

**Implementation of Inclusive Early Childhood Education Policy and
Change in Ghana: Four Case Sites of Practice**

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**IMPLEMENTATION OF INCLUSIVE EARLY CHILDHOOD
EDUCATION POLICY AND CHANGE IN GHANA:**

Four Case Sites of Practice

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Doctor of Philosophy

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ABSTRACT

Inclusive early childhood education (IECE) represents a key policy and practice implementation that facilitates the education and socialisation of all children with and without disability and special educational needs in Ghana. Despite the development of IECE through Government commitments to both inclusive education (IE) and early childhood education (ECE); and as educational goals being realised, little research exists locally on IECE implementation and change practice.

The study utilised a qualitative interpretive multiple case study approach to investigate how IECE is being implemented in Ghana. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 16 teachers and five headteachers of four early childhood learning centres and schools, and six senior education officials. Thematic data analysis results revealed differing understandings of IECE. What also emerged strongly in this study is that children's human rights and economic benefits are fundamental moral purposes that frame IECE policy and change implementation. IECE presented valued outcomes for all children, and benefits for teachers and parents. Education officials and headteachers demonstrated high expectations for IECE, which were partly met as some headteachers and teachers reported the use of effective pedagogical and organisational IECE practices, and demonstrated effective teacher quality and dispositions that supported IECE practice. The expected and reported practices appear to be related to attitudes and beliefs about children with disability. Shared leadership was viewed as an indispensable component of IECE. Teacher training and PD were considered insufficient for IECE while other essential support was desirable for IECE practice. Self-learning and partnership programs with some universities served as additional training and learning opportunities for some teachers and headteachers in an IECE setting.

Cross-case findings revealed that essential change factors were present to varying degrees in IECE implementation in Ghana. While shared moral purpose, and principles and objectives enabled IECE, mixed attitudes towards IECE, insufficient capacity and support, lack of system leadership and commitment, and absence of a clear IECE policy and evaluation of practice constrained progress. Recommendations and implications for policy and practice in Ghana are discussed. The study further contributes to international perspectives and knowledge on IECE and change practice.

STATEMENT OF ORIGINALITY

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

And Give Him the Glory *Great Things He Has Done*

To God be the Glory! He has been my light, my redeemer and my wisdom-seat throughout this journey. For I know my redeemer lives, and He has brought me this far, and the pen is stilled and the final words of this thesis are written. I have no other argument than to be thankful for His *grace sufficient* that enabled me to surmount this challenging, yet humbling experience. Also, the working vessels—the people—deserve my commendation for their contributions and input to this doctoral research.

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DEDICATION

To the Glory of God, for his redeeming power, guidance, health, knowledge, understanding and comforting hands and presence in the journey;

In celebration of my lovely wife, Lady Mercy, who gracefully remained joyful and supportive of me and our dear children, and throughout this doctoral research journey;

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

CCMA	Cape Coast Metropolitan Assembly
CCMED	Cape Coast Metropolitan Education Directorate
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
ESP	Education Strategic Plan
ECE	Early Childhood Education
EFA	Education For All
GES	Ghana Education Service
GoG	Government of Ghana
IE	Inclusive Education
IECE	Inclusive Early Childhood Education
KG	Kindergarten
MoE	Ministry of Education
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
PD/L	Professional Development/Learning
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SpED	Special Education Division
UDL	Universal Design for Learning
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNICEF	United Nation's Children Funds

PEER-REVIEWED PUBLICATIONS AND CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

Deku, P. & **Ackah Jnr, F.R.** (2012). Teachers' conceptualisation of inclusive education in Ghana. *Ife Psychologia*, 20(1), 152-164.

Ackah Jnr, F.R. (2013). *Teacher attitudes towards inclusive education in Ghana: Implications for policy, provision and practice (Final Draft)*. School of Education and Professional Studies, Griffith University, Brisbane, Australia.

Ackah Jnr, F.R. (2014). *HDR student profile*. School of Education and Professional Studies, Griffith University, Australia.

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Ackah Jnr, F.R. (2014, December 2nd). *Implementation of inclusive early childhood education in Ghana: Enablers and barriers*. Paper presented at AARE-NZARE 2014 Conference, QUT, Brisbane, Australia. (Published Abstract)

Ackah Jnr, F.R. (2014, October 29th). *The labyrinthine of inclusive early childhood education implementation in Ghana*. Paper presented at the 2014 Griffith Higher Education Research Student Conference, South Bank, Australia. (Published Abstract)

Ackah Jnr, F.R. (2014, Feb 25th). *Research student spotlight*. School of Education and Professional Studies, Griffith University, Australia.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pz-xbiBs-sY>

Ackah Jnr, F.R. (2013, November 15th). *Teachers' perspective of the physical environment of inclusive schools*. Paper presented at the 2013 Griffith Higher Education Research Student Conference 2013, South Bank, Australia. (Published Abstract)

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Inclusive education has become a central issue in educational policy and practice around the world. There are moral and economic or practical justifications for this increased attention. This study is contextualised in Ghana, the first independent state in Sub-Saharan Africa. The research project is a qualitative interpretive multiple case study inquiry¹ of implementation² of IECE. Inclusive early childhood education is identified as a means for creating meaningful and successful educational and social experiences for children with disability and special educational needs (SEN), and students without such needs, aged 0–8 years, in ECE settings³. Significantly, research has recognised early childhood as the best time for inclusion to commence (Smith, Polloway, Patton, & Dowdy, 2012) and after years of exclusion, discrimination, and marginalisation, IECE is considered a valued educational policy and practice for all children and society.

In the 21st century, IECE has also been identified as a primary goal to achieve equitable Education for All (Odom, Buysse, & Soukakou, 2011; Simpson & Warner, 2010; Winter, 2007) and learning together for all children (Ackah Jnr, 2010b; Peters, 2004). In Ghana, recognition of the rationale for IECE, and empirical benefits to be gained, inform its practice, with clear policy commitment and activity to both IE and ECE. However, the research on IECE practice is scant. Therefore, this study examines implementation of IECE. The central research question addressed is:

How is inclusive early childhood education being implemented in Ghana?

The study set out to contribute to the empirical knowledge base of IECE practice, and the ways in which such implementation is succeeding or may be enhanced, as well as to make contribution to international understandings of IECE in differing contexts. It offers recommendations that support IECE policy-making and practice.

The motivation for this study was borne in part from my Master's thesis. A prominent finding of this previous study was that the majority (89.4%) of teachers in Basic Schools in Ghana expressed positive/favourable attitudes towards IE, especially for children with mild-moderate disability. This motivation, combined with my experience as a teacher educator, heightened my desire to investigate how IE is being implemented at the ECE level.

¹ Qualitative interpretive multiple case study inquiry is explained in detail in the research methodology section.

² "Implementation" means policy in action, involving decisions made in carrying out that policy.

³ These include formal early childhood settings for all children aged 0–8 years, used for this study

1.1 Background to the Study

Education is a powerful tool and a cornerstone for development, as it shapes society and the extent to which schools that are inclusive or exclusive have an impact on children's lives (Precey & Mazurkiewicz, 2013). Its role—socially, psychologically, politically, economically, morally or otherwise—is evident in how much people feel a sense of belonging, or learning together. For these significant reasons, IECE should be a lifelong vision of educators so that all children have the opportunity to develop their potential.

The major international declarations and conventions, including the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR, 1948), the World Declaration on EFA (1990) and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC, 1989) have articulated EFA as a principal goal for developed and developing countries. Article 26 of the UDHR and Article 28 of the UN CRC recognise the right to education for everyone. However, EFA cannot be achieved without the development of effective IE policies or analogous strategies to include all learners, who have a basic human right to education (Cologon, 2014; Peters, 2004; UNESCO, 2009).

Booth, Ainscow, and Kingston (2006) define IE as increasing learners' participation in learning, cultures and communities, and reducing exclusion within and from education. Increasingly, IE has been identified in discourse, policy and practice as an international goal for education of all individuals regardless of disability (A. C. Armstrong, Armstrong, & Spandagou, 2010; Deiner, 2013; Florian, 2008; Gibson & Haynes, 2009; Hodkinson & Vickerman, 2009; Lindsay, 2007; D. Mitchell, 2010; Peters, 2004; UNESCO, 2008). The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (United Nations [UN], 2006) specifically advocates and supports the implementation of IE. Article 24(1) states that:

States Parties recognise the right of persons with disabilities to education; *an inclusive education system at all levels devoid of discrimination, and provided on equal opportunity is a vehicle to realising this right.* Such [an inclusive education] system is effective to develop the *full human potential and personality, sense of dignity and promote social participation.* (UN CRPD, 2006, emphasis added)

International research not only identifies IE as a right of all individuals to education (Deiner, 2013; Foreman, 2011; D. Mitchell, 2010; Peters, 2007a) but also as a practice that benefits all students with and without disability, as well as teachers, parents

and families, and society (Allen & Cowdery, 2012; Foreman, 2011; Friend & Bursuck, 2006; Killoran, Tymon, & Frempong, 2007; McLeskey, Rosenberg, & Westing, 2013; Salend, 2005; Simpson & Warner, 2010; Smith et al., 2012; Wolery & Odom, 2000). IE aims to address the diversity of needs in education (Ashman & Elkins, 2012; Booth et al., 2006; Foreman, 2011), and promotes social justice (Ainscow, 2005; Sapon-Shevin, 2003, 2007; UNESCO, 2009) and equality in education (D. Mitchell, 2010).

Nutbrown and Clough (2006) have argued that inclusion and ECE are inseparable. The first EFA goal stresses expansion and improvement of ECE, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children (UNESCO, 2000, 2009). Early childhood is seen as the foundation on which children build their lives and future, and a critical stage for children's growth and development (Deiner, 2013; ILO, 2012; McCain, Mustard, & Shanker, 2007; UNICEF 2008). Children's experiences in early childhood provide essential foundations for developing the basic architecture and function of the brain (McCain et al., 2007). Research shows that ECE improves the physical and psycho-social wellbeing of children, and promotes cognitive gains in young children, and is a major contributor to combating poverty cycles or weather the storms of life (ILO, 2012; Naudeau, Kataoka, Valerio, Neuman, & Elder, 2011; OECD, 2015; UNICEF 2008). Children need "a balanced set of cognitive, social and emotional skills for achieving positive life outcomes" (OECD, 2015, p. 13). As such, a lack of children's involvement in ECE can present negative future consequences. According to Heckman (2006b) and (Darragh, 2010), the later in life we attempt to repair early deficits, the costlier the remediation becomes. At the current level of resources, society over-invests in remedial approaches at later ages and under-invests in proactive education in the early years.

Early childhood education generally connotes services for the care and education of children from birth to age 8 years (Bredekamp, 2011; Brewer, 2007; Darragh, 2010; Essa, 2007; Prochner, 1992; UNESCO, 2008; Wardle, 2003). Quality (early childhood) education must have a special focus to include all children who may be marginalised or excluded. Thus, developing a truly IE system begins with recognition of the importance of ECE as a crucial area that provides a foundation for the future educational success of all children (A. C. Armstrong et al., 2010).

Based on the importance of early childhood for *all* children with and without disability and SEN, and concern for quality ECE for *all* children (Bredekamp, 2011; Darragh, 2010; Essa, 2007), inclusion should commence in early childhood (Smith et al., 2012). Therefore, IECE is viewed as a living reflection of developmentally appropriate

practice (Delaney, 2001), that is, valuing diversity, individuality and the rights of all children to live in the community. It is about access, participation and support (DEC/NAEYC, 2009), and the right to equal educational and social experiences for all children (Moore, 2009; Smith et al., 2012; Winter, 2007) that maximise children's potential as they benefit academically and socially from provisions in ECE settings. Studies of human rights, brain development and learning, and ethical, social equity and economic arguments provide a strong foundation for IECE (Allen & Cowdery, 2012; Darragh, 2010; Deiner, 2013; McCain et al., 2007; Simpson & Warner, 2010; Smith et al., 2012; Winter, 2007).

In the 21st century, IECE is seen as a promise for all children to have learning and social opportunities together (Cologon, 2014; Winter, 2007). Exclusion can start very early in life, reinforcing exclusion throughout life (Holdsworth, as cited in Ackah Jnr, 2010b). Historically, children with disability often experience stigma from birth and are more prone to exclusion, concealment, abandonment, institutionalisation and abuse (UNESCO, 2009), and are still combating educational exclusion (UNESCO, 2008). Belonging and a solid connection to community are pivotal to IECE practices (Odom et al., 2011); segregated practices are inherently unequal (Deiner, 2010; Heward, 2013; Moore, 2009).

Empirical evidence shows that IECE is beneficial for all young children with and without disability, as well as teachers, parents and families, childcare providers/professionals and society (Allen & Cowdery, 2012; Chandler, Young, & Ulezi, 2011; Deiner, 2013; Grisham-Brown, Hemmeter, & Pretti-Frontczak, 2005; Hanline & Correa-Torres, 2012; Killoran et al., 2007; Odom et al., 2011; Salend, 2010; Simpson & Warner, 2010; Smith et al., 2012; Winter, 2007). IECE settings provide an environment that enables "all children with and without special needs to develop their functional-social capacities" (Greenspan, 2005, p. 26). Research indicates that IECE has become a major focus of educational research, policy and practice around the world (Florian, 2008; Frankel, Gold, & Ajodhia-Andrews, 2010; Hebbeler & Spiker, 2011; Odom et al., 2004). Increasingly, IECE classrooms are becoming the most common type of learning contexts for educating preschool children with disability (Gruenberg & Miller, 2011; Odom et al., 2011; Soukakou, 2012; Winter, 2007).

In summary, research and policy indicate that IECE is the most equitable and just approach for educating young children with and without disability. The critical question is how IECE is being implemented, and particularly which features are related to quality

implementation. Quality is at the heart of *all* education (e.g., Bredekamp, 2011; UNESCO, 2000). Policies, and even legislation (Ainscow, 2005; Mittler, 2000), are not sufficient to ensure that within classrooms and schools, young students, especially those with disability and SEN, have access to quality IECE that meets their learning and social requirements.

Early childhood teachers, elsewhere and in Ghana, play significant roles in the enactment of policies and practices in IECE (Gruenberg & Miller, 2011; Winter, 2007). Teachers make IE practice happen (Ackah Jnr, 2010a; Carrington, 2006) and they assume multifaceted responsibilities to ensure the successful inclusion of children with and without disability in ECE classrooms (Winter, 2007). A number of studies (Bruns & Mogharreban, 2007; Hughes & Valle-Riestra, 2007; Idol, 2006; Leatherman & Niemeyer, 2005; Odom et al., 2004) have explored implementation of IECE. However, research indicates that developing IECE practice is challenging for early childhood teachers (Ackah Jnr, 2010b; Deiner, 2013; Gruenberg & Miller, 2011; National Professional Development Center on Inclusion [NPDCI], 2011).

Of the many features shown as enabling quality IECE in previous research, and in contexts outside Ghana, teacher interest and support for the participation and learning of all students, and parents and community support in classrooms, have been identified as essential to inclusive practice (Angelides, Georgiou, & Kyriakou, 2008). Teachers also require knowledge (Florian, 2008; Gruenberg & Miller, 2011; Sandall, Hemmeter, Smith, & McLean, 2005) of children with disability for IECE practice, which also enhances their skills and ability to better serve all young children. In a study of beliefs and practices of in-service ECE teachers, L. C. Mitchell and Hegde (2007) found, however, that few teachers trained in general early childhood education have sound knowledge of special education or the skills to handle children with disability in inclusive classrooms. Some teachers, who are concerned with the prospect of having children with disability in their classes, feel that highly specialised knowledge and skills are required to meet the needs of such children, but (UNESCO, 2005) considers such claims as misconceptions. In contrast, Foreman (2011) states that good teaching caters for the individual needs of all children, and challenges can emanate from all children regardless of disability.

Research to date indicates that early childhood teachers are generally found to express positive views or attitudes about IE (Idol, 2006; Leatherman & Niemeyer, 2005; McLeskey et al., 2013; Salend, 2010) despite concerns such as perceived inadequate training, lack of support or large class size (Ackah Jnr, 2014b; Horne & Timmons, 2009;

Hughes & Valle-Riestra, 2007; Simpson & Warner, 2010). Research on IECE and its implementation are essential research needs (Florian, 2008; Lindsay, 2003).

Ghana, having endorsed the international treaties and conventions that support IECE, has also developed local policies and legislation to support practice. This study therefore examines how IECE is being implemented and the range of issues that are associated with such implementation. The study not only provides empirical evidence of such implementation, but it will also inform future policy and enable continued and enhanced provision and practice of IECE.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

In Ghana, marginal numbers of children with disability and SEN are included in regular (mainstream) education environments (Ackah Jnr, 2010b). Research findings in Ghana by Annor (2002) over a decade ago indicated fewer than 44% of people with disability had access to education, while in a comprehensive country report to USAID, Thurman (2003) also stated that fewer than 1% of children with disability aged from 4 to 16 years had access to education. Influenced by the global movement towards IE, Ghana has initiated and implemented inclusive pilot schools to complement regular schools in educating children with and without disability and SEN in inclusive settings. These inclusive pilot schools, enrolling students aged 4 years and above, are resourced and located in southern Ghana—the Greater Accra, Central and Eastern Regions (MOE, Preliminary Education Sector Performance Report, 2008).

IE is integral to Ghana's education reform agenda, the underlying policy which informs the future direction for special education provision and a means to achieving EFA (Ministry of Education [MoE], 2012a; Special Education Division [SpED], 2005). The IE policy objective is to provide equitable educational opportunities for all children with non-severe SEN in mainstream schools and full enrolments of disadvantaged children by 2015 (MoE, 2012a; SpED 2005).

By 2004, the development of ECE programs had already increased greatly in Ghana (Ghana Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs [MOWAC], 2004). Demographic transformations also continue to be experienced in ECE settings due to ECE policy directives and the need for enhancing holistic growth and development of all children. Early childhood educators (i.e., teachers and headteachers) thus face increased pressures and challenges as their roles diversify to meet the changing educational and social needs of children and IE (Ackah Jnr, 2010b; Obeng, 2007).

Although there is no specific policy on IECE, existing provisions and policy interventions for IE and ECE, such as the Education Act (1961), Children's Act (1998) and fCUBE (1993) as well as ECCD Policy (2004), Disability Act (2006) and, more currently, the Education Act (2008), support and legitimises IECE. Prior to this in Ghana, most children with disability and SEN were educated within the traditionally categorised special schools, while a few received mainstream services at resource rooms (Okyere & Adams, 2003). Currently, little is known about IECE practice for such students and the underlying implementation issues.

Additionally, recent quantitative-oriented studies in Ghana have mainly concentrated on teacher conceptualisation (Deku & Ackah Jnr, 2012), attitudes and concerns of IE practice at the Basic School level (Ackah Jnr, 2010a, 2013; Agbenyega, 2007; Obeng, 2007) and in preservice teacher preparation programs at the Colleges of Education (e.g., Opoku-Inkoom, 2009). While some teachers appear apprehensive and less receptive to some children with disability and SEN in regular schools, or do not support the idea of IE (Ackah Jnr, 2010a), other teachers believe that provision of support is necessary to facilitate IE of all children, including children with disability and SEN (Ackah Jnr, 2010a, 2013; Agbenyega, 2007; Deku & Ackah Jnr, 2012; Opoku-Inkoom, 2009). Some teachers have also questioned their role, and have argued that their initial training preparation programs did not focus much on inclusive practice (Deku & Ackah Jnr, 2012).

In a recent study, Obeng (2012) found that the majority (67%) of teachers in public preschools, kindergartens (KGs) and primary 1–3 classes supported IECE in Ghana. Considering the suggested gap between attitudes of teachers towards IE and their willingness to accommodate students with disability (Hwang & Evans, 2011), and the need to conduct research on IE to inform policy, provision and practice (Florian, 2008; Lindsay, 2007), it is important to investigate implementation of IECE. There remains, however, limited research on IECE for all children, including those with disability and SEN, which represents a significant gap in the knowledge base. Therefore, this study examined implementation of IECE in Ghana.

1.3 Research Questions

The central research question addressed in this study is:

How is inclusive early childhood education being implemented in Ghana?

Through the data collection, a number of subquestions were explored, including:

1. How is IECE understood in Ghana?
2. What are the expectations for IECE in Ghana?
3. What are the current reported practices of, and attitudes to IECE?
4. What are the importance and perceived outcomes of IECE?
5. What training and professional development (PD) is provided for IECE?
6. What support is available and desirable for IECE?

1.4 Research Focus and Significance

This study examines the implementation of IECE in Ghana. The research utilises a qualitative, interpretive multiple case study approach to examine IECE practice in four ECE Centres in Ghana purposively selected for maximum variation. In-depth, semi-structured interviews were used to collect case site data on reported and enacted implementation practice from teachers and headteachers, while education officials identified expected implementation practice. The context-specific case sites selected included a university-based, inclusive pilot, and private and public settings educating children with and without disability and SEN in their programs, activities and routines.

In this research study, IECE focuses on children with disability and SEN as an aspect of diversity contextualised within Ghana's policy, provision and practice. Children with disability and SEN in the ECE centres and schools may fall into either of the categorised groups⁴ of persons with disabilities within the Ghanaian system. These include children with (1) mild-to-moderate intellectual disabilities, (2) emotional and behavioural difficulties, (3) physical disorders, (4) health disorders, (5) hard-of-hearing, (6) low vision, and (7) speech and language difficulties.

Particularly, IECE is considered important for all children and their parents/families, educators, stakeholders and government in Ghana (Ackah Jnr, 2010a, 2010b). Against the backdrop of Ghana's ECE and IE policies, IECE implementation is also fundamental to the holistic development of all children, including children with disability and SEN, and future human resource base (ECCD Policy, 2004). Enmeshed in the research significance is IECE as an educational change, its valued outcomes, and the buffering policy commitment and environment.

⁴ There are 10 categories of disabilities, including children with severe-to-profound intellectual disabilities, deafness and blindness who are usually educated in special schools in Ghana.

There are several reasons for this multiple case study, as this research also aligns with the need to improve policy and practice through ‘good research’ (Stake, 2010). This qualitative interpretive multiple case study present understandings, descriptions and interpretations of implementation of IECE through data collection in selected ECE centres, complemented with situational comments from education officials of one Education Directorate in the Cape Coast Metropolitan Assembly (CCMA). The study contributes to research on IECE to fill a knowledge-research gap in Ghana, drawing on the perspectives of teachers and headteachers of ECE centres and schools, and education officials. Such knowledge about current IECE practice provides contextual information to be used for quality and effective ECE services, supports and programs.

The study’s findings are essential to further informing recommendations guiding future policy and provision for enhancing IECE practice. The study also contributes to international understandings of and scholarship on IECE in different contexts such as Ghana, given the predominance of research literature from countries such as the United States, England, and Australia. Results of this study indicate how provisions in ECE and IE complement IECE for the education of all children. This is critically important for Ghana’s quest to attain EFA (Goal 1) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDG; Goal 2), and meet international conventions, especially the UN Convention on the Rights of Children (1989) and CRPD (UN, 2006).

Again, the study articulates contextual change factors that serve as enablers of (facilitators) and barriers to (constraints) implementation of quality IECE. This study, therefore, offers starting points for ECE centres oriented to promoting effective IECE. For ECE stakeholders and central government, the study serves as a key informant for developing pragmatic policies and programs that inform teacher practice of IECE. While the data collected through the case sites and participants are “limited”, insights into exemplary policies, provisions and practices garnered in this study will contribute essential research knowledge that will assist in the development of an IECE framework for Ghana.

1.5 Theoretical Framework of the Study

This section presents the theoretical framework and a navigation lens for articulations of meanings advanced in the study, and about change implementation. The study focused on how IECE is being implemented in Ghana, in response to international goals for EFA, and access to EFA, and Ghana’s ratification of such goals. In the last two decades, Ghana

has developed policies and legislation to provide ECE and IE for students with and without disability and SEN. The last one and half decades especially have witnessed considerable change in the educational goals for Ghana with the expectation that EFA and IE enhances not only the opportunities for individuals but also leads to economic growth, stability and development for the nation (Chapter 2). Education practice around the world has seen similar changes in policy and reforms, to direct educational practice for the future. Education systems are thus being reframed or revitalised to meet the changing needs and demands of the 21st century. Educational change is therefore central to efforts towards greater IE (Liasidou, 2012, 2015); hence, factors facilitating or inhibiting change implementation need to be critically examined and analysed.

This study on current implementation of IECE is therefore sited within the education theories of change⁵ and how to create effective change in practice following policy implementation. Change knowledge—understanding and insight about the process of change and the key drivers that make for successful change in practice—is an essential ingredient for implementing this educational change (Fullan, 2007a; Fullan, Cuttress, & Kilcher, 2005, 2009). Four theories of educational change are discussed to serve as a framework for this study.

Michael Fullan, a well-known international authority on educational change and policy implementation, and his colleagues have identified eight drivers (forces) that are essential for creating effective change and innovation in educational systems (Fullan, 2007b; Fullan et al., 2005, 2009). The change drivers, as shown in Figure 1.1, supporting implementation in practice are:

1. *Engaging people's moral purposes*, that is “knowledge about the why of change”, namely *the moral purpose* (Fullan et al., 2005, p. 54). Moral purpose relates to human and social development, and is an all-embracing construct that involves both ends and means (Fullan et al., 2005). As Fullan (2007a) noted, the moral purpose is instigates the motivation and engagement for accomplishing the necessary results or desired improvement. For instance, in educational change, the moral purpose is about improving society through improving educational systems and thus the learning of all students. A critical end in education is to make a difference in the lives of all children. Therefore, among others, IECE must ensure that all children are not only

⁵ Education theories of change explain how and why certain actions and meanings will produce desired change in practice within a given context and time following policy implementation.

included in ECE settings, but also that their potential and abilities are developed. Moral purpose is central to change, and it is not just a goal, but involves the commitment and engagement of all educators, community leaders, and society to the change process/innovation; for example, bridging the achievement gap between students, or reducing exclusive practices. Thus, there needs to be a shared commitment to explicit values. The remaining seven drivers are vehicles for attaining the moral purpose.

2. *Building capacity* entails developing “policies, strategies, resources, and actions designed to increase people’s collective power/ability to move the system forward” (Fullan et al., 2005. p. 55). It also includes developing individual and collective capacity—increasing knowledge, resources, motivation, and organisational capacity—to improve the infrastructure of agencies at the local, regional and state levels to deliver new capacity in the system, such as training, consulting and other support. Capacity building involves new resources and shared identity, and motivation or desire to work collaboratively or cooperatively for change. Capacity is often the missing piece in the process. Building group capacity must be evident in practice and ongoing in the change implementation, but it is not always easy, as it requires people to work together in innovative ways. Therefore, front-end training and PD at the initial phase of a program is usually not adequate for sustaining the change (Fullan et al., 2005). Fullan (2007a) adds that such capacity building with a results-oriented focus is not only crucial, but also what instigates collective motivation and pressure for attaining targeted improvement or learning for change.
3. *Understanding the change process*: this is a big driver, as such understanding traverses all elements and is critical to the success of any school initiative. Poor understanding negatively affects all the other drivers, which increases the likelihood of failure. Making change work requires the collective energies, ideas, commitment, and ownership of all stakeholders implementing change or improvements. The change process is thus about developing a shared vision of change, and establishing conditions for continuous improvements, overcoming barriers, and innovativeness. Nonetheless, the change process itself is too complex to be understood easily.
4. *Developing cultures for learning* entails promoting the learning, and sharing of knowledge and strategies among change agents that create collective commitment to innovation. It embodies opportunities for learning from peers within school and local community, and across schools, during program implementation. Learning from

peers, especially those who are knowledgeable in implementing new ideas, is considered one of the most powerful drivers of successful change (Fullan et al., 2005). Such cultures of learning in school systems must develop teachers' knowledge and skills for creating new learning experiences for students. In addition, Fullan et al. (2005) stressed the importance of "lateral capacity building", where schools learn from each other within a given jurisdiction, which widens the pool of ideas and fosters a collective identity of schools involved in similar innovations. Good policies and ideas take off in learning cultures, but they go nowhere in cultures of isolation; hence, developing cultures of learning for implementing change is critical (Fullan et al., 2005).

5. *Developing cultures for evaluation*: this complements the cultures of learning, and involves identifying promising ideas to deepen what is learned during educational change. This requires investing in assessment for learning and the capacity to use technology for improvement. Such cultures of evaluation serve as external accountability and internal data processing mechanisms.
6. *Focusing on leadership for change* involves knowing what kind of leadership is 'right' or best to lead productive change, or move the change initiative forward. This driver also entails having leaders who are innovative, with the capacity to develop leadership in others, and also possess the change knowledge for sustainable reform. Thus, principals should develop the next leaders who will push the change agenda forward. Effective leadership must spread throughout the organisation; hence, shared leadership enhances student achievement (Fullan et al., 2005). At the school level, the headteacher must "lead" the change implementation.
7. *Fostering coherence making* involves making connection and aligning with the big picture, that is, moral purpose. It means providing ongoing clarity about how all the parts of the big picture fit together. This driver entails investing in capacity building so that cultures of learning and evaluation, through the proliferation of leadership, can engender coherence from the grassroots level of implementation goals. Achieving new patterns of coherence enables people to focus more deeply on how strategies for effective learning interconnect.
8. *Cultivating tri-level development* involves system transformation at three levels: school and community, district, and state, as well as changing individuals. Thus, change involves not only individuals but the entire system and their interrelationships. The tri-level development means concurrently developing better individuals and

organisational systems by providing more opportunities for learning in contexts, or in actual situations where change is needed (Fullan, 2007b; Fullan et al., 2005). Thus, for change implementation to succeed there is the need to change systems, contexts and individuals.

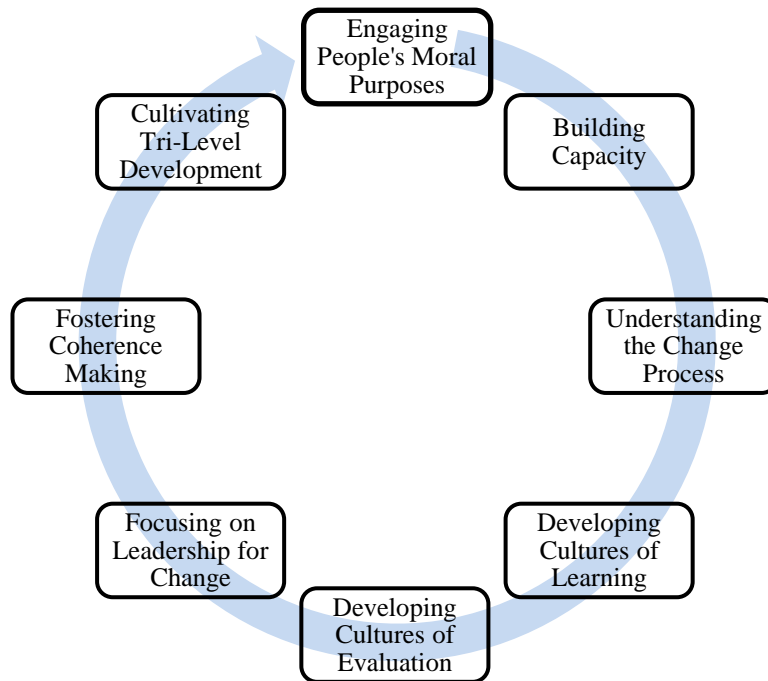


Figure 1.1: Drivers of change and innovation in educational systems (Fullan, 2007; Fullan et al., 2005).

Hargreaves and Shirley (2012), in *The Global Fourth Way: The Quest for Educational Excellence*, identify 15 factors for effective educational change and practice, based on six international case studies. These factors, categorised into three, embody: (1) the six pillars of purpose—for example, establish a system’s purposes and direction, and support its work, innovation and improvement to benefit all students and society: (2) the five principles of professionalism—for example, give the system its dynamic energy, ethics, and shared professional capital; and (3) the four catalysts of coherence—for example, ensure system stability and sustainability.

The six pillars of purpose include an inspiring dream; education as a common public good; a moral economy of education; local authority, innovation with improvement, and platforms for change. The five principles of professionalism entail developing professional capital, strong professional associations, and collective responsibility; teaching less to learn more; and mindful use of technology. The last group,

the four catalysts of coherence, are intelligent benchmarking, prudent and professional approaches to testing, continuous communication, and working with paradox. Hargreaves and Shirley (2012) noted that the fundamental principles provide specific pointers for professional practice for system leaders, school leaders and teachers involved in educational change.

Ainscow (2005), who has worked on policy implementation in Ghana and other countries, also identified high impact levers of change essential for developing more IE systems (Figure 1.2). The levers are defined as “the actions that can be taken in order to change the behaviour of an organisation and those individuals within it” (Senge as cited in Ainscow, 2005, p. 111).

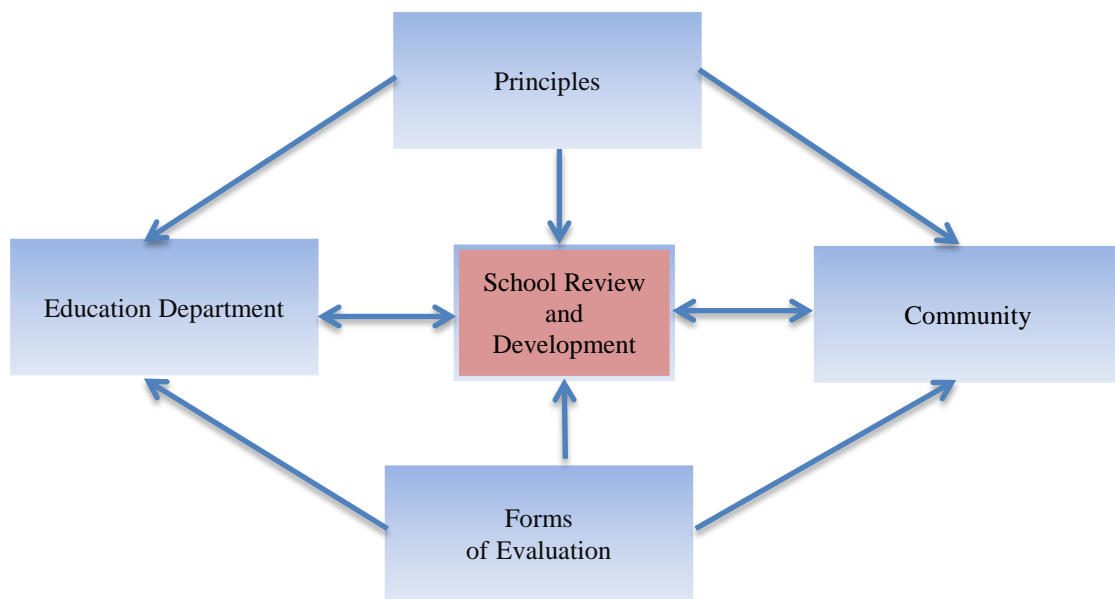


Figure 1.2: Change levers for IE (Ainscow, 2005).

Ainscow places the school at the centre of the framework, and argues that change agents must not focus on low leverage activities, including policy documents, conferences and in-service training courses, that do not significantly lead to changes in thinking. The high levers of change comprise both within-school and wider contextual factors that influence thinking and practice in IE. The school level factors mainly encompass increasing capacity of local inclusive schools to support the diverse needs of learners. This can be attained through social learning processes: (1) collaboration with other educators from higher institutions, (2) sharing experiences and negotiations within schools, (3) documenting evidence of practice, and (4) developing common language

about practice; as well as interruptions to thinking to stimulate self-questioning, creativity and action about practice.

The contextual factors that affect the school entail: (1) the principles guiding policy priorities within the education system; (2) the views and actions of others within the local context, including members of the wider school community that the school serves; (3) the views and actions of staff of the departments responsible for administration of the school system; and (4) the criteria used for evaluating the performance of schools. The wider contextual factors also involve: (1) clarifying the definition of IE, which incorporates views of stakeholders within the local community and the local education officials; and (2) measuring educational performance, based on evidence collected within an agreed definition of IE. Ainscow (2005, p. 120) asserts that we “measure what we value”, hence evidence collected needs to relate to the “presence, participation and achievement” of all students, especially those “at risk of marginalisation, exclusion and underachievement”.

Peters (2004) also proposed an IE framework, as a conceptual guide to thinking about the network of relationships and factors inherent in, and that influence IE development and practice. The framework, comprising four interdependent elements—inputs, processes, outcomes, and contextual factors in an open system—contains value-added factors and insights mostly derived from research literature on IE in global South countries.

Inputs include four crucial factors. First, socio-economic and cultural factors within the family or community, including economic survival needs, and traditional societal values and attitudes towards disability (e.g., shame and guilt, or under-expectations), predominantly affect access to IE. These factors combine with distance from school, accessibility of school buildings, discrimination, shortage of trained teachers and resource support to address the issue of teachers’ working conditions. Students’ characteristics are the second essential input consideration when developing IE. Peters (2004) observes that much attention is focused on children with moderate and severe disability to the neglect of the vast majority of children having mild disability. These children with mild disability, according to Peters, are thus more likely to constitute a significant percentage of drop-outs and repeaters. The third crucial input is the attitudes and lack of political will on the part of government officials and parents, which act as a critical challenge to IE. Finally, the conditions of teachers’ work (e.g., class ratios, sufficient time for preparation and confidence development, training, classroom physical

layout and incentives for participation) are a significant input. The conditions within which teachers must execute their inclusive work have a great impact on their ability or efficacy in carrying out their teaching.

Peters (2004) also asserts that school climate (e.g., high expectations, guiding philosophy/mission, positive teacher attitude), and teaching and learning (e.g., active teaching methods, appropriate class size, active student participation, appropriate support), are two critical process factors for IE. Within the process domains, a whole school approach and collaboration with other sectors and the community are seen as essential for effective IE implementation. Outcomes of IE focus on students' achievement (e.g., personal development, self-esteem, social and independent living skills), attainment (formal completion, preparation for life), and standards (e.g., official learning objectives, school-level objectives, supportive government policy). In terms of policy, Peters noted that IE policies should be morally, culturally and politically relevant. Peters also stresses the need for continuous evaluations of the implementation activities of IE programs (e.g., inputs, process and outcomes), as they have been shown to be successful in ensuring sustainability. However, such evaluations are less developed. For example, a process assessment can involve action research conducted by teachers, with technical support and training. The underlying contextual factors also include macro-economic and fiscal policies, and international coordination; national goals and standards for IE, and systematic knowledge transfer; and, educational system management, parental and community participation.

In summary, common factors that have been identified for educational change to occur and for teachers and headteachers to enact policy include:

1. Commitment to the system's goals and objectives or moral purpose;
2. Building individual, collective and system capacity;
3. Developing shared vision and ownership of the change process;
4. Developing collaborative learning opportunities within and across the school system;
5. Building evaluation systems for learning and innovation in the education system;
6. Fostering innovative leadership for change;
7. Establishing coherent and clarified system goals for change agents;
8. System transformation at the school, district and state levels.

Ainscow (2005) and Peters (2004) in particular, have identified the specific factors that should be in place for the implementation of IE as:

1. Principles and objectives guiding IE policy;
2. Building capacity for inclusive education;
3. Commitment to inclusive education policy;
4. Support for learners and teachers and other change agents;
5. Evaluation of inclusive practice;
6. Attitudes towards inclusive education;
7. Context of implementation;
8. Collaboration between education departments, other agencies and community.

A synthesis of common factors underpinning educational change and IECE implementation reveals seven key elements:

1. Moral purpose guiding IECE policy;
2. Principles and objectives of IECE;
3. Attitudes towards IECE;
4. Context of implementation;
5. Capacity and support for IECE;
6. Leadership and commitment;
7. Evaluation of inclusive practice.

The study design does not specifically focus on the presence or absence of these elements of successful change either for education or more specifically, IECE implementation. The focus is on how teachers, headteachers of ECE centres and schools, and education officials report the implementation of IECE in Ghana. Through examination of interview data collected from education officials and case sites, however, the extent to which these various factors are identified as necessary for successful change are in place will emerge.

1.6 Policy and Policy Implementation

“Policy” refers to a statement of philosophy, intention or strategy (e.g., Jones, 2004) or a purposive course of action followed by an actor or set of actors in dealing with a problem. The Merriam-Webster dictionary (n.d.) similarly defines policy⁶ as a definite course or a method of action selected from alternatives and in light of given conditions to guide and

⁶ <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/policy>

determine present and future decisions. Based on these definitions, it is clear that a policy requires conscious action to make its intent or purpose meaningful. Policy implementation or change thus entails combining meaning and action to achieve continuous improvement on a sustainable scale (Fullan, 2007b). Implementation is also conceived as the mechanisms, resources and relationships that link policy to program action or practice (Bhuyan, Jorgensen, & Sharma, 2010). Policies are living documents, and their implementation requires leadership, resources, monitoring, and other inputs to thrive and achieve their goals (Bhuyan et al., 2010). Similarly, Fullan (2007b) notes that policies require actionable concepts in combination: capacity building, learning in context, lateral capacity building, sustainability, and systems leaders in action engaged in changing the system, changing their own context. It means IECE will require the collective contributions of teachers, headteachers, Education officials, and government, as well as parents, society and other stakeholder interests, for this wind of educational change to occur. Thus, the policy implementation process sheds light on the barriers and facilitators of effective practice.

1.7 Structure of the Thesis

This thesis is structured in six chapters. The introductory chapter has outlined the background, rationale and significance of the study, research questions, and theoretical framework of the study. Chapter 2 discusses relevant literature framed mainly within three areas of policy and research—IE, ECE and IECE and the research questions. In Chapter 3, a qualitative interpretive multiple case study design employed for the research, and the data collection sources and thematic data analysis, as well as ethical considerations, and trustworthiness issues are detailed.

Chapter 4 presents the within- and cross-case findings and discussion from the participants and case sites. Chapter 5 further presents cross-case synthesis and discussion of principal themes from the research questions within the change factors identified from the educational theories of change, and related to the literature reviewed. In Chapter 6, the conclusion, implications for policy and practice, and further research areas are illuminated. The next chapter discusses the relevant literature.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents relevant research and policy literature that serve as the theoretical and empirical basis of the study. The study is sited within IE for students with disability and SEN, with a special focus on IECE. As stated, *implementation* is policy in practice, combining meaning and action for attaining desired goals (Fullan, 2007b). Implementation of IECE, as both educational policy and educational change, thus utilises multiple meanings and actions for achieving continuous improvements in the education of all children, including children with disability or SEN in ECE settings (Fullan, 2007b). Figure 2.1 illustrates three interrelated thematic areas of research and policy framing the literature review. The review highlights the need for IECE, a little explored research and policy area in Ghana.

