed settings promote children's self-selection of materials from a wide array of age-appropriate materials. Both the classroom and the playground invite children to engage in active learning whereby they construct their knowledge through interaction with adults, other children, and materials. The equipment and materials that support learning are easily adapted to the diverse interests, needs, and abilities of children. Children and adults with special needs have easy access to indoor and outdoor

spaces and materials. Within this setting, the teaching team should create a climate of acceptance and should be attentive and responsive to individual children- their interests, strengths, capabilities, culture, race, and gender. Quality early childhood programs are “highly organized and structured in the environments that teachers have carefully prepared and in which teachers are in control” (Bredekamp & Rosegrant, 1995 cited in Connecticut State Department of Education, 2007). Teachers do coach and teach in early childhood learning environments employing a variety of teaching strategies, modifying and adjusting tasks, setting expectations, demonstrating, assisting, and facilitating children’s learning (Berk and Winsler, 1997 cited in Connecticut State Department of Education, 2007). So, quality learning environments support all aspects of young children's development using as a base for the provision of quality early care and education that result in quality outcomes for children. Quality care and education mean children are getting a solid foundation they need to be healthy, happy, and successful throughout life which lays the foundation for lifetime success. But, lack of quality care and education has negative effects on children’s school readiness and development. Quality childhood care and education programs consistently maintain licensing standards and demonstrate responsive care and education provision practices (Kostelnik, Soderman, & Whiren, 2004). The indicators of quality include both structural and process measures. while the Process indicators of quality child care and education refer to what programs “do” to promote development-observable interactions; the structural indicators of quality child care and education show things that are “regulable,” monitored, and important for providing consistent care and education (Kagan and Kautz, 2012). The Process indicators include the established routines as part of the curriculum, language and reasoning activities, sensitive and responsive interactions, collaboration and provisions for parents and families, parent, teacher, and child interactions, child-size furnishings, and well defined and equipped space that meet the needs of all children. Whereas, the structural indicators could include licensure, lower ratios, smaller group size, the qualifications of teachers, professional development for staff, health and safety regulations, and an inclusive environment. In trying to see the learning environment for implementing a relevant curriculum, it is focused on some elements of learning environments that can be categorized under physical environments (proper space and furnishings), social environments, or interpersonal relations (the teacher-child, child-child, and parent-staff interactions), program structure and care routines (the scheduling and structure of daily care routines in the school), and language- reasoning and

activities (the arrangement of centers for the acquisition of language and subject matter knowledge in different disciplines) (Harms, Clifford, and Cryer, 2005). Thus, the learning environments that use as quality indicators for the implementation of the relevant curriculum can be depicted in the following diagram.

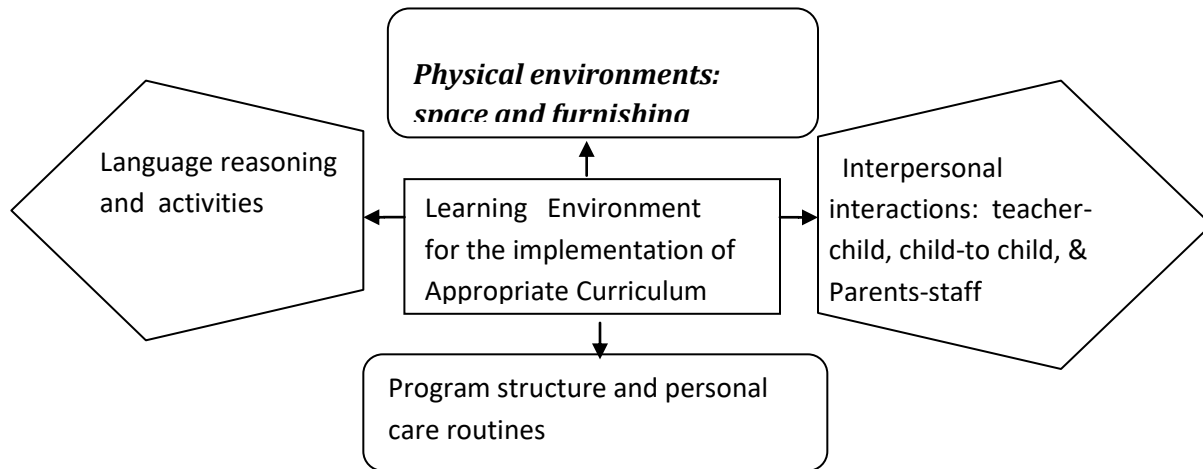


Figure 4. Components of the learning environment in relevant curriculum (DAC)

Source: California preschool () *Understanding Developmentally Appropriate Practice*.

Each of the four components of learning environments is discussed as follows.

2.3.3.2.1. The Physical Learning Environments: Space and Facilities for practice

The physical environment for relevant curriculum implementation shows a learning space conducive and equipped learning environment with furnishings. The elements are needed for appropriate practice in preprimary schools. The well-defined and equipped learning space for privacy and gross motor play, furniture for routine care like toys and other materials, and good furnishings for relaxation and comfort could make the preprimary school environment appropriate for practice.

Thus, the learning space and furnishings can include: 1) Indoor space: Children need sufficient space with a well-lit and comfortable temperature for learning and playing. This is for the reason that well maintained indoor space that gives good comfort and well facilitated and repaired materials sends a welcoming and inviting message to the young child, 2) Furniture for routine care, play, and learning: Children need appropriate furnishings to meet the demands of their daily schedules. Basic furniture such as cots, tables, and chairs should be appropriate to the size of the children in the group to be comfortable, have proper body support, and make children

focus on learning, playing, and routine activities. Caregivers/teachers need easy access to routine care furnishings, such as cots, to maintain proper supervision and provide smooth transitions between activities, 3) **Furnishings for relaxation and comfort:** Children need space and opportunity to relax and rest. Soft furnishings and toys allow children opportunities for relaxation and comfort. Cozy areas provide a space for quiet activities to occur and should be protected from active play so children can snuggle, daydream, and lounge, 4) **Room arrangement:** children need a creatively-arranged room for promoting their positive self-image that encourages a wide variety of age-appropriate activities. Well-defined interest centers where materials are easily accessible help children to understand the organization and return materials to their proper place, 5) **Space for privacy:** children need Places where they can escape from the pressures of group care to promote positive self-esteem. Providing a child with opportunities, space, and time to be alone can contribute to positive classroom behavior. This is for the reason that some children experience unacceptably high levels of stress when exposed to constant activity and interaction, 6) **Child-related display:** the works that are created by the children like artwork should be displayed in the classroom at the child's eye level for the reason that every child needs to know that others value his/her play or work. This promotes feelings of positive self-esteem and sends the message to the child that his/her work is valued and appreciated, 7) **Gross motor play:** There should be daily opportunities for children to exercise large muscles, run in open spaces, and practice gross motor skills. The space to develop large muscles through a variety of play experiences should be made safe for children by providing adequate cautions for fall zones. All play types of equipment should be safe, effective monitoring to teach children safe play behavior and to safeguard against accidents should be implemented as a number one priority, and 8) **Gross motor equipment:** Children need age-appropriate stationary and portable equipment to promote a wide variety of skills for large muscles exercise to develop confidence and abilities. Equipment should be sound, sturdy, safe, and accessible for children's daily activities. So, the implementation of a developmentally appropriate curriculum demands the provision of facilities like toys and other materials that should be safe, appealing, age-appropriate, and free from stereotypes and reflect the needs and ethnic diversity of the children in the classroom. A teacher who plans a developmentally appropriate curriculum with appropriate implementation can maintain an appropriate classroom environment. With proper planning of appropriate classroom materials, teachers may minimize frustrations resulting from a classroom

being out of control. In a well-organized classroom with pre-planned, developmentally appropriate activities, children are busy exploring and there will be less opportunity for conflict. A classroom that provides activities using a DAC creates a less frustrating environment and results in joy for the teacher in his/her activities.

2.3.3.2.2. Interpersonal Relations: Social Environment

Interpersonal interactions represent the social relations of staff, children, and parents in or out of the class in different forms. The interactions in preschools could be in the forms of

1) Supervision of gross motor activities: teachers use gross motor activities as learning opportunities to promote positive social interactions and to encourage the development of skills and new experiences. Diligent supervision of gross motor activities, indoors or outdoors, is critical in preventing accidents to ensure safe and active play,

2) General supervision of children: teachers must balance the level of supervision and control during activities based on the ages, abilities, and individual needs of the children. Adequate supervision of the whole group is required for children's health and safety and necessary for children's emotional well-being,

3) Discipline: teachers' approaches to classroom activities that focus on developmentally appropriate practice will lead to good behavior that is the product of self-motivation rather than the result of punishment and control. So, proper set-up of environment, teacher expectations, available materials and opportunities, and daily schedule significantly impact children's behavior in childcare centers or preprimary schools,

4) Staff-child interactions: teachers, who are nurturing and responsive, promote the development of mutual respect between children and adults. Children, who trust adults to provide for their physical, psychological, and emotional needs, develop their sense of self-worth and self-esteem,

5) Interactions among children: self-regulation, proper emotional expression, and positive social relationships are essential skills for later schooling and life. So, teachers must encourage children to develop such acceptable behaviors by providing a setting that encourages real opportunities for initiative-taking and competence building and creating opportunities for children to work and play together, solve conflicts in productive ways, and participate in group activities as some ways that teachers promote positive social relationships.

The other forms of interactions could be provisions for parents, provisions for personal and professional needs of staff, staff interaction and cooperation, supervision and evaluation of staff, and opportunities for professional growth.

Generally, interactions that involve proper supervision, discipline, and different forms of relations enhance DAC implementation. The creation of positive relationships can be facilitated by proper and safe room arrangements. Moreover, the location and traffic patterns, and wall decorations should be made proper and attractive to facilitate interaction in the implementation of the curriculum. Besides, early childhood classrooms should be welcoming, warm, and inviting for young children. Every day, caregivers/teachers take on many roles from being an observer in the classroom to community liaisons. Effective preschool teachers support children's exploration in the learning environments through relationship building; awareness, sensitivity, and responsiveness to children's emotional and learning needs; and expanding children's perspectives. It is advisable to avoid negativity, sarcasm, hostility, and aggression in teachers' interactions with children. Most importantly, a developmentally appropriate classroom environment will result in happy children and satisfied parents.

2.3.3.2.3. Language and Reasoning Activities

This dimension of the learning environment involves language reasoning and other activities. The creation of a suitable language-reasoning environment can be possible through providing books and pictures, encouraging children to communicate, using language to develop reasoning skills, and informal use of language.

The provision of books and pictures is an important means of learning for children as they make sense of the world around them. In the learning environment, books, pictures, and language materials should be available in sufficient numbers both for independent use in a reading center and for use by a teacher with children in formal and informal settings. In language learning, teachers' encouragement of children to communicate should establish an environment where language exploration and usage are enhanced by making available activities and materials that promote language development for use throughout the classroom and in the daily schedule. Using language to develop reasoning skills provides the key tool for success and problem solving as children are encouraged to talk about their thought processes. This can be possible by enabling children to create logical relationships and learn through interaction with

materials and people, both peers and adults, in the context of play and daily routines. The informal use of language is a way for children to expand their understanding of the world. So, the teachers should engage children in “give and take” conversations for enjoyment and learning by supporting child-to-child conversations as well.

As part of the learning environment, learning activities include different arrangements that use to develop fine motor, art performance, music/movement, the use of blocks, sand/water, dramatic play, nature/science, math/number, use of TV, video, and/or computers, and promoting acceptance of diversity.

The fine motor development of children needs a variety of age-appropriate and developmentally-appropriate toys and materials that they can manipulate with their hands and play with them as well. These activities strengthen fine motor control to encourage skill development that contributes to academic readiness. Art enables children to benefit from exposure to child-initiated art activities that are open-ended and process-oriented. Children’s art should be respected and appreciated as an individual, creative expression. Materials and opportunities to create art projects at the beginning and more advanced levels should be available as children are developmentally ready for them.

Besides, music and movement are valuable means of learning. Children need a supportive environment that includes a teacher and a variety of tools to encourage their self-expression through music and related activities. Block play, with a variety of blocks and accessories, allows children the opportunity to explore spatial, mathematical, and role-play possibilities. Powerful block play requires sufficient space in a protected area and time to expand on concepts and ideas.

The sand and water play gives children the opportunity to learn concepts through active exploration with their senses and dramatic play gives children the opportunity to discover an array of roles and responsibilities. It provides a vehicle through which they make sense of their world and can be enhanced by space, time, props, materials, and supportive teachers.

The science and nature activities and materials foster curiosity and experimentation benefiting the young learner through direct experience and application to other areas of learning. Concept and observation skills are strengthened through science procedures.

The math/number skills, when introduced through appropriate hands-on methods, form a foundation for school readiness and later academic success. Math skills can be taught effectively through routines, schedules, and play activities. The use of TV/video viewing and computer use tends to be passive in comparison to active involvement with materials and people. The use of each should be confined to subject material that is age-appropriate and mentally stimulating. Time limits encourage more active learning. Besides, promoting acceptance of diversity is another learning activity. Through this activity, Children need to be exposed to the similarities and differences of people in positive ways through books, pictures, toys, materials, and interaction. This exposure encourages respect for others and lessens misunderstandings. This aspect of the learning environment is represented by planning and arranging different learning centers with necessary facilities for language development and acquisition of knowledge and development of skills and dispositions in different subjects/ life areas.

The learning centers could be: 1) Dramatic Play/Home living center (with kitchen furniture, mirrors, dress-up clothes, baby dolls, and tables/chairs); 2) Library center (with books, cozy area/ listening center, rugs, puppets, soft pillows/furniture, natural lighting); 3) Discover or Sensory or Science center (with items found in nature (pine cones, shells, rocks, water/sand table), sensory items (shakers, smelling jars)); 4) Blocks /Construction center (with wooden, plastic or cardboard blocks, trucks/cars, doll house); 5) Art /Creative Expression center (with paper, paints, pencils, markers, pens, collage materials, brushes, easels); 6) Music or Movement center (with records, tapes, CDs, musical instruments); 7) Manipulative center (: pop beads, stack/nesting toys, puzzles); 8) Wood Working center (with tools, Styrofoam, glue, toy hammer/nails), 9) Feeding Area center (with tables/chairs, utensils, garbage can, sinks), 10) Sleeping Area center (with individual cots, blankets, transitional objects, sheets, soothing music, dim lights), and 11) Writing Center (with pencils, crayons, markers, dry erase board, paper, sticky notes, erasers, stamps)

Typically, DA preprimary school (preschool or kindergarten) classrooms are expected to offer “print-rich environments that promote both language acquisition and a positive sense of self, which allows children to take responsibility for their learning in drawing children’s attention to specific letters and words” (IRA & NAEYC, 1998, p. 9). DAP classrooms are also associated with positive growth in reading for they present “opportunities to engage in play that incorporates literacy tools, such as writing grocery lists in dramatic play, making signs in block building, and using icons and words in exploring a computer game” (p. 9).

Among other cognitive outcomes investigated in DAP research, creativity and divergent thinking are found to be fostered in developmentally appropriate classrooms and children also feel more confident in their abilities to solve intellectual problems (Kostelnik, Soderman, & Whiren, 2004).

Generally, in a well-organized environment, the care and education can support children’s engagement with materials and peers and this could become the foundation for all learning in early childhood classrooms.

Adults can encourage involvement and support independence by carefully arranging the environment to facilitate learning. The same considerations should be made for the playground as the indoor classroom. Learning centers and defined play spaces should be planned and prepared for indoor and outdoor activities. Previous research demonstrated that literacy-rich dramatic play is a robust predictor of later reading success and investigating young children’s reading in developmentally appropriate classrooms is of significant interest to policy issues in the early childhood education

2.3.3.2.4. Program Structure and Care Routines

The program structure and care routines show the way that schedules and daily routines provide the structure needed for consistent programming. Thus, program structure and personal care routines are conceptualized as scheduling and daily routines. Children need daily routines and schedules that are flexible, yet consistent and predictable. This instills a sense of order and helps children learn new skills and appropriate behaviors.

Program structure involves a schedule, free play, group time, and provisions for children with disabilities.

The best practice can be promoted by the daily schedule of large amounts of time for play, smooth transitions between activities, and a balance between child-initiated and teacher-directed activities. Children do well as they have a consistent routine that provides a balance of activities designed to meet individual needs and foster physical, cognitive, social, and emotional growth.

The free Play allows children to select materials and companions and manage to play independently so that they practice making decisions and having control of their world. Thus, teachers' intervention should be in response to children's needs, as an invitation or an opportunity to expand play activities. The group time for whole group activities should be kept to a minimum and limited to gatherings that follow the interests and involvement of the children. In group-care situations, the focus is on meeting individual needs and guiding children as they interact in small groups. The Provision for children with disabilities to meet their needs requires knowledge of routine care needs, developmental levels, individual assessments, and the integration of the children into ongoing classroom activities. It also requires the involvement and establishment of a partnership of the parents and staff in setting attainable goals to assist the child in reaching his/her full potential.

Personal care routines could involve routines about greeting/departing, meals/snacks, nap/rest, toileting/diapering, health practices, and safety practices.

In greeting/departing, Parents and children need a warm, welcoming, and pleasant atmosphere to make the daily routine a happy one. This is for the reason that positive greetings help in promoting the children's self-esteem and can create a welcoming environment for parents. The meals and snacks that follow scientific guidelines contribute to the health of children and provide a model for good nutritional habits for life-long practice. Taking care of Proper hand washing along with careful food preparation teaches children proper hygiene and promotes sanitary conditions. The Nap and/or rest time should be appropriately scheduled and supervised for the children in the group. It is advisable to recognize that adequate separation of cots helps to prevent the spread of germs and soft music or a soothing story helps to facilitate a peaceful rest time that is important in helping children to balance the day and renew their energy. In the toileting process, young children need appropriate supervision to care for basic needs and to teach the importance of good health habits. The schedule should be individualized. Provisions,

such as soap and steps near the sink, should be convenient and accessible so that children can wash their hands after toileting; this promotes self-help skills and good personal hygiene. The health practices for preventive measures, such as washing hands after handling pets or wiping noses, help to educate children to achieve life-long health practices. Besides, taking appropriate action when children are sick will minimize the spread of germs. The safety practices for protecting children from danger are critical in providing quality care, whether through adequate supervision or minimizing hazards both inside and outside. Thus, teachers/caregivers should anticipate potential safety problems and demonstrate, model, and teach children safe practices.

Generally, creating developmentally appropriate learning environments for preprimary school children is making the different components of the learning environment (as elaborated above) conducive to the child instead of adjusting the child to the environment to enhance the child's physical, emotional, social, and cognitive readiness based on the needs, developmental levels, and interests of each child. The learning environments that are expected to be fit for children should be filled with numerous activities to choose from daily, giving the classroom teacher the chance to incorporate a balance of teacher-directed and child-initiated activities. The learning environment is considered as part of the appropriate curriculum in the early childhood period including preparing program structure or appropriate scheduling, creating an appropriate classroom with sufficient space and furnishings, arranging learning centers, and creating interpersonal interaction with a mutual understanding that can result in actively engaging the child and keeping his/ her attention to learning for development. These elements contribute to fewer discipline problems and a smoother day as implemented in the classroom. Thus, in the process of this study, it will be tried to investigate the the extent that the learning environment in the preprimary schools of Ethiopia is organized in line with the expected standard as communicated in the literature and can be measured using the learning environment rating scale developed by experts in the area.

Early childhood programs need to create learning environments or settings where a cognitively challenging curriculum is embedded within appropriate experiences and delivered by caring professionals, understanding development, and staying current with research and best practice (Shore, 1997 cited in Connecticut State Department of Education, 2007). Teachers should be reflective and involved in decision-making around curriculum and teaching strategies.

Professionals should participate in the dialogue that strives to link past theories and practice with current research. The past and the present serve as guideposts in the ongoing efforts to strengthen the vision for the implementation of successful early childhood education programs. So, the next concern here is the training/education program for professionals who implement DAC or DAP.

2.4. Teacher Education Program for Preprimary care and Education Practice

Teacher education program for the preprimary school education practice is expected to produce professional teachers who can personalize the way they teach the same concept to each child.

Teachers can use different techniques to give young children an ideal learning environment if they go through proper training in planning classroom curricula for young children based on the wide spectrum of abilities and interests of children and activities. Teachers who can support the implementation of the DAC should be knowledgeable about human development and recognize the unique differences among each child and are capable to create classroom settings and planning activities that will better match the child's developing abilities in respecting their unique interests. ((Kostenik, Rupiper, Soderman,&Whiren,2012).

Professional teachers and staff for preprimary school education recognize the importance of having organized knowledge in planning daily activities and curriculum development in a manner in which a teacher accomplishes goals and objectives. In doing so, a relevant program meets the child's needs based on their abilities for the present, as well as the future. Besides, teachers who support DAP recognize that young children have diverse backgrounds and experiences. The role of the teacher is to facilitate learning, allow children to make meaningful choices, and build self-esteem through staging "successes" that encourage further exploration and learning. Working with young children is exciting, exhausting, and rewarding that involves tremendous responsibility. In this connection, the well-done professional activity/ job in the early childhood educational process can be facilitated by building a professional knowledge base that leads to effective teaching. Professional teacher education programs for preprimary school education should target acquainting teachers with three areas of knowledge as well as practical roles and responsibilities for implementing DAC and for providing DAP properly (Kostenik, Rupiper, Soderman, &Whiren, 2012). The three areas of knowledge that use as the base for professional activities are as follows. First of all, early childhood educators need to know what young children are like. They must understand child development and learn for applying the

knowledge or understanding to create early childhood environments where all children can thrive. This knowledge prompts teachers to focus more clearly on *who* they are teaching. Secondly, teachers must demonstrate deep knowledge of academic disciplines and subject matter content. This tells them *what* to teach. Third, early childhood professionals need to know about the learning process as well as the teaching techniques that best support children's learning. This involves knowing *how* to teach.

Thus, early childhood educators /teachers who are capable of practicing developmentally appropriate instruction should develop an understanding of these three areas of knowledge. They are knowledgeable about how children are developing and learning, good grasp of content knowledge in a variety of areas and understanding of learning outcomes, and develop a broad repertoire of effective teaching strategies.

Professionally well-prepared teachers combine all three areas of knowledge in their work with children. This holistic approach to teaching and learning as shown in the figure below provides the foundation for enacting DAP in early childhood programs. These three areas of knowledge for developmentally appropriate practice can be conceptualized in the professional knowledge base triangle as follows. (Kostenik,, Soderman,, &Whiren, 2011)



Figure 5: The main knowledge areas of educators of children

Source: Kostenik,M.J., Soderman,A.K., &Whiren, A.P.,(2011) *Developmentally appropriate curriculum: best practice in early childhood education* . , 6th ed., and in Kostenik, M.J., Rupiper, M., Soderman,A.K., &Whiren, A.P.(2012) *Developmentally appropriate curriculum in action*:

2.4.1. Knowledge about Child Development and Learning

The early childhood educator's knowledge about how young children develop and learn is a major factor in the delivery of high-quality relevant programs for children. Effective delivery of high-quality early childhood programs demands teachers to know when children are expected to benefit from certain experiences and how children are likely to differ from each other (Bredekamp & Copple, 2009 cited in Kostelnik, Rupiper, Soderman, & Whiren, 2012).

Teachers who have a solid grounding in child development and learning are more likely to use DAC and engage in DAP than are individuals who lack this knowledge (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009). Teachers who are unskilled in understanding the unique characteristics of children they serve are most likely to “drop out of the field” have management problems with children and find teaching difficult and unrewarding. Such unskilled teachers could treat their interactions with children as wholly intuitive rather than bring factual information to bear on how they think about children and how they interact with them in the classroom. This means early childhood education, more than any other level of education, demands well-prepared personnel who appreciate the unique characteristics of the learners they serve.

Thus, Knowledge of child development and learning contributes to this preparation and appreciation and this knowledge will influence the ways of teacher interaction with children, the ways of creating a learning environment for children, and the facilitation of achievement of expected learning outcome types of different age and ability level children (Kostelnik, Rupiper, Soderman, & Whiren, 2012). There are different important developmental principles that teachers should know to guide their thinking, planning, and instructing at the preprimary school level. These basic principles of child development and learning allow early childhood educators to make informed decisions about their thinking, planning, and teaching. include: Holistic development, Orderly sequence of development, varying rates in the development of learners, children learn as they are active learners, they learn through a continuous process of challenging and mastery of concepts and skills, and varying profiles of learning Styles (Kinesthetic, Auditory, Visual, Multiple Intelligences, and Motivations), learning through the combination of physical experiences, social interaction, reflection, a feeling of safety and security, and play (Kostelnik, Rupiper, Soderman, & Whiren, 2012). In other words, Bredekamp and Copple (1997) have delineated twelve interrelated principles related to the scopes of whole-child education,

values of social and cultural influences on children's learning, values of play-based approach to children's learning, children's experiential learning, individual differences to learning, age appropriateness to learning and scaffolding effect to learning. So, preprimary school teachers are expected to know these principles and other facts about child development and learning.

The teacher's knowledge about child development and learning facilitates knowledge about what is typical at each age and stage of early development, individually appropriate, and culturally important. Knowing what is typical at each age and stage of early development is crucial knowledge that helps teachers decide which experiences are best for children's learning and development. This Knowledge of the typical development of children within the age span provides a framework from which teachers prepare the learning environment and plan appropriate experiences. But, knowing what is individually appropriate shows knowledge of what one learns about a specific child that helps him/her teach and care for each child as an individual. This knowledge can be gained by continually observing children's play and interaction with the physical environment and others in order to learn about each child's interests, abilities, and developmental progress. Whereas, knowing what is culturally important shows making an effort to know the children's families and learn about the values, expectations, and factors that shape their lives at home and in their communities. This background information helps teachers provide meaningful, relevant, and respectful learning experiences for each child and family. Do teachers of the preprimary schools have such type of knowledge to help children learn and develop in line with their developmental levels, needs, and context? could be the question that should be answered through researching the learning and practicing of the teacher at the ground levels and by trying to study the curriculum they learn during the time of their training.

2.4.2. Knowledge about Effective Teaching Strategies

Knowledge of effective instructional strategies is equally important as knowledge of child development and learning to logically coach children along their learning preferences. The core strategies to be used may vary in type, complexity, and the extent of the direction the teacher needs to follow. The strategies can be understood in line with three categories: strategies that help teachers in preparing the learning environment, strategies of encouraging students' participation, and strategies of facilitating understanding.

While the strategies teachers use for preparing the learning environment in advance include Sensory engagement, environmental cues, and task analysis, the strategies that enable teachers to encourage and enhance children's participation that are more verbal teaching strategies include: Invitations, behavior reflections, paraphrasing reflections, do-it signals, and effective praise. But, the strategies that enable teachers to facilitate children's understanding include: telling, explaining, informing, modeling and demonstrating, repetition, challenges, and questions. Silence is also an effective teaching strategy.

In line with these three categories, the strategies that are considered in advance by teachers to facilitate understanding, but used when children are on the scene include: Chaining and successive approximation, scaffolding, and guided practice. Thus, teachers' knowledge of the different teaching strategies and the circumstance for utilizing the strategies can facilitate their effectiveness in teaching. Moreover, to make teaching effective, teachers should have knowledge about teaching strategies that can be put into practice following the cycle of learning with the phases of awareness, exploration, acquisition, and utilization (practice and generalization). This framework reflects the cycle of human learning-movement from awareness, to exploration, to inquiry, to utilization (Kostenik, Rupiper, Soderman, &Whiren, 2012).

For Kostenik, Rupiper, Soderman, &Whiren (2012), awareness is broad recognition of the parameters of the learning- events, objects, people, or concepts- and comes with the experience of recognizing that something exists and exploration is the process of figuring out the components or attributes of events, objects, and people using available means. It is extracting personal meaning to experiences through sensing (observe, touch, taste, smell, hear) and, talking about experiences, asking questions, collecting information, making discoveries and constructing a new understanding. Whereas, the inquiry is the process of developing an understanding of commonalities across events, objects, people, or concepts to come to generalize personal concepts and adapt them to more adult ways of thinking and behaving and Utilization is the functional level of learning, involves applying or making use of understanding of events, objects, people, or concepts. It can involve: Practice is self-motivating, self-initiated, ways that children gain mastery (child plays several times over several days) and Generalization is applying new

knowledge (things that go together) to similar situations... matching identical pairs. This framework is also used for determining age-appropriate curriculum content.

So, the preprimary school teachers' knowledge of effective teaching strategies involves the understanding of all three types of strategies and other similar knowledge and skills that they can acquire through their training in the teacher education program. Thus, teacher education programs should acquaint teachers of early childhood education with different strategies that are fit for teaching children. Whether teachers of the preprimary schools of Ethiopia have the needed understanding of the strategies or not could be another issue that should be known through research. So, this could be another target of this research. This may be understood through the practical activities of teachers at the ground level and through the study of the curriculum of preprimary school teachers training college.

2.4.3. Content Knowledge in Early Childhood Education

The early childhood educators need to have a broad grasp of content knowledge in various discipline areas like language and literacy, art, mathematics, health and fitness, natural science, and social science to provide accurate information and relevant experiences for children to help them know all about the world and how it works in their exploration of new knowledge and understanding (Kostenik, Soderman, &Whiren, 2011). Besides, early childhood educators need to know content standards or quality guidelines, or excellence related to educational content as identified by and agreed upon by experts in the field to address in one's classroom.

As to the ways educators decide what to teach, sources of content could be children's interests and the consultation of standards. Standards describe what young children may reasonably be expected to learn and do during the early childhood years. The sources of standards could be professional societies, departments of education, regional and local early childhood governing bodies, school districts, and early childhood programs. Incorporating standards into teaching can be possible by considering each standard whether it is meaningful for children of the given age and for these particular children, the need of beginner to know in relation to the standard, the existing knowledge of children, what they can learn through first-hand experience, and way of integrating the standard into day-to-day learning.

Thus, early childhood education practitioners should be well versed in the areas of content/subject matter that they are expected to teach to children. To do so, teachers should be clear with the source of scientific knowledge about life that they may be asked by their learners so that the teacher education curriculum should acquaint teachers with the contents of education given to children. Thus, the extent that the teacher education program acquaints teachers with early childhood education should be other areas of study for this research. This can be known by surveying the curriculum of the teacher education program and relating it to the ECCE curriculum.

Generally, early childhood professionals play a critical role in the DAP programs for effectively applying the developmentally appropriate curriculum in teaching and making decisions about children's learning and development. In applying DAC properly, a practitioner should: have strong knowledge and understanding of child development, know individual children, be knowledgeable about the cultural and social expectations of the community in which the children live, be intentional in planning and practice, and use effective teaching approaches and practices, scaffold children's learning, use a variety of teaching methods, recognize that approaches will vary and will change, and be a lifelong learner. This can be possible through proper training that combines child development and learning knowledge with knowledge of contents and effective strategies for instructing the contents in order to create a developmentally appropriate curriculum. Learning about DAC and applying DAP could be an ongoing process and an evolving approach to teaching. As an early learning practitioners, teachers will benefit from exploring the breadth of DAP in nurturing children's overall development (social and/or emotional, physical, cognitive or intellectual, and cultural) and its role in the guiding approaches to teaching. This means the practitioner should be participating in continuous professional development through discussions with other professionals, professional reading, and attending professional development opportunities. Practitioners also require time to spend reviewing curriculum, activities, and environments-all programming-to assess whether or not what is offered truly is DAC and DAP. Using reflection in combination with DAP components-child development appropriateness, individual appropriateness, social/cultural appropriateness-provides many tools to make good decisions for each child.

Generally, to individualize the way they teach the same concept to each child, preprimary school teachers should develop understanding in the three basic areas of knowledge: a good understanding/knowledge about how children are developing and learning, a good grasp of content knowledge in a variety of areas and understanding of learning outcomes, and developing a broad repertoire of effective teaching strategies. Here, it seems necessary to ask a question that states “does the teacher education program for early childhood education equip professionals with these three types of knowledge properly in Ethiopia?” Thus, finding the answer to this general question focusing on the balance of three areas of knowledge and the relation of the courses with the ECCE curriculum could be another target of this study. Besides, the teacher education program should be made clear to the practitioners about five interrelated functions of excellent early childhood teachers (creating a caring community of learners, teaching to enhance development and learning, planning curriculum to achieve important goals, assessing children’s development and learning, and establishing reciprocal relationships with families) as guidelines for DAP as developed by NAEYC (Copple and Bredekamp, 2009). The next part deals with the relevant practice and the tasks of teachers in applying the practice at ECCE.

2.5. Appropriate Practice in Early Childhood Care and Education Program

The appropriateness of practice in ECCE involves age, individual, and context appropriateness. Age appropriateness refers to the relevance of the curriculum implementation for the general age-related changes in the first eight years of life. Predictable changes are occurring in all areas of development that demands practitioners to know what children are like in that age range in terms of interest, abilities, and challenges and informs decisions about best practices. Observation uses to get information about children to develop activities and routines that accommodate the age group enabling them to provide materials that are safe, challenging, and achievable for children. Individual appropriateness refers to the relevance of the practice for the unique qualities or needs of each child’s individual patterns of development as physical growth, personality, ways of learning, and interests. This dictates the practitioner to consider each child as a unique person with his/her own rate of growth, an individual learning style who brings previous knowledge and experiences to users. Watching children in play activities can give important insights into their unique needs, progress and abilities. Context appropriateness refers to the relevance of curriculum implementation to the different conditions inside or outside of the

class to create the child's home and family environment in terms of interaction and habits at the school. The context (social and cultural) appropriateness demands practitioners to conceptualize culture as values, traditions, and beliefs and then to understand children and families in the context of the community by being familiar with the family culture of each child served for the reason that the lack of cultural awareness leads to assumptions(Kostelnik, Soderman, & Whiren,2007). Thus, the three main areas of appropriateness should be highly considered in making the curriculum appropriate for early childhood children (NAEYC, 1997).

2.5.1. The Rationale and Principles for ECCE Appropriate Practice

The key principle in relevant practice is that children construct their own knowledge through interactions with the social and physical environment. Such type of Effective instruction can be achieved by considering children's motivation to explore, experiment, and make sense of their experiences. In this connection, the play has a central role in the implementation of the appropriate curriculum for the benefit of children (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997). Play enables children to engage actively with the external world as an essential part of a child's education. Play supports children's development by providing tools, equipment, and interpersonal experiences that help them grow properly. Through play, children acquire information, master activities, use concrete materials as symbols, organize previous learning, focus, solve problems, and develop creativity. Play is a promoter of learning creating opportunities for concrete, hands-on experiences and helping children master their environment, and enabling them to develop the capacity for self-regulation, abstract thought, imagination, and creativity.

The other major premise of relevant practice is to make learning meaningful for the individual child using practices that reflect both the age and individual needs of the child. This gives strong emphasis on learning to think critically, work cooperatively, and solve problems.

The cognitive development constructivist theory of Piaget and the social constructionist theory of Vygotsky guide early childhood instructional practice (Bredekamp, 1987 and Bredekamp & Copple, 1997) in that using as a foundation for constructivist classrooms in the application of mathematics education and design of early literacy programs as well as the moral development, language development, and emotional and affective development (Kumtepe, 2005). The knowledge of the typical development of children within the age span grants a general

framework to organize the learning environment, curriculum goals, and appropriate practices (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997). The stage criteria are not age-related, but rather knowledge-related, and "...developmental levels are levels of knowledge, not levels of knowers. So, the age for each stage was considered as an indicator, not a criterion for the fact that infant level of adult behavior is reflected in Piaget's theory. (Smith, 2002 cited in Kumtepe, 2005)

Children are active learners and they are "...actively engaged in constructing their own understanding from their experiences and these understandings are mediated by and clearly linked to the socio-cultural context. Young children actively learn from observing and participating with other children and adults..." (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997, p. 13). This means that to know and construct knowledge of the world, a child must act on objects and the action provides knowledge of those objects (Piaget & Inhelder, 1969 cited in Kumtepe, 2005). Therefore, the learner is not considered a vessel to be filled with facts and teachers must provide meaningful opportunities for children to assume an active role in their own learning.

The socio-cultural constructivist development theory of Vygotsky has also influenced the creation of relevant practice, emphasizing socially constructed knowledge (Krogh, 1997 cited in Kumtepe, 2005). This view underlines the importance of a child's interaction with others, adults or older peers, who mediate and support the child's learning experiences to ensure that learning experiences are meaningful, relevant, and respectful for the participating children and their families (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997). The view provided insight into the relevant practice that learning occurs when children interact with both people and materials in their environments. Interactions between children and adults as well as other children facilitate children's mental manipulation and ownership of ideas. The view can guide practitioners to scaffold instruction to make children learn through social and intellectual engagement. For Vygotsky (1978), "Every function in the child's cultural development appears twice: first, on the social level-between people (inner psychological), and then on the individual level inside the child (intrapsychological) that could be applied equally to voluntary attention, logical memory, and the formation of concepts" A child's learning and development are affected by the surrounding culture, including the culture of the family environment in which he or she is living.

The potential for cognitive development depends upon the "zone of proximal development" (ZPD) for the reason that children can attain the level of development as they engage in social behavior in collaboration with more capable peers, to perform tasks that they are incapable of completing on their own (Vygotsky, 1978 cited in Kumtepe, 2005). Kumtepe,(2005) states that an essential feature of learning is that it awakens a variety of internal developmental processes that are possible only when the child interacts with people in the environment and in cooperation with peers. This idea informs the relationship between the teacher and the child in classrooms. Teachers should provide a variety of activities and materials for children; encourage collaboration among children; and adjust the level of difficulty of activity and the level of help regarding the child's level of performance. Since the child is viewed as intrinsically motivated and self-directed, effective teaching can be achieved by considering children's motivation to explore, experiment, and make sense of their experiences. Such a constructivist view of development calls for more direction from the child and less from the teacher. So, though other ideas could be considered further, the ideas of Piaget and Vygotsky could mainly guide the appropriate practice for children.

2.5.2. Guidelines for the Application of Relevant Practice

The recommended practice in teaching children from birth through eight years is the application of relevant practice that informs how children develop and learn (Copple and Bredekamp, 2009). The position statement of the National Association for the Education of Young Children indicated the relevant practice as a means for improving early learning programs (NAEYC, 1986) by describing examples of appropriate and inappropriate practices for programs serving children of age birth to 8 years (Bredekamp, 1987) that have been revised twice (in 1997 and in 2009). Teachers can utilize this knowledge as they make decisions about what is age-appropriate, individually appropriate, and culturally appropriate for the children they teach. The statement describes guidelines for five key aspects of developmentally appropriate instruction. They are: **1)** creating a caring community of learners, **2)** teaching to enhance development and learning, **3)** Planning an appropriate curriculum, **4)** Assessing children's development and learning, and **5)** establishing reciprocal relationships with families. These five interrelated basic guidelines that are covering the appropriate practice areas are addressed by Bredekamp and Copple (1997) and can be put in the form of a diagram as follows.

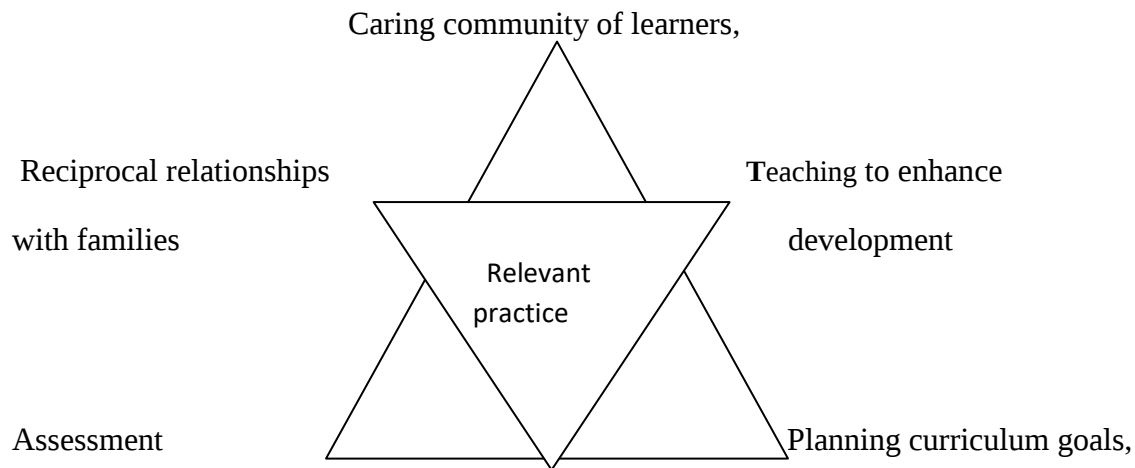


Figure 6. Modified form of Mariner's star: The key areas of DAP – the complex role of the teacher

Source: Adapted from basics of developmentally appropriate practice: an introduction for teachers of children 3-6. By c. copper and s.

Bredekamp, 2006. Washington, DC: NANEYC.

For ensuring Appropriate Practice, the five key areas of early learning practices are often shown as a star, with each point representing one key area of practice. All areas are interrelated and all are important in helping children learn and develop successfully. As an early childhood professional, making decisions about each aspect is a major responsibility for teachers.

The Strategies and approaches for applying appropriate practices in the five areas of the practice of teachers as communicated by scholars in the field (e.g., copple, C and Bredekamp, 2006, 2009, Pennsylvania childcare center, 2014) could be explained as follows.

1. In creating a caring Community of learners, the practitioners can provide nurturing, loving, responsive, joyous, and safe care for children. The practitioners should build consistent and caring relationships among children, families, and co-workers; value and respect all members of the community; celebrate and embrace diversity reflecting children's cultures in the classroom and activities; develop open positive collaborations with families and colleagues to support children's learning and development, and focus on building self-confidence, self-regulation, and problem-solving skills. In other words, in creating a Caring community of learners within an early childhood program (the classroom), the teachers should develop friendships, so that all the children in the class care about each other. When selecting activities for the children, teachers should be aware of, and responsive to, individual differences in children's ability, developmental level, and approach to learning. Besides, teachers should bring each child's home culture and

language into the classroom so children can learn to respect and appreciate similarities and differences among people. On top of this, children with disabilities or special learning needs should be included in the class not only physically but also intellectually and socially, and teachers should help children learn how to establish positive constructive relationships with adults and other children.

2. In teaching to enhance development and learning, the practitioners can offer both child-initiated and teacher-directed learning experiences. The practitioners should be responsive to children's ideas by offering materials, and documentation (samples of their work, photographs, etc), and enhance thoughtful conversation that builds on their ideas, skills, and knowledge; plan for hands-on experiences where children learn by doing and provide enough time for children to explore and fully engage in their interests; and build children's learning adding activities that challenge them and expand on what they can do. This means that in teaching to enhance development and learning, children's communication skills should be developed throughout the day by encouraging individual and group discussions. Teachers should motivate children through activities that they are naturally curious about and interested in, frequently ask the children for different ways to solve a problem thereby developing different strategies for problem-solving, and often provide a wide range of learning experiences so that children can select activities they would like to do, and create an environment where the child can take appropriate physical and academic risks.

3. In constructing an appropriate classroom curriculum, the practitioners can identify and define core learning goals for individual children and the program; develop a framework based on child development, individual learning, and cultures of the children in the group that reflects learning goals; use the framework for planning activities, experiences, and routines; present rich content, focused work/center areas, and create a meaningful connection of both indoor and outdoor environments to children's interests, curiosities, and development; and allow for flexibility in programming. So, in constructing an appropriate curriculum for classroom purpose, teachers should ensure that activities are well matched to each child's development, encourage children in new tasks when the child is ready to learn, and integrate different content areas (e.g., math/science/art) such as exploring patterns in math or counting blocks in the block center, and shows patience in occasional toileting accidents, spilled food at lunch, or unfinished jobs such as

putting the art supplies away. The design of what is to be taught in the class should be based on the children's prior experiences and interests. Besides, children should use strategies including inventing their spelling, talking informally, and listening to and reading stories and poems to develop language and literacy skills. In line with this, the construction of appropriate curriculum for children requires attention to the following guidelines for practice: curriculum provides for all areas of a child's development: physical, emotional, social, linguistic, aesthetic, and cognitive; includes a broad range of content across disciplines that are socially relevant, intellectually engaging, and personally meaningful to children; builds upon what children already know and are able to do (activating prior knowledge) to consolidate their learning and to foster their acquisition of new concepts and skills; plans frequently integrate across traditional subject-matter divisions to help children make meaningful connections and provide opportunities for rich conceptual development, focusing on one subject is also a valid strategy at times; promotes the development of knowledge and understanding, processes and skills, as well as the dispositions to use and apply skills and to go on learning; and content has intellectual integrity, reflecting the key concepts and tools of inquiry of recognized disciplines in ways that are accessible and achievable for young children of ages 3 to 8 (Bredekamp & Rosegrant 1992, 1995 cited in NAEYC,1997). Besides, the curriculum provides opportunities to support children's home culture and language while it is also developing all children's abilities to participate in the shared culture of the program and the community and its goals are realistic and attainable for most children in the designated age range for which they are designed. When used, technology is physically and philosophically integrated with the classroom curriculum and teaching.

4. In assessing children's learning and development, the practitioner can apply assessment approaches that are appropriate developmentally, individually, and culturally for children. The practitioners should use assessment tools that allow them to assess children in an authentic, ongoing, and intentional manner, develop a system for collecting and compiling assessment information; use the results of assessment for planning, decision-making, communicating with families and other colleagues, and to identify children who may need additional learning support; and gather information from multiple sources, including families, children, and other teachers. In other words, while teachers engage in assessing children's learning and development, they should use observation of the children's progress to assess the child's work, use their assessments

of children's classroom behaviors, projects, etc., to plan and adapt the activities that the children participate in. Thus, examples of the child's work (over some time) from multiple activities should be used to give the teacher a good idea of the child's development and the assessments should provide information concerning how the child solved the problem. Further, the program should accept children regardless of the child's prior knowledge, ability, or readiness. But, contrary to this, assessment practices that are not considered appropriate for children such as grading, and using standardized tests have been observed in kindergartens. Consequently, children face early failure and are frustrated with learning at an early age. Elkind (1981) and Gardner (1990) argued this unfortunate influence leads children to be hurried into functioning in ways that are not appropriate to their natural modes of learning.

5. In creating a reciprocal relationship with families, the practitioners can welcome all families into the program and invite them to participate in a variety of ways. The practitioners should work in partnership with families; communicate regularly with families in an open, positive, two-way manner; respect and acknowledge family goals and choices for their child; involve families in planning for their children; be responsive to family concerns, and be familiar with community programs and support families by referring them to additional services as needed. So, in creating reciprocal relationships with parents, the cultural and individual differences within the community should be respected by the teachers and family members should always be welcome in the program. Besides, opportunities for the family to participate in the program should be arranged to accommodate the family's schedule. In the case problems arise between teachers and families, teachers should be respectful of the family's wishes and both parties should work together to solve the problem. Further, teachers should work with members of the child's family in a partnership to help the child's learning and development and should always listen to the family members of the children in the program, respecting the goals that the family members have for their children. To make effective decisions regarding practices in each of the areas, practitioners need to be reflective and intentional. Take time to reflect on the children, one's teaching, and interactions. They should also think about what happened, what worked, what didn't, and any surprises. Be intentional in planning for children, developing policies and procedures, designing the environment, and one's approach. This needs to think about why one does what he/she does, keeping one's vision and goals for children in mind. Effective decision-

making will guide teachers in choosing the best strategies for meeting the needs of the children and families.

Each of these five areas/aspects is closely related, and failing to address one would critically undermine each of the other parts. As Sue Bredekamp (2003) indicated each of the five key aspects described above could contribute to reducing the achievement gap for young children by showing examples of appropriate (effective practices supported by research) and contrasting practices (less effective or even harmful strategies) for children of different ages (infants and toddlers, children ages 3 to 5, 5 to 6, and 6 through 8 years).

