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**COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND BEHAVIORAL STUDIES**  
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**THE CURRENT SITUATION OF PRE PRIMARY EDUCATION IN**  
**GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS AT ADMINISTRATIVE TOWNS**  
**SURROUNDING ADDIS ABABA**

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The Current Situation of Pre Primary Education in Government Schools  
at Administrative Towns Surrounding Addis Ababa

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## **ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

CRC: Convention on the Rights of the Child

ECCE: Early Childhood Care and Education

ECD: Early Childhood Development

EFA: Education for All

ESDP: Education Sector Development Plan

ETP: Education and Training Policy

ICESCR: the International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights

IICBA: International Institute for Capacity Building in Africa

MDG: Millennium Development Goal

MOE: Ministry of Education

NAAC: National Assessment and Accreditation Council

NAEYC: National Association for the Education of Young Children

NGO: Non-Governmental Organization

OEB: Oromia Education Bureau

PP1: Pre primary (KG1)

PPSE: Pre Primary School Education

REB: Regional Education Bureau

PPES: Pre Primary Education Standard

TEI: Teacher Education Institutions

TGE: Transitional Government of Ethiopia

TTC: Teachers Training College

UDHR: Universal Declaration of Human Rights

UNESCO: United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization

WEO: Woreda Education Office

## ABSTRACT

*This study was intended to analyze the current situation of the recently started pre primary education program attached to regular primary schools vis-à-vis the sphere of regionally stated Pre Primary Education Standard in some selected Pre Primary Schools of Sebeta administrative towns and its surroundings. To attain this objective data was collected from teachers, principals, parent and WEO experts. Qualitative research approach was adopted to conduct the study. Available sampling method is used to include all (6) teachers and (5) principals. Purposive sampling method is used to include 2 WEO experts. Random sampling method is used to selected (4) PPSs and (14) parents. Interview guide, observation checklist, and document analysis were used as instruments in data collection. Data was presented and analyzed qualitatively based on the major themes and sub themes. The study found out that the implementation of Pre Primary Education Program was weak since it was not aligned with Pre Primary Education Standard as intended. Because: teachers/personnel were both limited in number and not qualified to the required level; inadequate provisions & lack of financial support; too little parent-schools partnership, and insubstantial roles of administration bodies (WEO, PPSs). From the result of the study it can be concluded that the implementation of pre primary education as intended remains a slogan since the required conditions are not met. However, the expansion of pre primary schools by itself is a step forward for the equity and accessibility of children with low-income families & disadvantaged children. It was recommended that rethinking about this program since its movement has not yet gaining momentum- not yet received due attention & support it deserves. Hence, if not giving equal weight to its implementation, the intended quality education and a worthwhile experience in an early years setting might remain unworthy and it would be difficult to meet the regional goals & profiles set in the standard.*



# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Background of the study

The saying 'Child is the father of man' will ever remain relevant. Making of a nation depends on the sound development of children. For formation of civilized, cultured & happy society, we have to educate and train our children properly (Suresh, 2006, p. 2).

Many ideas of famous educators are still dreams because of our inability to translate ideas into reality. The goal of educating all children remains elusive, but nonetheless the goal remains. As Arne Duncan says:

*In today's era of global economics, rapid technological change, and extreme economic disparity, education is the most pressing issue facing the globe. Preparing young people for success in life is not just a moral obligation of society. It is an economic imperative. The nations that out-teach today will out-compete tomorrow.*

(A. Duncan, as cited in Morrison, 2011, p. 57).

Comenius believed education should begin in the early years because " a young plant can be planted, transplanted, pruned, and bent this way or that. When it has become a tree these process are impossible." Today, new brain research reminds us again that learning should begin early and that many "windows of opportunity" for learning occur early in life (Morrison, 2011).

If the formative years are characterized by exposure to a wide variety of learning activities and social contacts, skilled teaching, and intelligent guidance, then healthy growth and adjustment occurs (Miedel and Reynolds, 1999). Hence, the best we plan in early stage the less the overwork later.

Early childhood is a time of remarkable transformation and extreme vulnerability. These years of a child's life represent a crucial period of growth & change. Programs that support young children during the years

before they go to primary school provide strong foundations for subsequent learning & development, it cannot be achieved without virile and well trained management and teaching personnel (website:<http://www.unesco.org/en/efa/efa-goals>).

ECCE program has social benefits at individual, family, community and the societal level. It is the basis for shaping socially responsible citizens who are capable of building a stable and harmonious multicultural society. Indeed, it is the right program to foster early appreciation of the desired social and ethical values of diversity, tolerance, respect, sharing, and cooperation in a plural society. These values may in the long run have impact to reduce domestic and school violence, crime, different forms of discrimination, child abuse and neglect. To realize these objectives, however, the concerted actions of all stakeholders, most importantly the government, parents, teachers, the community, non-governmental organizations and the society at large, are very much desired (Tirusew et.al., 2007).

According to Sheila (2006), Africa is described as having the youngest population in the world, (half of the population are children under 14 and 20 percent under 5). He or she “will not receive any Early Childhood Development (ECD) care, since such services are still very rare in Africa,” with some exceptions for children aged 3 to 5 (in particular, Kenya). Enrollment rates improved during the 1990s in response to the 1990 Jomtien and Dakar conferences, the World Summit for Children, and the CRC, but coverage remains very low. Most African countries have pre-primary enrollment rates of less than 10 percent, but rates vary greatly in the region from over 90 percent in Mauritius to less than 1 percent in the Congo and Djibouti. The situation varies across the countries, with eastern and southern Africa accounting for 62 percent of the participating children. The programs are largely private with 80 percent of the children enrolled in private programs. ECCE programs remain a luxury for most children that they cannot afford, primarily it is the responsibility of families and communities, and investments in ECCE not viewed as important.

Likewise, doing business as usual is not working! There must be a definite shift in thinking about how, when, and where resources for development should be invested. Until African leaders begin to step back, reflect, and make conscious policy decision to invest in human resources to build human capabilities through specific targeting of 0-8 year olds and their mothers, vision of a developed and prosperous Africa will continue to remain a vision. Without transforming human resources into human capital, Africa countries will continue to struggle to provide the necessities for their citizens (UNESCO, 2010).

As the Ethiopia Case Study depicted that the concept of ECCE dates back to the 17th century Ethiopian philosophers Zār'a Ya'aqob and his disciple Wäldä Haywat (Sumner, 1986) while others associated its development to religious education given to children at the age of four in which children learnt alphabets in church services in the medieval Ethiopia. The number of kindergarten in the country grew to 77 in 1974 and 912 in 1990 (MOLSA and MOE, 1990). Most of these pre-schools are run by private individuals, religious institutions, and nongovernmental organizations. The increase in the number of private and public preschools underscores the growing belief that early childhood education should become an integral component of public education. Coverage and access to pre-school education for children between 4-6 years of age is very limited, as only 2.1 per cent of the total number of children in the appropriate age bracket has access to pre-school education and services; and this is limited to children in major towns and it hardly exists in the rural areas. In 2001/2, one third or 32 per cent of the country's total pre-primary enrolment was only in Addis Ababa. Gross enrolment rate of children 4-6 years in kindergarten was estimated at 2.7 per cent in 2005/06 which was a little higher than 2.3 per cent of previous year. Hence, 97.3 % of the eligible children at the pre-primary level do not have access to pre-primary education. The report pointed out a regional disparity in access as indicated by 40.3 per cent in Addis Ababa and 0.5 percent in Afar. All the other regions except Harari, Dire Dawa, Benishangul-Gumuz and SNNPR13 have GER less than the National average of 2.7 per cent. The report concurs that expanding access to pre-school program will enhance the quality of education and improving the internal efficiency of primary schools and also enhances children's chances of

success in the education system. (Website:<http://www.eng.unesco-iiicba.org/sites/default/files/ECCE.pdf> *Retrieved on 24/01/2014*).

Moreover, according to Tirussew, et al., (2007) several private preschool such as English school, the German school, the Lycel Gebre Mariam, etc were giving services for children of the well-to-do families in Addis Ababa following the operation of kindergarten in Dire Dawa in 1900's. Preschool as a general community service began in 1955 EC, with a few pilot projects established at the community centers in Ras Desta Sefer (Addis Ababa), Debre Zeit, Debre Berhan, Awassa and Asmara under the Ministry of National Community Development and Social Affairs and these centers were ran by Swedish and American Peace Corps volunteers.

Besides, the development of kindergarten in Ethiopia was very gradual compared to preschool expansion in other nations during the same period of time and stated that from 1908 to 1974 for example, only 77 kindergarten were established in Ethiopia limited to urban areas of the country operated by missionaries, private organizations and the Ministry of Social Affairs and Development. The central government at that time paid little attention to early childhood since it was felt that scarce resources should be directed creating literate adults to run the emerging modern state (Tesema, 2012).

The above assertion shows that little attention was given to preschool education by the MoE up to around 2008/2009. However, the private sector has been encouraged to expand preschool education in urban centers of the country. Since 2008/2009 it seems that the importance of the pre-primary education is recognized and some efforts have been made. Due to this the MoE formulated the national policy framework, strategic operation plan, and guidelines for early childhood care and education (ECCE) as well as the regional bureaus are making endeavor to incorporate the 'zero' grades into first cycle primary schools. Some of which, are already operating as pre-primary extensions attached to primary schools. This may, to some extent, provide an opportunity for children in the rural and low-income families who were starving for pre primary education in Ethiopia. Such effort could help the overlooked pre primary education to recover. Most

recently, it seems that the MoE has recognized the fundamental importance of pre primary education in attaining the education for all as part and parcel of MDGs, therefore, it has been intended to promote early stimulation and the best start in life for all children, and enhance the quality, accessibility and equitable distribution of services for children through more efficient partnerships and capacity building programs.

As ECCE Policy Context, the child's right to education shall be directed to "the development of the child's personality, talents and physical abilities to their fullest potential". The World Conference on Education for All (EFA) that took place in Jomtien, Thailand, in March 1990, articulated the significance of the early years as the foundation for the life of an individual. As indicated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), the International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the obligation of the member states is not limited to making education available and accessible to each child but also includes ensuring content and quality of which ECCE framework is an important element (MoE, 2010).

Therefore, in Ethiopia there is no question about the vital contribution of pre primary education (PPE) in developing and broadening the range of children's life experiences. At present the Government of Ethiopia developed a Comprehensive Early Childhood Development Policy Framework and a Strategic Operational Plan that implies the issue of PPE in the country is viewed as a component of a comprehensive services program for children.

More recently, ECCE has become one of the priorities for the education sector because it will be one of the potential inputs to the overall improvement of quality of education and reduction of drop out and repetition rates in later stages of formal schooling and because it leads to higher enrolments, particularly of girls. In addition, participating in ECCE is the right of the child and it has been considered as bedrock of EFA and the first step in meeting all the other EFA goals. This in turn contributes to the overarching MDG of reducing poverty (MoE, 2010).

Cognizant of these rationale, the Ethiopian Government has given due attention to ECCE as briefly stated above. Its ultimate aim is to ensure all children the right to a healthy start in life, to be nurtured in a safe, caring and stimulating environment and to develop to their fullest potential (MoE, 2010).

Similarly, in Oromia, PSE as the first formal setup along the educational pathway is acknowledged to benefit children age four to six. It aimed at the social, intellectual, emotional and physical development to promote children's success in the primary grades (OEB, 2012). Therefore, as the recently prepared three fundamental ECCE policy documents: a national policy framework, a strategic operation plan and guidelines has been adopted and serve as a cornerstone to guide basic issues that PPE should address in the region. Accordingly, the region has set Pre Primary Education Standard (OEB, 2012) that pre primary program must meet in order to achieve the intended goals and profiles. It is expected that this regional standard is adopted and practiced in all areas of the region.

## **1.2. Statement of the problem**

(Lowery& Modesty, 1912, as cited in Brudenel, 2004) stated that:

*"For years, we have given scientific attention to the care and rearing of plants and animals, but we have allowed babies to be raised chiefly by tradition"*

According to Nyerere (1979), "Giving birth is something in which mankind and animals are equal, but rearing the young and especially educating them for many years is something that is a unique gift and responsibility of men".

It is also not uncommon that in some traditional societies of Ethiopia proper care and education of children was a concern of the family and the community. Everybody in the community considered it their duty to protect the child from danger and correct misbehavior. Obviously, this practice has started to decline and nowadays, especially with people migrating to towns. A child may be insolent,

misbehaving, throw stones, get aggressive, the nearest adult does not always seem to care.

ECCE is one of the most neglected areas in Ethiopia. Coverage and access to pre-school education for children between 4-6 years of age is very limited, as only 2.1 per cent of the total number of children in the appropriate age bracket has access to pre-school education and services; and this is limited to children in major towns and it hardly exists in the rural areas. In 2001/2, one third or 32 per cent of the country's total pre-primary enrolment was only in Addis Ababa. Gross enrolment rate of children 4-6 years in kindergarten was estimated at 2.7 per cent in 2005/06 which was a little higher than 2.3 per cent of previous year. Hence, 97.3 % of the eligible children at the pre-primary level do not have access to pre-primary education. **It was** pointed out that a regional disparity in access as indicated by 40.3 per cent in Addis Ababa and 0.5 percent in Afar. All the other regions except Harari, Dire Dawa, Benishangul-Gumuz and SNNPR13 have GER less than the National average of 2.7 per cent. The report concurs that expanding access to pre-school program will enhance the quality of education and improving the internal efficiency of primary schools and also enhances children's chances of success in the education system. The ECCE enrolment rate in 2007/2008 is also about 3.9%, nationally a negligible figure. In the last few years, the private sector in the urban centers has shown a growing interest in investing in PPE, particularly in Addis Ababa. This opportunity, however, is only accessible for the very few children coming from well-to-do families. Most parents are not fully aware of their crucial role in their children's development and/or lack basic parental competences (MoE, 2010).

Besides, the situational assessment study on ECCE in various regions of Ethiopia in 2007 depicted that the major challenges in practicing the program were identified as: high payment that is requested to attend the program; lack of proper training of PPE teachers; lack of culturally relevant story books; lack of access to ECCE for all children and especially children from low socio-economic backgrounds; lack of awareness about the value and type of care and education of young children; low salary for teachers; causing high staff turnover; lack of ECCE professionals; misconception about teaching children "because they are

children!"; lack of developing and implementing curricula that served all domains of skills and competences equally; the vast majority of the population (61.5 %) is not educated, and parents have no knowledge about the care and education of their children (MoE, 2010).

Supporting this issue Tirussew (2007) indicates that, in Ethiopia the accessibility of ECCE is still insignificant. The government has left ECCE for private sector, religious organization and communities. Moreover, the private ECCE fee charges are too high for many families who cannot afford the program. Consequently, the majority of children from low economic status do not have access to PPE. This would be one of the core reasons that impede the trend of a low enrollment of children in ECCE in the country remains unbroken.

Accordingly, to meet the intended regional goals and profiles set in the ECCE policy, the Oromia Education Bureau (OEB) has set minimum standard in line with strategic operational plan and national policy framework that serve as a benchmark for the success of the program. This standard describes the areas of curriculum, quality of indoor and outdoor learning environments, materials and equipment of minimum essentials, professional requirements of teachers, assistant teachers & caregivers, parental involvement, as well as government and education experts supportive services required to lay sound pre primary education that its implementation can be judged against the standards set by the region.

Moreover, some previous researchers conducted at different part of the country mainly selected Kindergartens based on sponsorships stratified as (Public, private, NGO) but not conducted on government pre primary schools and all findings indicated that ECCE quality were poor (Bizunesh, 1983; Gezahegn, 2005; Temesgen, 2006; Amelework, 2007; Tanga, 2012; Tesema, 2012). This was one of the reasons that leans the researcher to conduct the study exclusively on the government pre primary schools at the central area of the region.

Since the opening of pre primary education attached to primary schools, the existing problems that have been creating the gap in providing access to all children and actualizing the PPE program as intended are assumed to get solution. This is because of that, overall goals of the implementation of ECCE policy framework and the regionally adopted standard is to promote early stimulation and the best start in life for all children, and enhance the quality, accessibility and equitable distribution of services for children through more efficient partnerships and capacity building programs.

Similarly, as to Tesema (2012) the government recently opened pre primary education attached to primary schools and has now become an issue of debate and discussion among parents, teachers, and researchers concerning the access, equity and quality of ECCE.

In view of the above issues, this study was intended to analyze the current situation of the recently started pre primary education program attached to regular primary schools vis-à-vis the sphere of regionally stated Pre Primary Education Standard in some selected Pre Primary Schools of Sebeta administrative towns and its surroundings. Hence, the purpose of this study was to answer the following research questions:

1. How is Pre Primary Education program going on in sampled Pre Primary Schools?
  - 1.1. What is the extent to which teachers and other personnel are qualified to the required level in Pre Primary Education?
  - 1.2. How is curriculum implemented?
  - 1.3. How far indoor-outdoor spaces, provision of materials and facilities, as well as its organization are adequate to accommodate individual children needs?
  - 1.4. To what extent parent- PPS relationships are maintained to facilitate and assist children's learning?
  - 1.5. What supportive services does the government provide to enhance ECCE implementation as intended?

2. What are the main possible factors that impede the implementation of Pre Primary Education in line with Regional Pre Primary Education Standard?
3. What possible suggestions can be forwarded to improve the implementation of Pre Primary Education?

### **1.3. Objective of the study**

#### **General Objective**

The study is intended to analyze the extent to which the entire current practice of PPE going on in the light of nationally laid goals and internationally shared knowledge and practices in general as well as regionally stated Pre primary education standard in particular in selected Pre Primary Schools of one of the Administrative Towns of Oromia Regional State.

#### **Specific Objectives:**

1. To examine the adequacy and professional qualification of teachers and personnel.
2. To assess the extent to which various issues related to the curriculum in the Pre Primary Schools are implemented.
3. To examine the adequacy of both in - out door learning materials and equipment as well as its organization activities practiced in the Pre Primary Schools.
4. To explore the extent to which parent- Pre Primary School as well as teachers and children relationships is maintained to enhance children's learning.
5. To explore the extent of governmental support to advance the realization of the PPE program.
6. To identify the main challenges encountered during the implementation of the PPE program.
7. To suggest possible means with a view of improving implementation of Pre Primary Schools with reference to the findings of the study.

#### **1.4. Significance of the study**

The result of this study expected to:

1. give insight about the current situation of government PPE in view of meeting the minimum standard.
2. help to identify areas of the problems that need to be solved in order to promote accessibility and raise the quality of PPE in the area.
3. initiate responsible bodies from school to Oromia Education Bureau to think on how PPE's accessibility and quality could be improved (to enhance the responsiveness of stakeholders).
5. It serves as a base for further researchers in the area.

#### **1.5. Delimitation of the study**

The scope of this study is delimited to assess the current situation of PPE attached to formal government primary schools at Sebeta town and its surroundings. Hence, this study was limited to only four (4) Pre Primary Schools instead of including private & public KGs.

#### **1.6. Limitation of the study**

Like any other study, this research also bears some limitations. Some of the limitations the researcher identified were:

Well-documented data were inadequate due to poor or none record keeping at PPSs and WEO. Besides, during interview some informants (parents) were reserved from giving adequate information regarding the implementation of PPE due to lack of understanding about the issue.

## **1.7. Operational Definitions of important terms**

**Children:** refers to boys or girls who are enrolled in Pre Primary Schools.

**Pre Primary Education:** are used interchangeably 'PPS', 'PS' 'KG' and 'PPE' to refer provision of structured stimulating and purposeful set of learning experiences for children between ages of four to six, carried out in the formal institutions before they join primary schools (Adapted from MOE, 2007).

**Government PPE:** refers to education program provided for children (4-6+ years) attached to government primary schools.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

#### **2.1. Historical Review of Pre primary Education**

In this chapter major concepts and ideas of different scholars regarding the practices of pre-school education were dealt. Since there are many other events, people, issues, and questions that could be considered, historical information that best fits the purpose of the study were carefully selected.

##### **2.1.1. Beginning of ECCE (1400-1600)**

Until the end of the 15th century, childhood was not recognized as a unique period of life. In fact, once children developed past infancy they were considered miniature adults. In this society, children of the upper classes were often provided with educational opportunities through study with a tutor or in schools in the homes of prominent families. Middle-class children left home for vocational apprenticeship, and poorer children often had to go to the streets to work. There was little, if any, attention paid to the education of young children. Those children who did receive an education were from the privileged economic class. Girls were rarely provided with the same opportunities and experiences that were available to boys (Ebsy, 1952; Wilds & Lottich, 1961; Butts, 1973; Osborn, 1991; Wortham, 1992; Trawick-Smith, 1997 as cited in Morrison, 2011).

##### **2.1.2. The Reformation**

###### **2.1.2.1. Martin Luther (1483-1546)**

According to White (2000), Luther is commonly referred to as the "Father of the reformation" and is credited with a number of educational reforms that continue to influence ECCE include:

- The importance of the home and family as being essential to good government and social order,

- Compulsory school attendance
- The importance of music in education, and
- Equal rights for all citizens.

### **2.1.3. Emerging the Awareness of the Importance of ECCE (1600-1800)**

During the 17th and 18th centuries, the education of children less than 6 years of age was not thought of as distinctly different from that of older children. However, the basis of many of the ideas, practices, and theories that continue to influence ECCE were established as a developing awareness of the importance of the early years in education evolved. An awareness of the unique nature of childhood also emerged as writers of the period described children as fragile creations of the God who needed to be safeguarded and reformed. As children began to be perceived as being different from adults, games and clothes were designed for children, and institutions designed for children's education emerged (White, 2000).

#### **2.1.3.1. Influential People**

##### **2.1.3.1.1. Comenius (1592-1670)**

His beliefs about education focused on nature and the natural tendencies and experiences of childhood. That is, he contended that the natural growth of the child must be the basis for education and schooling. According to him, schools were the best agencies for educating society and the individual. He believed that carefully planned experiences were needed to unfold innate ideas, and that children learn through action on objects. He also advocated for educational opportunities for children of all backgrounds (White, 2000, p. 29).

Comenius believed education should begin in the early years because " a young plant can be planted, transplanted, pruned, and bent this way or that. When it has become a tree these process are impossible." Today, new brain research reminds us again that learning should begin early and that many "windows of opportunity" for learning occur early in life (Morrison, 2011, p. 60).

According to White (2000, p. 29), a number of Comenius's beliefs continue to influence early childhood practice and theory today as:

- The recognition of the concept of individual and delineation of stages of development.
- The content of teaching should be drawn from children's interest in things, language, manipulation, and people.
- The belief that children should be engaged in different types of activities consisting of the very things children love to do, such as run, jump, pour out water, lift things up, and carry things place to place.
- A detailed program for young children consisting of play, games, rhymes, tales, music, and manual activity.

#### **2.1.3.1.2. John Locke (1632-1704)**

In the late 17th century, John Locke formulated and elaborated a theory of education that continues to ECCE. He also played a role in laying the foundation for Pestalozzi's ideas. Locke challenged the belief of the medieval church that children were born with a fully formed nature of soul, and he contended that children, like other natural phenomena in the universe, were subject to the effects of the environment. He was one of the first to point out that there could be no true education that did not take the nature of the individual learner into consideration. Attention to the development of the total child through the senses of sight, test, smell, and hearing expanded the education methods commonly used at this time. He also recognized the advantages of play that play was a method of learning and children would learn much quicker when doing something; they enjoyed (Locke, 1964; Weber, 1984; Osborn, 1991 as cited in Brudenel 2004).