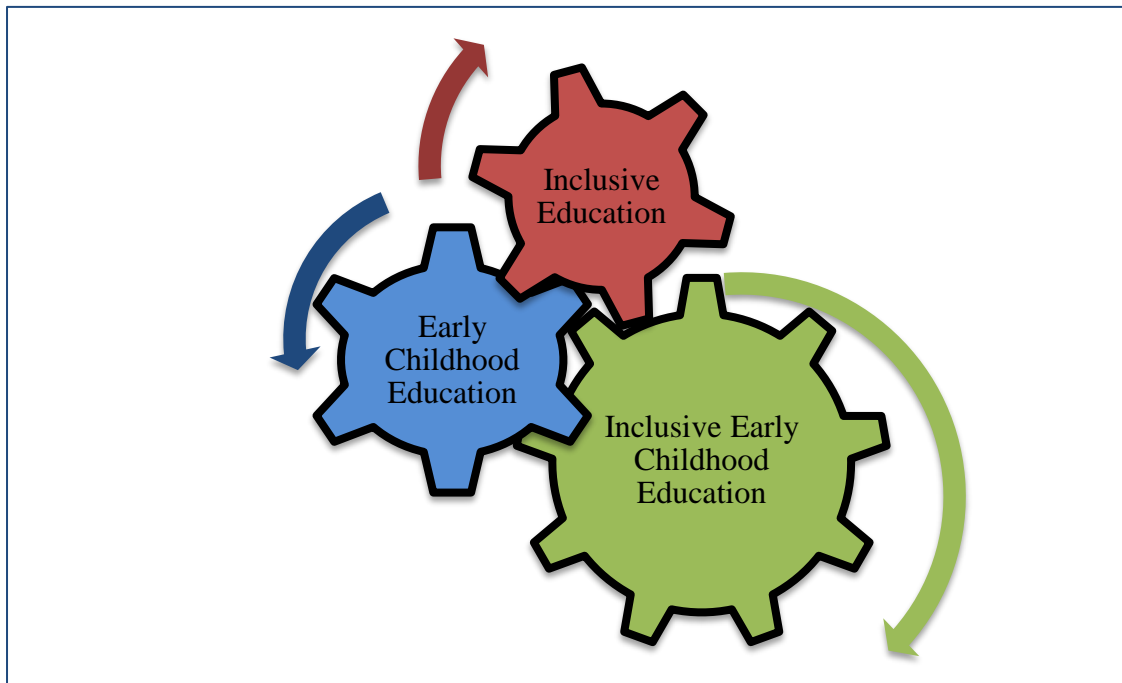


Figure 2.1: Three interrelated thematic areas of research and policy.

The review of the literature for the first two areas of research and policy, IE and ECE, considers the conceptualisation and definitions (i.e., origin and development), different rationales justifying their educational practice, and the benefits identified through empirical research. A similar structure is adopted for the third area, with more

detail on factors that enable and create barriers to quality IECE practice. In each of the three areas, the current status of research and policy in Ghana is highlighted.

As noted in the Introduction, *disability*⁷ is used as a term to include *impairment*, the loss or reduced function of a body part or organ (Heward, 2013). Disability refers to physical, cognitive, social and emotional, or genetic factors that have an impact on a child's ability to interact within the environment (Darragh, 2010); or restriction of functioning, activities or participation due to environmental barriers or lack of facilitators for participation (WHO & UNICEF, 2012). The UN CRPD preamble (2006) recognises disability as “an evolving concept”, resulting from the *interaction* between persons with impairments and attitudinal and environmental factors that hinders their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others.

Implicit in these definitions, individuals may have an impairment, but disability is a societal creation, reflecting what is termed as the social model of disability (Cumming, 2012; Hodkinson & Vickerman, 2009). *Special needs* embody the identified special or additional learning and support needs students with disability may have in education (Foreman, 2011; Hodkinson & Vickerman, 2009). *Special educational needs*⁸ (SEN) thus denote students with or without disability who may require special or additional educational supports than usually provided. However, the terms *disability* and *SEN* tend to ignite an increased focus on impairments or support, but they are used interchangeably or jointly when citing specific policies or research.

This review and study do not focus on students identified as gifted and talented unless they have an associated disability or SEN. The next section presents the concept, rationale and benefits of IE, and IE policy framework in Ghana, as summarised in Figure 2.2.

2.2 Concepts and Definition of IE

Inclusive education for students with disability is a global policy and practice, defined as providing education for these students in general education classes (Ainscow, 2005; Heward, 2013; Idol, 2006; Peterson & Hittie, 2010). It is, however, a complex phenomenon (Cologon, 2014; Hodkinson & Vickerman, 2009; Liasidou, 2015; Lindsay, 2007; D. Mitchell, 2010; Precey & Mazurkiewicz, 2013) and a subject of considerable discourse in research (Friend & Bursuck, 2006; Lindsay, 2003; Tsokova & Tarr, 2012).

⁷ Disability refers to functional limitation that may result from impairment or societal factors

⁸ SEN means additional educational supports required, and not the disability or impairment

The area is fraught with a myriad of conceptual and definitional issues (A. C. Armstrong et al., 2010; Deku & Ackah Jnr, 2012; Liasidou, 2015). While IE in general terms refers not only to SEN or disabilities (Carrington et al., 2013; Sapon-Shevin, 2003, 2007), but is about all students (Cologon, 2014; Foreman, 2011), the approach adopted in this study is the UNESCO’s definition of IE (2009, pp. 8-9):

process of addressing and responding to the diversity in needs of all learners through increasing participation in learning, cultures and communities, and reducing exclusion in education. It involves changes and modifications in content, approaches, structures and strategies, with a common vision which covers all and a conviction that it is the responsibility of the regular system to educate all.

Thus, the study focuses on IE and students with disability and SEN, as an aspect of diversity, contextualised within Ghana’s policy, provision and practice.

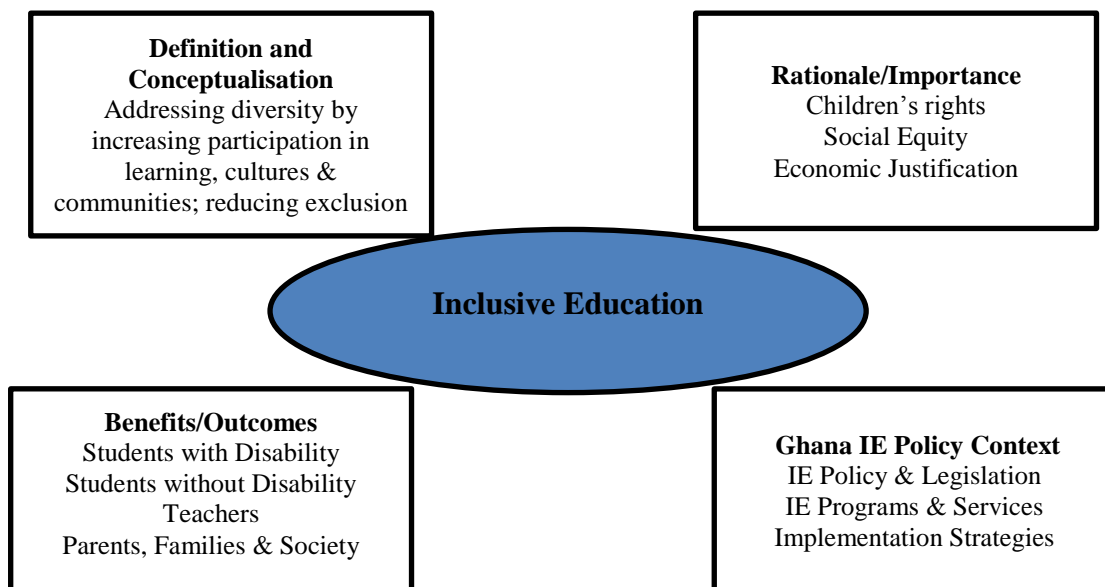


Figure 2.2: Key inclusive education research and policy.

2.3 Origin and Development of IE

The evolution and development of IE is underpinned by several influences and forces, including historical, philosophical and political movements; legislative enactments and declarations, differing definitions and understandings of disability; and economic and moral justifications and the results of evaluations of the efficacy of special education systems (Chapter 2). IE dates back to the early 1900s, and is therefore not a new

phenomenon (Darragh, 2010; Hodkinson & Vickerman, 2009). A mass movement to IE is traceable to advocacy from parents, teachers and society in the mid 1980s and early 1990s in response to a powerful critique of special education, that is, the education of students with disability in separate educational institutions, and educational practices in regular schools that restricted access and participation in mainstream education (A. C. Armstrong et al., 2010). Its development was based not only on the education of the individual, but also as a recognition of the potency of education in creating inclusive and democratic societies (A. C. Armstrong et al., 2010; Sapon-Shevin, 2003) and a transformative experience for all (Gibson & Haynes, 2009), as well as research demonstrating the efficacy of IE (Carrington et al., 2013). Advocates also grounded their philosophical arguments for IE on social justice and ideals of a just and good society (Ainscow, 2005; Foreman, 2011; Sapon-Shevin, 2003; UNESCO, 2009).

The present worldwide evolution of IE is, however, attributed to the 1994 Salamanca Statement of Spain developed by representatives of 92 governments and 25 international organisations (Hodkinson & Vickerman, 2009; D. Mitchell, 2010). The Salamanca Statement is considered a significant IE milestone, which sanctioned that regular schools should assist those with disability within child-centred pedagogy; inclusion-oriented schools are seen as the most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, creating welcoming communities, building inclusive society, and achieving an EFA (UNESCO, 1994). What is clear is that while developing as *an haute couture metaphor* for education in the developed world, IE has now become a globalised practice (A. C. Armstrong et al., 2010; Gibson & Haynes, 2009; Hodkinson & Vickerman, 2009; Liasidou, 2015; UNESCO, 2008). Other factors, supporting the IE movement, including international conventions and declarations, mainly human rights in legislation and policy, and other benefits, are discussed in later sections. IE as we know it today, however, has transitioned with other practices, as discussed next.

2.4 Related Terms to IE

In this section, four terms considered to be foundational approaches to IE—normalisation, least restrictive environment, mainstreaming, and integration (Darragh, 2010; McLeskey et al., 2013)—and which are also critical to IECE practice, are discussed.

2.4.1 Normalisation

Normalisation, an ideology that originated from Scandinavia, was first coined by Nirje (1970) and initially associated with persons with intellectual disabilities. It means making

patterns of daily living, learning experiences and environments of persons with disabilities similar to those everyone desires in society (McLeskey et al., 2013), and which are not different from what the culture values (Foreman, 2011). Normalisation contrasts protectionist societal views, and advances the tenets of “acceptance and membership physically and socially in everyday society regardless of disability” (Heward, 2013, p. 152), leading to increased expectations for life outcomes and values of persons with disabilities, such as the use of people-first language (Allen & Cowdery, 2015; Deiner, 2013; Essa, 2014; McLeskey et al., 2013).

2.4.2 Least Restrictive Environment

Least restrictive environment (LRE) advances the idea that some environments are more intrinsically restrictive than others (Foreman, 2011). It signifies that students with disability have the right to education in the same environments with typically developing peers (Darragh, 2010; McLeskey et al., 2013). Implementation of LRE requires a continuum of support services and educational placements, such as a regular class, resource room, self-contained class or hospital (Friend & Bursuck, 2006; Salend, 2005).

2.4.3 Mainstreaming and Integration

“Mainstreaming” refers to selective placement of students with disability in regular schools for a part or full day, on the basis of eligibility or readiness (Friend & Bursuck, 2006; Sapon-Shevin, 2007). Mainstreaming may involve attendance, but not inclusion. Integration involves “extensive placement” in regular schools with provision of support services identified as needed, or “making adaptations or accommodations to enable participation within a mainstream experience or settings” (Cologon, 2014, p. 10). In both mainstreaming and integration, the child may be physically included but pedagogically excluded from learning in the regular classroom. The basic premises of these approaches are minimised segregation or exclusion, and increased opportunities for participation in mainstream education settings, for both educational outcomes and socialisation (Smith et al., 2012). Thus, both mainstreaming and integration denotes a normalising process mostly concerned with *relocation* of students with disability into *fixed educational systems or practices*.

It is worth acknowledging that these approaches give impetus to IE practice, but may be more oriented to placement of students with disability from segregated environments into ‘unchanged’ mainstream settings. Such practices therefore mirror the ‘come in, from without hegemony’, reinforcing a ‘visitor-survival status’ to students with

disability. But IE comprises the physical, social, academic and ‘other implicit’ dimensions of mainstream settings to educate students with disability, and not just the placement metaphor. IE fosters the ‘in it, from within liberation’, privileging a ‘member-support status’ to *all learners*. IE is not a normalising process, attempting to fix allegedly “defective” students, but seeks to subvert exclusionary societal conditions and disabling educational practices (Liasidou, 2012). It is thus not synonymous to integration or mainstreaming (Liasidou, 2012; Poed & Elkins, 2012). Hence, worldwide and as in Ghana, IE has become a favoured educational policy and practice for all students. In Ghanaian policy and practice, however, terms such as mainstreaming and integration are evident, but the current conceptualisation and orientation is IE.

2.5 Conceptualisations of IE

This section peruses four key conceptualisations of IE that further enhance its understanding in practice at the early childhood level.

2.5.1 IE as Overcoming Exclusion and Equity

IE aims to reducing exclusionary barriers to learning and participation of vulnerable and at-risk learners. The essence is to increase presence, participation and achievement of all learners to ensure equity (e.g., Ainscow, 2005; Booth et al., 2006). Equity means providing an all-encompassing education for all learners, regardless of disability or SEN (Carrington & MacArthur, 2013; Darragh, 2010) Hence, inclusion strives to end exclusionary practices and promote equal opportunities for all (Booth et al., 2006; Peters, 2007a).

2.5.2 IE as a Sense of Belonging, Community and Full Participation

Equity and non-exclusion are seen to enhance access and rights with others in inclusive settings (F. Armstrong, 2011), facilitating belonging, acceptance and full participation of learners, especially those with disability (Cologon, 2014). Inclusion welcomes and celebrates diversity (Mittler, 2000) and “children don’t come and go” (Ackah Jnr, 2010b, p. 6). Valuing each student as a learner (Carrington, 2006) engenders a sense of belonging, acceptance and community (Cologon, 2014; McLeskey et al., 2013; Poed & Elkins, 2012; Salend, 2005; Sapon-Shevin, 2003). Thus, IE welcomes all learners, regardless of disability or differences, making it about the presence, participation and achievement of learners (Ainscow, 2005).

2.5.3 IE as a Continuing Process

Inclusion is identified as a process (Ainscow, 2005; Ainscow & Miles, 2009; Carrington & Robinson, 2004; Foreman, 2011), not as a fixed state (Jones, 2004), just as disability or SEN is not a fixed state for students. Inclusive practice evolves to meet the ever-changing needs of each student with disability and the context (Ainscow, 2005; McLeskey et al., 2013). Inclusion is therefore not a ‘transient practice’ or ‘quick-fix approach’, but a continuing process for realising inclusive goals and values. It occurs on an ongoing, daily basis, and thus IE is on wheels.

2.5.4 IE as Radical Reform

Mittler (2000) and Carrington (2006) state that inclusion signifies a radical reform of school culture—curriculum, assessment, pedagogy and grouping of students. Although complex, the radicalisation does not mean complete ‘overhaul’ or ‘abandonment’ of existing education system and practice. Rather, IE is not about fitting learners within an existing education system and practice, but adaptation of the system and practice to meet the child’s needs (F. Armstrong, 2011; Mittler, 2000; UNESCO, 2009). The reformation necessarily involves teachers requiring what Carrington and Robinson (2004) describe as a two-stage PD: reculturing schools to reflect inclusive beliefs and values, and enhancement of teacher skills and knowledge to better address the learning needs of all students. Hence, IE involves teachers reimagining how to perform evolving roles, take responsibility for the learning and development of all children, and meet challenges in inclusive settings (Carrington, 2006; Mittler, 2000; NCSE 2010). Transforming the culture of schools and systems is thus the main object (Fullan, 2007b) of IE.

These conceptualisations show that IE is a dynamic, continuing and multidimensional approach that ensures successful practice for all students with and without disability, as well as teachers. Although the centrality of IE is about all students, it also encompasses the attitudes, treatment and behaviours of parents/carers, teachers and headteachers. Hence, effective IE requires the support of all stakeholder interests.

2.6 Rationale for IE

Human rights, social cohesion and reducing ill-effects of segregation and cost-effectiveness are prominent arguments that have established the rationale for IE (Allen & Cowdery, 2012; A. C. Armstrong et al., 2010; Friend & Bursuck, 2006; Hodkinson & Vickerman, 2009; Lindsay, 2007; McLeskey et al., 2013; D. Mitchell, 2010; Mittler,

2000; Peters, 2007a; Salend, 2005; Smith et al., 2012; Turnbull, Turnbull, Wehmeyer, & Shogren, 2013; UNESCO, 2009). These arguments support the desirability of IE.

2.6.1 Human Rights

The universal right of all individuals to education is the most fundamental rationale for IE (D. Mitchell, 2010; Peters, 2007a). Human rights for IE were first articulated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR, 1948), and subsequently in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC, 1989) and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD, 2006). As an example, Article 26 of the UDHR states “everyone has the right to education for the full development of their potential”. The CRC (1989) also proclaims the right to education—Article 28(1a) states inter alia: “States Parties recognise the right of the child to education, provided on the basis of equal opportunity”. Article 23 also stresses the need for special care and support for education of the child with a disability, designed so that there is equal opportunity and access to facilitate development and active participation in the community. While both the UDHR and CRC acknowledge the right of all persons to education, Article 24 of the 2006 CRPD specifically advocates for IE (Article 24(1), emphasis added):

States Parties recognise the right of persons with disabilities to education; *an inclusive education system at all levels devoid of discrimination, and provided on equal opportunity is a vehicle to realising this right.* Such a system [inclusive education] is effective to develop the full human potential and personality, sense of dignity and promote social participation.

2.6.2 Social Cohesion and Reducing Ill-Effects of Segregation

Inclusive education is also argued on the basis that exclusionary practices are morally unacceptable, as separate is not equal (Heward, 2013). Hence, IE counters the ill-effects of segregation, such as stigmatisation and prejudices on individuals and groups within society (Ackah Jnr, 2010a; Okyere & Adams, 2003). Lindsay (2007) argues that segregated special education is discriminatory, and compromises children’s rights, or isolates children with disability from typically developing peers, mainstream curricula, and educational practices. Inclusive practice therefore has the potential to reduce fear, build friendship, respect and understanding (Rieser, 2011), and fosters in learners better ways to learn, play and live together (Sapon-Shevin, 2003, 2007). These are essential for developing social cohesion (Peters, 2007a, 2007b).

2.6.3 Economic Justification

From an economic perspective, IE is argued to improve human capital development and labour market participation (World Health Organization, 2011). Through IE, the platform for human resource development widens due to access to quality education and equal opportunity for all (Peters, 2007a). IE enhances acquisition of skills and competencies that increase the productivity of all individuals and society. Turnbull et al. (2013) state that IE promotes economic self-sufficiency of persons with disability through their engagement in income-oriented work. Such holistic human resource development ensures labour market participation by people with diverse backgrounds.

Peters (2007a) argues that within a globalised context, research has articulated IE as cost-efficient and cost-effective. IE is cost-effective as it offers savings or lower costs through the establishment and maintenance of schools that educate all children together than the establishment of complex system of different types of schools for different groups of children (A. C. Armstrong et al., 2010; UNESCO, 2008, 2009), and cost-efficient as it maximises the use of such learning environments and resources (Peters, 2007a).

2.7 Benefits of IE: Empirical Research Evidence

This section discusses the research and policy arguments pertaining to the desirability of IE and empirical research on IE outcomes. Empirical evidence attests that IE benefits children with and without disability, teachers, parents and families, and society (Allen & Cowdery, 2012; Foreman, 2011; Friend & Bursuck, 2006; Killoran et al., 2007; McLeskey et al., 2013; Salend, 2005; Simpson & Warner, 2010; Smith et al., 2012; Wolery & Odom, 2000).

2.7.1 Benefits to Students with Disability: Academic and Social Outcomes

Research on IE across many different countries such as the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, New Zealand, Australia, India and Ghana, and across a range of different educational contexts, including early childhood education, primary, secondary and tertiary levels, has shown academic and social benefits for students with disability (Agbenyega, 2007; Cole, Waldron, & Majd, 2004; Deku & Ackah Jnr, 2012; Foreman, 2011; Friend & Bursuck, 2006; Idol, 2006; Killoran et al., 2007; McLeskey et al., 2013; NCSE 2010; Obeng, 2007; Rea, McLaughlin, & Walther-Thomas, 2002; Salend, 2005; Salend & Garrick Duhaney, 2007; Smith et al., 2012). Research indicates that well-designed inclusive programs provide students with disability ready access to the general

education curriculum, as well as intensive, focused instruction in critical skill areas such as reading, writing and mathematics (McLeskey et al., 2013; Turnbull et al., 2013). Students with disability have benefitted from multiple school-wide instructional strategies, such as differentiated instruction (i.e., teachers modify different instructional methods, materials or content to enhance students' participation in general curriculum), and cooperative learning (i.e., students teach and learn together as team members by focusing on common tasks) (Tomlinson, 2014; Turnbull et al., 2013).

In one comparative study, Rea et al. (2002) examined the academic performance of 58 middle school students with learning disabilities (LD) in 8th grade inclusive classrooms and in "pull-out" special education programs. The study explored the relationship between placement type and academic and behaviour outcomes to establish the effect of IE using qualitative and quantitative data. The Iowa Tests of Basic Skills, Literacy Passport Tests and Course Grades, and students' records were utilised to assess students' academic outcomes.

Results showed that students with LD in inclusive classes achieved significantly higher course grades in language arts, mathematics, science and social studies compared with those in pull-out programs. Further, students with LD in inclusive classes attended significantly more days of school than those in pull-out programs, although they did have equal school suspensions (Rea et al., 2002). These findings demonstrate the positive impact of IE on academic achievement and school attendance of students with disability.

Another study by Cole et al. (2004) offers further empirical support for the benefits of IE for students with disability. Cole et al. conducted a comparative study of students with and without disabilities in six urban, suburban and rural school settings in Indiana. The study comprised 429 students with mild disabilities in 23 primary schools from Grades 2 to 5. Of these, 235 students were in special education settings and 194 students in inclusive settings. There were also 606 students without disabilities randomly selected from 35 inclusive and non-inclusive general education classes. Students' academic progress in mathematics and reading was evaluated using the Basic Academic Skills Samples (BASS; Espin, Deno, Maruyama, & Cohen, 1989), a curriculum-based and group-administered measure. Results of an analysis of covariance (ANCOVA), covarying pretest scores (academic achievement), and per pupil expenditure for students with disabilities across inclusive and special education settings and for students without disabilities across inclusive and non-inclusive settings, showed: (1) no significant difference in math and reading gains for students with disabilities across settings; and (2)

students without disabilities in inclusive settings had greater mathematics and reading achievements compared to those without disabilities in non-inclusive classes.

However, comparisons of group means and the percentage of students who achieved academic growth showed that students with disability in inclusive classes made greater or comparable progress in mathematics than those without disability, as well as higher reading achievement in both inclusive settings and pull-out resource programs. Students with specific disabilities were also found to make differential academic gains. For instance, students with mild intellectual disability in inclusive classes made the greatest gains in mathematics and reading compared to those with the same disability in the pull-out settings. Students with learning disability in inclusive settings also made higher gains in mathematics, but comparable gains in reading across settings.

The research literature has also indicated that IE provides social benefits for students with disability (Boutot & Bryant, 2005; Hanline & Correa-Torres, 2012; Holahan & Costenbader, 2000; McLeskey et al., 2013; Simpson & Warner, 2010). Simpson and Warner (2010) state that inclusion improves socialisation, self-image, and happiness and confidence of individuals with disability. In inclusive settings, children with disability have increased opportunities for observational learning, interactions, and higher levels of play with typically developing peers. Indeed, it also means students have access to models of good academic and social behaviour (McLeskey et al., 2013). Improvements in language and communication, social and play skills, cognitive and motor abilities, as well as the independence of students with disability in inclusive settings have been reported in research (Killoran et al., 2007).

Boutot and Bryant's (2005) study in Texas, which examined the IE of students with autism spectrum disorder (ASD) in primary Grades 2 to 5, also indicated that the practice benefits students with disability. One hundred and seventy-seven students participated in the study: 10 were students with ASD, 26 students had other disabilities such as LD, behaviour disorder (BD) or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), while 141 students had no disability. The study investigated three social integration constructs—acceptance (social preference), visibility (social impact), and peer group membership (social network affiliation)—of students with ASD and their relationship with the severity of autistic characteristics. The social preference and social impact of all students were determined by the peer nomination procedure in the Behaviour Rating Profile (Brown & Hammill, 1990) and the Gilliam Autism Rating Scale (Gilliam, 1995), which evaluated the severity of ASD characteristics in communication, social relatedness

and stereotypic behaviour, while social network affiliation was peer-determined. A 2 x 2 contingency design and Fisher's exact test were used for data analysis.

Findings revealed that students with ASD were chosen for social activities such as play and birthday parties and had similar level of visibility and social network affiliation as their peers without disabilities in inclusive classrooms. Students with ASD were also seen as members of inclusive classes, and their autistic symptoms did not affect social integration. Results of the Fisher's test showed that students with ASD and students with LD, BD or ADHD had comparable social integration ratings. Thus, students, regardless of the type of disability, were accepted, visible and members of a peer group (Boutot & Bryant, 2005). Observational findings also confirmed peers with ASD were preferred as playmates than as partners, and some were "popular". Although Boutot and Bryant (2005) cautioned against generalisation due to the limited sample size and variation among students, the findings support good social and emotional outcomes for students with disability through IE.

2.7.2 Benefits to Students without Disability: Academic and Social Outcomes

Inclusive education is also argued to benefit students without disability (Friend & Bursuck, 2006; McLeskey et al., 2013; Salend, 2005; Simpson & Warner, 2010). Students without disability perform well and often better academically when educated in inclusive classes (Cole et al., 2004; Salend & Garrick Duhaney, 2007). The academic achievement of typically developing students is not compromised or hindered due to inclusive practices (Foreman, 2011; Idol, 2006; Salend, 2005). Cole et al. (2004) found from their study that typically developing students in inclusive classrooms made significant academic gains in mathematics and reading, contrary to perceptions that the presence of students with disability in inclusive classes interferes with academic achievement of peers without disability. These students also benefitted from additional supports and different teaching techniques provided to students with disability (Turnbull et al., 2013).

Students without disability also benefit socially in several ways through IE. Many studies have found that students without disability attain increased personal growth, appreciation and acceptance of other children, feelings of accomplishment as they provide assistance to others, development of friendships with students with mild and significant disabilities, and improved understanding of disability-related issues (Boutot & Bryant, 2005; Idol, 2006; Peck, Staub, Gallucci, & Schwartz, 2004; Simpson & Warner, 2010).

Simpson and Warner (2010) stated that for children without disability, contacts and interactions with children with disabilities in inclusive settings can, over the long term, increase familiarity and reduce prejudice. For instance, children without disability learn about diversity, disabilities and differences at first hand. In most cases, typically developing children provide genuine help and assistance, beyond the traditional play or socialisation with peers with disability. Interviews with teachers and other staff working in a middle school indicated that IE promotes tolerance and sensitivity, appreciation and recognition of strengths and weaknesses among all students (McLeskey et al., 2013).

2.7.3 Benefits to Teachers

While teaching is a demanding profession and teachers have increasing expectations placed on them, especially within today's classrooms where there are a range of students with and without disability and others with diverse backgrounds, the evidence indicates that most teachers are positively disposed to IE (Friend & Bursuck, 2006; Idol, 2006; Lindsay, 2007; McLeskey et al., 2013; Salend, 2005). Teachers perceive that IE benefits them, although they do raise concerns about the perceived adequacy of training, availability of support services, large class sizes and/or teacher efficacy (Ackah Jnr, 2014b; Friend & Bursuck, 2006; Simpson & Warner, 2010). A review of research suggests that inclusive teaching increases teachers' knowledge about differences, abilities and diversity among learners, enabling teachers to develop favourable dispositions towards all students, which is a marker of effective teachers (McLeskey et al., 2013).

Studies have shown that IE presents opportunities for teachers to develop professional competencies to make accommodations in the classroom, curriculum content or mode of instruction and evaluation to successfully educate all students (McLeskey et al., 2013; Simpson & Warner, 2010). For instance, inclusive teachers gain new expertise through collaboration for sharing of ideas and skills (Friend & Bursuck, 2006), which is an important factor behind successful inclusive practice (Lindsay, 2003; Smith et al., 2012; Winter, 2007). As teachers acquire pedagogical skills and develop a new orientation for educating all children by sharing responsibility, they also work in partnership with other professionals to provide supports for the education of all children in inclusive settings (Winter, 2007).

2.7.4 Benefits to Parents and Families

Parents and families of children with and without disabilities have varied views of and experiences with IE (Leyser & Kirk, 2011; Salend, 2005), but generally consider that the

practice benefits them and their children (Peck et al., 2004; Simpson & Warner, 2010). For many parents of young children with disabilities, IE is an expectation (Turnbull et al., 2013) that they strongly support (Heward, 2013).

Peck et al. (2004) investigated outcomes of inclusion as perceived by 389 parents of children without disabilities in Pacific Northwest area of the United States. Participants were parents of children without disabilities in six elementary schools from KG through to Grade 6 who were educated with peers with severe disabilities, such as moderate to severe intellectual disability, ASD, cerebral palsy and Down syndrome. Parents evaluated specific educational outcomes as: “increased”, “remained the same”, or “decreased”, in a survey instrument with an open-ended question. Descriptive data analysis results showed that parents perceived IE to have mixed effects on children’s academic progress: no effects (78%), positive effects (15%) and decreased academic progress (7%). Parents (78%) believed children’s individual time with classroom teachers did not reduce, and inclusion had a positive impact on their children’s social and emotional development. Again, parents said inclusion increased more generally children’s appreciation of other’s needs (76%), acceptance of differences in behaviour and appearance among people (65%), and positive self-feelings (26%).

The majority of parents (87%) considered that inclusion had a positive impact on children’s participation in relationships with peers with severe disabilities, with 12% and only 1% neutral respectively for a negative impact on children’s participation. Most parents (94%) said inclusion had a positive or neutral effect on classroom climate, responsiveness of the curriculum to individual needs, and availability of specialist supports, with a small percentage of parents (6%) disagreeing. Parents’ attitudes were predominantly positive towards inclusion (64%), with 26% holding a neutral perspective and 10% a negative view. While most (73%) parents indicated they would re-enrol their children if given the opportunity, the few who had more direct contact with their children’s classes or perceived inclusion to have negative impact were reluctant to opt for re-enrolment in inclusive settings.

The analysis of narrative comments made by 237 parents who were dissatisfied with the IE experience showed that their major concerns were about behavioural disruption of classroom routines and loss of teacher time allocated to children without disability. Thus, they felt the presence of children with severe disability made their children without disability vulnerable. Although some comments—for instance, “I don’t think school is the place for children with severe disabilities”—demonstrated

philosophical opposition to IE, many parents described the social benefits of inclusion with respect to their own child and the classroom. Further, although Peck et al. (2004) stated that academic and social learning experiences are highly related, the majority of parents said that children benefitted “socially” from a classmate with severe disabilities, but not “educationally” (p.141).

The available research also indicates that parents of children without disabilities consider that IE does not prevent their children from obtaining a good education, appropriate services and teacher attention (Salend, 2010). For Salend and Garrick Duhaney (2007), IE is a positive experience for most parents due to opportunities for involvement in decision-making process about their children’s education. In conclusion, parents are important contributors in shaping implementation of IE.

2.8 Critique of IE

In contrast to arguments for the rationale and benefits of IE, it has also been critiqued as an ineffective or disadvantageous practice (A. C. Armstrong et al., 2010; Heward, 2013), and at best underpinned by a zeitgeist ideology (Kavale & Mostert, 2003). While some researchers claim that special education has produced a large but relatively diffuse data, contributing to improved interventions for students with disability, this seems to be overshadowed by the powerful tensions of *full* IE, which is “materially impacting the field of special education” (Kavale & Mostert, 2003, p. 191). As an example, some argue that special education, defined as an individually planned, specialised, intensive and goal-oriented instruction (Heward, 2013) provides a safety net for regular education and specialised services for children with disability. Thus, IE in a regular class may not be ideal for all children with disability, as it is often not “individualised” or “structured” as in a special education class, and is contrary to the tenets of LRE and free appropriate education (FAPE) (e.g., Heward, 2013; Kavale & Forness, 2000). Inclusion thus has created an ideological divide in the special education domain, and the word *inclusion* is likely to engender fervent debate (Kavale & Forness, 2000) in the education arena.

Research has also demonstrated that some students with disability do not attain expected social outcomes in inclusive settings (Kavale & Mostert, 2003; Lindsay, 2007; McLeskey & Waldron, 2011). Simply placing students with disability in general classrooms does not improve social skills, or lead to appropriate behaviour or socially acceptance by teachers or peers without disabilities (Cook, Klein, & Tessier, 2008; Moore, 2009). Inclusion may produce negative outcomes and interactions with peers

characterised by teasing, negative comments, staring, and social isolation (Leyser & Kirk, 2011; Meadan & Monda-Amaya, 2008; Pivik, McComas, & Laflamme, 2002) and bullying in IECE settings (Frederickson, 2010).

Research evidence indicates that some students with disability do not attain expected academic progress in inclusive settings, hence the effectiveness of IE is contested (Lindsay, 2007; McLeskey & Waldron, 2011). For instance, Lindsay (2007) asserts that the evidence reflects an inadequate endorsement of the positive effects of IE. In an international review of IE or mainstreaming evidence for child outcomes and processes, Lindsay examined 14 comparative outcome studies of children with some form of disability, selecting the 14 studies from 1,373 using a broad categorisation criterion of “effectiveness”. Nine studies compared the performance of children with disability in different settings, while five compared the outcomes of children with disability and typically developing children in the same mainstream schools. The nature and age of children with disability varied, and their ages ranged from preschool/KG to 17-year-olds. Most of the studies measured social, emotional or behavioural and academic outcomes, but others focused only on social factors such as self-concept.

The results indicated that children with disability and typically developing children achieved marginally positive and comparable outcomes, but interaction effects such as age coverage, type and severity of disability, and methods of inclusion were found to be important factors that enhanced IE. The research also identified processes that facilitate IE, such as teacher practice and attitudes, and teaching assistants. The study thus recommended examination of moderators and mediators affecting outcomes, since they support children’s rights to inclusion, rather than evidence of optimal practice (Lindsay, 2007). Hence, arguments in support of IE need to be articulated from both human rights and empirical research evidence of effectiveness.

Contributing further to debates opposed to IE outcomes attained by students with disability, the efficacy and/or effectiveness of *full* IE, in their article entitled *River of Ideology, Islands of Evidence*, Kavale and Mostert (2003) assert strongly that the IE movement “appears permeated by radicalism, rejecting the empirical in favour of the non-epistemic and postmodern” (p.191). These researchers claim that there is neglect of empirical evidence based on the efficacy of *full* IE by some inclusionists. In this regard, the IE ideology, which has inundated policy and practice disproportionately to its claims of efficacy, has become an ideological on-rushing river, bypassing significant islands of contradictory evidence. Full IE thus encompasses “rigid moral role and exclusionist

doctrine, resulting in the promulgation of ideas richly endowed with piety and reverence to propagandise the real world of teachers, parents, and students in special education, spawning predictable consequences for constructing and disseminating knowledge” (Kavale & Mostert, 2003, p. 194). Therefore, for (Kavale & Mostert), IE should instead adopt less-ideologically-driven approaches to educating students with disabilities.

Other arguments raised against the effectiveness of IE by (Kavale & Mostert, 2003), reflect similar challenges to IE in Section 2.7. For these authors, from a *practical perspective*, a significant part of special education processes and practices are enmeshed in the beliefs and actions of general education; hence in an integrated system, special education does not act independently as a separate system, but interdependently, and thus a conduit for an enhanced education system. Next, *attitudes* about integration/ inclusion are multidimensional and certainly not overwhelmingly positive, which may account for failed mainstreaming/inclusion policies. For example, general education teachers demonstrated certain reluctance about inclusion that countered policy changes towards increased IE of students with disability; *peers* exhibited lack of acceptance of students with disability; *parents* had mixed attitudes towards IE; and *administrators/ principals* lacked knowledge about students with disability and inclusion. In addition, *beliefs and actions*, complemented with contextual realities, resulted in mixed assessed academic outcomes of IE. *Socially*, IE continue to provide negative consequences for students with disability, while teachers *do not have the skill and ability* to include students with disability in inclusive settings.

While these arguments appear to water down the spirit of IE, however, like other researchers (e.g., Foreman, 2011; Lindsay, 2007), Kavale and Mostert (2003, p. 203) affirm that IE or “*full inclusion* may be viewed as a good thing (just, essential, democratic, liberating), though *reality* paints a less sanguine picture about the general education classroom being the *sole placement* option for educating students with disability”. Implicitly, if inclusionists give credence to educating students with disability in LRE, as opposed to general classroom-only education, and also recognise the role of empirical evidence, then IE will not be exclusionary and segregationist. As Kavale and Forness (2000, p. 289) concludes, there is “ideological and political support” for IE, though not all students with disability benefit from such practice.

Notwithstanding the contending views about *full inclusion* or IE nexus, several researchers (e.g., McLeskey et al., 2013) also argue that negative effects identified result from poor implementation of IE programs or quality of teaching, rather than the concept

of IE itself, given the challenges that IE can create. As such, when teachers' concerns are addressed, IE programs can be efficacious and successful (Ackah Jnr, 2010a; Friend & Bursuck, 2006; Lindsay, 2007; Simpson & Warner, 2010). For example, teacher preparedness is crucial to IE. For other researchers, individualisation and differentiation (e.g., Darragh, 2010; Tomlinson, 2014) and evidence-based practice use (DEC/NAEYC, 2009; Deiner, 2013) are at the core of meaningful IE. Significantly, IE is identified as a rationale practice for promoting the equalisation of educational and social opportunities for all children, based on several supporting arguments, aside from moral grounds (Cologon, 2014; Turnbull et al., 2013). Thus the move to more IE should not be misconstrued as an ideo-pedagogical contest between special and IE, igniting tensions in our collective attempts to educate all students with disability, but rather arguments be grounded in what teachers and other educators *do* to make IE happen, when exclusion becomes a predisposition, making students with disability to often 'struggle' to maximise their educational and social rights. IE is not a special education debate, but an approach advocated for, based on its desirability and empirical viability for most students with disability, if not all and for the common good of all society (e.g., Sections 2.6 and 2.7). As Kavale and Forness (2000, p. 287) reechoed unequivocally, "inclusion appears to be not something that simply happens but rather something that requires careful thought and preparation", and "when inclusion is deemed appropriate, it is implemented with proper attitudes, accommodations, and adaptations in place". Therefore, while criticisms of IE and perceived benefits exist, and factors that may affect success should be examined, as well as the need for more empirical evidence use to articulate the effectiveness of IE, research critiquing IE is insufficient to reverse the overall positive benefits found and attributed to IE practice.

2.9 IE Context in Ghana: Policy, Provision and Practice

Ghana, recognising the key role of education for developing quality human resources, has pursued numerous policies to enable her citizens, especially children, to access formal education to develop their potential and contribute to the socio-economic development of the nation (Casely-Hayford, Quansah, Tetteh, Adams, & Adams 2011). Based on the goal of quality human resources, IE has been an integral agenda of education reforms, policies and mission statements for education in Ghana. As an illustration, the overarching principle underlying aspirations of the Ministry of Education (MoE) is:

to provide relevant education with emphasis on science, information, communication and technology to equip individuals (*all Ghanaians at all levels*) for self-actualisation, peaceful co-existence as well as skills for the workplace and for national development. (ESP 2010–2020, p.21, emphasis added)

The right to education in Ghana dates back to enactment of the Education Act of 1961, which was the aftermath of the 1951 education reform and resultant Accelerated Development Plan by Dr Kwame Nkrumah, the first president of Ghana. As the principal legislation, the 1961 Education Act advocated the right to education for all children, including those with disability, by introducing a free, compulsory Basic Education. The Act stipulated (Ghana Education Service [GES], 2004, p. 2):

every child who has attained the school going age as determined by the Minister, shall attend a course of instruction as laid down by the Minister in a school recognised for the purpose by the Minister.

Though the 1961 Education Act set the precedence of education for all children, Ghana's IE policy is mainly rooted in the international conventions and frameworks it has ratified over the years—including the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights (1948), the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), the UN Standard Rules for the Equalisation of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities (SREOPD; 1993), the UNESCO Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education (Salamanca Statement, 1994), the EFA (UNESCO, 2000), the MDG (UN, 2000) and, most recently, the CRPD (UN, 2006). These international conventions and frameworks have had more influence on Ghana's policy and practice of IE.

The Republic of Ghana Education Act (778) of 2008 (Government of Ghana, 2008, Education Act (778), p.5) defines IE as:

the value system which holds that all persons who attend an educational institution are entitled to equal access to learning, achievement and the pursuit of excellence in all aspects of their education, and which transcends the idea of physical location but incorporates the basic values that promote participation, friendship and interaction.

This definition identifies IE as a value-based system, concerned with promoting equitable access to educational opportunities and achievement, that is, physical, academic

and social excellence for all persons, including those with disability and SEN in inclusive settings, and not a separated physical location.

Ghana had the goal to fully implement IE by 2015 with the policy objective to provide “equitable educational opportunities by including all children with non-severe disability and SEN in mainstream schools and full enrolments of hard-to-reach and out of school children” (Ministry of Education [MoE], 2012a, 2012b; Special Education Division [SpED], 2005). Although children with severe/profound disability and SEN are to be educated in special schools, IE is the main philosophy that informs the direction for educational provision for students with disability and is a means to achieving EFA (MoE, 2012a; SpED 2005). IE is thus driven by three major guiding principles: (1) the right to education, (2) the right to equality of educational opportunities, and (3) the right and obligation to be included in and participate fully in the affairs of society (MoE, 2012a). Similarly, the Ghana’s Draft IE Policy 2013 (MoE, 2013a) identifies five key guiding principles of IE policy implementation as:

- All children can learn irrespective of differences in age, gender, ethnicity, language, disability, and so forth.
- All children have the right to access basic education, including inclusive ECE.
- The education system should be dynamic to adapt to the needs of children.
- IE facilitates and enables education structures, systems and methodologies to meet the needs of all children; and,
- IE is part of a wider strategy to promote an inclusive society (p. 14)

In Ghana, the major legislation and policies mandating IE practice includes:

- Article 25(a) of the 1992 Constitution: “All persons shall have the right to equal educational opportunities and facilities, and with the view to achieving the full realisation of this right, basic education shall be free, compulsory and available to all’. Also Article 38(2) of 1992 Constitution of the Fourth Republic of Ghana enjoins the government to implement a free, compulsory universal basic education (FCUBE) for all children. The FCUBE policy aims at improving quality of teaching and learning, management efficiency, and increasing access and participation (Government of Ghana, 1992).
- The Children’s Act (560) of 1998, Section 10: “the Government shall promote the physical, mental and social well-being of every child through education, among others; children with disability have the right to special care, education and training for developing their maximum potential and to be self-reliant”.

- Special Educational Needs Policy Framework (2005): This framework addresses the issues of marginalisation, segregation and inequity that previously have constituted barriers or challenges to the education of students with disability.
- The Disability Act (715) of 2006: “the provision of free *regular education for a person with disability*, and establishment of special needs schools *only when the disability ... precludes* enrolment in regular schools. Parents and guardians/care givers shall enrol children with disabilities ... in schools based on severity level; there should be *no barrier to the admission* of such children” (emphasis added). (Government of Ghana, 2006)
- The Education Act (778) of 2008: “district assemblies should promote *inclusive education* (Article 5); ensure designs for schools are user-friendly for children with SEN; improve existing infrastructure and provide additional facilities where relevant. Parents and guardians should take advantage of IE education facilities and send the child with disability to an appropriate education facility or subject to available resources, request for appropriate education provision” (emphasis added).
- Government of Ghana’s Education Strategic Plan (ESP) 2003–2015 and 2010–2020: These ESPs reflect the government’s commitment to achieving EFA and to mandate all schools in Ghana to provide inclusive and accessible environments, and opportunities for all children with non-severe disability and who are disadvantaged.