2.5.3. Appropriate Practice to Age Gaps

The application of developmentally appropriate practice to age gaps can be viewed by dividing children into lower kindergarteners and upper kindergartners. So, as to how DAP is put into practice with children of ages 3-5 at lower kindergarten and 5-6 at upper kindergarten, some explanations are given as follows.

1. Appropriate Practice for lower kindergarten children of ages 3-5: According to NAEYC&IRA (1998), Preschool children with ages 3-5 learn best when they have positive and caring relationships with adults and other children; receive carefully planned, intentional guidance and assistance; and can safely encounter and explore many interesting things in their environment. Children may come to school with different strengths. One child might love picture books and may know lots of letters but have trouble with social interaction. A classmate may find it easy to initiate play and share toys yet have almost no experience with books and reading. Concerning this, practitioners are advised to know that children of the period thrive when they can experience new materials, roles, ideas, and activities - especially in pretend play; take great interest in feelings and become better able to express their emotions and identify those of others; make important cognitive gains that invite them to represent their world in pretend play, symbols, objects, drawings, and words; and show astonishing gains in language skills. So, in teaching the lower kindergarteners /Preschoolers, good preschool teachers maintain appropriate expectations, providing each child with the right mix of challenge, support, sensitivity, and stimulation. Based on their knowledge, skill, and training, teachers – in collaboration with families - can ensure that programs promote and enhance every child's learning. The teachers of preschoolers are expected to be observant, inventive, and intentional teachers. The intervention

sparks fresh play, tempting children to take on different roles, enrich their social and language interactions, and use writing and math for new purposes.

2. Appropriate Practice for upper kindergartners of ages 5-6: As to NAEYC&IRA (1998), upper Kindergartners, children of ages 5-6, are in a time of change, challenge, and opportunity. In many ways, kindergartners are still like preschoolers. Yet with the increasing focus on school readiness, many kindergarten classrooms, unfortunately, bow to pressures and begin to look more like primary classrooms than kindergarten. Five- and six-year-old children make great intellectual leaps. They go through a major shift, allowing them to develop more personal responsibility, self-direction, and logical thinking. This growth affects development across physical, social and emotional, cognitive, and language domains. Kindergarten can shape a child's overall outlook on and engagement in lifelong learning. So, practitioners teaching upper Kindergartners must balance kindergartners' varying abilities and needs while making sure that the curriculum fits appropriately between preschool and first grade.

Kindergarten teachers must fully engage in the social world of the classroom and be intentional in their interactions and instruction. With the many differences among—and wide age range of—kindergartners, teachers should be responsive to developmental, individual, and cultural variation. Thoughtful, sensitive teaching promotes a joy of learning and prepares children for further academic challenges.

2.5.4. General Appropriate Practice for children

The relevant practice demands planning and implementing high-quality programs for young children. The practice informs decision-making and gives a basis for continually scrutinizing professional practices. In doing so, the essence of relevant practice can be captured in twelve overarching principles (Kostelnik & Grady, 2009; Miller, 2013). The principles are targeted at the support of adults, the program, the children, and teachers. Thus, concerning appropriate practice, adults are expected to develop warm caring relationships with children and acknowledge children's positive behaviors, reason with children, and treat their misbehaviors as learning opportunities so that such child guidance fosters self-regulation. Whereas, Programs should focus on whole-child, (i.e., address children's aesthetic, emotional, intellectual, language, social, and physical needs), the learning needs of *all* children, including children with special

needs, and are integrated across disciplines and developmental domains. In practicing the developmentally appropriate instruction, children should suit their needs with routines and safe and stimulating indoor and outdoor environments. They should have numerous opportunities to learn by doing hands-on activities that are relevant and meaningful to them, and they are considered active decision-makers in their learning with many opportunities to initiate activities and to make choices about what and how they will learn, and they should have many opportunities to play throughout the day. Besides, teachers should be intentional in their teaching and have specific goals in mind for children's learning and use relevant instructional strategies to address those goals, and they should establish reciprocal relationships with children's families. Finally, assessment should take place continuously throughout the day and addresses all developmental domains. Information about what children know and can do should be gathered through observations collecting work samples and inviting children to document their learning,

Concerning practices associated with DAP; NAEYC outlined both developmentally appropriate and inappropriate practices for children from birth through age eight. Although the NAEYC lists many examples of appropriate and inappropriate practices that can be observed in the education of young children, researchers in the field tend to agree on ten fundamental practices that characterize the DAP philosophy. The Practices that are evaluated as developmentally appropriate and their importance are highly emphasized in early childhood classrooms include: 1) addressing the whole child (child's emotional, social, cognitive, and physical needs) in designing the curriculum, 2) Individualizing the program to suit particular children (encouraging the use of varied instructional strategies to meet the various learning needs and interests of children in the group), 3) emphasizing the importance of child-initiated activity (encouraging a mixture of teacher-directed and child-directed activities in a setting where children are viewed as active decision-makers and responsible for their learning), 4) seeing play as a vehicle for learning(valuing both outdoor and indoor learning as a medium for learning), 5) creating flexible, stimulating classroom environments (keeping the balance of direct and indirect instruction to promote the child's learning), 6) integrating curriculum(combining many subject areas (e.g., math, science, and reading) into an interconnected unit of study that is meaningful to students by integrating activities with real life), 7) using learning by doing approach in promoting children's active learning experiences in which children manipulate real objects and learn through hands-on, direct activities that consider learning centers as means of providing

active learning experiences), 8) Providing choices to children. (providing a wide variety of ways to learn for children with various learning styles to develop their capabilities and to view learning in new ways), 9) focusing on continuous assessment of individual children and the program as a whole(de-emphasizing the use of standardized tests rather to use a variety of formal and informal assessment techniques are valued to determine the needs of each child), and 10) creating Partnership with parents(considering Parents as decision-makers and sources of information about each child seeing the partnership as essential to achieving programs that are responsive to the needs of individuals). Generally, the general practices to be considered in teacher's tasks to ensure relevant practice address the whole child (physical, cognitive, social, emotional), individualize practice to meet individual needs, recognize the importance of child-initiated activity, and recognize the significance of play, create stimulating classroom environments, use an integrated curriculum, engage children in activities...learn by doing, and give children choices about what they learn and how. According to the NAEYC, the appropriate practice provides children with opportunities to learn and practice newly acquired skills. The relevant practice offers challenges just beyond the level of children's present mastery and it takes place "in the context of a community where children are safe and valued, where their physical needs are met, and where they feel psychologically secure" (Bredekamp & Copple 1997). With appropriate adult help or in collaboration with more capable peers, children can often perform tasks that they are incapable of completing on their own. It is indicated that an essential feature of learning is that it awakens a variety of internal developmental processes that are possible only when the child interacts with people in the environment and cooperation with peers (Vygotsky, 1978). This idea informs the relationship between the teacher and the child in developmentally appropriate practice classrooms. Teachers provide a variety of activities and materials, encourage collaboration with other children and adjust the level of difficulty of activity and the level of help regarding the child's level of performance.

2.6. The Influential Conditions and Strategies in the Appropriate Instruction

2.6.1. The Conditions Influencing the Appropriateness of instruction

Many conditions influence the relevance and quality of early childhood programs for the reason that quality is related to the application of appropriate practice. Some of the conditions that may affect the implementation of preprimary school relevant curriculum could be viewed by

categorizing them into conditions related process quality indicators (like the level of family engagement in activities, the use of multilevel continuous quality improvement system) and conditions related structural quality indicators (like conducive program settings and space, program support structure). These conditions/factors are essential elements for a high-quality early childhood program and should be addressed together to achieve *excellence* for preprimary school /kindergarten services (Kagan and Kauerz, 2012, Florida department of children and families, 2013).

2.6.1.1. Conditions Related to the Process Quality Indicators for relevant practice

The Process quality indicators emphasize the actual experiences that occur in educational settings and include aspects that could be related to policy issues as quality improvement issues as curriculum, assessment, environment, law and regularities, the support services for the school and professionals like family involvement and professional development ; and the provision of comprehensive services as health and safety provisions, as well as provision of available materials and other social services (Workman S. and Ullrich R., 2017). The curriculum including the assessment and learning environment as the main focuses of the study are discussed in the previous section. Here, we can focus on the rest aspects of the conditions related to the process quality indicators.

1. Multilevel continuous quality improvement system: Achieving high quality in an early childhood program demands constantly monitor and revise policies and practices. In measuring children's developmental progress, it is advisable to assess the overall program, individual classrooms, and employees, basing on data to inform positive and proactive improvements. To make the program operate at high quality, it is critically important that quality improvement supports are available to help programs increase and then maintain quality. Quality improvement supports can take many forms—including formal training opportunities, mentor programs, coaching, communities of practice, and informal networks of support-and can be accessed through state or national technical assistance providers or by local networks. It is advisable to have a quality revision improvement system (QRIS) that can be a mechanism for directing quality improvement support. The QRIS providers can access professional development and coaching opportunities and can receive financial incentives to purchase materials or equipment.

2. Comprehensive family engagement or Involvement in activities: In early childhood programs, family members play a critical role in supporting the growth and development of their children. So, families are encouraged to be involved in all aspects of the early childhood program-planning, implementation, and evaluation. A high-quality program recognizes that families are essential to children's educational success. The program has to have policies in place to engage families in children's learning. Programs need to develop family engagement strategies to encourage the participation of families in their children's learning and promote two-way communication. This enables parents to share with teachers the unique strengths and talents of their children. Families are encouraged to share their ideas, interests, and concerns to support their children's development and to enhance preprimary school services. It is expected to promote and maintain meaningful family involvement experiences by different means. Strategies must also be responsive to family needs, recognizing the increasing diversity and the specific needs of children. Engaging with families inclusively and reciprocally can help ECCE providers understand a family's culture and values, which can inform the development of culturally responsive learning experiences. Family engagement often involves providing feedback on children's progress and discussing how parents can sustain learning activities at home. The family involvement activities include many forms: parent meetings, training sessions, weekly communication with other families and informal gatherings, regular parent-teacher conferences; daily communications between teachers and families through daily report sheets and emails; monthly newsletters; parent-in-classroom events; and other events intended to build a community that includes children, families, teachers, and program leaders. High-quality family engagement activities can help build trusting and positive relationships between teachers and families to address concerns such as behavior problems or developmental delays and better coordinate a response before issues become significant and affect children's learning.

3. Continuous Professional Development: Professional development services targeted at early childhood education is an essential component of high-quality appropriate practices. These services must be rigorous, content relevant, organized, strategic, as well as sustained throughout the year to ensure the effective implementation of standards-based appropriate instruction. The professional development activities are focused on areas/conditions related to *process quality indicators*, such as teacher-child interactions, child assessment, early literacy, mathematical and

scientific learning etc.. Professional development shall be provided to ensure that the teaching staff and administrators are provided with information to strengthen overall program implementation in terms of instruction, assessment, family involvement, support services, transition, and continuity. A minimum of four professional development days for staff must be provided each year. Continuous Professional development is designed to support teachers' continuous learning, effective implementation, and improvement of practice. Teachers should engage in weekly/monthly sessions of peer-to-peer technical assistance involving discussion about child and teaching data, observing and examination of practice, and planning improvements to teaching and learning opportunities.

4. Comprehensive Services are integral parts of an effective early childhood program. These services are designed to build upon the strengths and alleviate the problems of young children and their families. Comprehensive services include health services, physical examinations, primary prevention, vision and hearing screening, nutrition services, social services, and counseling. Services for preschool children with disabilities shall be integrated into the program and provided per the needs specified in a child's Individualized Education Program (IEP). Furthermore, comprehensive services in the child's home language must be provided for children where ever necessary.

2.6.1.2. Conditions Related to the Structural Quality Indicators for relevant practice

The structural quality indicators as the second category of conditions for measuring the relevance of the program can include the the program supportive facilitie and/ or resources and nature or *characteristics* of the program. The facilities and resouces for the program can involve set of human and material resources, funding mechanisims, program setting and space as well as class size that results in certain adult-child ratio and square footage of space for every child. The nature of the program focuses on “pushing the curriculum down” and continuity in the transition of children to different settings that are frequently regulated by state/city licensing requirements as to the structure of the program (Kagan and Kauerz, 2012, and Florida department of children and families, 2013).

1. Program human resources support: A high-functioning preschool environment is an essential element of a quality early childhood program that is relevant for children in terms of leadership and administrative supervision.

The leadership articulates the preprimary education philosophy to parents, staff, and the community, and serves as a source of support for staff and families by facilitating ongoing opportunities for learning and development. The supervisor continually assesses program quality and measures accountability of the institutes to strengthen the instructional practices, and promotes curriculum alignment with the next-level schools.

The administrative operational support takes several forms. The programs need effective leaders who can provide instructional support to teachers as well as sound business management to the overall program. The multiple leadership functions are complex and often need to be fulfilled by more than one person for the reason that early childhood program administrators are responsible for a broad range of tasks, requiring many different competencies.

First, programs need instructional leaders with a solid understanding of child development and teaching and learning strategies. Instructional leaders support teachers with lesson planning and curriculum implementation, behavior management strategies, and professional development.

Second, programs need leaders with sound business management skills. The majority of early childhood programs are private businesses, and similar to any other small business, their long-term stability is reliant on adequate business management and the implementation of good budgetary practices. Programs require clear enrollment, financial, and personnel policies and need leaders who can implement these policies fairly and consistently.

Finally, program administrators must be skilled in organizational management and relationship building. In addition to fostering relationships with families and the community, leaders play a key role in creating a positive atmosphere inside the program, which can minimize teacher turnover, increase program efficiency, and allow teachers to focus on the children.

These multiple administrative roles need to be staffed sufficiently with more than one person, given the varied skill sets required. In smaller programs—with limited capacity to employ

multiple administrators—leaders need to be supported in their various roles through access to external technical assistance, leadership resources and targeted professional development.

In line with this, external to the immediate program, a series of structural supports, including access to professional development, quality improvement resources, stable and sufficient funding streams, and a pipeline of well-trained teachers are needed. These external supports recognize that early childhood programs do not operate in a vacuum and rely on the wider early childhood system. All three factors need to be in place to ensure quality. A well-resourced classroom is not sufficient without an effective teacher to harness those resources. Meanwhile, an effective teacher is not sustainable without a support system to manage the business, support instruction, and provide professional development.

The human resource support structure involves the qualifications of staff. The critical relationship of staff experience, high-quality training, commensurate compensation, and the effectiveness of a program is well documented. The Staff like teachers, social workers, and administrators must have in-depth knowledge of child development and how young children learn. The teacher assistant/teacher aide who provides support in a preprimary classroom shall have a high school complete with appropriate training for at least certain hours of college credit courses. In programs for children who learn English language, the recommended teacher assistant(s)/teacher aide(s) are bilingual in the children's native language.

A professional and stable teacher workforce is the most critical component of quality in an early childhood program. All teachers need to have a foundational knowledge of child development and be able to lead activities that promote children's learning at various ages. This important role requires that teachers have formal education and training in early childhood education. Moreover, the early childhood workforce needs compensation that reflects the importance of their work and the expertise necessary to educate the nation's youngest children.

2. Providing professional compensation and benefits, comparable to kindergarten teachers, help recruit and retain effective and educated teachers can promote a stable healthy learning environment for children. In addition, programs need to be staffed at a level that allows for teacher-child ratios that are appropriate for the age of the children and the size of the group. Low teacher-child ratios enable teachers to focus on the individual needs of the children and engage

them in meaningful interactions. This means having an adequate number of teachers specifically assigned to a classroom, as well as providing sufficient substitutes or floaters to cover for breaks, planning time, and paid leave. The early childhood education workforce should also reflect the growing diversity of the child population, ensuring that children have teachers they can relate to and role models that reflect their backgrounds.

3. Sustainable and sufficient set of funding mechanisms: To support the highly qualified workforce, the safe and engaging physical and learning environment and the stable infrastructure necessary to achieve and maintain high-quality programs need funding that supports the actual cost of operation. To ensure high-quality programs, which are available to all children, public funding needs to be sufficient to cover the costs of quality and help families to afford the cost of private tuition. In addition, funding needs to be stable so that programs can make staffing and other business decisions based on anticipated income that is not subject to annual appropriations or fluctuations due to child absences. The total funding available to a program, therefore, needs to be adequate to cover the actual cost of operating at high quality and secure enough for programs to make plans beyond the short term.

4. Program Settings and Space: The strategies of relevant practice can be carried out in a different early childhood settings-half-day or full day; home-based, center-based, or school-based; private or public; nonprofit or for-profit. These apply to programs serving infants, toddlers, preschoolers, school-age children, children who are linguistically diverse, and children with special needs. Relevant practice can be observed in large or small programs, as well as in urban, rural, and suburban locations. So, the settings have either a facilitating or hindering role in the practice of developmentally appropriate program. The early childhood classroom space is a minimum of 30 square feet per child (540 square feet for 18 children) of the wall-to-wall useable space. Bathroom facilities are within the room or readily accessible for young children. Large-muscle room (75 square feet per child) and/or outdoor space are provided. Space, equipment, and furniture shall be provided and maintained in a state of good repair and sanitation. Every early childhood provider must secure and identify a facility that meets the requirements like disabilities act compliance, fire, and safety building codes compliance, day Care compliance, a minimum of 30 square feet per child, outdoor play area of at least 75 square feet per child or a play area within walking distance of the site is provided, and office space and kitchen facilities.

5. Group Size and Adult-Child Ratio: The nature and needs of young children require consistent care and attention. The younger the children, the smaller the number of group members and the lower the adult-child ratio. There should be two adults available for each group of 18 children to ensure individualized and appropriate programming to their age. The adults include a certified teacher and a paraprofessional (teacher assistant/teacher aide) working together. Thus, class sizes of 19 or 20 prekindergarten children require a certified teacher and two paraprofessionals (teacher assistant/teacher aide). Group size and the ratio of children to adults should increase gradually through the primary grades, but one teacher with no more than 18 children or two adults with no more than 25 children is optimum (NAEYC, 1997). Inclusion of children with disabilities may necessitate additional adults or smaller group sizes to ensure that all children's needs are met.

6. “Pushed-down” Curriculum: Early childhood experts are promoting the developmentally appropriate practice in response to a phenomenon dubbed the “escalated” or “pushed-down” curriculum (Scott, 1993). Preschool classes and kindergartens have begun to look more like traditional first grade classes: young children are expected to sit quietly while they listen to whole-class instruction or fill in worksheets. Concurrently, teachers have been expecting their pupils to know more and more starting from they first enter their classrooms. This may be due to many reasons, for example, materials for early childhood education are simply copied from other nations—a type of schoolwork inappropriate for 4- to 6-year-olds. Another cause of the pushed-down curriculum is the widespread—yet incorrect—notion that one can teach children anything, at any age, if the content is presented in the right way (NAEYC, 1997). In addition, more children today attend preprimary school, and preschools market themselves as academic. Some parents, too, favor the pushed-down curriculum in their zeal to give their children a head start in life. Under pressure from parents and the central office, kindergartners were expected to use workbooks—despite their teachers' concerns. While the intentions of those pushing down the curriculum may be good, the effects on children are bad. For one thing, giving children material far beyond what they can do is simply inefficient, requiring young children to do overly advanced work has another harmful effect: it causes them to miss something else they *should* be doing. If children are only responding to teacher cues, “they are missing natural learning experiences”—direct, sensory experiences of their world—which form the foundation for later,

more abstract learning. Yet another drawback of the pushed-down curriculum is its effect on children's attitudes toward learning. When young children are introduced to formal instruction too early, in a form that is too abstract, they *may* learn the knowledge and skills presented, but at the expense of the disposition to use them. Destroying students' enthusiasm for learning in exchange for some short-term gains is a poor bargain. Further, when young children are repeatedly coerced into behaving as though they understand something—such as the calendar or arithmetic- when they do not, their confidence in their abilities is undermined, and over time, children bring their behavior into line with this belief.

7. Transition and Continuity: For children to move smoothly from home to preschool and through the early elementary grades there must be similarities in goals, philosophy, and expectations, for children, families, and staff. The special needs of children should be considered within the early childhood setting to reduce the fragmentation of services and facilitate inclusion. Families are encouraged to participate in all aspects with providers to ensure curriculum continuity through the implementation of a strategic plan that promotes articulation with their participating collaborators.

2.6.2. The Strategies to be considered in enhancing relevant practice

Some of the measures to be considered for the enhancement of relevant practice can be related to the different program policy issues like professional development, school set-up for learners, a system of monitoring, regulating, and intervention, financial resources- funding, resources and expertise, and community support services. As to NAEYC (1997) measures for promoting developmentally appropriate early childhood programs should be thought of at the policy level. So, NAEYC (1997) strongly recommends that policymaking groups at the state and local levels consider the following when implementing early childhood programs:

1. Professional Development Issues: The professionals of early childhood education should possess college-level preparation in child development and developmentally appropriate practices to be qualified to work with young children. They should be engaged in ongoing professional development activities (e.g., university study, attending workshops, etc.) to remain up-dated in their teaching positions. A comprehensive professional preparation and development system is in place to ensure that early childhood programs are staffed with qualified personnel. So, a system should exist for early childhood professionals to acquire the knowledge and

practical skills needed to practice through specialized preparation in early childhood education/child development. Teachers in early childhood programs are encouraged and supported to obtain and maintain, through participation in in-service training, current knowledge of child development and learning and its application to early childhood practice. Specialists in early childhood special education should be available to provide assistance and consultation in meeting the individual needs of children in the program. In addition to management and supervision skills, administrators of early childhood programs have appropriate professional qualifications, including training specific to the education and development of young children to give time and opportunities to work collaboratively with colleagues and parents.

2. Issues of Learners: The number of children in the class should be limited by professional standards to ensure that each child receives the attention they require from the teacher and the administrators of the programs with professional knowledge of children's learning and development. Strategies such as multiage grouping (children of lots of different ages in the same classroom) are used so that children can develop a strong and lasting relationship with the teacher. It is indicated that early childhood professionals working in diverse situations with varying levels of resources are responsible for implementing practices that are appropriate for the children they serve. Regardless of the resources available, professionals have an ethical responsibility to practice, to the best of their ability, according to the standards of their profession.

3. Financial Resources-Funding issue : Funding is provided to ensure adequate staffing of early childhood programs and fair staff compensation that promotes continuity of relationships among adults and children. Funding should be adequate to limit the size of the groups and provide sufficient numbers of adults to ensure individualized and appropriate care and education. An acceptable adult-child ratio for 4 and 5-year-olds is two adults with no more than 20 children. Younger children require much smaller groups. Programs offer staff salaries and benefits commensurate with the skills and qualifications required for specific roles to ensure the provision of quality services and the effective recruitment and retention of qualified, competent staff. Decisions related to how programs should be staffed and how children are grouped result in increased opportunities for children to experience continuity of relationships with teachers and other children. Such strategies include the three age groupings of teacher-child relationships.

4. Resources and Expertise: Resources and expertise should be available to provide safe, stimulating learning environments with a sufficient number and variety of appropriate materials and equipment for the age group served (NAEYC, 1997).

5. System of Monitoring, Regulating, and Intervention: The relevant curriculum practice can be realized if there should be an intervention program in the form of support and supervision from different concerned bodies. Dias and Seabra, (2015) reported that the intervention program is more effective in promoting the professional executive functions in the developmentally appropriate curriculum than the regular curriculum. This truth may have practical relevance to public politics in education, primarily in disadvantaged contexts, as in certain developing countries. Adequate systems for regulating and monitoring the quality of early childhood programs' accreditation criteria and procedures should be in place (NAEYC, 1997).

6. Community Support Services: Community resources should be available and used to support the comprehensive needs of children and families (Kagan, 1991; NCSL 1995 cited in NAEYC, 1997). Besides, when individual children do not make expected learning progress, neither grade-retention nor social promotion is used; instead, initiatives such as more focused time for individuals and suitable environment provision type support should be given.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

To investigate the relevance of the early childhood care and education curriculum and its practice in Ethiopia focusing on three regional states, it was tried to assess the appropriateness of the curriculum for children, the suitability of the learning environment for curriculum practice, the appropriateness of the practice of ECCE teachers for children, the correspondence of ECCE teachers training courses to the ECCE curriculum, and some quality and process related factors affecting curriculum practice. In doing so, the mixed method approach was employed. From the various traditions of this approach, survey and explanatory sequential research design were followed.

In the mixed method approach, the quantitative and qualitative methods were used in combination to find the answer to the research questions in a single study. The data were collected in the form of words and numbers in order to create a better understanding of complex phenomena by complementing one set of results with another and thereby enhancing the validity of the inferences. The mixed method approach is chosen for this study for the reasons that studying the relevance of early childhood care and education curriculum and its practice for promoting children learning is a complex task with a multifaceted process involving the perspectives of different actors and the collection and analysis of data from different sources. Besides, studying the relevance of early childhood care and education curriculum and its practices for children of preprimary school level using a single approach may limit the comprehensiveness of the data and the accuracy of the finding so the mixed method could alleviate this problem. Hence, the mixed method is selected for this study to generate a greater understanding of the issues under study and the use of the mixed method enables to complement the strengths by integrating both qualitative and quantitative approaches and compensating the deficiencies of one approach by the advantage of the other (Creswell, et al., 1996). On top of this, the broad reasons for linking the quantitative and qualitative data are for the purposes of triangulation, complementarity, initiation, development, and expansion. It is further indicated that while triangulation enables confirmation or correspondence of results from different methods, complementarity facilitates elaboration, enhancement, and clarification of results using

different methods. But, initiation enables us to find new lines of thinking by giving attention to surprise or paradoxes, and development enables us to use the results from one method to inform the other method. Besides, Expansion leads to extending the breadth and range of inquiry using different methods. Hence, the mixed method can add ideas to the research toolbox and provide the opportunity for a synthesis of traditions (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009; Johnson and Christensen (2008) cited in Mulu (2012)).

The integration of quantitative and qualitative results into a coherent conceptual framework is an important step. This is for the reason that collecting and analyzing data using these two approaches, therefore, helps to get a comprehensive and deeper understanding of the problem under study. Besides, the complementarity of the data from quantitative and qualitative methods has long been appreciated (Creswell, 1995). Thus, the method has the intent to get a complete and comprehensive picture of the topic under study. The quantitative descriptive design was used to generate data from a wide number of sources about the respondents' knowledge and practices regarding the nature and relevance of the existing early childhood curriculum and its practices across the target schools in three regional states of Ethiopia. However, the quantitative data may not give deeper explanations for why a phenomenon occurs. This fact necessitates the use of qualitative data. Hence, the qualitative approach was employed to get data that capture the different dimensions of respondents' experiences, personal perspectives, meanings, values, norms, and beliefs regarding ECCE curriculum and its practices. It may also help to get deeper insights into the issues under consideration and capture some trends that may emerge from the data. Therefore, in this study, the use of such approach serves the purpose of 1) triangulation: gathering data using different methods from different sources that help to get a relatively comprehensive picture of the issues under study, 2) complementarity: using the strengths of one method to complement the weaknesses of the other method, which helps to improve the breadth and depth of the data. The combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches was applied during the empirical investigation of (1) the relevance of the planned early childhood care and education curriculum and the suitability of the learning environment for the curriculum practice, (2) the correspondence of courses of the teachers' training program to the ECCE curriculum for the practice, (3) the appropriateness of the practice of ECCE teacher in helping children, and (4) the factors that hinder or facilitate the implementation of relevant curriculum practice in the preschools.

The table below indicates the basic research questions, data sources, and instruments for data collection for the study diagrammatically with brief explanation following the table.

Table 3.1: Basic research questions, intruments for data collection and sources of data for each research question

Basic research questions 1& 2: #1: Does ECCE curriculum involve elements that address the requirements of relevant curriculum for children of Ethiopia? To what extent the elements help in promoting the fitness of the curriculum for children in the actual preschool setting of Ethiopia? -Survey questionnaire:362 preschool teachers, preschool experts, and preschool directors /coordinators -Interview:10 interviewees(experts of preschool education staff, trainees and parents) -document analysis: on elements of the ECCE curriculum and guides #2. Does the ECCE learning environment involve conducive elements that facilitate the curriculum implementation in Ethiopia? To what extent the elements of the learning environment meet the requirements of relevant ECCE practice to be fit for children? -Observation checklist : 15 preschools using learning environments observation rating scale accompanied by discussion after observation	Basic research questions 3: #3.1. Do the TEP courses equip the ECCE teachers with the three knowledge areas in balanced way? To what extent the balance of the three knowledge areas courses is kept in training ECCE teachers? #3.2. To what extent the TEP courses acquaint ECCE teachers with the elements of relevant curriculum for children #3.3. Do the courses for training of teachers for preschool children correspond to the ECCE curriculum in Ethiopia? To what extent the courses relate to the elements of ECCE curriculum? -Survey: 221in-service and pre-service trainees or students -Interview: 10 interviewees (preprimary school teachers training institute heads and staff) - Documentary analysis: courses of the teacher training institutes and ECCE syllabus	Basic research question 4: # 4.To what extent the preschool teachers implement the guidelines of appropriate practice at the actual preschool setting in Ethiopia to make the curriculum practice relevant for children? -Survey questionnaire: 362 preschool teachers -Observation checklist : 15 preschools teacher practice using appropriate practice observation rating scale accompanied by discussion after observation -Interview: 10 interviewees (experts of preschool education staff, trainees, and parents) Basic research question5: #5.1: Do process and structural factors (like facilities, support, parent involvement and other factors) influence the implementation of the ECCE curriculum at the preprimary schools in Ethiopia? To what extent these conditions influence the implementation of ECCE curriculum? What other factors are affecting the ECCE curriculum practice? - Survey : 362 preschool teachers with questionnaire scale , - Interview: 10 interviewees (experts of preschool education staff, trainees, and parents)
	Integration and Inferences Basic research question5: #5.2: What measures can be taken in minimizing the negative influence of the various conditions on the ECCE curriculum implementation in Ethiopia? and How can that be implemented? -Open-ended questions for ECCE teachers and trainees -Interviews with concerned bodies (trainees, experts, teachers, and parents)	

From the table above (table 3.1.), it is understood that the first and second research questions deal with the survey of the relevance of the ECCE curriculum and the conduciveness of the

learning environment for children of the period. This survey was required in collecting data from different sources using different tools that involved a mix of quantitative and qualitative data analysis. One set of data was regarding the relevance of the curriculum that considers guiding principles in its preparation and the incorporation of elements to make it relevant for children as collected from teachers of the different preschools who were engaged in the instructional process. In the collection of data for the first set of research questions, survey questionnaires with rating scale types and checklists for documentary analysis were used to generate quantitative data. Besides, open-ended questions, interview questions, and documentary analysis were used for generating qualitative data. In this part of the study, there was the complement of using survey quantitative and exploratory qualitative methods. The quality of the learning environment was also observed with an observation checklist rated on a scale and then discussions were conducted with administrators after the observation.

The third research question of the empirical study as indicated in the table above dealt with a survey of the correspondence of the courses of teachers' training program (TEP) for early childhood care and education to objective, contents, methods of instruction, and assessment in the ECCE syllabus and the role of TEP course in equipping ECCE teachers with three knowledge areas and other facts that make the curriculum relevant in promoting appropriate practice as viewed by teacher-trainees for ECCE and trainers for the given schooling level. This survey was requiring the analysis of data collected from different sources that involve a mix of quantitative and qualitative data analysis. One set of data was regarding preschool teacher-trainees' views and experiences about the correspondence of the courses of the training to the ECCE curriculum for promoting the appropriate practice in the preschools and the role of TEP courses in acquainting teachers with the necessary knowledge for making the curriculum relevant for children. Documentary analysis of the training syllabus/ courses and interviews with the trainers and trainees were also employed to generate qualitative data that could complement the data collected using the questionnaires.

The fourth set of research questions for the empirical study focused on the extent of the appropriateness of teachers' curriculum practices for children in preprimary schools. It involved a mix of quantitative and qualitative data analysis. The quantitative data was generated through survey questionnaires from preschool teaching staff and observation rating scales from

classroom practice of preschool teachers. Free classroom practice observations and interviews with coordinators, supervisors, and teacher-trainers were also conducted to get qualitative data.

In the fifth research question of the empirical study, a mix of qualitative and quantitative data analysis was applied to explore the factors that influence the implementation of ECCE curriculum in preprimary schools. The survey questionnaires for preschool teaching staff yielded data meant for quantitative data analysis. Interviews with people engaged in supervisory and management work and teaching staff of preschools and documentary analysis of the syllabus as well as teaching materials were also used to get a qualitative version of the quantitative information obtained. Besides, the factors that are affecting the practices and the measures to be taken for alleviating problems faced in implementing ECCE curriculum for the level were explored using open-ended questions designed for interview and discussion. Finally, the findings from the empirical studies were integrated and inferences were drawn to answer the research questions.

Generally, in this study, the survey questionnaires rating scale types and the checklists for both observation and documentary analysis generated quantitative data. But, interviews, documentary analysis, observation, and open-ended questions yielded qualitative data. Thus, the study demonstrated the complement of using survey and explanatory sequential designs. The descriptive survey design was used to study the curriculum as reported by participants, the learning environment as rated by raters, the curriculum practice as rated by practitioners, and the correspondence of courses of teacher education to ECCE curriculum as reported by graduating class teacher-trainees. The explanatory sequential design was used to study the characteristics of the already set curriculum materials, the factors affecting curriculum implementation and the possible measures to be taken for alleviating the problems in the future. In other words, the survey design was used for assessing the status of the preschool curriculum and its implementation in the actual setting as well as the suitability of conditions for the implementation of the curriculum. The explanatory design, complementing the survey design, was used to explain the appropriateness of the preschool curriculum for practice and then conditions influencing the practice with measures to be taken for alleviating the challenges .

3.2. Data Sources and Sample Selection Techniques in the Study

The sources of data: All concerned bodies of the preprimary school education (preschool teachers and coordinators, curriculum developers, teacher-trainers and trainees, and other preschool education experts) and preschool education documents and settings were the sources of data for the study. This means that the curriculum/syllabus of preschool education and other documents related to preschool education, the preschool learning environments, and people participating directly or indirectly in the preschool curriculum development and implementation process in Ethiopia were all sources of data.

The primary sources of data: The key participants in the development and implementation of the ECCE curriculum such as preschool curriculum developers, preschool teachers and coordinators, trainers of the preschool teachers, the teacher-trainees and the learning environments in the preschools were first-hand sources of data.

The secondary sources of data: The curriculum materials of preschool education like syllabus (that showed objectives, contents, instructional and assessment approaches), teacher's supplemental materials and curriculum guidelines and documents of the Ministry of Education and/or regional education bureaus like policy documents, curriculum standards, manuals guides for the preschool education curriculum implementation as well as the course outlines/ syllabus of teacher education program for preprimary school teachers were used as secondary data sources.

Thus, the population of the study was the teachers and coordinators of the preschools in the three sites (Addis ababa, Debrebirhan and Hawassa) of the selected regional states of Ethiopia and teacher- trainers and trainees for preschool education in teacher training institutes of the two study sites (Addis ababa and Hawassa).

The sample size was made to be 583 participants of the preschool education who were representative of the 10, 312 population in the study sites of the three regional states of Ethiopia namely Addis Ababa, Debirebirhan from Amhara and Hawasa from SNNPR. Of the given number of participants about 362 participants were teachers of preschools in the three regional states of Ethiopia out of 9,662 teachers including preschool education coordinators of the preschools of the three study sites. The rest 221 participants of the study were teacher-trainees for preschool education from 652 graduating classes of the pre-service and in-service trainees of Kotebe University of Education and Hawassa Teacher College. Besides, about 15 sample

preschool classes (5 classrooms from the three sites) were used for observation to see the suitability of the learning environment and the relevance of the actual practice of the teachers for children. The sample selection was made on the base of table for sample size determination communicated in Research for Distance Education: Tools for Research (IGNOU, 2001) and it is presented in the table below.

Table 3.2: Population of the study sites and Sample Size selected from the study sites

Study site	No of preschools	No of preschool teachers and trainees	Sample size	No of observed schools
Addis Ababa	545 Gov KG	8,327	269	5
Debrebrihan	74 Gov+NGO KG	262	39	5
Hawassa	127Gov+NGO KG	1,071	54	5
Kotebe University of Education		592	209	
Hawassa Teachers College		60	12	
Total		10,312	583	15

Sources: FDRE, MOE (July 2022) Educational Statistics Annual Abstract (ESAA), data from REB of Hawassa and Debrbrihan

Sampling techniques: The selection of the three study sites (Addis Ababa, Debrebrahan and Hawassa) of Ethiopia was done due to their representativeness of the country in the practice of preschool education and security issue. After selecting study sites or places in the three regional states, sample schools in the selected towns of the regions and respondents from the schools were selected on the bases of random sampling technique. Likewise, simple random sampling was also employed for selecting pre-service and in-service teacher-trainees. To conduct interviews with concerned bodies, availability sampling technique was used for getting other experts as sources of data. For documentary analysis, the syllabus of ECCE and syllabus for TEP courses and supplemental materials as well as national policy documents and relevant international documents were taken as available.

3.3. Research Variables

1. Demographic and other influencing variables: consist of three sets of factors as indicators for the relevance or appropriateness of curriculum and its practice: contextual, input, and process factors. In this study, children's characteristics, the social and cultural contexts of children, the guiding principles in developing ECCE curriculum, courses for training ECCE teachers, the

learning environment, and different socio-cultural factors (as the policy and legal framework, the regulators, the suppliers, and other socio-cultural factors) were considered as sources of influence on the relevance of ECCE curriculum and its practice at the preprimary schools.

i) The children's characteristics were considered complex but could involve the age and individual child's unique characteristics. In this regard, the early childhood period children had their characteristics in terms of developmental / age levels from 3-4, 4-5, and 5-6 age gaps and those who needed special attention.

ii) The guiding principles in preprimary school education curriculum referred to the development and learning principles in preparing documents for the preprimary school education that could become the base for the implementation of ECCE curriculum. This variable was approached through checklists for evaluating the relevance of the objectives, contents, activities, instructional methods; assessment approaches in the curriculum materials for the implementation of the curriculum at the classroom level in terms of the incorporation of principles.

iii) The courses for teacher education program in the syllabus for preschool education referred to curriculum documents of professional teacher training for preschool education that could become the base for the implementation of ECCE curriculum. This variable was approached through document analysis of the balance of courses in terms of offering knowledge of child development, content/subject matter knowledge, and pedagogical knowledge. Besides, a questionnaire for teacher-trainees was used for collecting data on the role of TEP in acquainting ECCE teachers with the elements of relevant curriculum and the correspondence of curricula of teacher education and ECCE in enhancing developmentally appropriate practice (DAP) in the preschools. On top of this, Open-ended perceptual questions for the would-be-teachers and teacher-trainers for assessing the teacher education program appropriateness for practice in the classroom were used for collecting data about the variable.

iv) Learning environment referred to the conduciveness of the school environment that involves both inside and outside the classroom conditions that facilitate or hinder the implementation of the ECCE curriculum. This variable was approached through observation to evaluate the of the learning environment conduciveness for ECCE curriculum implementation using an environmental rating scale that focused on Space and Furnishings, Personal Care Routines,

Language-Reasoning, Activities, Interaction, Parents and Staff, and free observation of the suitability of the learning environment for relevant practice.

v) The social and cultural contexts as contextual factors that comprised the set of environmental and situational variables that influence the promotion of appropriate practice at preprimary school levels. The factors involved policy and legal framework, concerned bodies as regulators and suppliers.

a) The policy and legal framework referred to the most fundamental policy and the legal grounds for the implementation of an appropriate curriculum for practice. In the Ethiopian context, the National Policy Framework for Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) in Ethiopia (2010) and the Training and Education Policy of Ethiopia (FDRE, 2003) that was endorsed in 2003 and improved in 2009 (FDRE, 2009) are the major policy frameworks that guide the operation of the early childhood education system. This indicates the guiding principles for structural set-up and focal activities as well as roles and responsibilities of partners and the training of teachers for preschoolers. The policy framework is operationalized in terms of the extent to which it enables preprimary schools to implement the appropriate curriculum as core educational processes that influence student learning. Perceptual questions and analysis of policy documents and reports of government in the area were used to address the policy issues.

b) Regulators referred to the bodies that enforce the implementation of government rules and regulations concerning early childhood education. In Ethiopia, the MOE, REBs and WEOs, and parents are responsible for the implementation of preprimary education. In this study, the regulator's aspect was operationalized in terms of the roles of MOE, REBs, and WEOs as well as the influence of parents in the implementation of an appropriate education system in preschools. Perceptual questions for preschool staff personnel, the proclamation, and published documents such as ECCE policy and MOE's requirements, relevance /quality evaluation reports were also used to deal with issues in this dimension.

c) Suppliers referred to the sources of inputs for preprimary schools, of which students were the primary inputs. In this study, suppliers as parents and community types were operationalized in terms of their role in supporting preprimary schools for early childhood education. The

financing/funding of the preprimary schools could be the other input. The financial source for the Ethiopian preschools could mainly be from the government or private NGOs. In this regard, suppliers were also viewed in terms of fund allocation mechanisms. This variable was approached through perceptual questions.

d) The other socio-Cultural factors involve the articulation of shared perspectives, values, procedures, and approaches to early childhood education practice. In this study, preschool culture is operationalized in terms of: (1) the extent of valuing the leadership and staff collaboration and discussion to share and use feedback to implement the appropriate practice, (2) the commitment and engagement of leadership, staff, and parents in enhancing child learning and development activities, and (3) the presence of shared responsibility, ownership, cooperation and collaboration among all actors regarding learning and development of children. These indicators have been measured through the perceptual questions contained in interviews and questionnaires.

2. Major Variables included the relevance or appropriateness of curriculum, conduciveness of learning environment and appropriateness of the practices for learners with different needs as well as the correspondence of teacher training courses to the ECCE curriculum and the achievement of different skills through the curriculum. The relevance of the curriculum was conceptualized in this study in terms of the incorporation of an acceptable philosophical base, principles, values, procedures, objectives and contents, methods, structures, and resources in the preparation of curriculum materials for practice in preprimary schools.

The appropriateness of curriculum practice in preprimary schools can be envisaged in terms of the five functions of teachers in the classroom: planning curriculum activities, creating a community of learners and reciprocal relationships with parents, teaching and assessment of development and learning as influenced by context, input, and process factors. The operationalization of appropriate curriculum and its practice in the early childhood period was approached in terms of the application of relevant, adequate, and efficient curriculum and its practice. The relevance of the curriculum as a base for implementing appropriate practice could be related to the age level of the learners and the social significance of the actual practice. This could be operationalized by looking into the presence of a sensible or logical connection of the ECCE curriculum elements in the implementation of appropriate instruction at school in teaching

children and the social significance of the curriculum for enhancing the appropriate practice at preschool levels.

In addition to this, the balance of three knowledge areas acquired by teachers in their training for teaching preschoolers, the role of the “Teacher Education Program” in familiarizing teachers with elements of the relevant curriculum for children, and the correspondence of courses of the teacher education program with the curriculum of ECCE to make the practice suitable for the needs of children was another dimension for operationalizing relevance of the curriculum practice for children. The relevance of the preprimary school education curriculum was viewed in terms of the significance of goals to the needs of the nation as a whole and to specific stakeholders, and the appropriateness of curriculum elements to facilitate the successful accomplishment of the goals of the ECCE. Besides, the relevance of the curriculum was understood in terms of the suitability of the learning environment for the curriculum practice. Learning environment involves school’s physical facilities (space in the classrooms, class corners, offices, school compound, playground, restrooms, clinic, furnishings), and learning resources (in the different learning corners), the appropriateness of interpersonal interactions, and suitability of program structure (scheduling and care routines). The relevance of the Curriculum was also seen in relation to the availability of an adequate number of qualified teaching staff to support the programs and an appropriate teacher-student ratio in the class, the appropriateness of mechanism for assessing students learning and the provision of appropriate support, the presence of the support for children and teachers, monitoring and review mechanisms, the involvement of external professionals and parents in curriculum design, evaluation and review process, and the clarity of curricular aims and objectives to teachers and parents; and the presence of the balance of the three knowledge areas: child development, subject knowledge and transferable skills/ pedagogical knowledge for the teachers.

The adequacy of the ECCE curriculum was meant to focus on appropriate practice. It was operationalized in terms of the (1) context elements: the background of children, the place and types of preschools, (2) input elements: the professional competence of teachers, and the accessibility and adequacy of resources in the learning environment, (3) structural and process elements: the quality of curriculum elements, teaching-learning and assessment approaches, staff development, and the utilization of resources in the learning environment, and (4) output

elements: the skills acquired by children at the end of preprimary schools as perceived by teachers. These four elements were assessed using perceptual questions and analysis of documents concerning the state of educational quality and the relevance of practicing appropriate instruction.

The effectiveness of practice is operationalized in terms of three aspects. The first aspect is related to the extent that the planned curriculum is enhancing learning and development that can be made workable in terms of frameworks/models, systems, policy, structure, procedures, and instruments to assure relevance and quality of the core educational processes and conditions. The intention here is not to measure the quality of student learning, but rather to see if there are functional mechanisms that enable the improvement of student learning. These mechanisms may include classroom surveys and rating of practice to see the appropriateness of teaching, assessment, and staff support for change and development through sharing experiences. The second aspect is related to the extent of creating a caring community of learners and reciprocal relations with parents encourage improvement or compliance in preschool learning. The third aspect examines the gap between intention and actual implementation; addressed by comparing actual practices in preschools against the good practices in developmentally appropriate instruction depicted in the conceptual framework of this study. Perceptual questions for preprimary school coordinators, teachers, and parents of children, and document analysis can be used to evaluate the efficacy of the appropriate practice.

3.4 Data Collection Tools and Procedures of Data Collection

The variables of the study as communicated above were ECCE Curriculum elements (objectives, contents/ activities, teaching methods, assessment, and principles for guiding relevant curriculum preparation and practice), the contribution of ECCE curriculum in developing different skills of children, courses of teacher education /training program(TEP)for the ECCE practice (focuses on the balance of three Knowledge areas as child development, content, and pedagogical knowledge, the role of TEP in acquainting teachers with relevant curriculum and equipping them with the correspondence of TEP and ECCE curricula), suitability of learning environment (involves space and furnishings, personal care relation,language reasoning and activities, instruction, program structure, and parents and staff), application of developmentally Appropriate Practice (involves the five functions/focus areas: constructing appropriate

curriculum /activities, creating a caring community of learners, teaching to enhance development and learning, assessing learning and development, and reciprocal relationships with parents and families), factors influencing the ECCE curriculum practices and the measures /strategies to be taken to alleviate the problems. The instruments for data collection are used as measures for indicators of the relevance or appropriateness of the curriculum, as perceived by concerned bodies for the developmental needs of children, the courses in terms of their uses to acquaint teachers with relevant facts about ECCE, the balance of three areas of knowledge in courses that use for training teachers and the correspondence of TEP and ECCE curricula to promote the appropriate practice, indicators of a developmentally appropriate learning environment fit for the developmental needs of children, and the indicators of suggested influential factors and measures to alleviate the negative influence of the factors.

The data collection instruments were questionnaires of close-ended rating scale types and open-ended types, checklists for observation, checklist for documentary analysis, and an open-ended question for interviews and discussion.

The questionnaire scales were used for measuring the incorporation of the guiding principles of curriculum preparation and practice, relevant elements as comprehensive objectives, integrated contents/activities, fit teaching methods and assessment means in the curriculum as communicated in the syllabus, and the contribution of the curriculum in developing children's skills as perceived by participants of preprimary school education program, especially ECCE teachers and coordinators.