#### **2.1.3.1.3. Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778)**

Rousseau believed that children are essentially good at birth and they should be allowed to freely express their instincts and feelings. He focused on the natural

environment as a vehicle for freeing the spirit of children (Wolfe, 2002). He believed that social and emotional adjustments were more important than the accumulation of information or skills. According to him, since the child is the center of the educational processes, his/her needs and spontaneous growth processes are a starting point for learning educational concepts. He also believed that teaching techniques such as memorization and rote learning were ineffective. He argued the use of natural objects and self-discovery to teach children through object lessons. He sees early childhood as a special stage in life and recommends that adults take particular care when educating the young, as 'in all things the beginning is the most important part' (Brudenel 2004:12).

#### **2.1.3.1.4. Johann Pestalozzi (1746-1827)**

Pestalozzi's work was built on the foundation of educational philosophy expounded by Plato as early as 427-347 B.C., in which early childhood was seen as a time of plasticity and expression of innate goodness, and by Comenius (1592-1670), whose ideas about education were sophisticated beyond his time (Johnson, 2005). Pestalozzi writes of the young children:

*Work and play are all one for him, his games are his work; he knows no difference. He brings to everything the cheerfulness of his interest, the charm of freedom, and he shows the bent of his own mind the extent of his knowledge.*

Lock's notion, coupled with the work of Comenius, formed one major premise of Pestalozzi's philosophy: that children learn through sense, observation, and perception (Johnson, 2005).

The functional laws of nature that call for continuous and gradual growth, as well as the proviso that each stage must come to completion before another begins, formed the basis for Pestalozzi's developmental curriculum.

For Pestalozzi, the preparation of the environment to resemble the home was of prime importance in setting the stage for children's experiential learning. He

believed that a home like environment first and foremost created a climate of emotional security, the first principle of education.

Based on his views of natural development, Pestalozzi designed a carefully sequenced curriculum in which materials and instruction were matched to the child's level of development:

*...the constituents of instruction must be separated according to the degree of the growing power of the child; and that in all matters of instruction, it is necessary to determine with the greatest accuracy, which of these constituents is fit for each age of the child, in order on the one hand, not to hold him back if he is ready, and on the other, not to load him and confuse him with anything for which he is not quite ready. (Johnson, 2005, p. 26).*

One of Pestalozzi's notable contributions was his development of teaching methods that allowed him to adapt instruction to fit individual needs. He believed that children should be involved in activities that were meaningful to them, based on their own interests and experiences. For him, the relationship between the teacher and the student represented the foundation on which curriculum was built. Providing continuity with the mother-child love relationship as the child moved outside the home was central to the child's level of readiness and to create an ever-widening circle of experience (White, 2000, p. 33).

#### **2.1.4. Expansion and Change in ECCE (1800-1900)**

##### **2.1.4.1. Friedrich Froebel (1782-1852)**

One of the most important developments in ECCE was the conceptualization and establishment of the kindergarten. Specifically, Froebel believed that human growth takes place in stages, that education should focus on the child's interests and activities, and that children should be allowed to manipulate real objects that are useful. He subscribed to the view that childhood represented a noble and malleable phase of human life (Johnson, 2005).

To Froebel, both the child's own nature and the universal aspect of nature were in close harmony. To enable the child to develop his inherent capacity for learning, the supportive adult had to be trained in this particular method (Brudenel, 2004).

He formulated the ideas that have influenced the beliefs about how children develop and learn:

- Children's growth and learning begin in the family setting and extend in an orderly manner into school life.
- Children learn by doing through activities that focus on the idea of unfolding. Learning is essential, as is the use of concrete manipulative materials in the learning process.
- The purpose of instruction is to provide activities in which children build habits, skill, and power of will, and character rather than acquire knowledge.
- The child's inner world will be awakened through the manipulation of objects. By manipulating objects through play, children will have opportunities for self-expression.
- The importance of training for early childhood teachers. (ibid, p. 5).

According to him, play was "the perfect medium for self-activity for the release of the child's inner powers". Implicit in all Froebel's curriculum materials and guidelines were the three forms of knowledge he saw as the basis of all learning: forms of life, such as gardening, care of animals, and domestic tasks; forms of mathematics, such as geometric forms and their relationships to one another in pattern making and block play; and forms of beauty, such as design with color and shape, harmonies in music, and movement. The teacher's role in the traditional Froebelian kindergarten was to observe and gently guide but not to interfere with children's creative processes (Weber, 1984; Synder, 1972; Wiggin, 1893 cited in Johnson, 2005, p. 39).

Regarding to the training of practitioners in early years settings Froebel believed that the training of workers for early year's settings was essential. Hence, children

now being admitted to out-of-home settings at a progressively earlier age than formerly the case. The training of practitioners in educare is, therefore, an area that has received some considerable attention in recent years (Brudenel, 2004:6).

#### **2.1.4.2. Robert Owen :( 1771-1858)**

Owen who lived in times of great change firmly believed that the educational environment is a key contributing factor in shaping the ways in which children responded to educative experiences, social behavior and value systems (Brudenel, 2004).

Owen's emphasis was on a stimulating curriculum that offered freedom for the child from the pressures commonly associated with childhood at that time.

*The children were not be annoyed with books, but were to be taught the uses or nature of common things around them by familiar conversation when the children's curiosity was excited so as to induce them to ask questions... (Ibid, p. 18).*

To this end, there are many aspects of Owen's curriculum that will be familiar to those who have worked in 'free flow' play settings. For example, where children have choice over the pace and areas of their learning; where there is an emphasis on outdoors as well as indoor activity; and where there is an emphasis on the development of social skills and support for individual needs.

Owen believed that by the use of good role models and appropriate educative and social experiences, children's individual characters could be shaped at a very early age. To this end, teachers were required to have 'a great love for and unlimited patience with infants'. He saw the home and the school environments as continuous and closely linked (Brudenel 2004:17).

## **2.1.5. Establishment of ECCE (1900-1950)**

### **2.1.5.1. John Dewey (1859-1952)**

A number of ideas that emerged from Dewey's interpretation of Froebel's activities have had a lasting impact on PPE. The role of early childhood teachers and how young children learn continue to influence educational practices as follows:

- The realities of everyday life should be the basis for all classroom activities in which children participate. According to Dewey, all activity should start with the child and not by the child's imitation of teacher-initiated activities.
- Children should be introduced gradually to the community and larger social world through outdoor games, nature study, and walks in the community.
- Participation in play activity contributes to the children's intellectual and social development. Play that relates to daily experiences and elicits problem solving on the part of the child is highly valued.
- The teacher's role is that of a facilitator who encourages social skills by providing opportunities to practice them.

As a progressive educator, he shared with Vygotsky, Montessori, and Piaget the central ideas of that movement: education should be child centered; education must be both active and interactive; and education must involve the social world of the child and the community. According to him, children's interests form the basis for curriculum planning. He thought teachers do not teach just subject matter, but also how to live in society. In addition, he thought that teachers do not just teach individual children, but also shape the society (Mooney, 2000:45).

He believed that teachers needed to have confidence in their skills and abilities. Teachers need to trust their knowledge and experience and, using both, provide

appropriate activities to nurture inquiry and dispositions for learning in the children they work with.

Dewey supposed that the path to quality education is to know the children well, to build their experiences on past learning, to be organized, and to plan well. The demands of new method make observing, documenting, and keeping records of classroom events much more important than when traditional methods are used. He thought that an activity is not a learning activity if it lacks purpose and organization.

From Dewey's perspective, an experience can only be called "educational" if it meets these criteria:

- It is based on the children's interests and grows out of their existing knowledge and experience.
- It supports the children's development.
- It helps the children develop new skills.
- It adds to the children's understanding of their world.
- It prepares the children to live more fully (Mooney, 2000:14).

In general, like Pestalozzi and Froebel, he saw school as an extension of the home environment, organized to encourage specific intellectual and social goals.

### **2.1.5.2. Maria Montessori (1870-1952)**

*The greatest sign of success for a teacher is to be able to say, "The children are now working as if I did not exist."*

*Maria Montessori*

Montessori saw education as assisting the psychological development of children rather than as teaching per se. (Wolfe, 2002; Johnson: 2005:4).

She grounded her educational program on an exceptionally keen insight into the nature of childhood as well as a belief that educating the young child was the key to the salvation of society (Goffin & Wilson, 2001; Wolfe, 2002).

In a nutshell, the good Montessori teacher operated on three principles: a carefully prepared environment, an attitude of humility, and respect for children's individuality. She determined that, to be comfortable, young children need furnishings their own size and tools that fit their small hands. She thought that the teacher has a responsibility to provide wonderful sights, textures, sounds, and smells for children (Mooney, 2000:24-25). Hence, beautiful, orderly, child sized environments and sensory play are part of Montessori's legacy.

## **2.1.6. 1950-1980: Development and Expansion of PPE**

### **2.1.6.1. Jean Piaget (1896-1980)**

*The teacher-organizer should know not only his own science but also be well versed in the details of the development of the child's or adolescent's mind.*

Jean Piaget

In terms of curriculum and programs for young children he suggest that children should be given the freedom to play, experiment, and participate in guided learning activities. While others asked what children know or when they know it, Piaget asked how children arrive at what they know (Mooney, 2000:59).

Piaget thought that the child's interactions with his environment are what create learning. He claimed that children construct their own knowledge by giving meaning to the people, places, and things in their world. He was found of the expression "construction is superior to instruction". According to him, the best strategy for preschool curriculum is to keep children curious, make them wonder, and offer them real problem-solving challenges, rather than giving them information. Many adults still hold the notion that a teacher is someone who

shares information. He also stressed the importance of play as an important avenue for learning. As children engage in symbolic play (making a cake out of sand) they make sense of the objects and activities that surround them (Mooney, 2000, p. 61-62).

According to Mooney (2000), when children's are interested and involved, they need teachers who respect this absorption with their work. Hence, children are actually doing the work themselves and creating their own understanding of what is going on, instead of being given explanations by adults.

### **2.1.6.2. Erik Erikson (1902-1994)**

*There is in every stage a new miracle of vigorous unfolding, which constitutes a new hope and a new responsibility for all.*

*Erik Erikson*

Erikson describes the child as energetic and ready to learn. However, it is a time when the child's development can split in one of two possible directions: human potential for glory or for destruction. If we encourage preschool children to use their energy in an active and involved way, their confidence will grow. Their competence will increase. If we do for them, what they can do for themselves or if we focus on the mistakes, they make on the way to developing new skills, their sense of initiative can turn to guilt and discouragement (Moony, 2000).

Adults, especially parents and teachers, are key parts of children's development and therefore play a powerful role in helping or hindering in their personality and cognitive development that occur hand in hand and cannot be separated (Morrison, 2011).

To support children's development, Erikson says that teachers can:

- ❖ encourage children to be as independent as possible

- ❖ focus on gains as children practice new skills, not on the mistakes they make along the way
- ❖ set expectations that are in line with children's individual abilities
- ❖ focus curriculum on real things and on doing (Moony, 2000, p. 55).

### **2.1.7. Contemporary Theory in ECCE (1980-Present)**

...Consequently, there was a strong emphasis on raising the standards for both teachers and students and reforming and restructuring schools (Moony, 2000:59)

#### **2.1.7.1. Lev S. Vygotsky (1896-1934)**

As Piaget, Vygotsky emphasized the value of play in intellectual development and provide strong arguments for children's own activity with objects and in interaction with peers as the basis for early childhood curriculum (Morrison, 2011). He believed that much learning takes place when children play (Mooney, 2000).

He believed that learning drives development. In this regard, the experiences children have influence their development. This is why it is important for all concerned bodies to provide high-quality learning experiences for all children (Morrison, 2011). According to him, interactive situations allow children to stretch and grow mentally. Hence, growing and learning does not necessarily happen "naturally". He used to say, "The children will grow taller without the teachers help, but not smarter or kind!" Teachers need to develop the skills of observing, questioning and encouraging peer instructions that will best support children's growth and development. Vygotsky has helped teachers to see that

children learn not only by doing but also by talking, working with friends, and persisting at a task until they "get it" (Mooney, 2000).

In general, by learning about the theoretical foundations of early childhood care enables to find solutions and guidance in the classroom today. As the work of five ground breaking education theorists in relation to early childhood, each theorist's work distilled to reveal how it relates to childcare and education, John Dewey examined the qualities that make curriculum meaningful; Maria Montessori, the need for carefully prepared classroom environments; Erik Erikson, an approach to making children healthy and comfortable; Jean Piaget, our knowledge of children's thought processes; and Lev Vygotsky, the importance of teachers and peers in learning.

### **2.1.8. From Luther to Today: Basic Beliefs Essential for High-Quality Early Childhood Programs**

In this section, the basic beliefs that are essential for developing high- quality programs and for teaching young children have been considered.

#### **Basic Beliefs About teaching children**

- Everyone needs to learn how to read and write.
- Children learn best when they use all their senses, all children are capable of being educated and should be educated to the fullest extent of their abilities.
- Education should begin early in life, children should be appropriately taught what they are ready to learn when they are ready to learn it and should be prepared for the next stage of learning, and learning activities should be interesting and meaningful.

- Social interactions with teachers and peers are a necessary part of development and learning as well as all children have many ways of knowing, learning, and relating to the world.

### **Basic Beliefs about Teachers and Teaching**

- Teachers should love and respect all children, have high expectations for them, teach them to their highest capacities and should be dedicated to the teaching profession.
- Good teaching is based on a theory, a philosophy, goals, and objectives. Children's learning is enhanced through the use of concrete materials, Teaching should move from the concrete to the abstract, should be a planned & systematic process, centered on children rather than adults or subjects as well as it should be based on children's interests. Observation is a key way to determine children's needs.
- Teachers should collaborate with children as a means of promoting development and should plan so they incorporate all types of intelligence in their planning and activities.

### **Basic Beliefs about Collaborating with Parents and Families**

- The family is the most important institutions in children's education and development. The family lays the foundation for all future education and learning. Parents are their children's primary educators; they are their children's first teachers. However, parents need help, education, and support to achieve this goal. Parents must guide and direct young children's learning.
- Parents should be involved in every educational program their children are involved in. Everyone should have knowledge of and training for child rearing. Parents and other family members are collaborators in children's learning. They must encourage and support their children's many interests and their unique ways of learning (Morrison, 2011:83-84).

The relationships of the school, parents, and communities are perhaps the biggest challenge to early childhood educators today. Besides, among other factors the parent's ability to effectively engage with the early years setting and form partnership with practitioners will depend on the individual's socio-economic, emotional and understanding status (Valdes, 1996; Isenberg & Brown, 1997; Ball & Pence, 1999; Gonzalez -Mena, 2002; Koplow, 2002 cited in Brudenel 2004, p. 233).

Hence, practitioners also need to consider their own views and assumptions about the parenting role and their responses to a range of parental approaches. Approaches that are judgmental, negative and critical of parents and children or cultures different to their own can be damaging to relationships and limit the child's experience (Brudenel 2004).

## **2.2. Importance of Pre primary -School Education**

Nelson Mandela once said, "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world." Wise words spoken, but even more specifically, early learning education is a far greater tool for success.

(Website: <http://visual.ly/importance-early-childhood-education>)

The best predictor of a good ending is a good beginning. All learning and life experience is molded by what happens to the child in the early years of his or her life. The influence of the family is of major importance but the influence of the educational opportunities offered to young children is just as powerful and, in some ways, more powerful. For it is the impact of ECCE that determines the attitude a child will take to formal schooling at primary or secondary level.

(website:<http://ezinearticles.com/?The-Importance-of-Early-Childhood-Education>)

## **2.3. Approaches to Pre primary Education Curriculum**

### **2.3.1. The Content of ECCE Curriculum**

Developmentally appropriate curriculum provide for all areas of a child's development: Physical, emotional, social, linguistic, aesthetic, and cognitive. It includes a broad range of content across disciplines that are socially relevant, intellectually engaging, and personally meaning full to children (Mooney, 2000, p. 277).

As well, Tirussew, (2007) indicates that the program should be designed in such way that it promotes the child's physical, cognitive, social, language, aesthetic and emotional development. To this effect culturally relevant, developmentally appropriate and inclusive indoor and outdoor materials and activities should be carefully designed for the enhancement of the all-round development of the child.

Therefore, all children pass through each area of development- physical, intellectual, linguistic, emotional & social we design educational program that are developmentally appropriate.

### **2.3.2. Teaching methods of PPE**

Several studies have shown that in implementing the PPS curriculum, methods emphasizing child directed activities are more effective than those teacher directed instruction. Education in PPS is not about imparting facts rather it is about listening, guiding and helping each child to make sense of real world (Paciorek and munro, 1999:83). It is based on better understanding of what children can do. To adapt interesting activities to the need and abilities of each child, keeping him/her learn with satisfaction (Tassoni, 2002:1).

Hence, the use of child-centered methods such as discussion, play based, learning by doing, grouping, learning through experience and the like provide opportunities for first hand experiences, activities, discovery, exploration, experimentation and multi-sensory approaches. These methods promote

independence, cooperation, consideration, tolerance and respect for the right of all others.

### **2.3.3. Assessment and record keeping in PPE**

Evidences show that assessment of young children should be based on continuous observation both in-out door environments that should be an ongoing process rather than a single paper-pencil test. Rather than mere presence of children's in the classroom, it should look at their activities, attitudes, and efforts (Isenberg and Jallongo, 1993:319).

Therefore, assessment is about recording how participants move through understanding rather than simply mapping the end product or outcome.

A multi source and a multi measure assessment will provide a more valid and comprehensive picture of the child. It also provides continuous feedback between teachers, children and parents. Particularly, observation with a clear focus and purpose is more rewarding to identify particular needs, strengths and weaknesses of children. When teachers only use tests as measures of performance, they tend to lose sight of individual rates of development and may think that if any child performs poorly, the child is viewed as a failure. Many educators believe that tests do not measure the true capabilities of young children because of children's developmental characteristics (Mooney, 2000).

### **2.3.4. Record keeping in PPE**

There are different types of records in PPS. These are personal record of the child, home background of the child, health records, attendance record, stock register; house visits records, parent's teachers meeting records, records of admission forms and progress report of the children (Chowdhur and Choudhury, 2002).

According to (Neaum and Tallack, 1997) record keeping is important to build up a picture of individual child, to monitor individual progress, to plan for the future progress and communicate achievements and progress to parents. Record keeping is an important part of a preschool curriculum. Its main purpose is to gain

information about the performance of preschool children, evaluate their progress, identify constraints, provide enrichment and optimizes each child's achievement in relation to the objectives of PPS education.

Besides, appropriate record keeping serves as reference to the pace of individual progress, evidence of the child's strengths and weakness, and help teachers to assess teaching effectiveness. It also provides parents with a basis for discussion with a teacher about their child performance and progress in the KGs (Hespe, 2002:11).

More to the point, a record-keeping system shows the philosophy (the principles & values) of the setting in action. If the record keeping does not reflect the principles the practitioners embrace, then there will be confused practice that constantly contradicts itself (Bruce, 2011).

### **2.3.5. Play and its Role within the PPSs Programs.**

Pestalozzi writes of the young child, as cited in Johnson, (2005, p.5):

*Work and play are all one for him, his games are his work; he knows no difference. He brings to everything the cheerfulness of his interest, the charm of freedom, & he shows the bent of his own mind & the extent of his knowledge.*

A sizable number of early childhood programs are built on the idea that play is central to children's cognitive & social development. Furthermore, links between play & creativity, language development, perspective-taking ability, & problem solving are well acknowledged (Hughes, 1998; Johnson et al., 2005).

According to Froebel, play is "the work of the child" and a part of "the educational process." "In play, children gradually develop concepts of causal relationships, the power to discriminate, to make judgments, to analyze and synthesize, to imagine and formulate".

ECCE can be fundamentally termed as "Learning through play". While good ECCE helps the brain to develop in healthy ways, improper education or study without play on other hand may affect brain development in different manner. For this reason, it is suggested that ECCE during these years should be more focused on teaching children about the world around them through play and establish the links. Moreover, many child development experts also agree that play is very important in the learning and emotional development of children. A play can be multi-facet and often helps in educating different skills in children. In addition to this, education through play also helps them learn social skills, and develop values and ethics. (Website: [http://EzineArticles.com?expert=Manoj\\_Tiwari](http://EzineArticles.com?expert=Manoj_Tiwari))

In nutshell, providing opportunities for children to choose among well-planned, varied learning activities enhances the probability that they will learn through play.

### **2.3.6. Pre primary-School Education workforce**

According to Chowhdury and Choudhry (2002), the staff is the most important element in PPS. Teachers and other categories influence the development of children more than any specific curriculum or educational methodology. Obviously, selection of staffing deserves thoughtful attention concerning their competencies and number of staff members.

#### **2.3.6.1. Teachers and Assistant Teachers**

ECCE is of utmost importance because researches have shown that ECCE experiences have great impact on all areas of a child's development and had suggested that the first teacher is an extremely important person in the child's life.

"Every young mind needs a spark to light the way to a brighter future through learning. Teachers are that spark." "...the greatest institution for social change is the school and the greatest instrument of change is the teacher. No other democracy created by man to promote the welfare of all people has ever existed.

Schools and teachers have always been the catalyst for human progress because knowledge and learning have created the world in which we live," (Morrison, 2011, p.31).

There is necessity of pre-school assistants for housekeeping services like cleaning, washing and care of the floor. A physician is desirable to be the staff of a pre-school as a part time worker who is responsible for the health examination of the child at least once a week (Chowdhury and Choudhury, 2002).

Besides the teacher, assistant teachers support the work of the main teachers. Assistant teachers are adults of sound mind (OEB, 2012).

#### **2.3.6.2. Personnel**

The crucial role of leadership the preschool teacher plays in shaping the attitudes, skills and learning of children makes the preschool teacher the key personnel to the successful program in the preschool. He/she needs sensitive to the needs of young children, respect the dignity of individual child, and recognize the existence of individual differences in human personalities and human capacities (Chowdhury and Choudury 2002). It further explained that the management of a preschool must have a basic knowledge of child development and psychology. He/she must know how to run a pre-school, its requirements for safety and health, nutrition and mental health service, should be able recruit and guide the other, staff; work with parents and maintain their involvement and collaborate with other communities agencies.

For an organization to be effective, it does not only need an appropriate structure. It also needs a minimum level of human and financial resources. Under ESDP IV, standards on the minimum numbers and profile of staff in all organizations and on the minimum level of resources to be available to all organizations will be developed (ESDP IV: 69).

## **2.4. Pre Primary School Learning Environment**

Both the physical environment and the social environment of the PPS classroom influence children's physical, cognitive, linguistic, and social-emotional development. The social environment consists of the immediate physical surroundings, social relationships, and cultural settings in which children function and interact. Teachers treat children courteously, talk with them about in-and out-of-school activities and events, and show genuine concern for them as individuals with specific needs. Unfortunately, not all children get the respect they need and want at home or at school. On the other hand, under the direction of an unaware or uncaring teacher, classroom activities and social interactions may encourage isolation and separation. Developing a positive teacher-child relationship is a key element of the social environment (Morrison, 2011).

### **2.4.1. Pre Primary School in- door Learning Environment**

#### **2.4.1.1. In-door Arrangements and Organization**

The classroom is organized to promote interaction and learning. Desks, tables, and workstations are clustered together; work areas have a variety of learning materials to encourage group projects, experiments, and creative activities. In addition, a high-quality kindergarten classroom is one in which children feel at home. Children's work is prominently displayed and they feel a sense of ownership (Morrison, 2011).

Educators have positive evidences that proper arrangement of materials & equipment can provide organization & structure, which will maximize learning opportunities for children in the classroom. Well-arranged classroom encourage children's independence & self-help that is a fundamental goal of PPS education. It provides easy choices & self-serving (Millar & Mc Dowelle, 1993:83).