The intention of the government of Ghana towards IE is clear; government and educational legislation and policies, however, do not automatically translate into effective practice or the achievement of equity for all learners (Gibson & Haynes, 2009). To rationalise IE policy and practice, the government of Ghana also initiated and implemented the inclusive pilot schools projects by a team of experts led by Professor Mel Ainscow in 1996 for educating children with and without disability. These inclusive pilot schools were located in southern Ghana, namely, the Greater Accra, Central and Eastern Regions, and were provided with additional resources. A review of the education sector performance in 2008 noted:

These are the only regions with inclusive schools. The number increased from an initial 35 pilot schools to 129. Enrolment at the 129 inclusive schools has reached 309 students with mild and moderate disabilities. (MoE, Preliminary Education Sector Performance Report, 2008, p. 58)

Since the end of 2011, “the IE program has expanded from 29 districts in seven regions to 46 districts in all ten regions” (MoE, 2013b, p. 70). The pilot inclusive schools complement regular schools (Ackah Jnr, 2013), which are also mandated to enrol children with non-severe disability without discrimination or refusal (Disability Act [715] 2006). Although provision of [physical] facilities encourages implementation of IE (UNESCO, 2009), to achieve the policy objectives of IE, many strategic activities are being implemented in Ghana (Ministry of Education [MoE], 2012a, ESP 2010-2020, p.17) including:

- the creation and sustenance of public awareness on disability issues;
- determination of the prevalence rates of various disability or SEN;
- conducting early comprehensive assessments of all learners experiencing educational difficulties for appropriate mainstream and special placement and intervention;
- increasing equitable access to high quality educational opportunities in mainstream pre-tertiary and tertiary institutions for those with disability;
- the provision and safeguarding the rights of learners and young people with disability;
- increasing enrolment of girls with disability at the pre-tertiary levels;
- ensuring that those with disability acquire appropriate technical and vocational skills for full community integration;
- strengthening and improving Special Education planning and management;
- promoting the development of ICT-based solutions to enhance the educational opportunities of learners and young people with disability.

Aside from the policy implementation strategies, research in Ghana has identified *authentic* teacher training as important in promoting IE (Ackah Jnr, 2013). The ESP Strategies and Work Program 2010–2020 also directs the incorporation of training in inclusive courses into Colleges of Education programs so that *all trained mainstream teachers* are suitably prepared to implement IE (MoE, 2012b).

In a study in the Cape Coast Metropolis of Ghana, Deku and Ackah Jnr (2012) identified the need for extending teachers’ knowledge about IE through effective training, and recommended the incorporation of inclusive courses in the curriculum of teacher training institutions and universities to equip preservice teachers with relevant knowledge, skills and competencies for IE practice. The researchers also advocated for

the organisation of constant in-service training and seminars, spearheaded by the GES, not only for teachers, but also for all service providers. Training courses and seminars, Deku and Ackah Jnr (2012) found, expand practitioners' knowledge of effective inclusive practices and management strategies for all children, especially those with disability. Other researchers have also stressed the need for effective teacher preparation for implementing IE in Ghana (e.g, Agbenyega, 2007; Opoku-Inkoom, 2009).

In a study in the Accra metropolis, Agbenyega (2007) found that some teachers believed that regular schools are not places for students with disability, especially students with sensory impairments, and perceived IE as an imposed policy. This was attributed to a lack of professional preparedness and available resources, as well as insufficient orientation and specialist assistance. Hence, Agbenyega called for inclusive policy development to address specific issues such as large class sizes, professional competency, student needs, teacher beliefs and resources, which are key to successful inclusive practice in Ghana. Similarly, re-evaluation of existing preservice and inservice teacher programs to develop specific programs for training regular classroom teachers to effectively respond to all students' needs, and examination of the GES/VSO inclusive project's impact on sensitising and reducing negative attitudes toward students with disabilities were suggested. Agbenyega proposed that the GES should involve classroom teachers in inclusive policy development and decision making, while the synchronisation of support systems and teacher involvement could reduce negative attitudes and concerns about IE practice. Opoku-Inkoom (2009) also identified the need for developing practical and intensive courses in IE and SEN for preparing teachers in Ghana, although the majority of preservice teachers were found to be somewhat knowledgeable about some key concepts in IE.

Clearly, progressive and encouraging commitment to IE is demonstrated by the ratification of international conventions and development of national legislation, policies and strategic initiatives and investments in Ghana. However, what is also necessary beyond legislation and policy is the avalanche of change (Mittler, 2000), pillars of change (Hargreaves & Shirley, 2012) and the levers for change (Ainscow, 2005) or drivers of change (Fullan, 2007b) that engender successful IE practice (see Chapter 1). This, among others, requires the collective responsibility of government, schools, teachers and communities (McLeskey et al., 2013; Mittler, 2000). As noted, the research identified increased teacher knowledge and training as a key factor that enhances IE practice. There is, therefore, the need for empirical research on how IECE is being implemented in

Ghana. In the following section, ECE is explored to provide further foundation for this study on IECE Ghana, as summarised in Figure 2.3.

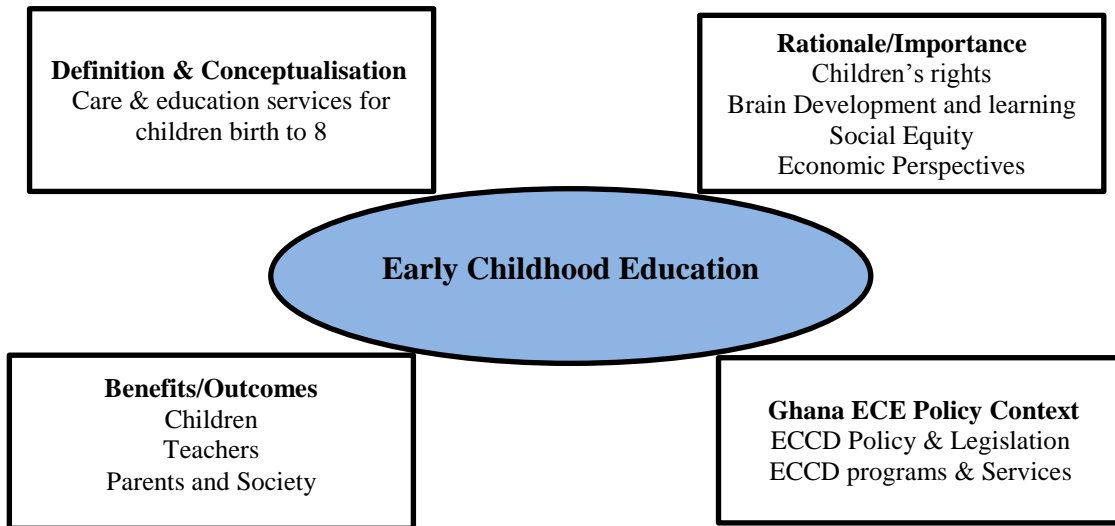


Figure 2.3: Key early childhood education research and policy.

2.10 Concept and Definition of ECE

Early childhood education (ECE) generically describes services for the care and education of children from birth to age 8 (Bredenkamp, 2011; Darragh, 2010; Deiner, 2013; Essa, 2014; Prochner, 1992; UNESCO, 2008; Wardle, 2003). The Organisation for Economic Organisation for Economic and Co-operation Development [OECD] (2001, p. 14) notes that *care* and *education* are inseparable concepts, and defines early childhood education and care (ECEC) as:

an integrated and coherent approach to policy and provision which is inclusive of all children and all parents regardless of their employment status or socioeconomic status. This approach recognises that such arrangements may fulfil a wide range of objectives including care, learning and social support.

Education International (2009), a global organisation of teachers and other education employees, with a branch in Ghana, also sees ECE as a wholesome education encompassing children's holistic development and learning, where care forms an integral part of a child's development and education. Broadly, ECE synergises three major conceptualisations of early childhood: (a) an education perspective—children's cognitive development and readiness for school; (b) a care perspective—child care for children of (working) mothers; and, (c) a health and welfare perspective—nutrition and child wellbeing (Penn, 2010).

The main settings⁹ or delivery modes of ECE programs are usually homes, child care centres, crèches and nurseries, KGs, preschools and primary classrooms (Grades 1 to 3) or other similar settings (Bredekamp, 2011; Darragh, 2010; Essa, 2007; Feeney, Moravcik, Nolte, & Christensen, 2010; Gordon & Browne, 2007). Different programs cater for different age groups of children; for example, under 3, 3–6 years or 6–8 years, varying across and within countries (Darragh, 2010; International Labour Organisation [ILO] 2012). Different ECE programs are designed for different purposes. For instance, enrichment-oriented programs enhance socialisation, cognition and overall development of children, while compensatory programs such as the Head Start and Perry Preschool in USA assist in addressing perceived gaps in children’s backgrounds (Darragh, 2010; Essa, 2007; Schweinhart et al., 2005).

2.11 Related Terms to ECE

In this section, the terms “early childhood”, “child care” and “education” are explained to further clarify the concept “early childhood education”. “Early childhood” is an international term that denotes the period from birth to age 8 (Bredekamp, 2011; Driscoll & Nagel, 2005; UNICEF 2008). “Child care” means attention to health, hygiene and nutrition within a nurturing and safe environment that supports children’s cognitive and socio-emotional well-being (Bowen, Donovan, & Burns, 2012). It includes child minding that offers flexible, spontaneous and real-life experiences for small groups of children with mixed ages in a home environment. “Education” means learning through early stimulation, guidance and a range of developmental activities and opportunities in the context of good physical care and of warm affective relationships (Bowen et al., 2012). In this study, ECE focused on care and education in formal centres and schools, and was limited to KG 1 and KG 2 and Primary One classes (P1).

2.12 Rationale of ECE

As for IE, the importance and value of ECE are argued on several but similar bases: children’s rights, scientific, political, economic, and social evidence (Bredekamp, 2011; Calman & Tarr-Whelan, 2005; Darragh, 2010; Driscoll & Nagel, 2005; Evans, Meyers, & Ilfeld, 2000; Heckman, 2006b; McCain et al., 2007; Schweinhart et al., 2005; Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000; Slyva, Melhuish, Sammons, Siraj-Blatchford, & Taggart, 2010). New understandings of children, changing families and societies, and political agendas are also

⁹ This study focuses on the formal ECE institutions—centres and schools for children aged 0 to 8 years

compelling reasons that support the need for ECE (Driscoll & Nagel, 2005; Essa, 2014). In the next sections, four rationales of ECE are provided: children's rights, brain development and learning, social equity, and economic perspectives.

2.12.1 Children's Rights Perspective

Education as a young child's right is entrenched in the 1989 CRC (UNESCO, 2006, 2010). Article 28(1a) of the CRC (1989) indicates: "States Parties recognise the right of the child to education, and with a view to achieving this right progressively and on the basis of equal opportunity, they shall, in particular, make primary education (inclusive of ECE) compulsory and available free to all". Article 23 (1, 2 and 4) further states: "The child with a disability has the right to special care and support for education and development." Signed States are thus obliged to provide ECE in fulfilment of the child's right regardless of a disability, and for the common good of society. To ensure the child's right to ECE, Montgomery (2003) argues that children must be seen as social actors and as fellow human beings who have a call on society's time and resources, not out of charity, but because they are members of society who contribute in the present and future.

2.12.2 Brain Development and Learning Perspective

Evidence from neuroscience, developmental neurobiology, neurodevelopment and other brain research show that the ages from birth to 5 years are critical for brain development (McCain et al., 2007; Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000; Wardle, 2003). Research indicates the pace of brain development is dependent on early stimulation or experiences provided by the environment (Bowen et al., 2012; McCain et al., 2007). The wiring and sculpting of the brain's billions of neurons in the early years affect the architecture and function of neurobiological pathways of the child (Gilbert & Epel, 2009; McCain et al., 2007) and subsequent human development (Mustard, 2010). Children's development may be compromised within inappropriate or unstimulating and improvised environments (Perry, 2000; Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000; Winter, 2007). ECE participation can address the impact of such environmental risks and negative experiences on brain development.

Relatedly, learning is cumulative, and acquisition of early learning skills fosters children's future learning and relationships (Driscoll & Nagel, 2005). ECE programs offer opportunities for play and hands-on exploration and learning for children. Such programs not only enhance children's ability to learn, but also to work with others and be patient and develop other skills, which are foundational for learning and social interactions in the school and beyond (Evans et al., 2000; Heckman, 2000). Early learning can be affected

by cognitive delays and children's overall development before they enter primary school, which presents long-lasting and costly consequences for both families and societies (Naudeau et al., 2011). Thus ECE programs can provide appropriate brain-compatible or stimulating environments and experiences to support and nurture optimal brain development and function (Gallagher, 2005; Wardle, 2003) and early learning of children.

2.12.3 Social Equity and Reducing Early Disadvantages

Early childhood education is seen to address social equity and equality (Darragh, 2010; Evans et al., 2000), minimising early disadvantages (OECD, 2015). Early childhood programs offer children a fair start in early development and learning and ensures equality to opportunities and access, and provides additional inputs to level the playing field socially and economically for vulnerable and disadvantaged children (Darragh, 2010; Evans et al., 2000). In some traditional societies and developing countries, ECE programs are seen to increase enrolment rates of older siblings, especially girls in primary schools, who usually have to care for younger children in homes (Naudeau et al., 2011). Hence, ECE programs are seen to compensate for vulnerabilities and disadvantages (UNESCO, 2006).

2.12.4 Economic Perspectives

Rationales for ECE that draw on economic perspectives identify its value for children as both the right and smart thing to do (OECD, 2015; ILO, 2012; Naudeau et al., 2011), on the basis that ECE as an economic tool has benefits not only for children and their families, but also for societies and governments as a whole. The economic perspectives of ECE include human resource development, labour market participation and engagement, and economic savings and returns, discussed in turn below.

Human capital development

ECE is also seen to serve as the foundation for developing quality human resources (Driscoll & Nagel, 2005). Through ECE children are provided with the fundamentals for acquiring skills and competencies for future growth and productivity of nations. To Montgomery (2003), children are productive adults of the future and a way that society replicates itself. To ensure continuity, productivity and regeneration of today's and tomorrow's human resources, participation in ECE becomes the platform for empowering children for the world of work and life. Children's early learning enhances the acquisition of such skills for future employment and productivity.

Labour market participation and engagement

ECE facilitates labour market participation of mothers with young children and reconciliation of work and family responsibilities (OECD, 2015; Penn, 2010). Child care programs provide safe and nurturing care in developmentally appropriate settings for children (Essa, 2007). ECE becomes a conduit for parent-consumers to meet their childcare needs while staying in work or training or otherwise. ECE thus helps families to sustain employment and strengthen families' roles in supporting children's development (Darragh, 2010).

Economic savings and returns

Future savings and returns to children, families, societies and governments are strong socio-economic justifications for providing ECE (Darragh, 2010; Heckman, 2006a; Schweinhart et al., 2005). Savings accrue from reduced expenditure on special education, crime, grade repetition and welfare and gains from increased taxes due to higher earnings (Bredenkamp, 2011; Darragh, 2010; Schweinhart et al., 2005). Participation in ECE programs prevents early and future deficits, reducing the need for future costly intervention (Darragh, 2010; Heckman, 2000). ECE programs are therefore argued to be cost-effective education expenditure. They provide better value for money than attempts to remediate educational and social problems at a later stage (Bertram & Pascal, 2002; Heckman, 2006b; Heckman, Stixrud, & Urzua, 2006). Studies have estimated the economic returns for every dollar spent on ECE as: \$13 (Lynch, 2004), \$1.5–\$1.7 (Heckman, 2006b), \$17 (Schweinhart et al., 2005) and \$1.7 –\$17.07 (Karoly, Kilburn, & Cannon, 2005).

2.13 Benefits of ECE

Empirical research shows ECE benefits mostly children, parents and families, and society (Barnett, 2008; Bredenkamp, 2011; Burger, 2010; Darragh, 2010; Essa, 2007; Hebbeler & Spiker, 2011; OECD, 2015; Penn, 2010; Reynolds, Temple, & Ou, 2010; Schweinhart et al., 2005; Slyva et al., 2010; Temple & Reynolds, 2007). Immediate cognitive and social developmental gains, and long-lasting learning and educational attainment, and social outcomes are identified in the research literature for children participating in ECE programs. Strong evidence from an analysis of longitudinal studies in nine OECD countries shows that both cognitive and social and emotional skills play a significant role in improving economic and social outcomes (OECD, 2015). In this section, empirical studies and reviews are discussed to buttress these outcomes of ECE.

Evidence from the Perry Preschool Project shows ECE benefits children (Schweinhart et al., 2005). The project, designed for 123 African American children (3- and 4-year-olds) of families with low socioeconomic status, was characterised by:

1. a well-defined program providing at least 12.5 hours classes each week for children;
2. daily schedule emphasising language and literacy, social relations, music or maths;
3. developmentally appropriate practices; child-initiated learning activities in small and large groups to foster relationships between teachers and children;
4. a small class size, that is, child-staff ratio of less than 10 children per adult;
5. highly trained staff with bachelor degrees and certification in ECE and, as well, consistent staff supervision, coaching and ongoing training;
6. home visitation to promote parental involvement in implementing curriculum.

Evaluation of the Perry Preschool program by Schweinhart et al. (2005) using randomised controlled trials showed that children who participated in ECE at age 4 years had a higher rate of high school graduation, and reduced delinquency and crime involvement. The program participants were significantly more likely to obtain higher education, employment and wage earnings, own their homes, and were less welfare dependent and had had few arrests. Thus, effective ECE promotes positive education and economic outcomes for children and society.

The Abecedarian Early Childhood Intervention Project that studied the effects of ECE on low-income children in North Carolina (Campbell et al., 2008) also reported educational, social and economic benefits. The program, a full-time provision for children aged from 6 weeks to 8 years from 111 disadvantaged families, had a low teacher-child ratio, intensive in-service training for teachers, low teacher turnover, and a holistic curriculum. Results revealed that children had positive reading and mathematics achievement throughout elementary and high school, coupled with less grade retention and special education placement, and as well, high college attendance and skilled jobs. Returns from original investment in education, social welfare and socioeconomic benefits increased due to decreased public expenditures for income, remedial/special education, and health benefits (Campbell et al., 2008). ECE thus enhances the development of children from parents with low income and educational status.

Evaluation of the Chicago Child-Parent Centres (CPC), a large-scale longitudinal study involving over 1,500 children (Temple & Reynolds, 2007) revealed positive effects

of ECE on children's learning and social development, similar to conclusions from the Perry Preschool and Abecedarian Projects. The CPC program, a half-day provision for children aged 3 years and above, included health and nutrition services, parental involvement and support, small teacher-child ratios, trained teachers and a structured approach to children's cognitive and social development. Results depicted that children who participated in the CPC had higher achievements in mathematics and reading, better social adjustment, reduced grade retention, lower dropout rates and juvenile arrests (Temple & Reynolds, 2007).

Burger (2010) conducted a systematic empirical review of 32 studies (23 key ECE projects) from Europe (8), USA (11), Asia (1), Great Britain and Canada (3 birth cohorts), and evidence showed that ECE participation benefits children, parents and society. The review assessed the effects of ECE programs on cognitive development, and the capacities of such programs to minimise social inequalities among children from different backgrounds. The review framework consisted of: (1) selected studies in databases, books and non-refereed publications from major educational authorities and research institutes; (2) 13 criterion, including programs with centre-based approaches, control groups and outcome measures of children's cognitive development; and (3) summarised evidence of effectiveness. The program start, intensity and duration were considered, and the selected studies were quasi-experimental, with the objective of promoting children's cognitive and social development. The programs were mainly centre-based and child-focused with half- or full-day provisions, including parent support and involvement, and trained teachers.

Evidence affirmed that ECE programs for children: (1) fostered positive cognitive outcomes or educational attainment in (pre)reading, writing, language and mathematics; (2) reduced the need for special education; (3) minimised grade retention; and (4) enhanced school graduation and better school attendance. Further, ECE programs provided differential compensatory effects for children. While both advantaged and disadvantaged children benefitted equally from ECE programs, socioeconomic disadvantaged children were found to attain larger or slightly higher gains since they usually lag behind in their development compared to more privileged children. It was revealed that quality early childhood experience gives children a favourable start at school, providing persistent significant short-term and moderate long-term effects on cognitive development, and can compensate early social inequalities. Since ECE endows children with cognitive capacities and prevents adverse development, Burger (2010) concluded that ECE programs should be provided in a real-world setting, adopting

broader approaches and policies for both socio-economically disadvantaged and privileged children than be limited to only model interventions.

Key findings from the Effective Pre-school and Primary Education (EPPE) study of children aged 3–5 years (preschool) in 141 preschool centres and 5–7 years (Key Stage 1) in the United Kingdom, by Sammons (2010), also revealed that ECE: (1) enhances all-round development in children; (2) promotes significant better intellectual development by the start of primary school, especially for language outcomes; (3) provides similar gains for children in full- or part-time provision; (4) significantly benefits disadvantaged children who have good quality preschool experiences with a mixture of children from different backgrounds; and (5) presents lasting effects on children's outcomes, evident throughout the primary school years. Specifically, ECE participation enhanced three social behavioural outcomes for children: peer sociability; cooperation and conformity, and independence and concentration (Sammons, 2010). The effects are strongest for peer sociability. Thus, mixing with other children in preschool promotes young children's social skills and abilities to interact positively with other children. The independence and concentration of children improved, which are linked to their learning behaviours and cognitive outcomes, while children's abilities to follow classroom procedures were enhanced through cooperation and conformity. Further, cognitive attainment increased largely for children's language development, followed by early number concepts and prereading skills. Such gains resulted in higher reading and mathematics attainment in primary school. Sammons (2010) noted that high-quality ECE programs combined with longer duration promoted better intellectual and social/behavioural development for all children, and that a quality early home learning environment is more important than parental education or income.

Overall, the research evidence indicates that all groups of children, especially children from lower-income families, derived significant but different short- and long-term benefits from ECE. It also reflects that ECE programs can give children a fair chance to achieve their potential and contribute meaningfully to their families and society. The research evidence makes a compelling argument for quality ECE programs for all children.

2.14 Quality ECE Programs

As noted, a critique of IE identified the core issue as the quality of provision and practice, not the principles or philosophy. Research has similarly emphasised the need for quality

ECE programs for all children (Barnett, 2008; Bredekamp, 2011; Burger, 2010; Darragh, 2010; Essa, 2007; Reynolds, 2010; Sammons, 2010; Slyva, Melhuish, Sammons, Siraj-Blatchford, & Taggart, 2011). ECE programs must have certain key characteristics to be beneficial for all children, parents and families and society, but as Slyva (2010) argues, quality experiences vary and remain contested, and are usually dependent on value judgements.

Quality ECE or well-designed programs are characterised by highly trained teachers or staff, small child-adult ratios, positive child-adult interactions, appropriate learning experiences, and parent involvement and support (Bredekamp, 2011; Burger, 2010; Essa, 2007; Schweinhart et al., 2005; Temple & Reynolds, 2007). These quality measures define structural and process elements of ECE settings, which influence children's learning and social-behavioural outcomes (Sammons, 2010; Slyva, 2010). The process quality includes pedagogical practices and adult-child interactions, while structural quality relates to staff-qualification and turnover, among others.

Quality ECE programs can be half- or full-day provisions offered in different settings for children of different ages and social backgrounds, yielding higher short- and long-term benefits for participating children (Barnett, 2008; Bredekamp, 2011; Burger, 2010; Essa, 2007; Sammons, 2010). For Essa (2007), high-quality programs make a long-term difference that carries into adulthood; good ECE programs not only improve the lives of children and families involved but also substantially benefit society. Such programs can be effective interventions that reduce the risk of special educational needs (Sammons, 2010).

Quality ECE programs are well implemented, comprehensive and intensive (Hebbeler & Spiker, 2011). It means low-quality or under-resourced programs are less comprehensive or beneficial, and can be more costly. Importantly, a review of the research shows that special populations of families—for example, children of low-income families and disadvantaged children (with disability) or at-risk—are found to attain significant benefits from quality ECE programs (Barnett, 2008; Bredekamp, 2011; Burger, 2010; Darragh, 2010; Essa, 2007; Reynolds et al., 2010; Schweinhart et al., 2005). Long-term academic, social and occupational achievement, particularly for children from low-income families, is associated with quality programs (Darragh, 2010; Schweinhart et al., 2005). Quality programs are important not only for policy, but for all children, and the day-to-day practices of ECE settings. Hence, quality ECE programs must be provided

to enrich the cognitive and social development of all children, especially children with disadvantages and vulnerabilities (disability).

The next section examines Ghana's Early Childhood Care Development (ECCD) policy—development, provision and practice.

2.15 ECE Context in Ghana: Policy, Provision and Practice

Traditionally, the care and education of children has been the responsibility of parents and families in Ghana, but demands for different forms of education have been created by Ghana's membership of the global community. Developing in the context of industrialisation, urbanisation and democratisation, formal care and education of children in Ghana dates back to the 19th century or the missionary era (Morrison, 2001). Attempts to introduce ECCD policy to direct provision and practice began over half a century ago when Ghana's first president recognised the importance of early childhood and youth for building a strong independent nation (Dillard, 2009). ECCD policy and practice are a derivative of global conventions and mandates to education that Ghana has signed, and its national legislation.

As previously noted, the major conventions, including the UDHR (1948) and CRC (1989) (Article 23 & 28) stress the right of all children to education from an early age. Significantly, Ghana was the first country to ratify the CRC. The 1990 World Conference on EFA stated its first target goal as “expansion and improvement of early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children” (UNESCO, 2000, p. 8), while the MDG (UN, 2000), especially MDG1 (Eradication of extreme poverty and hunger), MDG2 (Achieving universal primary education), and MDG4 (Reduction of child mortality) focused on care, education and opportunity for young children. The EFA Global Monitoring Report (UNESCO, 2006) devoted solely to ECE and the Moscow Framework for Action and Cooperation (UNESCO, 2010) are also instrumental to Ghana's ECCD policy development, provision and practice.

At the national level, key legislation that mandates ECCD includes the 1961 Education Act, the 1992 Constitution of Ghana, and the 1998 Children's Act (560). The 1961 Education Act declared Basic Education as free and compulsory for all children, and ECE (i.e., preschools) was designated as the responsibility of the MoE, resulting in the attachment of KGs to Primary One classes (Morrison, 2001). As noted earlier, Articles 25(a) and 38(2) of the 1992 Constitution of Ghana recognise [ECCD] education as a basic

right of the child. The state is also to provide equal opportunities and facilities at all educational levels including ECE (Article 38[1]; 25[1]). Further, the 1998 Children's Act (560) enjoins the government to promote the physical, mental and social well-being of every child by providing ECCD. The Children's Act tasks District Assemblies and other decentralised departments to establish day-care centres and other ECCD institutions. Similarly, the Education Act (778) 2008 states that education at the basic level, including ECE, is free and compulsory, and that District Assemblies shall provide necessary infrastructural needs and other facilities for the education of children. The Education Act (778) also makes two years of KG education part of Basic Education, extending Basic Education to 11 years, while the Government of Ghana's (GoG) ESP 2010–2020 also stresses ECCD as a focal area for attaining EFA. Thus, a strong commitment to the need for ECCD is evident in the ratified international conventions, national legislation and policies.

In Ghanaian policy, ECCD is defined as the timely provision of a range of services that promote the survival, growth, development and protection of a young child from birth to age eight years (Government of Ghana [ECCD Policy], 2004). As an integrated approach, the ECCD policy aims to protect the rights and holistic development of the child, and to provide a framework to guide the government and other relevant agencies when investing and implementing effective ECCD programs. While the policy responds to socio-economic and cultural issues of the nation, it is also an opportune investment in young children and a poverty reduction strategy in Ghana.

Prior to 2002, ECE (KG 1 and 2 for children before age 6) was not part of the formal Basic Education system of Ghana (Country Profile Commissioned for the EFA Global Monitoring Report, 2007). Its introduction emanated from recommendations of the 2002 President's Education Reform Review Committee (ERRC) as contained in the policy document: *Meeting the Challenges of Education in the 21st century*. Earlier, the Kwapong (1967) and Dzobo (1973) Committees on Education had recommended implementation of ECE in Ghana. Before 2001, several crèches, day care centres, nurseries and KGs were established by the government, private individuals, faith-based organisations and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to care for and educate children. For instance, the day care centres introduced by the Department of Social Welfare (DSW) enabled working mothers after maternity leave to have a reliable place for the care of their children.

While earlier attempts to mainstream ECCD in the Basic Education system had failed, in August 2004 the GoG approved and launched a national ECCD policy. This followed an initial draft policy, commenced in 1993 and developed in 1995, that resulted from consultations at the national, regional and community levels, culminating in the adoption of the Accra Declaration, a resolution to formulate and implement an ECCD policy. Thus, Ghana's ECCD policy development came into effect over a decade.

In Ghana, ECCD programs are provided in different settings for children of different age groups, and for a range of hours by the DSW, the Ghana Education Service (GES), and private proprietors, faith-based organisations and NGOs. Settings comprise: (1) childcare services at centres or schools, (2) in-home care (caregivers go to homes of children), (3) nanny homes (parents take children to homes of nannies), or (4) after-school home care (provision of after-school care for children until they are picked by their parents or guardians). Care is also provided by relatives or friends, sometimes called kith and kin care, to meet the child-care needs of working families. Centre-, school- or home-based settings mainly provide part-time or full day programs, and involve trained and untrained personnel.

Formal ECCD programs¹⁰ serve four main age categories of children: (1) crèches cater for children under 2 years, (2) day care centres for the age group 2–3 years, (3) nurseries for children aged 3–4 years, and (4) KG for children aged 4–5 years, which is part of the Basic Education system. The age limits, however, are not strictly observed and children of all ages can be found in centre- or school-based ECE settings (Country Profile Commissioned for the EFA Global Monitoring Report, 2007). Government public schools provide 2-year free and compulsory KG education (4–5 years), in accord with the Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education (fCUBE) and Capitation Grant policies, which aim to promote access and participation in ECCD programs, and reduce the financial burden of poor families.

Responsibilities for management of ECCD programs are shared by the MOE and GES, and the Ministry of Employment and Social Welfare, due to the care and welfare and educational needs of children. Hitherto, the mandate of the Ghana National Commission on Children (GNCC) placed the commission in charge of the welfare of all children. When the Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs (MOWAC) was established in 2001, the responsibility for policy making shifted from the GNCC to the

¹⁰ These formal ECCD programs, referred to as ECE settings, will be used in this study.

MOWAC. Although the MOWAC plays a central coordinating role, there has existed a lack of collaboration and coordination of ECCD services, a challenge the policy seeks to overcome. While the DSW monitors registration and maintenance of standards in crèches and day care centres, the GES oversees curriculum development and implementation for children aged 3–5 years (GoG ECCD Policy, 2004).

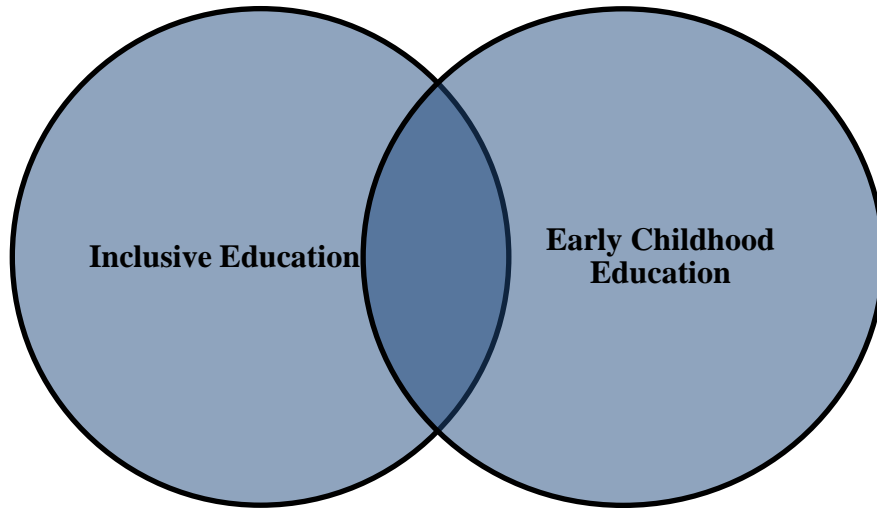


Figure 2.4: Inclusive early childhood education

In summary, there are substantial commitments and policies of practice for ECE/ ECCD, which provide a strong framework within which IECE can be studied in Ghana. As evident in other countries, the role ECE plays reflects not only on children’s level of development but also on the different cultural values, recent changes in society and in family structures that have affected early childhood policy making. Although empirical research studies on the effects of ECE are limited in Ghana, children can derive similar ECE outcomes (Section 2.13). The next section explores the research and policy areas of IECE and the conjoining of IE and ECE, which is the main focus of this study, as shown in Figure 2.4 (deep blue). The specific IECE research and policy literature reviewed in this section are captured in Figure 2.4b.

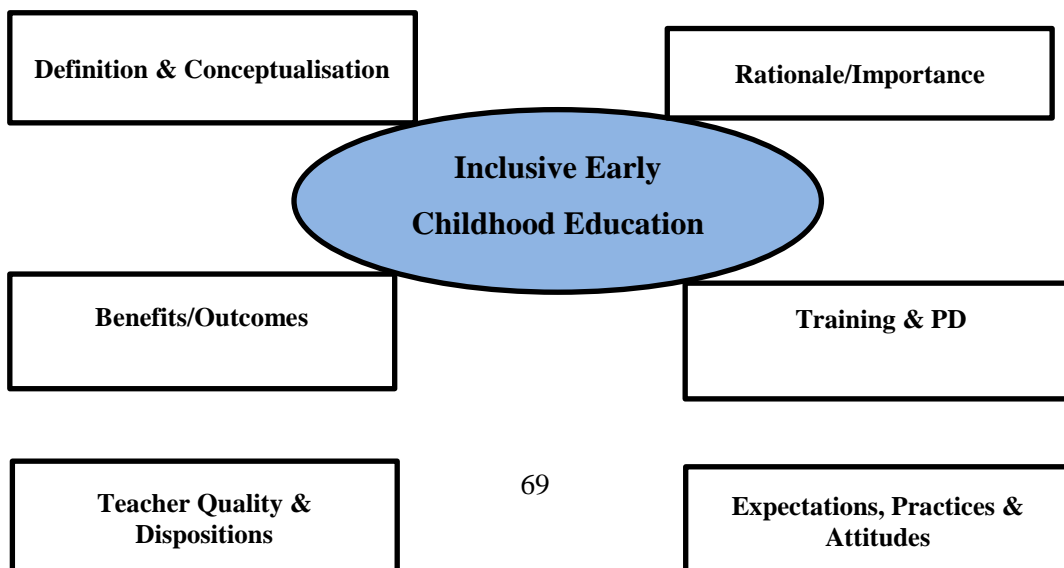


Figure 2.4b: Key inclusive early childhood education research and policy.

2.16 Concepts and Definitions of IECE

Inclusive early childhood education is burgeoning as a common and advocated practice in today's ECE settings (Cologon, 2014; Odom et al., 2011; Simpson & Warner, 2010; Winter, 2007). Different definitions capture the process and practice of IECE (Deiner, 2010; Odom et al., 2011; Simpson & Warner, 2010; van Kraayenoord, 2007), which are predicated on historical and socio-political contexts and vestiges, and the early childhood professional's allegiance (Winter, 2007).

Inclusive early childhood education is the right to equal educational and social experiences for all children with and without disability aged 0–8 years in the same ECE settings (DEC/NAEYC, 2009; Moore, 2009; Smith et al., 2012; Winter, 2007). As a philosophical and practical approach, IECE means children with varying needs and abilities are educated in the same environment (Darragh, 2010). Cologon (2014), Moore (2009) and Underwood (2013) stress the active participation¹¹ of all children in the same IECE programs and community settings, with engagement and participation in the same program activities and routines as their typically developing peers (Chandler et al., 2011; Grisham-Brown et al., 2005).

Inclusive early childhood education is also defined as community, and not as a set of strategies (Allen & Cowdery, 2012), which is based on positive membership, social relationships and friendships, and play (Booth et al., 2006; DEC/NAEYC, 2009; Gibson & Haynes, 2009; Odom et al., 2011). It is therefore an essential commitment to and preservation of all children's right to learning, playing and developing together in inclusive settings (Winter, 2007).

¹¹ Participation in all aspects of school: cultures (values and expectations), curricula (learning and social experiences) and communities (sets of relationships)

2.17 Rationale for IECE

Not surprisingly, human rights, brain development and learning, social equity, ethical factors and cost-effectiveness form the principal arguments for IECE (Allen & Cowdery, 2012; Cologon, 2014; Darragh, 2010; Deiner, 2010; McCain et al., 2007; Moore, 2009; Peters, 2007a; Simpson & Warner, 2010; Smith et al., 2012; Winter, 2007). These are strong arguments as they draw on evidence from both IE and ECE, and are discussed in this section.

2.17.1 Children's/Human Rights

The child's right is the pivotal argument for IECE practice (Cologon, 2014; DEC/NAEYC, 2009; Moore, 2009; Smith et al., 2012; Winter, 2007). The fundamental right to a full life and education of children with disability and typically developing peers is experienced in inclusive early childhood settings, not in segregated settings, which are inherently unequal (Deiner, 2010; Heward, 2013; Moore, 2009). As noted, the UDHR (1948) and Article 23 of the CRC (1989) endorse the right to education for all children and provision of special care and support for the education and development of the child with a disability. Most specifically, the same 2006 CRPD gives recognition to a child's right to IECE. Article 7 stipulates:

States Parties shall take *all necessary measures* to ensure the full enjoyment by *children with disabilities of all human rights and freedoms ... on equitable basis with other children*, which is in *the best interests of all children*. (CRPD, 2006, emphasis added)

Article 24 of the 2006 CRPD directs IE at the ECE level. Article 24(1) advocates that:

States Parties recognise the right of children with disabilities to *an inclusive education system at the early childhood education level, devoid of discrimination, and provided on equal opportunity as a vehicle to realising this right*. *An inclusive [early childhood education] system* is effective to develop the full human potential and personality, sense of dignity and promote social participation. (CRPD, 2006, emphasis added)

2.17.2 Brain Development and Learning

Brain development and early learning are important for all children. As noted, neuroscience, developmental neurobiology, neurodevelopment and other brain research indicate that the ages from birth to 5 years are critical for brain development of all

children, including children with disability (McCain et al., 2007; Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000; Wardle, 2003). The pace of brain development for children with disability is dependent also on the same early stimulation or experiences provided by the environment for children without disability (Bowen et al., 2012; McCain et al., 2007). Similarly, IECE can provide stimulating environments (Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000; Winter, 2007) to address the impact of early negative experiences on all children's brain development.

Inclusive early childhood education ensures that all children acquire early learning skills that foster future learning and relationships (Driscoll & Nagel, 2005). Through IECE programs, all children have opportunities for play, hands-on exploration and learning in ECE settings. Such programs not only enhance children's ability to learn, but also to work with others, be patient and develop other skills, which are foundational for learning and social interactions in the school and beyond (Evans et al., 2000; Heckman, 2000). Thus, IECE programs provide stimulating environments and experiences for brain development and function (Gallagher, 2005; Wardle, 2003), and early learning for all children with and without disability.

2.17.3 Social Equity and Reducing Early Disadvantages

Inclusive early childhood education is advocated as the centrepiece for attaining social equity (Darragh, 2010). In this case, IECE accords all children access and opportunity to benefit from typical settings and experiences. Young children with disability need the same early enriching and stimulating experiences (Allen & Cowdery, 2012; Bowen et al., 2012; McCain et al., 2007) as their typically developing peers for brain development and function (Gallagher, 2005). Through IECE, children with disability gain access to the general early childhood curriculum, typically developing peers, and more of the typical activities available to other children (Hebbeler & Spiker, 2011). Further, all children are provided equal opportunity to participate in the same curriculum, assessment and teaching practices and materials, and to achieve and succeed within the same nurturing and supportive environments (Darragh, 2010). Such opportunities reduce early disadvantages and, as discussed later, are identified as cost effective (Darragh, 2010; Heckman, 2006a).

2.17.4 Ethical/Moral Perspective

Inclusive early childhood education is justified as a strong ethical imperative to educate all children (Darragh, 2010). Developing inclusive, equitable ECE that embraces the strengths and learning requirements of each child, including a child with a disability (Darragh, 2010; Deiner, 2010; Winter, 2007), is ethically justified and righteous

(Hodkinson & Vickerman, 2009; Simpson & Warner, 2010). Children with disability are first and foremost children, like other children in ECE settings (Darragh, 2010). IECE ensures that children with disability participate, learn and thrive together with other children who have variety of abilities, interests and cultural backgrounds (DEC/NAEYC, 2009; Sapon-Shevin, 2007). Hence, it is unethical to separate children with disability from inclusive settings that have natural experiences for enhancing learning, playing and developing together for all children. IECE is the morally right thing to do (Precey & Mazurkiewicz, 2013).

2.17.5 Economic Justification

Combining the arguments for IE and ECE, IECE is also argued on strong economic premises: human capital development and labour market participation (World Health Organization, 2011), early learning, and cost-effectiveness (Peters, 2007a). It expands the platform for developing human resources by providing all children, including children with disability, with early and equitable access, participation and supports (Booth et al., 2006; DEC/NAEYC, 2009). At an early age, all children can be equally equipped with foundational knowledge, skills and learned abilities for future work and life, to secure the continuity, productivity and regeneration of human resources for society (Montgomery, 2003).

In addition, IECE practice enhances children's early learning, and skills acquisition and competencies for future employment, and the productivity and growth of society. As "skills beget skills", early interventions in social and emotional skills can play an important role in efficiently raising skills and reducing educational, labour market and social disparities (OECD, 2015). Learning starts early for all children ILO (2012), and IECE augments future learning, relationships and skills of all children (Driscoll & Nagel, 2005). Employment of individuals creates personal-social benefits (Turnbull et al., 2013). Early and inclusive preparation of today's crude human resources can ensure that many and diverse children become participants of and contributors to future labour markets. Empowering children is thus a strong assumption of international understandings of equitable provision for children with disability (Cumming, 2012). Through IECE, high social and economic costs often associated with exclusion from education and employment opportunities can be overcome (World Health Organization, 2011).

Again, IECE is a more economical entity. It uses existing ECE structures rather than recreating parallel and often duplicating structures (A. C. Armstrong et al., 2010; Peters, 2007b), which maximises learning environments and resources such as teaching materials, additional personnel and differential approaches to teaching (Chandler et al., 2011). For Darragh (2010) and Heckman (2006a), effective ECE programs that are inclusive save substantial dollars from costly interventions. Based on the principle of beneficence, IECE programs that benefit all children, as well as their parents and families, and society (Deiner, 2010; Odom et al., 2011; Salend, 2010) is economically rational.

2.18 Quality IECE

For IECE to be beneficial, several key characteristics of provision have been identified. However, understandings of quality IECE for all children continue to evolve (Odom et al., 2011). Engagement with programs should be meaningful, and participation should be active for all children in the same program activities and routines (Chandler et al., 2011; Cologon, 2014; Grisham-Brown et al., 2005; Underwood, 2013). A critical feature of IECE is planned participation (Guralnick, 2001). According to Cologon (2014, p. 98) such “participation and belonging facilitate further opportunity”. Quality IECE thus entails community (Allen & Cowdery, 2012), where all children are embraced and supported appropriately (Darragh, 2010; Underwood, 2013). Hence, key to quality IECE is the provision of necessary supports and services for all children, as well as teachers (Grisham-Brown et al., 2005; Peterson & Hittie, 2010; Simpson & Warner, 2010).