The questionnaire scales were also used for extracting information as to the application of developmentally appropriate practice at the classroom level and factors influencing the curriculum practice as reported by the preschool teachers. Besides, other sets of questionnaire scales were used for collecting information from the graduating class of teacher-trainees for preschool education as to their perception of the use of their training in applying the appropriate practice in their future career as well as the relation of the teacher education program training courses with ECCE curriculum. The questionnaire scales were scales that are constructed based on the literature and scales used by others but adapted for the purpose (e.g., the scale for measuring developmentally appropriate practice and the learning environment rating scale).

To collect data about the ECCE curriculum, the instruments used were a questionnaire of the rating scale types, a checklist for documentary analysis, and open-ended questions for interview and group discussion. The questionnaire of the rating scale type contains 36 items that focused on guiding principles of curriculum preparation (12 items) and contents of the curriculum (6 items) as well as instructional strategies (6 items), assessment means (5 items), and other conditions or resources (7 items) indicated in the curriculum. All items about the curriculum elements were rated by respondents to show the extent that the curriculum incorporated the elements represented by the statements. The contribution of the curriculum in developing different skills was also explored using a questionnaire with 32 items that were categorized under six categories of skills (lay base for developing academic, physical, social and emotional, language, and dispositions to learning, and ways of learning skills with five items for each except two skills that have six items). The items about the contribution of the curriculum in developing the six categories of skills were answered by the respondents showing their level of agreement ranging from strongly disagree (1) to disagree(2), neutral position(3), and agree(4) up to strongly agree(5) levels.

A check list for document analysis was also used to collect data about the ECCE curriculum contents or objectives in that the raters were expected to indicate to what the extent sufficient objectives and/or contents that are found in the international literature are present in the syllabus of Ethiopia. Besides, interview and discussion questions were used to explore general ideas about the problems and measures to be taken in designing and preparing the curriculum from people who have direct contact with ECCE.

To collect data about the ECCE learning environment, an observation checklist with 37 items that were categorized under six sub-scales were used. The sub-scales were space and furniture (8 items), personal routine (6 items), language-reasoning (4 items), activities (10), interaction (5 items), and program structure (4 items). Besides, using the open-ended questions with the scale, the raters were expected to freely comment on what they observed additionally about the learning environment.

In studying the teacher education program, questionnaires of the rating scale types were used to collect data about the role of the teacher education program in acquainting ECCE teachers with

guiding principles (12 items), appropriateness of ECCE curriculum for the age levels (3 items), uniqueness (4 items) and contexts (4 items) of children and awareness about children learning styles (5 items). On top of this, the questionnaires of the rating scale types were used to collect data about the ways of applying the guiding principles (12 items), consideration of learning conditions (3 items), and the use of exploration and experimentation (6 items) as fit methods of instruction for children and the use of observation (6 items) as a fit method of getting information about children. Besides, data about the Teacher Education Program's contributions in equipping teachers with the ECCE curriculum was also collected using a scale with 29 items focusing on 4 categories of objectives (physical with 3 items, cognitive including interaction with the environment with 4 items, and psychosocial with 13 items), four types of contents (physical, cognitive and language, and emotional with 4, 5, 6, and 4 items, respectively), as well as instructional strategies with 7 items and assessment means with 4 items. On top of this, the balance of TEP courses representing the three knowledge areas (pedagogy, subject matter, and child development) was explored through checklists from documents using documentary analysis by asking people to categorize the courses into the three areas. Interview questions were also used to explore problems and the measures to be taken to alleviate the problems in the future.

The practice of ECCE teachers was explored using a questionnaire of the rating scale types with 34 items that were categorized under five key functions of teachers (creating a caring community of learners, teaching to enhance development and learning, constructing appropriate curriculum, assessing children's learning and development, and reciprocal relationships with parents and families with 7 items each except 6 items for the last function). Similar items were also used as checklist items for conducting class observation as to the actual practice of teachers in the preschools that were filled by experienced teachers and those items were adapted from literature (Jambunathan and Caulfield, 2012). Besides, it was tried to explore ECCE teachers' application of the ten basic strategies in caring and guiding children.

As to the factors that affect the ECCE curriculum practice of teachers, data were explored using 20 items that were categorized under five categories of factors as factors related to policy (4 items), support from others (6 items), resources (4 items), provision of services (3 items) and program structure (3 items). Besides, interview and group discussion questions were used to collect

information about the problems and measures to be taken for alleviating the problems in practicing the ECCE curriculum.

All items on the questionnaire scales were rated from a maximum of five to a minimum of one point for positive items and vice versa for negative items. For all items, the percentage of respondents for their summative scores below average or midpoints (I and II quartiles) were representing low level or disagreement level, middle scores (III quartile) were representing medium or neutral positions and above-medium scores (IV quartile) were representing high level or agreement position. For instance, the overall score of the 12 items of the guiding principles yielded a summative score ranging from 12 to 60 with below-average (below midpoint 30), average (middle 25 % score, i.e. 30-42), and above-average (above 42) scores. A similar scoring scheme was applied to assess summative scores of participants in each dimension, too.

The reliability of the scale that uses to collect data about the general practice related to the relevance of the ECCE curriculum was calculated based on the data collected from 71 sample members. So, the reliability was Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.93$. Besides, the measure that was used for collecting data about the correspondence of courses of teacher education program with ECCE curriculum was administered for 30 respondents and based on the responses, its reliability was found, it was becoming Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.96$. The other questionnaire scales that were used for collecting data about the application of the curriculum practice at class level was adapted from the scale of developmentally appropriate practice to use for collecting data for the actual research with modification of items from the first scale (Jambunathan and Caulfield, 2012).

Similarly, the observation checklist for the learning environment was also adapted from previous work with minor modifications. As to the Validity of the scales, professionals in the areas were asked to comment on the items' ability to measure the variables under investigation. So, the developmental procedure of the scales was also ensuring the validity of the scales (face and construct). Besides, Observation checklists were employed for collecting data about the application of appropriate practice at classroom levels and the fitness of the learning environment for the application of developmentally appropriate practice. The data was collected using the observation checklists used as support for the data collected through questionnaire scales. Besides, the checklists were used for evaluating the learning environment and preschool

teachers' application of developmentally appropriate practice at the classroom level. While the checklist for evaluating the learning environment was adapted from Environmental Rating Scale, the observation checklist for the application of developmentally appropriate practice is adapted from the work of Jambunathan and Caulfield (2012).

Documentary analyses were made to collect data from documentary sources of data about preprimary school education and teacher education. The documentary analyses were conducted using structured checklists about the curriculum elements and materials of the early childhood care and education and the courses of the teacher education program. The checklists used for evaluating the curriculum elements and materials and the teacher education courses were adapted from the documents of ECCE and teacher education program and commented by teacher-trainers of the ECCE as valid content-wise.

Open-ended questions for interviews and discussions with parents, teachers, and knowledgeable others were used for collecting data that were employed for triangulating and complementing the data collected using the questionnaire scales and observation checklists. Besides, questions for interview and discussion help in eliciting factors affecting curriculum implementation and measures to be taken for alleviating the negative influences of the factors/problems indicated. The table below shows variables and tools for measuring the variables for ease of reference.

Table 3.3: The variables and instruments for measuring the variables

R.No	Demographic and other influencing variables	Research variables		Instrument/ Measures
		Main variable	Sub-variable	
1.	1.children characteristics: - Age 2.contexts: schools places Or regional back ground	ECCE Curriculum - relevance/quality	-Objectives and/or Contents -Teaching methods -Assessment and resources - Principles of DAP	-Teachers' questionnaire -checklists for document analysis - open ended questions (Annex1-3)
2	-ECCE curriculum -characteristics of children: age -school type and place	Learning environment for curriculum practice	- Space and furnishings - Personal care routines - Language reasoning - curriculum Activities, - Program structure -interaction of Parents-child-staff	-Environmental rating scale (Annex 5) -observation(free observation)
3.	- ECCE curriculum -characteristics of children: -age	Courses for training teachers to implement ECCE curriculum	- Balance of the knowledge areas: Child development, content, and Pedagogical knowledge -support of TEP to acquaint relevant curriculum for children - Correspondence of the TEP to ECCE Curriculum	-Questionnaire for trainees -Documentary analysis using checklists -Interview questions for trainers (Annex 6-9)
4.	- children's characteristics: age - contexts: School setting - curriculum of ECCE -Teaching Experience and Qualification	Developmentally Appropriate Practice (DAP): Extent of appropriateness	five basic functions: -caring community of learners -appropriate curriculum activities -teaching for development , -assessment for development, -reciprocal relation with parent,	-Checklist for rating the application of DAP at classroom (Annex 4) -Questionnaire scale for measuring appropriateness of practice -open ended questions -interview/ discussion(part of Annex1)
5	-Factors influencing curriculum implementation -process, structural and input indicators -Facilities and support services -other factors	ECCE Curriculum practice	- Preparation of Documents -Implementation of curriculum	-Close-ended questions (part of Annex1) and -open-ended questions
6	-Measures to be taken	ECCE Curriculum practice	- Syllabus development - Implementation of curriculum - Learning environment design - Courses of training of teachers	suggestions from concerned bodies through Open-ended questions

3.5 Data Analysis Procedure

The analysis of data was conducted using both qualitative and quantitative methods. In this study, the intention was to investigate the relevance of early childhood care and education curriculum in ensuring appropriate practices at preprimary schools. Thus, the unit of analysis focused on evaluating the relevance of preschool level curriculum and the appropriateness of its practice for children. The mixed-methods data analysis processes employed include data reduction, data display, data consolidation, and data integration. Data reduction refers to condensing the dimensionality of quantitative data (e.g. via descriptive statistics, exploratory thematic analysis, cluster analysis) and qualitative data (e.g., via exploratory thematic analysis). Data consolidation refers to combining quantitative and qualitative data to create new variables and data display refers to describing virtually the data (e.g. table, charts). But, in the data integration stage, both qualitative and quantitative data are integrated into either whole or separate sets. In this study, the data collected through questionnaires were coded, entered,

cleaned, and analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS 21 computer software) that was employed for data analysis purposes. The quantitative data were reduced into descriptive statistics such as percentages; and chi-square tests.

The qualitative data were also transcribed, coded, and interpreted thematically. The thematic approach was followed to display the analyses and findings from both quantitative and qualitative data. The themes for the data analyses were derived from the conceptual framework of the study that is grounded in the basic research questions. Analysis of quantitative data was displayed first and then supported by qualitative data analysis in the form of texts, quotations, tables, and charts.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations are of paramount importance in any research involving human beings. In providing information about any issue, we people may be sensitive of the potential consequences of all of our words by bringing home—inside our homes and workplaces—the ethics of representation. This is for the reason that the data provided may be about other people, society, experiences, cultures, work places, disciplines, friends, and families and this may spark a thought about the danger of mis-utilization and misrepresentation of the concerned bodies and risk for oneself. In the case of this research work, though there is an assumption that the research involved no risk to any of the participants and for others, all efforts were made to assess ethical problems and approaches. Proper care was taken in to account about the privacy of the participants and then proper management of the data was also assured for the participants. Appropriate procedures were followed to get informed consent of the participants, and their right to be remained known throughout the research process was assured. In addition to this, it was tried to adhere to ethics of the Ethiopian societies in collecting data. Besides, letter of cooperation for the data collection centers was used in relation to ethics and legality and is attached as Annex 10.

CHAPTER IV

DATA ORGANIZATION, ANALYSIS, AND DISCUSSION

Introduction

In studying the “Relevance of Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) curriculum and its Practice in Ethiopia focusing on three Regional States”, it was tried to see the fitness of the curriculum and its practice for preschool children in line with the research questions communicated at the introduction part. In doing so, data were gathered using different data collection tools such as questionnaires, interviews, observation, and documentary analysis. The collected data using questionnaire of the rating scale types and open-ended questions, interview questions, and checklists for observation and documentary analysis are organized and analyzed under the following headings.

1. The incorporation of basic elements (as foundational bases, guiding principles of curriculum development, comprehensive objective and then integrated contents, appropriate strategies of instruction, and fit assessment means and other resources) in the preschool curriculum that make the curriculum relevant for children as learned from documents and as perceived by professionals / teachers.
2. The presence of elements conducive in the preschool learning environments for ECCE Curriculum implementation and the extent that the elements meet the requirements of relevant practice fit for children.
3. The correspondence of teacher education courses for preprimary school education to the ECCE curriculum for children and the extent that the courses acquaint teachers with the three knowledge areas (child development, content, and pedagogy) , the contribution of the program in developing curriculum and its benefits in implementing appropriate curriculum for children.
4. The extent that the preschool teachers follow the guidelines of appropriate practice to make curriculum fit for children in the actual preschool setting in the selected regions of Ethiopia
5. The extent that conditions (like policy, facilities, support, parent involvement and other factors) influence the implementation of the curriculum and the prevalence of other influential factors in the implementation of the ECCE curriculum, and
6. The measures to be taken in minimizing the negative influence of the factors on the implementation of ECCE curriculum in Ethiopia

4.1. The Presence of Basic Elements making Preschool Curriculum Relevant for Children

The basic elements that make ECCE curriculum relevant for preschool children could be the incorporation of comprehensive objectives and then integrated contents, appropriate methods of instruction and assessment means fit for the children and the consideration of basic guiding principles of learning and development in the preparation of the curriculum. Besides, necessary resources that can enhance the relevance of the curriculum and its practice should also be indicated in the curriculum to enable the practitioners or teachers to make teaching fit for children. So, the relevance of the curriculum for preschool children can be studied by assessing whether the mentioned elements are included in the curriculum as documented in the syllabus or other curriculum documents and then indicating the extent that the elements are incorporated in the curriculum as reported by professionals in the field.

4.1.1. The Basic Component Parts in the ECCE Curriculum Document of Ethiopia

The basic component parts of ECCE curriculum of Ethiopia are communicated in the syllabus that was prepared in 2001 E.C. and it is supposed to be used throughout the country. This centrally prepared preschool syllabus of Ethiopia involves fifty pages organized in two parts.

The first part of the syllabus communicates the foundational base, general objectives, and thematic or content areas of the preprimary school education, the organization and the utilization of the curriculum, the weekly distribution of periods, and the number of periods for teaching the thematic areas of the curriculum as well as the developmental directions (in the form of chart) for preschool children in Ethiopia.

The syllabus for the preprimary school education of Ethiopia at the start indicates the need to lay foundations for developing citizens who can contribute their part in the building of the society and the need to touch the various developmental aspects of children. In this part, it is further stated that children come to class with special experiences and hopes to get new things, feelings, outlooks, and abilities so it is essential to accept, understand, and develop each child's behavior. It is also pointed out that children can enhance their understanding as a result of their interaction with their environment; they are eager to know truths, to find the relation between shapes and design, and to arrive at conclusions; and they need to develop self-confidence through activities they do and through plays, and through carefully prepared types of equipment as well as happenings. It is pointed out in the same part of the syllabus that the preschool learning environment should create opportunities for children to conduct

experiments, search, and research, adapt new findings, withstand problematic situations, interact with peers and adults, demand what they want peacefully, and appreciate similarities and differences. The learning conditions should also involve cooperation or collaboration, thinking for others, respecting and loving others. It is also pointed out that every child should have a Positive outlook about the self; think and respect others; express one's ideas and listen to the ideas of others; respect and accept the winning ideas; build problem-solving strategies; dare to ask and understand; have self-respect, self-confidence, and self-evaluation; apply what is learned with confidence; give respect to play and work; proud of self-achievement; appreciate and take care of the surrounding environment; able to use the body parts with competence; healthy outlook on physical wellbeing; get what is needed with peaceful way; take responsibility for one's deed and result, and appreciate and accept differences. All of these are used to inculcate and develop a positive outlook on children's future education (MOE, 2009, PP. iii-iv).

From this part of the syllabus, one can learn that the philosophical base as a standard guide for conducting preschool education seemed to be communicated in fairly needed ways to use as a base to organize and practice the ECCE in Ethiopia. This part of the syllabus also seems to communicate the psychological, social aspects of curriculum foundations but it did not seem to consider the historical and cultural aspects as well as the current technological changes as foundation of curriculum development and practice.

The syllabus also communicates the aims, objectives and thematic areas of preprimary school education in Ethiopia. The aim of preschool education is stated very briefly in that it is used to lay the base for full-fledged and balanced development of children. The preschool education objectives are also indicated stating in that making children to accomplish different activities and adapt to keep healthy system using different body parts and sensory systems; build experience and skills of recognizing, scrutinizing, understanding, appreciating, using, and caring for the environment having integration with the environment and to have a tendency to solve problems faced in daily lives, develop skills of receiving information, thinking, understand appropriate ways of expressing ideas and needs and accepting others' ideas and understanding differences; and develop skills of living in harmony with and understanding others, realizing and caring for the self in line with acceptable experience and living systems in the community due to interaction with people in their surroundings. In trying to organize the

ECCE system in line with the needs and abilities of children to build wholesome skills, the syllabus communicated the developmental activities (activities performed by the children) arranged under five themes. They are: 1) giving appropriate care for appropriate development and physical strength; 2) creating acceptable relations with others; 3) using language appropriately; 4) applying mathematical calculation and concepts in day-to-day life; and 5) studying and integrating the environment by interacting with the surrounding” (MOE, 2009, pp. v)

From this part of the syllabus, it is learned that the objectives for ECCE are not written in terms of students’ activities rather they are written in terms of teachers’ activities. On top of this, the objectives did not seem comprehensive enough for they did not touch all aspects of development so that they were not representing the various developmental domains in a balanced way. The objectives were only targeting on physical, social, and cognitive (language and mathematics) aspects of development. Similarly, the thematic areas were also touching only four aspects of development: physical, social, cognitive, and emotional aspects. Thus, the physical, social, cognitive and some elements of emotional aspects of development are the only contents included in the curriculum of ECCE. But, the contents that target in developing values about one’s culture and in acquainting children with indigenous knowledge and learning how to learn, and in developing characteristics/personal qualities as Ethiopian children were not well-communicated in this part of the syllabus for the given levels of schooling.

The syllabus communicates four developmental directions for Early Childhood period children’s education in Ethiopia in the form of the chart (physical, cognitive, social, and emotional developmental aspects). In the chart, it is indicated that physical development focuses on physical growth and strength, body parts, senses, and health. Children are expected to engage themselves in appropriate activities for appropriate growth and physical strength, knowing and caring for parts of the body, using sensory systems, and adapting the systems of caring for health. Similarly, cognitive development focuses on language (listening, speaking, and playing with books) as well as movement and experimentation, time and places, imagination and creativity, and concepts of mathematics. Children are expected in using language properly and listening information, communicating with meaning in different situations, feeling happy by turning books, understanding the concept of movement and trying to experiment with characteristics of real things, understand the concept of time and places, using/measuring imagination and creativity, and using mathematical concepts and activities in

everyday routines. Besides, social development targets caring and sharing attitude towards, and relationships with others, and interaction with the nearby environment. Children are expected to care for others and share what they have, have attitudes to know and differentiate people in their surroundings, create a relationship with others in acceptable ways, study and integrate with their surroundings due to interaction with the environment, and explore and know the immediate surrounding environment. Finally, emotional development as other aspect focuses on feeling, sensing of self, value to the self as well as playing, drawing, and painting. Children are expected in expressing one's feelings and sharing others' feelings, developing a sense of self-confidence, provide worth/value for the self, and be happy and express feeling through play or drawing pictures, or painting. (MOE, 2009, pp.ix)

Thus, the aforementioned four developmental aspects and the expected accomplishments from the part of children under each aspect of development in the syllabus do not seem sufficient for children to have a base for developing as full-fledged people with balanced knowledge in all aspects of life as future citizens. The basic elements that help children to become successful in their learning at schools like developing the habit of working at the level of one's capability, honesty, trustworthiness, truthfulness, assertiveness, hardworking habits, and showing love, and working in cooperation with others as elements of life are not properly touched in the contents of pre-primary school education syllabus. Thus, necessary developmental directions other than physical, social, cognitive, and emotional dimensions are not taken into account in the curriculum of preschool education. The development areas as personality, moral, ethical, spiritual, art and aesthetics, technological, and other aspects of development are not involved in the ECCE syllabus/curriculum.

The ECCE syllabus indicates that the five thematic areas of development for children should be organized and actualized in an integrated way in that themes support each other. Under each theme, the expected results are put as outcomes that the child can perform. The Competence of the behavioral change in every child and the results under each theme are divided for the three age levels (3-4, 4-5, and 5-6 years) children. It is also stated that to achieve these objectives, the main instrument is play. Besides, the syllabus indicates the main activities of teachers and the materials for teaching to support the learning and development of children as follows.

- Using their professional skills and creativity, teachers are expected to expand the contents by adding other developmental activities according to the context in which children live,

- accepting and understanding differences, teachers should follow the child's rate of receptivity and competence in performing,
- finding hidden and potential abilities of the child, teachers should create opportunities to develop the child in that direction, and
- thinking of children as main actors, teachers should give them the chance of high participation for they learn at best when they participate freely and are given the responsibility to perform. So, the focus of the activities should be on children (MOE, 2009, PP.vi).

Thus, here, it seems impossible for teachers at the preschool level to bring additional developmental activities in line with the developmental level of children. Besides, unless the curriculum documents communicate those activities properly, it may not be possible for teachers to accomplish other tasks such as extracting hidden abilities and creating chance for children to actively participate in the lesson. So, ECCE curriculum documents have drawbacks in communicating the activities of teachers. The preprimary school teachers with limited training may face difficult in performing the mentioned activities.

The syllabus is also pointing out other tasks expected from teachers as follows.

- Teachers are expected to create environment conducive for children taking themselves as creators of learning environment conducive in line with the age and developmental levels of children. The developmental activities can be achieved while using different play materials and teaching aids. So, preparing play materials, teaching aids, and the classroom for enhancing practical activities becomes essential.
- Teachers are expected to create conducive conditions that help children to do the following activities.
- Children can learn by imitating others in the form of play during interacting with peers and adult people. So, teachers should help the child by creating conducive conditions that enable them to freely move, play, and interact with adults and peers. Thus, teachers should act as a model for children every time and use praise, encouragement, appreciation, and show good ethics or morality for children.
- Children can think about the process of practical activities. So, it is expected of teachers to help children assess their surroundings, scrutinize the materials, study, express their ideas in different activities, and offer the chance to participate and provide an answer to their questions

-Children learn, entertain, know the environment, reflect on their inner feeling, and satisfying feeling through movements, and they see, understand, and gain opportunities to reflect through play on the fact that the highest interest for children is play. Play is a means of learning and enables children to participate without boredom.(MOE,2009, pp.vii)

If the preschool teachers are not guided by the syllabus and other curriculum documents in making the learning environment suitable and creating conducive conditions and practical activities for children, they may not accomplish the expected tasks by themselves. So, these tasks can become feasible when the syllabus shows how to make the learning environment conducive for children and how to create conducive conditions and practical activities for teachers. However, the syllabus does not communicate the conditions that make the learning environment suitable for children. The preschool education syllabus indicates the assessment and teaching approaches as follows.

- The growth and development of children should be assessed every time. So, the assessment should focus on the everyday activities of children but not based on a written examination given occasionally. Assessment should be conceptualized as a means for understanding progress but not a testimony of achievement at the preschool level. So, it is advisable to record developmental changes of children in everyday conditions to plan and practice continuous support. Continuous support of children seems mandatory for teachers to initiate and encourage children to have appropriate competence.

- Early childhood period is the time for laying base so that it is time to start to develop values. Teachers' observation and record-keeping of developmental activities of every child can use for the provision and progressive education for the next steps.

- The Capacities of Children to receive and remember differ from that of adults so presenting ideas orally for children alone does not suffice and then children should get a chance to use their different senses. To use the senses, children can use to understand, experiment or test, research their environment, and adapt to give a solution to problems in their classrooms so the classrooms should be organized with different play materials and teaching aids.(MOE,2009.PP.vii-viii)

Thus, if there are sample works in the syllabus or other curriculum documents, teachers may practice the indicated approaches of teaching and means of assessment properly. But, unless sample works as to the application of assessment means and approaches of instruction at preschools are indicated in the syllabus or other curriculum documents for preschool teachers, it

seems impossible for the teachers to do an assessment every time for planning and practicing continuous support, to use observation and record-keeping for the provision of progressive education and to allow children to use their different senses in learning. The syllabus communicates the ECCE weekly timetable distribution with the length of periods. The ECCE weekly period allotted for children of all age groups is 25 periods. The periods allotted for the five thematic areas for the different age groups are as follows.

Table 4.1: The weekly time table distribution with the length of periods in the ECCE syllabus

R.N o	Themes	age		
		3-4	4-5	5-6
1.	Giving appropriate care for appropriate development and physical strengthens;	7	7	7
2.	Creating acceptable relations with others;	3	3	3
3.	Using language appropriately;	5	5	5
4.	Applying mathematical calculation and concepts in day to day life; &	5	5	5
5.	Studying and integrating the environment by interacting with the surrounding.	5	5	5
	Length of the periods for the different age levels	15-20 minutes	20-25 minutes	25-30 minutes

N.B.: the daily routines like receiving children, rest, dining, and sleeping time are included in the timetable.

From the time table above, it is learned that children of the three age groups are expected to participate in the same thematic areas with the same number of periods. The differences lay in only the time length of the periods for children of the three age groups. So, difference according to age did not indicate differences of the content learned and the period distribution. But, the contents and period distribution for children of the three age groups should be made different.

The second part of the syllabus communicates the five thematic areas with the expected outcomes/results in the form of sub-topics of preschool education as developmental activities and reminders for teaching materials and teaching aids for the different developmental activities as well as sample competence of children after learning in each of the five thematic areas. The thematic areas and expected outcomes are as follows.

Theme1: appropriate care for appropriate growth and physical strength. The expected outcomes in this theme include: having a sense of understanding the self, self-confidence, and self-worth; differentiating body parts and telling their uses; caring for the eyes; caring for the ears; using smelling senses and caring for the nose; using tasting senses and caring for the mouth; caring for the health and adapting the system of caring for health; keeping and caring

with caution for body parts; using fine and gross muscles, and exploring discovery freely (MOE, 2009, PP.1-14).

Thus, children of preprimary schools learn contents under this theme that enable them to achieve outcomes related only to the self, body parts, and senses, the care for the body parts, health and muscles, and free discovery. But, the theme may involve more contents than contents mentioned here.

Theme 2: creating relationships with others in acceptable ways. The expected outcomes under this theme are: having a tendency to know and differentiate people in the surrounding; differentiating people who give caution and care for themselves and know how they are taking care of themselves; and caring for others and sharing what they have (MOE, 2009, PP.15-20). So, the expected outcomes of this theme target on people in the surroundings and caring for and sharing with others.

Theme 3: using language appropriately. The expected outcomes under this theme are listening to information properly and giving appropriate feedback in different situations; communicating with meaningful words and sign appropriately, having self-confidence in different situations; being happy and getting knowledge and understanding through reading; and ready for writing with the coordination of eyes and hand movement (MOE, 2009, PP.21-29).

Thus, listening to information, communicating with the use of spoken and sign language, reading and writing can be possible after children are made to study letters or the alphabet. The outcomes are so broad that need to think about the basic tasks to achieve the four skills of language usage.

Theme 4: using mathematical calculation and concepts in the day-to-day activities. The expected outcomes under this theme are assessing, understanding, and differentiating the characteristics of real things; comparing things based on their characteristics; knowing and exploring numbers, understanding their relationship and doing simple calculations with them; using appropriate measuring criteria and instruments at different situations; understanding the concept of time and using ways of expressing time; understanding the concept of place and using ways of expressing place; and acquainting with, differentiating, explaining, and using money (MOE, 2009. PP.30-39)..

So, the mathematical calculation and concept demand children count numbers before applying for the numbers in reality to measurement, time, places, and money. Thus, the expectation here becomes above the capacities of children.

Theme 5: studying and integrating with the surrounding environment and interacting with it. The expected outcomes under this theme are experimenting and knowing the nearby surrounding; knowing and appreciating important places found in the environment/surrounding; knowing and understanding how to give care for the surrounding environment; differentiating dangerous things in the environment and taking care of them; understanding the concept of motion and doing an experiment, and creating and appreciating different things using drawing and sculpture and expressing oneself using drawing/pictures(MOE, 2009, PP.40-50).

Thus, the focuses here are the immediate environment, important places, care for the environment, as well as dangerous things in the environment. Conceptualizing motion, drawing, and making shapes are expected tasks of children.

Generally, the five thematic areas of preschool education communicated in the syllabus focus on physical, social-emotional, language, and cognitive (mathematical including thinking about the environment) aspects of development with different numbers of expected outcomes under each theme. To realize the themes and sub-topics under the themes, competence, developmental activities, and suggestions on play and teaching materials are included in the syllabus in the form of a table. At last, reminders for the achievement of the competence are communicated at the end of each of the five thematic areas. This part of the syllabus seems insufficient for teachers to use for helping children in their learning and development at the given schooling level. The competence, the developmental activities, play and other materials for teaching should be made detailed for the teachers in the syllabus. Otherwise, the syllabus should be supported by other curriculum materials for the teachers to have detailed ideas to use properly as how to realize each topic in each theme. But, the fact is contrary to this truth. Teaching methods are not indicated in the table parallel to the topics for the teachers. So, the curriculum for preprimary school education seems to lack the needed level of adequacy to use, and then the relevance of the curriculum material for children of the given level can be put under the question mark.

As a whole, the ECCE syllabus indicates the philosophical bases, objectives, teaching methods, assessment approaches, and thematic areas and resources for teaching the themes as well as the

learning environment. But, the elements are not communicated at expected levels of clarity to use for teachers of the given schooling level. Besides, contents integration was not explicitly observed in the organization of the themes. Thus, the ideas communicated in the syllabus are so shallow for the teachers to use in practice. Though supportive materials were prepared for the three thematic areas (mathematics, language, and environmental science) in 2006 E.C., the materials were not found in all preschools and they were not properly touching all developmental areas as expected in an integrated way.

4.1.2. The Extent that ECCE Syllabus incorporates the Guiding Principles of Curriculum Preparation

The relevance of the preschool education curriculum for children can be seen by trying to assess the extent that certain child development and learning principles are considered in the preparation of the curriculum as perceived by teachers. The preparation of preschool curriculum should be done in line with certain standard or basic principles of preparing and then implementing the curriculum (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997). Following this, twelve basic principles should be considered in designing and implementing the preschool curriculum as an indicator of the relevance of the curriculum for preschool children. So, preschool teachers were asked to rate to what extent the twelve guiding principles of child development and learning were considered in the preparation of the preprimary school curriculum of Ethiopia using a five-point rating scale (rated from 5= it is considered at very high level through 3= it is considered at medium level to 1= considered at negligible level). The extent that the twelve guiding principles of curriculum development were considered in the preparation of the Ethiopian preschool curriculum to make the curriculum appropriate for the preschoolers as perceived by the preschool teachers is communicated in table 4.2.

Table 4.2 The preschool teachers' responses on the inclusion of the standard principles in the preschool education curriculum

R No	Principles	Percentage of responses about extent of incorporating the standard principles in the preschool curriculum							
		Below average		Average		Above average		Total	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1	Consider all developmental areas as important to create whole child.	16	5.0	106	29.3	248	65.8	362	100
2	follow sequential process with clearly stated objectives	27	7.5	115	31.8	220	60.8	362	100
3	proceed at same rates for each child *	41	11.3	125	34.5	196	54.2	362	100
4	Result from the interaction of maturation and experience.	38	10.5	127	35.1	197	54.4	362	100
5	Are profoundly affected by early experiences.	43	11.9	123	34.0	196	54.1	362	100
6	Proceed toward greater complexity, self-regulation, & symbolic or representational capacities.	34	9.4	119	32.9	219	57.7	362	100
7	occur in and are influenced by multiple social and cultural contexts	47	13.0	116	32.0	199	55.0	362	100
8	Advance as children are challenged by achievable tasks with support.	30	8.3	131	36.2	201	55.6	362	100
9	Can happen in a variety of ways.	30	8.3	112	30.9	220	60.8	362	100
10	Occur at best when they have secure relationships with others.	28	7.7	141	39.0	193	53.3	362	100
11	Enhance experiences to shape their motivation and approaches.	38	10.5	109	30.5	215	59.4	362	100
12	Promote self-regulation, language, cognition, & social competence using play.	28	7.7	108	29.8	226	62.4	362	100
	Average	46	12.8	127	31.3	198	55.4	362	100

*- Rated in the opposite direction

As it is indicated in table 4.2., preschool teachers reported that the preschool curriculum has been prepared following certain general principles of child development and learning at a relatively reasonable level. It is observed in the table that about six of the twelve principles are taken into account in preparing the ECCE curriculum as reported by 57.7 up to 65.8 percent of the respondents. The six principles that were taken into account as reported by nearly 60 or above percentage of respondents in preparing the curriculum include the need of considering all the important areas of development and learning in the curriculum (65.8%), promoting self-regulation, language, cognition, and social competence using play(62.4 %), preparing curriculum by making development and learning follow the sequential process with clearly stated objectives and using a variety of ways in children learn(60.8%); preparing curriculum by assuming that children's experiences shape their motivation and approaches to learning (59.4%) and proceeding toward greater complexity, self-regulation, and symbolic or representational capacities (57.7%). But, about 55.6% up to 53.3% of respondents reported that the ECCE curriculum was designed assuming the principles such as the need of preparing curriculum with challenging but achievable tasks for advancing the development and learning of children (55.6%), considering multiple social and cultural contexts for learning and development (55.0%), thinking the interaction of maturation and experience as base for the development and learning of children (54.4%) and creating profound early experiences that affect development

and learning (54.1%) and creating secure relationships for the best development of children (53.3%). Thus, it is learned from the table that the curriculum for preschool education is not up to the expected high levels in incorporating all the principles of child learning and development that make it fit for the developmental needs of children of the preschools. This is for the fact that, in most cases, a reasonably high percentage (i.e., 35% or more percentage) of respondents rated the incorporation of the principles at below and around average levels. Besides, the preparation of curriculum did not consider the age level of every child rather it is assumed that the development and learning of children proceeds at the same rates for all as reported by 57.8% of the respondents. Taking the average percentage of the responses for all principles, it is pointed out that the inclusion of the basic principles in the design of curriculum for preschool education was reported by 55.4% of the respondents. This shows that a little less than half-percentage (i.e., 44.6%) of the respondents reported that the different principles of child learning and development were not properly considered in the designing of preschool education curriculum. Thus, it is possible to say that the basic principles of child learning and development that should be considered in the curriculum designing practice of preschool education are not taken into account at the highest levels as expected. This means that the preschool curriculum preparation was done assuming the basic principles of development and learning but not at the highest and needed level.

Generally, the Ethiopian preschool curriculum considers the basic principles of development and learning in its preparation only at a medium level but not at a very high level. The percentage of the preschool teacher-respondents who reported that the principles that are considered in designing and then implementing the curriculum vary from 53.3% (in creating secure relationships for the best development of children) to 65.8% (in making the curriculum consider all domains of development) and the overall average is 54.4 %. So, this shows that the appropriateness of the curriculum for preschoolers has an undeniable gap in satisfying properly the needs of the children for the reason that all the basic principles were not considered in the design of the curriculum at very high levels as reported by teachers. This fact is also confirmed by document analysis in that the curriculum development practice did not seem to reflect properly the basic principles for it has a gap in fitting the developmental level of different age levels children. Thus, the curriculum preparation and then its practice become appropriate if the basic principles of child learning and development are taken into account at the highest level in

the design, preparation, implementation, and evaluation of the curriculum. But, it is only almost half (around average level) percentage of the respondents rated saying that the preschool curriculum design is done following the basic principles of curriculum preparation. So, high percentages of respondents were not reporting the consideration of the various basic principles as expected in the development practice of the preschool curriculum of Ethiopia.

4.1.3. The Extent that the ECCE Curriculum incorporates the Basic Elements Making it Relevant for Preschool Children

The basic elements that make the preprimary school education curriculum relevant for children are the inclusion of comprehensive objectives, integrated contents, appropriate instructional strategies, and fit assessment means for children in the syllabus as well as the incorporation of other necessary conditions and resources for enhancing the development and learning of children at the preschool setting. So, here, it is tried to assess to what extent these basic elements of curriculum are incorporated in the preschool education syllabus to make the curriculum relevant for children of the period as perceived by professionals in the field and from the documents as follows.

4.1.3.1. The extent that the ECCE curriculum incorporates Contents/activities relevant for preschool children

The relevance of the preschool education curriculum can be viewed by assessing the conditions of existing contents /activities in the curriculum as a whole and the contribution of the contents for achieving the ECCE objectives in that developing standard skills among preschoolers as perceived and reported by preschool teachers and the extent that contents and/or skills are stated clearly for children of different age groups as communicated in the syllabus. The results are presented in the tables below (from table 4.3 – 4.7).

Table4.3:The preschool teachers' responses on the conditions of contents or activities in curriculum for preschoolers

R No	Item	The perception level of respondents							
		low		Average		high		Total	
	The contents /activities in the curriculum for preschoolers :	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1	Integrate all domains of development (physical, social, emotional, linguistic, and cognitive).	38	10.5	131	36.2	193	53.3	362	100
2	are relevant, meaningful that bases on prior experiences of children to make connections.	41	11.3	135	37.3	186	51.4	362	100
3	Challenge children yet achievable with sufficient adult support.	42	11.6	132	36.5	188	52.0	362	100
4	Consider the developmental levels of each child.	39	10.8	128	35.4	195	53.9	362	100
5	Allow children to be active learners.	41	11.3	135	37.3	186	51.4	362	100
6	Do not consider the integration of the different content areas*.	67	18.5	131	36.2	164	45.3	362	100
	Average	61	16.8	132	36.4	161	46.8	362	100

*= Rated in the opposite direction

As it is observed in Table 3, about 51.4% of the respondents reported that the contents/activities in the preschool curriculum are designed in such a way that they allow children to become active learners and about 52% of the respondents reported that the tasks for children may challenge them but achievable with support from others at the expected level. About 53.3% of the respondents reported that the contents /activities in the curriculum integrate all developmental domains(item1)but the integrations of the different content areas are not well considered in the preparation of the curriculum as rated by about 45.3 % of the respondents at high level in answering the opposing item(item 6). Besides, although about 51.4% and53.9%of the respondents reported the relevance and meaningfulness to make connections and the fitness of the curriculum contents for the level of children, it is clear that the relevance and fitness of contents/ activities in the curriculum for children did not arrive at an expected high level. Reasonably a high percentage of respondents questioned the relevance and meaningfulness of the contents in curriculum for the children (i.e., 48.6%) and the fitness of the activities in curriculum for the developmental level of children (46.1%).As a whole, taken the average, only 46.8% of the respondents were rating the contents and activities in the preschool curriculum as appropriate. Contrary to this, 53.2% of the respondents rated the contents in the curriculum at either low or medium level of appropriateness for the developmental levels and the needs of children. This implies that the contents/activities in the curriculum of preschool education seemed to have a gap in their appropriateness for children for the reason that the contents were not rated at the highest and expected level of appropriateness. In line with this, the preschool curriculum can also be evaluated by seeing whether it incorporates standard contents and/or objectives that are found in

the syllabi of different countries for preschoolers that are workable at the international level as gained from literature.

Professionals in the area were also asked to evaluate the contents and/or objectives of the ECCE syllabus of Ethiopia by comparing to the standard objectives and/or contents for preschoolers workable at the international level. Thus, the objectives and/or contents of the preschool curriculum of Ethiopia were assessed as per the standard contents and /or objectives at global level as perceived by the experts in the area using a checklist. The checklist was prepared in such a way to evaluate the contents and/or objectives of the Ethiopian preschool education curriculum by comparing them with standard contents and/or objectives that are communicated in the literature (e.g., Alaska’s Early Childhood Investment, 2016, Texas Education Agency, 2007, California Department of Education, 2007). So, using the checklist, the evaluation was conducted by six individuals who are experts in the area (2 of them were from Addis Ababa Regional state Education Bureau and four of them were trainers of preschool teachers who were working in the preparation of syllabus and supportive materials for preschoolers) with the support of the researcher for interpreting the ideas listed in the checklist. The experts as raters /interviewees were asked to rate each of the contents and/or objectives of the ECCE syllabus of Ethiopia saying either directly or indirectly or dimly related or not at all related to the standard contents and /or objectives for preschoolers using the checklist. Thus, the contents and/or objectives of the Ethiopian preschool syllabus are evaluated in line with the contents/objectives for preschoolers globally that are brought in the form of the checklist from the literature. The results of the evaluation are communicated in the tables below (from table 4-6) as answers to the question that states “To what extent does the Ethiopian preschool education curriculum/syllabus includes the standard objectives and/or the contents standard workable at global level for children of the three age groups of Ethiopia?” (Appendix 2). Table 4 , table 5 , and table 6 indicated the direct, indirect, and otherwise relation of the ages 3-4, 4-5, and 5-6 children's education objectives and/or contents of Ethiopia to standard contents and/or objectives, respectively. They are as follows.

Table4.4 The extent that the Ethiopian preschool education syllabus includes the standard objectives and/or the contents for 3-4 age level children

R No	Level	Clearly stated	Indirectly stated	Stated dimly or Not at all
1.	3-4	Social and Interpersonal Skills: involves social interactions: - Getting along with other children and adults - developing good relationships with teachers - Playing cooperatively - working with others cooperatively Academics: a more central in preschool curriculum. -Names, addresses, and phone numbers -Colors, sizes, shapes identification -positions, such as under, over, and around -Numbers, letter, sounds, and rhyming recognition - prewriting skills, Language and Literacy: helping children learn literacy skills. - Oral language skills, - Vocabularies - Conversations with other children and adults Music and the Arts: encourage learning in all areas. -Varied materials (e.g., crayons, paint, clay, markers) to create original work -Different colors, surface textures, and shapes to create form and meaning -Art as a form of self-expression, -Music activities, -Movement to music of various tempos, - Varieties of simple songs, - Dramatic play with others Wellness and Healthy Living: learning healthy habits that help do well in school. -Personal hygiene, such as washing one's hands and blowing one's nose	Self-Help and Intrapersonal Skills: learning how to manage one's behavior and affairs: - Taking care of personal needs: dressing as buttoning, zipping - Eating skills (e.g., using utensils or glass; setting a table) - Health skills (e.g., washing, bathing, brushing one's teeth) Approaches to Learning: motivating children to learn and helping them develop positive dispositions toward learning. - Self-regulation of attention and behavior - Effective social skills to develop a good relationship with others - Positive attitude toward learning - Self-motivation for learning - Listening skills - Understanding rules and routines Language and Literacy: helping children learn literacy skills. - Proficiency in language -Literacy skills related to writing and reading -Letters of the alphabet, - Listening comprehension, - Motivation to read, - Print awareness, -Ways to use and appreciate books Learning to Learn: is as important as learning itself. learning depends on the acquisition of learning skills: -Self-help skills to promote a good self-image and high self-esteem -Knowledge of self, family, and culture -Sense of self-worth -Growing confidence -Responsibility for age-appropriate tasks -Turn taking during activities with other children Character Education: the character traits all students to demonstrate. - Respect for others, Cooperation,	Social and Interpersonal Skills - Helping others for developing caring attitudes - Following classroom rules Self-Help and Intrapersonal Skills - knowing what clothes to wear -Grooming skills (e.g., combing hair, cleaning nails) Academics - Simple sentence structure - Simple addition and subtraction - Ways to handle a book Approaches to Learning: -Accepting and following rules and routines -Finding more than one solution to a question - Ability to set goals - Develop and follow through on plans Learning to Learn and Character Education -Persistence, cooperation, self-control, and motivation to learn - Positive mental attitude, Persistence, Honesty, Trustworthiness, and Sensitivity Independence Skills : help children have the confidence they need to achieve in school activities -Doing things for themselves -Taking responsibility for passing out, collecting, and organizing materials -Learning self-direction Wellness and Healthy Living: learning healthy habits that help do well in school. - Good nutritional practices - New foods, a balanced menu, and essential nutrients - Management of personal belongings - Ability to dress oneself appropriately

As observed in table 4.4, the self-help and interpersonal skills, approaches to learning and learning to learn skills as a whole are pointed out indirectly in the syllabus of the 3-4 age level children of Ethiopia. Besides, the independence skills are neither clearly nor indirectly stated, but stated dimly in the syllabus. Some specific skills from the different basic contents are not pointed out either directly or indirectly but dimly in the syllabus as reported by raters with the exception of language skills. Language skills are found either in the indirect or direct category but not in the dimly category as reported by the interviewees. So, this shows that children of the 3-4 years are mainly expected to develop language skills. Some elements of social and interpersonal, academic, music and art and wellness, and healthy living skills were also given focus as other areas of learning for children of the given age level in addition to the language skills. The rest skills were not given emphasis.

Table 4.5: The extent that the Ethiopian preschool education syllabus includes the standard objectives and the contents for 4-5 age level children

	Level	Clearly stated	Indirectly stated	Stated dimly or Not at all
2.	4-5	Social and Interpersonal Skills: involve social interactions: - Getting along with other children and adults - developing good relationships with teachers - Helping others for developing caring attitudes - Playing cooperatively - working with others cooperatively - Following classroom rules Academics: more central in preschool curriculum. - Names, addresses, and phone numbers - Colors, sizes, shapes identification - positions, such as under, over, and around - Numbers, letter, sounds, and rhyming recognition - prewriting skills, - Simple addition and subtraction - Ways to handle a book Language and Literacy: helping preschool children learn literacy skills. - Oral language skills, - Vocabularies - Conversations with other children and adults - Proficiency in language - Literacy skills related to writing and reading - Letters of the alphabet, - Listening comprehension, - Motivation to read, - Print awareness, - Ways to use and appreciate books Music and the Arts: the use of music and the arts to encourage learning in all areas. - Varied materials (e.g., crayons, paint, clay, markers) to create original work - Different colors, surface textures, and shapes to create form and meaning - Art as a form of self-expression, Music activities, Movement to music of various tempos, Varieties of simple songs, and Dramatic play with others Wellness and Healthy Living: Helping children learn healthy habits that will help them do well in school. - Management of personal belongings - Personal hygiene, such as washing one's hands and blowing one's nose	Self-Help and Intrapersonal Skills: learning how to manage one's behavior and affairs: - Taking care of personal needs: dressing as buttoning, zipping - Eating skills (e.g., using utensils or glass; setting a table) - Health skills (e.g., washing, bathing, brushing one's teeth) Approaches to Learning: motivating children to learn and helping them develop positive dispositions toward learning. - Self-regulation of attention and behavior - Effective social skills to develop a good relationship with others - Positive attitude toward learning - Self-motivation for learning - Listening skills - Understanding rules and routines - accepting, and following rules and routines - Finding more than one solution to a question Learning to Learn: Learning how to learn is as important as learning itself. learning depends on the acquisition of learning skills: - Self-help skills to promote a good self-image and high self-esteem - Knowledge of self, family, and culture - Sense of self-worth - Persistence, cooperation, self-control, and motivation to learn - Growing confidence - Responsibility for age-appropriate tasks - Turn taking during activities with other children Character Education: the character traits all students to demonstrate. - Respect for others, Cooperation,	Self-Help and Intrapersonal Skills: - knowing what clothes to wear - Grooming skills (e.g., combing hair, cleaning nails) Approaches to Learning - Ability to set goals - develop and follow through on plans Wellness and Healthy Living - Good nutritional practices - New foods, a balanced menu, and essential nutrients - Ability to dress oneself appropriately Character Education: the character traits all students to demonstrate. - Positive mental attitude,- Persistence, Respect for others, Cooperation, Honesty, Trustworthiness, and Sensitivity Independence Skills help children have the confidence they need to achieve in school activities - Doing things for themselves - Taking responsibility for passing out, collecting, and organizing materials - Learning self-direction

As it is learned from table 4.5., the Social and Interpersonal, Academics, Language and Literacy, Music and the Arts, and Wellness and Healthy Living as contents for preschool education of age 4-5 children are stated clearly in the syllabus. But, the skills or contents like Self-Help and Intrapersonal Skills, Approaches to Learning, Learning to Learn, and Character behavior are found in the syllabus stated indirectly as rated by the raters. Some very few specific skills from Self-Help and Intrapersonal Skills, Approaches to Learning, Learning to Learn and Character traits are stated dimly. Besides, Independence Skills as skills that are to be developed starting from the preschool level are stated neither directly nor indirectly rather dimly in the preschool syllabus of children aged 4-5 level. So, this shows that the skills to be developed by children of the 4-5 ages are a bit different from the

skills that the 3-4 age children are expected to develop.