Curtis (1998) also indicates that activity centers are important features of Preschool classroom. It provides variety of experiences & learning opportunities for young children. The centers are the source of so much imaginative play, a place to explore, experiment, discover, solve problem & use of various materials

& equipment. Thus, as Isenberg & Jalongo (1993) specific areas in the classroom need to be related to specific area in the curriculum.

Similarly, OEB (2012) recommended that different activity centers for languages, science, social science, mathematics, and aesthetics that expected to be equipped with a variety of materials & equipments, which have a capacity to provide wide opportunities for children to actively involving in the program.

In general, Children are stimulated to become involved in classroom activities when materials are readily available.

#### **2.4.2. Pre Primary School out-door Learning Environment**

The education of young children does not end in the classroom. Playgrounds also provide opportunities to support and expand children's understanding of their world (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997).

Traditionally, playgrounds were associated primarily with children's physical development. Today, playgrounds are designed to support children's physical, cognitive, and social-emotional development. Playground learning centers include opportunities for art activities, nature studies, quiet activities, dramatic play, construction, gardening, and science activities. PPS out-door learning environment need to be designed for the whole child. It is therefore possible for teachers to link classroom and outdoor learning experiences.

The grouping of outdoor learning centers is also important. As in the classroom, playground learning centers that support active play (e.g., climbing, swinging, running, riding) should be grouped together and separated from less active play areas (e.g., gardening, sandbox, reading, nature study). Areas should be separated so that one set of activities does not interfere with the other.

Playgrounds, like classrooms, should accommodate children with diverse skills and needs. Wide door and gate openings, ramps and oversized paths can be installed to accommodate wheelchairs. Outdoor play, like the rest period, is also sometimes overlooked. Children are not only exercise their large-motor skills, but

also have opportunities to develop new insights into their world. Teachers need to monitor and facilitate children's outdoor play, just as they do within the classroom (Mooney, 2000:327).

#### **2.4.2.1. Pre Primary School Building**

As (Hallack, 1990) School building should be located far away from unnecessary noise, air pollution and other impediments such as places of amusement, taverns, dancehalls, cemeteries or other installations which would in any way demoralize or adversely affect the children's attitude. These situations distract the children's attention and even frustrate make feel of in security. In addition they also attack the health condition of the children spoiling the fresh air the children took in. so they must be far away from the causes of such problems like heavily traveled high ways , air parts, market areas and factories. Moreover, it has its significant influence on the behavior of the children therefore, the school building its situation, design, lighting, ventilation and general environment has important role to play in the behavior and welfare of the children.

#### **2.4.2.2. Pre Primary School Locations**

According to Hallack (1990), PPSs need to have a favorable and suitable site that consists of drainage capabilities, access to utilities, size and shape, type of soil, playground features, roadways, traffic conditions, residential surroundings and the like.

Pre-primary classes are placed in different types of locations. But, PPSs are situated at the government regular primary schools.

## **2.5. Parent - School Relationships Concerning PPE**

This section addresses some of the issues that prevent or adversely affect the development of effective partnerships between PPSs and parents and explores some of the strategies that can be used to overcome these issues.

Many research studies confirm the benefits of parent support. Students with involved parents, no matter their background, are more likely to earn higher grades and test scores, adapt well to school, attend regularly, have better social skills and behavior, and graduate and go on to higher education. The more families can support their children's progress, the better their children do in school and the longer they stay in school (Morrison, 2011, P. 344).

Education starts in the home, and what happens there profoundly affects development and learning. The greater the family's involvement in children's learning, the more likely it is that they will receive a high-quality education. Helping parents learn about child development, providing them with activities they can use to teach their children in the home and supporting parents in their role as their children's first teachers are powerful ways to help parents and children be successful. Accordingly, one of the guidelines to effectively involving all parents is supporting them in their roles as first teachers of their children. Support can include information, materials, and help with parenting questions (ibid, p. 349).

### **2.5.1. Why Partnership with Parents?**

Wolfendale (2000) states that the rationale for parental involvement in children's education lies mainly in raising educational achievement, but also has other aims:

- boosting children's well-being by having their parents and teachers working to shared goals on their behalf
- enhancing teacher satisfaction that parents are supporting their endeavors

- Increasing parental knowledge of school processes and thus reassuring them that schools are doing their best by their children.

Common sense and, for many practitioners, real life experience tell us that 'working together' will reduce the incidences of confusion, misunderstanding and hostility between parents and professionals that can adversely influence effective work with the child. Common sense also tells us effective partnerships between home and school will mean that all the adults working with a child will have a good understanding of the child's needs and how these can be best met at home and in the early years setting (Brudenel 2004).

### **2.5.2. Skills for building partnerships**

A key factor of effective partnership is the extent to which genuine participative communication takes place between parents and practitioners (Brudenel 2004: 438)

Unlimited possibilities exist for family involvement, but a coordinated effort is required to build an effective, meaningful program that can bring about a change in education and benefit all concerned: families, children, professionals, and communities. To ensure successful and significant parent and family involvement some activities such as participating in workshops and attending training programs can be implemented to foster Parenting knowledge and skill (Morrison, 2011).

### **2.5.3. Factors that may inhibit the development of effective partnerships**

Parenting is a complicated task with multiple demands and a changing context in which parents need to be knowledgeable about a wide range of issues that may affect their child. Yet, the majority of parents have little or no preparation for this momentous task (Brudenel 2004).

Parents have diverse motivations, agendas, and skills to bring to partnership with early years settings. Some will want to have a high level of involvement; others may appear to want not to be involved at all. Some may want to be involved but do not know how to engage; others may be hostile, even aggressive in their relationship with practitioners. Besides, Practitioners bring their own contributions to the development of partnership, but a key factor will be the level of commitment the work setting or organization has to partnership and the management ethos in respect of the 'genuineness' of partnership approach (ibid, p. 439-442).

Parents need to have opportunities to make suggestions; give feedback; make complaints and offer views and opinions. This entitlement should be part of policy and supported by a strong management and organizational ethos of listening and responding to feedback. Where possible, parents should be represented on the management of the service or early years setting (Brudenel 2004).

To conclude, developing partnerships is complex and messy, involving a large quantity of imagination and determination in order to reach the diverse range of parents with whom each early years setting is involved. The key elements are a strongly supportive ethos, ongoing discussion and feedback on strategies adopted and practitioners who have the knowledge, commitment and skills to work effectively in this area.

#### **2.5.4. Family- School Relations: Promoting Family Involvement**

Family-school relations have become a central theme of the educational reform movement. A comprehensive study of past work on student learning concluded, "The home functions as the most silent out-of-school context for student learning, amplifying or diminishing the school's effort on learning" (Wang, Haertel, &Walberg, 1993 cited in Mooney, 2000, p. 199).

Schools cannot have quality family involvement programs without having quality family-school relations. Family-school relations describe the nature of the relationship between families and schools. Just like other interpersonal relationships, the between parents and teachers is complex, ever changing, involves conflict, and is in need of constant care and attention. Moreover, just other relationships, those involving parents and teachers are dependant up on a shared sense of trust, communication, and negotiation. Family involvement describes the strategies by which parents and teachers cooperate to support children's early education. Family involvement activities can take place in the school, at home, or in the community (Mooney, 2000).

The collaborative relationship between families and schools has been referred to as a "third institution" built on mutual support and reciprocal exchanges between parents and teachers. Hence, Families and schools share the social functions of educating, nurturing, protecting children. Children learn best when their family and classroom learning experiences are linked (Mooney, 2000).

#### **2.6. Roles of Administration bodies in PPSE**

Regarding to the roles and responsibilities of partners in the provision of ECCE services, the MoE provides policy guidelines on PPE, certifies PPE teachers and trainers, develops play and teaching materials, and maintains standards and quality assurance. The Ministry is also responsible for the training of PPSs teachers. It provides training services for PPE, develops the curriculum, supervises PPSs Programs and registers PPSs at regional level (REB). The

Ministry will be required to carry out capacity building and advocacy, facilitate networking and build linkages. It was also stated that Woreda Education office would be responsible for furniture and indoor-and outdoor play-equipment (MoE, 2010).

While the government's direct involvement in the provision of ECCE will remain limited, its role in maintaining the improvement of quality of ECCE and its governance through supervision and inspection will deepen during ESDP IV. The government's role will be mainly one of promoting, coordinating, supporting and monitoring the involvement of other stakeholders (ibid p. 19).

The clear policy option for decentralization to the regional and Woreda levels is present throughout all sectors including in education. The success of this policy depends very much on the competence demonstrated by the local actors and on the support they receive from the upper levels of the administration. The decentralization reforms have transferred important responsibilities to the Woreda Offices in order to exercise their responsibilities with support from regional offices, within an overall framework developed at federal level.

However, according to ESDP IV many offices do not yet have the required capacity to exercise their responsibilities effectively. School functioning also needs further improvement, in particular concerning school leadership (MoE, 2010).

## **2.7. Quality of ECCE program**

As, MOE (2010) ECCE has become one of the priorities for the education sector because it will be one of the potential inputs to the overall improvement of quality of education and reduction of dropout and repetition rates in later strategies of formal schooling and because it leads of higher enrollments, particularly of girls. In addition, participating in ECCE is the right of the child and it has been considered as bedrock of EFA and the first step in meeting all the other EFA goals. This in turn contributes to the overarching millennium development goal of

reducing poverty. It is more cost effective to institute preventive measures and support for children early on than to compensate for disadvantage, as they grow older. Affordable and reliable ECCE provides essential support for working parents, particularly mothers. Investment in quality ECCE yields a high economic return, offsetting disadvantage and inequality, especially for children from poor families. Besides, ECCE has positive effects on female labor force participation and schooling of older siblings. It also levels the playing field by reducing inequalities between rich and poor and it is thus a key component to breaking the cycle of intergenerational poverty.

Although there is much debate about the quality of childcare and what it involves, we can nonetheless identify the main characteristics of quality programs. The dimensions and indicators of quality childcare include a healthy, respectful, supportive, challenging, safe and pleasant environment, developmentally appropriate curriculum, staff well trained in early childhood development, age-appropriate environments, small groups with optimal ratios, the quality of infrastructures and materials, systems for supervising and evaluating, teacher-to-child ratio, family involvement and cultural continuity and access and equity.

## **2.8. The quality of infrastructures and materials**

As Morrison (2011), learning involves activities, materials, and opportunities for exploration and interaction. UNESCO (2010) states that for effective interaction between children and teachers/ caregivers there must be good working conditions in terms of facilities, health environment, low child/ teacher ratio, instructional materials, and overall support.

Concerning quality of school infrastructure and facilities many schools, in particular at primary level, are constructed in non-durable materials, which decrease children's motivation to attend and remain in school (ESDP IV, p. 19).

## **2.9. Systems for supervising and evaluating**

Every type of PPS setting that wishes to accept government funding is required to undergo continuous supervision in order to assess the extent to which the PPSs are working towards the *intended Goals*.

An ECCE program is the first small step towards education, prosperity and an overall successful life. Naturally, all children are curious and whatever they will react to whatever they see, hear and touch. This ability to learn and adapt must be carefully supervised early on in order to mold the child into a better person in the long run and make him a successful human being in society. PPE is instrumental in putting a child on that path ([http://EzineArticles.com/?expert=Pen\\_Ryn](http://EzineArticles.com/?expert=Pen_Ryn)).

## **2.10. Teacher-to-Child Ratio**

The ratio of adults to children in childcare programs should be sufficient to give children the individual care and attention they need. In Africa, there has been a shortage of quality preschool facilities and personnel, especially teachers. The ratio is 1 teacher to 14 children, as to the international standard (UNESCO, 2010).

## **2.11. Brief Overview of Pre Primary education in Ethiopia**

As modern education is a phenomenon of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century to Ethiopia so also is kindergarten, however, the establishment of modern preschool preceded, by eight years, the introduction of modern western education into Ethiopia which took place in 1908. The first modern kindergarten was established in Dire Dawa for the children of French consultants who were helping build the first rail road in Ethiopia in 1900 (Demeke, 2003 as cited in Tesema, 2012).

According to Tirussew, et al., (2007) several other private preschool such as English school, the German school, the Lycel Gebre Mariam, etc were giving services for children of the well-to-do families in Addis Ababa following the operation of kindergarten in Dire Dawa in 1900's preschool as a general community service began in 1955 EC, with a few pilot projects established at the

community centers in Ras Desta Sefer (Addis Ababa), Debre Zeit, Debre Berhan, Awassa and Asmara under the Ministry of National Community Development and Social Affairs and these centers were ran by Swedish and American Peace Corps volunteers.

Moreover, the development of kindergarten in Ethiopia was very gradual compared to preschool expansion in other nations during the same period of time and stated that from 1908 to 1974 for example, only 77 kindergarten were established in Ethiopia limited to urban areas of the country operated by missionaries, private organizations and the Ministry of Social Affairs and Development. The central government at that time paid little attention to early childhood since it was felt that scarce resources should be directed creating literate adults to run the emerging modern state (Tesema, 2012).

Following the Ethiopian Revolution of 1974, kindergarten quickly got attention by the government at that time based on the assumption that making the women free from child rearing activities could increase the participation of the women in socio-political environment under the slogan of the time “Revolution can’t be successful without the active participation of women.” Based this preschool education become part of national education policy and the preschool curriculum was developed in Ethiopia for the first time. The kindergartens were community (Keble) based with poor resources and run by untrained caregivers mostly women.

### **2.11.1 Current Policies and Implication to Pre Primary Education in Ethiopia**

The above assertion shows that little attention was given to preschool education by the MoE up to around 2008/2009. However, the private sector has been encouraged to expand preschool education in urban centers of the country. Since 2008/2009 it seems that the importance of the pre-primary education is recognized and some efforts have been made. Due to this the MoE formulated the national policy framework, strategic operation plan, and guidelines for early

childhood care and education (ECCE) as well as the regional bureaus are making endeavor to incorporate the ‘zero’ grades into first cycle primary schools. Some of which, are already operating as pre-primary extensions attached to primary schools. This may, to some extent, provide an opportunity for children in the rural and low-income families who were starving for pre primary education in Ethiopia. Such effort could help the overlooked pre primary education to recover. Most recently, it seems that the MoE has recognized the fundamental importance of pre primary education in attaining the education for all as part and parcel of MDGs, therefore, it has been intended to promote early stimulation and the best start in life for all children, and enhance the quality, accessibility and equitable distribution of services for children through more efficient partnerships and capacity building programs.

Accordingly, Oromia Education Bureau has set Pre Primary Education Standard (OEB) that PPE program must meet in order to achieve the intended goals and profiles in the ECCE policy framework.

### **2.11.2. Benefits of Investing in Early Years**

MOE (2010) states that some of the benefits, Ethiopia would reap from increased investment in programs for infants and children include:

- Increased productivity, as the support provided to parents enables them to raise healthy and well-nourished children.
- Economic returns, because the better equipped children are at the start, the more effective education in school will be, and because investments in high quality preschool programs for low-income and ethnic minority children – who would otherwise be insufficiently prepared for school – work as a ‘multiplier’ of collective investments in the school system.

- Cost savings for both the families and the nation, as increased investments in quality care translates into children being healthier and having better academic performance, resulting in fewer school dropouts and repeaters.
- Reduction of poverty, as children exposed to quality early childhood development experiences do better at school, hence grow up to get better-paying jobs when they enter the labour market and have higher living standards in consequence.
- Improved chances for the girl child, as girls enrolling in early childhood development centers are more likely to proceed to primary school and higher levels of formal education.
- Improved family welfare, as parents and communities acquire more knowledge, skills and positive attitudes on various issues related to community development.
- Increased opportunities for parental and community mobilization and empowerment, as offered by early childhood development programs (ECCE policy Framework, 2010).

In general, everyone wants the best for their children, but if adults, particularly parents and teachers do not understand how important ECCE is to their development, they might be unknowingly denying them future successes.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This chapter presents various issues related to research method employed and the rationale for using it in this study. The issues include research method, source of data, sampling procedures, data collection procedure and instruments, method of data analysis, ethical consideration, and the validity and reliability of instruments.

#### **3.1. Research Design**

The major purpose of this study is to assess the prevailing situation of selected PPE attached to regular government primary schools at Sebeta administrative town and its surroundings against Regional Pre Primary Education Standard. In order to meet this purpose multiple case studies was employed as an appropriate methodology since it can investigate adequately an existing phenomenon within its real life context and help to analyze the research problem in more depth with the intention that the proposed purpose will be achieved. As Yin, 1993 qualitative/multiple case studies are generally preferred strategy when *how* & *when* questions are being posed, if the research goal is program evaluation, when the focus is on process than outcome, & when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon with in some real-life context. It enables the researcher to gather data from many case studies to answer/audit evaluation questions. It also strengthens the results by replicating the pattern matching, thus increasing confidence in the robustness of the theory. Besides, the qualitative approach addresses the process rather than the outcomes (Creswell, 2009 cited in Temesgen 2012, p.47). While using the qualitative methods it required allowing the source (the interviewee) express their views in a free and personal way, giving as much importance as possible to their thematic associations (Strauss and Corbin 1990; Bogdan and Biklen 1992).

### **3.2. Source of data**

The focal sources of data for the study consisted of PPS teachers, principals, parents, and WEO experts. Furthermore, Regional Pre Primary Education Standard guideline is used as the cornerstone of reference of information for the study.

### **3.3. Study site**

This study was carried out in Oromia Regional State Sebeta administrative town that is found at 25 km from Addis Ababa in the South West direction. The area under study was selected because: it is the working area of the researcher and that could be made the data easily available for the study. Besides, administrative towns would have relatively better awareness, facilities, experiences and accessibility than other remote Woredas regarding Pre Primary education. Moreover, some researchers conducted at different part of the country about ECCE at a distant from the capital city mainly selected KGs based on sponsorships stratified as (Public, private, NGO) but not stratified as government PPSs. Hence, the researcher was initiated to conduct on the government Pre Primary Schools.

### **3.4. Sampling technique and Sampling procedures**

There are five administrative towns around Addis Ababa. Namely: Lega Tafo, Sebeta, Gelan, Dukem, & Sululta. Out of this Sebeta was selected by using random sampling technique (lottery method). Of the (10) government Pre Primary Schools (PPSs) in the study area, 4 PPSs were selected by following similar sampling technique of administrative town selection. Besides, 2 female WEO experts were selected for the interview using purposive sampling method due to their close responsibility they have in the area. All (5), M=4 and F=1 school principals and all (6) female PPE teachers were included by using available sampling technique for the interview and 14 parents were randomly selected from

the total population of the parents. Generally, 27 numbers of informants were used in this study.

**Table 1: List of Sampled PPSs, Number of children, Teachers & Sections.**

No	Name of Schools	Total no of children						Drop out			Av. no of children per		
		Enrolled			Currently in the school						Section	Teacher	
		M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T			
1	Dima G.	39	32	71	21	29	50	18	3	<b>21</b>	1:50	50	
2	Kerabu	KG1	49	36	85	44	30	74	5	6	<b>11</b>	1:74	55
		KG2	29	28	57	28	22	50	3	4	<b>7</b>	1:50	
		KG3	19	29	48	16	25	41	3	4	<b>7</b>	1:41	
3	Abdi B.	94	81	175	54	52	106	40	29	<b>69</b>	1:10 6	106	
4	Mulugeta	17	25	42	11	14	25	6	11	<b>17</b>	1:25	25	

### 3.5. Data Collection Instruments and Procedure

#### 3.5.1. Instruments of Data Collection

Three principal techniques were employed for the gathering of data. These included interview guides, document review and observation guides.

Initially, relevant policy, guideline & curriculum materials were collected from MOE, WEO & Private KGs. A review of related literature is organized to get adequate information. Next, making contact with WEO responsible expert as well as PPS principals to obtain relevant information for further understandings.

Lastly, based on the collected materials, review of related literature and information obtained through groundwork discussion instruments of data collection were developed.

#### **3.5.1.1. Interview Guide**

Interview is one of the prominent methods of data gathering instrument used. People are more willing to talk than to write. It enables the researcher to seek clarification and brings to forefront those questions that for one reason or another respondent do not want to answer (Bursha, 2011, cited in Gudisa, 2012). The key informant interview method enables researchers to explore in depth understandings, facilitate free- exchange of ideas and lends itself to acquire more queries that are complex and attaining detailed responses. The informants had firsthand knowledge and experience and were therefore, best placed to comment on problems (Carl et al., 2004). Thus, interview was used to obtain in-depth and detailed information from the participants.

Interview is held with the WEO experts, PPS teachers, principals and parents. For WEO and PPS Principals the same interview guide was used in order to cross check the trustworthiness of information obtained for the study. Other type of interview questions was done for parents accordingly. The interviews were conducted in local language (Amharic/Afan Oromo based on the interest of interviewees and documented by tape recorder.

#### **3.5.1.2. Observation Guide**

Direct observation of main situations and activities accessible at PPSs were observed according to the details of the observation checklist of appendix D that enables to have a good view of all possible dimensions of sampled PPSs. Each in-out doors were observed at three various periods.

### **3.5.1.3. Document Review**

Document sources serve as a useful purpose in yielding information that is important in explaining social or educational practices. Rooted in this, to ensure how comparable and reliable the data collected through the aforementioned methods from the research site, and hence to make a kind of triangulation/cross checking document review yet found to be another means of data collection.

Related issues with the research problems of this study were reviewed in the policy materials (national policy guideline, strategic operational plan, ESDP IV, Education and Training Policy), instructional materials, children's attendance records, and teachers profile in general as well as Regional Pre Primary Education Standard (ROEB) in particular were reviewed and also attached as appendix.

### **3.5.2. Data Collection Procedure**

Before collecting the data, the researcher explained his mission and the purpose of the research to WEO and the school principals. The researcher welcomed by all of the selected PPSs. After permission was secured, the researcher with the principal of the PPSs were arranged the time and place to get the participants. Participants were informed about the objective of the study and were asked to participate as scheduled.

Required data was collected step by step through prepared interview guides and observation checklists on the basis of previously organized pertinent literature review so as to get necessary information. As the interview guide was not structured, other important questions were generated during interview and leading questions are introduced ahead. Ample time was allowed to satisfactorily probe in to the issue. Recording of interviews on tape is performed since it is convenient and obviate the necessity of writing during the interview, which may be distracting to both interviewer and subject (Best and Kahn 2006). Interviews are recorded with the personal consent of the participants for ethical concerns. As to the participant's interest, the language interviews conducted.

Observation was made according to the checklists prepared for. Therefore, observation is conducted in both the classrooms and outdoor play areas that supplement the interviews and can assist comparisons with the standard adopted in the region.

Photography is conducted both in the classrooms and outdoor play areas as well as sanitary places that provide actual data to supplement the interviews. Data collection process took a total of six weeks. A multiple system of data collection tools is employed. Specifically, interview, observation and document analysis (review) were used.

### **3.6. Method of Data Analysis**

The audio-recorded interviews were transcribed manually. Relevant portion of the interview were transcribed and summarized since transcribing every word, exclamation or pause that occurred in interview were not needed (Lofland & lofland, 1995 cited in Gudisa, 2012, p. 38).

Pertaining to observation, after the end of each session, the researcher wrote up detailed notes of direct observation based on the checklists as soon as possible. Furthermore, pictures were used to show the reality in the natural setting. Hence, the results were used to substantiate the results obtained through the interview. The researcher records of the major activities, facilities and general situation form a strong basis for analysis and interpretation of collected data.