Further to the understanding of, and a means of providing a shared definition of IECE, the Division for Early Childhood (DEC) and the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), in their joint position statement observed:

Early childhood inclusion embodies the values, policies, and practices that support the right of every infant and young child and his or her family, regardless of ability, to participate in a broad range of activities and contexts as full members of families, communities, and society. The desired results of inclusive experiences for children with and without disabilities and their families include a sense of belonging and membership, positive social relationships and friendships, and development and learning to reach their full potential. (DEC/NAEYC, 2009, p. 2)

The DEC/NAEYC’s (2009) comprehensive and goal-oriented definition articulates three key features: access, participation, and support, which provides a

framework for quality IECE implementation. *Access* means provision of broad range of learning opportunities by applying the principles and practices of universal design (UD); for instance, removal of physical and structural barriers to all children's activities and experiences in inclusive early childhood settings (Chandler et al., 2011; DEC/NAEYC, 2009). As a concept that originated from architecture, UD signifies the design and construction of barrier-free physical environments. Access also involves a universal design for learning (UDL), which is a proactive approach based on differentiation, rather than a one-size-fits-all approach (Chandler et al., 2011; Deiner, 2010; Tomlinson, 2014), and uses multiple means of representation, engagement and expression to ensure that all children have quality inclusive ECE (Darragh, 2010; Tomlinson, 2014). Access to the same learning environment, including the physical setting, ensures that all children benefit from general education curricula, materials, activities and routines, teacher-led instruction and experiences, and interactions with peers and adults (DEC/NAEYC, 2009). Adapting the curriculum means differentiating instruction (Darragh, 2010; Tomlinson, 2014).

Participation occurs when teachers and adults promote a sense of belonging and engagement for all children in IECE settings through planned implicit and explicit play and learning activities (DEC/NAEYC, 2009). Briefly, participation is facilitated through the use of instructional and intervention approaches. Most children require specialised and individualised instructional strategies and support to actively and meaningfully participate in ECE settings and experiences (Buisse & Hollingsworth, 2009; Grisham-Brown et al., 2005). Intentional teaching, for instance, facilitating positive relationships and socio-emotional development, and other evidenced-based strategies such as scaffolding and peer support, are relevant to effective participation in IECE settings (DEC/NAEYC, 2009).

Mass system-level support is identified as essential to IE in ECE settings. Strong administrative and program support enhances effective IECE (Chandler et al., 2011; DEC/NAEYC, 2009). System-level support includes PD, communication and collaboration opportunities for families, professionals and teachers, and provision of specialised services and therapies, and funding (DEC/NAEYC, 2009). Other key support systems are shared philosophy and vision of inclusion, shared instructional approaches, and strategies for teaching and supporting all children (Lieber et al., 2002).

Booth et al.'s (2006) *Index for Inclusion: Developing Play, Learning and Participation in Early Years and Childcare* offers additional understanding of quality

IECE. The Index of Inclusion is a contextualised resource for developing an inclusive school culture, policy and practice (Ballard, 2013). For Booth et al. (2006, p. 4), IECE means “reducing the barriers to play, learning and participation of all children; inclusive settings becoming more responsive to diversity of children in the locale and teachers, and putting inclusive values into action”. This confirms the need for quality IECE programs to provide appropriate resources for all children and teachers, to increase play, learning and participation opportunities, and to activate inclusive values to create successful practice. Hence, as a starting point, ECE teachers need to be knowledgeable of the philosophies, policies and practices of meaningful child participation and IE. Teachers require understanding of IECE practices that address the needs of all children with and without disability (Grisham-Brown et al., 2005).

2.19 Benefits of IECE: Empirical Evidence

Empirical research indicates IECE provides a range of benefits for children with and without disability, early childhood teachers, childcare providers, parents and families, and society (Deiner, 2010; Grisham-Brown et al., 2005; Guralnick, 2001; Hanline & Correa-Torres, 2012; Killoran et al., 2007; Moore, 2009; Mulvihill, Cotton, & Gyaben, 2004; Odom et al., 2011; Salend, 2005, 2010; Simpson & Warner, 2010; Smith et al., 2012; Winter, 2007).

2.19.1 Benefits to Children with Disability: Academic and Social Outcomes

Research and reviews of literature have identified a range of learning and social outcomes that children with disability have attained in IECE (Allen & Cowdery, 2012; Guralnick, 2001; Hanline & Correa-Torres, 2012; Moore, 2009; Mulvihill et al., 2004; Odom et al., 2011; Salend, 2010; Simpson & Warner, 2010; Smith et al., 2012; Wolery & Odom, 2000). The consensus, however, is that such benefits are realised through provision of appropriate experiences for children with disability in IECE settings (Hanline & Correa-Torres, 2012; McLeskey et al., 2013) and purposeful and careful support systems (Moore, 2009). In this sense, for IECE to be beneficial, there must be greater variety of nurturing, stimulating and responsive experiences (Allen & Cowdery, 2012; Wolery & Odom, 2000) and support systems for all children (Chandler et al., 2011; DEC/NAEYC, 2009; Lieber et al., 2002; Moore, 2009).

Drawing on research, Deiner (2010) and McLeskey et al. (2013) state that IECE environments provide opportunities for children with disability to learn and grow academically. Young children with disability, for instance, benefit from ready access to,

and participation in, the early childhood curriculum through appropriate adaptations and support (Chandler et al., 2011; Deiner, 2010; Grisham-Brown et al., 2005; McLeskey et al., 2013; Moore, 2009; Winter, 2007). Shapiro (1999) found that children with disability spend more time engaged in learning in inclusive settings than in segregated settings, while Simpson and Warner (2010) stated that such children mostly learn through peer interaction experiences, and idea exchanges and activities with typically developing peers.

Research summaries have further identified sociological benefits that children with disability attained from inclusive settings and community contexts (Hanline & Correa-Torres, 2012; Moore, 2009; Simpson & Warner, 2010). Writing on positive outcomes, Simpson and Warner (2010) noted that children with disability benefitted from IECE in a variety of ways, including: (1) modest improvements in socialisation skills when they are educated with typically developing peers; (2) increased likelihood to observe and learn meaningful ways of interacting with peers, other people or toys; and (3) development of social competence through observation of appropriate modelling and engaging in play and other social activities. In inclusive learning environments, children with disability have opportunities for development of appropriate observational, communication and listening skills, or interpersonal skills (Gruenberg & Miller, 2011; Hanline & Correa-Torres, 2012; Simpson & Warner, 2010). The availability of appropriate models of social interactions and opportunities for reciprocity of behaviours, especially from typically developing peers, teachers and other people in IECE settings, can reduce or eliminate social isolation (Simpson & Warner, 2010; Winter, 2007). Other valued outcomes that children with disability derive from IECE include increased class participation, better relationships with peers and adults, outside classroom activities, and greater opportunity for community life (McWilliam, Wolery & Odom, 2001).

Four studies were examined in detail to consider these outcomes of IECE. First, the benefits of IECE are evident in Hanline and Correa-Torres' (2012) qualitative study of social experiences of preschoolers with severe disability in an IECE setting. The study involved three preschool children with severe disability aged between 3 and 5 years, seven preschoolers without disability aged between 4 and 5 years, and eight adults—four paraprofessionals and four certified teachers. While the teachers had Masters or PhD degrees, the paraprofessionals had high school diplomas and had received training to work with children with disability at the preschool in the study. Interviews were

conducted with teachers, paraprofessionals and peers, complemented with observations of children and adults' daily routines.

Analysis of interview and field note transcripts showed that the social experiences of children with severe disability with adults were primarily assistance/help and direction/teaching. The characteristics of the children, and the learning objectives and activities children participated in influenced social experiences, yet results indicated that children with disability who are attention seeking and socially interactive had higher rates of affiliative comments, and higher conversation and interactions with adults. Most children with severe disability also had positive and affectionate physical contacts, although a few had less playful interactions with adults in the inclusive early childhood setting.

In this study, teachers facilitated social interactions for children with disability using play as a means of accomplishing learning goals. The three strategies teachers used most in promoting such interactions were: (1) ensuring children's full participation in activities, (2) modelling appropriate social behaviours, and (3) enlisting peers as helpers. While the behaviours of children with disability influenced social interactions with typically developing peers, in contrast, children with disability who had attention-seeking behaviours had higher peer interactions compared to those without such behaviours in IECE settings. The interactions of children with disability were characterised by playfulness and affection, which provided opportunity for engagement in reciprocal interactions. Typically developing peers did not identify children with disability as friends but, ironically, typically developing peers recognised that peers with disability needed extra assistance in daily activities. This suggests that typically developing peers demonstrate sensitivity and acceptance of peers with disability, but also indicates that friendship is not something that can be easily developed through facilitated social interactions.

In summary, the study indicates that children with disability in the IECE program experience improved affiliative comments, conversation and social interactions with adults, and also playful, affectionate and reciprocal interactions with typically developing children. Despite Hanline and Correa-Torres' (2012) caution against generalisation, and the possible effect of teacher familiarity and personal bias on observed behaviours and interviews, results from this single-site study provide valuable information to understand and foster social experiences of children with disability in IECE settings.

Second, Rafferty, Piscitelli, and Boettcher (2003) examined language development and social competence of 96 preschoolers with disability in community-based inclusive and segregated classes providing services for children aged 0–5 years in a New York State. The inclusive classes comprised 12 to 18 children with 53–75% of students with disability, and one special education teacher and early childhood teacher in each class, while the segregated classes had six children with disability, one special education teacher and one aide. The Preschool Language Scale—3 and the Social Skills Rating System (SSRS)—Teacher Version were administered as pre- and post-tests, whereas the Wechsler Preschool and Primary Scale of Intelligence—Revised was used to categorise 49% and 51% of the children into children with severe and not severe disability respectively.

Results revealed that children with disability in inclusive classes had higher functioning or greater developmental abilities at pretest than peers in segregated classes. Large effect sizes were found for auditory comprehension ($d = .97$), expressive language ($d = .91$) and social skills ($d = 1.18$), but not for problem behaviours ($d = .03$). Using a covariance model, an interaction effect was found between placement type (inclusive vs. segregated) and severity of disability (severe vs. not severe). Though the placement type had no differential impact on children with no severe disability in language ability or social competence, children with severe disability in inclusive classes achieved greater gains in language development (auditory comprehension, $d = .81$; expressive language, $d = .84$; and social skills, $d = .94$) than peers in segregated classes. Children with disability in segregated classes had fewer problem behaviours than in inclusive classes, but the homogeneous ethnic and socioeconomic status of the preschool settings may affect generalisation to other urban and rural settings.

Inclusive early childhood education settings are argued to increase opportunities for children with disability to develop friendships with peers without disabilities (Buysse, Goldman, & Skinner, 2002; DEC/NAEYC, 2009; Moore, 2009). Friendships are major developmental tasks of early childhood that predict later outcomes (Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000). Buysse et al. (2002) examined the effect of program settings on friendship formation of 333 preschool children (120 children with disability and 213 typically developing children) aged from 19 to 77 months in North Carolina. The children were enrolled in inclusive child-care or inclusive specialised programs operating on a full-day basis, and the children's disabilities included health impairment, deafness, ASD and mental retardation. Four measures—The Playmates and Friends Questionnaire for

Teachers (Goldman, Buysse & Carr, 1997), Teacher Ratings of Children's Social Development (Profilet & Ladd, 1994), ABILITIES Index (Simeonsson & Bailey, 1988) and Benefits and Drawbacks of Early Childhood Inclusion Rating Scale—were used to collect data from 25 general early childhood teachers in nine inclusive child-care centres and 20 early childhood special educators in nine inclusive specialised programs.

Three general linear mixed models were estimated to predict the number of reported friends, playmates and overall ratings of social development. Results revealed that the number of friendships for both children with disability and typically developing children in inclusive child care settings was comparable. Typically developing children in inclusive specialised settings, however, had more friends than children with disability. The severity of a child's disability did predict the number of playmates and social development scores. In addition, children with disability in inclusive child-care settings had more available playmates and were more likely to have friendships with typically developing children, “who are more attuned to interacting with their peers” (Buysse et al., 2002, p. 513).

In an earlier study, Holahan and Costenbader (2000) found further social benefits of IECE for children with disability. The study examined the developmental and social growth of 15 pairs of preschool children with disability aged from 3 to 5 years ($N = 30$) enrolled in two centre-based programs (inclusive and self-contained) in two cities in a rural county in western New York state. About 50% of the children enrolled in the inclusive classroom were typically developing, while children in the self-contained settings had disabilities, and the settings operated either as a half- or full-day schedule. Each classroom had a Master's level certified special education teacher, assisted by one teacher assistant and teacher aide, while some inclusive classrooms had a general ECE teacher. Most children enrolled at the centres received related services such as speech and language therapy, occupational and play therapy.

Using a pre–post design, the effect of inclusion was assessed on three domains: self-help skills, general knowledge/comprehension, and social and emotional development of the Brigance Diagnostic Inventory of Early Development—Revised (Brigance, 1991). A two-way ANOVA found no statistically significant effects of both inclusive and self-contained settings on self-help skills, general knowledge and comprehension, but children with less severe disability (higher level of functioning) in inclusive settings had higher socio-emotional development compared to children in self-

contained settings (Holahan & Costenbader, 2000). This was attributed to the presence of more peers and adults in the inclusive setting than the self-contained setting.

In summary, the research reviews and studies indicate that IECE is a beneficial practice, having positive academic or learning and social outcomes for children with disability, although there are some obvious negative outcomes.

2.19.2 Benefits to Children without Disability: Academic and Social Outcomes

Studies also show that typically developing peers benefit from social interactions in IECE settings (Boutot & Bryant, 2005; Hanline & Correa-Torres, 2012; Odom et al., 2011; Simpson & Warner, 2010; Smith et al., 2012). In a study, Hanline and Correa-Torres (2012) found that children without disability developed realistic understanding, tolerance and appreciation and sensitivity towards peers with disability in IECE settings, and also provided assistance to peers with disability in their daily activities. Similarly, at an early age, typically developing peers learn to appreciate similarities and differences between people (Wolery & Odom, 2000), develop greater understanding of disability, and increase sensitivity to individual differences (Odom et al., 2004). Most caregivers stated that IECE settings enable typically developing children to develop a strong sense of their strengths, while also recognising the abilities of peers with disability or diversity in their classes (Simpson & Warner, 2010).

Research has also shown that social interactions of typically developing children improve and are not disrupted in inclusive settings when they participate in social groups with children with disability. Such social interactions afford typically developing peers the opportunity to establish new and diverse friendships in IECE settings (Buysse et al., 2002; Idol, 2006; Odom et al., 2011; Simpson & Warner, 2010).

Generally, IECE settings offer all children opportunities for peer tutoring (Allen & Cowdery, 2012). This fosters multiple practice and assistance in the teaching and learning process for all peers. As understanding and tolerance of children with and without disability grows, all children in IECE settings can learn strategies for interacting with their peers—a valuable lifelong skill (Deiner, 2010). For Guralnick (2001), children enrolled in IECE programs are more likely to be enrolled in inclusive primary schools and beyond. Further, ECE settings where teachers use inclusive practices, which are effective teaching strategies, offer good learning environments for all young children (Winter, 2007). Because IECE benefits all children, it is best to commence this approach

in early childhood (Smith et al., 2012), and teachers must give considerable attention to all children in ECE settings.

2.19.3 Benefits to Teachers

Early childhood education teachers face challenges as educators of young children in today's inclusive settings. Despite teachers' concerns (Ackah Jnr, 2010a; Deiner, 2013; Leatherman, 2007; Simpson & Warner, 2010), IECE can benefit teachers through implementation and practice (Ackah Jnr, 2010a, 2010b; Salend, 2010). Research shows that ECE teachers generally express positive views or attitudes towards IECE (Idol, 2006; Leatherman, 2007; Leatherman & Niemeyer, 2005; Obeng, 2012; Purdue, Ballard, & MacArthur, 2001). In a narrative study of eight ECE teachers from three different ECE programs—a university, community-based and state public pre-kindergarten classroom—Leatherman (2007) found that teachers had positive feelings and experiences about IECE practice, and noted also that inclusive settings were great places for teachers as well as children.

Teachers, whether regular or special, have also witnessed improvement in their professional knowledge and expertise from their involvement in IECE (Winter, 2007). Research literature affirms that ECE teachers are exposed to and equipped with new knowledge, values, attitudes and skills to discharge their teaching responsibilities when implementing IECE (Gruenberg & Miller, 2011). Sapon-Shevin (2007, p. 23) noted that teachers in inclusive settings reported that having children with a more significant “difference” in the class forces an interrogation of many kinds of diversity and important discussions about how to respond to differences.

In addition, IECE teaching heightens collaboration and communication among early childhood teachers and other staff in ECE settings (Moore, 2009). Collaboration is a mark of, and necessity for, successful IECE (McLeskey et al., 2013; Salend, 2010; Smith et al., 2012; Winter, 2007; Wolery & Odom, 2000). The complexity of IECE settings requires innovative and collaborative approaches to teaching (Winter, 2007). Through collaborative supports and communication, ECE teachers acquire variety and additional professional knowledge relevant for effective IECE practice (Friend & Bursuck, 2006; Gruenberg & Miller, 2011; Moore, 2009; Salend, 2010; Winter, 2007).

Through the sharing and exchange of knowledge and expertise, quality inclusive practice is also enhanced, improving teaching competencies in IECE settings (Deiner, 2013; Salend, 2010; Winter, 2007). For instance, ECE teachers become competent in

early childhood curricula modification, instruction, and assessment through continuous exposure and acquisition of knowledge and skills (Simpson & Warner, 2010). This helps teachers to develop moderating expectations for all children. In these instances, ECE teachers develop a stronger sense of empowerment for teaching children in IECE settings. As such, Deiner (2010) stated the most powerful crossovers in IECE are that all educators share knowledge about the uniqueness of *all* children, and the need to individualise instruction. This helps teachers to implement effective practices and supports that facilitate IECE.

Through combined knowledge, expertise and resources, ECE teachers are able to maximise the social and academic benefits of IECE for all children (Moore, 2009). In this instance, ECE teachers come to the realisation that they are teachers of all children, despite disability. Such teachers, called effective teachers (McLeskey et al., 2013; Winter, 2007), will go the extra mile to employ a variety of appropriate teaching practices and support systems to ensure the success of all children in IECE settings. Thus, for effective teachers, the success or failure of each child is a corporate responsibility.

In IECE settings, ECE teachers have also developed positive dispositions towards all children, especially children with disability, through self-awareness and appreciation of human diversity (McLeskey et al., 2013; Salend, 2010; Smith et al., 2012) and derived satisfaction working with children with ASD (Finke, McNaughton, & Drager, 2009). Such teachers also reported that they effective in their roles for all students. Acknowledging that inclusive teaching is a positive experience for teachers and an avenue for learning and socialisation is a prime step towards successful IECE as teachers make inclusion happen (Ackah Jnr, 2010b).

2.19.4 Benefits to Parents and Families

Parents and families also benefit from IECE (Moore, 2009; Mulvihill et al., 2004; Peck et al., 2004; Rafferty & Griffin, 2005; Salend, 2010; Simpson & Warner, 2010). Though parents express differing concerns, reviews of the research literature show that their attitudes and experiences of IECE are generally positive (Moore, 2009; Rafferty & Griffin, 2005). In particular, parents of children with disability hold more positive attitudes, and strongly support IECE (Heward, 2013; Rafferty & Griffin, 2005; Salend, 2010). Rafferty and Griffin (2005) noted that parents of children with disability favour the increased social contacts inclusive settings provide for children with disability and typically developing peers.

Research shows that IECE settings provide many learning opportunities for parents and families (Simpson & Warner, 2010; Wolery & Odom, 2000). In a review of research, Mulvihill et al. (2004) found that parents and families of children with disability learn about typical child development through wider exposure to IECE settings, and they also have opportunities to form meaningful relationships with parents and families of typically developing children. In a study, Wolery and Odom (2000) similarly observed that all families have opportunities to learn that their children's behaviours are typical of most children, with families gaining a broader and new perspective of their children's abilities and needs in IECE settings. Wolery and Odom's study involved 16 inclusive preschool programs providing education for 112 children with a wide range of disabilities located in urban, suburban and rural communities, including culturally diverse children and adults.

Opportunities where all families learn and relate with each other in IECE settings further enhance community acceptance and development of positive attitudes towards children with disability. Families and parents become supportive of one another, decreasing feelings of isolation and self-doubt, and ultimately promoting feelings of confidence (Mulvihill et al., 2004; Simpson & Warner, 2010). Families of typically developing children also learn at first hand that families of children with disability have similar challenges and similar pleasures of parenting. Realising that all parents face similar challenges can be both comforting and empowering for all parents (West, 2002).

Some parents have also reported positive changes in family life, and increased interactions with families, friends and neighbours, as well as increased self-esteem and fewer behavioural problems, due to their participation and engagement with other parents, teachers and administrators in IECE settings (Simpson & Warner, 2010). Through increased experience of IECE, the perceptions of parents with typically developing children with respect to children with disability in IECE programs have improved (Allen & Cowdery, 2012; Peck et al., 2004).

Further benefits of IECE were found in Rafferty and Griffin's (2005) relatively large-scale study that compared the perspectives of 237 parents (161 parents of children with disabilities and 76 parents of typically developing children) and 118 providers (teachers and related services professionals) about the benefits and risks of inclusion in a North-eastern area of New York state. The study involved a suburban, community-based reverse inclusion preschool program, and data were collected using two scales—the Impact of Inclusion on Children with Disabilities Scale and the Impact of Inclusion on

Typically Developing Children Scale. Mean scores of parent groups and providers on each measure were analysed by ANOVA, while confirmatory factor analyses revealed a two-factor structure, Benefits and Risks, based on each scale scores.

Results showed parents and providers affirmed that IECE was beneficial to preschool children with disability and typically developing children. IECE was not seen to impact negatively on the majority of children, and involvement of staff and parents enhanced development of positive attitudes. However, parents' perceived risks of inclusion for all children (e.g., fright by unusual behaviour and slowing down learning progress) were greater than providers' perceived risks. Parents of children with disability had relatively lower perceived risks of inclusion compared to parents of typically developing children. While parents of typically developing children cited fright by unusual behaviour as the main risk of inclusion, providers disagreed that typically developing children were at risk of having their learning slowed or not receiving their fair share of attention or resources. Although parents had lower global attitudes towards inclusion than providers, both parents and providers were more supportive of inclusion for children with mild and moderate disability than children with severe disability (Rafferty & Griffin, 2005). This study suggests that parents and providers prefer IECE for children with mild–moderate disabilities to children with severe disabilities. In sum, IECE benefits parents of children with and without disability, shaping their contributions towards its implementation.

In summary, the research shows that IECE provides short-term benefits for children with and without disability, teachers and parents. The broader rationales framing IECE indicate that the short-term benefits should transfer to long-term benefits for all children, teachers, families and society. Thus, IECE becomes a rational and beneficial practice for the larger society. Considering the rationale for and benefits of IECE, which are complemented by arguments for both IE and ECE, it can be concluded that IECE is undoubtedly an important goal of a 21st century education program at the systemic and policy level. The research also identifies critical factors for quality implementation of IECE, the issues confronting practice, and the importance of various characteristics of the players. This study investigates how IECE is being implemented in Ghana. The next section examines IECE policy and research on its practice in Ghana.

2.20 IECE in Ghana: Policy, Provision and Practice

Inclusive early childhood education policies are essential to ensuring equitable access, fundamental rights to life, and quality education for all children (Jones, 2004; Purdue, 2009; Underwood, 2013). As noted earlier, developing IECE that caters for all children with and without disability requires the articulation of a strong policy that is complemented with sound fiscal provision, positive attitudes, support systems, and reimagining teachers in ECE to implement effective and successful practice. According to Jones (2004), IECE policy articulates the philosophy, intention and current practice that makes a difference to the quality of teaching and learning, and reflects aspirations and practices of the whole setting.

Although in most developed countries, specific policies and programs exist to support IECE (Purdue, 2009), in Ghana a “specific or concrete” IECE policy is lacking. Research indicates that both the IE and ECE policies identified in Sections 2.9 and 2.15 serve as strong framework and incentive for IECE practice. Thus, IECE implementation to foster access and EFA children in Ghana is augmented by IE and ECE legislative and policy environment.

As mentioned earlier, the major international conventions and treaties Ghana has ratified, especially the CRC (1989), the Salamanca Statement (1994), the CRPD (2006) and the UNESCO *Moscow Framework for Action and Cooperation* (UNESCO, 2010), support IECE practice. Key legislation and policies mandating and legitimising IECE at the national and school levels in Ghana include:

- Article 25(a) and Article 38(2) of the 1992 Constitution;
- The Children’s Act (560) of 1998 (Section 10);
- The ECCD Policy (2004);
- Special Educational Needs Policy Framework (2005);
- The Disability Act (715) of 2006;
- The Education Act (778) of 2008;
- The Government of Ghana’s ESP 2003–2013 & 2010–2020;
- The Draft IE Policy 2013.

Clearly, there is a strong commitment to IECE at the policy level, and IECE can be seen as a significant focus of current and future education provision in accordance with international conventions that Ghana has ratified, and national legislation and policy. The goals for IECE include both the development of all children, including children with disability, within a framework of their right to a quality education with opportunities

equal to all, with a range of academic, social and emotional outcomes, and the development of a stronger citizenship and economic workforce. Research from other contexts has demonstrated that these benefits can be identified. Further research from other contexts has also identified essential elements of quality IECE to ensure that the perceived benefits will flow, indicating what can be attained in Ghana through implementing IECE. However, there is very limited research on the implementation of IECE in Ghana. No research could be found that examined the implementation of IECE, the outcomes found to accrue to children, teachers, families and the community, and the issues being confronted in its realisation. Research evidence is not available on support systems for IECE in different ECE contexts, and factors such as the preparation and ongoing PD that ECE teachers and centre directors receive. Research about how ECE teachers practise IECE is limited.

Lindsay (2003) and Florian (2008) strongly recommend the need for research on IE to inform policy and practice. While the research identified from other countries informs the rationale and factors that may influence IECE practice in Ghana, it cannot be assumed that the research findings transfer easily to a different culture and educational context. As an example, Agbenyega and Klibthong (2011) report that in Ghana, teachers' pedagogical practices for IECE are influenced by colonial theory and cultural values, such as the non-recognition of children's rights (voice) and the use of punitive measures. This study provides the first empirical research investigating the implementation of IECE. The research question addressed is: *How is inclusive early childhood education being implemented in Ghana?*

2.21 Expectations and Practices for IECE

Expectations for IECE are critical to successful practice for all children in ECE settings. Although high expectations are important, reflective of values and attitudes central to inclusive practice (Kearney, 2011; Winter, 2007), low expectations can cause exclusion. As noted, the *rationale and perceived outcomes* (i.e., benefits; see Sections 2.17 and 2.19), *dimensions of quality* (see Section 2.18) and other necessary *facilitators and support* (see Section 2.24) highlight key expectations for IECE. Basically, all children, including those with disability, are expected to derive academic, social and other developmental outcomes from IECE while also realising their fundamental human rights (see Section 2.19). For instance, parents want their children with disability to gain acceptance, develop friendships and have opportunities to learn and socialise, among

others. Similarly, enhancing access, participation and support are principal expectations of IECE programs (DEC/NAEYC, 2009; Underwood, 2013). Thus, children with and without disability must have primary access, participate and engage in activities and programs, and as well be supported by teachers and others in IECE settings.

As noted, however, attainment of the valued outcomes also requires the existence of critical dimensions of IECE practice (McLeskey et al., 2013). Some of these key expectations for IECE are further discussed in this section.

In particular, good teacher preparation and ongoing professional learning (Kearney, 2011) are major expectations for IECE. Research indicates that successful inclusive practice requires knowledgeable and skilful teachers, with key competencies (Carrington et al., 2013; Gruenberg & Miller, 2011; Kearney, 2011; Sandall et al., 2005; Simpson & Warner, 2010). Importantly, practitioners (teachers and administrators) must learn and acquire information on inclusive practice, and be knowledgeable of changing laws, regulations and policies (Gruenberg & Miller, 2011; Simpson & Warner, 2010). Teacher knowledge of policy and legislation (Kearney, 2011), working concepts of inclusion, effective inclusive strategies (Cook et al., 2008), and the uniqueness of children and their needs (Allen & Cowdery, 2015; Simpson & Warner, 2010) are vital.

The role of positive attitudes (teachers, administrators, parents and other professionals) towards IECE cannot be underestimated (e.g., Ackah, 2010a; Idol, 2006). Successful IECE requires teachers who express positive attitudes towards all children with and without disability (Winter, 2007), since the attitudes of some teachers can be negative (Purdue, 2009). In particular, teachers' professional attitudes serve as major facilitators or constraints to IECE (Ackah Jr, 2010b; Deiner, 2013; Purdue, 2009; Underwood, 2013; Winter, 2007). Teachers' perceptions about the capability of individual children with disability to learn affect IECE (Winter, 2007). Educators' constructions/beliefs about disability as negative or different (Purdue, 2009) pose challenges since such beliefs are linked to the overall beliefs about learning and quality educational practice for children with disability. However, teachers holding positive attitudes that all children can learn, convey high expectations and are attentive and supportive of all children in ECE settings (Purdue, 2009; Winter, 2007). Deiner (2013) notes that while some teachers express concerns about the impact of children with disability on the social and learning environment and children without disability, others have questioned the suitability of inclusion of children with disability, especially those with profound-severe disability, and hence subscribe to segregated placements.

As for teachers, headteachers' and administrators' positive attitudes are strongly advocated for IECE. It is expected that teachers, headteachers and other professionals should give up traditional attitudes, beliefs or perceptions of children with disability. Similarly, the attitudes of headteachers (i.e., principals/administrators), parents and other significant stakeholders have been found to influence IECE (Purdue, 2009). Positive attitudes set the tone for effective inclusive practice (Deiner, 2013; Gruenberg & Miller, 2011; Salend, 2010; Winter, 2007).

Principals' leadership is critical for creating inclusive schools or processes (Billingsley, McLeskey, & Crockett, 2014; Carrington et al., 2013; Gibson & Blandford, 2005; Precey & Mazurkiewicz, 2013; Tsokova & Tarr, 2012). IECE is less likely to succeed without administrative support (McLeskey et al., 2013). Headteachers are therefore expected to develop and articulate clear, shared vision and direction; exhibit effective leadership (Billingsley et al., 2014; Carrington et al., 2013; Gibson & Blandford, 2005; Precey & Mazurkiewicz, 2013). Headteachers are crucial for the generation, distribution and management of resources for effective inclusive practice (Tsokova & Tarr, 2012). As key persons, headteachers should also instigate positive attitudes towards children with disability, greater responsiveness to individual needs and importantly a willingness among all staff to play effective roles for successful inclusive practice (Gibson & Blandford, 2005).

2.22 Teacher Qualities, Dispositions or Characteristics

Many researchers have identified teacher qualities and dispositions as essential for IECE (Allen & Cowdery, 2015; Colker, 2008; Cologon, 2014; McLeskey et al., 2013; Stronge, Tucker, & Hindman, 2004; West & Pirtle, 2014). Effective teacher qualities are comparable to having appropriate pedagogical skills (McLeskey et al., 2013). Teachers with positive dispositions have been found to accept responsibility for teaching all children, while demonstrating caring, fairness and respect (i.e., their humanity and strengths). Teacher who are fair may promote flexibility or provide differential instruction that meet the individual needs of all children (Essa, 2014; McLeskey et al., 2013). Enthusiasm, motivation and dedication are critically important qualities effective teachers demonstrate when educating all children, especially those with disability in ECE settings (McLeskey et al., 2013). Such teachers are interested and invested in their students. In a study, West and Pirtle (2014) reported that parents wanted more affectionate teachers for inclusive practice, as such teachers would like and care for their children with disability

in the inclusive program. As Carrington et al. (2013) and McLeskey et al. (2013) reiterate, caring and loving teachers enhance the learning and participation, or inclusion of children with disability, and are concerned and sensitive to the needs of children with disability (Allen & Cowdery, 2015).

Research shows that passion is an effective quality of good IE teachers (Allen & Cowdery, 2015; DEC/NAEYC, 2009; McLeskey et al., 2013; Stronge et al., 2004). For example, passionate teachers are identified to demonstrate enthusiasm, commitment and dedication and create a responsive learning and social environment for all children (Allen & Cowdery, 2015; Colker, 2008; McLeskey et al., 2013). Research shows that passion is the most important trait that makes a difference in the lives of children (DEC/NAEYC, 2009). Cologon (2014) similarly notes that because IECE has the potential for positive social change, flexible, skilled, confident and competent early years professionals are vital. Additionally, effective teachers collaborate with other professionals to share and receive ideas, and improve inclusive practice by actively seeking and participating in opportunities to learn new teaching strategies, and are also patient (McLeskey et al., 2013). In a qualitative study involving interviews with 43 early childhood practitioners from a wide range of backgrounds (e.g., ethnicity, gender, geographic location, and experience) about their perceptions of personal characteristics of effective early childhood teachers, Colker (2008) identified 12 characteristics integral to effective teaching. These characteristics of teachers, also crucial to IECE of children with disability include (1) passion about children and teaching, (2) perseverance, (3) risk taking, (4) pragmatism, (5) patience, (6) flexibility, (7) respect, (8) creativity, (9) authenticity, (10) love of learning, (11) high energy, and (12) sense of humour. Other researchers similarly identify respect as a key characteristic of teachers that foster inclusive practice (Nutbrown & Clough, 2006; Stronge, 2007; Stronge et al., 2004).

Headteachers of inclusive settings and schools are similarly expected to demonstrate the qualities of warmth and humour, sensitivity, supportiveness, firmness and kindness (Gibson & Blandford, 2005). Carrington and Robinson (2004) found that effective principals create a positive school culture, are problem solvers and positive role models, facilitate ongoing PD of teachers, and focus on instructional issues.

2.22.1 Policy Implementation Expectations

Researchers have also highlighted policy and change implementation expectations, some of which have been discussed in Chapter 1. A key expectation is the involvement in

inclusive policy development (Agbenyega, 2007; Jones, 2004). Involvement in policy development ensures acceptance and accountability, and shared understandings and expectations within and beyond those working with children with and without disability (Jones, 2004). Particularly at the school level, involvement of the staff (i.e., teachers and headteachers) in inclusive policy development is critical since *not all* practitioners can hold consensus on the values, ethos, or indeed IECE (Jones, 2004). Further, policy development and implementation cannot be viewed as a linear process whereby policy emanates from the “top” and is implemented systematically by those at the “bottom”. Because policy embodies essential values, systems, procedures and processes that influence practice, the involvement of teachers and administrators who are the primary implementers is highly necessary (Jones, 2004, p.65). Ultimately, the success of IECE policy depends on the commitment of implementers, which helps in transforming practice (Jones, 2004).

Research has identified shared commitment and responsibility of implementers, especially teachers, headteachers and other staff, at multiple levels as significant for effective IECE (Gruenberg & Miller, 2011; Jones, 2004; McLeskey et al., 2013). Thus, “all staff must be responsible for all children in ECE programs; learn and believe in the possibility of high quality inclusion, and the efficacy or value of inclusive programs” (Gruenberg & Miller, 2011, p. 10). Similarly, commitment from all stakeholders such as parents, education officials and government enhance inclusive practice (Gruenberg & Miller, 2011; Jones, 2004; McLeskey et al., 2013).

Gruenberg and Miller (2011) identified other policy expectations also noted by Lieber et al. (2000) that include strong administrative support, shared vision, advocacy for new ideas, functional teams with healthy communication, as well as national and state policies, are central to initiating and implementing effective inclusive programs (Lieber et al., 2000). In contrast, lack of time, lack of administrative support, and difficulties in establishing cohesive and mutually supportive teams are barriers to inclusive practice.

With respect to policy, Purdue (2009, p. 141) notes that “reviewing policies on inclusion in ECE to reflect the rights of all children to access and participation” is highly necessary. In addition, the development of IECE policies at the international and national levels (e.g., Armstrong et al., 2010; Mitchell, 2010) and school levels are relevant to guide effective practice (Gibson & Blandford, 2005; Jones, 2004; Purdue, 2009). For example, school level IECE policies should capture the inclusive ethos and values of the settings, to foster the school’s commitment to, and acceptance of IECE (Jones, 2004). However,

written documentation reflecting inclusive policies at the school level must be put into practice. Supportive policies enhance inclusive practice (Jones, 2004; Purdue, 2009; NPDCI, 2007).

In a research review, Mulvihill et al. (2004) identified policy implementation expectations (i.e., best practices) that included: written philosophy, written plan for inclusive programs, strong leadership, disability awareness for staff and children, training and support for staff, sufficient staff to meet child and program needs, communication and collaboration, adapted setting, activities and time, collaboration with families, and evaluation plan. The researchers identified these factors as important for “creating and implementing IECE programs of excellence” (p. 54).

In the wider education system, research indicates that central government and education departments are also expected to make certain provisions in the form of necessary resources, including funds, basic infrastructure and other resources for implementing IECE (Carrington et al., 2013; Deiner, 2013; Jones, 2004; Purdue, 2009). As Purdue (2009) found, funding and resourcing constraints resulted in some teachers and ECE centres in the North and South Islands of New Zealand opposing the inclusion of some children with disability. It means IECE may be affected by insufficient government support and resources to schools.

While no specific research was found on expectations for IECE and its practice in Ghana, the legislation and policies supporting IECE provide some indications of such expectations. For example, “children would have special care, education and training to develop their maximum potential and self-reliance”, “establishment of user-friendly schools” and “parent involvement” (ESP 2010-2020; Draft IE Policy 2013). Because Ghana’s inclusive policies and practices are also influenced by international conventions as in other countries, it can be argued from the review that expectations for IECE in Ghana mirrors the rationale and perceived outcomes of IECE, as well as attention to factors such as quality training and PD, positive attitudes, improved school-home partnerships (especially parent involvement), and the active participation of children with and without disability in daily programs and activities in ECE settings.

2.22.2 Inclusive Practices

Teachers play significant roles in the development of effective practices that support inclusive programs for all young children (Gruenberg & Miller, 2011; Winter, 2007). Research shows that inclusive practices must correspond to the diversity of students (i.e.,

including children with disability and SEN) and ensure all students have access; and that teachers should plan, teach and assess their lessons; and are interested and support the participation and learning of all students; while parents and the community are used as a source of support in the classroom (Angelides et al., 2008). Simpson and Warner (2010) identified eight key accommodation and modification approaches noted by Raver (2009) that are essential for enhancing inclusive practice, including environmental support, material adaptations, special equipment, and use of children's preferences and simplification of the activity, adult support, peer support, and invisible support. Similarly, Winter (2007) argues that teachers as facilitators must create a responsive physical and social environment that stimulates learning opportunities for all children. For instance, they must intentionally create peer-peer interactions in inclusive settings. In a study Leatherman and Niemeyer (2005) found that ECE teachers who involved children with and without disability in all aspects of the same classroom activities, which encouraged the development of interactions among the children, and creating an accepting environment. Other IECE practices are further discussed.

Prompts and cues

Research indicates that prompts include approaches such as physical guidance, partial physical guidance, modelling, and verbal directions, as well as questions, reminders, encouragement or visual cues that are provided prior to children's involvement in ECE routines and activities or following responses (Allen & Cowdery, 2015; Chandler et al., 2011; DEC/NAEYC, 2009; Grisham-Brown et al., 2005; Noonan, 2006; Winter, 2007). For Noonan (2006), teachers can effectively use a four-step prompt hierarchy, including verbal, gestural, partial physical and full physical assistance to support children with disability in inclusive settings. Such a prompt hierarchy ranges from least-to-most assistance or vice versa, and are efficient when formulated on an individual basis.

Prompts are an evidence-based, effective and recommended instructional strategy or practice that provides extra or specific assistance or information that supports children's learning and development (Allen & Cowdery, 2015; Chandler et al., 2011; DEC/NAEYC, 2009; Grisham-Brown et al., 2005; Noonan, 2006; Winter, 2007). Teachers' effective use of prompts and cues are useful in assisting all children, especially those with developmental problems or disability to acquire skills, or learn and perform tasks or activities independently (Allen & Cowdery, 2015; Chandler et al., 2011; DEC/NAEYC, 2009; Grisham-Brown et al., 2005; Noonan, 2006; Winter, 2007). While

prompts can be combined to address specific problems of children, or increase instructional effectiveness (Noonan, 2006), teachers must use prompts effectively or as necessary to enhance children's success and independence (Allen & Cowdery, 2015; Chandler et al., 2011). Prompts ultimately foster children's independence. Therefore, teachers must withdraw or fade prompts and cues through a gradual and systematic process of reducing assistance to children when necessary in IECE settings, to prevent dependency (Allen & Cowdery, 2015; Chandler et al., 2011; Noonan, 2006). Hence, fading the intensity of instructional prompts is critical for children to respond to the natural conditions of an inclusive environment (Noonan, 2006). The selective use of prompts must therefore be based on children's individual needs.

Other naturalistic prompting strategies, including incidental teaching or time delay strategies, are effective for all children in ECE settings (Chandler et al., 2011; Noonan, 2006). For example, incidental teaching that involves arranging the environment enables children to self-initiate an activity, which is later complemented with teacher prompts and elaboration to enhance response.

Motivation/encouragement

A variety of extrinsic and intrinsic motivators are used as components of instructional practice in IECE settings (Grisham-Brown et al., 2005; Noonan, 2006; Winter, 2007). Noonan (2006) argues that motivation and encouragement included in instruction enhances children's participation in the learning activities and routines, and arouses their interest and reinforces desired responses. Such motivation entails "using interesting or enticing materials, settings, or situational arrangements" to provide assistance and encouragement before and after the child's desired response (Noonan, 2006, p. 129). Extrinsic motivators such as the use approval or tangible rewards are useful to all children (Grisham-Brown et al., 2005). However, motivation should be selectively used, and a desired response may be reinforced through approximations of the response with shaping strategies (Grisham-Brown et al., 2005; Noonan, 2006).

Group instruction/grouping

Group instruction or grouping is an effective instructional practice for all children, including those with disability. It involves the simultaneous instruction of two or more children which enhances the development of participation skills, peer modelling and turn taking (Grisham-Brown et al., 2005; Noonan, 2006). Teachers use group instruction and grouping also to facilitate the learning of specific skills and to respond to the individual

needs of children (Grisham-Brown et al., 2005; Noonan, 2006). Research shows that the compositions of group instruction may range from small to large groups, and sometimes one-to-one teacher-child interactions, or mixed-ability groups, which are either homogenous or heterogeneous (Essa, 2014; Noonan, 2006). Effective use of group instruction depends on the ages and abilities of children, teacher-child ratios and the activities (Essa, 2014; Grisham-Brown et al., 2005; Noonan, 2006)). The use of group instruction may be challenging; teachers need to plan for the different needs of children within an activity. Hence, reduced or small group sizes or incorporation of the principles of UDL are necessary to enhance the effectiveness of group instruction (Noonan, 2006; Tomlinson, 2014).

Other IECE practices include effective of arrangement of the ECE classroom and environment to enhance children's participation or involvement in daily activities (Essa, 2014; Grisham-Brown et al., 2005; McLeskey et al., 2013; Winter, 2007). Research shows that effective seating can be used to manage children with hearing, attention and other sensory and behaviour problems (Grisham-Brown et al., 2005; McLeskey et al., 2013; Winter, 2007). Arranging the physical environment of inclusive classes effectively is motivating (Smith et al., 2012). As Allen and Cowdery (2015) argue, arranging the inclusive classroom is a way of providing a responsive learning environment that meets the interests and needs of all children. Since teachers create setting differentiation, they must be skilled in arranging seating in inclusive classrooms (Smith et al., 2012). In addition, re-teaching that involves a teacher reinforcing a previously learned skill, providing academic, social and emotional support, and helping students with personal care, is another effective practice that enhances children's learning and participation in daily activities (Allen & Cowdery, 2015).