Table 4.6: The extent that the Ethiopian preschool education syllabus includes the standard objectives and the contents for 5-6 age level children.

	Level	Clearly stated	Indirectly stated	Stated dimly or Not at all
3.	5-6	Social and Interpersonal Skills: much of students' learning involves social interactions: - Getting along with other children and adults - developing good relationships with teachers - Helping others for developing caring attitudes - Playing cooperatively - working with others cooperatively - Following classroom rules Academics: getting central place in ECCE curriculum. - Names, addresses, and phone numbers - Colors, sizes, shapes identification - positions, such as under, over, and around - Numbers, letter, sounds, and rhyming recognition - prewriting skills, - Simple sentence structure - Simple addition and subtraction, - Ways to handle a book Language and Literacy: helping preschool children learn literacy skills. - Oral language skills, - Vocabularies - Conversations with other children and adults - Proficiency in language, - Listening comprehension, - Literacy skills related to writing and reading - Letters of the alphabet, - Motivation to read, - Print awareness, - Ways to use and appreciate books Music and the Arts: the use of music and the arts to encourage learning in all areas. - Varied materials (e.g., crayons, paint, clay, markers) to create original work - Different colors, surface textures, and shapes to create form and meaning - Art as a form of self-expression, - Music activities, - Movement to music of various tempos, - Varieties of simple songs, - Dramatic play with others Wellness and Healthy Living: Helping children learn healthy habits that will help them do well in school. - Good nutritional practices - New foods, a balanced menu, and essential nutrients - Management of personal belongings - Ability to dress oneself appropriately - Personal hygiene, (washing hands and blowing one's nose)	Self-Help and Intrapersonal Skills: Children must learn how to manage their behavior and their affairs: - Taking care of personal needs: dressing as buttoning, zipping - Eating skills (e.g., using utensils or glass; setting a table) - Health skills (e.g., washing, bathing, brushing one's teeth) Approaches to Learning: motivating children to learn and helping them develop positive dispositions toward learning. - Self-regulation of attention and behavior - Effective social skills to develop a good relationship with others - Positive attitude toward learning - Self-motivation for learning - Listening skills - Understanding rules and routines - accepting, and following rules and routines - Finding more than one solution to a question Learning to Learn: Learning how to learn is as important as learning itself. learning depends on the acquisition of learning skills: - Self-help skills to promote a good self-image and high self-esteem - Knowledge of self, family, and culture - Sense of self-worth - Persistence, cooperation, self-control, and motivation to learn - Growing confidence - Responsibility for age-appropriate tasks - Turn taking during activities with other children Character Education: the character traits all students to demonstrate. - Respect for others, Cooperation,	Self-Help and Intrapersonal Skills: - knowing what clothes to wear - Grooming skills (e.g., combing hair, cleaning nails) Approaches to Learning - Ability to set goals - develop and follow through on plans Character Education: the character traits all students to demonstrate. - Positive mental attitude, - Persistence, Honesty, Trustworthiness, and Sensitivity Independence Skills help children have the confidence they need to achieve in school activities - Doing things for themselves - Taking responsibility for passing out, collecting, and organizing materials - Learning self-direction

As it is observed in the table 4.6., the syllabus of age 5-6 children in Ethiopia is the same as the syllabus of age 4-5 children as indicated by the raters and as observed from the document. The skills that are stated directly, indirectly, and dimly categories are the same for children of the two age groups (children of age 4-5 and 5-6) except for minor differences in the details of the contents.

Generally, as it is seen in the threetables above (from table 4-6), the raters who were asked to compare the contents of the preschool education syllabus of Ethiopians to the standard contents and/or objectives reported that out of the ten basic contents/objectives that are meant for the preschoolers as communicated in the international literature, only the five basic contents are

presented clearly or directly in the preschool syllabus of Ethiopia. But, the other five basic contents are presented in the syllabus either indirectly or dimly for children of all the three age levels. Thus, with the exception of some differences in limited sub-contents, the contents/objectives for children of three age levels seem the same. Some slight differences are observed only in the syllabus of children of age 3-4 level. Thus, as observed from the syllabus, preschoolers of the three age levels are expected to learn the same five content areas. The differences in the syllabus for the three age levels of children are only in the details and complexities of the concepts presented for the children from age level to age level. So, the contents and/or objectives for preschool children of the three age levels have similarities and in many cases, they are the same. Thus, it is possible to say that the relevance or appropriateness of the contents for the different learners in terms of age levels and uniqueness of every child taking into account the social and cultural contexts seem to lack due attention in the syllabus of Ethiopian preschool education. Besides, many important contents that are useful for the life of the children are not properly addressed in the preschool syllabus of Ethiopia. The preschool syllabus is expected to cover about ten different basic contents with varying degrees of emphasis as learned from international experiences. But, the preschool children's curriculum materials of Ethiopia are covering only five of them clearly. The rest contents are not touched properly. Thus, the contents/objectives of Ethiopian preschool education are not full-fledged that leads to the inappropriateness of the contents for the children of the given schooling level. This implies that the preschool education contents are not up to international standards. Besides, as it is learned from discussion with teachers, the syllabus does not involve other different important concepts that enable children to learn useful skills for leading their daily life. The contents in the curriculum materials seem to lack appropriateness for children of different age levels. It demands the teachers to rework the contents again to make them fit for children of different age levels. It is reported that making the contents to be fit to the kids is demanding /laborious for the teachers. But, unless teachers are reworking the contents of the curriculum, the contents could not be relevant and fit for all children. Besides, it is reported that the curriculum does not involve contents that make children of 5-6 age ready for grade one. So, the contents seem unfit for the age 5-6 level children. It is also reported by preschool teachers that the contents in the syllabus have various problems in sequence, i.e., they lack logical arrangement; involve unnecessary repetition, and the same contents are given to children of the three age levels. so, the

appropriateness of the contents for the different age levels are under question mark (e.g., for 5-6 age children, the contents are below their capabilities and for nursery level, in some instances, the contents are demanding for the kids). Thus, lack of logical ordering and redundancy of contents are common in preschool education to become age-appropriate for the children as reported by preschool teachers. It is further reported that the syllabus is not realized in the needed way in that it is not brought at the ground level for implementation. Some domains of development, such as emotional and moral development are not clearly stated, and ethics in society is not properly considered. Besides, there is no proper bridge between preschool education and primary school education curricula for the fact that children of the preschool completer are facing problems in starting and coping with grade one curriculum.

4.1.3.2. The extent that ECCE curriculum contributes in achieving preschool Objectives

The relevance of the ECCE curriculum can be seen in terms of its contribution to laying the base for achieving the basic skills as developing academic skills, language skills, physical skills, dispositions to learning, learning skills; and enhancing social and emotional skills. To assess the contribution of the ECCE curriculum in achieving these internationally accepted goals/objectives or skills of preschool education, the general and specific objectives are presented in the form of a scale to be rated by teachers to show their agreement or disagreement or neutral position for each of the items representing the skills. The contribution of ECCE curriculum in achieving the objectives as perceived by professional is presented in table 4.7.

Table 4.7: Preschool Teachers' responses on the contributions of the curriculum in achieving objectives of preschool education

R no	Item	The agreement level of respondents							
		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Total	
A	The curriculum for children contributes to:	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1	lay base for academic skills; such as,								
1	creating academic preparedness for future learning	28	7.7	77	21.7	257	71.0	362	100
2	developing children's Problem solving skills	28	7.7	87	24.0	247	68.3	362	100
3	displaying critical/analytical thinking skills	32	8.8	91	25.1	239	65.0	362	100
4	showing competence in different academic subjects	30	8.3	82	22.7	250	69.1	362	100
5	displaying capabilities in handling books and things	33	9.1	85	23.5	244	67.4	362	100
	Average	30	8.3	84.4	23.4	247.4	68.2	362	100
B	develop physical skills ; such as,								
1	helping to learn about Physical wellbeing/wellness	30	8.3	86	23.6	246	68.0	362	100
2	displaying effective motor /movement skills ,	27	7.5	98	27.1	237	65.5	362	100
3	showing necessary body muscle coordination skills	27	7.5	94	26.0	241	66.6	362	100
4	Safe guarding self- healthy living skills	26	7.2	95	26.2	241	66.6	362	100
5	showing persistence, endurance and self directing in doing tasks	31	8.6	82	22.7	249	68.8	362	100
	Average	28	7.82	91	25.1	242.8	67.1	362	100
C	enhance Social and emotional skills; such as,								
1	displaying social and interpersonal skills(cooperation, caring ,r/ships)	19	5.2	76	21.0	267	73.8	362	100
2	learning teamwork spirits or skills	22	6.1	80	21.1	260	71.8	362	100
3	demonstrating traits like positive attitude , honesty, trust, respect others	27	7.5	74	20.4	261	72.1	362	100
4	managing one's behaviors and affairs	29	8.0	88	24.3	245	67.7	362	100
5	exercising the Self- help and other intrapersonal skills	29	8.0	84	23.2	249	68.7	362	100
6	building self-confidence /self-direction skills	16	4.4	76	21.0	270	74.6	362	100
	Average	24	6.5	79.7	21.8	258.7	71.4	362	100
D	lay base for developing language skills; such as,								
1	Language and literacy as oral , signal , and reading skills	26	7.2	81	22.4	255	70.4	362	100
2	the skill of communication with the needed vocabularies	31	8.6	87	24.0	244	67.4	362	100
3	listening and understanding skills	22	6.1	76	21.0	264	73.0	362	100
4	writing skills like writing letters and numbers	19	5.2	75	20.7	268	74.0	362	100
5	Expressing the self- feeling with music and art skills	23	6.4	84	23.2	255	70.4	362	100
	Average	24	6.7	80.6	22.2	257.2	71.0	362	100
E	develop dispositions to learning; such as,								
1	having self-motivation for learning	26	7.2	96	26.5	240	66.3	362	100
2	following best approaches to learning	23	6.4	93	25.7	246	68.0	362	100
3	developing interest towards the learned subjects	32	8.8	99	27.3	231	63.8	362	100
4	having positive attitude towards their learning	21	5.8	95	26.2	246	67.9	362	100
5	starting to value the relevance of learning for later life	29	8.0	92	25.4	241	66.5	362	100
	Average	26	7.2	95	26.2	240.8	66.5	362	100
F.	develop learning skills ; such as,								
1	developing learning to learn skills	34	9.4	89	24.6	239	66.1	362	100
2	Showing good character traits as honesty, trust, respect in learning	23	6.4	78	21.5	261	72.1	362	100
3	having value orientation towards learning	30	8.3	86	23.6	246	67.9	362	100
4	Engaging & committing the self in learning	31	8.6	83	22.9	248	68.5	362	100
5	demonstrating responsibility for age-appropriate tasks	26	7.2	79	21.8	257	71.0	362	100
6	showing turn-taking habits during activities with others	24	6.6	90	24.9	248	68.5	362	100
	Average	28	7.8	84.2	23.2	249.8	69.0	362	100

*= Rated in the opposite direction

As it is observed in table 4.7., teachers of preschool education were expected to show their agreement or disagree or neutral position as to the contribution of preschool education curriculum for laying the base for developing academic skills, language skills, physical skills, dispositions to learning, learning skills, and enhancing social and emotional skills. So, taking the average percentage, about 68.2% of preschool teachers agreed that the ECCE curriculum contributes in laying the base for developing academic skills with a maximum 71.0% and minimum 65.0% of respondents showed their agreement as to the contribution of the ECCE curriculum in creating academic preparedness for future learning and displaying critical or analytical thinking skills, respectively. The rest 31.8% of the respondents were showing a neutral position or disagreement about the contribution of the ECCE curriculum in laying the base for

academic skills. Taking the average percentage, about 67.1% of preschool -teachers agreed that the ECCE curriculum has contributed in developing physical skills with a maximum of 68.8 % in its contribution for showing persistence, endurance, and self-directed in doing tasks and a minimum of 65.5% for its contribution for displaying effective motor /movement skills. The rest 32.9% of the respondents were rating either at a neutral or disagreement position about the contribution of the ECCE curriculum in developing physical skills. Taking the average percentage, about 71.4% of pre-teachers agreed that the ECCE curriculum contributed in enhancing Social and emotional skills with a maximum of 74.6 % for the item self-confidence /self-direction skills and a minimum of 67.7% for the item managing one's behaviors and affairs. The rest 28.6 % of the respondents were rating at either a neutral or disagreement position about the contribution of the ECCE curriculum in enhancing Social and emotional skills. Taking the average percentage, about 71.0% of pre-school teachers agreed that the ECCE curriculum contributed in laying the base for developing language skills with a maximum of 74.0 % for item writing skills like writing letters and numbers and a minimum of 67.4% for item the skill of communication with the needed vocabularies. The rest 29.0 % of the respondents were rating at either neutral or disagreement position about the contribution of the ECCE curriculum in laying the base for developing language skills.

Taking the average percentage, about 66.5% of pre-school teachers agreed that the ECCE curriculum has contributed for the item developing dispositions to learning with a maximum of 68.0 % for item following best approaches to learning and a minimum of 63.8% for item developing interest towards the learned subjects. The rest 33.5 % of the respondents were rating either at neutral or disagreement position about the contribution of the ECCE curriculum in developing dispositions to learning. Taking the average percentage, about 69.0% of pre-school teachers agreed that the ECCE curriculum has contributed in developing learning skills with a maximum of 72.1 % for item showing good character traits like honesty, trust, and respect in learning and a minimum of 66.1% for item developing learning to learn skills. The rest 31 % of the respondents were rating either at neutral or disagreement position about the contribution of the ECCE curriculum in developing learning skills.

Generally, about 71.4%, 71.0%, 69.0%, 68.2%, , 67.1% , and 66.5% of the respondents reported that the ECCE curriculum has contribution in enhancing Social and emotional skills, laying the base for developing language skills, developing learning skills, laying the base for academic

skills, developing physical skills, and developing dispositions to learning, respectively. The rest percentages (28.6%, 29.0%, 31.0%, 31.8%, 32.9%, and 33.5%) of respondents were rating at either neutral or disagreement position as to the contribution of ECCE Curriculum for laying base to enhance social and emotional skills, to develop language skills, learning skills, academic skills, physical skills, and dispositions to learning, respectively. This shows that the expected high percentage (i.e., about 75 and above) percentage ratings were not registered as to the contribution of the ECCE curriculum in laying base for the six basic skills or areas of development.

4.1.3.3. The extent that the ECCE curriculum incorporates fit instructional Strategies for Preschool children

The curriculum for preschool learners should suggest appropriate instructional strategies for teaching preschoolers considering their age and developmental levels. In line with this, the ECCE curriculum is expected to indicate fit instructional methods for children of the period and the methods in the ECCE curriculum should fulfill certain guiding conditions that are considered in using the methods during coaching and teaching children. Preschool teachers were asked to give their responses about the conditions of instructional strategies in the curriculum for preschoolers rating whether the instructional methods for preschoolers fulfill certain guides fit for children and their responses are presented in table 4.8.

Table 4.8 The preschool teachers' responses about instructional strategies in the curriculum for children

R. No	Item	The perception level of respondents							
		low		Average		high		Total	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1	The instructional strategies in the curriculum for preschoolers :								
1	Include a balance of active and passive activities.	31	8.6	127	35.1	204	56.4	362	100
2	Offer a wide variety of novel experiences that stimulate ideas by creating chance for problem solving.	56	15.5	123	34.0	183	50.5	362	100
3	Encourage children to choose for planning their learning activities.	53	14.6	128	35.4	181	50.0	362	100
4	Model for demonstrating specific skills.	40	11.0	129	35.6	193	53.3	362	100
5	Indicate differentiated instruction to plan learning experiences for different aged children.	39	10.8	132	36.5	191	52.8	362	100
6	Provide a balance of self-initiated and teacher directed learning.	39	10.8	137	37.8	186	52.4	362	100
	Average	43	11.9	129	35.7	190	52.6	362	100

*= Rated in the opposite direction

Regarding the instructional strategies in the preschool curriculum, 56.4% and 53.3% of respondents reported that the preschool curriculum indicates “a balance of active and passive activities” and gives “a model for demonstrating specific skills”, respectively. About 52.8% and

52.4% of teachers reported that the curriculum for preschoolers indicates “differentiated instruction in planning the learning experiences for different aged children” and provides “a balance of child-initiated and teacher-directed teaching”, respectively. Likewise, about 50.5% of the respondents reported that instructional strategies in the curriculum for preschoolers offer a “wide variety of novel experiences in stimulating ideas that create a chance for children for solving problems”. Only 50.0% (average) of the respondents reported that the curriculum for preschoolers “encourages children to choose for planning their learning activities”. Thus, as it is observed from the table above, the curriculum for preschoolers did not show fit instructional approaches that are appropriate for children at the expected level of percentage. This is for the reason that more than 43.6% of the respondents rated the fitness of the different instructional strategies in the curriculum below average. Thus, this shows that instructional strategies in the curriculum for preschoolers cannot be evaluated as fit as expected for the reason that almost half percentages of the respondents rated the appropriateness at average (i.e., 52.6%) taken the aggregates as a whole. Besides, on the basis of documentary analysis of the curriculum for preschoolers, the instructional methods suggested for coaching and developing children focus only on play and other varieties of methods were not properly considered as additional means of helping children learn and develop. On top of this, as many respondents reported that they used the methods that are employed at grade level in teaching preschoolers.

Generally, as it is learned from table 4.8, documentary analysis and participants’ responses for open-ended questions, the fitness of instructional methods for children seem far from appropriateness for preschoolers and insufficient for use. As to the application of teaching methods in different levels of preschool education, the preschool teacher respondents reported that most methods employed for teaching preschoolers seem more suitable for older children who are found at higher grade levels. Thus, it is possible to say that the methods of teaching used at the preschool levels need to be made appropriate for the age level and individuality of the preschool children in the future.

4.1.3.4. The extent that the ECCE curriculum incorporates fit assessment means for children

The assessment approaches for preschoolers should follow certain guidelines to be fit for children of the period. So, these guidelines should be communicated in the curriculum as a standard guideline for teachers in assessing children's strengths and needs. whether the guides

are communicated in the curriculum or not, preschool-teachers were asked to rate the extent that the guides are indicated in the curriculum with a rating scale converted into low, average, and high levels and the result is presented in table 4.9.

Table4.9:The preschool teachers' responses about assessment means in the curriculum for preschoolers

R No	Item	The perception level of respondents							
		low		Average		high		Total	
	The assessment means in the curriculum for preschoolers:	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1	Includes anecdotal notes to enhance children development.	61	16.9	110	30.4	191	52.8	362	100
2	Involves observation as key tools for assessing learning and growth.	60	16.6	110	30.4	192	53.0	362	100
3	Include other standard-based ways that leads to authentic results.	55	15.2	116	32.0	191	53.7	362	100
4	Enable to share useful information about children's learning strengths and needs.	51	14.1	101	27.9	210	58.0	362	100
5	Help to show progress and growth of students over time.	57	15.7	131	36.2	174	48.1	362	100
	Average	56.8	15.7	113.6	31.4	191.6	53.1	362	100

As to the assessment means indicated in the curriculum for preschoolers, 58.0%, 53.7%, 53.0%, and 52.8% of the respondents reported that the curriculum for preschoolers shows useful information about children's learning strengths and needs, indicates other standard-based assessment ways that lead to authentic results, involves observation as key tools for assessing learning and growth, and includes anecdotal notes to enhance children development at expected level, respectively. But, it was only 48.1% of the respondents who reported that the curriculum of preschoolers helps to show progress and growth of students over time at expected high level so that 51.9% of them rated at average or below-average levels. Thus, 42.0%, 46.3%, 47%, 47.2 %, and 51.9 % of the respondents did not report the inclusion of assessment means in the preschool curriculum for teachers to share information with parents about students' learning strengths and needs, use other standard-based ways that lead to authentic results, observation as key tools for assessing learning and growth, anecdotal notes to enhance children development, and help to show progress and growth students over time, respectively at a high level. So, more than 42% of the respondents rated the assessment means indicated in the preschool curriculum for preschoolers at average and below-average levels in serving children properly. As a whole, 53.1% of the teacher-respondents rated the assessment means indicated in the curriculum for preschoolers at a high level and the rest (i.e., 46.9%) rated at the average and below-average level. Besides, as learned from practice and reported by practitioners, the assessment means used in preschools seem to be actualized through traditional assessment tools like tests that differ from expectations. So, the assessment means that considers different learning styles of children is not taken as a key tool for assessing their growth and learning. This is for the fact that the

syllabus as a guide for teaching and assessing may not allow teachers in doing so as learned from the documents. The syllabus and other documents did not properly show ways for applying assessment at the preschools. Thus, it is clear that proper assessment means fit for preschool children in the Ethiopian context did not seem applicable so the assessment in preschool education did not seem to fit properly for the developmental level of children. It is also confirmed through discussion and interviews with teachers and other concerned bodies that the assessment approaches employed in preschool education do not have clarity in the application. It is often put into practice by testing children but assessments through taking notes and observation are not actualized as expected.

4.1.3.5. The extent that the ECCE curriculum indicates necessary conditions and resources for preschool children

The conditions and resources in the preschool setting for preschoolers should follow certain guidelines to be fit for children of the period. So, these guidelines should be communicated in the curriculum as standard guidelines for teachers to be referred in arranging learning conditions and resources for the needs of children. Preschool teachers were asked to rate to what extent the guidelines are communicated in the curriculum using a rating scale that can be converted into low, average, and high levels and the result is presented in table4.10.

Table 4.10: The Preschool teachers' response on conditions and resources in the curriculum for the classroom teaching

R no	Item	The perception level of respondents							
		low		Average		high		Total	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1	The curriculum for preschoolers indicates the needed resources like:								
1	Sufficient Space area for learning centers for children to select & plan activities.	61	16.9	110	30.4	181	52.8	362	100
2	Furnishing in the class for quiet and active social interactions.	60	16.6	110	30.4	192	53.0	362	100
3	Clearly labeled areas with words and pictures to encourage independent learning.	55	15.2	116	32.0	191	52.7	362	100
4	Attention catching materials in and out of the class that enhance meaningful experiences.	51	14.1	101	27.9	210	58.0	362	100
5	safety materials in and out of the classrooms	57	15.7	131	36.2	174	48.1	362	100
6	Different types of indoor equipment (e.g., toys/dolls, computers , medical , or science)	49	13.5	118	32.6	195	53.9	362	100
7	Different types of outdoor play equipment for motor activities and socialization	53	14.6	106	29.3	203	56.1	362	100
	Average	55.	15.2	113.	31.3	192.	53.5	362	100

*= Rated in the opposite direction

As to the learning conditions and resources indicated in the curriculum for preschoolers, about **58.0%, 56.1%, 53.9%, 53.0, 52.8%, ad 52.7%** of the respondents reported that the curriculum indicated the need for using attention-catching materials in and out of the class to enhance meaningful experiences, arranging outdoor play equipment for motor activities and socialization, and employing indoor equipment (e.g., toys/dolls, computers, medical, or science), preparing comfortable furnishing in the class for quiet and active social interactions, having

sufficient space for learning centers in which children can select to plan their activities and indicating clearly labeled areas with words and pictures to encourage independent learning at a high level, respectively. But, it was only 48.1% of the respondents who reported that the curriculum for preschoolers indicated the need for using safety materials in and out of the classrooms at high level. On average, only 53.5% of respondents indicated that the preschool curriculum involves necessary conditions and resources fit for children at a high level. So, as to the need to indicate necessary conditions and resources for preschoolers in the ECCE curriculum about 46.5 % of the respondents rated at low or medium level. Thus, the curriculum did not seem to indicate the need for sufficient places/areas for quiet and active social interactions for the learners as expected as reported by teachers. As a result, the classroom settings are overly cluttered with many highly stimulating materials that may not contribute to proper learning due to the reason that such settings do not have clearly labeled areas for pictures and words that enhance independent learning as reported by 47% of respondents. Almost the same percentage of respondents said that the classrooms did not have enough and adequate areas for children to choose and to plan their own learning activities. This fact is confirmed through observation in that there are many materials in the different classrooms that may be as instructed by the curriculum but the contribution of the materials to encourage meaningful experiences could become under question. As a result, children might be in problem choosing one from the many materials found in the class. The materials create confusion for children in arriving at a decision to choose one from many materials and may result in mental stress for children in preschool education.

Generally, the instructional strategies, assessment means, and resources and other conditions in the preschool curriculum of Ethiopia seemed to be found in need of amendment as reported by teachers. This is for the fact that the curriculum materials are not developed in the ways that enable all the teachers to use them in a uniform way as it is learned from observation and documentary analysis.

4.2. The Elements of Preschool Learning Environment for Curriculum Practice

The status of elements in the learning environment for the implementation of the ECCE curriculum and the extent that the elements are adequate in meeting the requirements of relevant curriculum practice for children can be evaluated on the bases of statements organized under six sub-scales. The items under the six scales are rated by experienced teachers encircling the

number from 1-5(from 5= totally adequate through 3= fairly adequate to 1= totally inadequate) corresponding to the statements on how the conditions are adequately found in the preschools. About 15 preschool learning environments were observed by three trained observers who are trainers of the preschool teachers with ample experience in preschool education and the results are communicated in Table 4. 11.

Table 4.11: The Elements of learning environment in Preschools of Ethiopia

R. No	Items in the scale	below average level of adequate		average level of adequate		above average level of adequate	
		F	%	F	%	F	%
I	Space and Furnishings in the environment						
1	Sufficiency of indoor space with light and temperature	5	33.3	7	46.7	3	20.0
2	Proper arrangement of room for activities like play	13	86.7	2	13.3	0	0
3	presence of space for privacy	14	93.3	1	6.7	0	0
4	presence of space for practicing gross motor play	12	80.0	1	6.7	2	13.3
5	Appropriateness of furniture for routine care, play and learning	8	53.3	5	33.3	2	13.3
6	Softness and comfort of furnishings for relaxation	10	66.7	5	33.3	0	0
7	Display of child-related activities/tasks	4	26.7	11	73.3	0	0
8	Appropriateness of equipment for various gross motor activities	10	66.7	5	33.3	0	0
	average	10	66.7	5	33.3	1	6.7
II	Personal Care Routines :						
9	The presence of warm, welcoming, pleasant atmosphere in daily routine	1	6.7	8	53.3	6	40.0
10	The habits at meals/snacks time	5	33.3	7	46.7	3	20.0
11	Supervision and schedule for nap/rest time for children	4	26.7	7	46.7	4	26.7
12	Supervision in toileting to care for basic needs and teach	7	46.7	6	40.0	2	13.3
13	Practice of healthy habits like washing hands and wiping noses	6	40.0	7	46.7	2	13.3
14	The supervision for minimizing hazards in and out of class	6	40.0	6	40.0	3	20.0
	Average	5	33.3	7	46.7	3	20.0
III	Conditions for Language-Reasoning development :						
15	Availability of sufficient books , pictures, and language materials	9	60.0	4	26.7	2	13.3
16	Encouragement of children to communicate using activities and materials	4	26.7	10	66.7	1	6.7
17	The use of language to develop reasoning skills	3	20.0	11	73.3	1	6.7
18	Encouragement of the child for informal use of language	4	26.7	6	40.0	5	33.3
	Average	5	33.3	8	53.3	2	13.3
IV	Interaction in the learning environment :						
19	Exposure of children to do fine motor activities using toys and other materials	7	46.7	5	33.3	3	20.0
20	Exposure of children for self-initiated art activities	6	40.0	9	60.0	0	0
21	Encouragement of children to use various tools for self expression using music and related movements	5	33.3	8	53.3	2	13.3
22	Encouragement of children to explore spatial , mathematical and role play possibilities with various blocks	7	46.7	5	33.3	3	20.0
23	The provision of opportunities for children to learn concepts by active exploration using sand and water play	10	66.7	5	33.3	0	0
24	Creation of chance for dramatic play for discovering role and responsibilities	8	53.3	4	26.7	3	20.0
25	The fostering of curiosity and experimentation through direct experiences of nature	12	80.0	2	13.3	1	6.7
26	Introducing mathematics /numbers through routine, schedule, and play activities	3	20.0	8	53.3	4	26.7
27	The use of selective subject matter confined, age appropriate , mentally stimulating TV, video and /or computer activities	8	53.3	7	46.7	0	0
28	Promoting acceptance of diversity- exposure to similarities and differences to encourage respect for others and minimizing misunderstandings	5	33.3	7	50.0	3	20.0
	Average	7	46.7	6	40.0	2	13.3
V	Involvement in various activities for learning and development:						
29	Supervision of gross motor activities- using motor activities as means for interactions	2	13.3	9	60.0	4	26.7
30	General supervision of children (other than gross motor)- using the whole group activities for healthy and safety accomplishments	3	20.0	9	60.0	3	20.0
31	Discipline-practice of good behavior through self-motivation	3	20.0	7	46.7	5	33.3
32	Staff-child interactions- presence of mutual respect b/n child and adults	1	6.7	6	40.0	8	53.3
33	providing opportunities for good interaction among children	2	13.3	6	40.0	7	46.7
	Average	2	13.3	8	53.3	5	33.3
VI	Program Structure						
34	Have consistent routines that achieve individual needs to foster the aspects of dev't	6	40.0	7	46.7	2	13.3
35	Free play- practice of making decisions having control of the world in free play	6	40.0	7	46.7	2	13.3
36	Group time-Meeting individual needs by guiding children in small group interactions	10	66.7	4	26.7	1	6.7
37	Provisions for children with disabilities- meeting the needs of children with disabilities	11	73.3	4	26.7	0	0
	Average	8	53.3	6	40.0	1	6.7

The learning environment for preschoolers should include adequate space and furnishing, proper care routines, conditions for the proper development of language and reasoning, the involvement of children in various activities, the presence of acceptable interaction, and a fit program structure for children. So, as it is indicated in table 4.11., the indicators for the conduciveness of preschool learning environment organize under six sub-scales. The sub-scales are space and furnishing, personal care routines, conditions for language and reasoning development, involvement of children in various learning activities, proper interaction in the learning environment, and program structure with 8, 6, 4, 10, 5, and 4 items, respectively.

As it is observed in the table above (table 4.11), taking the average, the conduciveness of two sub-scales, i.e., space and furnishing and program structure of the learning environment for children learning and development were rated at below-average level of adequacy in the 66.7% and 53.3% observed sample preschools, respectively. Besides, the sub-scale presence of good interaction in the learning environment was also rated at below-average level adequacy in the 46.7% sample preschools.

Under the sub-scale “space and furnishing in the preschool learning environment”, six out of the 8 items were rated at below-average level of conduciveness by the raters. More specifically, the presence of space for privacy, proper arrangement of room for activities like play, presence of space for practicing gross motor play, Softness, and comfort of furnishings for relaxation, and the appropriateness of equipment for various gross motor activities and appropriateness of furniture for routine care, play and learning were rated at below the average level of adequacy in 93.3%, 86.7%, 80%, 66.7%, and 53.3% sample preschools, respectively. It was only in the display of child-related activities/tasks that 73.3% of preschools were rated at an average level of adequacy. Besides, the sufficiency of indoor space with light and temperature was also rated at an average level of adequacy for 46.7 % of the sample preschools.

In the program structure for children, two out of four items, i.e., provisions for children with disabilities (meeting the needs of children with disabilities) and group time (meeting individual needs by guiding children in small group interactions) were rated at the below-average level of adequacy in the 73.3% and 66.7% sample preschools. But, the rest two items were rated at the below-average level of conduciveness in 40% sample preschools.

The presence of good interaction in the learning environment is the other indicator of the conduciveness of preschool learning environment that was rated below average in its adequacy

in the 46.7% of the observed sample preschools. However, in this sub-scale, about four out of ten items, (i.e., the fostering of curiosity and experimentation through direct experiences of nature, the provision of opportunities for children to learn concepts by active exploration using sand and water play, the use of selective subject matter confined, age-appropriate, mentally stimulating TV, video, and /or computer activities and creation of chance for dramatic play for discovering role and responsibilities) were rated at the below-average level in 80%, 66.7%, 53.3%, and 53.3% of the sample preschools, respectively. Similarly, the presence of involvement in various activities and the conditions for language reasoning development are the other indicators of conduciveness of preschool learning environment that were rated at below-average level in adequacy in the 40% of the observed preschools. So, it is only in three sub-scales (i.e., the involvement in various activities for learning and development and the conditions for language reasoning development (53.3%) and the personal care routine (46.7%) that the learning environment was rated as conducive at an average level of adequacy in the observed sample preschools. More specifically, under the sub-scale of the involvement of children in various activities for learning and development, two items were rated in 60% and one item was rated in 46.7% and other one item was rated in 40% of the sample preschools at an average level of adequacy, the rest two items were rated at below-average level of adequacy. Thus, involvement in various activities for learning and development did not arrive at the expected high-level adequacy for the reason that the items were rated as fairly adequate level but not at a high level of adequacy. Similarly, in the conditions for language and reasoning development, out of the four items two items were rated at 73.3% and 60% average level of adequacy and one item was rated at 40% at average adequacy and the other item was rated at a very low level in the sample preschools. On the scale of personal care routine while one, three, and two items rated at 53.3%, 46.7%, and 40% in the sample preschools at an average level. It was only in the item “the presence of warm, welcoming, pleasant atmosphere in daily routine” that the personal routine rated above 50% at the average level of adequacy and the rest items were rated below 50%. On the scale under “involvement of children in the various activities”, the four items, i.e., exposure of children to self-initiated art activities, encouragement of children to use various tools for self-expression using music and related movements and introducing mathematics /numbers through the routine, schedule, and play activities, and promoting acceptance of diversity- exposure to

similarities and differences to encourage respect for others and minimizing misunderstandings were rated at the average level of adequacy at 60%, 53.3%, and 50% sample preschools.

Generally, in all items except one, it was indicating that the suitability of the learning environment was rated at below or average level of adequacy. No other item other than “Staff-child interactions (-the presence of mutual respect between child and adults)” was rated at the above-average level of adequacy. Even this item was rated at almost average (i.e., 53.3%) level. So, out of the six sub-scales that indicate the conduciveness of preschool learning environment for children, the presence of proper interaction is rated at only 33.3% above average level of adequacy in the observed sample preschools, and the rest indicators of learning environment conduciveness were rated at below the 33.3% level of adequacy. All these facts imply that the learning environment in the observed sample preschools of Ethiopia did not seem adequate or conducive to the proper implementation of the ECCE curriculum in that making it fits for children of the country. Besides, after conducting classroom observation using check list, the observed classroom-teachers were expected to give their ideas as to the conditions in the preschool environment for the open-ended questions. So, additional information collected about the ECCE learning environment using open-ended questions can be summarized as follows.

All the observed preschools were found at the corner of elementary schools. Many preschools have insufficient space for activities and it was only in some preschools that a relatively safe place for play and move outside the class were found. Besides, appropriate equipment were not observed in the compound for activities. Many preschool conditions were modified due to the COVID-19 protocol so that the modification affected the conditions of the learning environment. Children's interactions with their peers, play materials, and other equipment were limited significantly. However, in some preschools, the number of children was more than the expectation and out of the protocol. The classrooms in some preschools were full of chairs in that the chairs were found disorganized and disordered so that the classrooms were lacking space for children indoor activities. This is for the fact that spaces for activities were not up to the expected level. In some other preschools, necessary materials such as teaching and play materials, and pictures for children learning were inappropriate. Besides, the classrooms have no learning centers, letters, numbers posted on the walls and ceilings did not fit for children. Moreover, other many fit things for children learning like text book and other children's books

seem limited in number; especially the existing materials did not seem unfit for the age levels of children.

In general, the classroom conditions vary from school to school ranging from very limited space for many children to classrooms made of thin sheet of irons that may not be suitable even for the health of kids of the preschool levels. Preschools were focusing on teaching instead of fostering the different developmental aspects of children using play due to limited outdoor equipment. The outdoor environment for children did not seem conducive for activities.

4.3. The Correspondence of preschool Teacher Education Program (TEP) Courses to the ECCE Curriculum and its practices

The TEP courses for ECCE teachers are expected to acquaint teachers with three knowledge areas (i.e., child development, content, and pedagogy) in a balanced way that relate to the ECCE curriculum to promote its practice and the support of the courses in implementing preschool curriculum. The TEP courses are also expected to equip teachers with indicators of relevant curriculum and its practices such as guiding principles, developmentally appropriate curriculum, learning cycles, instructional and assessment methods. In line with this, it is expected from Teacher education program (TEP) as a whole to have benefits in facilitating the curriculum practice of preschool education.

Thus, the correspondence of the ECCE teachers education program with the ECCE curriculum for children can be viewed focusing on the contribution of the training program courses in equipping teachers with the three knowledge areas (child development, content, and pedagogy) in a balanced way and the support of the courses in teaching preschool children, the contribution of the courses in equipping the would-be-teachers with indicators of relevant curriculum and its practice (like guiding principles of the child development and learning, appropriateness of curriculum for children, learning cycles of children, objectives, contents, methods of instruction, and assessment means fit for children)) and the benefits of TEP for ECCE curriculum practice in that acquainting teachers with the ways of achieving objectives, familiarizing with contents and utilizing methods of instruction and assessment means fit for children. The results are presented as follows.

4.3.1. The Balance of Courses in Three Knowledge Areas of Teacher Education Program

It is pointed out that the Teacher Education Program (TEP) for preprimary school education should contain courses in the three areas of knowledge (content, pedagogy, and child development) in a balanced level(Kostenik,, Soderman,, &Whiren (2011) and Kostenik, M.J., Rupiper, M., Soderman,A.K., &Whiren, A.P.(2012). The distribution of courses as documented in syllabus of teacher education program of Ethiopia are categorized in the three areas of knowledge as observed in Table 4.12 and Table 4.13 below.

Table 4.12: The distribution of teacher training program courses in the three knowledge areas as distributed in the three year levels

Y r	Sem	Content knowledge/ Bridging courses	Cr. hrs	Content knowledge/ supportive courses	Cr. hrs	professional /pedagogical knowledge	Cr.hrs	Courses of child development and learning	Cr.hrs
I	I	Basic Mathematics I Basic natural science Basic English I Basic social science Basic Mother Tongue	(3) (3) (3) (2) (2)	Hand writing Or Mother Tongue Hand writing Preschool Art and Craft	(2) (3)				
	II	Basic mathematics II Basic English II Environmental science Int. to Ethics &civic education	(3) (3) (4) (2)	Mother tongue reading & writing Preschool Music Int. to statistics for preschool	 (3) (3) (2)				
II	I	plane &solid geometry Spoken English	(4) (3)	Child Play Structure of Mother tongue	(3) (3)	Preschool management & improvement Practicum I Early childhood education	(3) (1) (3)	Early childhood Development &learning	(3)
	II	The structure of English	(3)			Assessment & Evaluation of preschool Children Teaching & Play Materials production in preschool Action research Inclusive education in pre- school Practicum I I	(2) (3) (2) (3) (2)	Mother Tongue Language Development	(2)
III	I			Health, safety & nutrition Children Literature	(3) (2)	Teaching English in pre-school Teaching mother tongue in pre- school Teaching Environmental science in pre-school Teaching mathematics in pre- school Practicum III	(3) (3) (3) (3) (3)		
	II			Life skill &Gender Equity for preschool Mother tongue child literature ICT for pre-school Physical Education	(2) (2) (2) (2)	Seminar on action research Practicum IV	(1) (6)		
	Total		35		32		41		5 =113

As it is learned in the above table (table 4.12), the TEP courses for preschool education teacher-trainees are grouped into content knowledge area courses(bridging and supportive courses), pedagogical knowledge area courses, and courses of child development and learning knowledge area. From the content knowledge area courses, the number of bridging courses is 12 courses

with 35 credit hours and accounted 31% of credit hours of the courses delivered for teacher-trainees and they are occupying the two semesters of the first year and go up to a second-year second semester of the training time with supportive courses. Similarly, the supportive courses are 13 courses with 32 credit hours which accounted for 28.3% of the training credit hours of the courses. These courses are distributed in all semesters of the three years of training time with other courses. Whereas, the pedagogical knowledge area courses are 15 courses with 41 (36.3%) credit hours including general pedagogical courses and subject specific pedagogical courses, practicum and research courses. But, the child development knowledge area courses are only two courses with 5 credit hours.

Generally, out of the 42 courses, 25 courses with 67 (59.3%) credit hours are the content-knowledge area courses (both bridging and supportive courses) and 15 courses with 41 (36.28%) credit hours are pedagogical knowledge area courses. But, only 2 courses with 5 (4.42%) credit hours are child development and learning knowledge area courses. So, there is a clear gap among the three knowledge areas. This gap is also confirmed applying the chi-square test as follows.

Table 4.13: The chi-square (X^2) test on the courses of three knowledge areas credit hours

Knowledge areas	Observed frequencies (O)	Expected frequencies (e)	(o-e) ²
Subject knowledge	67	37.7	858.5
Pedagogical knowledge	41	37.7	10.89
Child development and learning knowledge	5	37.7	1069.3
Total	113	113	1,938.7

$$X^2 = \sum (o-e)^2/e = (1,938.7/113) = 17.16$$

By applying the formula of $X^2 = ((o-e)^2/e)$, the calculated value of X^2 is 17.16 and the critical table value at the alpha value of $p=0.05$ significance level using K-1 degree of freedom (i.e., $3-1=2$), is 7.81. Since the calculated value is greater than the table value, the credit hours for the three knowledge areas courses were not uniformly distributed. Thus, the balance of content, pedagogical, and child development knowledge areas has a very pronounced gap in the teachers' training program for preschool education. This result is contrary to the idea of Kostenik, Rupiper, Soderman, & Whiren (2012) that states the three knowledge areas are expected to form the three sides of an equilateral triangle. So, the TEP courses did not create balance among the three knowledge areas for the reason that the child development and learning knowledge area is highly denied in the program. It seems clear that teachers of the early childhood care and education

should be made knowledgeable about child development for the reason that with two courses out of forty-two courses, it may not be possible to make teachers well versed with the knowledge of child development. It is advisable to think in the future to create the balance of the three knowledge areas in the training of teachers for the preschool education program. The distribution of the teachers training program courses can further be observed in the table below. (Table 4.14)

Table 4.14: The distribution of TEP courses in the sub-categories of the three knowledge areas

	Content Knowledge		Pedagogical Knowledge		Child knowledge	Dev't
	Mathematics and na.sc,		General pedagogical knowledge		Child development	
	Basic Mathematics I	3	Early of preschool Children education	3	Early childhood	
	Basic mathematics II	3	childhood Assessment & Evaluation	2	Development & learning	3
	plane & solid geometry	4	Preschool management & improvement	3	Mother Tongue Language	
	Basic natural science	3	Inclusive education in pre-school	3	Development	2
	Total	13		11		5
	Social science		Subject –related pedagogical knowledge			
	Basic social science	2	Teaching & Play Materials production in preschool	3		
	Environmental science	4	Teaching English in pre-school	3		
	Introduction to Ethics & civic education	2	Teaching mother tongue in pre-school	3		
			Teaching Environmental science in pre-school	3		
			Teaching mathematics in pre-school	3		
	Total	8		15		
	Language areas		Research			
	Basic English I	3	Action Research	2		
	Basic English II	3	Seminar on action research	1		
	Spoken English	3				
	The structure of English	3				
	Basic Mother Tongue	2				
	Total	14		3		
	Supportive: language area		Practicum			
	Children Literature	(2)	Practicum I	1		
	Mother tongue reading & writing	(3)	Practicum II	2		
	Structure of Mother tongue	(3)	Practicum III	3		
	Mother Tongue Hand writing	(2)	Practicum IV	6		
	Mother tongue child literature	(2)				
	Total	12		12		
	Aesthetic and physical education					
	Preschool Art and Craft	(3)				
	Preschool Music	(3)				
	Child Play	(3)				
	Physical Education	(2)				
	Health, safety & nutrition	(3)				
	Total	14				
	Other supportive courses					
	ICT for pre-school	(2)				
	Life skill & Gender Equity for preschool	(2)				
	Introduction to statistics for preschool	(2)				
	Total	6				
	Grand Total	67 59.3%		41 (36.3%)		5 (4.4%)

As it is learned from the above tables, the courses delivered for preschool teacher-trainees are grouped into content knowledge area (bridging and supportive) courses, pedagogical knowledge area (general pedagogical, subject-related pedagogical, action research, and practicum) courses and child development and learning knowledge area courses. As it is indicated earlier, the bridging courses in the teacher education program (basic mathematics, basic natural and social

science, and Basic English and mother tongue language courses) involve about 12 courses with 35 credit hours that accounted 31% credit hours of all the courses and cover nearly one-third of the training time of preschool teacher-trainees. Next to the bridging courses, the training is focusing on the supportive courses (mother tongue reading and literature, aesthetic and physical education and other supportive course as ICT, life skills and gender equality and statistics for preschool) include 13 courses with 32 credit hours that accounted 28.3% of the training time. The pedagogical knowledge area (general pedagogical, subject-related pedagogical, action research, and practicum) involves 15 courses with 41 credit hours. The general pedagogical knowledge area includes 4 (i.e.; 9.8% credit hours) courses and subject-related pedagogical knowledge area includes 5 (i.e.; 13.3% credit hours) courses. Whereas action research area contains 2 (i.e.; 4.5 % credit .hours) courses, and practicum involves 4 (i.e., 10.6% credit hours) courses. But, the third category, the child development and learning knowledge area has two courses with 5 (4.5%) credit hours. Besides, teacher –trainees as respondents reported in the interview questions that the content area courses of the teacher education program are involving many courses that are not considered relevant for the work in hand. It is indicated that the general pedagogical knowledge areas courses did not involve courses that acquaint trainees with general/active learning methods that use to facilitate children learning. This is for the reason that courses that acquaint trainees with general and active learning methods have been totally forgotten. Similarly, as learned from documents, subject-related pedagogical knowledge did not involve courses that acquaint trainees with teaching approaches related to subjects like natural and social sciences and aesthetics (sport, music, and drawing) and civics education. The natural and social sciences, sport, music, and drawing are part of the thematic areas in the preschool education so that they need corresponding teaching strategies that teachers are expected to learn at the teacher education program for preschoolers.

Generally, as observed from the tables above and responses of the respondent for interview, one can understand that the preschool teacher education program involves many courses that are not considered relevant for the work, general pedagogical knowledge areas courses did not contain courses that acquaint trainees with general/active learning methods and the subject-related pedagogical knowledge area courses did not include courses that acquaint trainees with teaching approaches that focus on natural and social sciences, ethics and aesthetic /art subjects. Thus, balance in the courses of the different knowledge areas was not kept as expected. Besides, many

important courses for teachers work seem to be left. Therefore, it seems mandatory to acquaint trainees with fit courses for the purpose, teaching or active learning methods fit for children of the preschool levels to lay base in developing different skills for future life. On top of this, as we can learn from the document, the courses that acquaint teachers with knowledge of child development did not seem totally sufficient. So, in this area, it seems advisable to think and involve other courses in the future.