Generally, the data obtained through unstructured interview guide, observation guide and document review was presented and analyzed through qualitative methods according to PPSs implementation domains. Themes and sub themes were generated as the analysis progressed. Based on the findings obtained, conclusions could be reached and recommendation was drawn.

### **3.7. Ethical Considerations**

In this study, ethical consideration was given due emphasis. The study had a letter of consent from Special Needs Education Department. The researcher was careful to maintain the rights of the respondents and at the same time conscious about the validity of data. In order to do these properly, the researcher took some cautious strategies. For instance, he disclosed the respondents the study objectives and strategies for data collection. From the respondents' point of view, they have the right to ask the researcher any questions. They also had the freedom to provide or not to provide the data. Nevertheless, they did not apply this. All of them were informed about the detail of the study objectives. Their response would be kept confidential and could not be used in ways that would harm them. The researcher did all these for getting reliable and valid information. Regarding parents, some respondents were not very curious about the issue of the research but the researcher tried to inform them as short as possible. Thus, it can be said that the researcher was interested to take informed consent from the respondents before collecting information.

### **3.8. Validity and Reliability**

To attain validity and Reliability in the instruments of data collection the researcher maintained a close relationship with the real situation of PPSs at every stages of the study. Before writing the proposal, the researcher visited some of the PPSs and discussed with the teachers and supervisors. The proposal presentation allowed the researcher to get the feedback from the research advisor. Research advisor ahead of the study saw appropriateness and applicability of the instruments. Some modifications were then made to the interview guides & observation checklist items based on feedbacks obtained from the advisor. Besides, all PPSs were under close contact of the researcher, which increased the extent of both reliability and validity of data.

Triangulation was attempted through using different methods in collecting the data. For instance, to explore the contact of parental partnership, the respective

principal who was responsible to arrange the program was interviewed. Along with this, parents and teachers were asked the same issue. Then, the researcher crosschecked the data and tried to see the extent of similarities and dissimilarities. The researcher was also insider in the locality. The researcher adopted patient investigation and triangulated the data from different sources. Thus, the researcher took the opportunities of the insider and tried to avoid biasness.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **FINDINGS**

This chapter presents the main findings, analysis and discussion of the study. Based on the nature of the research questions and data collected, qualitative method of data analysis was used. Data was presented based on major themes. The result of participants of each sample PPS obtained through observations using checklists and document reviews were analyzed and incorporated in the analysis to supplement and substantiate the data secured through interviews. Ahead of presentation, the general profile of the respondents was presented.

#### **4.1. Demographic Characteristics of Participants in the Interview**

In the interview guide, factual items that were asked for the identification of sex, age, educational standard and professional experience as teaching in the PPSs and the like were made a part of the interview. Results are in the table below.

**Table 2: Demographic Characteristics of Participants who were interviewed**

PPSs	Participants	Sex			Age					Educational (qualification) status							Professional Experience in year (PPE)	
		M	F	T	20-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	Above-40	ECCE-Certificate	TTI	Diploma	BA	1-4	5-9	10th & abv.	0-4	5-9
PPS1	Teachers	-	1	1					*		1							*
	Principals	-	1	1		*					1							
	Parents	1	1	2			*		*					2				
PPS2	Teachers	-	3	3		***				1	2							***
	Principals	2	-	2				*	*			2						
	Parents	3	3	6		*	**	***					4	2				
PPS	Teachers		1	1		*				1								*
	Principals	1	-	1		*					1							
	Parents	2	2	4	*		*	*	*				2	1	1			
PPS4	Teachers		1	1					*			1					*	
	Principals	1	-	1					*			1						
	Parents	1	1	2			*		*				1	1				
	WEO Experts	-	2	2					**			2						
	<b>Total</b>	11	16	27	1	7	5	5	9	2	3	5	3	9	4	1	1	5
	<b>Percent</b>	<b>40.7</b>	<b>59.3</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>3.7</b>	<b>25.9</b>	<b>18.5</b>	<b>18.5</b>	<b>33.3</b>	<b>7.4</b>	<b>11.1</b>	<b>18.5</b>	<b>11.1</b>	<b>33.3</b>	<b>14.8</b>	<b>3.7</b>	<b>16.6</b>	<b>83.3</b>

\* One person in the interval    \*\* Two person in the interval    \*\*\* Three person in the interval

■ Not have ECCE experience

As shown Table 2, the total number of participants for the study is 27(100%) 11 (40.7%) male and 16 (59.3%) female. PPS teachers were 6 (females); School principals were 5 (4 male and 1 female); Parents were 14 (7 male and 7 female); and WEO experts were 2 (females). The number of school principals were male 4 (11%) and 1 female. All (6) of the teachers were females. All of the school principals have not professional experience for PPSs.

It was depicted in the table 2 that it seems to be a female teacher's dominated program. This seems well done for the fact that the standard adopted in the region (OEB, 2012, p. 29), indicates not only the preference of female teachers but also principals and caregivers also preferably females that would be serving in the PPS education. It also appears that female teachers can play motherly roles in teaching children in the KGs.

Besides, Aggrawal (1996:219), confirm that a need to entrust the education at the pre-primary to women teachers who are considered to be more suited to the task of instruction at this stage.

Therefore, based on the above ideas, it would be possible to infer that being female teacher seems to have a positive influence on children's learning, for the fact that they deal with young children with their soft and motherly affection.

Therefore, as to the researcher point of view, a half-done unskilled female teacher's dominated program may not guarantee to mushroom children's education as expected. Rather, emphasizing well-designed teacher training program for both sexual category would take a lion share than focusing on a partial sex to the fact that it is difficult to clamp single-handedly.

Previous study and other documents also support this idea. For instance, Tesema (2012) found that there were a female dominated sector in both government and private ECE, which implies that there is a need to encourage males to join the profession so that children can have role models of both genders.

Table 2 also reveals that the age of most teacher respondents, 4 (66.66%) were in the range of 20 to 29 years. Only 2(33.33%) teachers were above 40 years. None of the

respondents was below eighteen years. This depicts that the age of teachers in the studied area implies an active working age.

Although, it requires another study to exactly know the impact of age of teachers on such program, certain evidences show that children are highly interested in adults to express their emotions-needs, fears, problems, feelings, and the like. Thus, it could be possible to bring to a close that the status of age of teachers in most of the studied PPSs seems beneficial to their children. However, the ages of two teachers above 40 years old give a picture of out of an active working age concerning educating very energetic young group and serving them requires primarily to face well the responsibilities of educating young children, which is complex in nature.

As educational standard (qualification) of the respondents portrayed in the table 2, 1 (16.6%) was diploma holder, 2 (33.3%) were PPE certificate holder and 3 (50%) were TTI certificate holder. A number of evidences show that the quality of teachers determines to a high degree the excellence of ECCE program. One of the requirements is that teachers should meet at least minimal educational standards for their specific tasks (Decker and Decker, 1988).

Conversely, the majority 4 (66.66%) of the teachers who are working in government PPS have not qualified in relation to the standard adopted in the region which requires a minimum of PPE diploma holder (OEB, 2012, p. 31). Therefore, it is not only inadequate to accomplish the overall tasks in PPE but also might have negative or irreversible impact on children's learning as well as overall development. As WEO experts & principals responded that even refresher courses are not allowed to teachers that could satisfy in terms of their preparation. It was also observed a reflection of disorganized kinds of activities in the classrooms. It was mostly due to lack of professional competency. Regarding this, UNESCO (1992) stated that the main instrument is the teachers. Exploration of intellectual ability and creativity of the teachers in the training sessions and of the students in the classrooms were the main tasks of any education program. Hence, remaining silent on the qualification of teachers in the preschools has complicated the situation.

As depicted on the table 1, 2 (33.33%) of teachers have better education in relation to the regional standard. On the other hand, it should be noted that just come close to certain academic requirements alone does not assure one fit to the position required since educating young children highly demanding excellence of many kinds.

Concerning teaching experiences of the participants as a teacher in the PPSs the majority 5 (83.3%) of them have experiences of teaching from 6-10 years and only 1 (16.6) has an experience of teaching from 0-4 years.

According to Seefeldt, 1973 cited in Shewakena (1997, p. 66) indicates that years of prior teaching experience is related to the cognitive gain and better adjustment of children in the KGs. Similarly, Heffernan and Todd (1960:4) argued that the professional growth of teachers would take place through increasing insightful years of service in the KGs working with children and colleagues. It enables teachers to practice different teaching skills and to integrate new knowledge and skills with current practice.

Hence, the great majority of teachers currently working in the studied area have a better opportunity to develop good experience in teaching young children for the fact that essential knowledge and skills to be effective and competent in educating children build up through practice.

#### **4.2. Profile/ Adequacy and Professional Competency of Teachers in PPE**

One of the concerns of this study was to examine the adequacy and professional competency of teachers in PPE. Respondents were asked about the availability of opportunity for pre-service or in-service training and refresher courses as well as the opportunities that teachers have to further improve their professional competences.

Regarding this issue, the school principal from PPS-1 said,

*"No ...*

*Regarding adequacy and competence of the staff, both are in question. It is better to say we have many children without any trained PPS teacher or personnel, similar to having numerous sheep without shepherd! Always we*

*face unspeakable challenge since a single untrained aged teacher served as PPE teacher, assistant teacher, caregiver, cleaner, etc.*

Supporting the above idea, the school principal from PPS-2 also said in Amharic that, "... እዉነት ለመናገር ከሆነ በቅድመ መደበኛ ትምህርት ላይ በቂም ብቁም የሰዉ ኃይል የሉንም..." which mean, "... genuinely speaking, we have neither adequate nor competent man power regarding to PPE". His vice also added that,

*"We have a serious problem in regarding to both adequacy & professional competency as the so called qualified teachers themselves had been trained in private colleges by untrained trainers. Besides, there is no room to improve their professional skill either in-service training or short term training".*

Moreover, findings obtained from the interview of almost all parents revealed that they complain about inadequacy and incompetency of workers in government PPSs and they are dissatisfied by the existing PPE program. One of the parents from PPS-2 responded with unpleasant face as:

*"... regarding to man power, as you see any layman can judge it, highly inadequate. Frequently, I see a single teacher attempt to do all activities with many children. Not only teachers but also school principals are not skilled enough about children. Always there is a nagging between parents and the school about children's learning."*

On the other hand, the school principal of PPS-3 revealed as follows:

*"...The current competent and committed teacher served about 120 children in a single classroom without any assistant teacher, caregiver and inadequate materials as well as facilities. This depicts how far man power issue is serious problem and the PPE program is at risk."*

By confirming the idea of school principal from PPS-2, the school principal of PPS-4 expressed that:

*"... the issue of adequacy or professional competency is mainly the mandate of WEO. Our consent is to organize, to support, to monitor about*

*the program as much as possible. What we did is just assigning one of the strongest diploma holder teachers to PPE program. In fact she is strong, but not trained for PPE."*

In the same way, one of the WEO expert also revealed about the existing adequacy and professional competence of man power in PPSs program as well as the opportunities that teachers have to improve their professional competences that:

*"...it is not only the PPSs problem but also better to say there are no, both adequacy as well as competency in every position including us. As an a good opportunity there is an endeavor to train a trainers of trainees to foster the awareness and skill of stakeholders in addition to training of PPE teachers in the teachers college just of this year. For instance, we are training 5 to be ECCE PPEteachers in government teachers training college as the quota of our WEO."*

As it was observed from teacher's portfolio most of them (4), had no training. Some (2) of them were trained for PPE. This reveals that most of the teachers in the studied area were not trained for the program. As the duration of their training period indicated, both of teachers trained for ten months, which showed that they had relatively proper training. Besides, the review of documentary evidence of PPSs also indicated that all of personnel and most of the teachers in the studied PPSs were not trained as required.

Therefore, the training of workers for early year's settings was essential. According to Brudenel, (2004, p. 6) children now being admitted to out-of-home settings at a progressively earlier age than the formerly. The training of personnel in educare is, therefore, an area that has received some considerable attention in recent years.

(TGE, 1994), article 3.4 and sub-article 3.4.5, regarding the training of teacher's states:

*Teachers starting from KG to higher education will be required to have the necessary teaching qualification and competence in the media of instruction, through pre-service and in-service training.*

Correspondingly, the standard setting adopted in the region, indicates the qualities of those entrusted with the responsibility of supporting the learning and development of PPS children need to have adequate number of workers in each PPSs/per sections and the expected qualifications for PPE program. Thus, one of the qualities of workers are expected to be the holder of a training certificate in child development and PPS teachers are expected to be a diploma holder in PPE from teacher training college (OEB, 2012, p. 29-31).

In recent years, educators stress the crucial importance of providing well-trained teachers for PPS children and emphasize adequate and professional education as a pre requisite. Because, the quality of PPS programs, depends greatly on the availability of qualified teachers who have been trained in the education of PPS children. A program's success depends on the teachers who implement it, their interest in the problems of children, and the ways they devise to solve these problems (Bulter, 2001 cited in Temesgen, 2006, p. 68).

Hence, the main instrument is the teachers (commitment, interest, readiness & competency) despite how long they have worked there, materials & equipment as well as large class size. For teachers with strong background in PPE can best provide for children what they need to grow physically, socially, emotionally and intellectually (Woodfield, 2004, p. 99).

Previous study also affirms that a commitment to equipping teachers with essential knowledge, attitudes, skills and expertise through pre-service training is an indication of good practice in PPS setting. It follows that the first stage of education, should have well qualified teachers. Obviously, teachers need to be well educated personally, and professionally in order to fit the responsibilities, which are complex in nature and highly demanding of excellence of many kinds Temesgen (2006: 69).

From the above points, it could be possible to deduce that the majority of teachers, in the PPSs, had no training to be armed with professional knowledge, attitudes, skills, and expertise that enable them to be competent and effective for the undertaking of PPE.

Moreover, the image of inadequacy of training of teachers was further complicated by the present over-all shortage of teacher and increasing demand for services of young children. Hence, it could be said that the training of teachers in most of the PPSs was inadequate. This may limit the competence of teachers to carry on a sound program of PPE, which in turn might affect the whole development of children in the studied PPSs.

#### **4.2.1. In-service training**

Participants were also asked about the availability of opportunity for in service training and refresher courses on PPE. They responded that almost all (5) of them have not get an opportunity for in-service training except one of the teacher has got a kind of in service training for about 2 weeks in various times as a workshop. This depicted that lack of opportunity for in-service training or refresher courses for almost all of teachers in the area. Besides, the interviewed WEO experts & principals had expressed the absence of in-service training or refresher courses provided for teachers by government body that could satisfy in terms of their preparation. This had created lack of self-confidence and feelings of inadequacy in their profession.

Regarding this, the teacher from PPS-4, who is aged above 40 years, expressing her emotion with a high tone, that:

*...whatever the year I stayed with children, gradually, I lost my confidence since I was trained for regular students in teacher training institute and I am not in a position to do with children as it should be done. Always I did in the same way I trained for. Neither PPE training nor refresher courses are allowed that could satisfy PPE preparation. Any atmosphere of professional development has not been created as to primary education program...*

Dewey believed that teachers needed to have confidence in their skills and abilities. They need to trust their knowledge and experience and, using both, provide appropriate activities to nurture inquiry and dispositions for learning in the children they work with (Mooney, 2000, p. 5-6).

Evidence also shows that in-service training is an essential part of the on-going work and development of PPS education. Both qualified and unqualified teachers need to have access to up-to-date information that enables them to meet the standards required at all times. Periodic refresher courses, workshops, seminars, and conferences are required so that teacher can keep themselves abreast of current trends and research and their application to understanding of children and curriculum development (Sadek and Sadek, 1996 cited in Temesgen, 2006, p. 73).

Hence, in-service training is expected to equip teachers with newer and better teaching procedures that will help them carry out their professional responsibilities effectively. However, teachers hardly had opportunities to upgrade and acquaint themselves with changes and innovations in the system. Therefore, this situation would have a negative impact on the performance of the teachers, which in turn affects children's learning as a whole in the studied PPSs.

### **4.3. Curriculum Implementation in PPSs**

To identify the extent to which the standard curriculum was implemented in PPSs, various components of the curriculum were analyzed. Hence, points related to objectives, contents, methods, materials, assessment, record keeping systems and Play and its role in PPE were observed as well as interview were held accordingly. The results are analyzed as follows.

#### **4.3.1. Importance /Objectives of the curriculum**

To identify the objectives of the curriculum in PPE for child's holistic development, the participants were asked accordingly.

Regarding this, parents were asked about the importance of PPE program for their children overall development. Particularly one of the parent respondent from PPS1 said in short, "...my child understand and read even better than regular grade 1 or 2 students".

By supporting this idea, another parent from PPS-3 responded that:

*...I have one girl in this PPS. Due attention is given to her education in order to read, write and understand it well at home. After a meal, she is studying about 'Qur'an' in addition to regular education.*

Similarly, one parent responded from the same school that:

*... my son knows alphabets properly. At home, I asked the lesson he learned daily and attempted to support him accordingly. Now, he is very good at English, good at Mathis but not good at Amharic.*

In contrary to the above discussion, one parent from PPS-4 said that, "my child was going to the school for the sake of going. She knows nothing. She cannot read or write."

As observed above, as parents' center of attention, the importance of PPE program for children overall development is extremely focused on their children academic knowledge. Furthermore, the interview conducted with the school principals and teachers, made clear that better attention be given to the intellectual as well as physical development of children. The evidence given by principals was to prepare children for primary education and that of teachers was parents highly targeted on their children academic knowledge. It was also pointed out that PPE usually gives more attention on the preparation of children for primary education like reading, writing, arithmetic and school discipline.

Similar to the data obtained through interview, it is evident from the findings through observation results that intellectual and physical development's of children were more targeted by most (5) teachers in most (3) PPSs. Whereas, social development of children were to some extent emphasized and emotional development hardly ever emphasized. Unfortunately, PPSs settings succumb to pressure and push children towards academic goals and objectives i.e. more of formal instruction in literacy and numeracy teaching were directly imposed upon young children.

In contrast, there is an increased realization that the social and emotional experiences, which PPS offers, are considered very important to the development of children. Unless the social and emotional predispositions those children desires are included early, we will spend even more resources remedying our mistakes (IDRC, 1983, p.103).

Further, social and emotional adjustments were more important than the accumulation of information or skills (Wolfe, 2002). Carefully planned KG curriculum aims at the development of well-balanced and competent personalities (Butler, 2001:103). Children whose all aspects have developed in a balanced way will strive to learn whatever is necessary to make their life a satisfactory one (Tassoni, 2002, p. 1).

Correspondingly, the education and training policy (TGE, 1994), states, "KG will focus on all round development of the child in preparation for formal schooling." (Article 3.2 and sub-article 3.2.1).

According to MoE (2012), teachers are mainly engaged in developing reading, writing and arithmetic skills; early stimulation in a play full way is very often not part of their teaching. It means that the psychosocial component, which is critical for proper cognitive, linguistic and overall stimulation and instrumental for adapting to new environment situations, is largely ignored especially in the schools and parents are not aware of it. In order to fill this gap, promoting quality child-adult interaction both at home and at school is necessary.

Based on the policy, the standard adopted in Oromia (OEB, 2012), set forth, the objectives of PPE education in the region as all round development of the child and promotion of children's success in primary grades. Understanding how a child's social, emotional, intellectual, and physical aspects are interrelated and interdependent allows one to see the importance of PPS program, which deals with the whole child. The development of desirable social attitudes and manners, healthy group participation and adjustment, sensitive to the rights and privileges of others are also needed. Further, to inculcate emotional maturity by guiding the child to express, understand, accept his feeling and emotions are required in the early years.

Therefore, based on the results it would be possible to realize that the objectives of the curriculum lack focus on social and emotional development of children. The lack of balance to address the social and emotional development of children in the studied PPSs, might lead to lack of harmonious development of children's personality.

### 4.3.2. Relations of contents

With respect to the relations of contents of curriculum to the objective realities of children's environment in PPS, almost all of teachers replied that it was little in PPSs. This may indicate that the preparation of curriculum materials as to reflect the objective realities of children's environment was given less attention in the region.

However, literatures suggest that the content of preschool curriculum, need to be related and have meaning for the child (Bruce, 1997). Besides, even at a longer time ago, based on his view of natural development, Pestalozzi designed a carefully sequenced curriculum in which materials & instruction were matched to the child's level of development:

*...the constituents of instruction must be separated according to the degree of the growing power of the child; and that in all matters of instruction, it is necessary to determine with the greatest accuracy, which of these constituents is fit for each age of the child, in order on the one hand, not to hold him back if he is ready, and on the other, not to load him & confuse him with anything for which he is not quite ready (Johnson, 2005:6).*

To the contrary, all PPSs under this study were not using any form of curriculum materials prepared by OEB, rather borrowed books published elsewhere, which are less relevant to the children environment. All of respondents (teachers & principals) also commented the use of "imported" texts from private KGs, which are not relevant to the children environment. Class observation result also confirmed alike the respondents comment.

Previous research findings are consistent with this finding. For instance, Tesema, (2012) found that the content of curriculum did not reflect the objective realities of the children's environment in private ECE since teachers were using books published elsewhere, which are not relevant to the children environment. The current study also revealed similar findings in government PPSs. However, it is not consistent with this finding in the other. For instance, Tesema (2012) again found that in government ECE the content of the curriculum was found more appropriate to reflect the objective realities of children's

environment because the teachers have been using teachers guide prepared by the OEB, which is more relevant to the children's environment. Contrary to this finding, any forms of curriculum materials prepared by OEB were not used in all government PPSs under this study.

Supporting the current findings, Temesgen (2006) also stated that the degree to which the content was based on the realities of children's environment to prepare them for future life was found to be low. According to Curtis (2003) and McCarthy (1980), the educators working with pre-primary children must give careful attention to the content of the child's learning. Moreover, the contents of preschool curriculum should be based on areas of learning experience; aesthetic and creative, human and social, language and literacy, mathematics, physical, moral and spiritual, and technical. Curtis further explains that, the content also needs to include many opportunities for children to practice thinking and reasoning skills through fun, interesting and age appropriate when designing curriculum based on activities and experiences, the educationalists should consider the worthwhile knowledge and fields. Preschools should use a curriculum whose content has been geared to the developmental needs of the children and will see the content areas as progressing along a continuum and allowing sufficient flexibility to ensure that the individual interests of children in their community can be met. The learning experiences of the preschool must reinforce learning, which has occurred at the preschool stage (Curtis, 2003). It is clear that what goes in the PPSs must be closely related to what goes on outside it. For this, the PPSs must have contents selected from daily life experience of children to prepare them for life journey ahead. It also appears that the contents need to value children's daily living, as important to the society in which they are members and help them to cope with everyday life at their own maturity, understanding and ability level.

Quite unexpectedly, there were no regionally prepared PPE curriculum materials in the studied PPSs. Hence, the lack of contents from the realities of children's environment and their daily life experiences would have significant disadvantage on children's competences, initiatives, and opportunities to cope with both individual and community problems at the present and to the future.

For this reason, based on the above analysis and reviewed literatures, it is possible to conclude that the value of contents relation to the objective realities of the children's environment was not given an important place. Besides, its' implementation was not similar throughout the region as some government PPSs were using materials prepared by the OEB and others were using "imported" materials from private KGs.

### 4.3.3. The Commonly Used Teaching Methods in PPS

In order to check out and analyze the focal teaching methods in the PPS to effectively implement the curriculum, the level of use of a variety of different teaching methods: Discussion, play based lessons, question and answer, learning by doing, illustrating stories, role play, grouping, cooperative learning were never used in the class rooms. The data obtained from the observation on the type of frequency of teaching methods is presented as follows.