In summary, expectations highlight valued outcomes and identify roles, responsibilities and characteristics of key stakeholders, training and support requirements, or practices and challenges that must be addressed to foster IECE.

2.23 Training and Professional Development

Teachers are fundamental to quality IECE (Bruns & Mogharreban, 2007; Buysse & Hollingsworth, 2009; Hughes & Valle-Riestra, 2007). Many researchers have identified the essence of effective teacher training/preparation and PD for successful IECE (Ackah Jnr, 2013; Agbenyega & Klibthong, 2014; Buysse & Hollingsworth, 2009; Deiner, 2013; Deku & Ackah Jnr, 2012; Forlin & Chambers, 2011; Frankel, Hutchinson, Burbidge, &

Minnes, 2014; Leatherman & Niemeyer, 2005; Lieber et al., 2002; L. C. Mitchell & Hegde, 2007; Odom et al., 2011; Purdue, 2009; Simpson & Warner, 2010; Soodak et al., 2002; West & Pirtle, 2014; Winter, 2007). Effective training and PD ensures that practitioners (early childhood teachers) acquire significant knowledge, skills and ongoing supports to effectively implement IECE (Odom et al., 2011). According to Smith et al. (2012, p. 42), training and PD are significant in “creating positive attitudes” and “allaying apprehensions and concerns of teachers” in IE settings.

Research has demonstrated that pre-service teacher preparation (before entry to the field) and PD (on-the-job training and support or continuing education) serve as main vehicles for shaping teachers for IECE (Buysse & Hollingsworth, 2009; Winton & McCollum, 2008). Pre-service training is essential for nurturing favourable attitudes and building confidence in teachers, hence the provision of quality training is crucial to inclusive practice. PD thus helps teachers acquire core knowledge, skills and dispositions or improve practice (Buysse & Hollingsworth, 2009).

While quality teacher training and education is significant (Buysse & Hollingsworth, 2009), most research report that teachers lack adequate preparation and experience for inclusive practice (Deiner, 2013; Hughes & Valle-Riestra, 2007; Simpson & Warner, 2010) resulting in feelings of unpreparedness in meeting the needs of children with disability (Deiner, 2013; L. C. Mitchell & Hegde, 2007) or negative attitudes and concerns (Sharma, Forlin, & Loreman, 2008). But disability-related education or education on children with disability enhances development of positive attitudes towards inclusive practice (Sharma et al., 2008). Mulvihill et al. (2004) note that disability awareness training augments staff acceptance of diversity. L. C. Mitchell and Hegde (2007) reported that in-service teachers identified knowledge of disability areas, hands-on training, workshops, program visitations and additional coursework are critical for enhancing early childhood personnel preparation for inclusive classrooms. In contrast, Frankel et al. (2014) reported that pre-service teachers were knowledgeable of children with developmental disabilities and delays including ASD and Down syndrome. The researchers noted that such knowledge base serves as “initial professional capital” for inclusive practice (p.386). Further, the pre-service teachers felt moderately prepared or competent collaborating with other colleagues, parents and health care professionals including occupational therapists and speech and language pathologists (Frankel et al., 2014).

Deiner (2013), L. C. Mitchell and Hegde (2007), and Purdue (2009) observe that some teachers have inadequate knowledge of disability (i.e., specific disabling conditions or challenges) and specific strategies for educating children with disability in ECE settings. Consequently, some parents have expressed concerns about educators' preparedness and competency to effectively care and educate their children with disability in ECE settings (Deiner, 2013). Ongoing training and PD is thus necessary to equip teachers with the requisite skills and knowledge or technical assistance to overcome challenges in inclusive settings, and develop positive attitudes (Deiner, 2013).

In another study, Leatherman and Niemeyer (2005) found that both pre-service and in-service teachers required appropriate training for inclusive practice. In particular, pre-service teachers identified found early and continuous hands-on exposure to children with diverse needs important to enabling teachers develop more accepting attitudes and fewer concerns when teaching in IE settings (Leatherman & Niemeyer).

2.23.1 Training and Professional Development Needs

While most early childhood teachers believe that all children with and without disability should be educated in general ECE settings (Bruns & Mogharreban, 2007; L. C. Mitchell & Hegde, 2007), they have also identified training and PD needs. In a study, Bruns and Mogharreban (2007) found that inservice early childhood teachers expressed the need for training in specialised interventions and strategies in behaviour and communication, positioning/transportation, especially for children with motor disability, to enhance successful inclusive practice. Mulvihill et al. (2004) also noted that child-care providers and teachers required specialised training and support to include children with special needs in their programs.

Teachers need knowledge and experience in inclusive practices as they educate children with special needs and attempt to meet the diverse needs of all children in their classes (L. C. Mitchell & Hegde, 2007). Bruns and Mogharreban (2007) reported that the majority of teachers were skilful in appropriately arranging the classroom environment and conducting effective assessment for children with and without disability, while others were knowledgeable of developing and implementing individualised education plan (IEP) goals and objectives into the curriculum, and working effectively with families and other professionals. In contrast, Frankel et al. (2014) found that preservice teachers had challenges with managing behavioural problems of children with disability (e.g., inappropriate and disruptive behaviours), making curricular adaptations to meet

expectations, and understanding differences in adult perspectives of their roles in meeting a child's needs. In some Ghanaian studies, preservice teachers also expressed the need for extra training and support in overcoming such challenges (e.g., Agbenyega & Klibthong, 2011; Deku & Ackah Jnr, 2012). Teacher understanding of IE philosophy is essential since it frames not only their attitudes but also practice (Deku & Ackah Jnr, 2012). These authors found that teachers required training and PD to extend their understanding and knowledge of IE practice.

Agbenyega and Klibthong (2014) also found in a study involving 175 teachers (6 males and 169 females) from 11 public and 12 private IECE centres in Thai that the majority of early childhood teachers had inadequate knowledge on IECE. This was attributed to the inadequate practical knowledge teachers acquired during training. Hence, the researchers suggested there was a need for adopting a pedagogy of hope in teacher training and teaching, which among others will equip teachers with “the pedagogical strength to strive to overcome challenges in inclusive classrooms” (p.1258).

Research indicates that student field experiences are mediators or facilitators in the development of beliefs about inclusive practice (Frankel et al., 2014; Smith et al., 2012). In a recent mixed method study, involving 143 preservice early childhood and 208 elementary teachers on teaching children with developmental disabilities delays in inclusive classrooms in Ontario, Frankel et al. (2014) found that these preservice teachers had moderate experience with some children with disability in their recent practicum, but extensive experience especially with children with ASD. Because of the value of practical experiences, Smith et al. (2012) argue that teachers must have opportunities to see good examples of inclusive classes as part of their training-related activities and preparation for IE practice. The researchers believe that inclusive settings serve as demonstration sites, can foster the observation and imitation of critical dimensions of inclusive practice. Similarly, Buysse and Hollingsworth (2009) recommended that quality PD methods must facilitate experientially oriented learning that promotes improvements in inclusive programs and practice.

Research reveals that PD programs must help teachers acquire core knowledge, skills and dispositions or improve practice (Buysse & Hollingsworth, 2009; Deiner, 2013) in inclusive settings. Further research articulates that teachers require practical training in designing curriculum to foster social skills and supports for children with disability in ECE settings (Allen & Cowdery, 2012; Winter, 2007). Such training is relevant because

some children with disability usually require extra support and training to demonstrate the necessary social skills.

Collaboration is a necessity for successful IE practice (McLeskey et al., 2013; Smith et al., 2012; Winter 2007) and a conduit for teachers' PD (Friend & Bursuck, 2006; Gruenberg & Miller, 2011; Moore, 2009; Salend, 2010; Winter, 2007). Essentially, teachers need collaborative skills in order to work effectively with other professionals in inclusive settings such as special education staff and parents, in order to meet the academic and social needs of all children with and without disability (Smith et al., 2012). Through collaboration, teachers can access key support for delivering appropriate education and social services to students with disability, and also have opportunities for increasing skills, knowledge and understanding of IECE. Hence, training and PD programs must stress the need for collaboration.

In a recent qualitative study in Turkey, Akalm, Demir, Sucuoğlu, Bakkaloğlu, and Iscen (2014) found that inclusive preschool teachers lacked competence in providing individualised instruction, assessment of the performance of children with special needs, and in ensuring good classroom and behaviour management. Therefore, most teachers identified the need for training and knowledge on the characteristics of children with special needs, individualised instruction, and assessment of children with special needs, while others required additional experience and support in developing IEPs. However, despite systemic issues and challenges in their inclusive classrooms, the teachers were convinced that IECE is a successful practice for children with and without special needs (Akalm et al., 2014). In a previous study, Hughes and Valle-Riestra (2007) similarly reported that KG teachers found the provision of one-on-one and individualised instruction for children with disability challenging, and attributed this to large class size and the range of student abilities.

Kuyini and Abosi (2014) found that Ghanaian regular teachers have limited to moderate competence in adaptive instruction. The study examined teachers' competence in adapting instructions to teach pupils with LDs in the regular classrooms, using data that was gathered from 387 teachers in a cross-sectional survey involving questionnaires and structured observation methods. As such, teachers needed adequate competence in adaptive instruction to be able to address the growing needs of children with LDs in the regular classroom setting. The researchers also concluded that adaptive instruction is an important competence domain [of teachers] for any effective inclusion of pupils with LDs in the regular classroom.

Research also shows that knowledge of evidence-based practice such as prompts and differentiation are critical to IECE (e.g., Chandler et al., 2011; McLeskey et al., 2013; Noonan, 2006; Smith et al., 2012; Tomlinson, 2014). In addition, knowledge of child development for both children with and without disability is relevant for teachers implementing IECE (Allen & Cowdery, 2015; Deiner, 2013; Essa, 2014; Underwood, 2013). Underwood (2013) argues that such knowledge of individual child development enables teachers to match the changing needs of children with appropriate programs and practices in inclusive settings.

2.23.2 Training and Professional Development Format

Teachers' training and PD for IECE occur in different forms and in different settings. Some training and PD programs for teachers have consisted of specific coursework (Sheehy, Rix, Nind, & Simmons, 2004; West & Pirtle, 2014), workshops (L. C. Mitchell & Hegde, 2007; Mulvihill et al., 2004) and on-the-job training or mentoring (e.g., Nutbrown & Clough, 2006). Coursework for preservice or inservice teachers utilising collaborative learning (Sheehy et al., 2004) increases teachers' knowledge of children with disability and understanding of specific evidence-based practices. West and Pirtle (2014) further note that coursework-fieldwork linkage is important for teachers to acquire knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary for inclusive practice. L. C. Mitchell and Hegde (2007) found that because only general information was provided in preservice programs, preschool teachers desired workshops, seminars, and additional courses or on-the-job training and experiences in order to gain more knowledge for effective inclusive practice. Similarly, appropriate on-the-job training was identified to enhance IECE practice (Bruns & Mogharreban, 2007; Nutbrown & Clough, 2006). Mulvihill et al. (2004) note that workshops are the most frequently used inservice training format, though their effectiveness is dependent on participants' ability to transfer and adapt the learnt ideas and knowledge to the work settings.

Other forms of training and PD are also essential for IECE practice. Baker-Ericzén, Mueggenborg, and Shea (2009) found that child-care providers (i.e., teachers) received PD in the form of a modularised (e.g., face-to-face) inclusion training program that focused on specific instructional strategies: (a) introduction to inclusion, (2) respectful accommodations, (3) positive behavioural support, and (4) partnering with families. The program used didactic teaching and experiential learning activities, and occurred as self-contained training sessions, on-site trainings, or at a variety of locations

and times. Baker-Ericzén et al. (2009) found that child-care providers' participation in training significantly changed their attitudes and perceived competence for inclusive practice. Also, child-care providers who had three or more training sessions exhibited the most positive attitudes and the greatest perceived competence in including a child with special needs. Thus, teachers who receive more inclusive-related trainings are more likely to express positive attitudes and competence. Authentic training is also important for inclusive practice (Ackah Jnr, 2013; West & Pirtle, 2014).

While “traditional” training and PD have focused mainly on specialised courses through workshops and other programs, teachers should develop the professional motivation for self-directed learning as other avenues for improving IECE practice (Soodak et al., 2002).

2.24 Support for IECE

Supports are the cornerstone of “good inclusion practice” (Mortier, Van Hove, & De Schauwer, 2010, p. 544) and are critical because IECE presents challenges to teachers (Smith et al., 2012), or engineers changes in teachers' roles and responsibilities (Winter, 2007). IECE cannot be devoid of support, although the pertinence of support is not a reflection of inadequacy on the part of teachers or headteachers, but a reminder that IE is a shared responsibility on the part of all educators (McLeskey et al., 2013). Smith et al. (2012, p. 19) note that successful IECE “does not normally happen without assistance”, suggesting that no single educator has the capacity to serve the range of needs that may be present in today's IECE settings. In a qualitative study, Mortier et al. (2010) found that supports were identified as necessary and perceived as a good thing by students, teachers, support persons and parents. Support therefore enables teachers to work and respond to all children with a range of learning needs, and also ensures children have full access to the early childhood curriculum (DEC/NAEYC, 2009). Due to the essence of support, Jones (2004) reiterates that

support based in the context of providing appropriate learning experiences in an inclusive environment is planned to meet the needs of all children, and not only those perceived as having SEN. (p. viii)

Adequate support is thus necessary to ensure that programs and program personnel, especially teachers, are ready for children with a range of characteristics and needs in inclusive settings (Odom et al., 2011). Effective support therefore strengthens

inclusion, helping to build community for dealing with challenges in IECE settings (Peterson & Hittie, 2010). Teachers who are provided with sufficient support, both for themselves and students with special needs, are more likely and willing to accept such students in inclusive classes (Friend & Bursuck, 2006; Mastropieri & Scruggs, 2010).

2.24.1 Types of Support

A variety of types of support, including human, material, financial or otherwise, are major enablers of effective inclusion practice (Allen & Cowdery, 2012, 2015; Hammond & Ingalls, 2003; Idol, 2006; Leatherman, 2007; Mortier et al., 2010) and enhance teachers' proficiency in inclusive settings. Systems support, including key advocacy at the administrative level that commits resources for PD, ongoing coaching and collaboration, and time for communication and planning, are essential (Odom et al., 2011). Support also embodies staff development and education about the child's disability, individualised therapy (e.g., occupational and physical therapy), para- professional support for curriculum adaptation or facilitate social interactions, and ongoing assistance from an inclusion specialist (Allen & Cowdery, 2012, 2015). This infrastructure of systems-level support, when in place, undergirds the efforts of teachers (DEC/NAEYC, 2009). In this regard, support from the larger systems context is useful for inclusion at the classroom level (Lieber et al., 2000).

Administrative support and leadership

The importance of strong administrative and leadership support for successful inclusion has been identified in numerous studies (Billingsley et al., 2014; Chandler et al., 2011; Cook et al., 2008; Hammond & Ingalls, 2003; Hoppey & McLeskey, 2013; Leatherman, 2007; McLeskey & Waldron, 2002). Administrators are gatekeepers and key players in supporting inclusive program; hence, supportive headteachers set the tone for effective implementation (Lieber et al., 2002; Soodak et al., 2002). Although administrative support takes different forms, positive attitudes of administrators are an essential support for IECE, as their attitudes influence staff attitudes and acceptance of children with disability (Chandler et al., 2011; Idol, 2006; Leatherman, 2007). Administrators serve as a model and a change agent, and exhibit acceptance and warmth; hence, the administrator's lead role is instrumental in creating a vision of a school community with respect and value for learners and teachers and also in establishing a supportive school climate for inclusion (Billingsley et al., 2014; Gibson & Blandford, 2005), as well as influencing the attitudes and behaviours of the school staff (Kearney, 2011).

Supportive leadership demonstrated within program settings and at the system level is essential to inclusive practice (Booth et al., 2006; Loreman, Forlin, & Sharma, 2014). Loreman et al. (2014) in a review of international literature identified effective leadership at all levels as critical to the operation of an inclusive school system, as “schools with strong administrative support for inclusion have been shown to effectively serve greater numbers of students with disability in regular classrooms” (p. 172). Further, administrators need to improve leadership quality, and motivate and monitor commitment to the vision of IECE (Deiner, 2010), and be aware that most teachers need additional support to work with children with diverse needs and disability (Simpson & Warner, 2010). Successful IECE hinges on administrator support and resources for teachers to accommodate children’s individual needs (Lieber et al., 2000).

Findings from a narrative inquiry by Leatherman (2007) showed that early childhood teachers require administrative support in the form of appropriate avenues for involvement in decision-making processes and changes about programs in their IECE practice. For teachers, administrative support is significant in reducing frustrations and isolation, and promotes positive attitudes and commitment towards inclusive practice. In a case study of principal leadership in an effective inclusive school, Hoppey and McLeskey (2013, p. 4) found that the principal viewed his primary role as “lubricating the human machinery,” or providing support for teachers so that they could do their best work to enhance successful inclusive practice. Thus effective leadership ensured there was a nurturing and caring for staff, buffering faculty from external pressures associated with high-stakes accountability, providing high-quality PD, and ensuring that teachers had opportunities to assume leadership roles in the school.

Consistent results have been reported on the administrative support necessary for teachers. For example, McLeskey and Waldron (2002) found that staff required three key types of support and resources from school administrators: (1) support for program development, (2) relevant staff development opportunities, and (3) promotion of positive changes towards inclusion among staff. Teachers also require administrative support to collaborate with other professionals and paraeducators involved with the inclusion of all children, especially those with disability, since inclusive practice presents an ideal opportunity for collaboration (McLeskey et al., 2013; Smith et al., 2012). Effective administrative support augments regular teachers’ ability to collaborate with special education teachers to solve problems in inclusive classrooms (Hammond & Ingalls, 2003; Idol, 2006), and to compensate for personal insecurities. Supportive environment is key

to successful collaboration in IECE programs (Friend & Bursuck, 2006; McLeskey et al., 2013; Smith et al., 2012). Such an environment incorporates the availability of time for collaboration to implement best practices. It is not enough for each teacher to have a preparation period; shared planning time also needs to be arranged (Friend & Bursuck, 2006) for inclusion to succeed. As a result, administrators are duty-bound to provide a supportive environment for teachers to engage in collaborative consultation to facilitate the exchange of more ideas and experiences to help children achieve success in inclusive classes (Smith et al., 2012).

Overcoming lack of support, such as limited funding, teaching materials and training, or collaboration with team members or large classes, is an administrative responsibility (Deiner, 2010). Research comments from teachers show frustrations with lack of resources, insufficient contact with resource personnel, an overwhelming workload and feelings of isolation. Teachers often require moral support, that is, person-to-person interactions that validate the worth of their practice, by sharing experiences. It is therefore crucial for administrators to support teachers by building in common planning time, promoting flexibility, and allowing the teachers opportunities to develop their skills and confidence (McLeskey et al., 2013; Smith et al., 2012).

Teacher peer support

Other teachers have been cited as a complementary and important support for teachers practising IECE (Hemmings & Woodcock, 2011; Leatherman, 2007). Teacher peers are helpful, offering a collegial and moderating environment for teachers to mutually share, exchange ideas and understandings of IECE. Leatherman (2007) found that inclusive preschool teachers needed interactions with, and support from, their peers, other than from early childhood administrators, special educators and therapists, to accommodate children with disability. These early childhood teachers value and feel comfortable with their peers. Teacher peer support is particularly important where administrators seem to lack adequate knowledge or feel lethargic about the inclusive program. Peers provide expertise to help early childhood teachers to create supportive and responsive classroom environment and learning activities for all children. For example, members of teaching teams can capitalise on the strengths and expertise of team members to provide greater potential for quality instruction for all children in inclusive settings (McLeskey et al., 2013). In addition, some teachers rely on mentors (e.g., former teachers, lecturers or

supervisors) involved in teacher training and PD for inclusive practices and research for IECE (Leatherman, 2007).

Teacher aide/technical assistance/materials and equipment

Outside-school support, including external support and additional staff, are two critical types of support teachers in preschool programs identified as necessary for inclusive practice (L. C. Mitchell & Hegde, 2007). Additionally, qualified assistants, resources and linkages to specialists were also found helpful for ECE teachers to include children. Teachers attributed successful IE of children with disability in their classes to having additional personnel, particularly the special education teacher (Hughes & Valle-Riestra, 2007), while some teachers had success with classroom volunteers.

Research indicates that technical assistance is important for teachers to provide quality inclusion. Technical assistance from experts for including children with diverse abilities is usually provided through inservice training, staff development activities, on-site collaborative consultation, and peer coaching (Smith et al., 2012).

The availability of essential classroom materials and specialised equipment is also relevant to inclusive teachers. In a study conducted in two urban school districts in the United States, using surveys and follow-up interviews, Hughes and Valle-Riestra (2007) interrogated general education KG teachers to list resources and types of support relevant to accommodating the needs of all children in their classes. Results showed that the three most essential resources or types of support teachers wanted to facilitate IECE were additional classroom materials and equipment (e.g., computers, audio/visual equipment), more staff and aide support, and smaller class sizes. In addition, limited supports including lack of teaching materials, training and large classes inhibit effective inclusive practice (Deiner, 2013). In contrast, low class ratios, quality materials and adequate space were found to enhance quality IECE (Lieber et al., 2000).

Child peer support

Peer support is the most readily available type of support or resource in IECE settings (Bond & Castagnera, 2006; Kauchak & Eggen, 2012) and a cost-effective method of addressing the needs of children (McLeskey et al., 2013). Peer support systems (Kroeger & Kouche, 2006; Smith et al., 2012) is a natural type of support in which children engage in collaborative roles to support peers (McLeskey et al., 2013). Through peer support, children with disability in inclusive classes receive social or instructional support from peers without disability (Smith et al., 2012).

Importantly, children with disability benefit most from peer support, but the resultant effect is the collaborative efforts in the social and learning environment from teachers and learners (McLeskey et al., 2013; Smith et al., 2012). As the [best] option for providing natural assistance for children in academic and social involvement in inclusive settings, relevant peer support models for teachers that enhance participating in ECE settings include: peer tutoring, peer modelling, peer reinforcement, cross-age tutoring, and cooperative learning (Smith et al., 2012). However, peer tutoring and cooperative learning are the two main peer-assisted learning strategies often used in inclusive classrooms (Smith et al., 2012). Research shows that peer tutoring benefits both teachers and children, enhancing the self-concept and self-efficacy of children in inclusive settings. Though peers provide a great deal of help, successful peer support remains a professional responsibility (McLeskey et al., 2013; Smith et al., 2012). It means proper training and supervision of peers is important for effective peer tutoring or support (Simpson & Warner, 2010).

Parent support and involvement

Considerable research has identified the crucial role of parent and family involvement in education, and specifically IECE (Ackah Jnr & Appiah, 2011; Allen & Cowdery, 2015; Deiner, 2013; Gibson & Blandford, 2005; McLeskey et al., 2013; Nutbrown & Clough, 2006; Simpson & Warner, 2010; Smith et al., 2012; Turnbull et al., 2013; Winter, 2007). Parent support has been found useful for teachers in inclusive settings (Hemmings & Woodcock, 2011; Smith et al., 2012; Turnbull et al., 2013) because of its potential to enhance child outcomes and increase the resources available to meet children's needs (McLeskey et al., 2013). Parental involvement improves children's academic success, behaviour and social adjustment, while nurturing home-school connections for ongoing partnership and mutual support help foster effective IECE (Deiner, 2013; McLeskey et al., 2013; Smith et al., 2012; Winter, 2007). Active parent involvement such as participating in parent groups and volunteerism (Simpson & Warner, 2010), makes meaningful contributions to enhance IECE practice.

Parents play critical roles in the life and education of all children (Deiner, 2013). The Every Child Matters agenda in the USA supports significant parents' roles in the education of children with disability and SEN (Tsokova & Tarr, 2012). As such, parents' provisions for their children's needs, and communication and collaboration with teachers and ECE settings, among others, are essential for IECE (McLeskey et al., 2013; Smith et

al., 2012; Winter, 2007). Parents are seen as the source of first-hand information about their children; hence, parent participation in decisions related to their children with disability, is paramount to successful inclusion (Allen & Cowdery, 2015). Parents are also children's primary and ongoing teachers, and important partners and collaborators in IECE (Deiner, 2013; Nutbrown & Clough, 2006). Deiner (2013) further argues that parents are vital sources of information, and an invaluable resource for understanding their children. Parent support thus enhances the work of teachers in inclusive settings. In contrast, negative parent attitudes, limited parental involvement in children's education and a lack of communication with parents or families of children with disability served as barriers to inclusive practice (e.g., Leyser & Kirk, 2011).

Both parents of children with and without disability can support teachers. While some parents are involved in their child's education, others have limited involvement. Research reveals that teachers need to establish collaborative partnerships with parents /families in order to tap such a rich source of support for inclusive practice because for the most part, educational programs are greatly strengthened by parental support (Smith et al., 2012). This means that all parents are expected to demonstrate support for IECE.

Human resources and other support

Teachers are the leading factor in successful inclusion (Ackah Jnr, 2010). While the importance of support from "others" is undoubted, what teachers do when they are faced with limited support is equally important. Hence, teachers should be willing to self-support themselves, and seek helpful information or resources to mitigate the challenges of IECE. As such, teachers must take ownership to access requisite support for educating children in inclusive classes. Teachers must take personal responsibility and extend their knowledge base in appropriate pedagogical skills to succeed in today's IECE settings (Carrington et al., 2013).

Hemmings and Woodcock (2011) conducted a survey-based study using Likert scales and open-ended questions with a cohort of 138 preservice teachers in a large regional Australian university to verify the types of support relevant for inclusive teaching. Content analysis results suggested that eight critical types of support, including aide support, support from other colleagues, physical resources, programming support, PD programs, parental assistance, funding, and "other support" were important and helpful for inclusive practice. The findings illustrate that human resources are valuable and a critical part of an inclusive classroom. Support in the form of PD is a much more

important vehicle for inclusive practice (Hemmings & Woodcock, 2011). However, there is the need to provide adequate training/PD for teachers (Section 2.23).

In Ghana, few theoretical and empirical studies have highlighted current or probable contextual factors shaping inclusive practice (e.g., Ackah Jnr, 2010b; Obeng, 2012), some of which are examined. Obeng's (2012) empirical study involving survey questionnaire and interviews, with 68 purposively selected teachers of public preschools, KGs and Primary 1 to 3 classes found that there was lack of support (resources) for teachers, which influenced IECE, resulting in lack of teacher interest in educating children with special needs. The limited support from schools and district authorities made IE unpleasant and burdensome for teachers. Obeng identified bullying and teasing of children with disability, lack of parental participation, especially on the part of parents of children with special needs, and inadequate training as barriers to IECE. Whereas teacher non-utilisation of specialised instructional activities limited academic participation for children with special needs, Obeng felt that teachers' use of appropriate activities can instigate enthusiasm, willingness and participation of children with special needs in academic and other activities of ECE settings.

Based on the myriad of challenges, Obeng (2012) recommended active parent participation in the education of children with special needs through the advocacy of parent-teacher associations, employment of professionals such as special education teachers, physical and occupational therapists, nurses and social workers, to support teachers, as well as training for fostering IECE. Enhanced parental participation, Obeng stressed, could lessen teachers' daily work challenges.

In a research review, Ackah Jnr (2010b) identified limited training and PD, differing (mixed) attitudes and perceptions of teachers, and weak legislation, directives and policies as key major barriers to IECE. Ackah Jnr also identified seven key facilitators of successful IECE: effective education and training of teachers; effective early intervention programs for children with disability; collaboration among teachers and other professionals; effective parent partnerships; development of positive attitudes; quality interactions among all children and formation of friendships; and, renewing supports. These factors were seen as leverage for promoting quality care and education for all children (Ackah Jnr, 2010b). In addition, Ackah Jnr and Appiah (2011) stressed the need for the development of a holistic and inclusive approach to early intervention programs to support the education of children with disability in ECE settings. While supports are essential, Mortier et al. (2010) note that developing supports for inclusive

practice should be a dynamic process, founded on the children, the environment, and through creativity and courage, to serve as sources of inspiration and possibilities.

2.25 Summary

Research has shown that a number of factors, including expectations of IECE, teacher qualities and dispositions and practices, training and PD as well as varied support affect IECE practice. The next chapter discusses the nexus of the research methodology employed for this study on implementation of IECE in Ghana.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the methodological choice or decisions of this research are presented. This qualitative, interpretive multiple case study was designed to present evidence and interpretations of how IECE is being implemented in Ghana. This section highlights the rationale for the overall multiple case study design, and also elucidates the methods, procedures for the case studies, including information on the case sites and participants. It also considers within- and cross-case thematic analysis to extract principal cross-case and case-specific findings, for further discussion with literature and change factors.

3.2 Research Method

This study employs a qualitative methodology to understand, describe and interpret IECE in Ghana. As an interpretive and naturalistic approach, qualitative research is suitable for making sense of and interpreting phenomena (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Creswell, 2013; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Merriam, 2014; Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2014; Patton, 2015; Silverman, 2011; Yin, 2011). The qualitative research approach is thus appropriate for explaining the meaning of people's lives, views and perspectives within real contextual conditions using multiple sources of evidence rather than a single source (Creswell, 2013; Merriam, 2014; Yin, 2011).

Underlying this qualitative-oriented study is the interpretivist paradigm, lens or worldview, also referred to as constructivism (Creswell, 2014). The interpretive worldview supports a social construction of reality (Creswell, 2014; Merriam, 2014), which recognises and places premium on the value of everyday practices and experiences of individuals in understanding the world (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011). For Teddlie and

Tashakkori (2009, p. 72) such “understandings of reality are constructed both individually and socially”, hence “there are multiple realities, or interpretations of a single event” (Merriam, 2014, p. 8) . In order to capture the real-world settings (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Yin, 2011) and “views” of teachers, headteachers and education officials enmeshed in the implementation of IECE in ECE settings, and to “generate or inductively develop pattern of meanings” (Creswell, 2014, p. 8), case study was chosen as the specific qualitative methodology. The predominance of quantitative studies on IE, and lack of qualitative studies on IECE in Ghana, informed the choice of a qualitative methodology for this research (Chapter 1). In summary, this qualitative research utilised an interpretivist paradigm to understand, interpret, and describe implementation of IECE.

3.2.1 Case Study Methodology—Multiple Case Study

This research utilised case study (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Creswell, 2013, 2014; Merriam, 2014; Miles et al., 2014; Patton, 2015; Stake, 2006; Yin, 2009, 2013) to garner in-depth understandings, descriptions and interpretations of IECE from the four sites of practice in Ghana. Case study is “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life, especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not clearly evident” (Yin, 2009, p. 18). Creswell (2013, p. 97) summarises the process and art of case study as:

exploration of a real-life, contemporary bounded system (a case) or multiple bounded systems (cases) over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information ... and reporting a case description and case themes. The unit of analysis might be multiple cases or single case.

Case study is not only an important and viable method used in education (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011; Marshall & Rossman, 2011; Merriam, 2014; Yin, 2009, 2013), but it is also effective for capturing multilayered and rich meanings integrated within the educational experiences and practices of participants (Creswell, 2013; Yin, 2009). This research therefore investigates IE in ECE settings, utilising a multiple case study design. The multiple case study comprised four ECE centres and schools selected purposely to highlight potentially different contexts of IECE in Ghana (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Creswell, 2012, 2013; Patton, 2015; Yin, 2009). The selected case sites typify instrumental cases (Stake, 2006; Yin, 2009) and illustrate unique cases of interest (Creswell, 2013), portraying purposeful maximal variation sampling (Creswell, 2012; Patton, 2015).

The study's multiple cases concurrently provided in-depth understanding of reported and enacted IECE policy and change implementation in each ECE setting, which permitted comparison across the different mix of ECE settings. The individual cases present an information pool of evidence that facilitates a description of their self-centring, complexity and situational uniqueness (Stake, 2006). Hence, evidence and conclusions from the multiple case study are reliable, rich descriptions of the contextual conditions of the participants and case sites practising IECE (Patton, 2002; Yin, 2009).

In summary, qualitative interpretive case study is the appropriate approach for this study, and a multiple case study design (Creswell, 2013; Stake, 2010), involving four ECE centres and 27 participants was used to [re]construct the intricate fabric of IECE practice. The multiple case study approach provides a holistic understanding of IECE within a socio-physical context.

3.2.2 Research Context

This multiple case study is contextualised in Ghana, as part of the wider international and educational community implementing IECE. The research context is significant as current political and ideological changes have an impact on the approaches to providing EFA (Tsokova & Tarr, 2012). Thus, Ghana provides a unique context to understand, describe, and interpret the implementation of IECE within the larger international, social, political and educational contexts. As a centrally situated republic and the gateway to West Africa, Ghana is bounded by the Republics of Togo to the east, Cote D'Ivoire to the west, and Burkina Faso to the north. It has a coastline of 560 km to the south, which is washed by the Gulf of Guinea (Information Services Department, 2008). Ghana was also the first Sub-Saharan independent African country, with a population of about 26.4 million, and which occupies the position 140/188 on the UN Human Development Index with a medium human development status (United Nations Development Program [UNDP], 2015), a literacy rate of 67% (World Bank, 2013) or 71.5% (UNDP, 2015), and with 5 million people reported as having disability (Human Rights Watch, 2012). These indicate a summary measure of the average achievement in key dimensions of human development.

In Ghana, the study was sited in the Central Region, specifically, the Cape Coast Metropolitan Assembly (CCMA). Briefly, the Central Region is one of the 10 administrative regions in Ghana and has a representative mix of rural and urban districts, and different educational levels, including two public universities and other tertiary

institutions, and basic and secondary schools. The Central Region is also described as a hub region for the piloting and implementation of “new” educational policies, including IE, and inclusive pilot schools and other relevant, inclusive-related initiatives in Ghana. At the Basic education level, there were 6,671 educational institutions, comprising 758 crèches/nurseries, 2,155 KGs, 2,146 primary schools and 1,612 junior high schools in the Central Region. The majority are government owned, with others owned by private individuals and faith-based organisations (Ministry of Education [MOE], 2013). There was a teacher population of 29,870, of which 61 (4.4%), 1,626 (33.4%), 6,212 (46.9%) and 6,754 (65.1%) teachers respectively are trained in crèches/nurseries, KGs, primary and junior high schools¹². Table 3.1 presents the Central Region Basic Education Profile for 2012–2013, which shows the educational level and number of schools, and student and teacher characteristics.

Table 3.1: Central Region Basic Education Profile for 2012–2013

Level	Number of schools	Student enrolment	Teachers	Trained teachers (%)	Student-teacher ratio	Student-trained teacher ratio	Gross enrolment ratio	Net enrolment ratio
Crèche/nursery	758	36,564	1,379	61 (4.4)	27	599	13.7	
KG (1 and 2)	2,155	163,050	4,869	1,626 (33.4)	33	100	127.6	
Primary	2,146	408,060	13,249	6,212 (46.9)	31	66	113.0	87.0
Junior high	1,612	149,620	10,373	6,754 (65.1)	14	22	87.7	52.3
Total	6,671	757,294	29,890	14,653	–	–	–	–

Note: Adapted from MOE Basic Statistics and Planning Parameters for Basic Education in Ghana (2012–2013 Report).

As one of the 20 administrative and educational districts of the Central Region, the Case-Study Metropolis has six educational districts (circuits) dispersed in rural and urban areas, and different educational institutions, including one university, a polytechnic and a college of education, and other secondary schools. At the Basic education level, the Cape Coast Metropolis has a total of 46 crèches/nurseries, 103 KGs, 110 primary schools, 92 junior high schools, and 2,212 teachers (Ministry of Education [MOE], 2013). Table 3.2, the Cape Metropolitan Basic Education Profile for 2012–2013, gives further details about the educational level, type of school, and student and teacher characteristics. As noted, all crèches/nurseries are privately owned.

¹² Trained teachers have a minimum qualification of diploma in education or equivalent

Table 3.2: Cape Coast Metropolitan Assembly Basic Education Profile for 2012–2013

Level	Schools		Student enrolment		Teacher		Student-teacher ratio		Student-trained teacher ratio	
	Public	Private	Public	Private	Public	Private	Public	Private	Public	Private
Crèche/nursery	—	46	—	3,305	—	171	—	19	—	413
KG (1 and 2)	59	54	4,667	3,579	173	166	27	22	33	163
Primary	65	45	16,967	8,643	515	387	27	22	36	68
Junior high	60	32	7,825	3,096	573	227	14	14	15	29
Total	184	177	29,459	18,623	1,261	951	23	20	26	71

Note: Adapted from MOE Basic Statistics and Planning Parameters for Basic Education in Ghana (2012–2013 Report).

The Central Region and CCMA were chosen as typical and critical case sites. As typical case sites, the Central Region and CCMA mirror characteristics of the normal or average situation for IECE in Ghana, and their selection was motivated by key informants, knowledgeable people at the research sites, and through review of extant socio-demographic data signifying their typicality (Creswell, 2012, 2013; Patton, 2002; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). The Central Region and CCMA were critical sites to permit logical and maximum application of information to the multiple case studies (Creswell, 2013; Patton, 2015; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009; Yin, 2009). The identification, selection and utility of the Central Region and CCMA, and the four ECE centres described in Tables 3.6 to 3.9, articulate Patton’s (2015) assertion that if it [IECE practice] happens here, it will happen anywhere, and vice versa. Critical case sites dramatically represent the central phenomenon (Creswell, 2012; Patton, 2002, 2015). Hence, the Central Region and CCMA provide an appropriate context for explaining implementation of IECE in Ghana.

3.2.3 Purposive Sampling Techniques

Purposive sampling technique (Bryman, 2016; Creswell, 2013; Marshall & Rossman, 2011; Patton, 2015; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009), also called pragmatic sampling (Emmel, 2013), was appropriately utilised in this study for selecting research sites and participants who can purposefully inform an understanding of IECE practice (Creswell, 2013). Purposive sampling strategies involve the selection of particular cases for specific purposes rather than randomly through expert judgement of researchers and informants (Neuman, 2011; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). Enmeshed in the choice of purposeful sampling is the practical and pragmatic consideration: “to do what makes sense; report on what ... why ... and what the implications are for the findings” (Patton; 2002, p. 72).

Purposeful sampling means “strategically selecting information-rich cases to study, cases that by their nature and substance will illuminate the inquiry question being investigated” (Patton, 2015, p. 265).

In this study, purposive sampling permitted selection of the cases at three levels: sites, events and participants (Creswell, 2013; Marshall & Rossman, 2011), enhancing the richness of the field data (Patton, 2002, 2015; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009), and generating credible results for the study’s audiences (Emmel, 2013).

3.2.4 Research Sites

Four ECE Centres¹³ in the Cape Coast Metropolitan Assembly (CCMA) of the Central Region were purposively chosen as research sites. This section presents a description and justification for the research sites’ selection, which comprised: a university-based ECE centre, an inclusive pilot ECE centre, a private ECE centre and a public ECE centre, from the Case Study Metropolis. The case selections were underpinned by the need to convey a balanced, multidimensional representation of context, participants, and the reality of the situation—IECE in practice (Stake, 2010). Thus, the research sites represented different environments for IECE practice:

(1) The university-based ECE centre

The university-based ECE centre has well-trained teachers, and well-resourced in financial and equipment, physical learning environment and facilities, and is perceived to provide quality ECE programs for all children, and a model ECE. However, it has generally a high student-staff ratio compared to the regional and metropolitan average (Table 3.6).

(2) An inclusive pilot ECE centre

The inclusive pilot ECE centre is mandated by policy to “practise” IE and “receives” additional human and material resources. It could therefore also be perceived to provide model IECE programs for all children.

(3) The private ECE centre

The private ECE centre is also perceived to provide quality ECE programs, with children enrolled based on parents’ choices and finances. The private ECE centre is partially supported by the government or GES/MOE (Headteacher Interview), and may not have teachers with higher qualification compared to the other ECE centres.

¹³ ECE centres are KG1, KG2 and P1 classes that educate children aged 4–8, including children with disabilities.

(4) A public ECE centre

All children with and without disability are traditionally found in public ECE centres as they are non-fee paying. In general, the public ECE centre, like other public schools has well-trained teachers, and are resourced mainly by government or GES/MOE.

The research sites are part of regular schools or classrooms that serve as primary contexts for IECE implementation. Notably, the four ECE research sites educate all children, including children with disability and SEN, and present a unique ecology of classrooms and school culture. Thus, shared among the ECE centres is the desire and commitment to educating all children, in line with the goal of GES—providing accessible and quality EFA children, and IE and ECE policies (see Chapter 2).

In order to attain homogeneity of outcomes from the case site data, there was a limitation to the age range of students and classes chosen from the respective ECE centres and schools. Only KG 1 and KG2, and Primary 1 (P1) classes were chosen, although crèches, day cares and nurseries, and Primary 2 and 3 are part of ECE settings providing a range of services that promote survival, growth, development and protection of the young child from birth to age 8 in Ghana (ECCD Policy, 2004). KG1 and KG2 were selected as Ghana's ECE policy and Education Act 2008 mandate the provision of 2-year free and compulsory ECE for all children with and without disability and SENs aged from 4 to 6 years. Primary 1 was selected as a transition stage, which is identified as a potentially stressful time for all children, since they move to new and unfamiliar environments, with new teachers and class routines, and where adult-child relationships are possibly very different to those previously experienced (Kemp, 2011). Some teachers in Primary 1 may also be encountering IE for the first time. The transition from preschool — that is, KG1 and KG 2—to P1 is an opportune time to investigate IE (Rietveld, 2008), as this marks entry into the formal education system in Ghana.

As stated, the four ECE settings selected through maximum variation purposive sampling provide the opportunity to maximise differences and increase the likelihood that the study's findings will reflect different dimensions or perspectives and comparisons of IECE practice (Creswell, 2013, 2014; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). This process enhances the seeking out of insights that illuminate both variations and significant common patterns of shared experiences in ECE settings. Hence, there was the utilisation of expert-researcher judgement and reliance on statistical information that defines ECE centres, child and staff characteristics (e.g., enrolment, location, type of ownership,

services and age coverage) from the CCMED. As seen earlier, the Cape Coast Metropolitan Basic Education Profile for 2012–2013 school data was used. Other criteria used for choosing the four ECE sites were: (1) presence of children with disability/SEN, (2) educational district, (3) proximity, and (4) teacher qualification. Maximum purposive sampling thus enhanced the selection of case sites that offered the greatest amount of accessible, relevant, and diverse rich information to elucidate the particulars and specifics of IECE in practice.

3.2.5 Research Participants

The research participants included 16 teachers¹⁴ and 5 headteachers¹⁵ of four ECE centres and schools and six education officials¹⁶ from the CCMA. The education officials were designated as: Deputy Directors of Education (Finance or Head of Supervision, Monitoring and Evaluation), ECE Coordinators and Circuit Supervisors; and Inclusive and Special Coordinators. Research site participants were the main sources for interview data. In each research site, four (4) teachers and one (1) headteacher (except at case site 1 where two headteachers) were selected (Table 3.3). The research sites and participants provide rich contextual information for defining the implementation of IECE. As noted, purposive sampling techniques were used in choosing participants from the ECE Centres and CCMED that enhanced the attainment of information-rich cases (Emmel, 2013; Patton, 2002).