4.3.2. The Support of Teacher Education Program Courses in Implementing Preschool Education curriculum of Ethiopia

The syllabus of preprimary school teacher education program (TEP) involves forty-two courses. All the forty-two courses are expected to have high level of support for implementing relevant preschool curriculum. The graduating year teacher-trainees (both in-service and pre-service mainly in-service trainees with similar teaching experience) who have fresh information about the teacher education program courses and the preschool curriculum were asked to rate the support level of each of the TEP courses in implementing ECCE curriculum. On the basis of their experience with the TEP courses and preschool curriculum through practicum for pre-service trainees and through teaching as preschool teachers for in-service trainees, the trainees were rating the support level of each of the courses in teaching the preprimary school education subjects by circling the numbers from 1-5 (where, 1= no support 2= negligible support, 3= medium level support, 4=adequate level support and 5= very high support) corresponding to each course. The result is presented in tables 4.15 and 4.16 for each and categories of the courses.

Table 4.15: The support of the teacher education program courses in teaching at preschools as rated by graduating trainees.

S/N	course of the teacher training program	the support level of TEP courses for teaching at preschools							
R. No	To what extent courses of the teacher training program listed below help ECCE teachers for teaching preschool children? .	Low level of support		average level of support		High level of support		Total	
	Courses	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1	Basic Mathematics I	43	19.4	47	21.3	131	59.3	221	100
2	Basic mathematics II	40	18.1	51	23.1	130	58.8	221	100
3	Introduction to statistics for preschool	46	20.9	45	20.3	130	59.8	221	100
4	plane & solid geometry	36	16.3	51	23.1	134	60.6	221	100
5	Basic English I	29	13.1	51	23.1	141	63.8	221	100
6	Basic English II	20	9.0	51	23.1	150	67.9	221	100
7	Spoken English	7	3.2	41	18.6	173	78.2	221	100
8	The structure of English	19	8.6	44	15.9	158	71.5	221	100
9	Children Literature	11	5.0	44	19.9	166	75.1	221	100
10	Basic Mother Tongue	14	6.3	40	18.1	167	75.6	221	100
11	Mother tongue reading & writing	13	5.9	34	15.4	174	78.7	221	100
12	Structure of Mother tongue	12	5.4	42	19.0	167	75.6	221	100
13	Mother Tongue Hand writing	13	5.8	39	17.6	171	77.4	221	100
14	Mother tongue child literature	14	6.3	42	19.0	165	74.7	221	100
15	Basic natural science	20	9.0	56	25.3	145	65.6	221	100
16	Basic social science	20	9.0	57	25.8	144	65.2	221	100
17	Environmental science	17	7.7	43	19.4	161	72.9	221	100
18	Introduction to Ethics & civic education	25	11.3	35	15.8	161	72.9	221	100
19	Preschool Art and Craft	10	4.5	20	9.0	191	86.5	221	100
20	Preschool Music	8	4.1	27	12.2	185	83.7	221	100
21	Child Play	11	5.0	15	6.8	195	88.2	221	100
22	Physical Education	10	4.5	44	19.9	165	75.6	221	100
23	Health, safety & nutrition	8	3.6	36	16.3	177	80.1	221	100
24	ICT for pre-school	25	11.3	32	14.5	164	74.2	221	100
25	Life skill & Gender Equity for preschool	13	5.9	36	16.3	172	77.8	221	100
26	Early childhood Development & learning	11	5.4	23	10.4	186	84.1	221	100
27	Mother Tongue Language Development	10	4.5	28	12.7	183	82.9	221	100
28	Early childhood education	15	6.8	24	10.9	182	82.4	221	100
29	Assessment & Evaluation of preschool Children	11	5.0	34	15.4	176	79.6	221	100
30	Preschool management & improvement	16	7.2	33	14.9	172	77.9	221	100
31	Inclusive education in pre-school	14	6.3	40	18.1	167	75.5	221	100
32	Teaching & Play Materials production in preschool	8	3.6	29	13.1	184	83.3	221	100
33	Teaching English in pre-school	12	5.4	34	15.4	175	79.2	221	100
34	Teaching mother tongue in pre-school	11	4.9	41	18.6	169	76.5	221	100
35	Teaching Environmental science in pre-school	12	5.4	37	16.7	172	77.8	221	100
36	Teaching mathematics in pre-school	11	4.9	38	17.2	172	77.8	221	100
37	Action Research	26	11.8	45	20.4	150	67.9	221	100
38	Seminar on action research	18	8.1	56	25.3	147	66.5	221	100
39	Practicum I	18	8.1	36	16.3	167	75.5	221	100
40	Practicum II	21	9.5	32	14.5	168	76.0	221	100
41	Practicum III	18	8.1	27	12.2	176	79.6	221	100
42	Practicum IV	20	9.0	31	14.0	170	77.0	221	100

As indicated in table 4.15, taking the percentage scores (below the average as “low”, from average up to the third quartile (75%) as “medium”, and above the third quartile as “high”), the support of twenty-six out of forty-two courses of the teacher training program in teaching at preschool level rated at high level but not at very high level. The percentages of respondents who rated the support of those courses in implementing the preschool curriculum were a little more than 75%. All courses in the teacher training program of the different levels are expected to have direct support for teachers in teaching school learners at a high level. Likewise, the courses for the training of preschool teachers should support the teachers at a high level in helping,

coaching, developing, and teaching children of the period. In line with this, more than 75% (three-fourths) of the respondents rated the support of many courses in the teachers' training program in teaching preschoolers at a high level. But, all TEP courses were not favored by three-fourths of the participants of the study except in the cases of eight courses as to their contribution to teachers in helping preschool children. The sixteen courses out of the forty-two courses were rated at medium level of support (for they are rated by less than 75 % of the participants of the study) in helping teachers to teach preschool children. So, More than one-fourth of the respondents rated the support of the sixteen courses at either low or average level in coaching children of the given schooling level. More specifically, the support of ten courses (all mathematics, basic natural and social science, basic English I and II and the action research courses) for ECCE teachers were rated either at low or medium level by 32.1% up to 41.2% (more than one-third) of the respondents as to their support for ECCE teachers in coaching and teaching preschoolers.

In connection to this, through the use of checklist, all the trainers who were rating the relation and/or the support of TEP courses rated that some courses (as basic mathematics II, Basic English II, Introduction to statistics, Structure of mother tongue, Mother tongue literature, and Basic natural sciences) were not related to or in support for ECCE curriculum practice and they said that the courses are never related to ECCE. Similarly, some raters reported that the relation and support of some courses (like introduction to statistics, structure of English, mother tongue writing, basic natural science, basic social science, spoken English, children literature, and ICT for preschools) to ECCE were not observed explicitly. Besides, the respondents were also commenting that Civic and ethical education course should focus on developing the sense of morality (i.e., in creating acceptable knowledge, reasoning, judging, and behaving about things that are called right or wrong in the society) instead of focusing on rights of people, and ICT course should also focus on developing basic computer skills. By categorizing the courses in to twelve groups, the support of the ten categories of the forty-two courses for implementing ECCE curriculum is communicated in table 4.16.

Table4-16: The support of the categories of teacher education program courses in teaching at preschools

S/N	Course of the teacher training program	the level that TEP courses support for teaching at preschools							
	The courses category in the teacher training program help ECCE teachers .	Low level of support		Medium level of support		High level of support		Total	
	Category of Courses	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
I	Mathematics (4 Courses)	41	18.7	59	22.0	131	59.3	221	100
II	English language (5 Courses)	17	7.7	46	20.9	158	71.5	221	100
III	Mother tongue language (5 Courses)	13	5.8	39	17.6	169	76.4	221	100
IV	Basic natural science (1 Course)	20	9.0	56	25.3	145	65.6	221	100
V	Social science courses (3 Courses)	21	9.3	45	20.3	155	69.7	221	100
VI	Aesthetic, health, play and physical education (5 Courses)	9	4.3	28	12.2	183	82.8	221	100
VII	Other supportive courses (2 Courses)	19	8.6	34	13.4	168	76.0	221	100
VIII	child development and learning (2 Courses)	11	5.0	26	11.6	186	83.5	221	100
I X	General pedagogical courses (4 Courses)	14	6.3	33	14.9	174	78.8	221	100
X	Subject-related pedagogical courses (5 Courses)	11	4.8	36	16.2	174	78.9	221	100
XI	Action Research courses (2 Courses)	22	10.0	51	22.9	146	67.2	221	100
XII	Practicum courses (4 Courses)	19	8.7	32	14.3	170	77.0	221	100

While evaluating the categories of the courses in line with the low (below 50%), medium(50%-75%) and high (above 75%) , the percentage scores of the twelve categories of the teacher training program courses are expected to support teachers at very high level in helping, coaching, developing, and teaching children. But, as observed from the table 4-16, all the courses under the categories of mother tongue language, (5 Courses), aesthetic and health and physical education (5 Courses), other supportive courses (2 Courses), child development courses (2 Courses), general pedagogical area (4 Courses), subject-related pedagogical area (5 Courses), and practicum (4 Courses) were rated by more than 75% of the respondents as courses supporting the activities of teachers at the preprimary schools. Mainly, the average scores of courses in child development and learning and aesthetic and health and physical education categories were rated by more than 80% of the respondents as important courses for supporting the work of preschool teachers. But, the courses under the categories of action research (2 Courses), social science (3 Courses), English language (3 Courses), basic mathematics(4 Courses) and basic science(1 Course) were rated at medium level (by less than 75% of the respondents) in supporting the work of teachers at the preprimary school level. Besides, as reported by some respondents in the interview, some courses in the mentioned areas were totally unrelated to the work on the ground. Some respondents said that learning the course “plane and solid geometry” could not be clearly feasible in playing role in teaching children in the preschools. Thus, they commented that in revising courses of the teachers' training program for preschoolers, the bridging courses (mathematics, basic natural science, basic social science, and action research courses) seem to be in need of consideration in the future by concerned bodies. In

line with this, as learned from the responses of trainers as raters using the checklist that was used in making the trainers evaluate the support of TEP courses to the ECCE, the raters indicated that some courses like basic mathematics II, Basic English II, Introduction to statistics, Structure of mother tongue, Mother tongue literature, and Basic natural sciences as courses in TEP were rated as courses never support or related to ECCE. Similarly, some other raters indicated that the support of some courses like introduction to statistics, the structure of English, mother tongue writing, basic natural science, basic social science, spoken English, children's literature, and ICT for preschools to ECCE was not explicitly decided. The rest courses of the TEP were rated as courses related to ECCE. But, it was also commented that Ethics and Civic education should focus on morality and ICT should focus on the basic skills of computers. On top of this, the action research courses did not seem to be twined with preschool education. This is for the reason that respondents were not advertising as expected the contribution of research in the training of ECCE teachers.

4.3.3. The Contribution of the Training Program in Acquainting ECCE teachers with Indicatorsof Relevant Curriculum and its practices

The ECCE teachereducation program has its own contribution in equipping teachers with the necessary knowledge about indicators of relevant curriculum for children to implement early childhood care and education. The contribution of a preprimary teacher education curriculum in equipping teachers with the indicators of relevant curriculum for children (guiding principles, developmentally appropriate curriculum, learning cycles, methods of instruction, and assessment means) to promote curriculum practice can be evaluated in line with the certain criteria that were presented for the would-be teachers to give responses by encircling the number from 1-5(1= highly disagree 2=disagree, 3=neutral 4= agree and 5=highly agree) corresponding to each statement. The results are presented in tables 17 and 18 below.

Table 4.17: The contribution of TEP in acquainting the trainees with principles, relevant curriculum, and cycles of learning for children

R. No	criteria	level of agreement							
		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Total	
	The Teacher Education Program (TEP) acquaints you as prospective teachers with the principles that states -----.	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1	All areas of development are important to create the whole child.	17	7.7	43	19.5	161	72.8	221	100
2	Development and learning follow sequential process.	18	8.1	41	18.6	162	73.3	221	100
3	Development and learning proceed at varying rates for every child.	15	6.8	40	18.1	166	75.1	221	100
4	Development and learning result from an interaction of maturation and experience..	12	5.4	47	21.3	162	73.3	221	100
5	Development and learning are profoundly affected by early experiences.	17	7.7	48	21.7	156	70.6	221	100
6	Development and learning proceed toward complexity and self-regulation capacities.	16	7.2	45	20.4	160	72.4	221	100
7	Development and learning happen at best when children have secure relationships with others.	14	6.3	37	16.7	170	77.0	221	100
8	Development and learning occur in and are influenced by multiple social and cultural contexts.	14	6.3	40	18.1	167	75.5	221	100
9	Development and learning advance when children are challenged by achievable tasks.	10	4.5	42	19.0	169	76.5	221	100
10	Children's experiences shape their motivation and approaches to learning	10	4.5	46	20.8	165	74.7	221	100
11	Children learn in a variety of ways	11	5.0	41	18.6	169	76.4	221	100
12	Play is a vital vehicle for promoting self-regulation, language, cognition, and social competence.	11	5.0	46	20.8	164	75.4	221	100
	Average	14	6.3	43	19.5	164	75.4	221	100
B	The teacher training program acquaints you as prospective teachers with :								
I	Age appropriate curriculum for preschoolers —fit for everychild age -related characteristics- i.e.,								
1	-what children like in the age range in terms of interest, abilities, skills	11	5.0	38	17.2	172	77.8	221	100
2	-how to develop activities and routines that accommodate the age group	10	4.5	43	19.5	168	76.0	221	100
3	-how to provide materials that are safe, challenging and achievable	13	5.9	37	16.7	171	77.4	221	100
	Average	11	5.0	39	22.2	170	77.0	221	100
II	Individually Appropriate curriculum for preschoolers –fit to the strengths, interests, and needs of everychild in the group , i.e.,								
1	-the uniqueness of each child as a person	12	5.4	54	24.4	165	70.1	221	100
2	-the rate of growth of each child	10	4.5	40	18.1	171	77.4	221	100
3	-the individual learning style of each child	12	5.4	49	22.2	160	72.4	221	100
4	-the previous knowledge and experiences that each child brings to class	11	5.0	43	19.5	167	75.6	221	100
	Average	11	5.0	47	21.3	166	74.7	221	100
III	Socially and Culturally Appropriate curriculum for preschoolers -fit for social and cultural contexts in which children live-i.e.,								
1	Culture as values, traditions, and beliefs	16	7.2	37	16.7	168	76.0	221	100
2	-the children and families in the context of the community	14	6.3	36	16.3	171	77.4	221	100
3	-the family culture (values, traditions , beliefs) of each child	17	7.7	37	16.7	187	75.5	221	100
4	-the consequence that lack of cultural awareness leads to assumptions	12	5.4	41	18.6	168	76.0	221	100
	Average	15	6.8	38	17.2	173	78.3	221	100
IV	the five phases /Cycle of Learning								
1	Awareness- making the child to aware that something exist (observing friends playing game)	18	8.1	51	23.1	152	68.8	221	100
2	Exploration- making the child to explore what captured attention (finds game materials on shelf at school)	18	8.1	44	19.9	159	72.0	221	100
3	Acquisition- making the child to ask questions to learn new information and take action.	13	5.9	53	24.0	155	70.1	221	100
4	Practice-making the child to gain mastery (playing for several times and days) with self-motivation and self-initiation	13	5.9	48	21.7	160	72.4	221	100
5	Generalization- making the child to apply new knowledge to similar situations...	20	9.0	47	21.3	154	69.7	221	100
	Average	16	7.2	49	22.2	156	70.6	221	100

The teacher training program helps teacher-trainees know and have better understanding of the twelve principles of child development and learning at a very high level. But, the respondents showed their agreement to the contribution of the training in acquainting the principles at a reasonable level. Though many respondents agreed that the training helped teachers to have understanding of the principles, a reasonably high percentage of the respondents reported the contribution of the training in creating an understanding of the principles at either disagree or neutral positions. i.e., about 25% of the respondents rated the training contribution to have better understanding on six out of the twelve principles of child development and learning either at disagreement or neutral positions. It was expected that the training program should help teachers to understand the principles at a very high level; the truth is far from the expectation as it is learned from the responses of the participants of the study. Similarly, the training should create a profound understanding of the age, individual, and cultural appropriateness of the ECCE

curriculum for preschoolers. But, in some items of the three types of appropriateness, the appropriateness did not seem to arrive at the needed high level. Besides, the contribution of TEP in acquainting ECCE teachers with the five phase cycles of children learning did not seem at the expected level of support. The training has limitations in helping teachers to be competent to follow the five learning cycles in teaching children.

Table 4.18: The contribution of TEP in acquainting the trainees with application of Instructional and assessment methods, and other learning conditions for children

R. No	criteria	level of agreement							
		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Total	
C	The TEP acquaints you as prospective teachers with as how to :								
1	plan curriculum for the individual child and the group	36	16.3	50	22.6	135	61.0	221	100
2	use an integrated curriculum	19	8.6	53	24.0	149	67.4	221	100
3	address the whole child (physical, cognitive, social, emotional)	10	4.5	32	14.5	179	81.0	221	100
4	individualize program to meet individual needs	13	5.9	32	14.5	176	79.6	221	100
5	teach about mathematics and Science	15	6.8	53	24.0	153	69.2	221	100
6	Teach safety practices	9	4.1	52	23.5	160	72.4	221	100
7	recognize the importance of child initiated activity	9	4.1	35	15.8	177	80.1	221	100
8	recognize the significance of play	15	6.8	28	12.7	178	80.5	221	100
9	engage children in activities...making them learn by doing	12	5.4	51	28.1	158	71.5	221	100
10	give children choices about what they learn and how	14	6.3	48	21.7	159	72.0	221	100
11	make children active participants in different tasks /activities	9	4.1	58	25.3	156	70.6	221	100
12	use ongoing assessment of children and program	10	4.5	53	24.0	158	71.5	221	100
	Average	14	6.3	45	20.4	162	73.3	221	100
V	Consider the conduciveness of learning conditions								
13	create stimulating classroom environments	15	6.8	34	15.4	172	77.8	221	100
14	form partnerships with families as teachers in the future	12	5.4	61	27.6	140	66.9	221	100
15	Learn about tasks of others in children's learning	10	4.5	44	22.2	162	73.3	221	100
	Average	12	5.4	46	20.8	158	71.5	221	100
VI	use exploration and experimentation as method for children to learn making them to:								
1	-observe, touch, taste, smell, hear	11	5.0	53	24.0	157	71.0	221	100
2	-talk about their experiences	7	3.2	57	25.8	157	71.0	221	100
3	-ask questions about things	8	3.6	46	20.8	167	75.6	221	100
4	-collect information	9	4.1	51	23.1	161	72.8	221	100
5	-engage in discoveries -learn by discovering of reality	10	4.5	48	21.7	163	73.7	221	100
6	-construct new understanding	13	5.9	50	22.6	158	71.5	221	100
	Average	10	4.5	51	23.1	161	72.8	221	100
VII	use observation as means of getting information about child's ...								
1	-development (social, emotional, cognitive, and physical, language and literacy)	14	6.3	47	21.3	166	72.4	221	100
2	-individual interests	16	7.2	52	23.5	153	69.2	221	100
3	-coping and problem solving skills	13	5.9	59	26.7	149	67.4	221	100
4	-temperament	13	5.9	51	23.1	157	71.1	221	100
5	-expression of family culture	17	7.7	54	24.4	150	67.9	221	100
6	-behavior as a response to the environment	11	5.0	60	27.1	150	67.9	221	100
	Average	14	6.3	54	24.4	154	68.7	221	100

It is expected that TEP for preschool education teachers to acquaint the would- be-teachers with the nature ECCE curriculum, instructional methods, assessment means, and ways of creating activities for children and making conducive learning conditions for preschoolers. The contribution of training for the mentioned purposes was not at the expected level. This is for the reason that in many cases, about more than 25% (1/4) of the respondents did not favor the contribution of the training at a high level. It is about 72.8% up to 61.0 % of the respondents who favored the contribution of TEP in acquainting the preschool teachers with issues at hand at a high level as expected. More specifically, the training has limitations in making teachers competent in ways of using curriculum at the highest level of achievement, employing fit

methods for helping children learn, creating necessary conditions for children's development and learning, and using different approaches to assessing development and learning of children as well as in using exploration, experimentation as methods of helping children to learn and observation as means of getting accurate information about development, interest, skills of coping with stress and problem-solving temperament, expressing the culture of and responding to the environment of children.

4.3.4. The Benefits of Teacher Education Program for ECCE Curriculum Practice

The training program for teachers of preschool education should be geared in line with the objectives, contents or /thematic areas, and instructional and assessment methods of ECCE for children as pointed out in the syllabus. The training program corresponds to the objectives, contents/thematic areas, methods of instruction, and assessment in ECCE syllabus are evaluated as perceived by the future professionals (teacher-trainees) in ECCE. In doing so, respondents were asked to indicate the correspondence of the two curricula by showing the extent/level of support that the training program has to enable teachers to have a better understanding of objectives, the extent that TEP courses relate to ECCE contents/thematic areas, the support of TEP courses in acquainting teachers with methods of instructional and assessment means fit for children that are found in the syllabus encircling numbers from 1-5 (where; 1= no support at all, 2= low support, 3-medium level support 4= relatively high level and 5= very high-level support) in the table below. The result is presented as follows in the tables below (Table 17-19).

4.3.4.1. The Benefits of teacher education program in achieving objectives in the ECCE

Curriculum to promote the practice

The extent that the teachers' training program for ECCE corresponds to the ECCE objectives can be evaluated based on the rating of teacher-trainees as they perceived during their training and practicing time as future professionals for ECCE. In doing so, respondent-trainees were asked to indicate the correspondence of the two curricula by showing the training program level of support in enabling teachers to have a better understanding of objectives of ECCE for children that are found in the syllabus encircling numbers from 1-5 (where; 1= no support at all, 2= low support, 3-medium level support 4= relatively high level and 5= very high-level support) in the table below. The result is presented as follows in the table below (Table 19).

Table 4.19: The benefit of TEP in achieving objectives in the ECCE syllabus

S.No	Item: objectives	Level of support							
		Low level of support		Medium level of support		High level of support		Total	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
A	The extent that the TEP of ECCE teachers helps teachers to achieve the following ECCE objectives. The TEP helps teachers to enable children to:								
1	Perform different activities using their body parts and senses and adapt the system of safe guarding their wellbeing.	9	4.1	45	20.4	167	75.6	221	100
2	develop skills of using body with competence	11	5.0	46	20.8	164	74.2	221	100
3	develop healthy view about body wellbeing	4	1.8	49	22.2	168	76.1	221	100
	Average	8	3.6	47	21.3	166	76.1	221	100
1	Develop the habit and skills of watching, searching, understanding, and properly using and caring for the environment due to interaction with it and have attitude to give solutions by themselves for problems facing the day to day life.	10	4.5	49	22.2	162	73.3	221	100
2	develop skills of receiving information, thinking, understanding, expressing ideas and needs and accepting others ideas and differences	11	5.0	50	22.6	160	72.4	221	100
3	develop skills of building problem solving ways/strategies	12	5.4	48	21.7	161	73.8	221	100
4	develop skills of asking and understanding confidences	9	4.1	39	17.6	173	78.3	221	100
	Average	11	5.0	47	21.3	164	74.2	221	100
1	Develop skills of understanding, applying, living by relating harmoniously with the environment, accepting experiences and strategies of living having good relation with others in their surroundings	8	3.6	47	21.3	166	75.1	221	100
2	express respect and thinking for others	9	4.1	41	18.6	171	77.4	221	100
3	develop the habits of giving respect and accepting the winning ideas	13	5.9	38	17.2	170	76.4	221	100
4	adapt the habits of appreciating and accepting differences	11	5.0	49	22.2	161	73.9	221	100
5	develop the habits of appreciating and caring the environment	9	4.1	36	16.3	176	79.6	221	100
6	have positive outlook about the self	6	2.7	46	20.8	169	76.5	221	100
7	develop the habit of respecting the self, self-confidence, and self evaluation	5	2.3	45	20.4	171	77.4	221	100
8	create sense of self proud by one's success	10	4.5	40	18.1	171	77.4	221	100
9	take responsibility for one's did	7	3.2	49	22.2	165	74.7	221	100
10	develop the skills of expressing one's ideas freely and listening others ideas	7	3.2	41	18.6	173	78.3	221	100
11	develop the habit of obtaining what is needed peacefully	4	1.8	50	22.6	167	75.6	221	100
12	apply what is learned immediately with confidence	11	5.0	35	15.8	175	79.2	221	100
13	learn to give respect for play and work	5	2.3	40	18.1	177	80.1	221	100
	Average	8	3.6	43	19.5	170	76.4	221	100

As learned from the table above, More than 70% of the ECCE teacher-trainees reported that the TEP courses have a high level of support in understanding the objectives in the ECCE syllabus. But, out of all objectives listed in the syllabus, it was only in one objective that the correspondence of the two curricula reached a high level (i.e., 80% level) of relation as reported by trainees. In the rest objectives that are found in the syllabus, the high level of correspondence ranged from 72.4% to 79.6%, and six objectives were rated below 75% as to their relation to the TEP courses. So, from this fact, it is clear that a reasonable percentage of the respondents rated the correspondence of the two curricula either at a low or medium level of relation. As it is learned from the table above and from an earlier report in the curriculum part, the objectives of ECCE in the syllabus focus only on four categories. The categories seem to have relation to physical, cognitive, and social including emotional developmental aspects of children and the numbers of the objectives under physical, cognitive, and social including emotional aspects of development are 3, 3, and 13, respectively. So, the objectives in the different aspects did not seem to create balance in terms of numbers. Besides, the objectives are not written in terms of the performance of learners but rather in terms of the performance of the teachers. So, the

deficiencies in balance and forms of stating objectives are clearly observed. On top of this, all contents were not represented by objectives. So, it is expected from concerned bodies to take measures in the program in the near future. So, from this fact, it is clear that the relevance of TEP courses for implementing the ECCE curriculum could be put under the question mark.

4.3.4.2. The benefit of teacher education program in familiarizing teachers with contents in ECCE curriculum for practice

The extent that the TEP corresponds to the ECCE contents/thematic areas can be evaluated based on the teacher-trainees for ECCE perception of the level of relationship that exists between the two curricula. In doing so, respondents were asked to indicate the correspondence of the two curricula by showing the extent that TEM courses related to ECCE contents/thematic areas for children that are found in the syllabus encircling numbers from 1-5 (where; 1= no relation, 2= low-level relation, 3=medium level relation 4= relatively high-level relations and 5= very high-level relations). The result is presented as follows in the table below (Table 4.20).

Table 4.20: The relation of TEP with contents in the ECCE syllabus as rated or perceived by teacher-trainees.

B	Items	Level of relations						Total	
		Low level relation	level	Medium level Relation	level	High level relation	level		
I	Physical Development								
1	Appropriate Care for proper physical development and strength	7	3.2	56	25.3	158	71.5	221	100
2	Know and care for the different body parts	7	3.2	45	20.4	169	76.5	221	100
3	The use of the sense organs	8	3.6	49	22.2	164	74.2	221	100
4	Adapt the systems of care for health	4	1.8	50	22.6	167	75.6	221	100
	Average	7	3.2	50	22.6	165	74.7	221	100
II	Social Development								
1	Create acceptable relation with others	3	1.4	37	16.7	181	81.9	221	100
2	Care for others and share what one has	6	2.7	41	18.6	174	78.8	221	100
3	Have interest to know and differentiate people in the surrounding	7	3.2	39	17.6	175	79.2	221	100
4	Study and integrate properly the environment through interaction with it	3	1.4	41	18.6	177	80.1	221	100
5	Experiment and know the immediate environment	6	2.7	40	18.1	175	79.2	221	100
	Average	5	2.3	40	18.1	176	79.4	221	100
III	Cognitive and Language Development								
1	Use language properly and listen information	14	6.3	39	17.6	168	76.1	221	100
2	Communicate meaningfully in different situations	14	6.3	35	15.8	172	77.9	221	100
3	Turn books and differentiate things	9	4.0	41	18.6	171	77.4	221	100
4	Understand the concept of motion and do experiment on characteristics of things, understand the concept of time and place	11	5.0	41	18.6	169	76.4	221	100
5	Use and measure thoughts and creation	11	5.0	50	22.6	160	72.4	221	100
6	Use mathematical operation and movement in the day to day activities	11	5.0	41	18.6	169	76.4	221	100
	Average	12	5.4	41	18.6	168	76.1	221	100
IV	Emotional Development								
1	Express feeling and understand others feelings	9	4.0	47	21.3	165	74.7	221	100
2	Develop sense of self confidence	6	2.7	44	19.9	171	77.4	221	100
3	Provide value for the self	9	4.0	43	19.5	169	76.5	221	100
4	Express feelings and feel happy by playing withdrawing picture and painting	4	1.8	38	17.2	179	81.0	221	100
	Average	7	3.2	43	19.5	171	77.4	221	100

As learned from the table above, the support of the teacher education program in understanding the four thematic areas of the ECCE program is rated at a high level. But, the highest level of

correspondence of the TEP course to the ECCE contents or thematic areas was in creating acceptable relations with others at 81.9% level. In the rest contents, the ratings were ranging from 71.2 to 80.1%. Besides, in the five sub-contents, the ratings did not exceed from 75% at highest level of support. This means that more than 25% of the respondents rated the correspondence of TEP and contents of ECCE either at the low or medium level of relation. So, the support of TEP in acquainting the contents of the ECCE curriculum was not at the expected high percentage level. It is expected of the TEP to acquaint trainees with all contents of ECCE at the highest level, i.e., more than 80% level. But, the fact did not confirm the expectation.

4.3.4.3. The Benefits of Teacher education program in utilizing fit methods of instruction and Assessment in the ECCE curriculum practice

It is tried to evaluate to what extent the TEP corresponds to the instructional methods and assessment means of ECCE as perceived by the teacher–trainees for preschool education as future professionals in the area. In doing so, respondents were asked to indicate the correspondence of the two curricula (teacher education and preschool education) by showing support of TEP in acquainting teachers with methods of instructional and assessment means fit for children that are found in the syllabus encircling numbers from 1-5 (where; 1= no support at all, 2= low support, 3=medium level support 4= relatively high level and 5= very high-level support). The result is presented as follows in the table below (Table 4.21).

Table 4.21: The support of TEP in acquainting teachers with methods of instruction in the ECCE syllabus as perceived by trainees

C	The extent that TEP for ECCE teachers enables them to accomplish the following activities : instructional methods	Low level support		Medium level support		High level support		Total	
1	Children cannot follow up the program presented orally so that their classrooms should be organized with different play materials and teaching aids to understand ,explore , search using their senses organs and solve problems at their own levels	19	8.6	41	18.6	161	72.9	221	100
2	Children can think with practical movement process that create chance to survey their environment , see and search things of different facts , express their ideas in different activities and give immediate answer for their questions.	11	5.0	48	21.7	162	73.3	221	100
3	Thinking that the highest tendency of children is plays that use play as means for learning, recreation, knowing the environment, reflecting feelings, participating, and use play as means of teaching strategy providing proper attention for its significance and application	9	4.0	48	21.7	164	74.2	221	100
4	initiate and encourage children providing continuous support to make them ready for the next level and demonstrate competence in line with their age	13	5.9	40	18.1	168	76.0	221	100
5	Childhood is the critical time to lay base for future adults so it is the beginning for developing democratic values that serve the next life time	10	4.5	46	20.8	165	74.6	221	100
6	Children learn by imitation of others activities in play with peer of the same age and interaction with adults so that create a chance to play, move freely and interact with people	8	3.6	57	25.8	156	70.6	221	100
7	use acknowledgement, encouragement, appreciation every time and show good ethical behavior as teachers to be exemplary for children	10	4.5	51	23.1	160	72.4	221	100
	Average	11	5.0	47	21.3	162	73.3	221	100

As it is observed in table 4.21 above, the support of the teacher education program (TEP) in acquainting teachers with their expected activities in teaching children was rated at a high level of support by many respondents. But, in the six out of seven teaching activities, the ratings were

below 75% level of support. So, this shows that more than 25% of the respondents rated the correspondence of TEP with teachers' activities indicated in the ECCE syllabus either at a low or medium level. The methods of instruction communicated in the syllabus seem limited for coaching, teaching, guiding, and developing children of the given schooling level. This is for the reason that, for instance, the appropriate methods of teaching children as storytelling, exploration or experimentation, observation, excursion or field trips, inviting guests, making children share their experiences, dramatization and similar methods were not indicated in the syllabus.

Similarly, teacher education support in acquainting preschool teachers with the assessment methods communicated in the syllabus is indicted in table 4.22

Table 4.22: The support of TEP in acquainting teacher with assessment means in the ECCE syllabus as perceived by trainees

The extent that TEP for ECCE teachers enables them to accomplish the following activities : assessment means		Low level support		Medium level support		High level support		Total	
Assessment means									
1	Child growth and development needs continuous follow up so that the assessment should focus on activities of day to day life but not written test given periodically	14	6.3	39	17.6	168	76.0	221	100
2	The concept of assessment is not for "conformation " but for "improvement "so that teachers should understand and apply this concept	21	9.5	34	15.4	166	75.1	221	100
3	follow up independently everyday activities of individual and record the developmental changes so to plan and apply necessary future support	12	5.4	35	15.8	174	78.8	221	100
4	Acquaint teachers that observation and recorded notes about every development and activities of every child serve as starting point and improvement for the provision of next education services	14	6.3	45	20.4	162	73.3	221	100
Average		15	6.8	38	17.2	168	76.0	221	100

As it is observed in table 4.22 above, the support of the teacher education program (TEP) in acquainting teachers with their expected activities in assessing children learning and development was rated at a high level of support by many respondents. But, except one out of the four assessment means, the rating was made above 75% of support at a high level. So, this shows that in average score of the scores more than 75% of the respondents rated the correspondence of TEP with teachers' assessment activities found in the ECCE syllabus at high level. The assessment mean communicated in the syllabus seem to have better high correspondence with TEP courses. But, the methods to be followed in assessing the day-to-day changes of children did not seem to be considered in the teacher education program as learned from documents. In connection to this, through the interview questions, the teacher-trainers as respondents were reporting their ideas about the courses to be included in TEP, the relation of TEP courses to the ECCE contents and methods of instruction, the support of TEP courses to make ECCE fit for the developmental level, unique ability, and social and cultural life of children, and problems faced in TEP and measures to be taken to alleviate the problems.

1. The presence of skill training centers and courses to be included in TEP: Respondents reported that training centers or places for practicing teaching aid preparation like drawing and other creative activities should be there to enable trainees to create and prepare attention-catching teaching materials for children from local materials. They further indicated that the TEP courses that focus on moral education, child health care, disease prevention, and handicrafts should be included and given emphasis in the future training of teachers. On top of this, the respondents further indicated the need of extending independent teaching time from one month to at least two months.

2. The relation of TEP courses to the ECCE contents and methods of instruction: It was reported that some TEP courses like early childhood education (ECE 201), early child hood development and learning (ECDL 211) and Assessment & Evaluation for preschool (AEPS 202) have high relation with ECCE. More specifically, these courses enable the trainees to understand the developmental level of children and the ways of practicing fit instructional strategies in teaching children. However, the courses were not delivered using the instructional strategies that are communicated in the syllabus or curriculum of ECCE. Thus, the delivery of the TEP courses should be put in to practice following instructional strategies fit for children, i.e., a play-based approach.

3. The support of TEP courses in making ECCE fit for the developmental level, unique ability, and social and cultural life of children: The TEP is expected to have understanding about the developmental level of children and the contents to be appropriate for children. But, some courses are not prone for this purpose so that they need to be amended in the future to make them fit for the purpose. Besides, the course inTEP enables the trainees to have an understanding of the holistic development of children. Thus, many courses, directly and indirectly, should explain the various developmental aspects of children. But, courses are in contrary to this target so that it is expected from concerned bodies to do a lot to make the courses fit for the purpose.

4.4. The ECCE teachers' practice in applying the five key functions and in utilizing relevant teaching methods at the preschools

In trying to see whether the practice of preschool teachers is appropriate for children or not, it is possible to evaluate the performance of teachers by focusing on two issues: the practice of preschool teachers in accomplishing the five key functions to make the practice relevant for children as evaluated in line with certain guidelines by themselves and external evaluators and the utilization of fit instructional methods for teaching children as they indicated in answering for open-ended questions and as evaluated by professionals/experts.

4.4.1. The extent that ECCE teachers follow guidelines of appropriate practice to make the curriculum fit for preschool children

The practice of preschool teachers to make the curriculum appropriate for preschool children can be seen in terms of realizing the five key functions of preschool teachers (Copper&Bredekamp, 2006, 2009, Pennsylvania childcare center, 2014). The table below indicates representative sample items of appropriate Practices in the five key functional areas of the developmentally appropriate practice(DAP) guide for preschoolers that use to evaluate whether the practice at the preschools is appropriate or not. So, teachers of preschool education were asked to indicate the extent that they perform the sample tasks under the five areas by encircling the number from 1-5 (where, 1 = not at all, 2=rarely, 3=at average, 4=highly, and5=very highly) that corresponds to each of the statements. The result is presented in the table below (Table 23).

Table 4.23: Teachers' responses as to their practice in fulfilling the five basic functions of teachers at preschools of Ethiopia

R No	Item	The extent that preschool teachers practice the five functions of teaching preschoolers							
		low		medium		high		Total	
I	The five key functions of teachers in the preschool classes								
A	Creating a caring community of learners by trying to :	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1	Provide nurturing, loving, responsive, joyous, and safe care for children	17	4.7	67	18.5	278	76.8	362	100
2	Build consistent & caring relation among children, families, and co-workers.	18	5.0	69	19.1	275	76.0	362	100
3	Value and respect all members of the learning community.	16	4.4	68	18.8	277	76.5	362	100
4	Celebrate & embrace diversity, reflecting children's cultures in the class and activities.	22	6.1	72	19.9	268	74.0	362	100
5	Create positive collaborations with families and colleagues to support learning.	20	5.5	59	16.3	283	78.1	362	100
6	Focus on building self-confidence, self-regulation, and problem-solving skills	11	3.0	66	18.2	285	78.7	362	100
7	promote a positive climate for learning by fostering a cohesive and democratic group	14	3.9	74	20.4	274	75.7	362	100
	Average	17	4.7	68	18.7	277	76.5	362	100
B	Teaching to enhance development and learning by trying to :								
1	Offer both child initiated and teacher-directed learning experiences.	12	3.3	84	23.2	266	73.5	362	100
2	Be responsive to children's ideas by offering materials, documenting samples work, photos, & having thoughtful conversation built on their ideas, skills, & knowledge.	15	4.1	72	19.9	275	76.0	362	100
3	Plan for hands on experiences where children learn by doing.	13	3.6	81	22.4	267	74.0	362	100
4	Plan enough time for children to explore and fully engage in their interests.	16	4.4	76	21.0	270	74.6	362	100
5	Build children's learning with activities that challenge & expand on what they cando.	18	5.0	71	18.6	273	75.5	362	100
6	create fit environment and schedule for the learners	14	3.9	63	17.4	285	78.8	362	100
7	use variety of teaching strategies fit for the children	12	3.3	53	14.6	297	82.0	362	100
	Average	14	3.9	72	19.7	276	76.3	362	100
C	Constructing appropriate curriculum by trying to :								
1	Identify core learning goals for individual children and the program.	10	2.8	87	24.0	275	73.2	362	100
2	Prepare a curriculum framework that reflects learning goals.	10	2.8	76	21.0	276	76.3	362	100
3	Use the framework for planning activities, experiences, and routines.	15	4.1	65	18.0	282	77.9	362	100
4	Present rich content in different work areas that have meaningful connections to children's interests, curiosities, and development.	14	3.9	84	23.2	264	72.9	362	100
5	Use fit, coherent and effective contents and approaches for children.	11	3.0	70	19.3	281	77.6	362	100
6	Integrate the contents of different subject areas	10	2.8	65	18.0	287	79.3	362	100
7	create smooth transitions between programs or group activities	10	2.8	69	19.1	283	78.2	362	100
	Average	11	3.2	74	20.4	278	76.4	362	100
D	Assessing children's learning and development by trying to :								
1	Assess what is appropriate for children developmentally, individually, and culturally.	7	1.9	75	20.7	278	77.4	362	100
2	Use tools that allow for assessing children in an authentic, ongoing, & intentional way.	9	2.5	73	20.2	280	77.3	362	100
3	Gather information from multiple sources, as families, children, and other teachers.	6	1.7	61	16.9	295	81.5	362	100
4	employ multiple methods of assessment including performance based assessments	9	2.5	59	16.3	294	81.2	362	100
5	Develop a system for collecting and compiling assessment information.	8	2.2	75	20.7	279	77.1	362	100
6	use assessment results to identify and give learning support for different learners	7	1.9	74	20.4	281	77.6	362	100
7	Use assessment results for planning, making decision, communicating with others.	14	3.9	58	16.0	290	80.2	362	100
	Average	9	2.4	68	18.7	285	78.9	362	100
E	Having reciprocal relationships with parents and families by trying to :								
1	Welcome all families into the program inviting them to participate in a variety of ways.	14	3.9	63	17.4	285	78.7	362	100
2	Work in partnership with families involving them in planning for their children.	19	5.2	60	16.6	283	78.2	362	100
3	Communicate regularly with families in an open, positive, two-way manner	10	2.8	65	18.0	287	79.2	362	100
4	Respect and acknowledge the goals, wishes and choices of family for their child.	15	4.1	52	14.4	295	81.5	362	100
5	Be responsive to family concerns recognizing them as first teachers.	11	3.0	61	16.9	290	80.2	362	100
6	Schedule conferences to discuss expectations & answer questions about curriculum.	21	5.8	65	18.0	276	78.3	362	100
	Average	15	4.1	61	16.8	286	79.3	362	100

As it is indicated in table 4.23., the preschool teachers reported their accomplishments in the five basic functions of preschool teachers at a high level. Taking the average, about 76.5%, 76.3%, 76.4%, 78.9%, and 79.3% of the teachers reported that they are creating the caring community of learners, teaching to enhance development and learning, constructing appropriate curriculum, assessing children's learning and development, and in having reciprocal relationships with parents and families at a high level, respectively. Contrary to this, about 23.5%, 23.7%, 23.6%, 21.7%, and 20.4% of the respondents rated their accomplishments in creating a caring community of learners, teaching to enhance development and learning, constructing appropriate curriculum, assessing children's learning and development, and creating reciprocal relationships with parents and families at below or at an average level, respectively. Thus, the respondents as preschool teachers were rating their performance at a high level. But, the ratings were not as high as expected. Many of them showed reservations. This is for the reason that 20.4 upto 23.7% (i.e., almost one-fourth) of the respondents reported their accomplishments at below an average level in all the five key tasks. To confirm or disconfirm the results obtained from teachers as to their application of the expected tasks, experienced outside raters were evaluating teachers' accomplishment of the tasks in the actual setting/classrooms. The experienced raters were asked to rate the practice of preschool teachers in the actual setting as to the appropriateness of teachers' application of the five basic functions or practices in some sample classes using a rating scale prepared for the purpose. The scale involves similar statements of the items presented in the questionnaire for the respondent-teachers to evaluate the application of developmentally appropriate practice by teachers in the preschool classroom. The statements were rated by encircling the number ranging from 5-1 (while; 5 = very highly level appropriate, 4 = highly level appropriate, 3 = medium level appropriate, 2 = inappropriate, and 1 = highly inappropriate) as to the teaching practice of teachers at preschools in Ethiopia. The result of the raters is communicated in the table below (Table 24).

Table 4.24: The extent of preschool teachers' practice appropriateness in the five key functions.

R.No	Item	low level of appropriate		Average level of appropriate		above average level of appropriate	
		F	%	F	%	F	%
I	In creating a caring community of learners, the preschool teacher :						
1	promotes a positive climate for learning	5	33.3	4	26.7	6	40
2	fosters a cohesive, democratic group	8	53.3	3	20	4	26.7
3	meets individual needs	12	80	3	20	0	00
4	Celebrates diversity reflecting children's cultures in the class	7	46.7	7	46.7	1	6.7
	Average	8	53.3	4	26.7	3	20
II	In Teaching to enhance development and learning, the preschool teacher :						
1	creates fit environment and schedule for the learners	5	33.3	8	53.3	2	13.3
2	uses variety of teaching strategies fit for the children	10	66.7	3	20	2	13.3
3	enhances Language and communication skills	4	26.7	7	46.7	4	26.7
4	provides proper guidance for learners	7	46.7	6	40	2	13.3
5	motivates learners for learning	5	33.3	4	26.7	6	40
6	Offers both child initiated and teacher-directed learning experiences.	10	66.7	4	26.7	1	6.7
	Average	7	46.7	5	33.3	3	20
III	In constructing appropriate curriculum, the preschool teacher :						
1	Integrates the contents of different subject areas	10	66.7	4	26.7	1	6.7
2	creates continuum of development and learning	9	60	4	26.7	1	6.7
3	prepares fit, coherent, effective curriculum	9	60	6	40	0	0
4	matches contents and approaches for children	7	46.7	8	53.3	0	0
5	teaches language and literacy skills	0	0	9	60	6	40
6	shows mathematical operation and concepts	2	13.3	6	40	7	46.7
7	orients about social studies issues	4	26.7	8	53.3	3	20
8	involve contents of natural science	1	6.7	7	46.7	7	46.7
9	takes care of health and safety of children	6	40	4	26.7	5	33.3
10	include aesthetic education	4	26.7	10	66.7	1	6.7
11	involves physical education	0	0	12	80	3	20
12	incorporates character qualities	7	46.7	3	20	5	33.3
13	creates transitions b/n programs or groups or activities	5	33.3	6	40	4	26.7
14	Uses the curriculum for planning activities and routines.	2	13.3	8	53.3	5	33.3
15	Allows for flexibility in programming.	6	40	6	40	3	20
	Average	5	33.3	7	46.7	3	20
IV	In Assessing children's learning and development, preschool teacher :						
1	uses Performance based assessments	5	33.3	7	46.7	3	20
2	employs multiple methods of assessment	12	80	3	20	0	0
3	uses assessment results to support learning	7	46.7	8	53.3	0	0
4	Assesses appropriatedevelopmental, individual, and cultural change of children.	12	80	3	20	0	0
5	Gather information from multiple sources.	13	86.7	2	13.3	0	0
6	presents model as exemplary work for students for comparison	5	33.3	8	53.3	2	13.3
	Average	9	60	4	26.7	1	6.7
V	In Reciprocal relationships with parents and families, preschool teacher :						
1	creates opportunities for parents to be involved in classroom activities	13	86.7	2	13.3	0	0
2	Respects the goals, wishes, concerns and choices of family for their child.	9	60	6	40	0	0
3	communicates regularly with parents in an open, positive, two-way manner	5	33.3	9	60	1	6.7
4	welcome parents as visitors to the program or classroom for participation.	8	53.3	5	33.3	2	13.3
5	inform parents about goals and assessment as the child's first teacher.	14	93.3	1	6.7	0	0
	Average	10	67.7	4	26.7	1	6.7

As it is indicated in table 4.24, the accomplishments of sample preschool teachers were rated at the below-average level of appropriateness in three out of the five key functions of preschool teachers in more than 50% of the observed schools. Similarly, seen as a whole in the rest two tasks, the accomplishments of preschool teachers were rated at below-average level of appropriateness in 46.7% of the sample preschools for one task(i.e., in Teaching to enhance development and learning) and an average level of appropriateness for the other task(i.e., in constructing appropriate curriculum). More specifically, in trying to evaluate the practice of preschool teachers' accomplishment of the five functions, the accomplishments of 53.3% of teachers in the sample preschools were rated at the below-average level of appropriateness in the

task of creating a community of learners. This is for the reason that the accomplishments of teachers of the sample preschools in meeting the individual needs, fostering a cohesive and democratic group, and celebrating diversity by reflecting the culture of children in the class were rated at below-average level of appropriateness in the 80%, 53.3%, and 46.7% of the sample preschools, respectively. The task of “assessing children learning and development” as another task for preschool teachers was rated at below the average level of appropriateness in 60% sample preschools. This was due to the fact that 86.7% of ECE teachers did not gather information about children from multiple sources, 80% of them did not employ multiple methods of assessment and they did not assess children considering their developmental, individual, and cultural differences in appropriate ways, and then 46.7% of them did not use assessment results to support learning. Thus, the mentioned four items (item 1, 2,3 and 4) of the task of assessing children learning and development were rated at below-average level of appropriateness in 86.7%, 80%, 80.0%, and 46.7% sample preschools by the raters , respectively. In the tasks of preschool teachers’ that says “creating reciprocal relationships with parents/families”, the accomplishment of the teachers was rated at below-average level of appropriateness in 67.7% of the sample preschools. This is for the fact that in the 93.3%, 86.7%, 60%, and 53.3% sample preschools, preschool teachers were not in the positions to inform parents about goals and assessment, to create the chance for parents to be involved in-class activities, to respect goals, wishes, concerns, and cultures of the child family, and to welcome parents as visitors to program for participation, respectively.