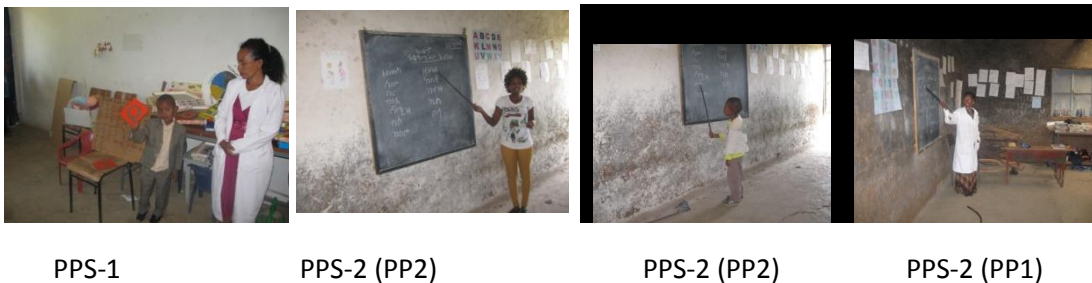
**Table 3: The most commonly used teaching methods in PPSs**

S/no	Teaching method	No of teachers used	Observation			
			Always	Some Times	Rarely	Never use
1	Discussion	1			✓	
2	Play based lessons	2			✓	
3	Question and answer	4		✓		
4	Learning by doing	2			✓	
5	Illustrating stories	0				✓
6	Role play	0				✓
7	Grouping	2			✓	
8	Learning through experience	2			✓	
9	Explanation	6	✓			

As it can be seen from the table above, teachers currently working in PPSs were always using explanation, sometimes using question and answer, rarely using discussion, play based lessons, learning by doing, grouping, learning through experience and never use

illustrating stories as well as role play teaching methods in the studied area. This depicts that explanation and question and answer were the most commonly used teaching methods in the majority of the PPSs. whilst, other important methods were rarely used or not at all. As observation result witnessed in most classrooms more of direct teaching with giving emphasis on telling, reading, showing and asking (dominance of teachers centered) than the use of the rest (student centered) methods. Children were not encouraged to ask, rather questions flow from the direction of teachers only. Individual and cooperative learning through experience, play based lessons, learning by doing and grouping were less observed. Teaching methods, which could foster motivation and engagement of children, were less observed when used. Children were hardly included in all activities to the best of their individual needs and abilities.

**Picture one: The Commonly Used Teaching Methods in PPSs**



The above pictures shows that in most PPSs there is dominance of teachers centered methods and more attention was given to the subject matter.

In addition, the interviewed principals and teachers agreed that oral methods were dominating for the reason that the shortage/absence of materials and facilities, large class size, child sized chairs and tables, assistant teachers, knowledge on the part of most teachers, & mixed-age groups of children (4-6/7 years) in the same class and absence of feedback from supervisors were the main factors which influenced the proper practice of teaching methods.

Several studies have shown that in implementing the PPS curriculum, methods emphasizing child directed activities are more effective than those teacher directed

instruction. Education in PPS is not about imparting facts rather it is about listening, guiding and helping each child to make sense of real world (Paciorek and munro, 1999:83). It is based on better understanding of what children can do. To adapt interesting activities to the need and abilities of each child, keeping him/her learn with satisfaction (Tassoni, 2002:1).

Further, when we talk about programs for PPE, we mean the philosophy that guides our teaching and learning, the theories that underlie what we teach and how children learn, and the curricula that we select to guide the activities and experiences we provide for children. Regardless of the approach selected as the bases for teaching young children, the majority of early childhood professionals agree that the environment and teaching practices should be child centered, educate the whole child, and meet the needs of each child (Morrison, 2011).

Similarly, the standard adopted in the region (OEB, 2012), point out that child-centered methods as the main medium of instruction for all-round development of children in the PPSs. Hence, the use of child-centered methods such as discussion, play based, learning by doing, grouping, learning through experience and the like provide opportunities for first hand experiences, activities, discovery, exploration, experimentation and multi-sensory approaches. These methods promote independence, cooperation, consideration, tolerance and respect for the right of all others. Therefore, one must be sure that verbal explanation does not make sense to PPS children. For the reason that, at this stage children learn more from what they can see, hear, feel and do for the fact that the more senses brought into use, the greater the amount of learning that takes place.

Overall, factual information does not ensure the kind of experiences needed for young children in a world of continuous change. Children need to have a foundation how to understand concepts, apply skills, solve problems, work cooperatively, and take responsibility for their learning.

Thus, based on the information obtained, it would be possible to conclude that the more dependence on the teacher centered methods have an effect on the proper implementation of the curriculum as stated in the PPSs that have unconstructive effect on the overall development of the child.

#### 4.3.4. Preparation and Utilization of Instructional Materials

As direct classroom observation, extreme shortage or absence of instructional materials were shown in most (3) PPSs. Consequently, teachers depend only on picture, sound-letter association, letter naming as well as word discrimination written on the flash cards or mostly on the blackboard. Besides, critical curricular materials such as textbook, syllabi, teachers guide, as well as related materials that serve as a corner stone to guide children's education were not available in all PPSs. Only PPS2 has some books borrowed from other private KGs.

Concerning this, one respondent teacher from PPS 2 responded that:

*...obviously, almost we have nothing. There is no carefully planned curriculum along with instructional materials even to some extent. We borrowed few textbooks and sometimes obligated to use a single textbook for all levels (PP1-PP3) children. The lack of essential curricular materials make us to be dependent on personal notions in formulating objectives, methods, content selection, instructional materials utilization, as well as assessment procedures.*

Similarly, the interviewed school principals did not deny the critical shortage of fitting instructional materials that hampered expected utilization of instructional materials to the PPE program. Besides, they said that the tradition to collect & use real objects, which is easily available in the local environment by PPS teachers were very weak. Rather, PPS teachers merely in quest of readymade materials of high cost or used solely their own individual information, ability and understanding in absence of essential instructional materials. Further, almost all principals responded the failures of teachers' preparation & utilization of instructional materials assigning the issue to lack of interest, finance, time, & insufficient practical skill of PPS teachers.

Direct classroom observation also verified that all most all of PPS teachers did not prepare from locally available materials & used the real objects that have great value to make the lesson more concrete & interesting for children except for a teacher in PPS3 to some extent.

## Picture two: Individual and cooperative learning



PPS-3(Forming letters by Eucalyptus seeds  
/Learning by doing)



PPS-1

The above pictures show that in some PPSs there is an endeavor to use locally available raw materials & prepare from locally available raw materials.

There will be ample age-appropriate materials that the child can use in a variety of ways. Learning grows out of the child's direct actions on the materials. Locally available materials and the local environment are used for active learning (OEB: 2012).

Moreover, the utilization of proper instructional materials provides a grand opportunity for children to broaden and deepen their knowledge and understanding. Instructional materials support children's self-initiated learning, stimulates interests, awareness and imagination. As a result, teacher's proper utilization of instructional materials enhances the implementation of the given curriculum in the PPSs.

### 4.3.5. Assessment Techniques Used by Class Teachers

In order to identify and analyze the major assessment techniques used, teachers in the classrooms and their assessment portfolios were observed by using the level of frequency ranged from always to never use in the class rooms. The data obtained from the observation based on the lists of assessment techniques are presented and analyzed as follows.

**Table 4: The most commonly used assessment techniques in PPSs**

S/No	Assessment techniques	No of teachers used	Observation			
			Always	Some times	Rarely	Never
1	Daily attendance	6	✓			
2	Test	6	✓			
3	Portfolio	1			✓	
4	Observation	1			✓	
5	Check list	1			✓	
6	Class participation	4		✓		
7	Writing and Drawing	2			✓	
8	Home work	1			✓	

It can be seen from table 4 which all teachers used test and daily attendance. Several (4) teachers used class participation. On the other hand, the assessment techniques like writing and drawing by (2) teachers, as well as checklist, portfolio, observation, and home work each equally by (1) teacher were the least used techniques of assessment in most of the studied PPSs.

In addition, the interview held with principals of PPSs also supported the above finding and pointed out issues such as inadequacy of training, absence of in-service training by government and stakeholders and shortage of instructional materials, budget, and equipment were some of major problems which adversely affects the proper implementation of assessment techniques in PPSs . Moreover, it was observed that the number of children's in the classroom is very high. Even in PPS3 the number of children in the classroom is more than hundred.

Evidences show that assessment of young children should be based on continuous observation both in-out door environments that should be an ongoing process rather than a single paper-pencil test. Rather than mere presence of children's in the classroom, it should be look at their activities, attitudes, and efforts (Isenberg and Jallongo, 1993).

According to Mooney (2000, p. 204) assessment is about recording how participants move through understanding rather than simply mapping the end product or outcome.

Further, a multi source and a multi measure assessment will provide a more valid and comprehensive picture of the child. It also provides continuous feedback between teachers, children, and parents. Particularly, observation with a clear focus and purpose is more rewarding to identify particular needs, strengths and weaknesses of children (Neaum and Tallack, 1997).

Hence, based on the above result, it could be said that appropriate assessment techniques that provide complete picture of children both in the in-out door environments were not used in most (3) of the studied PPSs.

#### **4.3.6. Record keeping Techniques Used in PPS**

In order to identify and analyze the mostly used children's record keeping techniques in the PPSs, portfolios were observed. Based on the types of record keeping techniques such as daily attendance, admission, anecdotal and mark list records the following observation results were presented in the table below.

**Table 5: The most commonly used record keeping techniques in PPSs**

<b>Types of record keeping</b>	<b>No of teachers used</b>	<b>PPS1</b>	<b>PPS2</b>	<b>PPS3</b>	<b>PPS4</b>
Daily attendance	6	1	3	1	1
Admission record	3	-	2	1	-
Anecdotal record	1	-	-	1	-
Mark list record	5	1	2	1	1

A

It can be seen from the table 5 regarding record keeping almost all of the teachers, observed that they used daily attendance, most (5) used mark list record, some (3) used admission record and only one teacher used anecdotal record. This implies that daily attendance and mark list record keeping was the main record keeping system in PPSs under the study. It was also confirmed during class observation by the researcher that mostly daily attendance and mark list record keeping were available record keeping, but records for each child, which show child's progress, were not yet happening. The problems might face, because the teachers lack skill how appropriate record keeping techniques could be made for each child accordingly.

Appropriate record keeping serves as reference to the pace of individual progress, evidence of the child's strengths and weakness, and help teachers to assess teaching effectiveness. It also provides parents with a basis for discussion with a teacher about their child performance and progress in the KGs (Hespe, 2002). A record-keeping system shows the philosophy (the principles & values) of the setting in action. If the record keeping does not reflect the principles the practitioners embrace, then there will be confused practice that constantly contradicts itself (Bruce, 2011:207).

Hence, the use of anecdotal records with brief descriptions of children's performance both in-out doors, continuously recorded, from time to time provide valid information about the child (Curtis, 1998:129).

Quite the opposite, the studied PPSs were not accustomed to keep appropriate records of an individual profile, which includes pertinent information about the child's performance in the curricular areas, estimates of social and emotional adjustments, family background & examples of his/her work were not available. They use daily attendance & admission records, which provide a very little information about the child & that never, reflect a complete picture of the child.

Therefore, based on the above, it would be possible to conclude that appropriate records containing reliable, accurate, & well organized information were not kept in the studied PPSs.

### **4.3.7. Play and its role in PPE**

Participants were asked whether or not activities in the PPSs are play based & encouraged children to play. Concerning this issue, the information obtained from almost all participants revealed that, even if there is an attempt to encourage children to play as well as making instructional activities in the PPSs are play based, its' implementation is unthinkable to the reason that sufficient/conducive conditions are not met and PPSs were ill-equipped yet. Consistence with the result obtained through interview, the result obtained through observation checklist also revealed that except PPS-1, all other PPSs opened the program on the bare ground which adversely hampered each instructional activities that must undertaken through play based actions as intended.

A sizable number of early childhood programs are built on the idea that play is central to children's cognitive & social development (Johnson, Christie, & Wardle, 2005).

Furthermore, links between play & creativity, language development, perspective-taking ability, & problem solving are well acknowledged (Hughes, 1998; Johnson et al., 2005). The education given during early years of a child's life plays a very important role and helps in proper development of children. PPE can be fundamentally termed as "Learning through play". While good ECCE helps the brain to develop in healthy ways, improper education or study without play on other hand may affect brain development in different manner (website: [http://EzineArticles.com?expert=Manoj\\_Tiwari](http://EzineArticles.com?expert=Manoj_Tiwari)).

Therefore, play is a means by which the child maintains the wholeness (the unity) of his/her experiences (Bruce, 1987; 1991; 1996, 2011:19). Hence, play was the most spiritual activity of the child in that it gave meaning of relationship with self, others and the universe.

For this reason, it is suggested that PPE during these years should be more focused on teaching children about the world around them through play and establish the links. Moreover, many child development experts also agree that play is very important in the learning and emotional development of children. A play can be multi-faceted and often helps in educating different skills in children. In addition to this, education through play also helps them learn social skills, and develop values and ethics.

Likewise, the standard adopted in the region (OEB, 2012) indicates play as the main medium of educating PPS children. All activities that undergone must be both play and developmental based which could foster the overall development of the child. On the contrary, the lack or absence of appropriate play, as in the studied PPSs, undoubtedly, can inhibit the realization of objectives of the program as suggested. Because, most of the games involved simply running, jumping, playing with local balls as well as ropes. Even in the area where there is a playground, children mostly played in the street.

Generally, based on the above findings it would be possible to say that most children were unquestionably, inopportune to have wide opportunities gradually to develop concepts of causal relationships, the power to discriminate, to make judgments, to analyze and synthesize, to imagine and formulate through playing. Besides, it impedes effective use of appropriate teaching methods and assessment techniques, not only limits the role of teacher but also proper implementation of the program to enhance the overall development of children.

#### **4.4. Organization of PPS in- Out Door Learning Environments**

In order to examine, the adequacy of different issues related to indoor and outdoor facilities, materials and equipment in PPSs as stated in the OEB, targeted groups were interviewed to judge about the situation of their PPS. On the other hand, the researcher undertakes detailed observation by using observation checklists besides the aid of concrete means (photography) whenever necessary to confirm the responses. The results are presented and analyzed as follows.

#### 4.4.1. Pre Primary School In-door Organizations

**Table 6: The sufficiency of classroom environment, materials and equipment as well as its organization in each PPSs**

No	Observation items	PPS1			PPS2			PPS3			PPS4		
		Clearly Apparent	Inadequate	Non-existent	Clearly Apparent	Inadequate	Non-existent	Clearly Apparent	Inadequate	Non-existent	Clearly Apparent	Inadequate	Non-existent
	<b>1. Classroom Conditions</b>												
1.1	An orderly arrangement of the available materials & equipment		**				***			***			***
1.2	Materials & equipments are accessible, easy to use and invite self-servicing approach	*					***			***			***
1.3	Tables, chairs, benches and shelves are all child sized & comfortable for use	*			**			**			**		
1.4	The classroom is clean, pleasant and stimulating	*			**			**			**		
1.5	The windows, doors (low enough to the size/easily operated for children), and decorations are all suitable		**		**			**			**		
1.6	Well lit and ventilated enough	*			*			*			*		
1.7	The centers are well equipped according to specific purpose		**				***			***			***
1.8	Places where small groups of children can work together	*			**			**			**		
1.9	Decorated classroom with different pictures, cemented, dry and clean floors, non shiny walls,	*			**			**			**		
1.10	Adequate space for materials and floor space for activities		**				***			***			***

\* Clearly Apparent

\*\* Inadequate

\*\*\* Non existent

As an observation result shown from the above table, an orderly arrangement of the available materials and equipment in the classroom, accessibility of materials & equipments as well as easy as to used them and invited self- servicing approach; The equipping situation of centers (corners) according to specific purpose (standard); Adequacy of space for materials and floor space for activities were observed "*non-existent*" except in PPS1.

On the other hand, child sized & comfortable tables, chairs, benches and shelves for use; the cleanness, attractiveness and stimulating of the classroom; The appropriateness of windows, doors (low enough to the size/easily operated for children), and decorations; Places for small groups of children to work together, and decoration of the classroom with different pictures, cemented, dry and clean floors as well as non shiny walls were observed "*inadequate*". Exceptions were noted in PPS-1 where children were provided with individual chair, light enough to be carried by each child & tables comfortable for group work. Even so, shelves are not proper height to be served by children.

Picture 3 below also shows that classroom environment and space, materials and equipment as well as its organization in each PPSs were insufficient except in PPS-1.

### **Picture 3: PPSs in-door Organizations**



PPS-1(Classroom situation)



PPS-1(Classroom situation)



PPS-1(teaching materials organization)



PPS-2 (Class room situation of PP1)

PPS-2 (Class room situation of PP2)



PPS-3(Classroom situation)

Many studies have shown that KG children should be provided with tables, chairs, benches & shelves of proper height & weight. Equipment used should be to the size of children so that they participate in the life that goes on in the classroom actively (Christine & Jill, 1999).

*...everything should be in proportion to the size of the child. The clear light rooms, with little low windows wreathed in flowers with small pieces of furniture of every shape just like the furniture of a nicely furnished home, little tables, little armchairs, pretty curtains, low cupboards within reach of the children's hands, where they can put things and from which they can take what they want, all this seemed a real, practical improvement in the child's life (Montessori, 1936, quoted in Morrison, 2011, p.17).*

It is possible to say that meeting the needs of children in the PPSs, calls for appropriate kinds of equipment, which are essential for the program. Tables, benches, chairs & shelves must be selected to meet the needs of PPS children. They must afford an opportunity for children to sit & work contentedly. The equipment needs to be suitable for use & adequate for the group of children attending the program. The inadequacy of the equipment, as in the most of studied PPSs, usually to create discomfort & fatigue, which invite children to lack of attention & concentration to their learning. Thus, the inadequacy might impede the achievement of educational objectives in those PPSs, as stated.

On the other hand, brightness and air circulation of all classrooms under the studied PPSs were observed "*clearly apparent*" to the extent of minimal stated standard.

When respondents were asked about the adequacy of space provided per child, all of them responded that at least to combine many children with few resources, the classroom space provided per child was inadequate. Likewise, as observed by the researcher, the government PPSs was opened attached to primary schools. Since, the schools were built primarily for the primary education purpose, the problem is not the suitability of the classrooms rather teacher-child ratio per classroom was large in two PPSs (PPS-1 & PPS-

2) and unusually large (1:106) in PPS-3. However, as it was stated in the regional standard, there should be no more than 40 young children for one teacher and one helper (OEB, 2012).

Correspondingly, Country-Case Studies on ECCE in selected sub-Saharan African Countries (2007/2008) reported that unattractive salary of PPSs teachers, has led to high turnover of preschool teachers, making PPSs teachers/children ratio high. For instance, teacher/PPSs ratio could be as large as 1:141 in Gambela region or as low as 1:17 in Addis Ababa region, while the national average is 1:26. This is an indication of a wide range of variation with implication for the quality of service provided in these centers. Besides, the PPSs trained teachers/children ratio is high (Tirusew, 2007).

It is obvious that in crowded classroom children always feel discomfort & lack freedom of choice for every activity. It hinders free movement, effective use of time & methods. The classroom space for young children should provide access to, and direction for learning centers & materials that foster creating, experimenting, & working with friends. Adequate space, facilitates social interaction among peers & the teacher, provides more learning opportunities, reduce tensions & social aggressions (Garrick, 2004:65). In the same way, the standard adopted in the region (OEB, 2012), recommend 63 sq.m classroom sizes for 40 children & 1.55 sq.m space for each child.

Therefore, the classroom space provided per child was under sized resulting in crowded classroom due to large number of children above the standard. This implies that the classrooms could not meet the standard size set by the region, which likely to limit children's attending & engagement in tasks & creates tensions for both teachers & children to work with satisfaction. This in turn could affect the proper achievement of the objectives of the program in the studied PPSs.

#### **4.4.1.1. Class room arrangements, equipment, and materials**

Concerning the arrangement of activity centers in the classroom, questions were held to the respondents (teachers & principals). Their response revealed that in almost all of the PPSs the arrangement of activity centers were inadequate. Equally, supply of materials and equipments in the activity centers were inadequate.

It was also observed that in almost all PPSs, there were no clearly defined activity centers. Materials of all types such as Literary (various books-such as fictional, mythical, legendary, story book, etc), Creation (blocks, building sets, etc), Self expressive (toys, musical instruments, dress up clothes, dolls, etc), Investigative (Puzzles, matching games, playing cards, etc), Designing (markers, pencils, etc) and Usual materials (leaves, sand, rock, water, etc) were lacking. Only limited no of not well-prepared charts and small amount of pictures were posted here and there on the wall. The practice of collecting natural instructional objects easily available from local environment was slightest.

Educators have positive evidences that proper arrangement of materials & equipment can provide organization & structure, which will maximize learning opportunities for children in the classroom. Well-arranged classroom encourage children's independence & self-help that is a fundamental goal of PPS education. It provides easy choices & self-serving (Millar & Mc Dowelle, 1993). Curtis (1998), also indicates that activity centers are important features of Preschool classroom. It provides variety of experiences & learning opportunities for young children. The centers are the source of so much imaginative play, a place to explore, experiment, discover, solve problem & use of various materials & equipment. So, as Isenberg & Jalongo, (1993) specific areas in the classroom need to be related to specific area in the curriculum.

Similarly, the OEB (2012), recommended that different activity centers for languages, science, social science, mathematics, and aesthetics that expected to be equipped with a variety of materials & equipments that have a capacity to provide wide opportunities for children to actively involving in the program. In addition to all problems of adequacy of classroom materials & equipment observed, almost all of the studied PPSs have been found disordered concerning the arrangement of the available materials. Since, some materials were invisible and not easily accessible for use; children's were not enabling to

serve themselves with materials available. This could be mainly resulted from professional gaps of PPS teachers.

Therefore, based on the responses obtained, it could be possible to realize that, the lack of materials & facilities plus their disarrangement, unquestionably, can inhibit the attainment of objectives of the program which could resulted to far reaching negative influence for children's attending in the studied PPSs.

#### **4.4.2. Out-door Arrangements, Equipment and Materials**

Without taking into consideration the outdoor organization PPS cannot operate its complete function. Thus, observation & interviews were held to judge the overall situation of outdoor space playground, its safety conditions, supply of materials & equipments as well as its organization in the studied area. Observation held by the researcher in order to secured the situation through concrete means -"taking photographs & Video capture".

**Table 7: The Sufficiency of out-door environment, materials and equipment as well as its organization in each PPSs**

NO	Observation items	PPS1			PPS2			PPS3			PPS4		
		Clearly	Inadequate	Non-existent	Clearly	Inadequate	Non-existent	Clearly	Inadequate	Non-existent	Clearly	Inadequate	Non-existent
	<b>2. Out-door Conditions</b>												
1.1	The outdoor play area provides materials and equipments that will be appropriate for developmental level of all children's		**				***			***		***	
1.2	The arrangement of play materials and equipment enhance children's individual and cooperative play activities		**				***			***		***	
1.3	The compound is constructed for the purpose of PPSs			***			***			***		***	
1.4	Outdoor space & play ground provided per child	*			*			*					
1.5	The PPS is located away from the crowded/traffic areas	*			*			*			*		
1.6	The compound is fenced and free from non splinting materials		**			**			**			**	
1.7	The PPS site is a raised area, dry and have natural drainage free from water logging	*			*			*			*		
1.8	The compound is attractive(neat and decorated)		**			**			**			**	
1.9	Out-door space is adequate, safe and secure play ground		**			**			**			**	
1.10	access to water			***			***			***		***	
1.11	access to toilet	*				**			**			**	
1.12	Availability of adequate facilities in the play ground		**				***			***		***	

**\*- Clearly Apparent    \*\*-Inadequate    \*\*\*-Non-existent**

As observation results shown from the table 7, all of the PPSs under study were not constructed for the purpose of PPSs and all, have not access to water. Materials and equipments that will be appropriate for the developmental level of children's at outdoor play area, the arrangement of play materials and equipment that enhance children's individual and cooperative play activities and availability of adequate facilities in the playground were observed "*non-existent*" with the exception of one PPS that was also observed "*inadequate*".