Table 3.3: Research Sites and Participants

Type of ECE centre	Teachers	Headteachers	Education officials
1. University-based	4 teachers from each	1 Head from each centre:	1 Deputy Director of Education
2. Inclusive pilot	centre:	Head ECE or	2 Circuit supervisors
3. Private	2 teachers in KG1	Head basic school	1 ECE coordinator
4. Public	1 teacher in KG2 1 teacher in P1		2 Inclusive/SpEd coordinators

Teachers

The teachers in the ECE settings and schools involved in this study included attendants and caregivers in only KG1, KG2 and Primary 1, who were either trained or untrained.

¹⁴ Teachers include attendants and caregivers depending on the type of ECE setting— private or public

¹⁵ Headteachers are the administrators, managers or directors of ECE centres and schools

¹⁶ Education Officials are officers in the Cape Coast Metropolitan Education Directorate involved in policy making and implementation at the macro or micro level, including the Director of Education, ECE Co-ordinator and Circuit Supervisors among others

Usually, trained teachers have taken Certificate, Diploma or Degree courses in ECE, inclusive and special education from the University of Cape Coast, University of Education, Winneba, and Colleges of Education, or the National Nursery Training Centre in Accra, Ghana or elsewhere. Other teachers had related qualifications in education that enabled them to care and educate children in such ECE settings. The ‘untrained teachers’ may not possess the relevant certification but they receive periodic in-service education and training (INSET) to enhance their proficiency in caring and educating all children in ECE settings. Such teachers are identified as forerunners of IECE (Ackah Jnr, 2010a; Carrington & MacArthur, 2013), and their practices and roles are central to its effectiveness (Lindsay, 2007; NCSE 2010; Winter, 2007); they give meaning to IECE practice (Florian, 2008).

Headteachers

In Ghana, headteachers of early childhood learning centres and schools are also called managers, directors or proprietors, and sometimes owners. In this study, headteachers, also referred to as administrators or principals, are primarily responsible for the day-to-day running or overall operation of ECE centres and schools. In ECE settings, administrators perform diverse roles and responsibilities, including provision of instructional and program leadership, and leading initiatives. Headteachers were automatically selected because they are politically important, and their management and leadership responsibilities in ECE centres and schools set the tone for IECE practice or otherwise (Soodak et al., 2002). In particular, headteachers are critically important to successful and effective IECE (Cook et al., 2008; Delaney, 2001; Hammond & Ingalls, 2003; Idol, 2006; Killoran et al., 2007; Leatherman, 2007). Headteachers or principals have been identified as critical in creating inclusive schools that are responsive to meeting the needs of diverse learners (Billingsley et al., 2014).

Education officials

Education officials from the CCMA, comprising the Deputy Director of Education, Head of Supervision, Monitoring and Evaluation, an ECE Coordinator, one Circuit Supervisor and two Inclusive and Special Education Coordinators constituted the last group of participants. As educational authorities and policy makers, education officials are responsible for disseminating information on educational policies and practices such as IECE, and conducting policy implementation monitoring and evaluation. These officers also conduct in-service training and PD programs for teachers and headteachers, and

coordinate activities related to quality and effective ECE programs in Ghana. Hence, the selection of education officials was essential, as they also provide resources and a policy environment through the central government for teachers and headteachers implementing IECE. These officials support teachers and headteachers who are striving to make IECE succeed, hence it was necessary to have their perspectives, understandings and interpretations of implementation. Further characteristics of research participants and case sites are presented in Tables 3.5 to 3.9.

3.2.6 Data Collection

Documents, archival records, interviews, direct and participant observations and physical artefacts are six main data collection sources used in case study research to present an in-depth picture of the case(s) (Yin, 2009). In this study, however, extensive and multiple interviews from research sites and participants (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Creswell, 2013; Yin, 2009, 2011) formed the data corpus. These multiple sources of data were analysed, and findings from the participants and case sites are based on the convergence of information for meaningful interpretations. In the following sections, interviews are explained, as well as a pilot case study that tested the data collection tools and procedures.

Interviews

Interviewing is a major data collection tool used by qualitative researchers and an important data collection method used for the case studies (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Bryman, 2016; Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011; Creswell, 2013; Marshall & Rossman, 2011; Merriam, 2014; Stake, 2006; Yin, 2011). As an interchange of views for knowledge production (Kvale, 2007), interviews also offer opportunities for constructing a deeper understanding of the participants' world and important aspects of a phenomenon in a case study (Patton, 2002; Yin, 2011). Interviews are vehicles for obtaining unique information and interpretation held by individuals (Stake, 2010). Hence, this multiple case study employed interviewing as the appropriate data collection method to explore the practices and experiences of teachers and headteachers, and education officials implementing IECE.

Semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions were crafted to enable participants to voice their experiences, unconstrained by the researcher's perspectives (Creswell, 2012; Merriam, 2014; Patton, 2002), and to enhance flexibility in the interview process (Bryman, 2016). The semi-structured interviews had standard questions but other questions emerged on IECE practice as the interview progressed which permitted probing for in-depth information and clarification from participants (Creswell, 2013). Probe-

based interviews give focus to participants' interpretations and motivate participation (Stake, 2006, 2010; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009) in the study. As such, the semi-structured interviews were suitable for collecting rich data for the case sites by exploring experiences and understandings of participants in depth.

Interviews were conducted individually and face to face with the 16 teachers and 5 headteachers of ECE centres and schools, and 6 education officials in the CCMED (Cohen et al., 2011; Creswell, 2013, 2014; Merriam, 2014; Yin, 2011), to gain personal understanding of IECE implementation. Interview sessions occurred within a specific context or setting, to enhance a conversational mode between the participants and the researcher (Yin, 2011). Prior to commencement of interviews, a set of interview topics or research questions was presented to participants so that they could organise their ideas and responses accordingly. Questions that were raised from the literature, which guided the study and interviews, are presented in the *Inclusive Early Childhood Education Practice Interview Protocols for Teachers, Headteachers and Education Officials* (Appendix A). Each interview protocol had a demographic information section, and similar interview questions were drawn from each research question for teachers, headteachers and education officials.

Interview sessions lasted for a minimum of 20 minutes, and for between 30 to 45 minutes or a maximum of over 1 hour (Appendices B), and occurred mostly in distraction-free environments to improve the quality and accuracy of recorded information (Creswell, 2013). Each interview was audio-taped, with participants' prior consent for recording of the conversation, verbatim transcription and interpretation of data (Creswell, 2012). In addition, short field notes were taken during interviews for clarification purposes, "catching" key moments and understanding, and to cement meanings of practices, perspectives and issues about IECE from the case sites.

Rephrasing techniques were used during interviews to clarify participants' understanding of issues on IECE practice. Using appropriate clarifying and elaborating probes enhances the elicitation of additional, in-depth and detailed information from participants (Creswell, 2012). Eight audio tapes and initial interview transcripts were presented to participants from each site, including two education officials for member checks. In all, similar or standard interviewing procedures were utilised for all the participants (Creswell, 2012).

3.2.7 Pilot Case Study

The study commenced with a pilot case study as a “test drive” for the actual case studies (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009, p. 203). The pilot case study’s objective was to enhance the clarity, suitability, and meaningfulness (Cooksey & McDonald, 2011) of the content of the interview protocols as they related to the implementation of IECE (i.e., research questions), and to the data collection methods. The pilot case study also served to refine data collection plans and development of relevant lines of questions, especially for in-depth interviews with participants (Yin, 2013). Additionally, the pilot study provided an opportunity for sharpening the researcher’s interviewing skills and development of appropriate schema for collecting interview data from participants in the respective research sites.

One ECE centre, a public-based ECE setting, comprising teachers and headteachers, with education officials in the Komenda Edina Eguafo Abirem Municipal Assembly (KEEAMA), was chosen as the pilot case site. The selection of KEEAMA was based on considerations of convenience, access and geographic proximity (Creswell, 2013; Yin, 2009). Further, the ECE Centres and participants—teachers and headteachers, and education officials in the KEEAMA—were more likely to provide informative documentation and data on IECE similar to what could be encountered in the real case sites in the CCMA (Yin, 2009). ECE centres in the KEEAMA include children with and without disability, while the mission and vision statement of the KEEA Municipal Education Directorate (KEEAMED) supports IE: “to provide quality and affordable education for *all children of school entry-age* ... by making education accessible and available, and ensuring qualitative manpower” (emphasis added).

Participants in the pilot case study involved two female teachers and one female headteacher of an ECE centre, and two education officials—an ECE coordinator and a master training officer from the KEEAMED (Table 3.4). These participants were interviewed on IECE practice. As stated, the interview with each pilot study participant was face to face, and occurred at a convenient place and time. Other interviewing processes are further discussed under the data sources and procedures section.

Table 3.4: Pilot Case Site and Participants

Case site	Participants	Gender	Qualification	
Public	ECE	One teacher in KG 1	F	BEd (Basic Education)
Centre		One teacher in P1	F	Diploma (Basic Education)

	One headteacher	F	BEd (Basic Education)
KEEAMED	One ECE co-ordinator	F	BEd (Guidance and Counselling)
	One master training officer	M	MEd (Educational Administration and Management)

Three sets of interview questions guided the pilot case study (Appendix A). Each interview protocol had a demographic information section, examining issues such as participants' designation, gender, educational level, and length of experience in terms of teaching, headship, or policy implementation. Other issues covered included understanding of IECE. The substantive interview questions for the pilot case study, drawn from the research questions, were similar for teachers, headteachers and education officials, capturing six IECE implementation issues: (1) expectations or expected approaches, strategies, methods or pedagogy; (2) importance; (3) perceived outcomes; (4) training and PD; (5) support; and (6) barriers and enablers.

During the pilot interviews, and through repeated playbacks and active listening of audio-taped interviews, and following initial transcriptions, three new issues emerged that centred on: (1) qualities and dispositions of teachers and headteachers for IECE, (2) policy documents on IECE and IE practice, and (3) leadership.

On the issue of teacher qualities and dispositions for IECE, one teacher remarked, "if teachers are patient, they can teach all children whether with and without disability. Teachers need time for [all] the children. So to do this IECE thing, patience is essential". When asked about policy documents on IE or IECE practice, the ECE Coordinator indicated that "there were no such materials on IECE; you just hear about this IE policy". Leadership was also identified as an important ingredient for IECE implementation (master training officer and female headteacher). On leadership for IECE, the master training officer stated that "Officers at the Directorate should demonstrate support for IECE by showing the way, while headteachers must also recognise that they open or close doors to [include] children with disability in ECE settings. The headteachers are the first people to come into contact with children when they are sent to the school".

Through reflection and knowledge, and observations from the pilot case site, issues relating to qualities and dispositions of teachers and headteachers, policy documents and leadership for IECE implementation were deemed significant and incorporated in the final interview protocols for participants. These issues were pursued in depth in the main study. In conclusion, the pilot study served as a formative process,

assisting in conceptual clarification, understanding and development of relevant lines of inquiry (Yin, 2003) for the actual case sites. Thus, interview questions were revised for the main study based on the pilot case study results.

3.2.8 Ethical Considerations and Entering the Field

Access and approval (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Bryman, 2016; Creswell, 2013; Miles et al., 2014; Yin, 2011) was gained from the Griffith University Human Research Ethics Committee (GUHREC) and the Ghana Education Service (GES) before the field data gathering tools and interview protocols were used in both the pilot and main studies for the purposively selected research sites and participants in the KEEAMA and CCMA. This study is thus compliant with the research requirements of Griffith University in accordance with the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research, and the GES, CCMED and KEEMAMED. Ethics guided the responsible conduct of this study to ensure that the process of inquiry did not compromise the property and rights of research sites and participants (Bryman, 2016; Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011).

Based on the foregoing reasons, this research, conducted following Griffith University research ethics approval, had the GU number EDN/B1/13/HREC (Appendix C1). Both the Participant Information Package and Ethics and Informed Consent Form (Appendices C2 to C4) were presented to the GES Directorate for approval and access to the four ECE centres and education officials. Securing proper access from gatekeepers was thus crucial to the collection of interview data from the case sites. Access negotiation served the purpose of establishing rapport, familiarising, and obtaining goodwill essential for the cooperation, participation and support from participants and ECE settings (Cohen et al., 2011; Creswell, 2012; Yin, 2011). This process involved three levels of stakeholders in Ghana, namely, the GES level, the ECE centre level, and the teacher level.

As an important gatekeeper in education, the GES, which manages all schools, was the prime contact institution that was provided with information about this study in ECE centres (Creswell, 2013). In this regard, the case sites—the CCMED (in the main study) and KEEAMED (in the pilot study) of the GES—were contacted independently for official permission to engage with some of its officials, and also visit ECE centres. Following the GES approval (Appendices C5 and C6), respective ECE centre headteachers were approached to obtain further access, cooperation and collaboration or familiarisation for the entire data collection process. There were negotiations with ECE centre headteachers to engage teachers, and through voluntary consent, ECE centre

teachers were also invited to participate in the study. Suitable times and dates were scheduled with teachers and headteachers of the four ECE centres and schools, and education officials, for individual interviews. Essentially, there was ongoing access (Bryman, 2016) that ensured express interactions with participants and passage through the case sites.

Data collection therefore commenced after the necessary permission, contacts and rapport were secured from the three main stakeholders. Hence, the gathering of data occurred at each of the four ECE settings at convenient times, mostly during free times of school days for teachers and headteachers, and other prearranged times for education officials, to minimise disturbance and ensure authentic cooperation and participation (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Creswell, 2013). Prior to commencement of interviews, participants were invited to sign the Informed Consent Form (Appendices A2 to A4).

As an event *sui generis* (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007), this study observed a threefold but complementary ethical practice typical of case studies (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Cohen et al., 2007; Creswell, 2012, 2013; Neuman, 2011; Patton, 2002; Yin, 2011): prefield, field-issues, and postfield ethics. Importantly, four interdependent elements of informed consent—competence, comprehension, volunteerism, and full information—were ensured in the data collection process (Cohen et al., 2011). Participants were clearly informed about the study’s purpose, and participation was voluntary—that is, there was no coercion, manipulation or deception, and participants were free to (dis)engage in this study (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Bryman, 2016; Cohen et al., 2011; Creswell, 2013; Miles et al., 2014). Teachers, headteachers and education officials consented and engaged in this study as “mature” participants, based on their abilities. The informed consent acknowledged participants’ rights to freedom and self-determination (Cohen et al., 2007, 2011; Creswell, 2013; Neuman, 2011; Patton, 2015).

Though challenging (Creswell, 2013; Miles et al., 2014), the field-issues ethics were designed to protect participants’ privacy, confidentiality and anonymity, hence the identities of research sites and participants were masked or pseudonymised where necessary. The post-field ethics related to the collected field data, analysis and reporting (Creswell, 2013). In this case, there was good data storage and management, analysis, and accurate reporting of results. Data management involved working with and systematically reviewing and organising both paper-based and electronically collected data, which comprised audiotaped interviews, interview transcripts, photographs, notes and memos. Hard copies of the raw data were stored in folders and organised by case sites

and participants, and the type of data. Electronic copies of interview recordings were filed in folders on my office computer and laptop and other forms, including hard drives. Digitally stored data was password protected on devices that were also password protected for security, and was backed up daily in additional secured storage sources. In conclusion, access was secured to research sites and participants for collecting the case sites data, and to observe the necessary ethical decorum accordingly.

3.3 Final Characteristics of Sites and Participants

To better understand the implementation of IE policy, it is essential to examine the context of practice (Liasidou, 2012). This section therefore describes the context and situation of the four case sites and participants (Stake, 2010), which provides unique backgrounds for explaining, describing and interpreting IECE. The participants included six education officials, and five headteachers and sixteen teachers, who provided interview data. To comply with the ethical requirements of the GUHREC, pseudonyms were used for each participant, which are common names in the study’s context, to ensure confidentiality (see Tables 3.5 to 3.9).

3.3.1 Education Officials

Table 3.5 details the demographic profile of the six senior education officials who provided interview data on IECE. Comprising three males and three females, the education officials had Masters degrees in higher education, educational administration and management, and special/inclusive education. While EO-Kofi had 15 years of policy experience, there was an average of 6 years of policy implementation experience, and over 10 years’ teaching experience for most education officials. The education officials also had practical classroom and policy experience that is deemed suitable for IECE. As noted in this chapter, education officials provide policy implementation environment and support headteachers and teachers. These officials had experiences with children with disability, and hence working knowledge of IECE practice.

Table 3.5: Demographic Summary of Education Officials

Participant	Position	Gender	Teaching		Policy	Qualification
			experience	Age range	experience	
EO-Alua	Deputy Director	F	22	46–50	9	MPhil (Education Adm & Mgt)
EO-Kofi	Deputy Director	M	15	51–55	15	MPhil (Education Adm & Mgt)
EO-Abi*	ECE Coordinator	F	30	51–55	3	BEd (Basic Education)
EO-Abeka	Circuit Supervisor	M	22	46–50	6	MEd (Teacher Education)
EO-Atta	ISE Coordinator	M	16	41–45	5	MPhil (Special Education)

EO-Akos	ISE Coordinator	F	11	41–45	2	MEd (Education Adm & Mgt)
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Note. *Abi also has 11 years of headship experience; EO = education official. **All names used in Table 3.5 and in Tables 3.6 to 3.9 are all pseudonyms.

3.4 Multiple Case Study

This section presents contextual information and descriptive characteristics of the four case sites and demographic profiles of the headteacher and teacher participants. The ECE centre/school type and mission, other demographics of participants (e.g., education, class size, and experiences) are discussed.

3.4.1 Case Site 1 and Participants

Case site 1 is a large university-based ECE centre and school located in OLA Sub-Metro Education Circuit of the CCMA that served children with and without disability within its community. The ECE centre and school is highly committed to “providing quality and accessible ECE within a warm and welcoming environment, and where learning is fun” (Headteacher Interview). While one male teacher held a Master degree, the other three teachers had Bachelor degrees deemed suitable for educating all children. All two headteachers at case site 1 had Master degrees in Guidance and Counselling and/or Educational Administration and Management, considered key to managing inclusive settings. From Table 3.6, it is clear that the class sizes of case site 1 were large compared to the regional and metropolitan average (see Tables 3.1 and 3.2). While the ECE centre had three streams, the primary school had six streams. Table 3.6 outlines the demographics of the four teachers and two headteachers at case site 1.

Table 3.6: Demographic Summary of Participants at Case Site 1

Participant	Position	Gender	Teaching experience	Age range	Headship experience	Qualification	Class size
FT-Ama	Teacher	F	20	41–45	N/A	BEd (ECE Education)	54
FT-Aba	Teacher	F	10	31–35	N/A	BEd (ECE Education)	44
MT-Kwame	Teacher	M	8	31–35	N/A	BSc (Agricultural Science)	43
MT-Kabenla	Teacher	M	11	36–40	N/A	MEd (Guidance & Counselling)	42
HT-Baa*	Headteacher	F	8	51–55	14	MEd (Guidance & Counselling)	N/A
HT-Aka+	Headteacher	M	16	51–55	15	MPhil (Education Adm & Mgt)	N/A

Note. Baa* also has MEd (Educational Adm & Mgt) degree; Aka+ is the only male headteacher; FT= female teacher; MT = male teacher; HT = headteacher.

3.4.2 Case Site 2 and Participants

Case site 2, an inclusive-based ECE centre and school, is found in the Aboom Sub-Metro Educational Circuit of the CCMA. It is a single-stream ECE centre and school educating

different children from its catchment community. As seen in Table 3.7, all five case participants were females, and they had Bachelor degrees, except one teacher who was a Diploma holder. Two teachers had 23 years of teaching experience, while the other two teachers had 14 years of teaching experience, which are considered vital for managing inclusive settings. The headteacher had over 20 years of combined teaching and headship experience deemed essential for supporting inclusive practice. Clearly, the class sizes of case site 2 were smaller compared to the case site 1. Table 3.7 shows demographics of the four female teachers and one headteacher at case site 2.

Table 3.7: Demographic Summary of Participants at Case Site 2

Participant	Position	Gender	Teaching		Headship	Qualification	Class size
			experience	Age range	experience		
FT-Abiba	Teacher	F	14	46–50	N/A	BEd(Basic Education)	30
FT-Akasi	Teacher	F	23	46–50	N/A	BEd(Basic Education)	19
FT-Adwoa	Teacher	F	23	46–50	N/A	BEd(Basic Education)	32
FT-Akua	Teacher	F	14	36–40	N/A	Diploma(Basic Education)	31
HT-Dede	Headteacher	F	14	46–50	7	BEd(Basic Education)	n/a

3.4.3 Case Site 3 and Participants

Case site 3 is a private-based ECE centre and school located in Cape Coast Sub-Metro Educational Circuit of the CCMA. As a doubled-stream ECE centre and school, it served different children within its community. All case participants were females, except one male teacher. With the exception of the headteacher who held a Bachelor degree, the others had a Diploma degree or a lower qualification. From Table 3.8, it is evident that the class sizes of case site 3 were fairly large compared to the regional and metropolitan average (see Tables 3.1 and 3.2). In Table 3.8, the demographic profile of the three female teachers and one male teacher, and one headteacher is described.

Table 3.8: Demographic Summary of Participants at Case Site 3

Participant	Position	Gender	Teaching		Headship	Qualification	Class size
			experience	Age range	experience		
FT-Yaba	Teacher	F	30 years	51–55	N/A	Certificate in ECE	40
FT-Ebela	Teacher	F	4.5 years	26–30	N/A	SSCE Certificate	34
FT-Antwiwaa	Teacher	F	5 years	31–35	N/A	Diploma (Basic Education)	33
MT-Kwasi	Teacher	M	12 years	41–45	N/A	Diploma (Basic Education)	33
HT-Mansa	Headteacher	F	33 years	61–65	5 years	BEd (Basic Education)	n/a

3.4.4 Case Site 4 and Participants

Case site 4 is a single-sex, public-based ECE centre and school, sited in Aboom Sub-Metro Educational Circuit of the CCMA, and is also committed to educating the young female children holistically to fit into society. The ECE centre and school is one-stream, with the motto “Each for all and all for all”, which denotes an inclusive principle and value. All five participants at case site 4 were females, and they all had Bachelor degree. The headteacher had a combined teaching and headship experience of 33 years, considered key to managing inclusive setting, while the teachers had teaching experience of between eight and 16 years. With the exception of one class, the class sizes of case site 4 were fairly large compared to the regional and metropolitan average (see Tables 3.1 and 3.2). A demographic summary of participants at case site 4, comprising four female teachers and one headteacher, is outlined in Table 3.9.

Table 3.9: Demographic Summary of Participants at Case Site 4

Participant	Position	Gender	Teaching experience	Age range	Headship experience	Qualification	Class Size
FT-Maama	Teacher	F	8	31–35	N/A	B. Management Studies	26
FT-Oba Yaa	Teacher	F	8	31–35	N/A	B Ed (Basic Education)	40
FT Araba	Teacher	F	13	36–40	N/A	B Ed(Basic Education)	52
FT-Oforiwaa	Teacher	F	15	36–40	N/A	B Ed (Basic Education)	46
HT- Esi	Headteacher	F	16	51–55	15	B Ed (Basic Education)	N/A

From the participant interviews, it was revealed that different types of children with disability, mainly children with mild-moderate disability were present in ECE settings. These comprised mostly children with LD, including slow learners; and children with behaviour and emotional difficulties, hearing difficulty, partial visual impairment, and others classified as having hidden or less obvious disability (Appendix K1).

3.5 Data Analysis and Interpretations

Interview data were iteratively analysed for meaning making and interpretations of IECE implementation. As noted, data collection and analysis are concurrent and interrelated processes for building coherent interpretations (Creswell, 2013; Merriam, 2014; Miles et al., 2014). Data analysis comprised examination, categorisation, and tabulation or consolidation of evidence for drawing empirically based conclusions (Yin, 2009). Succinctly, the data analysis and synthesis mirror a three-flow concurrent activity: data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification (Miles et al., 2014), while “interpretations uncover meanings of personally transformative experiences”

(Stake, 2010, p. 10) through a pattern of interrelationships (Miles et al., 2014). The case sites were holistically analysed (Yin, 2009), with descriptions and contextualisation of these case sites and participants (see section 3.3).

First, there were detailed descriptions of the research sites and participants (Creswell, 2012) to situate implementation of IECE in the Ghanaian context. The data analysis format provided a structure through which rich descriptions of each case was made—the university-based ECE, inclusive pilot ECE, private ECE and public ECE—and themes within the cases and participants, that is, within-case analysis (Creswell, 2013). This is followed with a cross-case analysis of the case participants and sites (Creswell, 2013; Patton, 2015; Stake, 2006; Yin, 2009). The data analysis process identified issues within each case site and across participants, and common themes that transcended the case sites and participants.

3.5.1 Thematic Analysis and Synthesis

This study uses thematic analysis and synthesis to offer thick descriptions, and highlight similarities and differences in experiences, meanings and the reality of participants (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2013), and it also integrates other analytic procedures described by qualitative authors (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007; Creswell, 2013; Miles et al., 2014; Yin, 2013). Thematic analysis of participant semi-structured interview transcripts was used to identify, analyse, and report key themes, which “captures something important about the data in relation to the research questions, and represents some level of *patterned* response or [meaning] within the data set” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 82). As noted, this thematic analysis is based on the interpretative worldview, where meanings and experiences are socially constructed. This study adapted and used Braun and Clarke’s (2006, 2013) six-stage thematic analysis process:

1. Familiarisation and understanding of interview data:
 - (a) verbatim transcription and cleaning of transcripts
 - (b) recheck accuracy of transcripts through replaying of audio interviews
 - (c) import formatted interview transcripts in QSR NVivo 10 (Appendix D1)
 - (d) reread for immersion, familiarisation for depth and breadth of transcripts
 - take selective notes, memos, jottings (e.g., key concepts, ideas or issues) directly in each transcript by using “new comments” function of Microsoft Word or margins of printed transcripts (Appendix D4).
 - (e) active reread transcripts to explore further meanings and patterns

2. Open coding to create initial codes;
 - code transcripts manually (e.g., use direct words—in vivo coding) or auto-code with QSR NVivo 10 after Step c.
3. Refinement of codes to create potential themes/categories;
 - reduce and combine codes for themes.
4. Reviewing and categorising themes for overarching and homogeneous themes;
 - review and reduce code categories.
5. Defining and naming themes;
 - collapse the reduced codes into thematic categories (i.e., subthemes and themes)
 - develop table summaries of themes and subthemes for cross-case and case-specific analysis and findings (Appendix D5).
6. Reporting findings based on themes with direct quotations from the data set.
 - revisit research purpose and questions, and tell a story about case participants and sites through the discovered themes and subthemes, and with literature (Chapter 4).

Appendix D provides further information about the actions in the NVivo and manual coding process. Data management ensures high quality, accessible data, documentation of analysis undertaken, and retention of data and associated analysis after the study is completed (Miles et al., 2014, p. 50). As noted, data analysis commenced with the transcription of interviews. After rereading through the transcripts of participants, note-taking memos were used to develop initial understandings of the interview data (Creswell, 2013). Various memos were used to clarify the results of the data analysis, and were mainly based on the researcher's reflections, which captured key concepts and rationales behind participant interviews (Appendix D3). Following this, initial ideas and understanding were developed about practices, perspectives or issues in IECE from teachers, headteachers and education officials after data immersion, culminating into the production of initial codes, a process called open coding (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Creswell, 2013; Miles et al., 2014; Saldana, 2009). Coding means sorting and categorising data to capture meanings, occurrences, and emergent patterns (Creswell, 2013; Miles et al., 2014), and the “formal representation of analytic thinking” (Marshall & Rossman, 2011, p. 212). There was in vivo coding (e.g., hearts of love), descriptive codes (e.g., understandings), and hierarchical codes (e.g., essential support — professional, motivation, material and human resources), and codes were generated

through critical reflection and careful reading that enhanced the researcher's interpretive familiarity with the data corpus (Miles et al., 2014).

Interview transcripts were aggregated into small categories of information to describe practices, perspectives and issues, and to seek evidence and assign labels to the codes (Creswell, 2013). Such a process entails working systematically through the data set, giving equal attention to identifying interesting aspects of the data that form the basis for recurring patterns and themes across a data set. There was manual coding, where coloured highlighters were used to mark units of information (i.e., potential patterns), as well as selective note-making or commentaries in the margins for interview transcripts and field notes. Manual coding was thus complemented with the use of QSR NVivo 10, a computer-assisted qualitative data analysis (CAQDAS) software, which has been increasingly used in qualitative research (Bazeley & Jackson, 2013; Bryman, 2016; Flick, 2014). QSR NVivo 10 was used mainly for the purpose of auto coding, and to manage and organise the data and resulting patterns (Appendix D2).

There was continuous refinement of initial themes and categories, that is, several aggregated codes that form a common idea (Braun & Clarke, 2006; Creswell, 2013). Through an ongoing review and rereading of coded extracts, I established a coherent pattern to clarify ambiguities, and extended emerging themes. This is important to ensure the internal and external homogeneity of data coherence (Patton, 2015). Specific themes were supported with direct quotations or extracts for interpretation of meanings within and across the case sites. I used my acquaintance with participants to interpret and (re)present understandings and meanings about IECE in Ghana (Yin, 2011).

3.5.2 Cross-Case Analysis

Cross-case analysis articulates a constellation of evidence from the participants and four case sites to show uniformity or disparity characterising IECE practice (Stake, 2006). Cross-case analysis aims to identify what is unique of each case, that is, the situationality of individual cases in the within-case analysis. The researcher's reflections on data analysis enhanced comparison between the different participant roles and four case sites for extracting similarities and differences, or unique instances of perspectives on IECE (Chapter 4).

Cross-case analysis enhances generalisability or transferability to other contexts, or deepens understanding and explanation (Miles et al., 2014). Utilising a highly reductive process and accounting for any rivalry explanations from the case sites and participants,

the cross-case analysis assisted in the development of naturalistic generalisations from the data—generalisations that people can learn from the cases for themselves or apply to a population of cases. In brief, the cross-case approach involved: (1) identifying prominent themes in each case, (2) examining the utility of cases, (3) describing findings relevant to each theme, (4) gathering high importance findings for each theme, and (5) making cross-case assertions with supported findings. In the cross-case analysis, findings from the cases were combined to form assertions that are context-bound or denote site-specific experiences (Stake, 2006) that were data-driven and authenticated with the researcher's stamp. In summary, both within-case and cross-case analyses of case sites and participants provided a chain of evidence that explained IECE practice (Yin, 2009). Appendix D5 shows a sample of manual data reduction for cross-case and case-specific findings.

3.5.3 Change Factor Analysis

The focus of this study was the implementation of IECE in Ghana as a relatively new area of educational practice and research. From within- and cross-case analyses, expected evidence was gained of factors that promote change, such as attitudes towards IECE, moral purpose, capacity and support, leadership and commitment (Ainscow, 2005; Fullan, 2007b; Fullan et al., 2005; Hargreaves & Shirley, 2012; Peters, 2004). While generalisation of the study's findings is limited by the use of case studies, the evidence collected from education officials, headteachers and teachers yielded insights into the change process occurring in IECE implementation. The within- and cross-case analysis and synthesis results were used to gauge where Ghanaian IECE is within the change factor framework, which guided recommendations for future directions in IECE.

3.6 Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness is the extent to which an inquirer can persuade audiences that findings are “worth paying attention to” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 300). This study utilised Lincoln and Guba's (2007) parallel criteria of trustworthiness namely, credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability respectively, as techniques for establishing the truth value, applicability, consistency and neutrality of interpretations of the case studies, explained as follows.

Credibility defines whether or not the reconstructions (i.e., interpretations) of the researcher corresponds with (i.e., are credible) the constructors (i.e., participants' actual views) of the original multiple realities (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Three integrated

techniques were applied to enhance the credibility of the study: triangulation, peer debriefing, and member checks (Creswell, 2013; Lincoln & Guba, 2007; Stake, 2010). Triangulation involves the use of multiple and different sources, methods, investigators, and theories to provide corroborating evidence (Lincoln & Guba, 2007; Patton, 2015; Stake, 2010; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). In this study, there was triangulation of data gathered from teachers, headteachers and education officials (data sources) using in-depth interviews. Interview evidence was corroborated to illuminate themes or perspectives of IECE (Creswell, 2013; Yin, 2009). Peer debriefing is important to ensure interpretations are corroborated by others (Lincoln & Guba, 2007; Marshall & Rossman, 2011). In this case, possible research bias was acknowledged, and the research questions and interpretations were discussed with other doctoral students interested in IECE and qualitative research as part of peer debriefing, which enhanced the interpretations of findings. Emerging themes and issues were also discussed with my thesis supervisory team. Member check involves asking participants to check back on the accuracy of themes, interpretations and conclusions (Creswell, 2013; Lincoln & Guba, 2007; Marshall & Rossman, 2011; Stake, 2010; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). To member check, paraphrasing techniques were used in interview sessions for participants to check for accuracy of understandings, and summaries and initial transcripts were also shared with eight (29%) participants for confirming after the interviews. Finally, the data was analysed with the Ghanaian context in mind, and interviews were conducted in an open and relaxed manner with all participants.

Transferability means applying inferences from a specific sending context to a specific receiving context (Lincoln & Guba, 2007). Though generalisation is not the object of this qualitative multiple case study, there was the need to demonstrate the study's applicability to another context (Marshall & Rossman, 2011). In this case study research, there was rich, thick description of research sites and participants (Creswell, 2013; Lincoln & Guba, 2007; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009). Thick descriptions do not just provide details describing the case sites or themes (Creswell, 2013), but also embody abundant, interconnected details (Stake, 2006) that have direct connection with inclusive theory and knowledge (Stake, 2010).

Dependability and confirmability relate to whether findings from this study can be replicated with the same research sites and participants, and whether conclusions and interpretations are coherent with the data (Lincoln & Guba, 2007). To enhance dependability, methodological decisions were appropriately documented (Teddlie &

Tashakkori, 2009). For instance, a pilot case study was conducted, and interview data were personally collected, using similar procedures with participants and case sites. The dependability or consistency (Creswell, 2013; Silverman, 2010, 2011; Yin, 2009) of this qualitative case study was also enhanced through effective data coding system. Peers and supervisors were engaged in reconciliation of initial coding of data and interpretations of findings (Silverman, 2011). The researcher and independent coder [peer] independently coded two samples of the data and held consensus discussions on themes, sub-themes and categories presented as findings. In addition, QSR NVivo 10 was used to assist in cross-checking initial codes in the data set. To enhance the confirmability of this study, interpretations were grounded in data collected from the case sites and participants. There was representation of the participant-researcher voice in interpretations of the results. Descriptive and reflective field notes were taken during data collection (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009).

3.7 Limitations of the Study

This qualitative multiple case study research is not without limitations, though it presents key contextual insights on enacting and enhancing IECE. The overall data collection and selection of four case sites and participants, however, limited the generalisability of this study on implementation of IECE across Ghana. While the study's results are context-specific (Creswell, 2013), they still contribute significant insights into IECE in practice. The case studies provided rich, thick descriptions of teacher practice of IECE and its relationship to teachers' contextual conditions, perspectives and issues in Ghana (Yin, 2011), which serves as a starting point for minimising the research-knowledge gap in this area of policy and practice.

Given the personal engagement and interactive nature of the study, and the researcher's interests, prior teaching and social experiences with some of the participants and research sites, the plausibility of research bias and subjectivity was a significant challenge. But, subjectivity is an essential element of understanding human activity (Stake, 2010). However, to minimise personal subjectivities, the findings and interpretations of data incorporated appropriate illustrative excerpts from participants' interviews. Results from this study are presented as intersubjective interpretations of the researcher and the researched through the use of both objective and subjective perspectives that helped inform and enhance each other. Meanings and interpretations of results were articulated, based on the contextual and international literature on IECE and

filtered through an interpretive lens underlying the study. As Yin (2011, p. 12) articulates: “the researcher cannot in the final analysis avoid [his] own research lens in rendering reality” ; in this research the presentation of meanings or understandings from interview data embodied both participant and researcher perspectives, but the researcher placed a personal stamp on such interpretations (Creswell, 2013). Further limitations of this study are considered in Chapter 6.

3.8 Conclusion

This chapter presented the research design, methodology and paradigm for the current study on implementation of IECE in Ghana. Methodological choices, including in-depth interviews with 27 participants, were informed by the research questions and an examination of empirical evidence and associated literature on IE, ECE and IECE in Ghana and internationally. Limited research has been conducted on IECE policy and change implementation with key participants, and in multiple case sites. Therefore, an in-depth understanding of IECE practice is needed to determine where change implementation is succeeding or otherwise. To achieve deeper understandings and interpretations of IECE, key education officials, and headteachers and teachers in four case sites were purposefully chosen. The data collection and thematic analysis procedures were detailed. The results and discussion of the interviews with participants are reported in Chapter 4.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis and principal findings from the case sites and participants. Data gathered from semi-structured participant interviews is examined to answer the research question: *How is IECE being implemented in Ghana*. To restate, this study explored the implementation of IECE in Ghana in the context of four purposively selected ECE settings, and involved 27 participants. Following the thematic analysis method identified in Chapter 3, key findings identified in relation to each research question are presented and discussed. Emergent themes are supported with appropriate illustrative extracts to enhance the credibility and consistency of the study findings. Care was taken to not only present salient data excerpts, but also capture important or unique perspectives and experiences of participant roles and case sites. Tables are used selectively to map featured examples for themes identified from the thematic analysis or to provide summaries of themes and findings. In this chapter, italicisation is mainly used to highlight or mark some of the exact words of participants or map a finding. In most cases or where appropriate, interview extracts of education officials are presented first, followed by headteachers and teachers, with respective case sites. With the data presentation, names with EO are education officials (e.g., EO-Alua, female education official, and EO-Kofi, male education official); names with HT are headteachers (e.g., HT-Baa, female headteacher, and HT-Aka, male headteacher at case site 1), and; names with MT or FT are teachers (e.g., MT-Kwame, male teacher, and FT-Araba, female teacher, at case site 4), as also shown in Tables 3.5 to 3.9 (Chapter 3).

4.2 RQ 1: What Are the Understandings of IECE?

4.2.1 Understandings of IECE

Understandings of IECE are vital to effective implementation. Broadly, understandings indicate the definitions, interpretations or philosophies of education officials, headteachers and teachers assigned to IECE. Across participant roles and case sites, understandings reflected varied but similar interpretations and meanings of IECE (see Appendix E). Human rights, equity, disability, ability and resources were five key frameworks for understanding IECE (Table 4.1). The five key understandings are discussed in the following sections with illustrative extracts explaining each aspect.

Table 4.1: Understandings of IECE

Understandings	Illustrative examples
Human rights	All children have the same rights to education and social opportunity in inclusive settings, and not in segregated settings. Children with disability are humans. Education, including IECE, is a basic right for all children, backed by legislation.
Equity	Equal access and opportunity to education and social activities for all children. A fair share of teaching (instructional) and social processes for all children. Recognition of the self-worth and potential of all children. Quality teaching and learning for all children.
Disability	Placement of children with disability with normal peers in ECE settings. Educating children with problems, difficulties or special needs in regular schools. Children with disability “can’t fit” without prior preparation.
(Cap)ability	All children have (cap)ability for education and social opportunities. Every child despite disability, race or capacity can learn or “do something”. IECE is an education for all with ability and potential.
Resource-driven	Effective IECE means resource availability and commitment. Multifaceted “resources for all” drive IECE. Contributions from everyone matter.

4.2.2 Human Rights Understandings

Inclusive early childhood education was understood from a perspective of human rights by the participants in this study. The majority of participants—five education officials, five headteachers and thirteen teachers—shared this view across sites. Specifically, they perceived that IECE means that all children, regardless of ability or background, have the right to the same educational and social opportunity in ECE settings as other children, and not in segregated settings. These participants believed the enforcement of children’s human rights for IECE eliminated segregation, discrimination, and exclusion. Children with disability were also seen as humans; hence, IECE is a basic right for them, and not just for a selected few. Most participants felt the human rights perspective of IECE ensures that all children, including those with disability, have an early education in IECE settings.

IECE is a right for the child with disability and others because every child has right to education. So all children can start education early.... In our educational system we have crèche and nursery, but basic education starts from KG, around age 4. The child with some challenges has the right to attend a regular school.
(EO-Kofi)

IECE is a right for every child irrespective of disability, and even race, culture, ethnic group and religious affiliations or whatever. Children with disabilities are human beings too; they haven’t made themselves so. Such children must their right to education by having IECE. (HT-Baa-CS1)

IECE and education is a right of all children. *The child with disability should enjoy the right to teaching, learning and social activities like others. The law [Ghana's constitution] supports the educational rights of such children in regular schools like ours.* (FT-Araba-CS4)

Practically, there were clear-cut reservations or apprehensive lenses used for the applicability or acceptability of human rights for *all children*, which was attributed to the vulnerability of some children, severity of disability, or teachers' lack of knowledge or competency. For example, "IECE should be for only children with mild-moderate disability" (EO-Abi). This means that IECE is a conditional practice for some children. Therefore, IECE mostly privileges children with disability who are thought to be manageable, signifying a "subtle discrimination" in promoting the rights of all children. However, some education officials, headteachers or teachers who believed in human rights also held a disability view of IECE.

4.2.3 Equity understandings

Although related to the human rights understandings, equity was another understanding of IECE that was shared by two headteachers and a small number (five) of teacher participants. IECE was interpreted from an equity perspective as equal access to education and social opportunity for all children. This entailed the "enjoyment of a fair share of instructional activities" (FT-Antwiwaa-CS3) or social processes in ECE settings by all children, devoid of discrimination or inequities. For these teachers, equity meant fairness and quality education for all children. The headteachers and teachers who shared this perspective felt IECE provided equal opportunities and experiences, and recognised the self-worth and potential of children with disability, which further children's human rights entitlement.

The inclusive [ECE] means providing equal access or opportunity to schools for all children whether they have disability or not. Because of the free education children will have the chance to also attend the same schools and be included in the activities. (HT-Dede-CS2)

Ghana's constitution, Article 25 talks about education for all children including those with disability or whatever. This education means *quality teaching and learning for all children*. So IECE means everyone has that access. *[All] children have equal access is important.* (MT-Kwame-CS1)

Children with disability should take part in every activity or given special attention so that they feel that equality in class. Yes, they are involved so that there is equity. *IECE is about that [equality] so children have a fair share of the instruction or teaching activities.* (FT-Antwiwaa-CS3)

Clearly, an equity perspective of IECE strives to counter exclusive practices and increase access and presence, but, more importantly, it also strives to expand participation and engagement in ECE opportunities for all children. This understanding was especially held by two headteachers at case sites 2 (the inclusive pilot setting) and 4 (a private ECE setting), and five teachers at case sites 1 (a university-based ECE setting), 3 (a public ECE setting) and 4, who also noted that equity was the basis for operationalising effective IECE. Thus, without equity, all children cannot fully enjoy their fundamental human rights to involvement and participation in activities of inclusive settings. The synergy of the human rights and equity perspectives was seen to foster effective IECE. Thus without IECE, the right or access to and participation in ECE would not be a reality for some children; however, Ghana is a signatory to international conventions on IE and “shall ensure IECE” (CRPD, Article 24[1]).