The ECCE teachers’ accomplishment in the third key function; i.e., the task of teaching to enhance the development and learning of children, was rated at below the average level of appropriateness in the 46.7% of the sample preschools. Similarly, the ECCE teachers’ accomplishment in the fourth key function of the preschool teachers; i.e., the task of appropriately constructing curriculum, was rated at an average level of appropriateness in 46.7% of the sample preschools. But, in the sub-tasks of integrating contents of different subjects, creating a continuum of development and learning and preparing a fit, coherent and effective curriculum, matching contents and approaches for children, and incorporating character qualities, about 66.7%, 60%, and 46.7% ECCE teachers’ tasks were rated at below average level of appropriateness in the given sample preschools. In the task of involving children in physical education, aesthetic education, teaching children language and literacy skills, and using syllabus for planning and orienting about social studies issues, ECCE teachers tasks in 80%,

66.7%, 60%, and 53.3% of the sample schools were rated at an average level of appropriateness. It is only in the accomplishment of three sub-tasks of teachers in 46.7% and 40% sample preschools that the achievement of the tasks was rated at an above-average level of appropriateness. In other words, the practice of teachers' in involving contents of natural science and showing mathematical operations and concepts, about 46.7% of teachers in the sample preschools were rated above-average levels of appropriateness. Similarly, in the task of promoting a positive climate for learning and motivating learners for learning, about 40% of the sample preschool teachers were rated above average level of appropriateness.

Generally, though preschool teachers were rating their tasks in the five key functions at a high level, the results obtained from the raters as to the teachers' accomplishment of the tasks in the sample preschools were rated contrary to the teachers' judgment of their tasks. So, there is a mismatch between teachers' rating of their tasks and the rating of raters as to the accomplishment of the tasks by the teachers. Practically, it seems clear that teachers were not properly practicing relevant tasks fit for children of the different age levels, uniqueness of individuality considering social and cultural contexts in the country. Of course, it seems necessary to settle this mismatch in the future by conducting an additional investigation to create a clear picture of the correctness of the facts.

4.4.2. The application of relevant instructional methods in Coaching Preschool children

The appropriateness of the curriculum practice for preschool children can also be seen by focusing on the extent that teachers use the ten basic teaching strategies that are considered appropriate in the existing ECCE curriculum for implementation at classroom levels and the report of teachers as to their utilization of the different methods of instruction for coaching children of the different age (3-4, 4-5, and 5-6) groups. *Teachers' responses as to the application of the ten basic methods of instruction* that are mainly meant for children of the preschool education level are other areas of focus in evaluating the appropriateness of curriculum practice for preschool children. The table below indicates the appropriateness curriculum practice as indicated by the application of ten basic teaching methods that are fit for children of the given schooling level.

Table4.25: Teachers' response on the utilization of ten basic teaching methods for coaching preschoolers

R. No	Items that indicate the applicability of standard teaching strategies for preschool children	Percentage of responses in utilizing the instructional methods							
		Below average		Average		Above average		Total	
	To what extent do you use the following strategies as per the curriculum in teaching children?	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
1	Acknowledge what children do or say.	10	2.8	80	22.1	272	75.1	362	100
2	Encourage persistence and effort rather than just praising and evaluating what the child has done.	18	5.0	62	17.1	282	77.9	362	100
3	Give specific feedback rather than general comments.	14	3.9	74	20.4	274	75.7	362	100
4	Model attitudes, ways of approaching problems, and behavior toward others, showing children rather than just telling them	8	2.2	67	18.5	287	79.3	362	100
5	Demonstrate the correct way to do something.	6	1.7	66	18.2	290	80.1	362	100
6	Create or add challenge so that a task goes a bit beyond what the children can already do and show hint of working it to reduce challenge.	20	5.5	70	19.3	272	75.1	362	100
7	Ask questions that provoke children's thinking	10	2.8	66	18.2	286	79.1	362	100
8	Give assistance (such as a cue or hint) to help children work on the edge of their current competence	11	3.0	61	16.9	290	80.1	362	100
9	Provide information , directly giving children facts, verbal labels, and other information.	10	2.8	54	14.9	298	82.4	362	100
10	Give directions for children's action or behavior.	12	3.3	55	15.2	296	81.5	362	100
	Average	12	3.3	66	18.1	285	78.6	362	100

As it is observed in the table above (table 25), preschool teachers indicated the extent that they apply the ten basic teaching approaches that are communicated in literature and in the syllabus as standard methods for preschoolers. Taking the average, about 78.6% of the teachers reported that, as per the demand of the preschool curriculum, they are applying the methods that are supposed to be appropriate to apply for teaching preschool children. Besides, about more than 75% of the respondent preschool teachers reported that they apply all the ten teaching methods to help children learn at the above-average level. This shows that the preschool teachers seem to perform better (i.e., at more than or above-average levels) in providing information as facts at the verbal level to children (82.4%), in giving direction for action/behavior of children (81.5%), and in assisting children for actualizing the needed level of competence and in demonstrating **the** correct way to do something for children (80.1%). The other methods that were also used by teachers in between the range of 79% to 76% were modeling for different types of behavior (79.3%), encouraging persistence and effort rather than just praising and evaluating what the child has done (77.9%), acknowledging what children do or say and creating or adding challenge **so** that a task goes a bit beyond what the children can already do and show a hint of working it to reduce challenge (75.1%). This, in turn, shows that in applying these ten methods of teaching, around one-fourth of the respondents reported a below or average level of performance. About 21.4% of the respondents rated that they did not utilize the teaching methods in helping and coaching children of different age levels at satisfactory levels. On top of this, about 25 % of the

respondents rated that they are utilizing three out of the five teaching methods (i.e., Creating or adding challenges that a task goes a bit beyond what the children can already do and show a hint of working it to reduce the challenge, acknowledging the doing and saying of children, and Giving specific feedback rather than general comments) at the below-average level. The application of the method that says Encourage persistence and effort rather than just praising and evaluating what the child has been rated by 22.1% of the respondents below average. Besides, the application of the method that says “Asking questions that provoke children’s thinking” and modeling attitudes, approaching problems, and behavior toward others, and showing children rather than just telling them rated only by 20.9% and 20.7% of the respondents at below-average levels, respectively. Thus, in utilizing these three methods, the rating of preschool teachers is not found at the needed highest level of performance. So, taken as a whole, the standard to be used in teaching preschoolers did not seem to be applied properly to fit different age level children as reported by teachers at the expected very high level of application.

4.4.3. Teachers’ utilization of methods in coaching preschoolers of different ages

The appropriateness of the methods that teachers use in the implementation of curriculum for preschool children of the different age levels can also be seen focusing on the utilization of different methods in coaching children of the three age groups as reported in the open-ended questions. Teachers’ responses to the open-ended questions as to their utilization of methods in teaching and developing the different age learners have more similarities than differences for the different age level learners at the preschools. It is reported by respondent teachers that children of different age levels are made to learn with almost similar approaches. The instructional approaches practically used in the actual setting can be categorized on the bases of the frequency of responses in four divisions with ranges from negligible (1-5) through low (5-9) and medium (10-15 frequency) up to relatively highest frequency (above 15 frequency). Categorizing the responses of teachers into the four categories with five-point difference, the results of teachers’ utilization of methods in teaching preschool children of the three age levels are presented in the table below (table 26).

Table 4.26: Teachers' responses as to the approaches in use for coaching children of the three age levels

R. No	Frequency of the Methods used by teachers	Age levels		
		3-4 year level	4-5 year level	5-6 year level
1.	Above 15 (High category)	-helping children learn with different forms of play or game (movement,(27) -Teaching with music, songs, and rhythms (23) -demonstrating/showing with teaching aids(19)	-demonstrating/showing with teaching aids(22) -Teaching with music, songs, and rhythms (17) - learning with play or game (educational, movement, and interpretation)(17)	- making children to read words /letters using teaching aids (21) - Explaining , discussing , and elaborating (19) -questioning and answering-talking(16)
2.	From 11-15 (Medium category)	-making children touch shapes /learning by touching(14) - Explaining, discussing, &elaborating(12) - making children to paint, trace shape& draw things(11) - teaching with puzzles, riddles other aids(11)	- teaching using puzzles, riddles and other aids(13) - Explaining , discussing , and elaborating (13) - helping children writing words/numbers (12) -making children touch shapes /learning by touching (11)	-demonstrating/showing with teaching aids(13) -constructing sentence(11) -helping children writing words/numbers(11) -making children to do things (11) -Teaching with music, songs, and rhythms (11) -making children copy from board (11)
3.	From 5- 10 (Low category)	- telling things repeatedly and listening e.g., letters(7) - showing love and handling things (5)	-making them to read words using teaching aids (8) -questioning and answering-talking (8) -making children to do things by themselves(7) - telling things repeatedly and listening e.g., letters(6) - making children to paint, trace shape draw (5)	- learning with play or game (educational, movement, and interpretation)(6) - making children to paint and trace shape/drawing things, adding/subtracting numbers(5) -making children /learning by touching (5) -teaching using puzzles, riddles and other aids(5)
4.	Below 5 (Negligible category)	- learning by watching (3) - motivating children (3) - making children to do things by themselves(3) - questioning and answering (3) - learning by exercise(1) - supporting children to do things(1)	- learning by watching (3) -assembling things and experimentation, e.g.,letters(3) - dramatic/role play(1) - making children copy from board(1) - motivating children (1) - supporting children to do things(1)	-motivating children (2) -dramatic/role play(2) -telling things repeatedly and listening, -learning by watching, -assembling things and experimentation , - mixing /interpreting things, - learning by exercise/movements(1) - supporting children to do things(1)

As it is observed in the above table (Table 4.26), many preschool teachers reported that they help children learn through playorgames (movement). Teaching children using music, songs, and rhythm, and through demonstration with the use of teaching aids are other methods used commonly as reported by many teachers. Thus, these three methods are important approaches that preschool teachers use frequently for developing and helping preschoolers of different age levels to learn. These approaches are used among 3-4 and 4-5 age levels children with a high level of frequency. But, in the case of the 5-6 age level children, these three methods are used at a medium level of frequency as reported by preschool teachers. The commonly used method for all three age levels children is teaching through demonstrating **or** showing with the help of teaching aids. A high number of teachers reported that this method is used frequently for developing and helping children of the three age levels. Besides, teaching by explaining, discussing, and elaborating is the other teaching approach that is commonly used by all preschool teachers of the three age levels with a relatively high level of frequency. But, this approach seems more appropriate/ relevant for older age children. Teaching preschool children with such types of approaches may not make the methods age-appropriate for preschool level learners. This is for the reason that it is more teacher-centered rather than the child-centered

approach and cannot make the teaching approach competence-based as communicated in the syllabus (MOE, 2001). The approaches of making children learn by touching, painting, tracing shapes, and teaching using puzzles and riddles are methods that are used at the medium level of frequency for children of age 3-4 and 4-5. But, these methods are reported as teaching methods applicable at a low and negligible level of frequency for children of age 5-6 level. It seems advisable to use such methods at the highest level of frequency for teaching all preschoolers. Besides, making children read words /letters with teaching aids is used by teachers of 5-6 age level at a high level of frequency and teaching using questioning and answering, constructing sentences, and helping children write words/numbers are peculiar methods used by teachers of the upper kindergarten at medium levels of frequency. However, such methods should be as far as possible supported by play and games at the preschool level. If these methods are used alone without play, the methods may create a burden for the children for the reason that the attention span of children is limited to stay with the approaches that demand the use of one or two senses alone. Some very important teaching approaches that seem fit for children of the preschool levels like learning by watching, motivating children, supporting children to do things, making children learn through exercising/ movement, supporting children in doing, dramatic play and the like were employed at a negligible level of frequency by teachers of all the three age levels learners. Besides, the methods employed by preschool teachers have similarities for the three age levels children. Age-appropriate practice in applying different methods is not observed. The similarity is more pronounced than differences in the application of teaching methods for the three age level children at the sample preschools as learned from reports of teachers. The instructional strategies don't seem as a whole at a proper level of suitability for children due to the reason that they are working and learning in a room full of chairs and desks as the seating arrangement for older children of the upper-grade levels for all the three levels of preschool children (nursery-age 3-4, kindergarten-age 4-5, and preparatory for grade-age 5-6). Similarly, the assessments means employed at the preschool level are often assessments that are put into practice for older children of the grade levels. So, it could be possible to say that the preschool curriculum practice seems to lack appropriateness for the developmental level of the preschool children in terms of the curriculum materials, learning scenario, instructional strategies, and assessment approaches used.

4.5. The obstacles in making preschool curriculum practice Appropriate for children and measures for making the practice appropriate in the future

As to the conditions that affect (hinder or facilitate) preschool curriculum practice, the preschool teachers were asked to indicate to what extent the conditions related to policy, support from others, facilities/resources, provision of services, nature of program represented by 3-6 items. The lists below under the five categories were rated by respondents as hindrance or facilitator or otherwise in practicing ECCE curriculum at preprimary school of Ethiopia encircling the number from 1-5 (where 5 = high facilitator through 3= not important to 1 = high hindrance) and their responses are presented in the table below (Table 27).

Table 4.27: The conditions that hinder or facilitate the practice of ECCE curriculum in the preschools of Ethiopia

I	The hindrance or facilitator conditions in promoting appropriate practice for children in the preschools	Hindrance		Not important		Facilitator	
I	Policy	F	%	F	%	F	%
1	ECCE enrollment, financial and professional policy, law & regularities	77	21.3	84	23.2	201	55.5
2	Monitoring, regulating, and intervention system in the ECCE internal affairs	75	20.7	86	23.8	201	55.5
3	External quality regulation requirements and expectations	75	20.7	78	21.5	209	57.7
4	Multilevel continuous quality improvement system	76	21.0	75	20.7	211	58.3
	Average	76	21.0	81	22.4	206	56.9
II	Support of others						
5	Family involvement in preschool activities	68	18.8	73	20.2	221	61.1
6	Support of Institutions for the practice	73	20.2	83	22.9	209	57.7
7	Support of Community for the practice	77	21.3	79	21.8	206	56.9
8	Support of academic community for the practice	80	22.1	62	17.1	220	60.8
9	Support structure like effective leadership & supervision for the program	88	24.3	63	17.4	211	58.3
10	Continuous professional development for teachers (CPD)	61	16.9	67	18.5	234	64.6
	Average	75	20.7	71	19.6	217	59.9
III	Facilities/Resources						
11	Suitable and sufficient set of Resources for practice	90	24.9	60	16.6	212	58.5
12	Funding mechanisms for ECCE (e.g. finance and expertise, etc)	116	32.1	78	21.5	168	46.4
13	Group size and adult-child ratio in the preschools	93	25.7	90	24.9	179	49.5
14	Space for program setting in the ECCE	116	32.0	65	18.0	181	50.0
	Average	104	28.7	73	20.2	185	51.1
IV	Provision of services						
15	The provision of health services	107	29.6	69	19.1	186	51.4
16	The provision of nutritional services	79	21.6	59	16.3	224	61.9
17	The provision of other social services	94	26.0	56	15.5	212	58.5
	Average	93	25.7	61	16.9	207	57.2
V	The nature of program						
18	Transition and continuity from home to preprimary schools	84	23.2	64	17.7	214	59.1
19	Transition and continuity from preprimary to elementary schools	80	22.1	63	17.4	219	60.5
20	Pushing down the curriculum-Teaching the grade subjects at preschools	114	31.5	79	21.8	169	46.7
	Average	93	25.7	69	19.1	201	55.5

As it is observed in table 4.27, the conditions that are either hindering or facilitating the ECCE curriculum practice were viewed grouping them into five issues related to policy, support, resources, provision of services, and nature of the program. About 59.9%, 57.2%, 56.9%, 55.5%, and 51.1% of teachers of preschool education rated that support from others, provision of

services, policy, nature of the program, and resources as facilitators for ECCE curriculum practices. But, as it is observed from the same table, the percentage levels of the ratings at all conditions were not far from the average levels. So, the facilitation levels of the factors did not arrive at the expected high level in facilitating the ECCE practice. A reasonably high percentage of respondents rated the issues as either at a hindrance or not at all important levels. About 40.1%, 42.8%, 43.1%, 44.5%, and 49.9% of the respondents rated the support from others, provision of services, policy, nature of the program, and resources either at a hindrance or unimportant levels for curriculum implementation, respectively. More specifically, as is observed in the table, funding mechanisms for ECCE (e.g. finance and expertise, etc), Pushing down the curriculum (Teaching the grade subjects at preschools), group size and adult-child ratio in the preschools, space as program setting in the ECCE, and the provision of health services were rated at either hindering or unimportant conditions in ECCE curriculum practice by 53.6%, 53.3%, 50.5%, 50.0%, and 49.6% of the respondents, respectively. The rest factors were rated as facilitators in the range from 64.6% for Continuous professional development for teachers (CPD) up to 55.5% for ECCE enrollment, financial and professional policy, law & regularities as well as Monitoring, regulating, and intervention system in the ECCE internal affairs. But, more than 35% of the respondents which seems a significant percentage (i.e., 35.4% to 44.5%) of the respondents rated the factors either as a hindrance or unimportant factors in promoting the ECCE curriculum practices. In general, the ECCE curriculum practice seems to face more hindering than facilitating conditions in the preschools of Ethiopia. The conditions that seem to serve as facilitators did not work at the needed high level at more than 75% of facilitation for the practice.

In addition to this, from interviews, open-ended questions, and discussion with preschool education experts as well as documentary analysis, it was learned that the practice of preschool curriculum has been associated with many problems. Thus, some of the problems and then the measures that can be taken to alleviate the problems that were explored through the interview and open-ended questions, and discussion with concerned bodies are communicated as follows under two headings: prevailing problems and some measures in making curriculum practice relevant for preschool children.

4.5.1. The problems in making the curriculum practice appropriate for children

Some of the factors that make curriculum practice inappropriate for children are factors related to the curriculum materials are gaps in its coverage and development process, access and fitness for the purpose ; problems related to the nature of objectives, contents , and timing for delivery of the preschool curriculum; problems related to the learning conditions as learning environment, class-size, and learning corners; problems related to the use of teaching methods, assessment and other conditions; problems related to teacher education program for ECCE ; and other drawbacks or pitfalls like administration of preschool curriculum practice in serving the developmental needs of children

1. Problem-related to the curriculum materials: Coverage and development process and

Access and fitness to the purpose

i. The coverage and development process of ECCE curriculum material: As it was reported by the experts and learned from the ECCE syllabi prepared at different times, the preparation of the preschool education curriculum in Ethiopia dated back to 1989 though there was a similar endeavor in 1973. It is indicated in the syllabus that experiences of different countries from the world at large and Africa were taken in the preparation of the curriculum for Ethiopian preschool children. Some of the countries whose experiences were considered as the benchmark for the preparation of the Ethiopian preschool curriculum were England, Israel, and Russia from abroad and South Africa and Uganda from the continent of Africa (MOE, 1989). The preschool curriculum prepared in 1989 E.C. was focusing on subjects or disciplines (language, mathematics, social sciences, and natural science subjects) like subjects that are offered in primary school education and the curriculum was criticized in that it is not a child-centered curriculum. Besides, it was prepared only for children of age 4-5 and 5-6. So, the curriculum/syllabus of 1989 E.C. for the preschoolers was revised in 1998E.C. The preschool syllabus of 1998E.C. was revised again after three years due to its focus on subjects in 2001 E.C.(MOE, 1998, 2001). Thus, the 2001 E.C. curriculum for preschool education was prepared in a radically different way from the previous curriculum preparation. The curriculum that was prepared in 2001 E.C. was organized for children of the three age levels (3-4, 4-5, and 5- 6 year levels) with five themes focusing on : Theme 1: providing needed care for the appropriate development and physical strength, Theme 2: creating an appropriate relationship in acceptable ways with others, Theme 3: using language appropriately, Theme 4: using mathematical

computation and concepts in daily activities, and Theme 5: studying and integrating environment appropriately by interpreting events in it (MOE, 2001E.C.) that can be brought under the developmental aspects of activities (physical including motor, social including emotional, cognitive including language development). It is pointed out that the ECCE curriculum material (syllabus) has been prepared to integrate the different developmental activities under five thematic areas with competence-based approaches (MOE, 2001 E.C.). The expected outcomes/competencies are pointed out in the syllabus related to developmental activities. As learned from literature at the global level, the curriculum for preschoolers should not only focus on developing the academic skills related to the five themes mentioned above. But, preschool children, as learned from the standard contents or skills for children of different countries, are also expected to cover additional areas of learning skills like how to learn, how to manage themselves (self-help and intrapersonal skills), and other necessary qualities that enable them to become good citizens for themselves and for the society in that showing different personal qualities as a person doing things with confidence. Thus, these important components of good citizens are not explicitly reflected in preparing preschool syllabus/curriculum at a different time in Ethiopia. It is also advisable that children should develop psychosocial skills that are useful for leading personal and social life properly. Thus, these skills should be given emphasis starting from the preschool level in addition to teaching children about the academic area skills.

The experts in the field who participated in the preparation of the syllabus and who are working at the education bureau level reported that the current syllabus was prepared based on the educational policy of 2010. They further reported that there are standards guide, syllabus, and policy for preschool education. But, the challenges come in the implementation process in all cases. So, the preparation of the syllabus did not seem to consider mechanisms of alleviating problems observed at the stage of the implementation process. This problem may be minimized if there is a responsible body who engaged in the practical implementation of the program. In the previous time, there was an institute working on curriculum development and research-called Institute for Curriculum Development and Research (ICDR). This institute was advertised by many people as the best model in providing the best experience for other countries in Africa and beyond. The curriculum preparation process for ECCE and beyond, however, could not be done without the involvement of such type of institute that is highly responsible for the curriculum development work. The curriculum making without responsible organs like ICDR is now

questioned by many educators. This fact is also true in the preparation of the preschool curriculum.

ii. The Access and fitness of ECCE curriculum Materials for the purpose: The ECCE syllabus was used as base for the preparation of supplemental materials. For three subjects (Amharic, maths and environmental science), supplemental materials as the teacher's guide and guiding material for evaluation the quality of preschool education were prepared in 2006 E.C. in line with the syllabus. From all the curriculum materials for preschool education, the only material accessible for many but not all preschool teachers is the syllabus. The syllabus includes only objectives, contents, some guide as to instructional methods and evaluation approaches for use by preschool teachers for the three age levels children. The supplemental materials are only used in some sample preschools but not in all the governmental preschools as learned from sample preschools as well as non-government and private pre-schools in the country as gained from interviewees. It is clear that making the preschool teachers to be guided only by syllabus and in some schools by supplemental materials (that are prepared by NGO for the purpose), and the teacher's guides in some subjects (used only in very limited preschools that are a copy of the supportive materials as reported by teachers) as the only materials for curriculum practice could not be feasible to make the practice appropriate for the purpose. Thus, as learned from observation and interview, the curriculum materials for preschool education are syllabus, supplemental materials (that are prepared by NGO for the purpose found in few preschools), and the teacher's guides for three subjects (used only in some schools that are a copy of the supportive materials as reported by teacher-trainers). Thus, it is only the syllabus instead of other supportive material that helps teachers to teach contents and the syllabus creates a burden for teachers in bringing the contents down at the ground level in preparing the plan and additional materials for daily teaching programs. The preparation of teaching materials for curriculum implementation is undoubtedly a burden for teachers. This is for the reason that the syllabus cannot be used as it is unless supported by other supportive materials. In some schools, supplementary books of riddles and puzzles are bought from markets for use that is only helpful for teaching language (Amharic and English), mathematics, and sciences (social and natural). The experiences of other countries communicated in the books could not be the best representative of the different contexts of Ethiopia. The issues in the materials for children should not be questioned as to their representativeness of the Ethiopian reality.

2. Problems related to the objectives, contents, and timing for curriculum delivery

i. The gaps in writing objectives and contents/ activities in the syllabus: As it is learned from the syllabus for preschoolers, the objectives are communicated at a general level for all age groups and a specific level for the three age groups. But, the objectives are not written in terms of children's performance but in terms of teachers' activities.

In the curriculum materials, the contents and/or activities for children have similarities rather than the difference for preschool children of the three ages (age 3-4, 4-5, and 5-6) as observed from the document and as confirmed by the respondents. The contents and activities of preschool education at the three age levels seem the same with slight differences in the levels of complexities. The contents were not explicitly communicated but put as activities. The activities for children of the three age groups vary only in the tasks for different age levels learners to make them developmental activities. The developmental activities under each theme are the same for all age levels. This means that the preschool education syllabus of Ethiopia is focusing on the same issues for children of the three age levels. As a result, in the three age levels, the same issues are coming again and again unnecessarily so that much redundancy is easily observed in the practice of the preschool curriculum. Thus, as learned from the syllabus, the contents and objectives of the three age levels children (3-4, 4-5, and 5-6) are similar if not the same. The difference lies only in the extension of limited activities concerning some topics. But, the expected competencies for children have slight variations from age to age levels. So, it is obvious that the objectives for children of the three age levels, the contents and/or activities are almost the same and they are repeated from age to age levels. Besides, the contents in the syllabus have problems in sequence such as lack of logical arrangement; the same contents for children of the three age levels, some contents seem below the capabilities of an upper preschooler and a head of the capacity of nursery level kids. In addition to this, contents did not reflect some domains of development. For instance, issues laying base for emotional and moral developmental aspects are not clearly observed so societal ethics are not properly considered. Besides, there is no proper bridge between preschool education and primary school education contents of the two curricula for the fact that preschool completer children are facing problems in starting and coping up with grade one curriculum.

ii. The timing for content delivery: The syllabus of preschool education does not communicate the timing for teaching different contents. It is expected of teachers to adjust the time that they

assume it is suitable for teaching in line with the developmental levels of children. But, the main contents/themes in the syllabus are given time per week in that for the physical development aspect (7 periods/week), social aspects (3 periods), language aspect (5 periods), environment (5 periods), and mathematics contents (5 periods). The gaps in the timing or the schedule for periods for the three age group students are different only in five minutes time gaps for each age group children. The arrangement of lessons in a day is two consecutive periods of class –rest for a snack – 2 consecutive periods of play–launch and the last period is at the afternoon session. Besides, the syllabus does not allow teachers to follow a timetable fit for the developmental level of children for the reason that it is not supported by proper teacher’s guide and student textbooks. So, it is only the teacher who is expected to plan the timing in using different approaches to help children learn, for free and planned play for children, guide children to write freely and to draw pictures, to write on paper to save space on the paper. In doing all these and similar activities, the syllabus and the supplemental materials did not give proper guide for preschool teachers to avoid redundancy and to keep uniformity. So, teachers’ friendly guides and proper textbooks for children are very essential for the program to keep uniformity and to reduce redundancy of lessons at the different levels of the preschool education.

3. Problems related to learning conditions: learning environment, class size and absence of learning corners in preschools

Observation was made to identify the status of learning environment, class size and learning corners in sample preschools..Besides, preschool teachers were asked to share their perception and the facts in hand about the fitness of the learning environment, the appropriateness of class size, and presence of learning corners. Thus the result obtained from observation, report of teachers, and actual facts at the classroom about the suitability of the learning environment/classroom for the children of different age groups and the presence of standard number of students per class for preschoolers and the presence of learning corners are communicated as follows.

i. Learning environment in and out of the classroom: As it is learned from observation of the learning environment in the class and outside the class, many preschool classrooms are so narrow to accommodate different resources like chairs and desks for every learner, eight teaching corners, and teaching aids. So, there is a space problem for independent learning like reading, working with different teaching aids, watching, and learning by moving freely. In some cases,

the rooms are made of tin sheets of iron and the chairs are not suitable for the kids to stay for long sitting on them. The classrooms are also containing teaching aids that were produced by teachers with a limited number of appropriate manufactured materials for the kids that may not attract them to stay with them. The learning environment outside the classrooms did not seem appropriate for the kids in many preschools to play and learn. In many preschools, the playground has obstacles (ups and downs) for children's free movements. On top of this, there are materials like stones and a fence with big sticks that may hurt children if they fall on them while they are playing. So, as learned from observation, many preschools in the study areas lack appropriate and suitable playgrounds fit for the children to play, learn, and develop as expected. The same is true for the classrooms. These facts were also confirmed by interviews.

ii. Class size for preschoolers: As it is learned from literature and respondents in the field of preschool, the number of students in a class at the international level is expected to be 15-20 and the maximum number is 25 students/per class. But, in the Ethiopian context, the class size was decided to be 30 students/ class in the context of Addis Ababa and 40 students/ class in the rest of the country. Besides, the standard for the preschool classroom is $9m \times 7m = 63m^2$. But, as it is learned from observation of the class and school statistics about the class size in some sample schools in Addis Ababa, for instance, the numbers of students in a class is so far from the standard as depicted below (table 28).

Table 4.28: The number of students in some sample preschool classes of Addis Ababa

Class	Miss ford	Yeka	Salayish	Karalo	Abiyot	Kokebe tsebha	Yeka Terara	Wondrad	Bole addis
3-4	35+35(2 sec)	44+45(2 sec)	36+36=72	106 (3 sec)	45	31	57	41+42+38	54+57+ 68
4-5	35+32(2 sec)	47+45(2 sec)	56+48=104	83(2 sec)	47	31	65	40+42+41	56+ 58+ 64
5-6	59	37+38(2 sec)	53+50+48=151	81(2 sec)	38	35	52	45+47	52+59+65
Total	196	256	327	270	130	97	174	335	500

The standard class size or the number of students in a classroom is expected to be 30 students /class in Addis Ababa. But, in all cases in the sample preschools except one, the class size is very far from the expected standards ranging from 31 children /class in Kobe Tsebeha preschool to 68 children /class in Bole Addis Preschools.

iii. The learning corners in the classroom of preschools: As it is reported by experts, the preschool classrooms are expected to have different corners, like reading corner, family corner, clinic corner, art, play corners and so on that are to be untouchable learning areas and should be with sufficient space for children to work. But as learned from observation, the organization of

preschool classes in the sample preschools seem more of storehouse of teaching materials or a place of display for learning materials. The classrooms for preschool children are full of materials that make the classrooms so much cluttered with sub-standard teaching aids. It seems that the classrooms use as a store for materials instead of using it as a place for learning as pointed out previously. Children are expected to perform dramatic play of different life representations. But, the environment could not allow them to do so since the space is not suitable for free movement and play of children. The learning corners to be presented in the preschool classes could not be thought in such conditions. Thus, in general, the learning conditions of the sample preschools were involving unfit learning environment for children and are characterized by large class size and absence of learning corners. These problems were the common drawbacks that were observed in the different preschools of the study areas.

4. Problems related to Assessment in the Preschools: Traditional VS Authentic

Children in preschool are not expected to achieve objectives at 50% or above levels rather they are expected to learn and develop as their age increase through play. Thus, Preschool children are not expected to sit for the formal evaluation /testing rather they are assessed through authentic assessment tools like daily activities, checklists, and observation in their play. It is expected to get information about the change in children's learning and development on a continuous base. Checklists are found in the supplemental materials for use by teachers, the assessment is expected to be done in line with the themes, and standards there, but they are not considered by preschool teachers. The assessment standards are prepared at national levels. But, practically, teachers are assessing children differently from expected. Children are made to sit for examination/formal testing. They are expected to achieve but not to learn and develop. Detaining or promoting children on the base of their achievement by applying tests and similar tools is common. Thus, the traditional assessment approach is used in place of authentic assessment at the preschool level in the study areas of Ethiopia. Thus, it learned from the reported that the assessment has been associated with problems of implementation. The assessment is not the type that is advisable for the level.

5. Problems related to Teacher Education program

Through open ended questions and interviews, the teacher education program has been associated with problems of staff qualification, material preparation, nature of courses, duration, language for the training, and trainees' screening. These problems are explained briefly as follows.

i. Problems related to qualification and material preparation for TEP: The Teacher Education Program (TEP) was associated with problems of staff qualification and modular material preparation. It was reported by trainers and trainees that some courses of TEP were not given by qualified teachers. They further reported that some of the modular materials prepared for TEP courses were not suitable for the training. Besides, the TEP courses were not employing the teaching methods that help in realizing the ECCE.

ii. Problems related to the Courses and Duration of the Teacher Education Program: Through the open-ended questions, the teacher-trainee respondents reported some drawbacks associated with TEP with measures to be taken to alleviate the problems. The teacher education program involved 42 courses under three categories: content, pedagogy, and child development and learning. With their accumulated experiences in the three-year training program for regular students and in four summers time for in-service trainees, they pointed out some drawbacks in the training as graduates of the ECCE training program.

-Many respondents reported that the TEP courses are many to cover in the given limited time and many of the courses did not have direct relation to the preschool education or work at hand. So, it seems clear that there is a mismatch between the training and works at preschools.

- The courses that have a direct relation to ECCE are limited in number and the credit hours given for the courses are also limited, for instance, Action research. Besides, the courses that have a direct relation to ECCE are not distributed throughout the training time rather they are given around the end of the program. On top of this, it is reported that some courses are difficult to conceptualize for the trainees due to different reasons like lack of proper organization of the courses and language problems on the part of the trainees.

-The duration of the training program was made so short. The shortage of training time, especially for the in-service program created an obstacle in conceptualizing the courses as expected by providing time for further analysis and synthesis of the courses.

- Besides, the instructional language for the training creates obstacles in order not to conceptualize ideas in courses properly and the teaching approaches used in teaching courses did

not seem fit for the level. In addition to this, lack of attitude or interest in the profession from the part of trainees and teaching by reading the handout from the part of the trainers were also reported as other problems associated with the training.

iii. Problems related to Screening and Attitude of Trainees: As it is reported by the trainers, the screening process of trainees did not bring those students who could be proficient at the end of the training. On top of this, trainees reflected negative attitudes towards the profession that create problems in the training process and in the utilization of the knowledge and skills they learned. It seems advisable to have short-term training for trainees before, during, and after graduation to inculcate a positive attitude towards the profession.

iv. Other Pitfalls in Preschool Education: The trainers and trainees as respondents for open ended and interview questions were pointed out other challenges that are observed in the practice of developmentally appropriate curriculum. Some of the main challenges /drawbacks observed in the implementation of preschool education include the lack of:

- Model classrooms: teaching and learning centers and pedagogical centers meant for the purpose of training were not present in the training areas either at institutes or other training areas.

- Continuity between preschools and primary schools- the primary school education at grade one level does not seem to be practiced basing the preschool education experiences. The primary schools did not work in line with preschools by creating collaboration.

- Proper preparation of children for life- the preschool education did not properly focus on the future life of the child and the society at large.

- Proper management- preschool education is managed by people with know-how of higher grade level management and it seems clear that the needs of parents influence the work of preschools. Besides, the management of preschools seems to be done by people without necessary know-how about the nature of preschool education, supervisors are supervising the preschool education without the needed knowledge about preschool education, and other concerned bodies decide many things of preschool education without proper know-how about this level of schooling.

- Proper attention from concerned bodies- the preschool level of education is not considered as the first level of education by different concerned bodies rather it is considered as a place for simply making children stay for the day. Contrary to this, parents expect the preschool to teach children different subjects like higher grade learners. Besides, the preschool education

curriculum is criticized in that the education did not take into account children with disabilities and multiculturalism issues. On top of this, the curriculum is mainly focusing on academics.

4.5.2. Some Measures for making Curriculum Practice Relevant for children in the future.

The measures to be taken to alleviate some of the problems associated with preschool education could focus on measures related to content in the material development, classroom setting, instructional methods, teacher education program, and creating know-how, attitude, and sense of responsibility on concerned bodies.

1. Involving comprehensive contents in material development for the ECCE curriculum: The contents of preschool education in Ethiopia are focusing on five thematic areas and the five areas are limited in the coverage of different life aspects. While comparing the contents of Ethiopian preschool education with international contents, there are very big differences. The preschool education content areas at global level are ten as reviewed from literature. Of the ten content areas of international preschool education, only five of them are covered in the case of Ethiopian preschool education directly. So, the learning and development of preschool children should not only be limited to the five themes but rather go beyond the five themes. Children are expected to learn how to learn, develop necessary character qualities that are enabling them to lead personal and social life to do things independently and in a group with collaboration. But, these aspects of development and learning seem to lack attention as learned from the syllabus. Thus, the content that focuses on psychosocial life skills should be included as far as possible.

-The ministry of education tried to contribute its parts to preschool education syllabus development. But, as it is learned from the preparation of the other supplemental materials, it seems that there is a lack of emphasis in the country. This is for the reason that except for the syllabus and a guiding material for inspection of quality of preschool education, no other additional materials were prepared by MOE that can serve preschoolers. Of course, the supplemental materials for the syllabus are prepared by NGO- School Readiness Initiative with Action Aids in collaboration with REB only. So, MOE should play the leading role for the enhancement of preschool education. Besides, the issues of preschool education should not be left to a few citizens rather should be the agenda/issue of all citizens and/ or the government that is representing the population of the nation. But, preschool education seems the responsibility of a few persons. The government represented in MOE should support the effort of the concerned persons. But, the work of the MOE does not seem as expected in working appropriate curriculum

that fit the different age levels children of Ethiopia. This is evidenced in that the MOE does not try to prepare student text, appropriate teacher's guide that enables preschool teachers to have a teacher-friendly guide in teaching or coaching preschool children in a uniform way throughout the country. It seems that preschool education is left to a few citizens who feel responsibility for the futurity of the kids and then the country.

2. Thinking the suitability of preschools settings and instructional strategies for children: The different corners of learning like family play, social, construction, language, mathematics, physical development/strength, environment, and health / Red Cross corners should be used as leaning areas /corners. However, there is a problem with space. So, different preschools need to think about the space of the classroom for proper implementation of preschool education. Besides, the classrooms that are made of iron sheets in some schools should be changed for the reason that such rooms could not be suitable for the health of children. With such types of classrooms in mind, the children could not have a good attitude towards learning and may not come to schools with a positive attitude if the schools are not attractive. Further, the fulfillment of different resources that fit preschool children should be considered taking into account the age levels of the learners/ children.

The instructional strategies employed by teachers in teaching preschoolers of different age groups are almost similar. Thus, the appropriateness of the strategies used by teachers for different age groups learners should be thought for they are questionable. It is expected of teachers to employ appropriate teaching methods for different age level preschool learners to make their practice relevant for the development of children. The same is true as to assessment means.

3. Thinking appropriate measures for problems of Teacher Education Program: Some of the problems in the Teacher Education Program can be partly alleviated by taking measures as suggested by trainees and trainers as follows.

-The teacher trainee respondents suggested that in the TEP, attention should be given to professional courses or courses directly related to preschool education and such important courses should be given more credit hours and more focus than other courses. TEP courses should be made useful for children learning and one should select and give attention to fit courses. The courses delivered in the first and second-year levels were not that much related to the work at hand so it is advisable to reduce courses that are not related to the program; e.g.,

physics, chemistry, etc.,. Thus, The TEP should include only relevant courses for helping children of the preschool level or courses targeted at preschool education. Besides, it seems better to give attention to the quality of education by reducing the course that has less important for the purpose. Similarly, trainers suggested that some courses of the TEP were not suitable for training preschool teachers. So, it seems advisable to revise the TEP courses to use them as the base for training fit teachers for ECCE children. Besides, revision of the modular materials for the courses by qualified teachers is highly needed. On top of this, it is highly expected to fulfill TEP by qualified human resources particularly the teaching staff.

- The difficulty level of the courses should be thought in the future and important courses that are not included in the program e.g., courses related to child play and development, should be involved. So, it seems advisable to select and add important courses fit for children learning.

- Appropriate approaches /methods of teaching for the level should be selected and used and correct and fit methods for the level should be given proper attention in the program. It is good to use approaches of teaching that are new and appropriate teaching materials for the courses. Besides, Pedagogical centers should be there for trainees to practice the preparation of teaching materials.

- Adequate number of Teacher-trainers should be made well qualified in the areas they teach. This is for the fact that many courses were given by a few teachers as a self-contained classes. So, it is expected to make the qualification of teachers at the expected level. Besides, upgrading the TEP to the degree program level was suggested by different respondents.

- The training should be delivered with the language that makes the training simple to use the knowledge at the ground level and the language in use at preschool.

- In addition to this, it was suggested by the trainers that the screening or recruiting process of trainees should be done with criteria that could be fit for the purpose. Besides, it is expected to work on the development of a positive attitude of the trainees on the part of the institutes and trainers. This can be possible by providing short-term training for newly graduating students as well as new teaching staff about the profession. On top of this, model centers for training the ECCE teacher and practicing what they have learned in class should be thought in the future.

4. Creating awareness, positive attitude and sense of responsibility among concerned bodies: The preschool curriculum implementation is challenged by a lack of good attitude from concerned bodies for the practice. Thus, to make the preschool education curriculum practice relevant in the

future, it is necessary to bring changes in the attitude of the society/ community towards preschool. The change is expected from different concerned bodies, especially parents and school management for the fact that they demand preschool education to be geared towards the standard of grade-level schooling. Parents expect preschools to give different subject knowledge to their children. Similarly; the management of preschools and the supervision practice expect professionals to work at the standard of higher-level schooling. So, changes in the know-how and attitude as to the role and work of preschools should be expected from parents and school management and supervision bodies.

The other Problems observed in ECCE curriculum implementation could be the absence of a responsible body for the system and the lack of a separate and sufficient budget. This is for the fact that preschools use the budget from the primary schooling system. So, preschool education seems to lack a responsible body for every activity starting from curriculum preparation up to creating a bridge for its connection with primary school education. The program has no its own budget and organization for its proper functioning. Thus, for the appropriate implementation of the preschool education responsible body, separate budget, coordination, and continuity between pre-schools and primary schools should be thought by concerned bodies in the future.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1. Summary and conclusion

In studying the topic “the relevance of Early Childhood Care and Education Curriculum and its practice in Ethiopia: the case of some selected regional states”, the appropriateness of curriculum and its practice was evaluated by collecting data from preschool teachers, teacher-trainees, coordinators/directors other preschool education experts, documents and the school setting. Data were collected by employing different data collection methods. On the bases of the data collected, it was tried to find out answer to the basic research questions of the study. The research focused on investigating:

1. the incorporation of basic elements in the preschool curriculum (as the basic guiding principles of curriculum development, comprehensive objective, integrated contents, appropriate strategies of instruction, and fit assessment means) that make the curriculum relevant for children as learned from documents and as reported by professionals/teachers;
2. the presence of elements of learning environments conducive for the implementation of the ECCE curriculum and the extent that the elements meet the requirements of relevant practice fit for children;
3. the correspondence of the courses of ECCE teachers to ECCE curriculum for children and the extent that the courses relate to ECCE curriculum and equip teachers with the balance of the three knowledge areas (child development, content, and pedagogy) to promote the practices as well as the benefits of the courses in facilitating the work of preschool teachers;
4. the extent that preschool teachers follow the guidelines of appropriate practice to make the curriculum fit to children in the actual preschool setting in the selected regions of Ethiopia ;
5. the prevalence of factors or conditions (like policy, facilities, support services, and other factors) that influence the implementation of the ECCE curriculum and the extent that the conditions influence the implementation of the curriculum in Ethiopia; and
6. the measures to be taken in minimizing the negative influence of the factors associated with the implementation of the ECCE curriculum in Ethiopia in the future.

In line with the basic research questions, data were collected using questionnaire of the rating scale types, open-ended questions, interview questions for individuals, questions for focus group

discussion, observation checklist, checklist for document analysis, and free documentary analysis. The data were collected from 362 preschool teachers including preschool coordinators/directors in the study areas, 221 pre-school teacher-trainees of the graduating class of both pre-service and in-service programs using questionnaires of the rating scale types. Besides, data were collected from documents (syllabi of both ECCE and TEP for preschoolers and supplementary materials) using checklists and free document analysis and preschool class practices and environmental setting of sample preschools using observation checklists in the three regional states as well as open-ended questions for the interview and group discussions. The data were analyzed using both the quantitative and qualitative data analysis approaches. In analyzing the quantitative data, simple descriptive statistics like Chi-square (X^2), percentage, frequency, and average of numerical data were used. But, in analyzing the qualitative data, a comparison of the existing facts about the Ethiopian ECCE curriculum with international standards gained from literature was used for giving interpretation using rules of logic. Thus, the findings of the study can be summarized as follows.

Research Question 1: The ECCE Curriculum

1. The ECCE syllabus as a basic document of the curriculum has communicated the philosophical base for ECCE as general guiding principles for conducting preschool education in Ethiopia. The philosophical base communicated some guiding elements or ideas to use as a basis to organize and practice the ECCE. The syllabus indicated the philosophical basis but did not communicate those ideas that inculcate the values, beliefs, culture of the society and the ways of including indigenous knowledge as well as the ways of learning to learn, the ways of developing expected characteristics/personal qualities as Ethiopian children in an explicit way for the given levels of schooling. Besides, the syllabus indicated very limited ideas about sociological and psychological bases of curriculum. But, the historical and technological changes as base for curriculum development were not touched as a whole.

2. The ECCE syllabus as a basic document of the curriculum has communicated the objectives and contents of ECCE. But, the objectives were not written in terms of students' Performance rather they were written in terms of teachers' activities. Besides, the objectives were not comprehensive enough in that they did not touch on the various aspects of development. The

objectives only targeted at physical, social, and cognitive (language and mathematics) aspects of development. This is for the fact that the syllabus focused on five thematic areas that revolved around only the four aspects of development: physical, social, cognitive, and emotional aspects. So, the physical, cognitive, and social including some elements of emotional aspects of development are the only contents included in the curriculum of ECCE.

3. The ECCE syllabus as a basic document of the curriculum has communicated the developmental directions for Early Childhood period children of Ethiopia in the form of a chart including only physical, cognitive, social, and emotional developmental aspects. It seems clear that the developmental aspects communicated in the syllabus did not seem sufficient for children to have the base for developing full-fledged and capable citizens. The basic elements that would help children to become successful in their learning at schools like developing the habit of working at the level of one's capability, respecting, loving, and helping others, and working in cooperation with others and the like were not properly touched in the context of the Ethiopian preprimary school education. So, other important skills other than physical, social, cognitive, and emotional dimensions were not taken into account in the curriculum of preschool education. Thus, developmental directions as behavioral, personality, moral, spiritual, and other aspects of development were not incorporated in the ECCE syllabus/curriculum at the needed level.