On the other hand, the fencing and securing condition from non splinting materials, the attractiveness (neat and decorated) of the compound, the adequacy and security of play ground, were observed "*inadequate*" in all PPS. Besides, access to toilet was also observed "*inadequate*" except for PPS-1. Picture 4 below also depicts similar results with what was seen during observation.

**Picture 4 PPSs Out-door Organizations**



PPS-1 (outer view)



PPS-4 (common latrine-outer view)



PPS-1 (children's latrine)



PPS-3 (common latrine)



PPS-4 (Common latrine)



PPS-1 (Outdoor Playing)



PPS-3 (Outdoor playing)



PPS-2 (Outdoor Playing of PP2)



PPS-2 (outdoor Playing of PP1)



PPS-2 (Front view)



PPS-2 (In front classroom)



PPS-2 (Behind classroom)

However, outdoor space & play ground provided per child, location of PPSs away from the crowded/traffic areas, and PPSs site that is a raised area, dry as well as have usual drainage free from water logging were observed "*clearly apparent*" to the extent of minimal stated standard in all studied PPSs.

In the same way, school principals were interviewed & explained the reason for adequacy of outdoor space & play ground provided per child, was due to the fact that the situate of government PPS is appropriate for the practice of PPS because the school was

built primarily for the purpose of primary education. But, its safety conditions were at risk for broken parts, end edges, woods, uncovered fence/edged sheet & harsh materials were found occupying many spaces; moreover, the level of the ground was not smooth and safe for children. Besides, children were being injured since they were in the same gateway, same leave, same compound, same latrine, and the like with other older regular students that could expose kids to sudden danger. Remarkably, PPS-1 relatively observed either "*clearly apparent*" or "*inadequate*" but not "*non-existent*" in all of its outdoor conditions. As school principal elucidated, the main reason for this was due to good cooperation with concerned bodies- NGOs & private owners to provide them accordingly. However, the inadequate conditions were mainly due to financial problems.

Various research evidences show that outdoor space & play ground can provide many play possibilities. Playing in outdoor encourages children to share equipment & ideas, promotes creativity, & stimulates languages & common skills, & discussion about life experiences. As Montessori, (1936) cited in Morrison, 2011, p. 17) that order in the external environment helps children to organize their often-chaotic perceptions of the outside world and build a sense of predictability and security.

Besides, the education of young children does not end in the classroom. Playgrounds also provide opportunities to support and expand children's understanding of their world (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997). Further, adequate & safety play grounds provide more opportunities for children to jump, run, climb, roll & swing that promote the physical, social, emotional & intellectual development of children. On the contrary, the space that is crowded & lack safety limits learning opportunities; create tensions, injury & foster social aggressions (Heffernan & Todd, 1960:51, Garrick, 2004).

When respondent teachers were asked about the sufficiency of out-door environment, materials and equipment as well as its organization in each PPSs, Both teachers in PPS-2 rolled their eyes and one of them said, "Look around this room. These children do not go five minutes without hurting each other. As you observed nothing is adequate.... we always guard them rather than maintain playing. We would really have a lot of problems!" The researcher again asked why they thought the children acted this way.

The teachers said that they thought the children were not interested in doing any activities since nothing is inadequate.

As Tirussew, (2007) indicates that the social as well as the physical environment in these centers should not only be as receptive and child-friendly as possible but also safe and secure. As in the case of lower KG, ensuring safety includes safety of classroom play, playground and safety and cleanliness of the physical school environment. As well, OEB (2012), states play need to be the main medium of instruction in PPSs, suggested adequate & safety area to enhance the development of all children.

Therefore, it would be possible to conclude that the government PPSs has a good advantage regarding to outdoor space & playgrounds that found to be adequate in almost all of the studied area. Nevertheless, its safety conditions found to be inadequate that would limit children's possibilities for play and exposed them to hazard as well as fright.

With regard to outdoor materials & equipment, as it was observed & interviewed its supply was critically lacked in most of the studied PPSs. Those of minimum essentials were not available in all PPSs with the exception of PPS-1. Interviewed respondents also never denied the acute shortage/ absence of outdoor play equipment, but as a major factor raised financial constraint & less attention from WEO.

Outdoor play, like the rest period, is also sometimes overlooked. Children are not only exercise their large-motor skills, but also have opportunities to develop new insights into their world. Teachers need to monitor and facilitate children's outdoor play, just as they do within the classroom (Mooney, 2000, p. 327).

The grouping of outdoor learning centers is also important. As in the classroom, playground learning centers that support active play (e.g., climbing, swinging, running, riding) should be grouped together and separated from less active play areas (e.g., gardening, sandbox, reading, nature study).

Similarly, OEB, (2012) regarding to the organization of outdoor space & play equipment, as well as availability of minimum essentials such as: Various balls, swing, balance,

merry-go-rounds, climbing frames/ladders, slides and the like are expected to be equipped with at least as minimum prerequisites. Besides, Outdoor play equipment must:

- ✓ be well maintained, clean and developmentally appropriate;
- ✓ provide ample opportunity for creativity and development of different skills;
- ✓ be arranged in an organized manner to allow for accident-free play.

On the contrary, the supply of outdoor materials & equipment were found to be not existed in most of PPSs. There was also a lack of proper endeavor & indigenous way of making available play materials & equipment such as locally made swings and seesaws, small tyres, skipping ropes, sandbox, and the like were not provided. No any adjustment is done for children with diverse skills & needs in all studied PPSs except for PPS-1 generates a kind of incomes to aid orphans/ "more poor".

Therefore, based on the results, it could be rational to conclude that the supply of outdoor play materials & equipment were not available to meet the stated minimum requirement. Consequently, children might be found in unhappy environment to have their individual & group interests, which might adversely affect a wide range of children's opportunities for further development- physical coordination, social skills, mental discipline, & competence.

#### **4.5. Parent contribution in PPS Education**

In order to find out the extent of parent -PPSs relationship to assist children's learning, experts, principals and parents were asked to respond the existence of parent-PPSs partnership to assist children's learning in the studied area. Almost all of responses revealed that the lack of partnership in most of the studied PPSs.

The home and the school environments seen as continuous and closely linked. Although formal education was the purview of the teacher, the child's education at home and the love and support found there represented the foundation of learning (Morrison, 2011). Besides, the interview conducted with parents also revealed that they hardly ever understand the objectives of PPE for holistic development of their children. Moreover, they did not make a continuous follow-up about their children education. They did not

support the school with instructional materials and equipment. School principals were also indicated that the overall activities of parents in PPE were not worth mentioning.

According to MOE (2010) roles and responsibilities in bringing up on children, and on improving practical nurturing skills of parents and caregivers, due to the fact that most parents are not fully aware of their crucial role in their children's development and/or lack basic parental competencies parental education will cover all aspects of child rearing and development as well as the role of parents in fostering the realization of children's full potential. In general, OEB (2012) also states that parents should regularly be provided with opportunities to build their knowledge and strengthen their capacities.

In this regard, most principals as well as teachers responded that parents have very limited awareness about the purpose of PPS education. On the other hand, most (4) teachers lack proper knowledge to work with parents. Principals blamed the main reason for this is that teacher's lack of appropriate training to collaborate with parents. Some other teachers who have better training lack appropriate commitment, responsibility, & initiatives to form relationship with parents, as they are not satisfied with remuneration as well as scarce environment of PPSs. However, some of the interviewed parents not agreed with the opinions that many parents lack clear awareness about the program activities. Quite, they hold responsible the schools management lack of enthusiasm to collaborate Parent-PPS relationship as intended.

As to the researcher point of view, parents seemed to have a positive sentiment to involve in the PPSs. The problem is not only parents lack of awareness about the PPS activities but also the school management as well as the WEO experts failed to take guiding responsibilities about the issue that resulted to discriminating participation gaps between parents and PPSs.

Various research studies have shown that parent-PPSs partnership in early years is immense importance for children's overall development. Cooperation between both parties will benefit the KG, the parent & the child (Fitzgerald, 2004). Beyond, the OEB (2012), stated the need for strong parent-PPS partnership for the benefit of the child & successful achievement of the PP education in the region.

Quite the opposite, almost in all of the studied PPSs there was existence of great gap between parents & PPSs to maintain appropriate corporation. The fact that parents are an integral part of ECCE is failed to promoted by almost all PPSs. Clear awareness about the activities of PPSs to work harmoniously were also lacked by parents. Besides, most teachers lack to overcome knowledge gaps & achieve proper support from parents. Professional commitment to communicate with parents & an attempt to share responsibilities for children's educational attainment seems negligible.

Nearly all of the parents in PPSs provide little regular encouragement and practical support for their children's school learning, are passively engaged as a family in a wide range of 'educational' activities, both in the home and the schools, and are less involved in a range of opportunities that relate to their own learning and development.

Parenting is a complicated task with multiple demands and a changing context in which parents need to be knowledgeable about a wide range of issues that may affect their child .Yet the majority of parents have little or no preparation for this momentous task (Brudenel, 2004).

To this end, most of PPSs lack true involvement in and commitment to genuine partnership. It was found a very negative picture in an analysis of almost all PPSs under the study. Therefore, based on the above consequences it would be possible to deduce that effective parent-PPSs partnerships to assist children's learning in the studied PPSs were highly lacked. Had not been prioritized working with parents in these PPSs resulted getting their fullest cooperation challenged, which might contribute to children's poor adjustment & success to meet the intended goals.

#### **4.5.1. Parent PPSs Means of Communication**

Concerning means of communication used with parents, respondents (WEO, principals, teachers & parents) were asked to indicate the most common way of communication for parents to participate. Accordingly, almost all of participants replied that it was verbal messages always used as means of communication. However, various crucial channels

that could bring maximum returns in the program such as parental visits, children circulating books, discussions & meetings were rarely used in the studied PPSs.

As to all of the interviewed principals, attendance at annual parents meetings at the beginning & end of the year were the only means of communication with parents that parents were often hurried & imposed the stage passing on information. This leaves little room for debate & discussion & made communication one directional & less effective.

Studies have shown that effective means of communication between parents & KGs is essential to exchange information & develop links in ways that respects & values the contributions of the children, their family & the setting (Fitzgerald, 2004:7).

Besides, OEB (2012:32-33), stated about this issue as summarized as follows:

- Adequate opportunity should be provided throughout the year for interaction and communication between the parents and the teachers.
- Parents and teacher should regularly share information on the child's progress as well as about the PPS.

On the contrary, in most of the studied PPSs the mechanism through which the PPSs work & underlying values were not a well established features. Greatest dependency, on verbal messages provide minimum opportunity for brief & concrete personal exchanges of ideas in head- to- head situations. To maintain proper partnership, it would be vital that effective communication strategies to facilitate two way communication & support should be used; where both parties share mutual responsibilities & mutual achieves.

In view of that, based on the results, it would be possible to wind up that the means of communication used in almost all of the studied PPSs, for parent participation were found to be less effective that by no means encourages parents to participate in the education of their children directly.

#### **4.6. Roles of Administration bodies/ Government role in PPE**

In this part, effort is made to examine the administration bodies/government role in the PPE. Thus, interviews were held to identify the overall supportive services provided mainly by WEO.

**Table 8: The extent of WEO supportive services to each PPSs**

No	Observation items	PPS2			PPS2			PPS3			PPS4		
		Clearly Apparent	Inadequate	Non-existent	Cl.Apparent	Inadequate	Non-existent	Cl.Apparent	Inadequate	Non-existent	Clearly Apparent	Inadequate	Non-existent
1.1	Curriculum & policy materials provision			***			***			***			***
1.2	Providing pre-service training			***			***			***			***
1.3	Providing in-service training			***			***			***			***
1.4	Providing instructional materials			***			***			***			***
1.5	Providing supervising services		**			**			**			**	
1.6	Provide seminars, workshop etc on PPE			***			***			***			***
1.7	Monitoring and evaluation		**			**			**			**	

**\*\* - Inadequate**

**\*\*\* - Non-existent**

As an observation, result shown from the table 8, the role of WEO for providing supervising services as well as monitoring & evaluation were examined "*inadequate*". On the other hand, Curriculum & policy materials provision, providing pre-service & in-service training, providing instructional materials, Provide seminars, workshop, orientation and the like on PPE were examined "*non-existent*".

Similarly, an interview made with teachers almost all of the respondents told that the WEO did not provided proper services for the studied PPSs. Besides, the WEO "experts" did not facilitate for PPSs rather they entirely focus on regular students. Regarding this issue, one of the WEO "experts" was interviewed and explained as follows:

*...rather than children staying at home environment, PPS programs have been attempted to opened attached to Primary regular schools. However, the implementation goes against the regional standard, since nothing is equipped yet. We merely made schedules for monitoring & evaluation services parallel to regular schools at the time of regular school supervision and have a look at PPE classrooms to obtain data related to buildings, number of teachers, & children in all PPSs. The main notion of PPS is that adapting children's for regular schooling and future life.*

However, Bruce (2011) states that the best way to prepare children for their adult life is to give them what they need as children i.e. childhood is a part of life, not simply a preparation for the future.

Froebel, Montessori and Steiner agree that early child hood is not merely a period when children are prepared and trained for adult life. It is a phase of life that is important in its own right although, as a by- product, the more richly that childhood is experienced the more strongly the adult phase can be entered.

Concerning to the extent of WEO supportive services to each PPS, almost all principals expressed their idea to the insignificant supportive services obtained from WEO. As to them, the limited supervision, monitoring & evaluation made were more related to securing data for administrative activities than improvement of developing opportunities of children in the PPSs.

According to ESDP IV, “Plan for Accelerated and Sustained Development to End Poverty (PASDEP) focused on accelerating progress mainly in education and health, expanding the infrastructure, opening the economy, building institutions and further devolution of governance to the Woreda level. The clear policy option for decentralization to the regional and woreda levels is present throughout all sectors including in education. The success of education policy framework depends very much on the competence demonstrated by the local actors and on the support they receive from the upper levels of the administration. WEO and communities have strengthened their involvement in education planning, management and delivery.

However, not only between Parent-PPSs but also communication gap between PPSs and the administrative bodies (WEO) regarding the implementation of the program as intended.

According to OEB (2012), states about the education policy and curriculum materials that PPSs should provided with are: Text books, Syllabus, Teacher's guide, OEB, Educational administration, Policy Framework & guide line for PPE, Child Right Convention, Education and training policy, Guide line for PWDs, World Child Right Convention, and the like.

Quite the reverse, interview & observation result revealed that a complete absence of the aforementioned policy documents as well as curriculum materials in the studied PPSs. On the other hand, WEO experts seem to be relatively aware of the importance of PPE. Nevertheless, they did not responsive of its detailed & strong support in professional development of teachers, curriculum, materials & equipment provisions as well as controlling standard was found to be impractical. Besides, most of school principals in general & WEO in particular, had never given due attention to this bedrock stage of education. Basic government organs, at the root level representing public interest had never made necessary effort to ensure that minimum standards maintained so that children obtain proper all round - physical, cognitive, social, language, aesthetic and emotional development associated with PPS provision.

For that reason, based on the above issues, it would be sound to conclude that the PPSs lack essential support from government bodies, particularly from WEO, who particular action & attention was expected from it, & to the next level school principals to effectively run their activities in the best possible ways.

#### **4.7. Major Issues challenging the practice of PPS Education**

ECCE has become one of the priorities for the education sector because it will be one of the potential inputs to the overall improvement of quality of education and reduction of dropout and repetition rates in later strategies of formal schooling and because it leads of higher enrollments, particularly of girls. In addition, participating in ECCE is the right of the child and it has been considered as bedrock of EFA and the first step in meeting all the other EFA goals. This in turn contributes to the overarching millennium development goal of reducing poverty. It is more cost effective to institute preventive measures and support for children early on than to compensate for disadvantage, as they grow older. Affordable and reliable ECCE provides essential support for working parents, particularly mothers. Investment in quality ECCE yields a high economic return, offsetting disadvantage and inequality, especially for children from poor families. Besides, ECCE has positive effects on female labor force participation and schooling of older siblings. It also levels the playing field by reducing inequalities between rich and poor and it is thus a key component to breaking the cycle of intergenerational poverty (MoE, 2010).

Therefore, the main factors that were affecting the effective implementation of PPE as intended in the standard would come out with several shortcomings due to the weaknesses of the following inputs: Teachers & personnel development, class size, building, materials & facilities, PPSs-Parent collaboration, policy & curriculum materials, access and equity, supervising and evaluating as well as funding gap.

#### **4.7.1. Teachers and Personnel Development**

"Every young mind needs a spark to light the way to a brighter future through learning. Teachers are that spark." "...the greatest institution for social change is the school and the greatest instrument of change is the teacher. No other democracy created by man to promote the welfare of all people has ever existed. Schools and teachers have always been the catalyst for human progress because knowledge and learning have created the world in which we live," (Morrison, 2011, p. 31).

Hence, teachers are important component in any education provision. Rightly motivated to education at pre-primary level, committed and trained persons are important for establishment of a better teaching-learning provision. Success or failure of school program depends primarily on the teachers. Dealing with children at their pre-primary stage is a tricky one. The teachers of PPSs should have diversified qualities and ideas to guide and support the children (*ibid*).

However, most teachers neither trained nor almost all of them had attended the short-term refreshments/seminars/workshops accordingly. Only one teacher had attended 2-week workshop at various sessions. Obviously, most ECCE teachers were untrained. As most of the teachers in the PPSs were incompetent, it was observed that while some of the teachers were teaching children they did not even know what to do in class. Besides, not only most of ECCE teachers were untrained but also found inadequate that caused high teacher-child ratio. As stated by UNESCO (2010) that quality is largely determined by the interaction between children and teachers/caregiver. For this interaction to be effective there must be good working conditions in terms of facilities, health environment, low child/ teacher ratio, instructional materials, and overall support. In Africa, there has been a shortage of quality preschool facilities and personnel, especially teachers. Absence of skilled school principals and WEO experts behind ECCE program was also another area of center of attention.

Generally, this implies that teachers & personnel development seems bizarre as compared to the stated minimum standard.

### **4.7.2. Class Size/ Overcrowding**

Overcrowded schools are a serious problem in many school systems. Corcoran et al. (1988) found that overcrowding and heavy teacher workloads created stressful working conditions for teachers and led to higher teacher absenteeism/ turnover.

Teacher-child ratio per classroom were found 1:40, 1:55, 1:106 and 1:25 in PPS1, PPS2, PPS3 and PPS4 respectively compared to the international standard of 1 to 14 (UNESCO, 2010). The size of class differed from one teacher to another, with some teachers handling loads of children without any assistant teachers.

Hence, crowded classroom conditions not only make it difficult for students to concentrate on their lessons, but inevitably limit the amount of time teachers can spend on innovative teaching methods.

### **4.7.3. Building, materials and other facilities**

Corcoran et. al., (1988) found that "where the problems with working conditions are serious enough to impinge on the work of teachers, they result in higher absenteeism, reduced levels of effort, and lower effectiveness in the classroom, low morale, and reduced job satisfaction. Where working conditions are good, they result in enthusiasm, high morale, cooperation, and acceptance of responsibility."

Similarly, Poplin and Weeres (1992) reported that, based on an intensive study of teachers, administrators, and students in four schools, "the depressed physical environment of many schools... is believed to reflect society's lack of priority for these children and their education."

Accordingly, in most PPSs there is lack of buildings (rooms), unhygienic environment, shortage of water, toilets as well as in-outdoor activity centers. Nevertheless, the building sites as well as playgrounds are not a problem in all PPSs since they opened attached to primary schools. The safety of children was not guaranteed in most environments since children are with older regular students. Besides, in most PPSs children were forced to use the available common latrine, which in some PPS is not only at risk for children

health but also too woeful even for quick look. The situation was aggravated by lack of water almost full of academic year.

#### **4.7.4. Management and parent collaboration in PPSs**

Miedel and Reynolds (1999) are of the opinion that when families are involved in their children's early education, children experience greater success once they enter PPS and even in later life.

However, most parents are limited in what they can provide & support the program accordingly. Parents could not understand about the objectives of ECCE for holistic development of their children. Besides, they did not make a continuous follow-up about their children education since many parents are petty traders and burdened with their own concerns that they are unable to provide the overall activities that a child needs especially where mothers are the sole support or breadwinner of the family. In addition, principals also lack a basic knowledge of child development, not only less communicative, cooperative relationship, and less guidance with the staff but also fragmented work with parents, maintain their involvement, and collaborate with other community's agencies.

It appears that there is a lot that needs to be done even outside the PPSs. There must be good cooperation with the parents who will contribute to the development of the PPSs in a variety of ways. In general, school management failure resulted to lack of awareness and parent initiatives in the study areas.

#### **4.7.5. Systems for supervising and evaluation of PPSs**

Every PPS required to undergo continues supervision in order to assess the extent to which the PPSs are working towards the intended goals. When thinking of ECCE and preschool age children, it is also necessary to consider the care taken of them as well as develops monitoring & evaluation mechanism, because it is a significant factor in a child's development.

An ECCE program is the first small step towards education, prosperity and an overall successful life. Naturally, all children are curious and whatever they will react to whatever they see, hear and touch. This ability to learn and adapt must be carefully supervised early on in order to mold the child into a better person in the long run and make him a successful human being in society. PSE is instrumental in putting a child on that path (Website: [http://EzineArticles.com/?expert=Pen\\_Ryn](http://EzineArticles.com/?expert=Pen_Ryn)).

Even so, WEO was supposed to supervise but this had not been done in any one of the PPSs under the study. At the same time, individual pre-schools did not have a mechanism of evaluating its own progress. PPSs resulted to a high number of dropouts. In many cases, the children learned quite a lot of things in the wrong way. This critical area calls for a careful preparation of PPSs teachers and assistants through permanent, skillful, & intended supervision.

Interaction between WEO with teachers when they visit schools is another occasion to help teachers to perform well. It was evident that this was impractical due to inappropriate attention to the program in addition to financial constraints, inadequate skilled man power, and other administrative activities that took first than PPSs program. In general, PPSs must be evaluated like any other educational institution so that the existing weaknesses can be removed. But, no system exists to supervise and evaluate for further improvement of ECCE at WEO level/or grassroots since, effective school leaders and supervisors in ECCE were inadequate.

#### **4.7.6. Budget/Funding gap**

The success of one new program will be uncomplicated with economic support. Nevertheless, most parents were not only seemed to be unaware of the importance of the program but also have dearth of economy. Besides, stakeholders have not made considerable effort for generating income for supporting ECCE accordingly. Hence, the success of the program will be further promoted through developing strategies to increase funds to low-income communities and of promoting stakeholders support as the critical time of the program.

Increased government financing, continued and growing donor support and community contributions can help fill this gap, while a more effective use of available resources will also lead to greater results (MoE, 2010). Generally, implementation of the standard depends on filling a funding gap over the life of the program. Failure to fill the gap will mean that elements of the education program will not be implemented as intended.