4.2.4 Disability understandings

In contrast to the human rights and equity perspectives, the majority of the participants across roles and sites, except site 1, took a disability perspective. Four education officials, three headteachers and 11 teachers felt the extent of children’s disabilities was a selection criterion for inclusion. These participants’ disability understanding embedded a medical/deficit discourse of disability, which focused mainly on children’s disability, special needs, and the lacks, and inability (i.e., *have-not*) or placement in ECE settings from segregated settings. The severity of disability is also embedded in policy, hence reflects these participants’ views. Implicit in the disability understanding were participant responses such as “children with disability needed *prior preparation* for acquisition of key skills and competencies *before* (emphasis added) being deemed capable of succeeding or functioning in ECE settings” (FT-Ebela-CS3) or “segregated if children with disability are problematic or impact those without disability” (HT-Dede-CS2). This means the child’s disability was central to how, why, when and who is included or otherwise, making IECE a conditional, deterministic, or selective practice. It implies that without the preparation or capacity, IECE was elusive or led to the perpetuation of integration/mainstreaming or exclusion. The disability-oriented understanding thus

projected dualistic placement due to the supposedly “unfit” or “ineligible” children with disability, or preservation of IECE settings for some groups of children, as best expressed in the following extracts.

In IECE all children with disability should be educated in ECE centres or schools with normal children but that’s *not* the case. *Some children with disability have huge challenges, or disabilities are in different levels. Not all children with disability can fit in the schools.* So, children with disability must be trained to get some skills before they are included. (EO-Alua)

The inclusive [IECE] is where disabled peers join their normal mates at the regular classes, and learn together as we have here. *But some children having disability have difficulties so we need to prepare such children very well before they are included.* (FT-Akasi-CS2)

Clearly, participants’ disability-oriented understanding connoted a restrictive view of inclusive practice, or that IECE is a normative practice for some children, but not children with disability. One explanation for the prevalent disability view of IECE may be due to the perceived thinking or belief, and Ghanaian official policy that special schools are responsible for educating children with disability. However, one reason the disability view of IECE was not evident at case site 1 can be attributed to the fact that the site serves as a model centre for inclusive practice or training and PD, hence the teachers and headteachers may be well exposed to the concept of IE. Hence, case site 1 participants felt IECE was not only about the child’s disability but what teachers *can do* to foster all children’s involvement, or learning and social interactions in ECE settings.

4.2.5 (Cap)ability understandings

Conversely, IECE was also understood from an ability perspective. This perspective was held by three education officials, two headteachers and three teachers (all at case site 1) but only one teacher at case site 4. These participants interpreted IECE as a (cap) ability phenomenon, which implied that the child’s strength or ability to function, perform or achieve ‘something’ formed the basis for inclusion, rather than the child’s disability or SEN. It means that IECE is for all children, which contradicted the disability perspective that IECE was for some “eligible” children. The ability perspective indicated a broader interpretation of IECE as it embraced all children, regardless of their (dis)ability, background, and capacities. Since some participants also considered that IECE coincided with “the admission of every child on *attainment* of the school entry age” (EO-Abeka),

the ability understanding fosters the inclusion of more children in ECE settings at an early age. Further, participants who held an ability perspective felt that IECE was an all-embracing, anti-discriminatory and welcoming practice for children. It means that effective IECE programs would enable all children to develop their potential and capacity within a supporting learning and social milieu. The ability perspective of the different participant roles is best captured in these illustrative extracts:

IECE as a policy means [e]very-one. The [Education] Act says everybody—so those with abilities and strengths; children with disabilities or whatever type of disability should be educated or enrolled to mingle with normal children. So everyone who has attained the school-going age is included and IECE starts with the admission of every child. Yes! The child with disability has strength. (EO-Abeka)

IECE means teaching all children with or without disability with materials ... creating accessibility, or using flexible curriculum. What is important are the abilities of children. Children with disability have abilities to learn or can learn or do something. If we always think about the disability, how can we include such children in education or social opportunities? It goes beyond the disability and bringing all children under one roof. (EO-Atta)

The inclusive [ECE] is a new term. But it's the totality of education given to all children based on their abilities, and not their disabilities as some people think. The [IE] law is for all children to get educated. It's the thoroughness or all-round education for all children. Whether the IE still means mainstreaming or not, all children can do something ... they have potentials. (HT-Aka-CS1)

In my opinion IECE is educating children no matter their abilities, including children with disability in the same learning environment, and their participation in the learning, social activities and other aspects. So they all start early and develop their talents. (FT-Oforiwaa-CS4)

As clarified in the above extracts, participants considered what all children can do as pivotal to IECE practice, and this is supported in the context of IE legislation and policies. However, one headteacher's view of the ability perspective indicated that "children's (cap)abilities co-existed with weaknesses, which must be concurrently recognised in order to promote effective IECE" (HT-Baa-CS1). This means disability is seen as a normal part of life, but what mattered was scaffolding children to develop their potential. Ideal IECE is thus a celebration of differences and empowerment of children.

The ability perspective conveyed an understanding that IECE must shift from a recurrent focus on disability that limits the inclusion of children, and instead leverage many children to access education and social opportunities. While overall, eight participants held the ability perspective, it connoted a broader view of inclusive practice, and the need for an ideological shift in thinking or attitudes towards educational provision for all children, whose “ultimate goal should develop each and every one for life and for society” (MT-Kwame-CS1).

4.2.6 Resource-driven perspectives

IECE was also perceived as a resource-driven practice across roles and case sites. This understanding of IECE implied the availability of requisite resources enhanced or impeded IECE practice or the capacity of ECE settings to meet the needs of all children. Three education officials, three headteachers (sites 1, 3 and 4) and six teachers (sites 1, 2 and 4) shared that successful IECE warranted resources from policy makers, especially central government or education officials, and other stakeholders, without which implementation was challenging for implementers, especially teachers. For example, if all children were included, “many resources”, “multi-professional support”, or “contributions from everyone” were important (FT-Aba-CS1). IECE was perceived to require resource commitment. However, the way the resource-focus was understood was specific to individual sites. While at case site 1, additional facilities and teacher expertise were seen to engineer the inclusion of all children, including those with severe-profound disability, at case site 2, resources were needed to include children with mild-moderate disability. The resource-oriented understanding was thus related to the severity of disability, that is, the disability perspective:

If all children are on board [IECE], *we need to modify all activities, curriculum, and have a systematic way to involve children with disability. Even the building must change. We need necessary resources for all children or teachers. The severe ones like the visually impaired ... [I]f they are included we must have specialists who can handle those children in inclusive schools ... specialists who can use the Braille; I can't use it.* (FT-Ama-CS1)

We don't have the resources and materials to include children with disability. So, if we [headteachers and teachers] are to include many of these [children with disability] it means there should be more resources for IECE. More teachers, experts and other people ... (HT-Mansa-CS3)

In my view the inclusive [ECE] requires expertise or resources. If they [government] want teachers or headteachers to include children with disability in all the schools there must be more resources. Train teachers, redesign schools or provide materials. When there are resources IECE practice can succeed. But now there aren't enough resources. (EO-Alua)

Interestingly, the same teachers at case sites 2 and 4, headteachers at sites 3 and 4, and education officials, who held a resource-driven perspective of IECE, also held a disability perspective, but the teachers at case site 1 still expressed an ability perspective. While no headteacher at case site 2 or teacher at site 3 interpreted IECE as resource-oriented, the perception was that “resources for all” gives practical meaning to implementation. For education officials, necessary resources must drive IECE, but two headteachers strongly felt the lack of resources could be used as an excuse for the exclusion of children with disability. Though this may be a concern, one case site 1 headteacher believed teachers do their best to enhance IECE. The lack of resources may not necessarily be used to deny children with disability, but rather propel implementers to look for supportive ways to foster inclusive practice.

Over here we get training or other resources from the university. The Child Development Centre helps. Other teachers in some schools may not get such resources but they are doing something. Resources are good but if they aren't forthcoming, does it mean we won't support children with disability? Will this be a reason for denying such children? We must do something! (HT-Aka-CS1)

Overall, the varied understandings suggest IECE policies are enacted in different ways. Education officials (i.e., policy makers), headteachers and teachers (i.e., key policy implementers) had a mix of shared understandings of IECE. These understandings are connected to the expectations, importance and perceived outcomes of IECE, training, PD, support, expected practice and teacher quality, and the enablers and barriers of IECE, which will be discussed later in this chapter.

Although participants expressed mixed understandings of IECE, they were similar to those reported in other research. Research literature shows that interpretations of IECE vary contextually, culturally, nationally, and even globally among implementers (Armstrong et al., 2010; Carrington & MacArthur, 2013; Deiner, 2014; Odom et al., 2011; Winter, 2007). For example, teachers have different understandings that influence conceptualisation (Deku & Ackah Jnr, 2012) and actual practice (Carrington &

MacArthur, 2013) of IECE, creating tensions for ECE centres or schools (Liasidou, 2012). A. C. Armstrong et al. (2010) similarly note that the way inclusion is conceptualised may differ significantly in the practice of policy makers, administrators, principals and teachers working in different national and educational contexts.

Disability understandings of IECE are dominant in the research (Jones, 2004; Nutbrown & Clough, 2006), attributable to the origin of IECE and a medical model of disability that influences thinking about inclusive practice (Hodkinson & Vickerman, 2009; Nutbrown & Clough, 2006). The human rights, ability and equity understandings are broader beliefs and philosophies of IECE, which highlight the importance of including many more potentially excluded, marginalised or discriminated groups in ECE settings (Nutbrown & Clough, 2006; Okyere & Adams, 2003). Findings in the current study also support previous findings that IECE reflects a capability approach to education for children with disability or to the development of children's abilities and skills (Underwood, 2013; Underwood, Valeo, & Wood, 2012). This is driven by a transactional (social, capability or socio-political) discourse of disability (Hodkinson & Vickerman, 2009) aimed at increasing presence and eliminating barriers to participation and learning to create an inclusive environment for all.

In summary, understandings of IECE are critical. Such understandings may define practice and expectations, and what is valued about implementation. Although participants mostly viewed IECE as being about human rights and the equity, capability, and resource-driven perspectives, the disability-oriented understanding is still dominant in current thinking and practice. This was seen to perpetuate exclusive practices, labelling, and the associated language of disability and SEN. While IECE was conceptualised differently, and the heterogeneity of meanings reflects the history and development of IE, the varied understandings, whether contradictory or restrictive and broad, affect practice or beliefs about IECE philosophy. But, paradoxically, it may be difficult to get consensus of understanding or interpretation of IECE due to the ever-changing people and contexts. However, when policy makers and policy implementers share understandings of IECE, they can collaboratively steer implementation in the shared direction. Taken together, participants' differing understandings can create a "confusion-matrix" of associated meanings, interpretations and implementation practices within contexts. Therefore, the different but somewhat similar understandings, attributed to each site, more importantly, participants' roles will generate different but complementary pathways for implementation of IECE.

4.3 RQ 2: What are the expectations for IECE in Ghana?

During the interviews with participants, only education officials and headteachers stated their expectations for IECE. These were high expectations and seen to be significant in directing present IECE practice and the attainment of its goals in Ghana. The participants identified six expectations as critical for implementing IECE: training and PD, leadership, policy development, parent involvement, collaboration and communication, and government support (Table 4.2).

Table 4.2: Expectations of IECE

Expectation	Illustrative examples
Training and PD	Ongoing training and PD Special training and skills Inclusive knowledge. Knowledge of disability and individual differences
Leadership	Leadership at all levels (classroom, school and system) Effective, committed and supportive, or visionary leadership. Leadership knowledge
Policy development	Supportive national or school IECE policies and legislation Availability of policy documents
Parent involvement	Effective and active parent involvement Effective parent role and responsibility Parent as resources, partners or collaborators
Collaboration	Within school collaboration. External collaboration with professionals and experts External support and collaboration from NGOs
Government support	Adequate resources and facilities. Adaptive technology Teaching-learning materials

4.3.1 Training and Professional Development

Continuous training and PD were seen as the most important and dominant expectation for implementing IECE. All the education officials and headteachers across all case sites reported that effective training and PD that have the propensity to sharpen teachers' knowledge, skills and pedagogies in meeting the identified needs of children with disability should be fundamental to IECE practice. For education officials and headteachers, inclusion-oriented training and PD were vehicles for helping teachers become "more knowledgeable and skilful" (HT-Dede-CS2). These participants believed it is important to predispose teachers to IECE knowledge, skills and competencies. For example, "ongoing workshops and seminars that equip teachers with new tricks" (EO-Abi) or "specialised training" were necessary for inclusive practice (EO-Alua). Therefore, it was expected that both teachers and headteachers "continue to learn and

train for IECE” (EO-Kofi). Training and PD are the centrepiece of effective IECE, without which implementation could be “*very challenging for teachers who might not be exposed to inclusive practice*” (EO-Kofi) during their preservice teacher education. Indeed, education officials’ optimistic expectations of training and PD emerged in considerable comments including:

I expect that all teachers are well trained in inclusive [early childhood] education. Teachers in schools need special training and skills so that they can deal with special children and other children. If teachers don’t have the skills, they will treat children with disability like normal children. Teachers should know much about those with disability and the practice. (EO-Alua)

My expectations are there should be more workshops or training to prepare headteachers and teachers to have new ideas and knowledge for what they are doing [IECE]. Even the GES officials, especially circuit supervisors should be trained to understand the need for inclusive early education so that during their school visits, they know what to do or can help teachers or headteachers who face problems. Training must be the centre of IECE. (EO-Abi)

Three education officials and three headteachers specified types of key inclusive issues that headteachers and teachers need to know: disability; individual differences; and inclusive legislation, policies and practices to enhance IECE implementation.

There are individual differences that teachers must be aware of. When teachers or headteachers know such differences they can cater for all children. To teach children with disability, you must first know them in order to meet their needs. This knowledge is needed by teachers for IECE practice. (HT-Baa-CS1)

Understanding of policies on inclusive early education is another good thing. If they [teachers and heads] understand the policies or laws [they] can educate parents too on what they need to do to support children with disability or even where they [teachers and headteachers] can go when they face problems educating children with disability. (EO-Akos)

These are critical findings, as Simpson and Warner (2010) also stress the necessity of teachers having knowledge of the uniqueness of children and their needs in ECE settings to foster IECE. While increasing knowledge on legislation and policy related to inclusion alone does not alleviate preservice teachers’ concerns (Forlin & Chambers, 2011), it may enhance understanding of IECE.

Interestingly, two education officials highlighted the value of extending training and PD to all education officials because knowledgeable officials can offer assistance to or support for headteachers and teachers implementing IECE. Such training and PD considered important for headteachers and teachers included key inclusive issues such as knowledge of IECE policies and legislation, disability, and managing IECE settings; but perhaps education officials also need inclusive leadership knowledge. It means enhancing all educators' knowledge and understanding to provide additional impetus for IECE, making implementation a matter for all stakeholders (Nutbrown & Clough, 2006). Such knowledge flow is likely to engineer sustained collaboration among policy makers and implementers.

The results are consistent with international research that shows that knowledgeable and skilful teachers are invaluable and enhance successful IECE practice (e.g., Carrington et al., 2013; Gruenberg & Miller, 2011; Kearney, 2011). The findings further reveal that the training and PD expectations for headteachers and teachers to foster IECE should be that of empowerment (Liasidou, 2012; Soodak et al., 2002) or promote the development of an inclusive mind-set (Carrington et al., 2013).

4.3.2 Leadership

Five of the six education officials, and four of the five headteacher participants across the case sites reported leadership from education officials, headteachers and teachers as another essential element of effective IECE. These education officials and headteachers were highly expectant of effective leadership at all levels, considering that leadership from the entire education system, including policy makers, contributed to successful IECE. Three education officials and four headteachers across the case sites, except at site 3, expected headteachers to set a vision, direction and expectations for inclusive practice. Headteachers were seen to occupy “strong positions, which shape attitudes and practices” of teachers (HT-Aka-CS1). However, two education officials expected people in their role “to do what effective education leaders do best” (EO-Kofi) to support headteacher and teacher leadership in IECE. Specifically, strong and visionary leadership from all educational leaders to enforce positive attitude development and holistic changes was perceived as necessary for IECE. This was captured succinctly in the extract of one education official:

With people's attitudes, you need strong leadership to change or put things in place. So, leaders with vision for inclusive [early childhood] education ...

Directors of Education and Special Education Division, regular school headteachers should have some kind of dynamic vision that will give a whole process a change. If we don't have that strong leadership then the practice should no longer be viewed as a means of helping all students with disability or not. (EO-Atta)

Implicit in the above extract, effective leaders identify and address barriers to IECE (e.g., negative attitudes and inadequate resources). So, leadership that creates change or an environment for IECE was seen as highly significant for effective implementation. It means that if all educators lead IECE, it will be successful and benefit all children. However, despite the call for effective leadership, especially at the school level, one headteacher stressed that barriers to IECE arising from “insufficient resources, or training” need to be mitigated (HT-Dede-CS2).

One compelling view shared by two education officials and one headteacher at case site 1 related to leadership knowledge. These participants considered that educational leaders, including headteachers and teachers, needed knowledge of IECE to foster “commitment and interest in practice” (EO-Kofi). Particularly at the school level, headteachers need to “exhibit leadership by demonstrating in-depth inclusive knowledge and providing instructional leadership” for IECE (EO-Atta). Similarly, teachers were expected to demonstrate leadership by possessing inclusive knowledge (e.g., effective instruction or management skills). Thus, at the classroom level, the teacher is expected to lead IECE. These findings reinforce that leaders with in-depth knowledge of IECE, grow in commitment and provide continuous support for effective implementation. It implies that training and PD should essentially develop educational leaders' knowledge. Therefore, inclusive leadership knowledge should form a critical part of training and PD for implementing IECE.

Leadership may not have 100% in-depth knowledge about inclusive [early childhood] education, but the policy must be implemented. Leaders should be grounded in knowledge of children with SEN. The leader's commitment and interest may wither with time because of limited knowledge. But if you have in-depth knowledge, your interest grows. We have ordinary children who aren't performing.... Considering IECE if you don't have knowledge you see to its superficial practice. You do what you can! So, *all leaders must have knowledge.* (EO-Kofi)

These key participant perspectives on the need for leadership, and knowledgeable leadership, confirmed previous research that identifies leadership as a critical ingredient and driver for IECE practice (Billingsley et al., 2014; Delaney, 2001; Gibson & Blandford, 2005; McLeskey et al., 2013; Precey & Mazurkiewicz, 2013). In particular, headteacher leadership is essential to ensure that changes occur as schools become more effective and inclusive for all students (McLeskey, Waldron, & Redd, 2014). Headteacher leadership is seen to provide support and assurance for teachers, students and other school staff (Billingsley et al., 2014; Gibson & Blandford, 2005).

4.3.3 Policy Development

Some participants expected that development of policy and the availability of such documents would support IECE practice. Of significance was the belief that “developing strong supportive IECE policies and legislation” promotes effective implementation (EO-Atta). Such policies were seen as a “guiding force” that shapes implementation practice and expectations. Three education officials and two headteachers at case sites 1 and 2 considered IECE policies at the national level as the key vehicles for practice, to safeguard the participation, provision of education, and opportunities for all children. One headteacher at case site 1 envisaged the need for school-level policy, but acknowledged this should be based on the national policy. These views suggest that inclusive policies are critical to practice, and signify commitment to an initiative. While there are no specific national IECE policies in Ghana, these participants believed IECE policies offer “guidance and direction to implementers, and most importantly support meaningful practice” (EO-Alua). Although “good IECE policies”, whether at the national or school level, may not easily translate into effective practice, the participants felt they provided a supportive framework for implementation, as best described in this excerpt:

When we look at any good implementation there are polices backing it. So, IECE must have strong polices from government/MOE or some force backing it so things are put into practice effectively. The policies will give implementers [teachers, heads or education officials] guidelines so that things follow particular trends. Headteachers or teachers must know what to do in practice. There should be good policies in place so that IECE is guarded zealously so the right things are done. If there’s no backing, what we are doing may be superficial. The policy shouldn’t be something else. (EO-Atta)

Many researchers (e.g., Armstrong et al., 2010; Jones, 2004; Liasidou, 2012; Mitchell, 2010; Peters, 2004) have identified the importance of IECE policies at the international, national and school levels as they have an impact on practice, teacher preparation, and expectations. Peters (2004) claims that inclusive policies that are morally, culturally and politically informed are necessary. Armstrong et al. (2010) agree, suggesting that policies that articulate the underlying ideologies of a country make practice more socio-culturally and educationally relevant. The education officials and headteachers in this study did not indicate the scope of national or school IECE policies that might “ensure the right things are done” (EO-Atta). As noted in Chapter 2, Ghana’s IE is influenced by international policies and conventions that support a socio-human rights perspective, though a medical-deficit model still persists in current practice. As such, having IECE policies that embed not only the global IE discourse, but also reflect current values and concerns are important.

Three education officials and two headteachers identified the need for national policy documents on IECE to illustrate practices. They believed national IECE policy documents serve as reference resources for further reading and understanding of expectations. Hence, the availability of national IECE policy documents was seen to enhance teachers’ understanding and knowledge of practice.

I wish the various schools have policy documents, for example, Disability Act, IE policy. They [GES] should provide documents backing implementation of IECE. It will surprise you that teachers sometimes do things differently after workshops. GES should [provide] such documents for teachers and heads to have some point of reference or learn the expectations of IECE. (EO-Abi)

IECE is a policy that teachers, headteachers and others are implementing. From time to time they need to read and be abreast of what is happening. When documents on IECE are available; they can read on what is expected. It’s vital the documents are made available. (EO-Alua)

Although there is no concrete national or school level policy on IECE in Ghana, if there were to be one, it should be crafted in “plain implementation language” and be made available to teachers (HT-Aka-CS1). School-level IECE policies (Gibson & Blandford, 2005; Jones, 2004; Purdue, 2009) are considered necessary to guide practice and enforce commitment to inclusive beliefs, ethos and values. Similarly, Ainscow et al. (2006) affirm that developing inclusive policies, practices and structures at the school

level can activate inclusive values. It means the development of supportive national and school level policy is likely to promote IECE practice.

4.3.4 Parent involvement

A recurrent theme in the data was the expectation of “enhanced parent involvement”. Almost all (i.e., five) education officials and five headteachers across the case sites stated that active parent involvement promotes successful IECE implementation in several ways. First, parent involvement was seen as reinforcement and a bridge to strong home-ECE setting connections that support IECE. Active parent involvement supplemented schools’ and teachers’ efforts, serving as a motivation for continued education of all children, especially those with disability. Parents are expected to reinforce “the learning of children with disability at home” (HT-Mansa-CS3). Thus, parents have significant roles and responsibilities, including effective care and attention, and the provision of requisite supports for their children. Comments capturing the scale of parent involvement expectations included:

Parents must do something to support teachers’ efforts. If parents help schools in educating children with SEN, teachers would be motivated. If parents aren’t willing, teachers may also withdraw. When a child is identified with a problem, parents should play their expected roles at home and school. If teachers play their part, parents should also support teachers so that there’s no gap. Parents should help such children at home as teachers do [at] school. It must be consistent. (EO-Kofi)

Second, parents are seen as important resources and partners in IECE. One education official considered that parents can provide helpful insights on their children’s ability/disability and needs, and have intimate knowledge and skills that can support their children’s learning, development and participation in ECE settings. Hence, as effective partners in ECE settings, parents can enhance IECE. The involvement of parents was perceived as best practice:

We are looking at best practices; when parents are involved, they can give lots of help and ideas. You know, [p]arents are first and foremost people who know about their wards’ ability or disability. Parents must be involved so they can to volunteer information to service providers, teachers, or people who help the child with disability. We can use their skills. The care parents give is important. (EO-Atta)

Clearly, provision of a connection with the home and support for the work of teachers were seen by EOs and headteachers as likely to promote IECE. These perspectives from participants not only align with extant international research but also stress the crucial role of parental involvement in education, and specifically IECE (e.g., Ackah Jnr & Appiah, 2011; Allen & Cowdery, 2015; Deiner, 2013; McLeskey et al., 2013; Nutbrown & Clough, 2006; Turnbull et al., 2013; Winter, 2007).

Research shows that parents are important collaborators in IECE (Deiner, 2013; Nutbrown & Clough, 2006). Two education officials and two headteachers (case sites 2 and 3) shared a similar view. They recognised strong parent-teacher groups as key to encouraging active parent involvement in IECE. Traditionally, such groups have been used to engage parents in decisions regarding children's problems and academic outcomes, but effective parent-teacher groups should create opportunities for "deliberating issues affecting parents of children with disability" (EO-Abi). Thus, parent involvement was seen as an interactive or collaborative process where parents, teachers and other key societal members partner in search of support for IECE.

While parent involvement was seen as vital for IECE, two education officials and two headteachers (case sites 2 and 4) envisaged challenges, mainly the "lack of motivation of some parents to actually get involved" (EO-Kofi). Although there is a capitation grant for all children and feeding programs in selective schools meant to alleviate the financial burden of poor families, some parents did not take advantage of such programs to engage meaningfully in their children's education. The lack of parent involvement was linked to parent background (e.g., education, finance, unemployment or community), perceptions of IECE, and educational level. It is therefore important to develop explicit approaches or a parent involvement policy to foster parent involvement in IECE.

*Parent involvement is lacking in some communities. There is capitation grant and feeding programs in some schools to support all children. But the motivation to get involved isn't there. Some parents, especially along the coast, don't have enough role models or appreciate the benefits of education so don't see the need for IE. If a child has disability the financial support ...? If a child isn't doing well in school, they may ask the child to be at the beach or *do whatever to support the parents*. So it depends on the community, but some parents are really supportive. *Other parents are relaxing because of their backgrounds or education.* (EO-Kofi)*

4.3.5 Collaboration

In addition to collaboration between schools and parents, two education officials and two headteachers at case sites 1 and 4 had high expectations for increased collaboration across system levels as an essential element for inclusive practice. Collaboration between the GES (e.g., Metro Education Directorate) and NGOs that support the education of children with disability was vital for “procuring resource materials and other facilities, or providing training and PD” to enhance teacher knowledge and skills (EO-Abi). The findings show that collaboration as a shared responsibility enhances IECE. Without collaboration, “IECE is difficult; the GES cannot do IECE alone but must collaborate with NGOs and others” (EO-Abi).

Two headteachers stressed the need for external collaboration. Effective external collaboration was perceived as a flagship element for meaningful IECE since “headteachers and teachers need to work as a team with other experts or professionals to achieve the objectives of inclusive practice” (HT-Aka-CS1). Through collaborative teamwork with multiple professionals and experts from different agencies, teachers and headteachers gain additional knowledge, ideas and skills or other resources for IECE. ECE setting and health system collaboration was seen to foster the provision of coordinated health-related services and support for children with disability, especially when such children are “referred” (HT-Aka-CS1).

Previous research has also identified that collaboration is valuable for successful IECE (Ackah Jnr, 2010b; Gibson & Blandford, 2005; McLeskey et al., 2013; Odom et al., 2011; Smith et al., 2012). The findings also indicate that collaboration has the propensity to provide integrated, high-quality, holistic child-focused services (Gibson & Blandford, 2005) and supports to teachers.

4.3.6 Government support

Government support for IECE in terms of resource provision and commitment was identified as another key expectation. Three education officials and all headteachers considered the government’s provision of facilities, including adaptive technology, teaching materials and other resources, as necessary for IECE as they affect instructional practices and children’s learning and involvement in ECE activities. In many Ghanaian ECE settings there are inadequate material resources, and government is seen as having responsibility for the provision of these. Two education officials recognised the overt need for adaptive technology, and expected central government, through the MOE/GES,

to make provisions for such materials and others to enhance teachers' work and the participation of all children in ECE settings.

And we expect *government or GES to provide all the needed facilities* for schools. Teachers and children [those with disability] need to get some devices and other materials to use in ECE settings. These materials or things are important for learning. (EO-Alua)

Clearly, government support for resource provision is necessary, reinforcing the resource-driven perspective of IECE seen earlier. As such, the EOs and headteachers felt conscious that government efforts and investment were required for procuring suitable facilities and needs-specific materials, including adaptive technologies for IECE. In this regard, some participants felt that the MOE should collaborate with NGOs for support in acquiring adaptive technology and other facilities. Government support has been identified as critical for IECE (Purdue, 2009). Similarly, research shows that adaptive technology enhances children's functionality and independence, fostering mobility and communication in IECE settings (Allen & Cowdery, 2015; McLeskey et al., 2013; Simpson & Warner, 2010).

In summary, education officials and headteachers held high and optimistic expectations for IECE implementation. Training and PD, leadership and policy development, as well as collaboration and government support were seen as key areas that require urgent attention and provision to guide effective IECE. Hence, they should become high priority areas or considerations in order to promote successful IECE.

4.4 RQ 3a: What Are the Expected and Reported IECE Practices in Ghana?

4.4.1 Expected and Reported Practices

Expected practices are practices perceived by education officials and headteachers as necessary to be implemented by teachers, while reported practices are the actual practices teachers implement to create meaningful educational and social experiences for all children in IECE settings. A range of valued practices, some expected but not necessarily evident in practice, as well as practices reported as occurring in practice, were associated with effective IECE. The practices clustered into two categories: (a) 11 pedagogical practices, and (b) two organisational practices. Of the 13 identified practices, eight were expected practices, while five were reported practices. While all the eight expected practices were pedagogical practices, three of the reported practices were pedagogical

practices, and two were organisational practices (Table 4.3). Some of these practices were specific to participant roles and case sites (see Appendix F).

Practices expected by education officials and headteachers and reported by teachers are first discussed, followed by practices expected by education officials and reported by teachers, and then reported but not expected practices are discussed.

Table 4.3: Expected and Reported Practices

Practice	Illustrative examples
Pedagogical practice	
Involvement in daily activities*	Active involvement of all children in daily activities
Individualised instruction*	One-on-one instruction, special attention and support Needs-driven instruction
Curriculum adaptation/task differentiation*	Adapting/enriching the curriculum, or providing differential tasks Individualised education plans
Prompts*	Verbal, visual and physical prompts or others (reminders, assistance or guidance) that foster learning and engagement in social activities
Group instruction/grouping *	Small and whole group instruction Ability and mixed-ability group instruction
Activity method*	Use of activity teaching methods
Demonstration*	Use of demonstration teaching methods
Motivation+	Differential motivation (verbal praise, encouragement or rewards) Recognition of self-worth, ability and potential of children. Using children interests and likes to foster learning or involvement
Reteaching+	Reteaching lessons to meet children’s specific needs
Peer tutoring+	Assigning children without disability to provide learning and social support to those with disability
Play*	“Productive” play for all children
Organisational practice	
Seating arrangement+	Effective seating or classroom arrangement based on children’s needs
Use of student-teachers on practicum+	Bi-weekly one-on-one practicum program for children with disability

Note. *Expected and reported practice; +Reported practice only

4.4.2 Practices Expected by Education Officials and Headteachers and Reported by Teachers

Involvement in daily activities, individualised instruction, and curriculum adaptation /task differentiation were three practices expected by education officials and headteachers, and reported by most teachers as occurring in practice. These practices were frequently shared among most participants and across the case sites, except for curriculum adaptation.

Involvement in daily activities

Children's involvement in daily activities was an expected and reported practice commonly shared among all education officials and headteachers, and 10 teachers. The majority of participants, irrespective of roles and case sites, expressed the need for the active involvement of all children, especially children with disability, in daily activities (e.g., routines, programs or schedules) in order for them to participate in learning experiences and the associated social processes to which they are seen to be entitled. Most education officials, headteachers and teachers identified involvement as the heart of effective IECE. For example, the education officials and headteachers considered child-centred practices critical for IECE, and subsequently most teachers reported that children with disability were given turns to answer questions, engaged in the same lessons, and participated in physical education and excursions with peers without disability. In distinctive comments, involvement was perceived as an effective practice that enhanced children's learning, sustained attention and interest, and created opportunities for acceptance and belonging:

We expect teachers to make lessons child-centred. They should really involve all children in whatever activity. Children with SEN want things to play with. If you teach in the abstract, how can they be involved? When you give children materials, as they interact they learn. So, we want teachers to focus on child-centred education and involve all children in their teaching tasks. (EO-Kofi)

Teachers must use child-centred approach to involve the child with disability or not in all activities. Using more teaching-learning aids is useful. Children can't sit for long due to short attention span. Teachers must find many ways to involve ... (HT-Baa-CS1)

*[A]lways I make the child with disability contribute in class. Actually I want him to feel part of the class. So the child *too participates in what others are doing*. I ensure the child is part of the activities, PE and contributing. *I find ways and means to work it* [involvement]. (MT-Kwasi-CS3)*

Implicitly, the involvement of children with disability in daily activities limits exclusive practices, as teachers must plan and use effective ways and means to include all children in activities. Across all the case sites, involvement was noted as a common practice by at least some participants, but noted more frequently by more participants at case sites 1 and 4, as making IECE meaningful.

Involvement is identified in research as an effective practice that provides a quality education and social experiences for all children (DEC/NAEYC, 2009; Grisham-Brown et al., 2005; McLeskey et al., 2013; Moore, 2009; Underwood, 2013; Winter, 2007), with active involvement in daily activities is likely to enhance quality IECE. Previous research (e.g., Leatherman & Niemeyer, 2005) found that ECE teachers who involved children with and without disability in all aspects of the same classroom activities (e.g., children go to all centres; play in the same centres) encouraged the development of interactions and relationships among the children, and created an accepting environment. Such involvement practices are not different from those implemented by teachers or expected by education officials and headteachers in this study. More specifically, Hanline and Correa-Torres (2012) reported that teachers involving children with disability in the activities of an IECE setting (e.g., using play) facilitated the social interactions and full participation of such children. It implies that irrespective of contexts, involvement is the best IECE practice, and must be an everyday practice. Involvement enhances children's learning and social interactions, but among some teacher participants at case site 1, involvement was also seen as a means of managing behavioural problems (e.g., children who are inattentive or hyperactive). This is an additional benefit for involving children with disability in ECE activities. Without *active* involvement, IECE may present limited educational and social benefits to all children. However, to effectively involve all children requires prior and effective planning (DEC/NAEYC, 2009; Guralnick, 2001).

Individualised instruction

Two education officials, three headteachers and six teachers reported individualised instruction as an effective practice that optimised children's involvement in curriculum and social activities, but more importantly, supported the unique needs of all children. They felt individualised instruction (e.g., one-on-one instruction, individual attention and support) was at the heart of inclusive practice, though they believed children were not always instructed or supported in this way, but rather grouped according to the different needs and situations of children and based on differentiated instruction. However, some teachers occasionally focused on a specific need of a child. The identified importance of teachers providing individual attention and support or "attending to the child in need" (MT-Kwasi-CS3) is highlighted, as captured in these key excerpts:

Teachers should sometimes have one-on-one sessions. It's a good way to help all children, the less endowed, or those with disability. After the instruction teachers *must* also go one-on-one to assist those having problems or attend to particular needs of children. (EO-Abeka)

Teachers can't sit back or leave the child with disability out! You can't say the child *isn't getting anything* so the child should stay out of the class activities. Teachers must make time for such a child. Sometimes teachers can make the child stay in class or perhaps given enough time to perform tasks. When teachers give individual attention, it works. (HT-Dede-CS2)

Although some teachers considered individualised instruction time consuming, some headteachers felt teachers should not exclude children with disability from the classroom activities. Rather, the headteachers considered that teachers needed to make time for individual children with disability or challenges since individualised instruction was the only way such children could be helped to participate in the learning activities. There were no apparent differences in the shared view on individualised instruction across roles and case sites. These results support previous research on individualised instruction.

Researchers (Darragh, 2010; Deiner, 2013; Grisham-Brown et al., 2005; McLeskey et al., 2013; Tomlinson, 2014) have identified individualised instruction as an effective practice, which aligns with principles of UDL or differentiated instruction, that is, the use individualised instruction to differentiate instruction, instead of using a one-size-fits-all approach for all children. The education officials, headteachers and teachers perceived individualised instruction as a key practice that may enhance the quality of IECE.

Buysse and Hollingsworth (2009) and Grisham-Brown et al. (2005) noted that individualised instruction and supports are avenues through which most children, especially children with disability, participate in the experiences of ECE settings. Thus, it is important that teachers plan to support the learning needs of all children so that they can achieve positive outcomes, by identifying child learning characteristics and needs, selecting instructional supports and determining how to use them, and providing effective feedback to children to foster effective individualised instruction (Grisham-Brown et al., 2005).

Curriculum adaptation/task differentiation

Curriculum adaptation/IEP/task differentiation was a practice expected by only a few education officials and headteachers and reported by a few teachers. Two education officials, one headteacher (at case site 1), and two teachers at case site 1 and 4 found curriculum adaptation or task differentiation to be a key IECE practice that enabled all children, especially those with disability, to experience daily activities, and important for meeting the specific learning and social needs of children. Developing IEP goals and curriculum adaptation are related to individualised instruction. While the education officials expected teachers to develop IEP goals or adapt the existing curriculum for some children with disability, the headteacher felt curriculum adaptation (enrichment) must involve new and interesting elements that catered for the needs of all children, including the gifted. The teachers reported that they not only adapted the curriculum but also provided differential tasks that focused on the specific learning needs of the children, or responded to individual differences. By differentiating the curriculum or tasks, teachers offered multiple learning opportunities and different rates of learning for all children based on their needs.

Research reveals that IEPs should address the specific skills or needs of children with disability to ensure that they have access to and participate in daily activities and/or events (i.e., general curriculum) (Grisham-Brown et al., 2005). Curriculum adaptation or task differentiation is a form of differentiated instruction (Darragh, 2010; Tomlinson, 2014) that enables children to participate in daily activities, similar to the expectations that the education officials and headteachers identified that they held for teacher practice or reported by the teachers. Individual planning is identified as an important part of effective IECE. Leatherman and Niemeyer (2005) had found that in-service teachers used several strategies such as IEP goals to address the individual needs of all children in the curriculum and in classroom activities using children's interests and needs in planning activities in the classroom. Since only a few teacher participants reportedly used task differentiation, this may suggest they were either not knowledgeable about this practice or found it a difficult practice, as reported by one education official. Because many children with disability may not be meaningfully engaged in inclusive settings' activities without individualised instruction and supports, it is important for teachers to know how to adapt the curriculum to develop IEP or provide different learning tasks to meet the unique needs of children. Therefore curriculum adaptation and development of IEPs are related to individualised instruction.

4.4.3 Practices Expected by Education Officials and Reported by Teachers

This section focuses on the use of prompts as practices expected by education officials and reported by teachers.

Prompts

The use of prompts was one practice expected by two education officials, and two teachers at case sites 2 and 4. They identified the use of prompts as effective IECE practice. These education officials and teachers found prompts important when working with all children. Effective use of prompts was seen as motivational, which supported or prepared children with disability for improved performance. Such prompts included reminders, guidance/direction, and verbal and visual cues that stimulated children's participation and engagement in learning and social activities.

While not explicitly identifying prompts as an expected practice, the two teachers reported they demonstrated/modelled (academic and social) learning activities to children with disability, practices recognised in research and practice literature as prompts. One education official observed that teachers' lack of knowledge may limit the effective use of prompts. While at case site 2 prompts were used as reminders, assistance and visual cues to stimulate children's participation or sustain their attention in the learning activities, at case site 4, prompts were mainly used as guidance/direction for all children, especially those with disability to participate in both academic and social activities. Prompts were thus used similarly but for different purposes, and teachers were knowledgeable about the use of prompts, contrary to the view of the education official. The use of multifaceted prompts enhanced learning and social outcomes:

The addition of prompts to learning tasks and activities is important. *As children with disability learn, verbal, visual and physical prompts should be used* to really help them perform or learn social tasks. But are teachers knowledgeable in using effective prompts to support children? (EO-Atta)

The research literature indicates that prompts such as physical guidance, modelling and verbal directions, as well as questions, reminders, encouragement and visual cues should be provided prior to children's participation in learning and social activities in ECE settings, or following responses (Allen & Cowdery, 2015; Grisham-Brown et al., 2005; Noonan, 2006; Winter, 2007). Use of prompts is a recommended practice (DEC/NAYEC, 2009) to assist children with disability especially to learn and acquire skills (Allen & Cowdery, 2015; Grisham-Brown et al., 2005; Noonan, 2006;

Winter, 2007). Winter (2007) also noted that prompts offer the learner extra information and direct the child's attention towards relevant features of a task. It means that the use and importance of prompts as identified by some education officials and teachers are similar to those critical to IECE. Prompts are effective pedagogical practices that may enhance quality IECE. Thus, if teachers embed prompts effectively in daily activities, all children will be functionally included. However, teachers should use prompts selectively, based on children's individual needs, and faded appropriately for children to respond naturally to conditions of ECE settings (Noonan, 2006).

4.4.4 Practices Expected by Headteachers and Reported by Teachers

Practices that were expected by some headteachers and reported by some teachers included group instruction/grouping, activity and demonstration methods, and the use of play to create opportunities for all children. Although the use of "productive" play was specific to one headteacher and one teacher at case site 1, it was perceived as an effective practice for enhancing the learning and social skills acquisition of all children, especially those with disability. Use of activity and demonstration teaching methods were practices also shared respectively by one headteacher at site 1 and six teachers across case sites, and two headteachers (at sites 2 and 4) and three teachers at sites 1 and 2, as practices that fostered the involvement of children in ECE settings. In the next section, group instruction is discussed.

Group instruction/grouping

Three headteachers (one each from case sites 1, 2 and 4) and eight teacher participants from across all the case sites commonly identified the use of group instruction or grouping as an effective IECE practice. They associated group instruction with benefits that included: fostering reciprocal/collaborative learning, interactions, skills, and confidence development among children. The headteachers and teachers identified common group instruction practices or composition (e.g., use of small and whole group or ability and mixed-ability groups) effective for meeting the specific needs of children. Teachers mostly reported using ability and mixed-ability groups, but variety in group instruction was seen as useful for IECE. However, one headteacher felt effective group instruction depended on the nature of the children's needs, availability of materials and teacher knowledge and skills, among others. This suggests teachers' organisation and management skills are crucial to group instruction. Across the case sites, small group instruction was reported to be used to provide specialised attention and support for all

children, especially those with disability, but whole group instruction was specific to case sites 1 and 3; mixed-ability grouping was unique to case sites 1 and 2; and ability grouping was used at case sites 1 and 4 to meet the learning and social needs of children. It means that group instruction was used for divergent purposes.

Some of these findings support current literature and research on the use of group instruction/grouping in IECE. Research shows that group instruction is an effective instructional practice for all children, including those with disability (Grisham-Brown et al., 2005; Noonan, 2006). It is reported to enhance the development of participation skills, peer modelling and turn taking (Grisham-Brown et al., 2005; Noonan, 2006). Additionally, teachers use group instruction and grouping to facilitate the learning of specific skills and to respond also to the individual needs of children (Grisham-Brown et al., 2005; Noonan, 2006). The findings confirm that group instruction is used for similar purposes and functions. In addition, similar compositions of group instruction, ranging from small to large, or ability to mixed-ability grouping, were also evident at the case sites, although they may be used differently.

4.4.5 Reported But not Expected Practices

Teacher participants reported practices that were not identified as expected by either education officials or headteachers. While there were commonalities and differences in reported IECE practices across the teacher participants and case sites, some were teacher or site specific. Pedagogical practices that were not expected included peer tutoring, motivation, and reteaching, which were considered useful in fostering children's engagement, participation and learning. Reteaching was uniquely used by two teachers at case site 4 to enhance understanding or meet the specific learning needs of children. Additional practices that related to organisational practices, such as prescribed seating arrangements to focus attention and engagement, and the use of teacher education students on practicum as additional support, were also reported. While the use of student-teachers on practicum was unique to two teachers at case site 1, the practice of reteaching was specific to two teachers at case site 4.

While not identified as expected practice, the reported practices reinforced education officials and headteachers' expectations for teachers to use child-centred IECE practices. The reported practices considered children's developmental needs, provided appropriate opportunities for all children to participate in ECE activities, and promoted a collaborative approach to IECE. It implies teachers regarded individualisation as best

practice. This section highlights peer tutoring, motivation and seating arrangement as effective practices.