4. The syllabus indicated that teachers were expected to add activities in accordance to the contexts of children of the preschool period. But, it seemed impossible for teachers at the preschool level to bring additional developmental activities in line with the developmental level of children without the curriculum documents communicating those activities properly. So, the ECCE curriculum documents had a drawback in this area. This seemed impractical for teachers at this the level of education.

5. The ECCE syllabus as a basic document of the curriculum communicated the same thematic areas with the same number of periods for children of the three age groups. The differences lay in the length of the periods for children of the three age groups. To realize the five thematic areas or topics and sub-topics under the themes, competence, developmental activities, and suggestions on the play materials and teaching aids were included in the syllabus in the form of a table. At last, reminders for the achievement of the competences were communicated at the end of each of the five thematic areas. This part of the syllabus seemed insufficient for teachers to use it for

helping children in their learning and development at the given schooling level. The competence, the developmental activities, and the play materials and supportive aids for teaching should be described in details for the teachers to use them or the syllabus should be supported by other curriculum materials for the teachers to use it properly. But, the reality was contrary to this. Teaching methods were not indicated in the table parallel to the topics for the teachers. So, the curriculum for preprimary school education seemed to lack the needed level of adequacy to use and then the relevance of the curriculum material for children of the given level seemed to be put under a question mark.

6. The ECCE syllabus did not also show how to make the learning environment conducive for children. Besides, the syllabus or other curriculum documents for preschool teachers did not indicate sample work for the application of assessment means at preschools. This was because teachers need guidance either from the syllabus or other curriculum documents as to how to make the learning environment suitable for children and apply assessment means at preschools. Generally, the ECCE syllabus indicated the philosophical base, objectives, contents, methods of teaching in the form teachers' activities, assessment approaches, and thematic areas and resources for teaching the themes as well as the learning environment. But, the elements were not touched at the expected levels of clarity for teachers to use them at the given schooling level. The ideas communicated were too shallow for the teachers to use them in practice. Of course, additional materials were prepared for the three thematic areas (mathematics, language, and environmental science) in 2006 E.C. But, these materials were not found in all preschools. Besides, the materials did not properly cover all developmental areas.

The ECCE teachers were asked to rate their perception of the preparation of the ECCE syllabus by indicating the extent to which the syllabus incorporated guiding principles, basic elements of the curriculum, and contribution of the ECCE to children. The results obtained look like the following.

7. The basic and guiding principles of development and learning were considered in developing the Ethiopian preschool curriculum only at a medium level but not at a very high level as reported by the respondents. The percentage of the preschool teacher-respondents who reported that the guiding principles were considered in preparing and implementing the curriculum varied from 53.3% in creating secure relationships for the best development of

children to 65.8% in making the curriculum consider all domains of development. The overall average was 57.8%. So, this shows that the appropriateness of curriculum development for preschoolers had an undeniable gap in satisfying properly the developmental needs of the children for the reason that the preparation of the curriculum had considered the principles that reflected developmental needs and levels of children only at a reasonable level as reported by teachers. Besides, as learned from the document, the curriculum development practice did not follow the basic principles as much as expected, so the appropriateness of the curriculum preparation had a gap in fitting the developmental stage of children of the different age levels. Thus, the curriculum preparation and its practice would become appropriate if the basic principles of learning and development were taken into consideration at the highest level in the design, preparation, implementation, and evaluation of the curriculum. But, it was only almost half (a medium level) percentage of the respondents who rated saying that the preschool curriculum designed was done following the basic principles of curriculum preparation. So, the highest percentage of respondents was not reporting the consideration of the basic principles as expected in the practice of developing preschool curriculum of Ethiopia. Though the preparation of the curriculum had considered the basic principles of child development and learning that reflected the developmental needs and levels of children at a reasonable level as reported by teachers, the developmental appropriateness of the preschool curriculum practice for preschoolers had an undeniable gap in satisfying properly the developmental needs of the children. The curriculum practice would be appropriate for children learning and development at the highest level if the design, preparation, implementation and assessment stages of the practice incorporated the basic principles of learning. Though it was reported that the preschool curriculum practice of Ethiopia was designed following the basic principles of curriculum preparation, this idea was not supported by the highest percentage of respondents as expected.

8. The contents/activities in the curriculum of preschool education seemed to have a gap in their appropriateness for the reason that the contents were not rated at the expected highest level. The contents of the preschool education syllabus of Ethiopia were compared to the ten basic standard contents/skills or objectives as rated by experts. Out of the ten basic skills that were meant for the preschoolers as communicated in the international literature, only the five basic contents were presented clearly or directly in the preschool syllabus of Ethiopia. But, the rest five basic

contents/skills were presented in the syllabus either indirectly or dimly for all three age levels of children. Besides, with the exception of some differences in limited sub-contents, the contents for the three age levels of children seemed the same. Some slight differences were observed only in the syllabus of children of age 3-4 level. Thus, as observed from the syllabus, preschoolers of the three age levels were expected to learn the same five content areas or skills. The differences in the syllabus for the three age levels of children were only in the details of the concepts presented for the children from age level to age level. So, the contents and/or objectives for preschool children of the three age levels had similarities and in many cases, they were the same. Thus, it is possible to say that the relevance of the contents for the different learners in terms of age levels, individual differences and sociocultural contexts seemed to lack due attention in the syllabus of Ethiopian preschool education. Besides, many important contents that are useful for the life of the children were not properly addressed in the preschool syllabus of Ethiopia. Moreover, as learned from discussion with teachers, the syllabus did not involve other different important concepts that could enable children to learn useful skills to lead their daily life. The contents in the curriculum materials seemed to lack appropriateness for children of different levels. It demanded the teachers to rework the contents again to make them appropriate for children of different age levels. It was reported that making the contents appropriate to the kids was demanding /laborious for the teachers. But, if teachers did not rework the contents of the curriculum, the contents could not be relevant and fit for all children. It was also reported that the curriculum did not involve contents that could make children of 5-6 age ready for grade one. So, the contents seemed inappropriate for children of age 5-6 level.

9. It was also reported by preschool teachers that the contents in the syllabus had various problems in sequence, *i.e.*, the contents lacked logical arrangement. They involve unnecessary repetition, and the same contents were given to children of the three age levels. So, the appropriateness of the contents for the different age levels were found to be under question (*e.g.*, for 5-6 age children, the contents were below their capabilities and for nursery level, in some instances, the contents were too demanding for the kids to deal with). Thus, lack of logical ordering and redundancy of contents were common in preschool education to become age-appropriate for the children as reported by preschool teachers. It was further reported that the syllabus was not realized in the needed way for the fact that it could not be brought at the ground level in implementation. Some domains of development, such as emotional and moral

development were not clearly stated, and ethics in society was not properly considered. Besides, there was no proper bridge between preschool education and primary school education curricula so that grade one children who had completed preschool faced problems in starting and coping up with the grade one curriculum.

10. The contents and/ or objectives of preschool education for children of the three age levels in Ethiopia were similar. Thus, the appropriateness of the contents for children of the different levels in terms of age and individual differences and sociocultural contexts seemed to lack due attention in the syllabus of preschool education. Besides, many important concepts useful for the life of the children were not properly addressed in the preschool syllabus of Ethiopia. The preschool syllabus was expected to cover about ten different basic contents/skills with varying degrees of emphasis as learned from international experiences. But, the preschool children's curriculum materials of Ethiopia covered only five of them clearly. The rest contents were not covered properly. This indicates that the contents of Ethiopian preschool education were not full-fledged so that inappropriate for children of the given preschool level. Thus, the preschool education contents were not also up to international standards. It was reported that for preschool education, there were standards of guide, syllabus, and policy. But, the challenges would emerge in the implementation process in all cases. Thus, making the practice appropriate after evaluating the syllabus, policy, and guides should be thought in the future

11. The preschool teachers were asked to rate the contribution of ECCE for children of the period in the six content or skill areas. So, about 71.4%, 71.0%, 69.0%, 68.2%, 67.1%, and 66.5% of the respondents reported that the ECCE curriculum has contribution in enhancing social and emotional skills, laying the base for developing language skills, developing learning skills, laying the base for academic skills, developing physical skills, and developing dispositions to learning, respectively. The rest percentages (28.6%, 29.0%, 31.0%, 31.8%, 32.9%, and 33.5%) of respondents were showing either neutral or disagreement positions as to the contribution of the ECCE curriculum for enhancing social and emotional skills, laying the base for developing language skills, developing learning skills, laying the base for academic skills, developing physical skills, and developing dispositions to learning, respectively. This shows that the expected high percentage (i.e., about 75 and above percentage) of respondents did not agree on the contribution of the ECCE curriculum in the six content or activity areas.

12. The ECCE curriculum was also evaluated based on the extent that the curriculum involves instructional methods, assessment means, and other resources useful for children learning. So, instructional strategies included in the curriculum for preschoolers were found to be in a far less degree than expected as only almost half percentage of the respondents (i.e., 52.6%) rated the inclusion of the strategies in the curriculum. Besides, through analysis of documents of the curriculum for preschoolers, the only instructional methods suggested for coaching and developing children is play. But, other methods fit for children were not properly considered as additional means of helping children learn and develop. Many respondents reported that the usual methods that are used at grade-level schooling were also used at preschool levels. Generally, analysis of documents and responses from open-ended questions indicated that the instructional methods seemed insufficient and far from appropriateness for preschoolers. In other words, the methods applied at the three levels of preschools were methods more suitable for older children who are found at higher grade levels. Thus, it is possible to say that the methods of teaching used at the preschool levels need to be made appropriate for the age level.

13. The assessment used in the preschools seemed to have been actualized by means of traditional assessment tools like tests which were different from what expected. So, the assessment tools did not consider different learning styles of children. This may be due to the reason that the syllabus as a guide for teaching and assessing did not allow teachers to address individual differences as we learned from the documents.

14. The syllabus and other ECCE documents did not properly show the ways of applying appropriate assessments for children though the tools were already indicated in the ECCE documents /syllabus. Thus, it is clear that so called proper assessment techniques meant for preschool education in the Ethiopian context did not seem applicable so the assessment of preschool education in Ethiopia did not seem applicable as it did not seem to fit properly the developmental level of children. It was also confirmed through discussion and interviews with teachers and other concerned bodies that the assessment approaches employed in preschool education did not have clarity; it was rather vague and would create confusion in application. Assessment was often put into practice by testing children but assessments through taking notes and observation were not actualized as expected.

Research Questions 2: Learning Environment

15. The appropriateness of the learning environment for children was assessed using a rating scale with six sub-scales and 33 items. So, the suitability of the learning environment was rated at below or average level of adequacy in all items except one. No other item other than “Staff-child interactions (the presence of mutual respect b/n the child and adults)” was rated at an above-average level of adequacy. Even this item was rated at almost medium level of adequacy (i.e., 53.3%) in the sample preschools. So, out of the six sub-scales that indicated the conduciveness of preschool learning environment for children, the presence of proper interaction was rated by only 33.3% the participants at above medium level of adequacy in the observed sample preschools, and the rest indicators of suitable learning environment were rated at the medium level of adequacy by less than 33.3% of the participants. All these facts imply that the learning environment in the observed sample preschools of Ethiopia did not seem adequate or conducive to the proper implementation of the ECCE curriculum.

16. Besides, as learned from observation, there were many materials in the different classrooms but the contribution of the materials to encourage meaningful experiences could become under question. As a result, children might be in problem to choose one from the many materials found in the class. The classroom conditions vary from school to school ranging from very limited space for many children up to classrooms that are made of thin sheet of irons that would not be suitable even for the health of kids of the preschool levels.

17. Generally, the current conditions of the preschool curriculum, the instructional strategies used, assessment means employed, and the learning environment/classroom in the preschools of Ethiopia seemed to be found in need of amendment as reported by teachers. The curriculum materials in the classrooms for preschoolers were not developed in ways that would enable all the teachers to use them in a uniform way

Research Question 3: Teacher Education Program (TEP)

In trying to study the TEP as an indicator of relevance ECCE program, the courses for training ECCE teachers were assessed in terms of their use in equipping teachers with the balance of three knowledge areas and facts of relevant ECCE curriculum, and acquainting them with the

correspondence of the TEP courses to the objective, contents, and methods of teaching and assessment in the ECCE curriculum. The results are summarized as follows.

18. In the TEP, 25 courses with 67 (59.3%) credit hours ,15 courses with 41 (36.3%) credit hours , and 2 courses with 5(4.42%) credit hours were devoted to the content-knowledge area-related (both bridging and supportive courses), pedagogical knowledge areas, and knowledge about child development and learning area, respectively. Thus, the balance of content, pedagogical, and child learning and development knowledge areas as learned from the document had a very pronounced gap in the teachers' training program for preschool education. So, in studying the balance of the courses in the three knowledge areas, the child development and learning knowledge area seemed to be marginalized in the training program while it was important that teachers of the early childhood care and education program be made knowledgeable about child development. But, with two courses out of forty-two courses, it would not be possible to make teachers well versed with the knowledge of child development. It seems advisable to think in the future about the imbalance of the three knowledge areas in the training of teachers for the preschool education program. The syllabus indicated that the courses that acquaint teachers with knowledge of child development did not seem totally sufficient. So, in this area, it seems advisable to think and involve other courses in the future.

19. The subject-related pedagogical knowledge area courses did not involve courses that acquaint trainees with teaching methods pertaining to contents like natural and social sciences as well as ethics and art subjects. Besides, the general pedagogical knowledge areas courses did not involve courses that acquaint teacher-trainees with general teaching /active learning methods. So, the courses that acquaint trainees with overall knowledge about methods were totally forgotten. But, teaching methods especially active learning methods fit for children are highly needed for ECCE teachers and should be made clear to the teachers. The action research courses did not seem to be twined with preschool education for the reason that respondents did not favor the contribution of research in the training of ECCE teachers as expected. The syllabus did not include courses that acquaint teachers with general teaching methods and subject-specific pedagogical knowledge in some subjects. So, in these areas, it seems advisable to think and involve other courses in the future.

20. Though the training program was expected to help teachers in understanding the learning and development principles at a very high level, the truth is far from the expectation as it is learned from the responses of the participants of the study. Similarly, the training was expected to create a profound understanding about age, individual, and cultural appropriateness of the ECCE curriculum for preschoolers among trainees. But, in some items of the three types of appropriateness, the expected high levels of appropriateness were not achieved. Besides, the contribution of TEP in acquainting ECCE teachers with the five phases/cycles of learning did not seem to reach at the expected level of support. The training has limitations in helping teachers to be competent to follow the five learning cycles in teaching children

21. The support of sixteen out of the forty-two TEP courses in the training of the ECCE teachers were rated from 58.7% up to 74.2 % of the participants of the study. So, more than one-fourth of the respondents reported that the sixteen courses out of the forty-two courses had either a low or medium level of support for the ECCE teachers in developing or teaching /coaching children of the given schooling level. More specifically, the support of some of the TEP courses like basic mathematics, basic natural and social science, and the action research courses were rated at either low or medium-level by 32.2% up to 42.2% of the respondents as to their contribution to ECCE teachers in coaching and teaching preschoolers. Besides, as reported by some respondents through the interview, some courses of TEP for preschoolers were totally unrelated to the work on the ground. Some respondents said that learning some of the course like “plane and solid geometry” could not be clearly feasible in playing the role for children learning at the preschools. Thus, in revising courses of the teachers' training program for preschoolers would seem to be imperative. In line with this, the bridging courses (mathematics, basic natural science, basic social science, and action research courses) were commented by preschool teachers as irrelevant to teach the preschool children so that the courses need consideration in the future by concerned bodies.

22. The TEP had limitations in helping teachers to be competent in using curriculum at the highest level of achievement, in employing appropriate methods for guiding children to learn, in creating necessary conditions for children's development and learning, and in using different approaches to assess the development and learning of children. The TEP had limited support in using exploration, experimentation as methods to help children learn and observation as means of getting accurate information about development, interest, skills of coping with stress and

problem solving, temperament of children, and expressing the culture of the society in response to the context of children.

23. Out of all objectives listed in the ECCE syllabus, it was only in one objective that the correspondence of the two curricula (TEP and ECCE) arrived at a high (i.e., 80%) level of relation as reported by trainees. The correspondence of rest objectives in the ECCE syllabus to TEP courses ranged from 72.4% to 79.6%, and six objectives were rated at below 75% as to their relation to the TEP courses. So, from this fact, it is clear that a reasonably high percentage of the respondents rated the correspondence of the two curricula either at a low or medium level of relation.

24. So, the support of TEP in acquainting would-be-teachers with contents of the ECCE curriculum was not at the expected high level. It was expected of the TEP to acquaint trainees with all contents of ECCE at the highest level, i.e., more than 80% level. But, the fact did not confirm the expectation.

25. The methods of instruction and assessment means mentioned in the ECCE syllabus were limited to coaching, teaching, guiding, and developing children of the given schooling level. This is why such methods of helping children learn and develop as storytelling, exploration or experimentation, observation, excursion or field trips, inviting guests, making children share their experiences, dramatization and the like methods of helping children learn and develop were not indicated in the syllabus. Similarly, parallel methods to follow up on the day-to-day changes of children did not seem to be considered in assessing the learning and development of children.

Research Question 4: The Key Tasks of Effective Preschool Teachers

26. The ECCE teachers were also expected to rate their performance in practicing the five functions of ECCE teachers appropriate for children of the period. So, the ECCE teachers were rating their performance at a high level. But, it was not as high as expected. Many of them showed reservations. This was for the reason that almost one-fourth of the respondents reported their accomplishments at below an average level in all the five key tasks.

27. Though preschool teachers rated their tasks in the five key functions at a high level, the results obtained from the raters as to the teachers' accomplishment of the tasks in the sample preschools were contrary to the teachers' judgment of their own tasks. So, there was a mismatch between teachers' rating of their tasks and the raters' rating of the accomplishment of the tasks by the teachers. Practically, teachers were not properly practicing relevant tasks to children of the

different age levels, children with different needs or uniqueness in individuality, and children of different social and cultural contexts in the country. Of course, it seems necessary to replicate this present finding through further investigation on the subject.

28. Thus, while preschool teachers were made to list the methods they use in helping children, three methods out of many methods were listed by many of them. So, taken as a whole, the standard to be used in teaching preschoolers did not seem to be applied properly to be fit for the different age levels as reported by teachers at the expected high level of application.

29. Some very important teaching approaches that seem fit for children of the preschool levels like learning by watching, motivating children to participate in activities, supporting children to do things by themselves, making children learn through exercising/ movement, supporting children in doing dramatic play were employed at a negligible level of frequency by teachers of all the three age level learners. Besides, the methods employed by preschool teachers had similarities for all the three age level learners. Age-appropriate practice in applying different methods was not clearly observed. The similarities were more pronounced than differences in the application of teaching methods for the three age level children at the sample preschools as learned from reports of teachers.

30. Taken as a whole, the standard methods to be used in teaching preschoolers did not seem to be applied properly to fit different age level children as reported by teachers. Besides, teachers reported in the open-ended questions that the methods they followed in teaching and developing the different age learners had more similarities than differences for the different age level learners. It seems that children were made to learn with almost similar approaches though they were found at different age levels. The instructional strategies/methods communicated in the curriculum supposed to be used by teachers did not seem to be applied properly for the different age levels of children as reported by teachers. Besides, most methods used by preschool teachers were more suitable rather for older children at higher grade levels than for preschoolers.

Research question 5: Factors Affecting Preschool Education

31. As to the factors that either hindered or facilitated ECCE curriculum practice, teachers were expected to rate statements under the five categories of factors saying hindrance, facilitators, or neutral. So, about 59.9%, 57.2%, 56.9%, 55.5%, and 51.1% of teachers of preschool education rated the support from others, provision of services, policy, nature of the program, and resources as facilitators of ECCE curriculum practices respectively at medium or less than medium levels.

The percentage levels of rating at all factors were not far from the average and did not arrive at the expected high level in facilitating the appropriate practice of ECCE. In other words, a reasonably high percentage of respondents rated the issues as either a hindrance or not at all important level. About 40.1%, 42.8%, 43.1%, 44.5%, and 49.9% of the respondents rated the support from others, provision of services, policy, nature of the program, and resources either as a hindrance or unimportant level for curriculum implementation, respectively. More specifically, items like funding mechanisms for ECCE (e.g. finance and expertise, etc), Pushing down the curriculum (-Teaching the grade subjects at preschools), Group size and adult-child ratio in the preschools, Space for program setting in the ECCE, and the provision of health services were rated as either hindering or unimportant conditions during ECCE curriculum practice by 53.6%, 53.3%, 50.5%, 50.0%, and 49.6% of the respondents, respectively. The rest factors were rated as facilitators in the range from 64.6% for Continuous professional development for teachers (CPD) up to 55.5% for ECCE enrollment, financial and professional policy, law & regularities as well as monitoring, regulating, and intervention system in the ECCE internal affairs. But, seemingly a significant percentage (i.e., 35.4% to 44.5%) of the respondents rated the factors either as a hindrance or unimportant factors in promoting the ECCE curriculum practices. Besides, through interviews and discussions with preschool education experts and through documentary analysis, the practice of preschool curriculum was discovered to have been associated with many problems.

32. Through open-ended questions on an individual or group basis, respondents indicated some other factors as the hindrance in the curriculum practice. Some of the factors that make curriculum practice inappropriate for children are factors related to the process of curriculum materials preparation, the nature of objectives and/or contents in the preschool curriculum, and problems related to the learning environment, the use of teaching methods, assessment and other conditions like administration of preschool curriculum practice. Besides, the curriculum practice was associated with some other problems like lack of proper attention from the concerned bodies as to the preparation of the materials, the experience from other countries gained may not represent the Ethiopia context properly, lack of collaboration, continuity, proper management, and the inadequacy of the standard contents, learning objectives, instructional methods, and assessment for different age level children. So, these problems need attention in future practice.

Research question 6: Measures for Alleviating the Problems

33. On top of this, respondents tried to show some remedial measures to be taken for enhancement of the ECCE practice in the future. Thus, some measures to be taken for making the curriculum practice appropriate for children of different age levels include modifying contents and developing material, making learning context more suitable thinking about classroom setting and instructional strategies and training of ECCE teachers, and bringing changes in attitude and responsibility of concerned bodies. These measures could help in making the curriculum practice more suitable for the developmental levels of the learners if they are given due consideration in the future.

5.2. Recommendation

To make the preschool curriculum and its practice developmentally relevant for children, the following points should be taken into account in the future.

- The curriculum developers and the practitioners should follow the basic principles of curriculum preparation and implementation to make the curriculum and its practice appropriate for the age and unique needs of children within their social and cultural context in the future. This enables to meet the standard international experiences of the preschool curriculum development practice .
- The contents in the preschool curriculum should incorporate additional relevant domains other than the five domains targeting at making children ready for future life by focusing on the objectives of developing different psychosocial skills-the skills neglected in all levels of schooling including preschool education. On top of this, contents that are related to the tasks of developing necessary ethical and moral qualities as well as content areas that focus on indigenous knowledge should be involved as part of preschool education for children for they are useful for leading personal and social life properly. The skills of learning to learn and disposition towards learning should be given emphasis and should be incorporated in the curriculum starting from the preschool level in addition to the contents of the academic area skills. The developmental aspects would be made more than the four areas indicated in the syllabus of preschool education. Thus,

the ECCE curriculum developers and implementers would base in the future on the model below in preparing and implementing curriculum for preschool education. The model could be thought of diagrammatically as follows

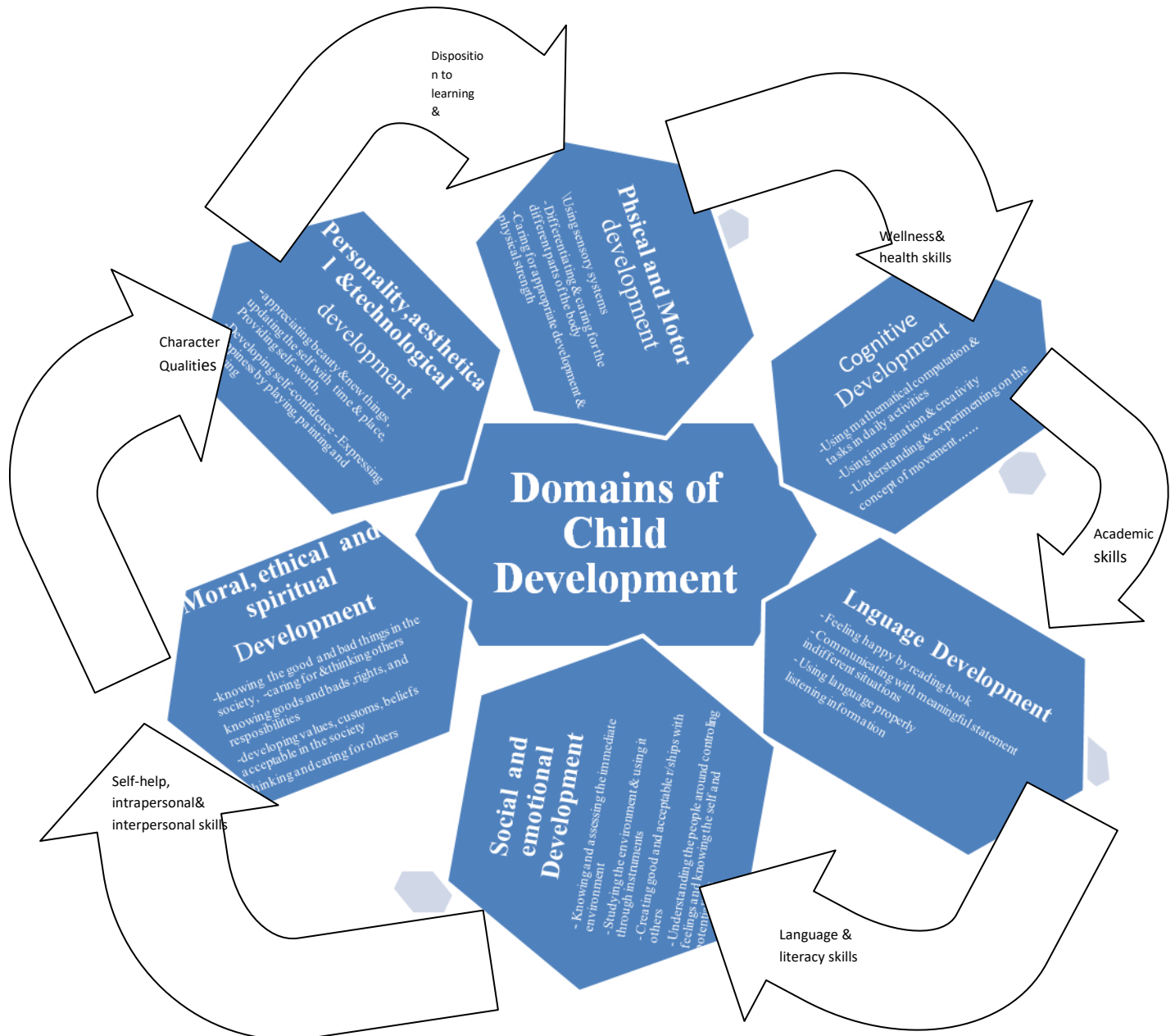


Figure7: The developmental aspects to be covered in the curriculum of preschool education

- Thus, the curriculum/ syllabus for preschoolers should not only focus on developing physical, cognitive and language, social and emotional domains or the academic subjects

related to the five themes mentioned in the syllabus. As learned from literature at the global level, preschool education should enable children to lay the base for the moral, spiritual, ethical, and personal aspects of development, too. So, children are expected to develop many skills like how to learn, how to manage themselves (self-help and intrapersonal skills), thinking others and care for others as human beings, appreciate nature, and other necessary qualities that enable them to become good citizens for oneself and for the society in that showing different personal qualities as a person doing things with confidence. Thus, these important components of good citizens were not explicitly reflected in the existing preschool syllabus/curriculum of Ethiopia. Thus, these skills should be given emphasis starting from the preschool level in addition to teaching children about academic area skills. Besides, the knowledge about values, customs and culture, and other accumulated experiences in the society (indigenous knowledge) should be inculcated in children starting from early life. So, the ways of learning to learn, creativity and technology, the common values learned from the spiritual and moral life of the Ethiopian societies, and the ways of leading healthy life should also be included in the curriculum of preschools in the country in the future.

- The curriculum /syllabus for ECCE did not show clearly the fit methods of instruction, appropriate assessment means, suitable learning environment, and resources for children learning in a needed way. So, fit methods of instruction, appropriate assessment means, and ways of creating learning conditions conducive for children should be elements to be clearly indicated in the future syllabus for preschoolers.
- The syllabus should show how to make the learning environment conducive for children. If teachers are not guided properly by the syllabus and other curriculum documents in their task of making the learning environment suitable, the task of creating a suitable learning environment may not be feasible. Besides, the learning environment did not seem at the proper level of suitability due to the reason that they were working and learning in a room full of unfit chairs and desks meant meant and arranged for older children at the upper grade levels rather than for preschool children (nursery-age 3-4, kindergarten-age 4-5, and preparatory for grade-age 5-6).

- The instructional strategies employed seem to be approaches more appropriate for older children than for preschoolers. Thus, the methods of teaching used at the preschool levels need to be made appropriate for the age and individuality of the preschool children.
- The assessments employed at the preschool level were often assessments practiced with older children of the grade levels. But, sample work for the application of assessment means at preschools should be given in the syllabus or other curriculum documents for preschool teachers.
- The curriculum, learning context, instructional strategies, and assessment would be made developmentally appropriate for children. This is for the reason that the preschool curriculum practice seems to lack appropriateness for the developmental level of the preschool children in terms of the curriculum materials, learning scenarios, instructional strategies, and assessment approaches used. Besides, it is advisable to develop a guide for the proper implementation of the preschool curriculum. So, to realize the syllabus of preschool education properly, teachers' friendly guides and students' workbooks are very important so as to make facts easily visualized. This means that to make the curriculum and its practice appropriate for the developmental level of children, it would be advisable to have teaching materials prepared with pictures and traces to support the teaching of text, which would enable children to use their different senses and learning styles.
- The teacher Education Program (TEP) should create a balance of the three knowledge areas of the training. This is for the reason that child development and learning as one area of knowledge was totally marginalized and some professional knowledge area courses were not included in the list of the courses. Besides, the TEP should be upgraded to the degree level in the future and those marginalized or the forgotten knowledge areas courses would be included in more detailed and expanded contents in the future.
- The Early Childhood Care and Education teachers reported that they realized the five key functions of relevant practices at high level. But, the raters rated at a "poor level of performance" as to the accomplishments of the five key functions of teachers in the sample preschools.
- The curriculum practice of preschool teachers lacked appropriateness for the developmental level of the preschool children in terms of supplying enhanced curriculum

materials, creating suitable learning scenarios, applying fit instructional strategies, and using acceptable assessment approaches for children that are brought to the ground/classroom level. So, the current conditions of promoting the preschool curriculum in terms of developing instructional tasks, creating a suitable learning environment/classroom, using fit instructional strategies, and employing assessment means in the preschools of Ethiopia was found to be in need of amendment as reported by many concerned bodies. So, the performance of teachers undoubtedly has a problem. Thus, teacher trainers should provide emphasis for the key functions /tasks of preschool teachers in the training time.

- Different concerned bodies should take the responsibility for the betterment of the future practice of preschool curriculum. To do so, it seems highly advisable to create a connection between preschool and primary education in that either by revising the KG education again or grade one level education or reconsidering the contents of age 5-6 children to make it the starting point for the education of grade one. Teachers' guides and student text should be prepared to be used properly for children of the three age levels for the uniformity of education at all pre-schools in the country. Thus, MOE should take the mandate in preparing such guides and books for preschool education. This is for the fact that MOE did not seem to engage in the preparation of a guide or a book for preschool education except syllabus and policy preparation till recently. As a result preschool education materials were prepared by the initiative of individuals with the support of an NGO. But, the MOE is also expected to work in collaboration with the NGO, like the support of Action Aids, for developing the materials for preschool education.
- On top of this, this study was focusing on curriculum components like contents, learning context/environment, instructional strategies (one of the various elements of teachers' behavior), and assessment. The components of curriculum practice were not fully treated in the study. So, future studies on the area should focus on other components like teachers' behavior and performance at classroom levels, and process and experiences of the curriculum planning practices as variables in investigating the developmental appropriateness of preschool curriculum for the preschoolers of Ethiopia.

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7. APPENDICES

Part I: Tools for Assessing curriculum, its Elements and Practice, and other conditions

Annex 1: Questionnaire on ECCE curriculum, its elements, contributions and practices, and factors affecting the practices

Addis Ababa University
School of graduate studies
Department of curriculum and instruction

Questionnaire to be filled by preprimary school teachers

This questionnaire is used to collect data about preprimary school education curriculum to study whether the curriculum/syllabus consists of basic principles of development and learning, and the elements that make the curriculum appropriate, and whether the curriculum has contribution for the development and learning of the early childhood period children. Besides, the questionnaire involves items that explore the appropriateness of the preschool teachers' practice, utilization of basic learning strategies, and conditions/ factors that affect the practice in order to conduct study on the title **“The Relevance of Early Childhood care and Education curriculum and its practice in Ethiopia”**. Thus, the study has the goal of airing out the relevance of the curriculum and its practices for the preschoolers, and other factors that promote the relevance of the practice at the preprimary schools. The Information you provide will be used only for research purpose. Please attempt all the questions for the reason that your response to all items in the questionnaire contributes to the success of the research. So, you are kindly requested to provide your answer with full heartedly and genuinely for the success of this research. Your answers will be kept confidential. Please do not write your name or any other identifiers on the questionnaire.

Thank you for your time!

A. Back ground Information

Directions: For each of the statements (questions) below, please put tick mark (v) in the box Corresponding to the appropriate information about you.

1. Sex: Male ☐ Female ☐
2. Age: Below 25yrs ☐ 25 - 40yrs ☐ above 40yrs ☐
3. You teach children of age: 3-4 years ☐ 4-5 years ☐ 5-6 years ☐ all years ☐

4. Your Work Experience = Less than 5 years ☐ 5 - 10 years ☐ more than 10 years ☐

B. Scale about preschool curriculum

1. Statements about the principles of child development and learning

Directions: There are twelve guiding principles of child development and learning that should be considered in preparing appropriate curriculum that fits for developmental needs of preschool children. The principles are listed as statement below. So, indicate to what extent the principles are considered in the preparation of preprimary school curriculum of Ethiopia by encircling the number (ranging from 5 it is considered at very high level to 1 it is considered at negligible level) that corresponds to the statements.

I.	To what extent does the ECCE curriculum take in to account the principles listed below?	at ver y	at reas ona	at ave rag	at low	at negl igib le
I	The ECCE curriculum addresses that development and learning of children ----					
1.	consider all developmental areas as important to create whole child	5	4	3	2	1
2.	follow sequential process with clearly stated objectives	5	4	3	2	1
3.	proceed at varying rates for each child	5	4	3	2	1
4.	result from the interaction of maturation and experience.	5	4	3	2	1
5.	are profoundly affected by early experiences.	5	4	3	2	1
6.	proceed toward greater complexity, self-regulation, and symbolic capacities.	5	4	3	2	1
7.	occur in and are influenced by multiple social and cultural contexts	5	4	3	2	1
8.	advance when children are challenged with meaningful contents.	5	4	3	2	1
9.	happen in a variety of ways using the different senses .	5	4	3	2	1
10.	occur at best when they have secured relations with others.	5	4	3	2	1
11.	enhance experience to shape their motivation and learning approaches	5	4	3	2	1
12.	promote self-regulation, language, cognition, and social competence using play	5	4	3	2	1

2. Statements about ECCE curriculum Elements that make it relevant for children

Directions: The following are representative statements that indicate the appropriateness of ECCE curriculum elements (content /activities, the instructional strategies, assessment in the ECCE curriculum as well as the needed resources indicated in the curriculum) for practice. So, please rate to what extent the curriculum involves these elements as assessed in line with the guiding criteria listed by encircling the number (ranging from 5 = at very high level to 0=not at all) that corresponds to each of the statements.

R No		The extent that the curriculum involves the elements to realize relevant practice					
	II. To what extent the guide lines below are involved in ECCE curriculum for relevant practice?	Not at all	rarely	To some extent	At a medium level	At a high level	At very high level
A. The contents/activities in the curriculum for preschoolers :							
1	Integrate all domains of development (physical, social, emotional, and cognitive e.t.c.).	0	1	2	3	4	5
2	are relevant, meaningful that bases on prior experiences of children to make connections.	0	1	2	3	4	5
3	Challenge children yet achievable with sufficient adult support.	0	1	2	3	4	5
4	Consider the developmental levels of each child.	0	1	2	3	4	5
5	Allow children to be active learners.	0	1	2	3	4	5
6	Do not consider the integration of the different content areas.	0	1	2	3	4	5
B. The instructional strategies in the curriculum for preschoolers :							
1	Include a balance of active and passive activities.	0	1	2	3	4	5
2	Offer a variety of novel experiences to stimulate ideas and problem solving.	0	1	2	3	4	5
3	Encourage children to choose for planning their learning activities.	0	1	2	3	4	5
4	Model for demonstrating specific skills.	0	1	2	3	4	5
5	Indicate differentiated instruction to the learning experiences for different aged children.	0	1	2	3	4	5
6	Provide a balance between self-initiated and teacher directed learning.	0	1	2	3	4	5
C. The assessment means in the curriculum for preschoolers:							
1	Include anecdotal records/notes to enhance children development.	0	1	2	3	4	5
2	Involve observation as key tools for assessing learning and growth.	0	1	2	3	4	5
3	Include other standard-based approaches that lead to authentic results.	0	1	2	3	4	5
4	Enable to share useful information about learning strengths and needs of children.	0	1	2	3	4	5
5	Help to show progress and growth of students over time.	0	1	2	3	4	5
D. The curriculum for preschoolers indicates the needed resources like :							
1	Sufficient space for learning centers in which children can select to plan their activities.	0	1	2	3	4	5
2	Comfortable furnishings in the class for quiet and active social interactions.	0	1	2	3	4	5
3	Clearly labeled areas for books and pictures to encourage independence learning.	0	1	2	3	4	5
4	Attention catching materials in or out of the class that enhance meaningful experiences.	0	1	2	3	4	5
5	Indoor equipments (e.g. toys/dolls, computers, medical , or science)	0	1	2	3	4	5
6	Outdoor play equipments for motor activities and socialization	0	1	2	3	4	5
7	the safety materials in and out of the class	0	1	2	3	4	5

3. Statements about the Contributions of ECCE curriculum

Directions: The following are statements that indicate the contribution of ECCE curriculum /syllabus in achieving the preschool education goals. So, please rate the level of your agreement as to the contribution of ECCE curriculum for achieving the goals in line with guidelines listed to assess the relevance of the curriculum for children of the period by encircling the number (ranging from 5 = strongly agree to 1= strongly disagree) that corresponds to each of the statements

III	Please show the level of your agreement as to the contribution of ECCE curriculum /syllabus in achieving the following preschool education goals?	strongly disagree 1	disagree 2	Neutral 3	agree 4	strongly agree 5
A	The curriculum for children contributes to lay base for academic skills ; such as,					
1	creating academic preparedness for future learning	1	2	3	4	5
2	developing children's Problem solving skills	1	2	3	4	5
3	displaying critical/analytical thinking skills	1	2	3	4	5
4	showing competence in different academic subjects	1	2	3	4	5
5	displaying capabilities in handling books and things	1	2	3	4	5
B	The curriculum for children contributes for developing physical skills ; such as,					
1	helping to learn about Physical wellbeing /wellness	1	2	3	4	5
2	displaying effective motor /movement skills ,	1	2	3	4	5
3	showing necessary body muscle coordination skills	1	2	3	4	5
4	Safe guarding self- healthy living skills	1	2	3	4	5
5	showing persistence, endurance and self directing in doing tasks	1	2	3	4	5
C	The ECCE curriculum contributes to enhance Social and emotional skills ; such as,					
1	displaying social and interpersonal skills(cooperation, caring ,relationships)	1	2	3	4	5
2	learning teamwork spirits or skills	1	2	3	4	5
3	demonstrating traits like positive attitude , honesty, trust, respect for others	1	2	3	4	5
4	managing one's behaviors and affairs	1	2	3	4	5
5	exercising the Self- help and other intrapersonal skills	1	2	3	4	5
6	building self-confidence /self-direction skills	1	2	3	4	5
D	The curriculum for children contributes to lay base for developing language skills ; such as,					
1	Language and literacy as oral , signal , and reading skills	1	2	3	4	5
2	the skill of communication with the needed vocabularies	1	2	3	4	5
3	listening and understanding skills	1	2	3	4	5
4	writing skills like writing letters and numbers	1	2	3	4	5
5	Expressing the self- feeling with music and art skills	1	2	3	4	5
E	The curriculum for children contributes for developing dispositions to learning ; such as,					
1	having self-motivation for learning	1	2	3	4	5
2	following best approaches to learning	1	2	3	4	5
3	developing interest towards the learned subjects	1	2	3	4	5
4	having positive attitude towards their learning	1	2	3	4	5
5	starting to value the relevance of learning for later life	1	2	3	4	5
F.	The curriculum for children contributes for developing learning skills ; such as,					
1	developing learning to learn skills	1	2	3	4	5
2	Showing good character traits like honesty, trust, respect in learning	1	2	3	4	5
3	having value orientation towards learning	1	2	3	4	5
4	Engaging & committing the self in learning	1	2	3	4	5
5	demonstrating responsibility for age-appropriate tasks	1	2	3	4	5
6	showing turn-taking habits during activities with others	1	2	3	4	5

C. Scale about preschool curriculum practice

1. Statement about the five key functions of preschool teachers

Directions: In the following table, representative sample items of Appropriate Practices in the five key function areas of DAP guide for preschoolers are listed that use to evaluate whether the practice at the preschool education is appropriate or not. So, as teacher of preschool, indicate the extent of your accomplishment of the tasks by encircling from the number that corresponds to the statements.

I	As preschool teachers, to what extent you practice the five key functions of teachers listed below in the preschool classes?	The extent of doing the activities				
		Not at all	Rarely	Average	Most often	Always
A	In Creating a caring community of learners, how often you try to :					
1	Provide nurturing, loving, responsive, joyous, and safe care for children-	1	2	3	4	5
2	Build consistent & caring relation among children, families, and co-workers.	1	2	3	4	5
3	Value and respect all members of the learning community.	1	2	3	4	5
4	Celebrate & embrace diversity, reflecting children's cultures in the class and activities.	1	2	3	4	5
5	Create positive collaborations with families and colleagues to support children's learning.	1	2	3	4	5
6	Focus on building self-confidence, self-regulation, and problem-solving skills.	1	2	3	4	5
7	promote a positive climate for learning by fostering a cohesive and democratic group.	1	2	3	4	5
B	In Teaching to enhance development and learning, how often you try to :					
1	Offer both child initiated and teacher-directed learning experiences.	1	2	3	4	5
2	Be responsive to children's ideas by offering materials, documenting samples work, photographs, & having thoughtful conversation built on their ideas, skills, & knowledge.	1	2	3	4	5
3	Plan for hands on experiences where children learn by doing.	1	2	3	4	5
4	Plan enough time for children to explore and fully engage in their interests.	1	2	3	4	5
5	Build children's learning with activities that challenge and expand on what they can do.	1	2	3	4	5
6	create fit environment and schedule for the learners.	1	2	3	4	5
7	use variety of teaching strategies fit for the children.	1	2	3	4	5
C	In Constructing appropriate curriculum, how often you try to :					
1	Identify core learning goals for individual children and the program.	1	2	3	4	5
2	Prepare a curriculum framework that reflects learning goals.	1	2	3	4	5
3	Use the framework for planning activities, experiences, and routines.	1	2	3	4	5
4	Present rich content in different work areas that have meaningful connections to children's interests, curiosities, and development.	1	2	3	4	5
5	Use fit, coherent and effective curriculum contents and approaches for children.	1	2	3	4	5
6	Integrate the contents of different subject areas.	1	2	3	4	5
7	create smooth transitions between programs or group activities.	1	2	3	4	5
D	In Assessing children's learning and development, how often you try to :					
1	Assess what is appropriate for children developmentally, individually, and culturally.	1	2	3	4	5
2	Use tools that allow for assessing children in an authentic, ongoing, and intentional manner.	1	2	3	4	5
3	Gather information from multiple sources, as families, children, and other teachers.	1	2	3	4	5
4	employ multiple methods of assessment including performance based assessments.	1	2	3	4	5
5	Develop a system for collecting and compiling assessment information.	1	2	3	4	5
6	use assessment results to identify and give learning support for different learners.					
7	Use assessment results for planning, decision-making, communicating with families and other colleagues.	1	2	3	4	5
E	In Reciprocal relationships with parents and families, how often you try to :					
1	Welcome all families into the program inviting them to participate in a variety of ways.	1	2	3	4	5
2	Work in partnership with families involving them in planning for their children.	1	2	3	4	5
3	Communicate regularly with families in an open, positive, two-way manner.	1	2	3	4	5
4	Respect and acknowledge the goals, wishes and choices of family for their child.	1	2	3	4	5
5	Be responsive to family concerns recognizing them as first teachers.	1	2	3	4	5
6	Schedule Conferences to discuss expectations of parents for their children and answer any question they may have about the curriculum.	1	2	3	4	5

Source: Jambunathan, S. and Caulfield, M. (2012) . Developmentally Appropriate Practices in Asian Indian Early Childhood Classrooms and Penneslavia childcare center

2. Statement about the utilization of basic instructional strategies for practice

Directions: In the table below, ten instructional strategies for practice at preschool are listed. Please indicate to what extent you or other practitioners use the instructional strategies in helping children at preprimary school to learn by encircling the number (ranging 5= used all the times to 0=not at all) that corresponds to the statements.

R. No	To what extent are you or other practitioners using each strategy listed below in helping children to learn?	the extent of Utilizing the instructional strategies					
		Not at all	negligibly	used rarely	used at average	used often	used always
1	Acknowledging what children do or say.	0	1	2	3	4	5
2	Encouraging persistence and effort than praising and evaluating work of children.	0	1	2	3	4	5
3	Giving specific feedback rather than general comments.	0	1	2	3	4	5
4	Modeling attitudes, problems approaches, and behavior toward others, showing children rather than just telling them	0	1	2	3	4	5
5	Demonstrating the correct way to do something for children.	0	1	2	3	4	5
6	Creating or adding challenge so that a task goes a bit beyond what the children can already do and show hint of working it to reduce the challenge.	0	1	2	3	4	5
7	Asking questions that provoke children's thinking	0	1	2	3	4	5
8	Giving assistance (cue/hint) to help children work on the edge of their current competence	0	1	2	3	4	5
9	Providing information , telling facts and other information for new issues.	0	1	2	3	4	5
10	Giving directions for children's action or behavior.	0	1	2	3	4	5

D. Statement about Hindering or Facilitating Conditions of preschool curriculum practice

Directions: In the table below, conditions that affect (hinder or facilitate) the curriculum practice at preschool are listed. Please indicate to what extent the conditions are becoming a hindrance or a facilitator or otherwise in practicing ECCE curriculum at preprimary school of Ethiopia by encircling the number (ranging 5= high facilitator through 3= not important to 1 = high hindrance) that corresponds to the statements.