## **2. Major Issues challenging the practice of PPS Education**

Respondents identified the main challenges those encumber the implementation of the ECCE in line with OEB as follows:

- Unqualified and inadequate teachers as well as materials & equipment as stated.
- Lack of classrooms to maintained the intended teacher-child ratio per classroom as the standard.
- Limited or absence of parental involvement, monitoring, evaluation and intended supervision, curriculum and teaching materials, as well as low attendance in PPSs.
- Lack of dedication as to which education sectors should have primary responsibility for RPPE standard.
- Located primarily in poor communities and inadequate physical facilities
- Lack of commitment from the part of the government to expand and support this subsector, especially as a large majority of people live under poverty line, and limited role of the government in the sector denies many children to access the program;
- Lack of budgetary provisions, lack of qualified experts in the sub-sector, the absence of a well established and mandated body to ensure the quality and standard of the training, lack of coordination on the part of the various organs of the education sector to monitor and inspect the activities are some of the problems that hamper ECCE programs in the studied area.

**3. Respondents suggestions to improve the implementation of PPE as the following.**

- Over-all shortage of appropriate support, workers, materials, & equipment need to be solved in order to properly implement such a valuable program.
- Collaboration across the parents & PPS need to be recognized & valued.
- Fostering the skills of existing personnel through training and/or appoint trained principals to handle the program properly.
- Expanding awareness raising activities on the benefits of ECCE at all level
- Develop relevant curriculum, organize play and planned play based on the interest of the child.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1. Summery**

ECCE has a unique and rich history that reflects challenging social, economic, and demographic conditions. According to Tirussew et al., 2007, it has social benefits at individual, family, community and the societal level. It is basic for shaping socially responsible citizens who are capable of building a stable and harmonious multicultural society. Indeed, it is the right program to foster early appreciation of the desired social and ethical values of diversity, tolerance, respect, sharing, and cooperation in a plural society. These values shall in the long run markedly reduce domestic and school violence, crime, different forms of discrimination, child abuse and neglect. To realize these objectives, however, the concerted actions of all the concerned bodies, most importantly the government, parents, teachers, the community, NGOs, and the society at large, are very much desired.

As Policy Context, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), adopted by the TGE in December (1991), stipulates that the child's right to education shall be directed to "the development of the child's personality, talents and physical abilities to their fullest potential". The World Conference on EFA (1990) articulated the significance of the early years as the foundation for the life of an individual. As indicated in the UDHR, the International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights and the CRC, the obligation of the member states is not limited to making education available and accessible to each child but also includes ensuring content and quality, of which an ECCE framework is an important element.

In Ethiopia, more recently, ECCE has become one of the priorities for the education sector because it will be one of the potential inputs to the overall improvement of quality of education and reduction of drop out and repetition rates in later stages of formal schooling and because it leads to higher enrolments, particularly of girls. In addition, participating in ECCE is the right of the child and it has been considered as bedrock of

EFA and the first step in meeting all the other EFA goals. This in turn contributes to the overarching MDG of reducing poverty.

The education & training policy has been adopted in Oromia to educate PPS children. Thus, the region initiated reform for raising standard and has set a minimum standard that PPS program should meet to achieve the intended purposes of the policy. Hence, the main objectives of this study was to analyze the extent to which the entire current practice of ECCE going on in the light of nationally laid goals and internationally shared knowledge and practices in general as well as regionally stated PPS standard in particular in Sebeta town & its surroundings. Since, the proper implementation of the standard would result in preparing children to meet the intended educational objectives.

Based on the general objective three basic research questions were raised. In order to answer those questions, a qualitative research design is employed as an appropriate methodology. To achieve this, 4 (four) PPSs, all teachers (6), all principals (5), parents (14), and WEO experts (2) as well as classrooms and outdoor play areas were used as the source of data. In addition, OEB was used as cornerstone of reference of information for the study.

All teachers and principals as well as WEO experts were included using available sampling method. PPSs and Parents were randomly selected as participants for the interview. Generally, 27 numbers of informants were used in this study.

Various types of data collection instruments: interview guide, observation checklists, & document review were used. The data collected through interview & observation were presented & analyzed using descriptive statements by the words of respondents or by summarizing similar words of respondents. The observation results were also summarized in tabular form so that they can be presented, analyzed & followed relevant discussions easily. The concrete data (photos) were used to supplement the interview/observation data when necessary.

The finding of the current study indicated that the implementation of PPE in line with OEB is found to be inadequate. In response to the basic research questions, the findings of the study are presented in brief as follows:

1. The extent of ECCE going on in the studied PPSs was found to be mostly inconsistent with the stated OEB. Because, the findings disclosed:

1.1. Profile (Adequacy and Professional Competency) of Teachers/personnel indicated that inadequate & lack professional skills required to effectively caring on a sound program of education in the PPSs. Seeing that, the findings disclosed:

- All of the teachers who are working in government PPS have not qualified in relation to the standard adopted in the region, which requires a minimum of PPE diploma holder. The majority of teachers (66.66%) were not qualified. However, (33.33%) of teachers were PPE certificate holder that have better education in relation to the regional standard.
- The majority of teachers had either no proper training or capable for very short duration.
- All of the teachers had no any form of refresher programs and the opportunities for in-service training to improve or update their professional skills to engage effectively in the PPSs.
- The majority of teachers were seeing the program as temporary job seeking place and teachers' turnout was very high as well as have not interest and commitment. However, few trained teachers were found to be committed, interested, as well as effective despite the inadequacy of workers, materials & equipment as well as exceptionally large class size.
- Neither of WEO "experts" nor school principals have professional experience for PPSs. Particularly, assistant teachers were not available in all PPSs.
- Teachers were inadequate in relation to the number of children attending in the PPSs. However, all teachers were females; the majorities were in active working age & meet the minimum OEB.

1.2. The adequacy of curriculum materials in the studied PPSs found not existed & the contents observed lack relevance to children's environment. Because the findings revealed:

- The objectives of the curriculum found lack of balance to address the social and emotional development of children in the studied PPSs. i.e., social

development of children were to some extent emphasized and emotional development hardly ever emphasized.

- The value of contents relation to the objective realities of the children's environment was not given an essential place & its' implementation was not similar throughout the region as some government PPSs were using materials prepared by the OEB and others were using "imported" materials from private KGs.

1.2.1 The commonly used teaching methods in PPS found to be mostly dependent on the teacher centered approach (direct teaching): telling, reading, showing and asking. While, other important methods (student centered): discussion, play based lessons, learning by doing, grouping, learning through experience were rarely used and illustrating stories as well as role play were never used in the studied area. Besides, in instruction that is more formal literacy and numeracy were imposed directly and indirectly upon young children.

1.2.2. Teachers preparation & Utilization of Instructional Materials found to be inadequate. Because the finding indicated:

- The tradition to collect & use real objects, which is easily available in the local environment by PPS teachers were very frail in almost all of PPSs.
- There were acute shortages of relevant instructional materials in most of PPSs.

1.2.3. Assessment and record keeping techniques in PPSs were found to be least used.

As to the assessment techniques, appropriate assessment techniques that provide complete picture of children both in the in-out door environments were not used in most of the studied PPSs. Because the finding pointed out that:

- Assessment techniques such as test and daily attendance as well as class participation were used by several teachers respectively.
- Assessment techniques such as checklist, portfolio, observation, and homework were the least used in most of the studied PPSs. The assessment technique mostly appeared summative evaluation in almost all PPSs.

Considering to record keeping system, daily attendance and mark list that provide a very little information about the child & that never reflect a complete picture of the child were

the main records keeping system in PPSs under the study. While, records that could endow with accurate as well as reliable information about child's progress such as admission record & particularly anecdotal record were the least experienced techniques.

1.2.4. Concerning Play and its roles, there was lack or absence of appropriate play in most of PPSs that could inhibit its indispensable role in the realization of objectives of the program as intended. Since the findings demonstrated:

- There were worthless endeavor to encourage children to play as well as making instructional activities play based. Since, conducive conditions are not met and most of PPSs were un-equipped yet.
- Except one PPS, all other PPSs were opened the program on the bare ground which adversely hampered each instructional activities that must be undertaken through play based actions as intended in the OEB.
- Most children were unquestionably, inopportune to have wide opportunities through play that gradually develop concepts of "causal relationships, the power to discriminate, to make judgments, to analyze and synthesize, to imagine and formulate".

1.3. In- out door learning environment, materials & equipment, as well as its organization in the studied PPSs were found to be inadequate/non-existent. For the reason that, the findings be evidenced for:

- An orderly arrangement of the available materials and equipment in the classroom; accessibility of materials & equipments as well as easy as to be used and invite self- servicing approach; the equipping situation of centers; adequacy of space for materials and floor space for activities were observed "*non-existent*" except in PPS1.
- The classroom space provided per child was found to be inadequate. The problem is not the suitability of the classrooms rather the teacher-child ratio per classroom was observed large in most PPSs, also extra large in some PPSs.
- Child sized & comfortable tables, chairs, benches and shelves as well as windows for use; the cleanness, attractiveness and stimulating of the classroom; the

appropriateness of windows, doors, and decorations; were found to be *"inadequate"*.

- On the other hand, brightness and air circulation of all classrooms were in order.
- Clearly defined activity centers were not observed in all of PPSs.
- Materials of all types were found to be lacking. Particularly, the practices of collecting natural instructional objects easily available from local environment for the activity centers were found to be far-fetched.
- The outdoor space & outdoor play areas in almost all of PPSs were found to be adequate. However, their safety conditions were found to be inadequate in general and at risk in particular PPSs.
- Outdoor playing materials and equipment, arrangement of materials and equipment in the play ground were found to be "not existed" in most of PPSs.
- The fencing and securing condition, the attractiveness of the compound, the adequacy, and security of playground were found to be inadequate in all PPSs.
- Toilet rooms found to be lacked sanitary facilities, not child sized in general, and the worst in particular PPSs.
- However, the extent of outdoor space & play ground provided per child, location (away from the crowded/traffic areas) & site (a raised area, dry as well as have usual drainage free from water logging) were found to be adequate & consistent with the minimal stated standard in all PPSs.

1.4. The existence of Parent-PPSs partnership to assist children's learning in the studied area is found to be inadequate. Since, the findings depicted:

- Effective parent-PPSs partnerships to assist children's learning in the studied PPSs were very weak.
- Almost all parents lack understanding about the objectives of PPE for holistic development of their children. They did not make a continuous follow-up about their children education.
- The school management failed to take guiding responsibilities about the parent-school partnership in all of the studied PPSs, for parent participation were found to be less effective that by no means encourages parents to participate in the

education of their children directly. In general, parent involvement was found to be insignificant.

- Professional commitment to communicate with parents & an attempt to share responsibilities for children's educational attainment seems negligible.

1.5. Roles of administration bodies /government to enhance PPE in the PPSs found to be minimal & inadequate. As, the findings uncovered:

- The role of government, particularly of education sector for providing supervising services as well as monitoring & evaluation were examined to be "*inadequate*".
- Provisions of curriculum & relevant policy materials, pre-service & in-service training, instructional materials, seminars, workshop, as well as orientation were found to be "not -existent" in all PPSs.

## 5.2. Conclusion

PPE did not get priority as it received for primary education to the world community.

*For years, we have given scientific attention to the care and rearing of plants and animals, but we have allowed babies to be raised chiefly by tradition.*

When thinking of early education and preschool age children, it is also necessary to consider the care taken of them, because it is a significant factor in a child's development.

- ✓ Thus, activities for PPS children must meet & reflect the complexities of their lives to develop fully in all aspects. Hence, based on the main findings of the study the following conclusions were drawn. The ongoing PPE programs were found to be mostly inconsistent with the stated OEB package. Because, teachers were inadequately prepared & lack professional skills required to effectively carry out a sound program of education in the PPSs. Teachers not have the qualification in relation to the standard adopted by the region, which requires a minimum of PPE diploma holder. The majority of teachers were not interested and committed. However, few of them were committed, interested, and effective despite the inadequacy of workers, materials & equipment as well as exceptionally large class size. Neither WEO "experts" nor school principals, have skilled for PPSs. Besides, assistant teachers were not available in all PPSs. Teachers were neither adequate, nor trained & professionally developed, to meet minimum professional requirements stated by the region.
- ✓ The curriculum materials in the studied PPSs were inadequate & the content lacks relevance to children's environment. The objectives of the curriculum do not to address the social and emotional development of children. Besides, curriculum implementation was not similar throughout PPSs.
- ✓ Teaching methods mostly dependent on the direct teaching other than important methods (student centered). The teaching method seems teacher centered approach.

- ✓ Teacher's preparation & utilization of instructional materials found to be inadequate. Because, the tradition to collect & use real objects were very frail. Besides, there were acute shortages of fitting instructional materials in most of PPSs.
- ✓ Assessment and record keeping techniques in PPSs were found to be least used. Appropriate assessment techniques that provide complete picture of children both in the in-out door environments were not used. Other than, test and daily attendance as well as class participation were the mostly commonly used assessment techniques.
- ✓ Daily attendance and mark list which provide a very little information about the child & that never reflect a complete picture of the child were the main record keeping system in PPSs. Records that could endow with accurate as well as reliable information about child's progress such as admission record in general & anecdotal record in particular were the least experienced.
- ✓ There was lack or absence of appropriate play that could inhibit its indispensable role in the realization of objectives of the program as intended. Further, there were worthless endeavor to encourage children to play as well as making instructional activities play based. Since, conducive conditions are not met and most of PPSs were un-equipped yet.
- ✓ In- out door learning environment, materials & equipment, as well as its organization were found to be inadequate/non-existent. The classroom space provided per child was inadequate due to teacher-child ratio per classroom was large. Child sized & comfy of tables, chairs, benches and shelves as well as windows for use; the cleanness, attractiveness and stimulating of the classroom; the appropriateness of windows, doors, and decorations; were inadequate. However, clearly defined activity centers were not existed in all of PPSs. Besides, the practices of collecting natural instructional objects easily available from local environment for the activity centers were found to be far-fetched. Further, toilet rooms found to be lacked sanitary facilities, not child sized in general, and the worst in particular PPSs. Nevertheless, the extent of outdoor space & playground provided per child, location & site were found to be adequate & consistent with the minimal stated standard in all PPSs because the schools built primarily for the

purpose of primary education. However, their safety conditions were found to be inadequate. Generally, the indoor and outdoor environment found to be not encouraging for PPE.

- ✓ The existences of Parent-PPSs partnership to assist children's learning in the studied area were inadequate. Not almost all parents seem to be aware of the benefits of PPE for holistic development of their children. The school management failed to take guiding responsibilities about the parent-school partnership. Professional commitment to communicate with parents & an attempt to share responsibilities for children's educational attainment seems negligible, for parent participation were found to be less effective that by no means encourages parents to participate in the education of their children directly. In general, parent involvement was found to be insignificant.
- ✓ Roles of administration bodies to enhance PPE were minimal & inadequate. As, the role of government, particularly of WEO, Providing supervising services as well as monitoring & evaluation as the sub-system of formal education were too little in relation to the intended demands. Moreover, provisions of curriculum, relevant policy materials, pre-service & in-service training, instructional materials, seminars, workshop, as well as orientation were not existed in all PPSs.
- ✓ Personnel need to train, to inspect, and advise PPSs. Without monitoring and supervising, PPSs will greatly suffer and the products of the PPSs will adversely affect the quality of primary education in the future.
- ✓ It needs to be strong political will to implement provisions in line with regional standard, national plans and policies, and international conventions. Otherwise, the achievement of the Education for All will be difficult.
- ✓ The image of over-all shortage of appropriate support, manpower, materials & equipment on top of increasing demand for services of young children would resulted

not only to the high dropout rate of children but also to the erosion of such valuable program .

- ✓ Children qualifying for these programs usually come from families living below poverty line, so these programs are not readily available for children from all backgrounds.
- ✓ Play is an essential and critical part of all children's development. It is how children learn to socialize, to think, to solve problems, to mature and most importantly, to have fun. However, the lack or absence of appropriate play impedes effective use of appropriate teaching methods and assessment techniques that might limit the role of the teacher as well as proper implementation of the program to enhance the overall development of children.
- ✓ Therefore, as to achieve its aim children education its very essence demand the coming together of people, materials, appropriate strategies of instruction and program into a cohesive unit. Particularly, teachers, school principals and nearby WEO educational experts as well as parents play a significant role for PPE program implementation.
- ✓ Overall, the PPS program was found to be not aligned with national policy framework and strategic operational plan in general and the OEB in particular. Because of teachers/personnel adequacy & competency, curriculum as well as policy materials, proper teaching methods, preparation & utilization of instructional materials, play based activities, in- out door learning environment, materials & equipment as well as its organization, Parent-PPSs partnership, roles of administration bodies(WEO), financial support, awareness among stakeholders were found not encouraging.
- ✓ Theoretically, as it was claimed by the standard, formal education in the region starts on PPS level. Nevertheless, successfully implementing the program as the stated standard remained a great challenge and the program instituted on unsound basis, which not yet received due attention & support it deserves. Therefore, the OEB and its implementation seem "not fitting but fighting". As observed, there was a general

decline in PPS programs because of the aforementioned problems in general and budget cuts in government PPSs in particular. Consequently, the adoption practice of OEB at PPSs remains a motto when the enabling conditions are not met.

- ✓ However, the expansion of the PPS attached to government schools in the region by itself is a footing one-step forward for the equity and accessibility of children with low-income families & disadvantaged children that highly contributes to the slogan of EFA, which depicted the beginning of ECCE starts.

Therefore, it is imperative to keep in mind that constitutionally, education is a state responsibility. Not only the state has taken the lead in developing standards for what students should know and do but also plays a powerful role in implementing the program properly. The current OEB does not just suddenly happen overnight. On the other hand, its movement has not yet gaining momentum.

Hence, if not giving equal weight to its implementation, just the same as marvelous documents of education Policy, ECCE strategy, guideline as well as the minimum standard the intended quality education and a worthwhile experience in an early years setting might remains slight worthy and are still dreams because of our inability to translate dreams into reality.

### 5.3. Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions drawn, the following recommendations were suggested to enhance the implementation of PPE program in line with the OEB.

- ❖ The need to mobilize political resolution from the regional government and development partners like to situate PPE in a holistic manner high on their respective agenda as the indispensable & burning issue - Efforts to improve PPE should go hand in hand with programs of poverty alleviation.
- ❖ It is strongly recommended that budgetary allocations would also be reflective of governments' (at all levels), commitments that a certain percentage of the education budget be allotted specifically for programs in ECCE to ensure intended objectives and implementation of the standard.
- ❖ OEB & WEO need to promote access to ECCE and use of basic practical activities; designing continuous teacher development programs, expand pre-service & in-service training in TTC and organize short-term workshops/refresher training, seminars, and pedagogical issues for PPS teachers/personnel to maintain professional fitness in order to realize OEB at grassroots level endlessly. Training of Teachers for ECCE should be given priority.
- ❖ WEO experts, school principals, teachers, & parents need to team up to perform their duties & responsibilities as stated in the minimal standard to enhance the implementation of ECCE program accordingly.
- ❖ Education sectors (OEB, WEO) need to publish, equities, accessible, & distribute relevant curriculum as well as policy materials. PPS teachers also need to value each of good characteristics of ECCE curriculum and adapting the "imported" curriculum accordingly.
- ❖ WEO need to enduring planning, monitoring, evaluating, & supporting system on PPE program implementation alike regular schools in order to assist every stakeholder perform its duties & responsibilities as intended.
- ❖ Keeping the requirements in view, PPSs & WEO need to jointly organizing ongoing awareness raising activities & mobilization of the family, stakeholders, and the community as well as the sponsoring agencies in order to effective

contribution of the available knowledge, skills, & fund. There should be proper enlightenment campaign on the importance of PPE.

- ❖ OEB & WEO in collaboration with private KGs & sponsoring agencies in general & with linkage TTC in particular need to familiarize teachers in the proper preparation & utilization of instructional materials, proper teaching & assessment methods, as well as record keeping systems through various short-term means's to cope up with rapidly changing world of PPE. Besides, OEB need to form career structure from OEB to PPS level in order to guiding & coordinating issues relating to PPE program accordingly.
- ❖ WEO should employ adequate number of PPE teachers & assistant teachers to equip PPSs with sufficient teaching staff to make possible an enhanced support & guidance of children in the PPSs as recommended in the standard.
- ❖ One of the major features of PPE is effective parent-PPS collaboration. Connections across the parents & PPS are recognized & valued as it reinforced the opportunities for children's learning as well as overall development. Therefore, effective strategies for working with parents based on the realities of local environment should be employed. It is recommended that parents and teachers will protect the large blocks of time every day that each child needs to become fully human. Hence, PPSs need to collaborate with parents through lessening circuitous way of communication and developing means of communication approach that encourages parents to have participatory role in the education of their children directly for ultimate success of PPS education.
- ❖ PPSs need to organize play and planned play using low cost or locally available raw materials to improve acute shortages as well as to increase the opportunity that child has to choose what to and how to play based on the individual need. As activity centers are a place to explore, experiment, discover, solve problem & use of various materials & equipment PPSs need to organize the indoor and outdoor activity centers for children's holistic development.
- ❖ A minimum of one PPS need to be prepared as a role model of good practice in the area & create cluster PPSs in order to sharing worthwhile experiences & information among each other for the recovering of the program.

- ❖ Educational background and enthusiasm about ECCE should get priority in teacher recruitment. These are important for the sake of quality of education and for the overall child's development.
  
- ❖ Considering the recent price hike of the essentials, remuneration of the teachers needs to be revised in the context of competitive market price. Salaries needed to attract and retain trained teachers.
  
- ❖ The governance should be harmonized all at OEB, WEO & school management levels, and having explicit responsible body that could play a leadership role & consider what steps might be taken to stop the erosion of early age program that could resulted to the overall failures of older ages.
  
- ❖ Finally, the researcher recommends a more detailed & comprehensive studies as well as wider public awareness in the area to investigate & further strengthen the practices of PPS education in the region as a whole.

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## **Appendix -A**

### **An Over View of Regional PPE Standard Guidelines and it's Implication**

A Standard is statements that specify what students should know and be able to do, help answer questions about what to teach children and what they should learn; it also act as expectations for student learning. Standards have influenced every aspect of ECCE and will continue to do so (Morrison, 2011:121).

The ultimate aim of ECCE is to ensure all children the right to a healthy start in life, to be nurtured in a safe, caring and stimulating environment and to develop to their fullest potential (ECCE, 2010).

It is apparent that the different regions of Ethiopia have adopted the ESDP prepared at the federal government level. Among these, Oromia is also the region that is implementing the program to address the issue of PSE in all zones of the region.

Accordingly, the region has set minimum PPE standard (2012) that preschool program must meet in order to achieve the intended regional goals and profiles set in the National ECCE Policy Framework (2010) and Guidelines For ECCE (2010) that meant to operationalise the National ECCE Policy Framework and the Children Act (2001).

In order to maintain the expected educational quality and its standard, the core issues that have been seen in the eyes of the national educational objectives were listed in the RPPES, which gives a picture of the major contents of the stated standard in brief.

#### **1. Implication of RPPE organization**

Children at early ages are highly susceptible than other social groups. Hence, it is indispensable that they deserve special attention, support, care, and management.

PPE daily program should manage by three major directions:

- Free play:- not controlled, not planned
- Education
- Individual and group activities

PPE daily program should accomplish mainly through playing method.

## **2. PPE Program /Target Population**

PPS programs will target:

- All children aged 4 to 6+, regardless of culture, gender, social class or ethnicity and including children with special needs.
- Provide appropriate education for 2 years.
- Requires families involvement, teachers and administration commitment and initiative, as well as government due attention.
- PPS services were delivered attached to primary schools.

## **3. Organization of the Program**

### **3.1. PPE curriculum**

- Language(mother tongue)
- Social science
- Math's
- Drawing, music and physical education
- English

**For children with special needs education:**

#### **A. Visual Impairment**

- That enables to stimulate and develop sensory skills
- Mobility and Orientation
- Developing daily living skills
- Pre Braille & Braille skill
- Pre Abacus skill

#### **B. Hearing Impairment**

- Leap reading
- Sign Language

- Hearing aids
- Speech therapy

### **C. Intellectual Disability**

- playing skill
- language skill
- Social skill
- Self help skill
- Music and hand craft

## **2. Scheduling and Structure of PPS Activities**

- A daily schedule of activities should be prepared and displayed in the classroom.
- The daily schedule should be adjusted to accommodate the needs of children.
- PPS programs should ideally run full a day, from 8.00 a.m. to 4.25 p.m. and from Monday to Friday. This could assist to care for children whose parents are working full day. Should the program run full day, the children should be given time to rest in the afternoon.
- 25 minutes and 30 minutes per period for children aged 4-5 and aged 5-6 respectively.

PPS teachers use the curriculum as a guide:

- Every day should have a variety of learning activities in key competency areas that are compatible with the different age groups.
- Adequate time should be scheduled for play, discovery and rest.
- Children should be allowed to go to the toilet at regular intervals

## 2.1. Daily schedule of the program

No	Activities	1 <sup>st</sup> level	2 <sup>nd</sup> level
		4-5 ages	5-6 ages
1	Admitting time	8:00-9:00	8:00-9:00
2	Readiness time for education	9:00-9:05	9:00-9:05
3	Education	9:05-9:30	9:05-9:35
4	Readiness time for education	9:30-9:35	9:35-9:40
5	Education	9:35-10:00	9:40-10:10
6	Snack time	10:00-10:40	10:10-10:50
7	Relaxation	10:40-11:40	10:50-11:50
8	Indoor/Classroom (play time)	11:40-12:05	11:50-12:20
9	Classroom preparation	12:05-12:15	12:20-12:30
10	Lunch time	12:15-2:15	12:30-2:30
11	Sanitation time	2:15-2:30	2:30-2:45
12	Readiness time for education	2:30-2:35	2:45-2:50
13	Education	2:35-3:00	2:50-3:20
14	Outdoor time(play)	3: 00-3:50	3:20-3:50
15	Good-Bye time	3:50-4:25	3:50-4:25

## 2.2. Teaching Learning Methodology

All activities that undergo must be both play and developmental based as well as foster the overall development of the child. PPE teachers can be used various teaching methods. For instance: group play, individual play, role play, learning by doing, field trip, describing and the like.

Hence, teaching must be child-centered, with the children actively involved in the learning process.

## **2.3. PPSs Environment and its Conditions**

### **2.3.1. Area selection**

PPE area should be:

- Neat, free from any hazard
- Free from traffics, main road/way
- Full access of pure water
- Free from alcohol, sound pollution
- Have enough playing area
- Near to children living area (not more than 1 km) and the like

### **2.3.2. PPSs compound situation**

- The PPS need to be fenced compound where it is safe for children to learn, run and play games together.
- Free of danger
- Have big trees for shadow as well as recreation
- Have playing materials, flat surface grounds and appropriate for children interaction
- Have flowers and planting areas in order to show them about plants, seeds, and the like.

### **2.3.3. PPSs classroom and teacher-child ratio**

- There are no more than 40 young children for one teacher and one helper per classroom.
- The teacher-child ratio in the PPS is 1: 30 for the four-to-five-year olds and 1:40 for the five-to-six-year olds.
- Each classroom should be  $7 \times 9 = 63$  Sq. km.

#### **2.3.4. Learning Environment and Physical Space for PPS**

- The centre should be easily identified and clearly marked as PPSs.
- The environment should be an attractive, pleasant and physically safe place for children.
- The setting of the physical space should allow for free movement of both children with and without disabilities
- Cleanliness, good maintenance and hygiene must be a priority. The location should be free from pollution and away from garbage sites.
- Basic sanitation facilities need to be available, including latrine and clean water for drinking and hand washing.
- The room should be well ventilated, with enough window space to allow a good flow of air.
- There should be an area for displaying the children's creative work.
- The PPS centre has at least the Child-to-Child locally available children's materials and basic materials like crayons, paper, etc.
- A variety of stimulating play and learning materials that promote not only simple but also higher thought processes (as with puzzles, riddle and guessing games, stories, etc.) should be available.
- To enhance creativity, there should be a variety of visuals rich in color, texture and shape on the walls.
- The learning environment should be friendly, providing adequate opportunity for interactions among children as well as between children and adults.
- Adequate opportunities for exploration and discovery should be made available.

#### **2.4. Rooms required for PPSs**

- Proper classrooms, administration room, storage, Dining room, dependent toilets for children, teachers & for workers, Napping room, Hall, rooms for cashier, staff, first aid, and the like.

## 2.5. Outdoor play equipment (stable)

- Various balls, swing, Balance, Merry-go-rounds, Climbing, frames/ladders, slides and the like.

Outdoor play equipment must:

- ✓ be well maintained, clean and developmentally appropriate;
- ✓ provide ample opportunity for creativity and development of different skills;
- ✓ be arranged in an organized manner to allow for accident-free play.

### Minimum Standards

- Availability of climbing frames and locally made swings and seesaws.

## 2.6. PPSE Education Workforce

### 2.6.1. Teachers, assistant teachers and workers

Number of Teachers and workers per sections

Section	No of Sections	No of Children	No of principal	No of Teacher	No of Assistant teacher	No of Care giver	No of sanitarian	No of Health worker
A	One	40	1	1	1	1	1	1
B	Two	80	1	2	2	2	1	1
C	Three	120	1	3	3	3	2	1
D	Four	160	1	4	4	4	2	1

- As shown in the table above the number of teachers and workers be supposed to increases per sections
- For sections, two and less than two more experienced and efficient teachers can be assigned as a teacher as well as principal.

- Sections three and above requires its own principal.
- More preferably PPSs principals, teachers and caregivers will be female's.

## **2.6.2. Teachers, Assistant Teachers and Caregivers Qualifications**

Those entrusted with the responsibility of supporting the learning and development of PPS children should have the following qualities:

- knowledge and skills related to holistic child development;
- ability to work well with children, parents and others in the PPS setting;
- commitment to enhancing the development of young children;
- love and respect for all children regardless of their culture, ethnicity, family beliefs and practices or any other difference;
- be advocates of the rights and the protection of the child;
- be the holder of a training certificate in child development.

### **2.6.2.1. Teachers**

- Teachers should hold a Diploma in PPE teachers training.

### **2.6.2.2. Assistant teachers**

- Next to the teacher, there is an assistant teacher or ECCE caregiver for both age groups (four-to-five year olds and five-to-six-year olds).
- After completing grade 10, an assistant teacher should hold a PPE teacher training course certificate.
- Assistant teachers support the work of the main teachers.
- In addition to the above requirements, teachers and assistant teachers should have attended a short-term training course to upgrade their skills and knowledge, especially in the field of Special Needs Education.
- Assistant teachers are adults of sound mind.

### **2.6.2.3. Care givers**

- Need to complete grade 10 and possibly have an experience on food nutrition and food preparation.

### **2.7. PPS Curriculum**

The curriculum to be used should be designed to meet the holistic needs of different age groups.

- Only the government-approved curriculum should be used in all PPSs.
- The curriculum should be adapted to the local context.
- The curriculum will be used as a guide for incorporating developmentally appropriate content, concepts and activities in the PPS program.

Teachers will therefore need to use their creativity in addition to the curriculum to foster the holistic development of all children.

- All aspects of the child should be targeted in the PPS program. Emphasis on cognitive development must be avoided.
- The curriculum should give children an opportunity to practice skills that will enable them to function effectively in the society.
- All teaching and learning activities should be consistent with the approved preschool curriculum; teachers should not use the primary school curriculum at the end of PPS to prepare children for grade 1.
- The curriculum should be readily available to all teachers in the PPSs.

### **2.8. Policy and Curriculum Materials**

PPSs required having curriculum & policy materials as the following:

- PPS Standard (Regional), Guide line for ECCE, Text books, Syllabus, Teacher's Guide, United Nations Convention on the Right of the Child Education and training policy, Educational administration, Curriculum framework, Guide line for Visually Impaired , Guide line for Hearing Impaired, Guide line for Intellectual Disability & Child Right Convention and the like.

## **2.9. PPS partnership with Parents and Communities**

### **2.9.1. Parents/Caregivers**

Parents and other caregivers are the most important persons in the life of a child. They play a key role in children's development. Their role is to socialize the child and inculcate life principles and spiritual, cultural and moral values for his/her character development. They also provide an enabling environment for the child's growth and development, and early stimulation for his/her future development. They meet the child's survival needs, and ensure healthy growth in terms of adequate and proper nutrition, immunization and growth monitoring. They are the safeguards of the child's rights, provide learning, play materials, and link the child to ECCE services (Guideline for ECCE, 2010).

### **2.9.2. Working with Parents and Communities**

The community supports the parents' efforts in providing for the child's holistic needs. It makes support services available for the young children and provides a protective environment and physical facilities. The community safeguards the children's rights and mobilizes resources to enhance their holistic development.

Generally,

- Adequate opportunity should be provided throughout the year for interaction and communication between the parents and the teachers.
- Parents and teacher should regularly share information on the child's progress.
- Clear and comprehensive information about the PPS should be made available to all parents.
- Information about the home environment should be made available to the teacher.
- Information on all events that have taken place in the PPS should be shared at the close of the year.

- Parents should regularly be provided with opportunities to build their knowledge and strengthen their capacities.

## **2.10. Management/School principal of PPSs**

- The Ministry of Education is the leading and responsible ministry;
- The REB is responsible at regional level.
- At Woreda level, the education bureaus are responsible.
- At kebele level, the responsibility will lie with the kebele administrative office as ECCE implementing committee.

To conclude, that there are no easy answers to meeting diverse needs within early years setting. Recognizing that children differ greatly in their real life and parenting experiences is an important starting point. Hence, Strict adherence to the guidelines by all ECCE service providers is expected to guarantee the survival, care and holistic development of children until seven years old (ECCE Guideline, 2010).

Therefore, it is imperative to keep in mind that constitutionally, education is a state responsibility. Not only the state have taken the lead in developing standards for what students should know and do but also plays a powerful role in implementing the program properly.

## **2.11. Importance of Regional PPE Standard**

Standards are playing an important role in the lives of children, families, and administrators. Some of the reasons for the prominent and important role standards have in education today has examined as follows:

### **2.11.1. Provide Clarity and Focus**

A standard enables to know what a region expects of its children, teachers and Families. In this regard, they bring clarity and focus to the program curriculum and teaching. In order to know what skills need to be aligned with each other to produce the best learning

experience for the child, standards have to identify the knowledge that needs to be taught (Morrison, 2011:127).

### **2.11.2. Integrate Concepts**

By knowing what the region expects, we will be able to integrate concepts, ideas, and skills into children's teaching to ensure children are well prepared for learning in the next grade.

### **2.11.3. Identify What Children Should Know**

A Standard identifies what every child in a particular school should know and be able to do. This is significant in that, with a standard, the expectations are the same for all children, regardless of their socio economic backgrounds, culture, ethnicity, or where they go to school. In this sense, a standard levels the educational playing field and helps ensure that all children will learn the same content and will achieve at a high level. Implementing a standard is one way to help close the achievement gap.

### **2.11.4. Provide Accountability**

A standard serves as one means by which states and local programs can be accountable for teaching and learning. Accountability implies that all students will achieve what the standard specifies, leading to greater focus on children's development.

## Appendix B.

**List of sampled PPSs, number of children, teachers & Sections.**

No	Name of Schools		No of children						Drop out			Teacher child ratio	Ed. Qualification
			Enrolled			Currently in the school							
			M	F	T	M	F	T	M	F	T		
1	Dima G.		39	32	71	21	29	50	18	3	21	1:50	TTI
2	Ke rab u	KG1	49	36	85	44	30	74	5	6	11	1:74	TTI
		KG2	29	28	57	28	22	50	3	4	7	1:50	PPE- certificate
		KG3	19	29	48	16	25	41	3	4	7	1:41	TTI
3	Abdi B.		94	81	175	54	52	106	40	29	69	1:106	PPE- certificate
4	Mulugeta		17	25	42	11	14	25	6	11	17	1:25	Diploma
5	Alemgena		53	41	94								TTI
6	Rogge		41	30	71								TTI
7	Dima M.		47	39	86								TTI
8	Koche		22	20	42								TTI
9	Atebella		22	23	45								TTI
10	Daletti		30	26	56								Ass. teacher

Source: WEO Statistics (2006 E.C)

 Not required

# **Appendix C**

## **Addis Ababa University**

### **College of Education and Behavioral studies**

#### **School of graduate Studies Department of Special Needs Education**

##### **Interview guides Objectives**

The main intention of this interview is to collect information regarding the extent to which the regional PPES with respect to preschool education is implemented in Sebeta town and its surrounding. Thus, your direct participation is found fundamental and you are selected for the interview. So, kindly requested to provide information needed impartially and openly. It is certain that the collected information will be kept top secret and used for research purpose only.

##### **A. Interview Guide for Town Administration Education Office Expert and School Principals**

1. How far do you think that the content of the regional is adequate to realize the rationales of the Pre-Primary School Education?
  - How far do you think that the regional PPSES is realized as expected objectives of the program?
2. Do you provide support to the PPSs education program?
  - Do you have trained personnel to provide support on pre-primary education?
  - How and when do you provide support to the PPSs education program (have fixed plan)?
  - How well do you think that the supports meet the requirements of PPSs?

3. How far do PPSs equip with the necessary materials and facilities for the attainment of the program as stated in the regional standard?
  - When building/assigning PPSs, how do you check whether proper rules and regulations/Standards are considered?
  - Appropriateness of play ground for the level of the children.
  - Proportionality of play equipment and number of children
  - Suitability of play equipment to the children
  - Is the PPSs located away from the crowded/traffic areas, free from unnecessary noise and air pollution?
  
4. How do you elucidate Parent-School partnership to support Children's learning?
  - How far do you think that parents know clear objectives of the Pre-Primary School Education?
  - Are parents an integral part of the management body of the PPSs?
  
5. How could you reveal the existing condition (adequacy) and professional competence of personnel/teachers in the PPSs?
  - Are they competent enough to provide the stated professional support?
  - What opportunities do you think that teachers have to improve their professional competences?
  
6. What are the main challenges hindering the implementation of PPSs Education?
  
7. Do you have any other comments, future plans, suggestions and possible solutions for further improvement of the practice of PPSE in your administrative area?

## **B. Interview Guide for Pre-Primary School Teachers**

The main intention of this interview is to collect information regarding the extent to which the regional PPSES with respect to preschool education is implemented in Sebeta town and its surrounding. Thus, your direct participation is found fundamental and you are selected for the interview. So, kindly requested to provide information needed impartially and openly. It is certain that the collected information will be kept top secret and used for research purpose only.

### **Part one: Background Information**

1.1. Name of the Pre-Primary School -----

1.2. Woreda----- Town administration-----

Town----- Kebele-----

1.3. Teacher's age A. 24 and below    B. 25-29     C. 30-40     D. 41 and above

1.4. Sex: Male     Female

1.6. Educational status (qualification):

A. 10<sup>th</sup> grade     B. 12<sup>th</sup> grade complete     C. Certificate PPE

D. TTI     E. Dip (10+3)

1.7. Service Years (as pre-primary teacher):

A. 0- 4    B. 5-9    C. 10-14    D. 15-19    E. 20 and above years

2.1. Do you know the regional pre-primary school education standard?

A) Yes    B) No

If yes:

- How far do you think that the regional PPSES is adequate to realize the rationales of the program?

- How far do you think that the regional PPSES is realized as expected objectives of the program?
- 2.2. Do you think pre-primary school teacher training is adequate to effectively implement the expected program?
- 2.3. Do your pre-primary school have:
- skilled man power
  - carefully planned curriculum along with
  - enough teaching materials and
  - Facilities as stated in the standard?
- 2.4. How do you explain parent - teacher/school partnership to assist children's learning?
- Do parents well come to invitations of the PPSs?
- 2.5. Do WEO give much attention to the development of your pre-primary school?
- Are there regular supervision and monitoring by Woreda education experts? If yes, would you explain their contributions? If No, why?
  - Are they competent enough to provide professional support?
- 2.6. What are the central problems that stuck the implementation of pre-primary school education in your schools?
- 2.7. Do you have any other comments, suggestions and possible solutions for further improvement of the practice of PPSs education in your schools?

## C. Interview Guide for Parents

The main intention of this interview is to collect information regarding the extent to which the regional PPSES with respect to Pre-Primary School education is implemented in Sebeta town and its surrounding. Thus, your direct participation is found fundamental and you are selected for the interview. So, kindly requested to provide information needed impartially and openly. It is certain that the collected information will be kept top secret and used for research purpose only.

1. What do you think about the pre-primary school education program in terms of your child's over all development?

- How far do you know about the activities of pre-primary school education?
- What support do you give for your child at home?
- What support do you give for your child at pre-primary school?
- Is your child joyful going to pre-primary school? Why?

2. Do you know the Woreda Education Office? A) Yes B) No

If yes:

How far do you think that the support of WEO offers services that enhance the PPSs program?

3. Do you think that your pre-primary school has man power/teachers adequate to the activities of pre-primary school education?

4. Do you think that your pre-primary school equip with the necessary materials and facilities to assist children's learning?

5. How do you explain the parent - pre primary school partnership to assist children's learning?

- How often do you go to the pre-primary school?
- When do you go to the pre-primary school?
- What do you do?

- What are the things you like about the pre-primary school?
  - What are the things you don't like about the pre-primary school?
6. Do the Schools show appreciation to establish respectful partnerships with you?
  7. What are the main challenges that hinder the partnership?
  8. Would you like to give additional comments, suggestions or recommendations to realize your child's learning?

### **D. Observation Checklist for main Situations and Activities Accessible at PPSs**

#### **1. A checklist for the absence or presence of policy and curriculum materials in each PPSs**

<b>NO</b>	<b>Question items</b>	<b>Remark</b>	
		<b>Provided</b>	<b>Not provided</b>
1	Pre-Primary School Standard(Regional)		
2	Pre-Primary School Standard(MOE)		
2	Guide line for Pre-Primary School Education		
3	Text books		
4	Syllabus		
5	Teacher's Guide		
6	United Nations Convention on the Right of the Child		
7	Education and training policy		

**2. A Checklist for implementation of the curriculum/ for the details of instruction in order to assess the professional competence of Pre-Primary School Teachers.**

No	Question items	Remark			
		Always	Some times	Rarely	Never use
1	The teacher lovingly guide children, show respect, & cooperation				
2	The classroom runs smoothly with order and clear purpose				
3	Various kinds of assessment methods are employed				
4	The teacher uses different strategies to guide children's learning				
5	Individual and cooperative works or activities are emphasized				
6	All children are included equally in all activities to the best of their interests				
7	Teaching-learning activities are organized around central themes				
8	<b>I. Teacher</b>				
	Encourage children to participate in the class				
9	Provide opportunities for children to acquire initiative and independence				
10	Encourage the child to secure materials to make choices among a variety of materials				
11	Encourage to take care of books of display and place them carefully				
12	Provide opportunities to choose activities				
13	Encourage independent activities				
14	Appreciate children in order to provide a pleasant and supportive environment				
15	Allow children to talk the lead, do less telling and more asking				
16	Corporal/ emotional punishment(Insulting, kicking)				
17	Read books to children				
18	Use a variety of instructional methods: a. Discussion				
	b. Play based lessons				
	c. Question and Answer				
	d. Learning by doing				
	e. Illustrating stories				
	f. Role play				
	g. Categorizing				
	h. Cooperative learning				

19	Teachers work with individual children's (small/whole groups at different times)				
20	Associate the content of the curriculum to the realities of the child's environment				
21	Prepare children for the wished-for objectives such us:				
	a. Children's physical development				
	b. Children's Social development				
	c. Children's intellectual development				
22	d. Children's emotional development				
	Organize the content in the major areas of learning experiences:				
	a. language				
	b. Physical education				
	c. Environmental Science and creative				
	d. Aesthetic				
	e. Mathematics				
20	<b>II. The Children's</b>				
	Ask questions				
21	Have access to various activities				
22	Playing and working with materials/other children(in the context of their every day experiences):-Block building, pretend play, picture books, painting, table toys, etc				
23	Play and explore(The natural world of plants and animals, cooking, etc)				
24	Proportionality of play equipment and number of children				
25	Suitability of play equipment to the children				
26	Follow actively				
27	Not frightened to make mistakes				
28	They know each other's name				
29	Filling out work sheets				
30	Asking permission ahead of they take out resources				

**3. A Checklist for the Sufficiency of classroom and physical environment, materials and equipment as well as its organization in each PPSs**

NO	Observation items	Remark			
		Clearly Apparent	Inadequate	Non-existent	
	<b>1. Classroom Conditions</b>				
1.1	The classroom provides an orderly arrangement of the available materials and equipment in the classroom				
1.2	Materials and equipments are accessible, easy to use and invite self-servicing approach				
1.3	Tables, chairs, benches and shelves are all child sized and comfortable for use				
1.4	The classroom is clean, pleasant and stimulating				
1.5	The windows, doors (low enough to the size/easily operated for children), and decorations are all suitable				
1.6	Well lit and ventilated enough				
1.7	The centers(corners) are well equipped with necessary materials and equipment according to specific purpose(standard)				
1.8	Combination of many children in small space with few resources				
1.9	Places where small groups of children can work together				
1.10	Decorated classroom with different pictures, cemented, dry and clean floors, non shiny walls,				
1.11	Attractive books and suitable for the level				
1.12	Large enough for adequate space for materials and floor space for activity centers				
1.13	Classroom spaces provided per child				
	<b>2. Outdoor Conditions</b>				
2.1	The outdoor play area provides materials and equipments that will be appropriate for developmental level of all Children's				
2.2	The arrangement of play materials and equipment enhance children's individual and cooperative play activities				
2.3	The compound is constructed for the purpose of Pre-School				
2.4	Outdoor space & play ground provided per child				
2.5	The Pre-Primary School is located away from the crowded/traffic areas				

2.6	The compound is fenced and free from non splinting materials			
2.7	The Pre-Primary School site is a raised area, dry and have natural drainage free from water logging			
2.8	The compound is attractive(neat and decorated)			
2.9	Out-door space is adequate safe and secure			
2.10	plenty space to a play ground			
	access to a play ground			
	access to water			
	access to toilet			
2.11	Space for storing			
2.12	Balance			
2.13	Merry-go-rounds			
2.14	Swings			
2.15	Slides			
2.16	Climbing frames/ladders			
2.17	Crawling tunnels			
2.18	Tricycle			
2.19	Foot balls, giant balls			
2.20	Skipping ropes			
2.21	Gymnastic mat, multipurpose mat			
2.22	Large and mobile toys			
2.23	Small car tires			
2.24	Tires			

#### 4. A checklist for the absence or presence of materials in the activity centers of PPSs

No	Observation items(Materials)	Remark		
		Clearly Apparent	Inadequate	Nonexistent
1	Literary materials (various books-such as fictional, mythical, legendary, story book, etc)			
2	Creation materials(blocks, building sets, etc)			
3	Self expressive materials(toys, musical instruments, dress up clothes, dolls, etc)			
4	Investigative materials(Puzzles, matching games, playing cards, etc)			
5	Designing materials(markers, pencils, etc)			
6	Usual materials(leaves, sand, rock, water, etc)			