I	Please rate the following conditions as hindrance or facilitators in promoting appropriate practice for children in the preschools?	Hindrance		Not important	Facilitator		undecided
		1	2		4	5	
1	ECCE enrollment, financial and professional policy, law & regularities	1	2	3	4	5	
2	Monitoring, regulating, and intervention system in the ECCE internal affairs	1	2	3	4	5	
3	External quality regulation requirements and expectations	1	2	3	4	5	
4	Multilevel continuous quality improvement system	1	2	3	4	5	
5	Family involvement in preschool activities	1	2	3	4	5	
6	Support of Institutions for the practice	1	2	3	4	5	
7	Support of Community for the practice	1	2	3	4	5	
8	Support of academic community for the practice	1	2	3	4	5	
9	Support structure like effective leadership & supervision for the program	1	2	3	4	5	
10	Continuous professional development for teachers (CPD)	1	2	3	4	5	
11	Suitable and sufficient set of Resources for practice	1	2	3	4	5	
12	Funding mechanisms for ECCE (e.g. finance and expertise, etc)	1	2	3	4	5	
13	Group size and adult-child ratio in the preschools	1	2	3	4	5	
14	Space for program setting in the ECCE	1	2	3	4	5	
15	The provision of health services	1	2	3	4	5	
16	The provision of nutritional services	1	2	3	4	5	
17	The provision of other social services	1	2	3	4	5	
18	Transition and continuity from home to preprimary schools	1	2	3	4	5	
19	Transition and continuity from preprimary to elementary schools	1	2	3	4	5	
20	Pushing down the curriculum-Teaching the grade subjects at preschools	1	2	3	4	5	

Annex 2: Checklist for assessing the appropriateness of curriculum objectives and contents

Addis Ababa University

School of graduate studies

Department of curriculum and instruction

1. The objectives/ contents to be included in the ECCE curriculum to make it appropriate for children

Directions: In the table below, standard objectives and/or contents to be included in preschool curriculum are listed. please indicate the overall extent that each of the given objectives and/ or contents are included in the preschool education curriculum of Ethiopia by encircling from the number that corresponds to the statements and then put remarks under the level from the three age level children curriculum material where the contents are stated.

No	To what extent do the objectives and/or the contents stated below are included in the curriculum of Ethiopian preschool education?	stated Clearly	Stated indirectly	Stated dimly	Not stated at all	indicate the age gap that correspond with as Remarks		
						3-4	4-5	5- 6
1	Social and Interpersonal Skills: Human beings are social, and much of students' learning involves social interactions:	3	2	1	0			
	• Getting along with other children and adults	3	2	1	0			
	• developing good relationships with teachers	3	2	1	0			
	• Helping others for developing caring attitudes	3	2	1	0			
	• Playing cooperatively	3	2	1	0			
	• working with others cooperatively	3	2	1	0			
	• Following classroom rules	3	2	1	0			
2	Self-Help and Intrapersonal Skills: Children must learn how to manage their behavior and their affairs:	3	2	1	0			
	• Taking care of personal needs, such as dressing (e.g., tying, buttoning, zipping)	3	2	1	0			
	• knowing what clothes to wear	3	2	1	0			
	• Eating skills (e.g., using utensils, napkins, and a cup or glass; setting a table)	3	2	1	0			
	• Health skills (e.g., how to wash and bathe, how to brush one's teeth)	3	2	1	0			
	• Grooming skills (e.g., combing hair, cleaning nails)	3	2	1	0			
3	Approaches to Learning: motivating children to learn and helping them develop positive dispositions toward learning. it is also known as dispositions to learning and include these components:	3	2	1	0			
	• Self-regulation of attention and behavior	3	2	1	0			
	• Effective social skills to develop a positive relationship with others	3	2	1	0			
	• Positive attitude toward learning	3	2	1	0			
	• Self-motivation for learning	3	2	1	0			
	• Listening skills	3	2	1	0			
	• Ability to set goals	3	2	1	0			
	• develop and follow through on plans	3	2	1	0			
	• Understanding rules and routines	3	2	1	0			

	• accepting, and following rules and routines	3	2	1	0			
	• Finding more than one solution to a question	3	2	1	0			
4	Learning to Learn: Learning how to learn is as important as learning itself—in fact, learning depends on the acquisition of learning skills:	3	2	1	0			
	• Self-help skills to promote a good self-image and high self-esteem	3	2	1	0			
	• Knowledge of self, family, and culture	3	2	1	0			
	• Sense of self-worth	3	2	1	0			
	• Persistence, cooperation, self-control, and motivation to learn	3	2	1	0			
	• Growing confidence	3	2	1	0			
	• Responsibility for age-appropriate tasks	3	2	1	0			
	• Turn taking during activities with other children	3	2	1	0			
5	Academic SUBJECTS: As academics plays a more central role in preschool curriculum, some key areas of knowledge include these:	3	2	1	0			
	• Names, addresses, and phone numbers	3	2	1	0			
	• Colors, sizes, shapes identification	3	2	1	0			
	• positions, such as under, over, and around							
	• Numbers, letter , sounds, and rhyming recognition	3	2	1	0			
	• prewriting skills	3	2	1	0			
	• Simple sentence structure	3	2	1	0			
	• Simple addition and subtraction	3	2	1	0			
	• Ways to handle a book	3	2	1	0			
6	Language and Literacy: helping preschool children learn literacy skills. To develop language and literacy skills, they must work on a variety of capabilities:	3	2	1	0			
	• Oral language skills	3	2	1	0			
	• Vocabularies	3	2	1	0			
	• Conversations with other children and adults	3	2	1	0			
	• Proficiency in language	3	2	1	0			
	• Literacy skills related to writing and reading	3	2	1	0			
	• Letters of the alphabet	3	2	1	0			
	• Listening comprehension	3	2	1	0			
	• Motivation to read	3	2	1	0			
	• Print awareness	3	2	1	0			
	• Ways to use and appreciate books	3	2	1	0			
7	Character Education: Many schools identify, with parents' help, the character traits they want all students to demonstrate. Children need multiple opportunities to learn about and demonstrate character traits like :	3	2	1	0			
	• Positive mental attitude	3	2	1	0			
	• Persistence	3	2	1	0			
	• Respect for others	3	2	1	0			
	• Cooperation	3	2	1	0			
	• Honesty	3	2	1	0			
	• Trustworthiness	3	2	1	0			
	• Sensitivity	3	2	1	0			
8	Music and the Arts: Brain research supports the use of	3	2	1	0			

	music and the arts to encourage learning in all areas. Preschoolers can learn about music and the arts in many ways							
	• Varied materials (e.g., crayons, paint, clay, markers) to create original work	3	2	1	0			
	• Different colors, surface textures, and shapes to create form and meaning	3	2	1	0			
	• Art as a form of self-expression	3	2	1	0			
	• Music activities	3	2	1	0			
	• Movement to music of various tempos	3	2	1	0			
	• Varieties of simple songs	3	2	1	0			
	• Dramatic play with others	3	2	1	0			
9	Wellness and Healthy Living: children achieve their best when they are healthy. Helping children learn healthy habits will help them do well in school and such habits include :	3	2	1	0			
	• Good nutritional practices	3	2	1	0			
	• New foods, a balanced menu, and essential nutrients	3	2	1	0			
	• Management of personal belongings	3	2	1	0			
	• Ability to dress oneself appropriately	3	2	1	0			
	• Personal hygiene, such as washing one's hands and blowing one's nose	3	2	1	0			
10	Independence: Skills of independence help children have the confidence they need to achieve in school activities	3	2	1	0			
	• Doing things for themselves	3	2	1	0			
	• Taking responsibility for passing out, collecting, and organizing materials	3	2	1	0			
	• Learning self-direction	3	2	1	0			

2. The ten basic instructional strategies to be considered to make the curriculum appropriate

Directions: In the table below, ten instructional strategies for practice at preschool are listed. Please indicate first whether the ten instructional strategies listed below are indicated or not in the curriculum by circling “yes” or “no” and then indicate the evidence from the curriculum material for your “yes” answers.

II	Does the ECCE curriculum indicate the following instructional strategies for action? Please indicate the evidence from the material for your “yes” answers.	yes , it indicated	no , not indicated	evidence for yes
1	Acknowledging what children do or say.	Yes	no	
2	Encouraging persistence and effort than praising and evaluating work of children.	Yes	no	
3	Giving specific feedback rather than general comments.	Yes	no	
4	Modeling attitudes, problems approaches, and behavior toward others, showing children rather than just telling them	Yes	no	
5	Demonstrating the correct way to do something for children.	Yes	no	
6	Creating or adding challenge so that a task goes a bit beyond what the children can already do and show hint of working it to reduce the challenge.	Yes	no	
7	Asking questions that provoke children's thinking	Yes	no	
8	Giving assistance (as a cue or hint) to help children work on the edge of their current competence	Yes	no	
9	Providing information , telling facts and other information for new issues.	Yes	no	
10	Giving directions for children's action or behavior.	Yes	no	
	(If there other tools list and rate)			

11. Please state your overall judgment /comment about the objectives and contents of Ethiopian preschool curriculum.

Annex 3: Interview Question 1

Addis Ababa University
School of graduate studies
Department of curriculum and instruction
Interview Questions about ECCE Curriculum and its Practice

1. As preprimary school teachers, have you tried to make instruction developmentally appropriate for children? To what extent you make the practice developmentally appropriate?

2. Does the preprimary school curriculum allow you apply developmentally appropriate practice?

3. Are there other factors that limit you from practicing developmentally appropriate teaching for children?

4 Please list down the major factors that you think affect the implementation of the ECCE curriculum in your school.

Internal/school factors _____

External factors _____

5. In what ways do you think we can improve the current relevance of preschool education practices? Please state your suggestions for improvement

6. What are the basic strategies that teachers use to help children learn at different levels of preschools?

a. For 3-4 age children

b. For 4-5 age children

c. For 5-6 age children

7. How do you see the appropriateness of learning environment of the preschools for children's learning?

Part II: Tools for Assessing Learning Environment

Annex 4: Rating scale for assessing the appropriateness of Learning Environment

Addis Ababa university
School of graduate studies
Department of curriculum and instruction

Environmental Rating Scale to assess the appropriateness of the learning environment for preschool education used by experienced evaluators

Directions: The following statements signify ideas that help in evaluating the learning environment for preschool education, indicate to what extent each statement organized under seven subscales as to the preschool learning conditions of Ethiopia by encircling from the number (ranging from 5= totally adequate to 1= totally inadequate) that corresponds to the statements and put remarks how the conditions are adequately found in the preschool.

R.No	Items in the scale	Totally inadequate (1)	fairly adequate (2)	adequate at average (3)	highly adequate (4)	totally adequate (5)
I	Space and Furnishings					
1	Sufficiency of indoor space with light and temperature	1	2	3	4	5
2	The arrangement of room for activities like play	1	2	3	4	5
3	The presence of space for privacy	1	2	3	4	5
4	the presence of space for practicing gross motor play	1	2	3	4	5
5	Appropriateness of furniture for routine care, play and learning	1	2	3	4	5
6	the Softness and comfort of furnishings for relaxation	1	2	3	4	5
7	the displayed child-related activities/tasks	1	2	3	4	5
8	Appropriateness of equipment for various gross motor activities	1	2	3	4	5
II	Personal Care Routines					
9	the presence of warm, welcoming, pleasant atmosphere in daily greeting/departing routine	1	2	3	4	5
10	the habits at meals/snacks time	1	2	3	4	5
11	supervision and schedule for nap/rest time for children	1	2	3	4	5
12	supervision in toileting to care for basic needs and teach	1	2	3	4	5
13	practice of healthy habits like washing hands and wiping noses	1	2	3	4	5
14	the supervision for minimizing hazards in and out of class	1	2	3	4	5
III	Language-Reasoning					
15	availability of sufficient books , pictures, and language materials	1	2	3	4	5
16	Encouragement of children to communicate using activities and materials	1	2	3	4	5
17	the use of language to develop reasoning skills	1	2	3	4	5
18	Encouragement of the child for informal use of language	1	2	3	4	5
IV	Activities					
19	exposure of children to do fine motor activities using toys and other materials	1	2	3	4	5
20	exposure of children for self-initiated art activities	1	2	3	4	5
21	encouragement of children to use various tools for self expression using music and related movements	1	2	3	4	5
22	encouragement of children to explore spatial , mathematical and role play possibilities with various blocks	1	2	3	4	5
23	the provision of opportunities for children to learn concepts by active exploration using sand and water play	1	2	3	4	5
24	creation of chance for dramatic play for discovering role and responsibilities	1	2	3	4	5
25	the fostering of curiosity and experimentation through direct experiences of nature /science	1	2	3	4	5
26	the introducing mathematics /numbers through routine, schedule, and play activities	1	2	3	4	5

27	the use of selective subject matter confined, age appropriate , mentally stimulating TV, video and /or computer activities	1	2	3	4	5
28	Promoting acceptance of diversity- exposure to similarities and differences to encourage respect for others and minimizing misunderstandings	1	2	3	4	5
V	Interaction					
29	Supervision of gross motor activities- using motor activities as opportunities for interactions	1	2	3	4	5
30	General supervision of children (other than gross motor)- using the whole group activities for healthy and safety accomplishments	1	2	3	4	5
31	Discipline- practice of good behavior through self-motivation	1	2	3	4	5
32	Staff-child interactions- presence of mutual respect b/n child and adults	1	2	3	4	5
33	Interactions among children- providing opportunities for good interaction among children	1	2	3	4	5
VI	Program Structure					
34	Schedule- having consistent routines that provide balance of individual needs to foster different aspects of development	1	2	3	4	5
35	Free play- practice of making decisions having control of the world in free play	1	2	3	4	5
36	Group time-meeting individual needs by guiding children in small group interactions	1	2	3	4	5
37	Provisions for children with disabilities- meeting the needs of children with disabilities	1	2	3	4	5

44. Please comment about the overall learning environment of preschool

Part III: Tools for Assessing the Developmental Appropriateness of Practice (DAP)

Annex 5: Checklist for rating the application of DAP

Addis Ababa University
School of graduate studies
Department of curriculum and instruction

The Checklist for rating the application of Developmentally Appropriate Practices by teachers

Directions: The following statements signify ideas that help in evaluating the application of developmentally appropriate practice by teachers in the preschool classroom, indicate for each statement the extent that the practice of teacher is appropriate developmentally in line with the number that range from 5 for most appropriate to 1 for the most inappropriate as to the education practice at preschools of Ethiopia by encircling from the number that corresponds to the statements and putting remarks how they are practiced in the classroom.

	Please rate the extent of the appropriateness of preschool teachers practice in the five key functions below.	Not at all appropriate	Rarely appropriate	appropriate at Average	highly appropriate	very highly appropriate
I	In creating a caring community of learners, the preschool teacher :					
1	promotes a positive climate for learning	1	2	3	4	5
2	fosters a cohesive, democratic group	1	2	3	4	5
3	meets individual needs	1	2	3	4	5
4	Celebrates diversity reflecting children's cultures in the class	1	2	3	4	5
II	In Teaching to enhance development and learning, the preschool teacher :					
1	creates fit environment and schedule for the learners	1	2	3	4	5
2	uses variety of teaching strategies fit for the children	1	2	3	4	5
3	enhances Language and communication skills	1	2	3	4	5
4	provides proper guidance for learners	1	2	3	4	5
5	motivates learners for learning	1	2	3	4	5
6	Offers both child initiated and teacher-directed learning experiences.	1	2	3	4	5
III	In constructing appropriate curriculum, the preschool teacher :					
1	Integrates the contents of different subject areas	1	2	3	4	5
2	creates continuum of development and learning	1	2	3	4	5
3	prepares fit, coherent, effective curriculum	1	2	3	4	5
4	matches contents and approaches for children	1	2	3	4	5
5	teaches language and literacy skills	1	2	3	4	5
6	shows mathematical operation and concepts	1	2	3	4	5
7	orients about social studies issues	1	2	3	4	5
8	involve contents of natural science	1	2	3	4	5
9	takes care of health and safety of children	1	2	3	4	5
10	include aesthetic education	1	2	3	4	5
11	involves physical education	1	2	3	4	5
12	incorporates character qualities	1	2	3	4	5
13	creates transitions b/n programs or groups or activities	1	2	3	4	5
14	Uses the curriculum for planning activities and routines.	1	2	3	4	5
15	Allows for flexibility in programming.	1	2	3	4	5
IV	In Assessing children's learning and development, preschool teacher :					
1	uses Performance based assessments	1	2	3	4	5
2	employs multiple methods of assessment	1	2	3	4	5
3	uses assessment results to support learning	1	2	3	4	5
4	Assesses what is appropriate for children developmentally, individually, and culturally.	1	2	3	4	5
5	Gather information from multiple sources.	1	2	3	4	5
6	presents model as exemplary work for students for comparison	1	2	3	4	5
V	In Reciprocal relationships with parents and families, preschool teacher :					
1	creates opportunities for parents to be involved in classroom activities	1	2	3	4	5
2	Respects the goals, wishes, concerns and choices of family for their child.	1	2	3	4	5
3	communicates regularly with parents in an open, positive, two-way manner	1	2	3	4	5
4	Welcome parents as visitors to the program or classroom for participation.	1	2	3	4	5
5	Inform parents about goals and assessment. as the child's first teacher.	1	2	3	4	5

Source: Jambunathan, S. and Caulfield, M. (2012). Developmentally Appropriate Practices in Asian Indian Early Childhood Classrooms

Part IV: Tools for Assessing Teacher Education Program (TEP)

Annex 6: Questionnaire for assessing the relevance of teacher education program Curriculum in ensuring DAP

**Addis Ababa University
School of graduate studies
Department of curriculum and instruction**

Questionnaire to be filled by prospective teachers for preprimary school education

This questionnaire is used to collect data about the correspondence of preprimary school teachers education courses with preprimary school curriculum to study whether the curricula/syllabi go together and the contribution of in equipping teachers with developmentally appropriate practice for early childhood period children in order to conduct study on the title “**The Relevance of Early Childhood care and Education curriculum and its practice in Ethiopia**”. Thus, the study has the goal of airing out the relevance of the curriculum and its practices for the preschoolers, and other factors that promote the relevance of the practice at the preprimary schools. The Information you provide will be used only for research purpose. Please attempt all the questions for the reason that your response to all items in the questionnaire contributes to the success of the research. So, you are kindly requested to provide your answer with full heartedly and genuinely for the success of this research. Your answers will be kept confidential. Please do not write your name or any other identifiers on the questionnaire.

Thank you for your time!

A. Back ground Information

Directions: For each of the statements (questions) below, please put tick mark (v) in the box corresponding to the appropriate information about you.

1. Sex: Male ☐ Female ☐
2. Age: Below 25yrs ☐ 25 - 40yrs ☐ above 40yrs ☐
3. You teach children of age: 3-4 years ☐ 4-5 years ☐ 5-6 years ☐ all years ☐
4. Your Work Experience = Less than 5 years ☐ 5 - 10 years ☐ more than10 years ☐

Part 2: basic data

Directions: The preprimary school teacher training program curriculum/syllabus for the would-be- teachers involves courses listed in the table below. The courses listed below are expected to have high relation to curriculum of preschool education and care program. So, on the basis of your experience with the courses in the preprimary teacher education program of Ethiopia, please indicate your perception as the courses' relation to the preprimary school education subjects by circling the numbers from 1-5 (1=has no support to 5=has very high support) corresponding to each course .

S/N	course of the teacher training program	the level that TEP courses support for teaching at preschools				
		has no support 1	has low support 2	has average support 3	has high support 4	has very high support 5
1	Basic Mathematics I (3)	1	2	3	4	5
2	Basic mathematics II (3)	1	2	3	4	5
3	Introduction to statistics for preschool (2)	1	2	3	4	5
4	plane &solid geometry (4)	1	2	3	4	5
5	Basic English I (3)	1	2	3	4	5
6	Basic English II (3)	1	2	3	4	5
7	Spoken English (3)	1	2	3	4	5
8	The structure of English (3)	1	2	3	4	5
9	Children Literature (2)	1	2	3	4	5
10	Basic Mother Tongue (2)	1	2	3	4	5
11	Mother tongue reading & writing (3)	1	2	3	4	5
12	Structure of Mother tongue (3)	1	2	3	4	5
13	Mother Tongue Hand writing (2)	1	2	3	4	5
14	Mother tongue child literature (2)	1	2	3	4	5
15	Basic natural science (3)	1	2	3	4	5
16	Basic social science (2)	1	2	3	4	5
17	Environmental science (4)	1	2	3	4	5
18	Introduction to Ethics &civic education (2)	1	2	3	4	5
19	Preschool Art and Craft (3)	1	2	3	4	5
20	Preschool Music (3)	1	2	3	4	5
21	Child Play (3)	1	2	3	4	5
22	ICT for pre-school (2)	1	2	3	4	5
23	Physical Education (2)	1	2	3	4	5
24	Health, safety & nutrition (3)	1	2	3	4	5
25	Early childhood Development &learning (3)	1	2	3	4	5
26	Mother Tongue Language Development (2)	1	2	3	4	5
27	Life skill &Gender Equity for preschool (2)	1	2	3	4	5
28	Early childhood education (3)	1	2	3	4	5
29	Assessment & Evaluation of preschool Children (2)	1	2	3	4	5
30	Preschool management & improvement (3)	1	2	3	4	5
31	Inclusive education in pre-school (3)	1	2	3	4	5
32	Teaching & Play Materials production in preschool (3)	1	2	3	4	5
33	Teaching English in pre-school (3)	1	2	3	4	5
34	Teaching mother tongue in pre-school (3)	1	2	3	4	5
35	Teaching Environmental science in pre-school (3)	1	2	3	4	5
36	Teaching mathematics in pre-school (3)	1	2	3	4	5
37	Action Research (2)	1	2	3	4	5
38	Seminar on action research (1)	1	2	3	4	5
39	Practicum I (1)	1	2	3	4	5
40	Practicum II (2)	1	2	3	4	5
41	Practicum III (3)	1	2	3	4	5
42	Practicum IV (6)	1	2	3	4	5

Part 3: basic data

Directions: to implement the preprimary care and education program in line with age levels of children, the contribution of preprimary teachers education program can be evaluated in line with the following criteria. Please rate the contribution of preprimary teacher education curriculum in line with the criteria listed below by encircling from the number 1-5(1= highly disagree to 5=highly agree) corresponding to each statement.

R. No	criteria	level of agreement				
		highly disagree	disagree	undecided	agree	highly agree
A	The Teacher Education Program (TEP) acquaints you as prospective teachers with the principles that states -----.					
1	All areas of development are important to create the whole child.	1	2	3	4	5
2	Development and learning follow sequential process.	1	2	3	4	5
3	Development and learning proceed at varying rates for every child.	1	2	3	4	5
4	Development and learning result from an interaction of maturation and experience..	1	2	3	4	5
5	Development and learning are profoundly affected by early experiences.	1	2	3	4	5
6	Development and learning proceed toward complexity and self-regulation capacities.	1	2	3	4	5
7	Development and learning happen at best when children have secure relationships with others.	1	2	3	4	5
8	Development and learning occur in and are influenced by multiple social and cultural contexts.	1	2	3	4	5
9	Development and learning advance when children are challenged by achievable tasks.	1	2	3	4	5
10	Children's experiences shape their motivation and approaches to learning	1	2	3	4	5
11	Children learn in a variety of ways	1	2	3	4	5
12	Play is an important vehicle for developing self-regulation and promoting language, cognition, and social competence.	1	2	3	4	5
B	The teacher training program acquaints you as prospective teachers with :					
I	Age appropriate curriculum for preschoolers –fit curriculum for every child age -related characteristics- i.e.,	1	2	3	4	5
1	-what children like in the age range in terms of interest, abilities, skills	1	2	3	4	5
2	-how to develop activities and routines that accommodate the age group	1	2	3	4	5
3	-how to provide materials that are safe, challenging and achievable	1	2	3	4	5
II	Individually Appropriate curriculum for preschoolers –fit curriculum to the strengths, interests, and needs of every child in the group , i.e.,	1	2	3	4	5
1	-the uniqueness of each child as a person	1	2	3	4	5
	-the individual learning style of each child	1	2	3	4	5
3	-the previous knowledge and experiences that each child brings to class	1	2	3	4	5
III	Socially and Culturally Appropriate curriculum for preschoolers -fit curriculum for social and cultural contexts in which children live-i.e.,	1	2	3	4	5
1	-the children and families in the context of the community	1	2	3	4	5
2	-the family culture (values, traditions , beliefs) of each child	1	2	3	4	5
3	-the consequence that lack of cultural awareness leads to assumptions	1	2	3	4	5
C	The TEP acquaints you as prospective teachers with as how to :					
1	plan curriculum for the individual child and the group	1	2	3	4	5
2	apply or use an integrated curriculum	1	2	3	4	5
3	address the whole child (physical, cognitive, social, emotional)	1	2	3	4	5
4	individualize program to meet individual needs	1	2	3	4	5
5	teach children mathematics and Science	1	2	3	4	5
6	teach children about safety practices	1	2	3	4	5
7	recognize the importance of child initiated activity	1	2	3	4	5
8	recognize the significance of play	1	2	3	4	5
9	engage children in activities...making them learn by doing	1	2	3	4	5
10	give children choices about what they learn and how	1	2	3	4	5
11	make children active participants in different tasks /activities	1	2	3	4	5
12	use ongoing assessment of children and program	1	2	3	4	5
13	create stimulating classroom environments	1	2	3	4	5
14	form partnerships with families as teachers in the future	1	2	3	4	5
15	make others participate in children's learning	1	2	3	4	5
IV	use exploration and experimentation as method of helping children to learn by making them to:					
1	-observe, touch, taste, smell, hear	1	2	3	4	5
2	-talk about their experiences	1	2	3	4	5
3	-ask questions about things	1	2	3	4	5
4	-collect information	1	2	3	4	5
5	-engage in discoveries -learn by discovering of reality	1	2	3	4	5
6	-construct new understanding	1	2	3	4	5
V	use observation as means of getting information about child's ...					
1	-development (social, emotional, cognitive, and physical, language and literacy)	1	2	3	4	5
2	-individual interests	1	2	3	4	5
3	-coping and problem solving skills	1	2	3	4	5
4	-temperament behavior as a response to the environment	1	2	3	4	5
5	-expression of family culture	1	2	3	4	5
VI	know the five phases /Cycle of Learning	1	2	3	4	5
1	Awareness- making the child to aware that something exist (child observes friends playing a game)	1	2	3	4	5
2	Exploration- making the child to explore what captured attention (finds game materials on shelf at school)	1	2	3	4	5
3	Acquisition- making the child to ask questions to learn new information and take action.	1	2	3	4	5
4	Practice-enabling the child to gain mastery (playing for several times and days) with self-motivation and self-initiation	1	2	3	4	5
5	Generalization- making the child to apply new knowledge to similar situations...	1	2	3	4	5

Annex 7: Correspondence of Teacher Education and ECCE Curricula

በአዲስአበባ ዩኒቨርሲቲ የድህረመረቃ ትምርት ፕሮግራም በካሪክለም ትምህርት ክፍል

ለቅድመ መደበኛ ትምህርት መምህራን ስልጠና የተዘጋጀ ስርዓተ ትምህርት የቅድመ መደበኛ

ትምህርትን ከልጆች እድገት ደረጃ አንጻር ተግባራዊ ለማድረግ ብቁ ስለመሆኑ ለማጥናት የተዘጋጀ መጠይቅ

በሰልጣኞች የሚሞላ

ዉድ የጥናት ተሳታፊዎች :

የዚህ መጠይቅ ዋና ዓላማ ለቅድመ መደበኛ ትምህርት መምህራን ስልጠና የተዘጋጀ ስርዓተ ትምህርት የቅድመ መደበኛ ትምህርት ስርዓተ ትምህርትን ከልጆች የእድገት ደረጃ አንጻር ተግባራዊ ለማድረግ ብቁ የመሆኑ ወይም አለመሆኑ ደረጃውን በማመልከት ወደፊት የሚሻሻልበትን መንገድ ማሳየት ነዉ ፡፡ ስለሆነም ለቀርቡለዎት ጥያቄዎች እርሰዎ የሚሰጡት መልስ ለጥናቱ መሳካት ወሳኝ በመሆኑ ጊዜ ወስደዉ መጠይቁን ይሞሉልን ዘንድ በትህትና እየጠየቅን የሚሰጡት መረጃ ለምርምር ግባዓት ብቻ የሚዉል መሆኑን አስቀድመን ለመግለጽ እንወዳለን፡፡ ስመዎን መጻፍ አያስፈልግም፡፡

እናመሰግናለን

አጥኚዉ

መመሪያ፡- በመጠይቁ ሶስት ዋና ዋና ክፍሎች ስር ለቀረቡ ጥያቄዎች ባዶ ቦታዉን

በመሙላት ወይም አማራጭ ለቀረበላቸዉ ትክክል ነዉ በሚሉት ምርጫ በማክበብ

ይመልሱ፡፡

ክፍል 1፡ ቅድመ መረጃ

ዖታ ፡ ወንድ _____ ሴት _____

ዕድሜ፡ ከ 25 በታች ----- 26- 30 ----- 31-40 _____ 41-50 _____ ከ50 በላይ-----

ክፍል 1፡ ዋና መረጃ

መመሪያ ፡ ለቅድመ መደበኛ ትምህርት ተማሪዎች (ለህፃናት) በተዘጋጀዉ ስረዓተ ትምህርት(syllabus) ው ስጥ የሚገኙ የትምህርት ዓላማች ፤ ይዘቶችና የማስተማርና ምዘና ዘዴዎች ቀጥሎ ባለዉ ሰንጠረዥ ተዘርዝረዋል፡፡ የመምህራን ትምህርት ስልጠና ትምህርቶች ከተዘረዘሩት የቅድመ መደበኛ ስረዓተ ትምህርት ዓላማች ፤ ይዘቶችና የማስተማርና ምዘና ዘዴዎች ጋር የቱን ያህል እንደሚዛመዱና የቱን ያህል የልጆችን ትምህርት ከእድሜያቸዉ እንፃር ለማቅረብ እንደሚረዱ ከ 1-5 ከተሰጡት ቁጥሮች (ማለትም 1- ምንም እርዳታ የለዉም ፤ 2-በዝቅተኛ ደረጃ ይረዳል ፤ 3. በአማካኝ/በመጠኑ ይረዳል ፤ 4-በአብዛኛዉ ይረዳልና 5- በከፍተኛ ደረጃ ይረዳል) በመምረጥ እርሰዎ የሚስማሙበትን በማክበብ ስምዎን ታዎን ይግለጹ፡፡

ተ.ቁ	የትምህርት ዓላማዎች፣ ይዘቶችና የማስተማርና ምዘና ዘዴዎች	የእዝዛ				
I	የትምህርቱ ዓላማዎች	ደረጃ				
	የቅድመ መደበኛ መምህራን ስልጠና ሕፃናትን በማስተማር ስራ ሂደት ውስጥ ቀጥሎ የተዘረዘሩ የትምህርቱን ዓላማዎች እዉን ለማድረግ ያላቸዉ እዝዛ የቱን ያህል ነዉ?	ምንም እዝዛ የለዉም 1	በዝቅተኛ እዝዛ አለዉ 2	በመጠኑ እዝዛ አለዉ 3	በአብዛኛዉ እዝዛ አለዉ 4	በከፍተኛ ደረጃ እዝዛ አለዉ 5
1.1.	ህፃናት የተለያዩ የአካል ክፍሎቻቸውንና የሰሜኑ ህዋሳቸቻቸውን በመጠቀም ከእድሜቸዉ አንፃር የተለያዩ ድርጊቶችን ማከናወንና ጤናን የመጠበቅ ሥርዓቶችን እንድላመዱ ለማስቻል	1	2	3	4	5
1.2	አካልን በብቃት የመጠቀም ችሎታ፣ለማሳደግ	1	2	3	4	5
1.3.	በአካላዊ ደህንነት ላይ ጤናማ አመለካከት እንድኖር ለማገዝ፤	1	2	3	4	5
2.1	ከአካባቢ ጋር በሚኖራቸው መስተጋብር አካባቢን የማስተዋል፣ የመፈተሽ፣ የመገንዘብ፣ በአግባቡ የመጠቀምና የመንከባከብን ልምድና ክህሎት እንዲያዳብሩና በዕለት ተዕለት ህይወታቸው የሚያጥሙአቸውን ችግሮች በራሳቸው የመፍታት ዝንባሌ እንዲኖራቸው ለማገዝ፤	1	2	3	4	5
3.1.	መረጃዎችን የመቀበል፣ የማሰብ፣ የማገናዘብ፣ ሀሳብና ፍላጎትን በአግባቡ የመግለጽ፣ የሌላውንም ሀሳብ መቀበልና በልዩነቶች የማመን ክህሎት እንዲያዳብሩ ለማድረግ፤	1	2	3	4	5
3.2.	ችግር ፈቺ ዘዴዎችን የመገንባት ክህሎት እንዲያዳብሩ ለማድረግ	1	2	3	4	5
3.3.	የመጠየቅና የመረዳት ድፍረት፣ክህሎት እንዲያዳብሩ ለማድረግ	1	2	3	4	5
4.1.	በአካባቢያቸው ከሚገኙ ሰዎች ጋር በሚኖራቸው ግንኙነት በማህበረሰቡ ተቀባይነት ያላቸውን ልምድና የኑሮ ሥርዓቶች የመረዳት የመተግበርና ራስን በመጠበቅ ከአካባቢ ጋር ተስማምቶ የመኖር ክህሎት እንዲያዳብሩ ለማድረግ ፡	1	2	3	4	5
4.2.	ለሌሎች አሳቢነትና አክብሮትእንዳሳዩ ለማሳደግ	1	2	3	4	5
4.3.	ለአሸናፊው አስተሳሰብ አክብሮት መስጠትና መቀበልልምድ ለማሳደግ	1	2	3	4	5
4.4.	ልዩነቶችን ማድነቅና መቀበልን ማላመድ	1	2	3	4	5
4.4.	አካባቢን ማድነቅና መንከባከብ፣ ልምድ ማሳደግ	1	2	3	4	5
4.5.	ስለራስ አዎንታዊ አመለካከት እንድኖራቸዉ ለማድረግ፤	1	2	3	4	5
4.6	ራስን ማክበር፣ በራስ መተማመንና ራስን መመዘን፣ልምድ ለማዳበር	1	2	3	4	5
4.7	ባገኘው/ችው ስኬት በራስ መክራት ስሜትን ለመፍጠር፣	1	2	3	4	5
4.8.	ላደረጉት ወይም ለፈጸሙት ተግባር ኃላፊነት መውሰድ፣	1	2	3	4	5
4.9.	የራስን ሃሳብ በነፃነት መግለጽና የሌሎችን ሃሳብ ማዳመጥ ክህሎት ለማዳበር	1	2	3	4	5
4.10.	የሚፈልጉትን ነገር በሰላማዊ መንገድ ማግኘትን እንድላመዱ ለማስቻል፣	1	2	3	4	5
4.11.	የተማረውን/ችውን ጊዜ ሳይወስዱ በቆራጥነት ለመተግባር ማስቻል	1	2	3	4	5
4.12.	ለጨዋታና ለሥራ ክብር መስጠት እንድማሩ ለማድረድግ፤	1	2	3	4	5
II	ትምህርት ጭብጦች /ይዘቶች					

	የቅድመ መደበኛ መምህራን ስልጠና ከሚከተሉት የቅድመ መደበኛ ትምህርት ጭብጦች /ይዘቶች ጋር የቱን ያህል ግንኙነት አለው?	ምንም ግንኙነት የለውም	በዝቅተኛ ደረጃ	በመጠኑ 3	በአብዛኛው	በከፍተኛ ደረጃ
1	የአካል እድገት	1	2	3	4	5
1.1.	- ለተገቢው እድገት ና የአካል ጥንካሬ ተገቢውን እንክብካቤ ማድረግ	1	2	3	4	5
1.2.	-የአካል ክፍሎችን መለየትና በጥንቃቄ መያዝ	1	2	3	4	5
1.3.	-የሰሜት ህዋሳትን መጠቀም	1	2	3	4	5
1.4.	-ጤናን የመጠበቅ ስርዓቶችን መለማመድ	1	2	3	4	5
2	የማህበራዊ እድገት	1	2	3	4	5
2.1.	- ተቀባይነት ባለው መልኩ ከሌሎች ጋር ግንኙነት መፍጠር	1	2	3	4	5
2.2.	-ሌሎችን መንከባከብ ና ያለን ነገር ማካፈል	1	2	3	4	5
2.3.	-በአካባቢ ያሉ ሰዎችን ለማወቅ ፍላጎት ማሳደርና መለየት	1	2	3	4	5
2.4.	-ከአካባቢ ጋር በሚፈጠር መስተጋብር አካባቢን ማጥናትና በአግባቡ ማጣጣም	1	2	3	4	5
2.5.	የቅርብ አካባቢን መፈተሽና ማወቅ	1	2	3	4	5
3	የአእምሮዊ ና ቁንቁ እድገት	1	2	3	4	5
3.1.	- ፅንፁን በአግባቡ መጠቀም መረጃን ማዳመጥ	1	2	3	4	5
3.2.	-በተለያዩ ሁኔታዎች ትርጉም ሊሰጥላቸው ያለውን መግባባት	1	2	3	4	5
3.3.	-መፅሐፍ በማገላበጥ መለየት	1	2	3	4	5
3.4.	-የእንቅስቃሴ ዕንሰ ሀሳብ መረዳትና ሙከራ ማካሄድ / የቁሶችን ባህርይ መፈተሽ የጊዜና ቦታ ዕንሰ ሀሳብ መረዳት	1	2	3	4	5
3.5.	- ምናብና ፈጠራን መጠቀም /መለካት	1	2	3	4	5
3.6.	-በዕለት ተለት እንቅስቃሴ ውስጥ የሂሳብ ስሌትና እንቅስቃሴ መጠቀም	1	2	3	4	5
4	የሰሜት እድገት	1	2	3	4	5
4.1.	-ሰሜትን መግለፅ የሌሎችን ስሜት መጋራት	1	2	3	4	5
4.2.	-በራስ መተማመን ስሜት ማዳበር	1	2	3	4	5
4.3.	-ለራስ ዋጋ መስጠት	1	2	3	4	5
4.4.	-በጨዋታ /ስእል በመሳል በመቀባት መደሰት /ስሜትን መግለፅ	1	2	3	4	5
III	የማስተማር ዘዴዎች					
	የቅድመ መደበኛ መምህራን ስልጠና የቅድመ መደበኛ ትምህርት ቤት ህፃናትን ከማገዝና ሁኔታዎችን ከማመቻቸት አካያ መምህራን ቀጥሎ የተመለከቱትን ተግባራት እንዳከናውኑ የቱን ያህል እገባ አለው?	ምንም እገባ የለውም	በዝቅተኛ ደረጃ	በመጠኑ 3	በአብዛኛው	በከፍተኛ ደረጃ
1	ህፃናት በቃል ብቻ የሚቀርብላቸውን ፕርግራም መከታተል ስለሚከብዳቸው የሰሜት ህዋሳተቻቸውን በመጠቀም አካባቢቸውን መረዳት መፈተሽና መመራመር በደረጃቸው ለችግሮች መፍትሄ መስጠት እንዲለማመዱ ክፍላቸው በተለያዩ መጫዎቻቸውና የማስተማሪያ መርጃ መሳሪያዎች የተደራጀ ማድረግ በተመለከተ	1	2	3	4	5
2	ህፃናት ሊያሰቡ የሚችሉት በተግባራዊ እንቅስቃሴ ሂደት በመሆኑ አካባቢቸውን የማሰስ ቁሳቁሶቹን አገላብጦ የመመልከት የመመራመር ሀሳባቸውን በተለያዩ ተግባራት የመግለፅና የመሳተፍ እድል እንድናራቸውላቸውላቸው ለጥያቄዎቻቸው ተገቢውን መልስ በወቅቱ መስጠትን በተመለከተ	1	2	3	4	5
3	የህፃናት ክፍተኛ ዝንባሌ ጨዋታ እንደሆነ በማስገንዘብ በጨዋታ እንድንማሩ ፣እንድንገናኑ አካባቢያቸውን እንድንቀወቁ ፣ ስሜታቸውን እንዳንፀባርቁ፣ እንድንሳተፉ ለጨዋታ ተገቢውን ትኩረት በመስጠት እንደማስተማሪያ ዘዴ የመጠቀምን አስፈላጊነትና ስተግባብ ማስገንዘብን በተመለከተ	1	2	3	4	5
4	ለቀጣዩ ደረጃ ዝግጁ እንድሆኑም ለእድሜቸው የተቀመጠውን ብቃት እንዳያሳዩ በማነቃቃትና በማበረታት ቀጣይነት ያለው እገባ ማድረግ ።	1	2	3	4	5
5	ወቅቱ የወደፊቱ ጎልማሳ ሰው መሠረት የሚጣልበት ወገኝ ወቅት በመሆኑ ለቀጣዩ የሕይወት ዘመን የሚያገለግሉ ዲሞክራሲያዊ እሴቶችን ማዳበር መጀመር የማይታለፍ ስለመሆኑ ።	1	2	3	4	5
6	ህፃናት ሊማሩ የሚችሉ ሌሎች የሚያደርጉትን በማስመሰል በጨዋታ ከእድሜ እኩዮቻቸውና ከአዋቂ ሰዎች ጋር በሚኖራቸው መስተጋብር በመሆኑ ህፃናቱ በነፃነት እንድንቀሳቀሱ እንድንጫወቱ ከሰዎች ጋር የመገናኘት እድል እንድናራቸው ሁኔታዎችን ማመቻቸትን በተመለከተ	1	2	3	4	5
7	ሙገሳና ማበረታታት ማድነቅን በየጊዜው መጠቀምና መልካም ሥነ ምግባር በማሳየት መምህራን ምሳሌ መሆንን በተመለከተ	1	2	3	4	5
8	የህፃናት እድገትና መዳበር በየጊዜው ክትትል የማድረግ በመሆኑ መመዘኛ ሊሆን የሚገባው በእለት ተእለት ህይወታቸው የሚያደርጉእንቅስቃሴ እንጂ በየወቅቱ የሚሰጥ የፅሁፍ ፈተና አለመሆኑን ፤	1	2	3	4	5
9	የምዘና ጽንሰ ሀሳብ “ለማረጋገጫ” ሳይሆን “ለማሻሻያ” መሆኑን መምህራን ተረድተው ተግባራዊ ማድረግን በተመለከተ	1	2	3	4	5
10	በየዕለቱ የሚያደረጉትን እንቅስቃሴ በየግል መከታተልና የመዳበር ለቁጦችን በመመዝገብ አስፈላጊውን ቀጣይ እገባ ማቀድና መተግበር አስፈላጊነት	1	2	3	4	5
11	በየዕለቱ በእያንዳንዱ(ዱ) ልጅ ዕድገትና እንቅስቃሴ ላይ መምህራን የሚያደርጉት ምልክታና የሚይዙት ማስታወሻ ለሚቀጥለው የትምህርት አቅርቦት መነሻና ማሻሻያ ሆኖ እንደሚያገለግል ማሳወቅን በተመለከተ	1	2	3	4	5

Annex 8: Interview Questions 2

Addis Ababa University
School of graduate studies
Department of curriculum and instruction

ቃለ መጠይቅ - መምህራን ስልጠናን በተመለከተ

1. በቅድመ መደበኛ መምህራን ስልጠና ስረዓተ ትምህርት መካተት ያለባቸው ግን ያልተከተቱ ና መምህራን ሊማሩት ና ሊጠቁት የሚገባቸው የቅድመ መደበኛ ትምህርት ተማሪዎችን (ህፃናትን) ለማስተማር የሚያግዙ ትምህርቶች/ጉዳዮች ምን ምን ናቸው?

2. የቅድመ መደበኛ መምህራን ትምህርት ስልጠና ኮርሶች ከቅድመ መደበኛ ትምህርት ተማሪዎች (ህፃናት) ስርአተ ትምህርት ይዘቶችና የማስተማር ዘዴዎች ጋር ያላቸው ዝምድናና መያያዝ እንዴት ይገለፃል?

3. የቅድመ መደበኛ መምህራን ትምህርት ስልጠና ኮርሶች የቅድመ መደበኛ ትምህርት ተማሪዎችን(ህፃናትን) ትምህርት ከልጆች እድሜ፣ ልዩ ችሎታና ማህበራዊ ና ባህላዊ ህይወት ጋር የተስማማ አድርጎ ለማስተማር ያላቸው እገዛ እንዴት ይገለፃል ?

4. በአጠቃላይ በቅድመ መደበኛ መምህራን ትምህርት ስልጠና ላይ አስተያየት ካለዎት (ችግሮች ወይም መፍትሄዎች)

ሀ. በመማር ሂደት ያጋጠሙ ችግሮች ምን ምን ናቸው?

ለ. ችግሮቹ እንዴት ሊቃለሉ ይችላሉ ?

Annex 9: Check list for assessing the relevance of teacher education curriculum for ensuring DAP at preprimary schools

**Addis Ababa University
School of graduate studies
Department of curriculum and instruction**

Check list to assess the relation of teacher education courses to preprimary school education

1. Background information

Evaluator ----- **code** ----- **time length** -----

Level of education ----- **specialty areas** -----

2. Basic data

Directions: The teacher education program courses for the would-be teachers of preprimary school education are listed in the table below. On the basis of your experience with the courses in the preprimary teacher education program of Ethiopia, please indicate your perception as the courses' relation to the preprimary school education subjects by putting a tick mark under " 'yes' or 'no' or 'undecided'" corresponding to each course and then comment on the support of the courses for teaching the preschool subjects.

S/N	subjects	the relation of the courses to preprimary education			
		never related	yes related	Undecided	comments
	The courses of teacher training for preprimary school education are listed below. Indicate whether each of the given the courses are related or no to the subjects of preschool education to support the work of preschool teachers.				
1	Basic Mathematics I				
2	Basic mathematics II				
3	Introduction to statistics for preschool				
4	plane & solid geometry				
5	Basic English I				
6	Basic English II				
7	Spoken English				
8	The structure of English				
9	Children Literature				
10	Basic Mother Tongue				
11	Mother tongue reading & writing				
12	Structure of Mother tongue				
13	Mother Tongue Hand writing				
14	Mother tongue child literature				
15	Basic natural science				
16	Basic social science				
17	Environmental science				
18	Introduction to Ethics & civic education				
19	Preschool Art and Craft				
20	Preschool Music				
21	Child Play				
22	ICT for pre-school				
23	Physical Education				
24	Health, safety & nutrition				
25	Life skill & Gender Equity for preschool				
26	Early childhood education				
27	Assessment & Evaluation of preschool Children				
28	Preschool management & improvement				
29	Inclusive education in pre-school				
30	Teaching & Play Materials production in preschool				
31	Teaching English in pre-school				
32	Teaching mother tongue in pre-school				
33	Teaching Environmental science in pre-school				
34	Teaching mathematics in pre-school				
35	Action Research				
36	Seminar on action research				
37	Practicum I				
38	Practicum II				
39	Practicum III				
40	Practicum IV				
41	Early childhood Development & learning				
42	Mother Tongue Language Development				

Annex 10: Letter of cooperation

አዲስ አበባ ዩኒቨርሲቲ
ኮሌጅ ትምህርት ኮሌጅ
የትምህርትና ማስተማር
ትምህርት ክፍል



Addis Ababa University
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Date: May 7, 2021

Ref. No. C&I/15/20/21

To: _____

Subject: Cooperation

Mr. Walelign Admasu Gedefa is a PhD Student (ID.No.GSR/3272/08) at Addis Ababa University, College of Educational Behavioral Studies in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction. He is working on a research project titled "The Relevance of Early Childhood Care and Education Curriculum and Its Practice in Ethiopia."

I would be most grateful if you extend to him all the necessary assistance regarding this matter.

Thank you for your kindness

Sincerely,



Teshome Tola (PhD)
Chairperson, Department of Curriculum and Instruction