Peer tutoring/support

Peer tutoring/support was one practice commonly reported by five teacher participants drawn from all the case sites. Although a small number of teachers used peer tutoring, they found children without disability an in-class support that enhanced their participation in the learning and social activities of ECE settings. Three teachers specifically assigned children without disability to support children with disability in the learning or social activities, but two teachers reported that children without disability taught peers with disability in group work. Effective peer tutoring was seen as both an instructional and social support. This suggests that peer tutoring was a deliberate and collaborative practice, requiring effective teacher planning and facilitation. Teachers used peer tutoring to provide more individualised learning and support for children with disability.

In a typical class, *children with disability or problems are paired with the good ones*. If children have difficulties, they also resort to their peers for assistance apart from the teacher. (MT-Kwame-CS1)

Implicitly, peers without disability served as complementary support, which may reduce teachers' stress or burden in ECE settings. Children were seen as capable of playing relevant roles in enhancing the work of inclusion. Across all the case sites, peer tutoring was used similarly but for different purposes. While at case sites 1, 2 and 4, peer tutoring was used mainly for academic purposes where children without disability taught or assisted peers with disability in specific learning activities (e.g., group work or reading), at case site 3, peer tutoring was used to provide social support to children with disability. However, the assignment of peers without disability to peers with disability, or the pairing of peers with and without disability to enhance children's participation in the learning or social activities, were only found at case sites 1, 2 and 3. While these results support some previous research (e.g., McLeskey et al., 2013; Smith et al., 2012) they offer additional insights about peer tutoring in IECE.

Research shows that through peer tutoring/support, children with disability receive social or instructional support from peers without disability in inclusive classes (Smith et al., 2012), similar to the identified purposes of peer tutoring in this study. Peer tutoring benefits both teachers and children, and enhances the self-concept and self-efficacy of children in inclusive settings (McLeskey et al., 2013). This means that peer

tutoring is a beneficial practice. Researchers (e.g., Kroeger & Kouche, 2006; Smith et al., 2012) have described peer support systems as natural supports where children engage in collaborative roles to support peers, especially those with disability. Therefore if peers without disability are effectively used to support their peers with disability, they can contribute to successful IECE practice. As also identified by the teacher participants, effective peer support is a professional responsibility (Smith et al., 2012), but some teachers may over rely on peer support without actually taking responsibility for the inclusion of children with disability.

Motivation

Notably, six teachers across the case sites, except site 2, commonly identified the use of motivation as an effective and beneficial IECE practice. These teachers used differential motivation (e.g., verbal praises, rewards, encouragement, recognition, or children's interests) for children to undertake learning or social tasks. Thus, extrinsic and intrinsic motivators were used for multifunctional purposes. Effective motivation was a valuable and a critical force that not only enhanced children's learning and participation in daily activities of ECE settings but also recognised the self-worth of children, especially those with disability. Teachers used a variety of motivational techniques.

I encourage the children with disability to answer questions or participate in class activities, and even at play. I've been telling them to always try *as they can do something* like their peers without disability. *I motivate all the children, but I think those with disability need more motivation.* You know they have low self-esteem, so motivating them is important. (FT-Araba-CS4)

I've been motivating all children. *I tell them everyone can learn. They have different talents, abilities or are different.* When a child with disability answers a question, I become very happy. Even the way *I praise the child or let the class to applaud* the child's efforts is different. I do this *just* to motivate such children to more participate in class activities. (FT-Ama-CS1)

Evidently, motivating all children aligns with teachers' belief that every child is a capable learner or doer. Across case sites 1, 3 and 4, encouragement was primarily used to foster the participation of children with disability in learning tasks. However, at case site 3, encouragement embedded the reorientation of children with disability to 'not accept' their disability as a limitation, but rather as an opportunity for success. While teachers' recognition of children's self-worth and potential, and use of praise served as

motivation at case site 1, at case site 4, rewards, gifts or tangible motivators (e.g., stickers, favourite or desired toys) were seen as motivational. But the use of children's interests and likes as a motivation was unique to case site 1. Such divergent forms of motivation were seen as useful for fostering engagement, involvement and/or the sustenance of children's interest in the learning activities.

Research shows also that both extrinsic and intrinsic motivation is used in stimulating children's learning and participation in ECE activities. Children who are mostly intrinsically motivated are more likely to learn or engage in ECE settings' activities than those motivated extrinsically (Grisham-Brown et al., 2005; Noonan, 2006; Winter, 2007). This may explain why the teacher participants and case sites commonly used intrinsic motivation (encouragement, and recognition of the self-worth and potential of children) to instigate children's participation in daily activities of ECE settings. However, there is a need for extrinsic motivation (Grisham-Brown et al., 2005) to enhance children's learning, although teachers cannot always use approval or tangible rewards in motivating children. Hence, effective motivation should be appropriate or individualised.

Organisational practices

Arranging where children are seated in the classroom was a reported organisational practice specific to three teachers (two at case site 1 and one at case site 2). These teachers identified that effective seating arrangements enhanced children's participation and engagement in ECE settings. Therefore, they arranged the classroom or seating accordingly (based on children's needs or activity) to create a suitable learning and instructional environment. The seating arrangement was commonly used for instructional purposes. However, at case site 1 it was also used to manage behavioural problems (e.g., children who are hyperactive or are not attentive) or for children who had mild visual problems. An effective seating arrangement may reduce classroom problems. Teachers arranged the inclusive classrooms to facilitate the principle of involvement, individualisation and equalisation of opportunities:

I consider the seating arrangement so children with disability or problems are closer to me. The child with eye problem sits near the board; others who don't pay attention or disturb are together so I can keep eyes on them. I arrange the seats and class well, and the children are sitting in groups. (FT-Aba -CS1)

The class set-up depends on the subject or activity. You create an instructional environment, or ensure everything is in place. *The environment must conducive or attractive.* There are changes in the seating arrangement. You change the position for children become attentive. (FT-Akua-CS2)

Research shows that effective arrangement of the ECE classroom, especially seating arrangements, has been found to enhance the inclusion of children in activities (Grisham-Brown et al., 2005; Smith et al., 2012; Winter, 2007). Carefully arranged seating enhances learning and is also essential for managing students with hearing, attention and other sensory problems (Smith et al., 2012; Winter, 2007). Effective seating arrangements function similarly, as noted by teachers in this study. Bruns and Mogharreban (2007) found that teachers had the skills to appropriately arrange the classroom environment to meet all children's needs. It means that seating/classroom arrangement is a key IECE practice. Since teachers are instrumental in effecting setting differentiation (Smith et al., 2012), their proficiency in arranging seating is essential. It should not compromise interactions among children, but instead foster with-it-ness in inclusive classrooms.

Apparently, there were no expected practices that were not reported by teachers across the case sites. The expectations of practice reflected what teachers implemented, which suggests that education officials, headteachers and teachers had a similar understanding of valued IECE practices.

In summary, the expected and reported practices were all considered crucial elements of effective implementation of IECE. Most of the practices expected by education officials and headteachers matched to a degree the reported practices of teachers. To optimise children's participation, engagement and inclusion in ECE settings and meet children's differential needs, the involvement of all children in daily activities, individualised instruction, and differential motivation, as well as effective prompts, group instruction, peer tutoring or effective seating arrangements were seen as effective practices. While other practices were considered equally important, some teachers used these less frequently or did not implement them. This implies that not all teachers necessarily or effectively implemented expected or reported IECE practices. As such, training and PD for teachers to better develop effective knowledge and skills of inclusive pedagogical and organisational practices are necessary.

4.4.6 Attitudes and perceptions

This section discusses the attitudes and perceptions of teachers, headteachers, parents, and society towards children with disability that were seen to influence IECE. These attitudes included the beliefs and dispositions. Both positive and negative perceived attitudes and perceptions were identified, which was shared or specific to the participants and case sites. The attitudes and perceptions of teachers are first discussed.

Teacher attitudes

Interestingly, only five education officials, three headteachers and six teachers across the case sites reported that teacher attitudes impacted IECE. They believed that positive teacher attitudes—high motivation or effective dispositions (e.g., passion)—towards children with disability enhanced IECE practice. The teacher participants mostly felt that teachers were also satisfied with IECE outcomes attained by some children with disability, through the “ECE activities and interactions with other children and teachers, the child with disability developed better or improved communication skills” (FT-Yaba-CS3). These positive teacher attitudes and perceptions are a key ingredient in facilitating IECE. Across the case sites, high teacher passion was similarly seen as a positive attitude for inclusive practice. The results reinforce previous studies’ findings that teacher attitudes are generally positive towards IECE in Ghana (Ackah Jnr, 2010a; Kuyini, 2014; Obeng, 2012).

However, 10 participants felt that some teachers demonstrated unfavourable attitudes, including perceptions that IECE is time-wasting, burdensome, or an additional responsibility. For example, one education official and two headteachers felt “some teachers do not have the heart to cope with children with disability” (HT-Mansa-CS3), while two teachers believed “teachers in regular classrooms do not have *time* for those children whose *minds* are down or have disability” (FT-Antwiwaa-CS3). It means that such teachers may be unlikely to take responsibility for IECE. These teacher attitudes may also affect their beliefs about the value of IECE, or the potential of children with disability. Such negative attitudes were attributed to lack of teacher expertise or perceived reported large class sizes in some ECE settings. Research has similarly identified that negative teacher attitudes affect IECE (Deiner, 2013; Gyimah, Ackah Jnr, & Yarquah, 2010; Purdue, 2009; Underwood, 2013).

Headteacher attitudes

Further, only two education officials, three headteachers (two at case site 1 and one at case site 2) and three teachers (two at site 1 and one at site 4) reported that headteachers had positive attitudes. These participants felt that some headteachers expressed commitment or a positive disposition towards IECE. While some “headteachers led IECE by admitting children with disability, without which IECE was seen to be impossible” (HT-Dede-CS2), others “provided resources or training for teachers” (HT-Aka-CS1). Such attitudes are seen as essential to IECE. At case sites 1 and 2, headteachers’ attitudes were especially seen as a great support because headteachers were seen to lead the acceptance of IECE policy.

However, the two education officials and two teachers at case site 1 found that some headteachers had negative attitudes towards IECE. These participants felt headteachers should be the pacesetters for inclusive practice, so their refusal to enrol children with disability, or negative attitudes or beliefs about such children, affected IECE. Though there is a free education for all policy, some headteachers were seen to deny admission to children with disability. As headteachers occupy key positions, such negative attitudes may significantly influence the attitudes of teachers, children without disability, or other members of ECE settings. The two education officials also felt headteachers “perceived children with disability as problems for teachers or other children” (EO-Kofi), but the teacher participants felt “headteachers did not encourage or like children with disability if they were enrolled in the school” (MT-Kwame-CS1). While no headteacher identified any negative attitudes, such attitudes may affect the acceptance of and relationships with children with disability.

Parent attitudes

Five education officials, all headteachers and 10 teachers across case sites identified that the attitudes of parents influenced IECE practice. Specifically, these participants shared that parents of children with disability expressed positive attitudes, or happiness and satisfaction with IECE, which enhances implementation. Some parents were perceived to “feel happy and satisfied that at least their children with disability are learning or having interactions” with children without disability and teachers in ECE settings (FT-Oba Yaa-CS4). Such attitudes are considered enabling because parents who perceive that children with disability are attaining learning and social outcomes are more likely to see IECE as a positive experience and thus increase their involvement in IECE. Hence a positive parental attitude is critical. For most teacher and headteacher participants across the case

sites, active parent contributions were considered to be a key ingredient for effective IECE.

However, most (18) participants perceived parents as also holding negative attitudes, which limited parent involvement and support for educating children with disability in ECE settings. Indeed, most parents of children with disability were viewed as not providing adequately for their children, except for a “few enlightened parents” (EO-Abi). Such attitudes were also reflected in “the non-exposure of some children with disability from the public eye to preserve parent status” (EO-Abeka), or parents’ negative perceptions of the worth and potential of their children. Except at sites 1 and 4, parent attitudes were mostly perceived as negative due to the backgrounds of such parents, as captured in this extract:

Still some parents aren’t cooperating. Though you advise them to bring the child with disability to school, in the end the child may not be regular. The parents think what at all is my child learning for? Some parents feel disabled children are wasting money or time. (HT-Dede-CS2)

Some parents’ desire to avoid public ridicule or the induced gaze associated with having a child with disability in Ghana, or non-recognition of the value of education, inhibited IECE. However, one headteacher felt some parents were “just reluctant to send their children with disability to school even in the face of free education for all children” (HT-Dede-CS2). One headteacher at case site 2 and two teachers at case site 4 found that some parents of children without disability “complained and were not comfortable with children with disability in ECE classes or felt such children be segregated” (FT-Oforiwa-CS4). Attitudes of parents of children without disability were seen to affect IECE, as also reported by Leyser and Kirk (2011).

Societal attitudes

Five education officials, all headteachers and 12 teachers across the case sites identified negative societal attitudes in some communities that constrained IECE. Such negative attitudes were attributed to socio-cultural or superstitious beliefs that included explanations that “disability is contagious or results from reincarnation and past misdeeds” (HT-Mansa-CS3) or “children with disability are outcasts and evil or a curse” (MT-Kwame-CS1). These socio-cultural attitudes stressed children’s differences, especially their disability, and this invariably affected the education, general acceptance or interactions that others had with children with disability. Across all the case sites,

societal attitudes were most frequently commented on at case sites 2 and 3, linked to negative beliefs about the potential of children with disability. The societal attitudes projected discrimination, stigmatisation or dehumanisation of some children with disability, which are opposed to inclusive values such as acceptance and belonging:

The first barrier is *perceptions and attitudes of society and individuals*, the negative attitudes towards children with disability. Some groups suffer more intense reactions but *negative attitudes* cut across all types of disability. The cultural beliefs of some societies in Ghana are challenges. Some people still believe that if you go near a blind person you can go blind. Or *when a person is physically challenged people think it's an ancestor who has reincarnated or you did something wrong in the past*. A lot of negative perceptions hover around these things. (EO-Atta)

Once a child has a disability people think the child is not a “person” or something else, which affects the child’s life or education. (HT-Esi-CS4)

There’s societal perception or mindset about differences in everything, about children with disability or their abilities—intellectual and social or other aspects. The differences people see in children; they see children with disability differently. (FT-Oforiwaa-CS4)

These prevailing societal attitudes were seen as a great concern to IECE as “people sometimes withhold basic supports for children with disability or for teachers” (EO-Atta) or “assign other meaning to the education of some children with disability” (FT-Akasi-CS2). Most participants suggested all stakeholders needed positive attitude development. The shared view across the different participants and case sites was that effective IECE requires changes in societal attitudes and perceptions, as evident in this extract:

There should be change. It’s important for progress is impossible without change; those who can’t change their minds can’t change anything So IECE can’t succeed without change. *People need to change their perception of disability or change their mind on IECE*. (HT-Baa-CS1)

Essentially, two teachers at case site 1 felt that the recognition of IECE as a moral practice that fosters children’s early and future learning, and playing and living together in society should be fundamental to attitudinal and perceptual changes in society. Thus, IECE should be a moral imperative for creating an inclusive society that respects and values all children:

It's important we all take IECE seriously. *We can't dissociate morality from our way of life.* Morality involves showing respect for each other, recognising individual differences. How can we do this? We can do so if all of us live harmoniously together. *It may be easy to inculcate that attitude in young children in all-inclusive classrooms so that they learn and when they grow up they can appreciate and live in a comfortable society, or respect everybody.* (MT-Kabenla-CS1)

Research similarly shows the effect of societal attitudes on IECE (Agbenyega, 2007; Deiner, 2013; A. B. Kuyini, 2014; Okyere & Adams, 2003). Some researchers (Kuyini, 2014; Obeng, 2007) have reported that the superstitious beliefs of some societies in Ghana about children with disability attributed to unexplained spiritual factors (e.g., curses or past deeds) can have an impact on inclusive practice. As Deiner (2013) notes, elsewhere disability has been frequently blamed on sinful living, and such historical and societal beliefs have affected how children with disability are educated and included in ECE settings. It means cultural beliefs or superstitions are not only prevalent in these Ghanaian societies, but are similar to those found elsewhere. Regardless of context, societal beliefs are seen to influence people's attitudes towards IECE. This study's findings stress that societal attitudes result in exclusive practices and highlight negative labelling, language of SEN, and the dominance of a medical (deficit) model of disability, as also noted by Jones (2004) and Purdue (2009).

Language and attitudes

It was evident from participant responses that the language used for children in ECE settings reflected the participants' attitudes towards IECE. For example, extracts such as "one teacher teaches normal children" (EO-Alua), "sometimes some of the normal children report incidence to their parents" (HT-Dede-CS2), and "some of the things the normal ones say about peers with disability" (FT-Akua-CS2) expressed a language that indicated stark differences in children, which projected that two groups of children existed in ECE settings. Most participants, irrespective of roles and case sites, used the language and term "normality" persistently in reference to children without disability, showing that children with disability were considered "the otherness in society". Such language—that is, "normal" children—is not reflective of current inclusive values, but rather reinforces differences in children's ability or characteristics. It implies that some children (with disability) are different, and require differential treatment. As a prevailing term among most participants, this highlighted the primary disability or deficit of some children, with

little focus on their ability and potential. Since language and the terms used in society are powerful, shaping understandings, expectations or actions, this potentially affects IECE. It may lead to the reconstruction of the ideology of separate systems of special education for such children under the guise of IE (Armstrong et al., 2010). This view might perhaps have accounted for the perception among some participants that only *normal children belong* to IECE settings, while children with disability, “the others”, were visitors from segregated settings (Chapter 2). However, the language of disability that participants mostly used could be attributed to the dominant medical-deficit thinking of disability in Ghana, which is itself disabling or discriminatory, as opposed to the socio-humanistic thinking of disability identified as desirable in current practice or research and policy.

In the move towards enhanced inclusive practice, Jones (2004) argues that there must be a radical shift from values, language and policies that maintain a focus on individual deficit, to policy and practice that considers young children’s ability and learning within a broader social context. Therefore, examining and challenging assumptions that inform our work and thinking will enhance the development of inclusive practice (Carrington et al., 2013). It means that the principle, philosophy and practice of IECE should not be undermined by the continuing use of terms that perpetuate responses based on the idea that some children are “normal” and others are “different” or “special”. IECE is not a normality-differential divide or a normative practice for some children. If educators, education officials, headteachers and teachers, who are forerunners in IECE, are themselves caught in the web of using restrictive language that labels children, IECE will be seen to focus on a small group of children, rather than becoming a critical practice towards improving the education, participation and development of all children. It is perhaps not surprising that some teacher participants did not want to have any responsibility for children even perceived as having mild-moderate disability. IECE is about change, so implementers must use inclusive rather than exclusive language. For example, use people-first language to refer to all children (e.g., Allen & Cowdery, 2015; Essa, 2014). Hence, the ideological construction of normality and otherness may affect attitudes and practices, which must be reconstructed to become an inclusive language that mirrors acceptance, valuing, and celebrating differences as diversity. Such a change in language will activate positive thinking and awareness that IECE is about all children.

4.5 RQ 3b: What Are the Expected Teacher Qualities for IECE in Ghana?

4.5.1 Teacher Quality and Dispositions

Effective teacher quality and dispositions were perceived as equally important in supporting IECE implementation. Teacher quality and dispositions denote personal traits, skills, and understandings, as well as the capacity teachers or headteachers bring to inclusive practice, and the manner in which they behave in inclusive settings. Education officials, headteachers and teachers identified a range of key teacher qualities and dispositions, clustered mainly into affective characteristics that were commonly reported at the case sites or by participants (Table 4.5). Of the 11 identified teacher qualities and dispositions, four were perceived to be essential for both headteachers and teachers, while seven were associated with teachers only. The former group, included having passion, patience and respect, and being caring and loving, while the latter group involved being motivating/encouraging, having attentiveness and empathy, as well as being skilful and resourceful, fair and flexible, as necessary attributes for educating all children. The qualities unique to teachers were personality related (e.g., attention, fairness, flexibility, or empathy) and practice or capacity related (e.g., resourceful, skilful, or encouraging). The shared or case-specific teacher qualities are shown in Appendix G.

In the next section the teacher qualities and dispositions identified important to both headteachers and teachers are first discussed, followed by qualities specific to teachers.

Table 4.5: Essential Teacher Quality and Disposition

Quality/disposition	Illustrative examples
Passion*	Enthusiasm, willingness and commitment, and persistence Interested, concerned, and invested in children
Caring and loving*	“Hearts of love” and empathetic feelings
Patience*	Understanding and tolerant Accepting and accommodating
Respect*	Appreciating/valuing differences, diversity or self-worth or potential Showing politeness
Motivating/encouraging+	Positive expectations Inspiring and stimulating
Attentiveness+	Considerate of others Listening or “open-minded” Giving attention
Empathy+	Understanding situations of children and their needs Sharing in the joys and sorrows
Skilful+	Supporting and assisting
Resourceful+	Improvisation Creative and skilful
Fairness+	Equal and differential treatment

	Non-discriminating
Flexibility+	Willingness to change thinking and attitudes Adaptable to situations

Note. *Headteacher and teacher quality; +Teacher quality

4.5.2 Passion

Passion, identified by the majority (18) of the different participants and across all the roles and case sites, embodied enthusiasm, willingness and commitment, and was seen as an indispensable teacher quality that enhanced effective inclusive practice. Most participants indicated that passionate teachers had in common the following attributes: they were drawn to the difficulties and potential of all children; found effective ways to involve and teach children; and persisted daily to ensure the learning and success of all children. For the teacher participants, passion was a fundamental quality and disposition that naturally compelled some teachers to include children with disability in ECE settings, while some education officials felt passion was what enabled headteachers to lead IECE with dedication and commitment. Therefore, more passionate headteachers and teachers are needed to drive IECE. The illuminative extracts of two teachers best articulate the value of passion:

Inclusive teachers must know their potential and interests. If you have the potential and the interest to handle all children isn't there, it becomes head-knowledge. The interest to teach all children is key, so passionate teachers are needed. The teacher should have that passion, wanting to be with all the children whether having disability or not, and to teach them in the ECE setting. (FT-Ama-CS1)

It's about passion to help children including those with disability in the centre. Because of passion and love, I try my best to include the child with eye problems and others so that each child benefits. When it's tough I persist because I know that all children have to gain something. I help as much as possible everyday. That's what I think teachers should do. (FT-Aba-CS1)

Across the case sites, passion was considered the single most important teacher quality that enhanced IECE. At case site 1, for example, headteachers and teachers saw passion (e.g., interest, love or heart) as the dominant trait that propelled teachers to work with all children, while at case site 4, passion reflected a deep concern and love that enabled teachers to include children with disability. This means that passionate teachers are interested, concerned, and invested in children. In this study, effective IECE was

presented as passionate teachers who persisted to create meaningful experiences for all children, especially those with disability. Passionate headteachers and teachers strive to overcome challenges.

Other studies have also identified passion, the extra urge beyond enthusiasm that drives some teachers to inclusive practices, as a quality of good (IE) teachers (Allen & Cowdery, 2015; DEC/NAEYC, 2009; McLeskey et al., 2013; Stronge et al., 2004). Passionate teachers demonstrate enthusiasm, commitment, and dedication and create a responsive learning and social environment for all children (Allen & Cowdery, 2015; Colker, 2008; McLeskey et al., 2013). The DEC/NAEYC (2009) has similarly identified early childhood teachers' passion for all children as the most important trait that makes a difference in the lives of children. It implies that passionate IECE teachers are also driven to include children. Teachers' passion may stem from children's accomplishments in IECE settings (Allen & Cowdery, 2015); however, McLeskey et al. (2013) argue that passionate/enthusiastic teachers are always motivated through challenges to improve students' interest and outcomes. This means that passionate headteachers and teachers are committed to IECE, despite challenges.

4.5.3 Caring and Loving

Being caring and loving was another key teacher quality and disposition commonly shared by most (16) participant roles and across all the case sites. Three education officials, four headteachers and nine teachers identified being caring and loving as vital headteacher and teacher attributes for effective IECE. For example, some education officials felt headteachers and teachers with *hearts of love* demonstrated empathetic feelings, thus creating a welcoming environment for all children. Loving headteachers were perceived to “cascade positive dispositions to all children and even teachers” (HT-Aka-CS1), and this can “prevent the ridicule of children with disability” (HT-Esi-CS4), a challenge associated with inclusive practice.

When the leaders have no hearts (sic)... Have no hearts? I mean when headteachers or teachers don't have love or empathy to accept or even mingle with children with disability and cast insinuations, the other schoolmates may follow—the traditional ones. Both heads and teachers should be more caring about all children and their needs. That's having hearts of love. (EO-Abeka)

Teachers should have love for all the children. Though teachers come across children with different behaviours, they *shouldn't hate some or love others*

because of their abilities. For instance, that boy is disabled so you don't like him. It tends to affect your teaching and relations with the children. All teachers *should try and love all children* and it's important for [inclusion]. (MT-Kwame-CS1)

As headteachers occupy unique positions, and are focal persons, such qualities have an impact on the behaviours and attitudes of others. Participants also perceived that caring teachers showed affection and liked all children, which created healthy social relationships in inclusive settings. One possible explanation for the need for caring and loving teachers was that participants felt all children, especially those with disability, are in need of love and care; and second, because love and care for children is seen as the precondition that makes teachers effective. Across all the case sites, caring and loving were identified as key traits of effective and inclusive teachers and headteachers. While caring and loving were dominant traits at case site 4, at case site 1 these traits were considered fundamental for the effective inclusion of all children that also engineered commitment to IECE. This means that headteachers and teachers demonstrating hearts filled with love and care will not only be concerned about all children, but also accommodate them in IECE settings. It means caring headteachers and teachers are also passionate.

Research also highlights that caring and loving headteachers and teachers are most likely to have a more positive impact on the learning, participation and belonging of all children (Carrington et al., 2013; McLeskey et al., 2013; Stronge et al., 2004). It means that care and love are an important quality for IECE, and teachers who combine these qualities with effective instruction are likely to increase student learning and social interactions. Research has shown that caring headteachers look beyond the child's disability and focus on their strengths (McLeskey et al., 2013), which is likely to promote the acceptance of all children. It suggests that headteachers can lead IECE by creating a caring environment. Allen and Cowdery (2015) note that caring and loving teachers demonstrate enormous concern for children with disability and are sensitive to their needs, which is likely to make a positive impact on children's learning. West and Pirtle (2013) also found that parents wanted more affectionate (loving) teachers for inclusive practice, suggesting that caring teachers are critical.

4.5.4 Patience

Patience was an elementary teacher quality for IECE commonly shared by three education officials, most (four) headteachers and eight teachers across the case sites and participant roles. Without patience, IECE was seen as a challenge. For these participants, patience meant headteachers and teachers understood children with disability as well as the situations of the parents; provided adequate time for children's learning or involvement in ECE activities; and, more importantly, understood that IECE is a work in progress. Some teachers reported that they gave children with disability ample time to complete tasks or give responses, while some acknowledged that it is common for some children with disability to learn at a slower pace. The patient teacher is thus accepting and accommodating of children. Rather than blaming children with disability or difficulties, the patient teacher considered "effective ways or changed their approaches to include children more effectively" (MT-Kabenla-CS1). While IECE may be challenging at times even for the motivated teacher, "the patient teacher believed and hoped that with time the child can succeed" (FT-Aba-CS1). Across the case sites, patience was seen as an excellent teacher quality. The patient teacher was also caring and loving.

Patience has emerged in previous research as an important characteristic of effective teachers working with children in inclusive settings (Allen & Cowdery, 2015). Allen and Cowdery note that such teachers are steadfast in the midst of trying situations and develop strategies to make IECE work, as noted by participants in this study. IECE can be challenging, but teacher patience sustains the inclusion of children. However, in this study, patience also encompassed an understanding of the situations of children with disability and their parents, which teachers factored into meeting children's learning and social needs. Patience means "persistence", enabling headteachers and teachers to work and collaborate with parents to deal with challenges in ECE settings (FT-Aba-CS1).

4.5.5 Respect

Respect was the last teacher quality and disposition identified for both headteachers and teachers. Overall, eight participants (two education officials, two headteachers and four teachers) commonly shared such a view, and felt headteachers and teachers who respected all children irrespective of disability appreciated diversity in ECE settings. These participants considered respect to be an effective headteacher and teacher quality that created mutual respect among children, teachers, parents and the wider school. Respectful headteachers and teachers were seen to curtail the tendency of some parents to withdraw

children with disability from ECE settings or become offended due to demeaning attitudes towards such children, and may create effective relationships with parents. Respectful teachers showed politeness, and appreciated the self-worth and potential of all children, which is likely to increase expectations for all children. At case sites 1, 2 and 4, respect was similarly seen as a key teacher quality.

If the head or teacher has no respect for children with disability, parents may be offended and may even want to withdraw their children from that school. In much the same way, if the head or teachers have an attitude that brings demeanour to children whether disabled or not, the school won't be a happy place. It's good to respect all children. Headteachers and teachers must lead the way so the children too will respect themselves, or won't be looking down on the others. (EO-Abeka)

Other studies have found that respect is a necessary trait for IECE (Colker, 2008; McLeskey et al., 2013; Nutbrown & Clough, 2006; Stronge, 2007; Stronge et al., 2004). For example, McLeskey et al. (2013) have noted that inclusive settings, in which headteachers and teachers respect all children and acknowledge children's self-worth and strengths, create a safe environment that enhances children's acceptance and belonging. Stronge (2007) also identified respect as an essential trait of the teacher as a person—effective teachers continually demonstrate respect and understanding along with fairness regarding students' race, cultural background, and gender. This implies that treating all students in a balanced and open-minded manner that is considerate of their circumstances (Stronge et al., 2004), including their disability (Nutbrown & Clough, 2006), may foster effective IECE. Respect enables headteachers and teachers to interact with children in appropriate ways (McLeskey et al., 2013) that appreciate the uniqueness and personality of each child, and treat all children fairly. Therefore, to effectively include children with disability, teachers must respect differences in order to create a welcoming environment for all children.

4.5.6 Qualities Specific to Teachers

Teachers nominated other vital qualities and dispositions for teachers only that included personality traits (e.g., attention) and a capacity to implement IECE (e.g., resourceful, skilful). Although identified by only a minority of teacher participants, similar qualities were considered important for headteachers. Empathy and encouragement are discussed in the next section.

4.5.7 Empathy and Encouragement

Education officials and teachers saw empathy and encouragement as two essential teacher qualities for IECE. Two education officials and four teachers felt empathy enabled teachers “to really understand all children and their needs” holistically. For the teacher participants, empathy meant sharing in the joys and sorrows of all children, especially those with disability. By empathising, teachers understand the situations of children with disability so that they can tailor their efforts and strengths to meet the identified needs of such children. Teachers need “a heart to understand children’s situations” (HT-Mansa-CS3). This means that empathetic teachers may consider the learning pace of children, or provide differentiated tasks. Empathy was seen as fundamental to supporting children with disability. It means that empathetic teachers are likely to be patient, caring and loving, and above all, considerate of all children. Empathy was a trait uniquely identified only at case sites 1 and 2, and was equated with teachers’ understanding of children’s situations and needs, which therefore enables teachers to treat children as individuals. Thus, empathetic teachers recognise individual differences, which may initiate differential treatment of children.

One education official and seven teachers identified encouragement as another critical trait of teachers. For these participants, encouraging teachers enabled children with disability especially to learn and participate in daily activities. Such teachers were seen to stimulate children’s involvement. The need for encouraging teachers was attributed to the perceived low self-esteem of some children with disability and the belief that all children can learn. This means that when teachers effectively encourage all children, highlighting how they are capable of succeeding, it is more likely to initiate participation in learning and social activities. Thus, encouraging teachers may create a welcoming environment for all children to achieve IECE outcomes and was seen as an essential teacher quality for IECE. The teacher practice of encouraging children in their learning was also linked to teacher empathy. Thus, teachers’ understanding of children’s needs enables them to appropriately encourage children to participate in daily activities and routines that will meet such needs. Across the case sites, with the exception of case site 2, encouragement was seen as a key teacher quality that enhanced children’s participation in ECE activities.

Other research literature has similarly shown that encouragement is an effective tool that supports the intrinsic motivation of children (e.g., Darragh, 2010), enabling children to bring forth their best efforts and participate in activities. Darragh notes that

encouragement helps children develop skills supportive of healthy self-esteem, as noted by the study's participants. It means that encouraging teachers help to develop the self-worth of all children.

4.5.8 Fair and Attentiveness

Two teachers at case sites 2 and 4 specifically considered fairness to be another key teacher quality. These participants believed that fair teachers give equal treatment to all children, based on their needs. Thus, teachers who expressed fairness enhanced children's participation and engagement in daily activities. Fair teachers were seen to provide what children with disability also need to succeed in ECE settings, and as such are non-discriminating. Teacher Akasi stressed that being fair was a remarkable teacher quality as sometimes it takes God-fearing teachers to actually treat all children, especially those with disability, fairly. The reason was that some teachers neglected or excluded some children with disability from ECE activities. However, fair teachers were not perceived as necessarily providing the same treatment or tasks for all children. Rather, "they treat all children regardless of disability and background either equally or differentially" (FT-Oforiwaa-CS4). This shows that teachers who are fair may be driven by both capability and equity understandings of IECE, ensuring all children have a fair share of teaching and social activities based on their ability, and not their primary disability. As such, fair teachers are also likely to demonstrate flexibility in inclusive settings. Teacher fairness fosters equity and differentiation of practice:

It is the fear of God that makes teachers not to treat the children anyhow. The teacher has to treat children with disability *too well according to their needs*. You should treat them different or like peers without disability but some teachers don't mind such children. *Children with disability need to take participate in the activities so they need teachers who will not leave them out but help them also.*
(FM-Akasi-CS2)

Clearly, such teachers may also ignite positive attitudes towards children with disability, and use effective IECE practices (e.g., individualised instruction and differential tasks), thereby limiting discrimination, or exclusive practices. Fair teachers thus foster equalisation of opportunities; hence, they are also flexible in providing differential instruction and tasks to support the individual needs of children. Fairness is also identified as an essential trait of effective inclusive teachers (Essa, 2014; McLeskey et al., 2013). Therefore, to actively involve children in ECE settings' activities, teachers

must be fair to all children. Although not reported as a headteacher quality, fair headteachers will equally recognise IECE in terms of equity.

In addition, five teachers across the case sites, except at site 2, identified attention as an important teacher quality. Teacher attention embodied taking special care or interest in all children. Teachers who are attentive were considerate of the individual needs of children and make efforts to meet them. For example, they “devise effective ways to ensure all children, especially those with disability, participate in or cope with lessons and other activities” in ECE settings (MT-Kwasi-CS3). Attentive teachers were perceived to be “open-minded” (EO-Kofi); that is, they recognised all children and were not selective. Such teachers catered for the differing needs or challenges of children. However, teacher Kabenla felt attentive teachers can maximise the benefits children attain from IECE if the teachers are knowledgeable of the situations and capabilities of all children, as noted by Allen and Cowdery (2015). This means that such teachers are also empathetic:

Each child should derive benefits from the [inclusive] class so this requires *someone can give attention to everyone and their needs...* An inclusive teacher must know all the children under his custody; their competencies, or challenges and makes efforts to address them. (MT-Kabenla-CS1)

4.5.9 Skilful and Resourceful

Being skilful was seen as another essential teacher quality. Two teachers only at case site 1 shared that skilful teachers supported all children’s learning. Through a gradual process or “bit by bit support”, the skilful teacher ensured children with disability also engaged in the learning tasks (FT-Aba-CS1). These participants believed teachers who are skilful recognised that all children can learn or do something, but they need guidance and support. Skilful and scaffolding teachers were thus seen to provide ongoing assistance to all children, which fosters the attainment of learning and developmental goals. The skilful and scaffolding teacher builds the child’s confidence to master certain tasks. For example, they use differential tasks, task analysis or prompts as scaffolds to promote learning and participation in ECE activities. Such teachers may be driven by a capability and equity perspective of IECE.

Three teachers at case site 1 also nominated being resourceful as another crucial teacher trait. Being resourceful embodied teacher creativity and skill that drive IECE. The resourceful teacher thus accessed information, acquired knowledge and skills, and

collaborated with others to include children with disability. The teacher participants felt such teachers harnessed resources. Therefore, teacher resourcefulness was considered to be a key quality that promoted inclusive practice. Resourceful teachers were perceived to augment their practice capacity, and may have a resource-oriented view of IECE. It means that being resourceful enables teachers to harness available resources or support to ensure children are included in ECE settings. While IECE may be challenging, resourceful teachers will seek out resources to support the IE of children with disability:

A good inclusive teacher should be resourceful. Teaching all children requires [more] information or resources. So, teachers can improvise or find other ways to involve all with disability. The teacher needs to be reading or consulting others for knowledge and other things. The teacher will get skills to be on top of [inclusive] issues. (MT-Kwame-CS1)

4.5.10 Flexibility

Flexibility was a trait of inclusive teachers uniquely identified by one teacher participant at case site 4. Flexibility was seen to enhance the inclusion of all children in daily activities and routines. The teacher participant felt flexibility entailed the willingness of teachers to change their thinking and attitudes towards children with disability and use multiple pedagogical practices, or adapt the curriculum to meet the learning and social needs of children. Thus, if a strategy was ineffective, a flexible teacher would try another one and not rely on only one approach, believing that every child can learn. Or, flexible teachers may not hold on tightly to strategies that do not work but change to new ones that promote inclusion. It means that teachers who are flexible create varying opportunities for children, which are critical to IECE.

Research has more broadly reported flexibility as a key characteristic of effective teachers (Allen & Cowdery, 2015; Stronge, 2007) in IECE settings. Allen and Cowdery (2015) affirm that teachers' ability to be flexible and adapt an activity to individual or group needs is a hallmark of effective teaching, and hence, effective IECE practice. The teacher's flexibility is instrumental to providing a responsive learning environment that matches children's development level and special interests (Allen & Cowdery, 2015). This implies that flexible teachers are adaptable and open to the challenges that IE affords.

However, findings in the current study also highlight that flexibility is about a change in attitudes. It signifies that teachers who are flexible show initiative and responsibility, instead of relegating responsibility of IECE to other teachers. It also

emerged in the current study that some headteachers and teachers were reported to exhibit attributes not supportive of IECE. As observed by some teacher participants, some teachers cared less or did not have time for children with disability. This sentiment even extended to children without disability. Other unfavourable teacher qualities reported by a few education officials were that some headteachers were harsh and hostile, or not empathetic to parents of children with disability, which may further compound parents' emotional feelings. Such unfavourable teacher and headteacher qualities and dispositions may reflect attitudes towards IECE.

In sum, effective headteacher and teacher qualities and dispositions are important for IECE. Such qualities can be a “universal lens” for IECE as they are also evident in different contexts and different educational systems. Understanding and knowing what education officials, headteachers and teachers in this study identify as effective qualities of IECE teachers especially, and supported with other qualities that are known in research, can influence the development and enactment of experiences that align to promote these qualities in ECE settings. It is clear that the participants wanted teachers and headteachers who are mostly passionate, patient, and caring and loving; and who are flexible, respectful and empathetic, as well as resourceful, scaffolding and fair. Passion, patience, caring and loving, and respect are essential dispositions, and align with a study by West and Pirtle (2013) that found that teacher attributes mattered for inclusive practice. These teacher qualities are interrelated, or are linked together and supportive of each other to enable teachers to function effectively.

Teacher quality matters to all and is integral to the use and implementation of effective pedagogical and organisational practices for IECE. These qualities are key to teachers' understanding of their responsibility to all learners. Hence, based on the power of positive headteacher qualities (Billingsley et al., 2014) and teacher qualities and disposition (Allen & Cowdery, 2015; McLeskey et al., 2013; West & Pirtle, 2013), and knowing that such qualities matter in all children's education and inclusion, an education system that ensures that teachers and headteachers develop favourable attributes for IECE is critical.

4.6 RQ 4: What are the Important and Perceived Outcomes of IECE?

4.6.1 Perceived Outcomes

This section examines the perceived outcomes of IECE, that is, the values and benefits or otherwise of education officials, headteachers and teachers associated with IECE. Both

positive and negative perceived outcomes were identified for all children, teachers and parents (Table 4.6), which were similarly shared or specific to the participants and case sites. As noted in Chapter 2, the identified outcomes and importance of IECE are strongly reinforced by research evidence from both IE and ECE. IECE outcomes for all children clustered mainly into academic and socio-emotional outcomes, which are first discussed. Economic benefits and early learning and intervention are also discussed.

Table 4.6: Positive and Negative IECE Outcomes

Individuals	Outcomes
Children	Academic learning for all Social benefits (e.g., social skills, acceptance, belonging and valuing; friendship, communication skills, confidence building and self-esteem) Social challenges (e.g., behaviour problems, teasing, bullying, boredom)
Teachers	Professional knowledge, learning and skills Positive attitude and disposition (e.g., patience, empathy) Time-consuming and additional responsibility
Parents	Parent happiness and satisfaction Positive perceptions and attitudes Parent complaints and concerns

4.6.2 Academic Outcomes

Most (15) participants across roles and case sites perceived similarly that children with and without disability attained academic outcomes in IECE. Academically, all children were seen to access multiple avenues and opportunities (e.g., curricula activities, role models, peers, teachers, and other adults) in ECE settings that enhanced their learning. Although some children with disability were seen to not learn fast or attain much academically, the general acknowledgement by some headteachers and teachers was that with time and teacher support, such children’s learning or academic performance gradually improved, while peers with disability still attained their “expected learning and performance” (FT-Oba Yaa-CS4). Active involvement of children in ECE activities, complemented with effective teacher support was perceived to be more likely to improve the academic learning of all children. The learning opportunities make IECE settings great places for all children:

It’s good to include all children in the same classroom to learn same activities [curriculum]. *Doing so, those with disability* have more opportunities to learn. *The non-disabled ones also have the chance to improve. They learn from the disabled ones, especially those who are clever.* (EO-Akos)

Children with disability learn more in IECE than in separate schools. In IE settings, the head, teachers or friends impart good things to such children. The

peers without disability also learn but I think children with disability *will grasp more things than being in their own territories*. (HT-Esi-CS4)

All children participate in the activities. We tend to forget we learn from each other. The fact that a child is disabled doesn't mean he is incapable of learning. Some are good at creative arts or natural sciences, and also present ideas on questions involving imaginative thinking... Peers without disability may attain their usual success. (MT-Kwame-CS1)

4.6.3 Social Outcomes

Diverse social outcomes of IECE were identified for children with and without disability. Positive social outcomes identified for all children included increased socialisation skills, acceptance and belonging, and friendship formation, while children with disability were seen to also develop confidence and improved communication. The negative outcomes included behaviour problems, teasing and bullying, and boredom, which are discussed in this section.

Socialisation and interaction

Four education officials, four headteachers and 10 teachers, across the case sites, stated that IECE settings increased early interactions and play opportunities for all children, compared to segregated settings. For these participants, IECE provide varied opportunities that enhance interactions, playing or learning together in ECE settings. Through these interactions, children with disability especially develop social interaction skills (e.g., communicating, turn-taking, sharing, and self-control), which may also enable them to attain other social and learning outcomes (e.g., belonging, friendship, and confidence development). For most of the teacher participants, if children with disability could not gain much academically, at least development of “appropriate” socialisation skills to promote their living and interactions with peers and other adults in the larger society were non-negotiable. For example, “if children with disability do not learn anything, they develop some skills that help them to mingle or live with others” (FT-Akua-CS2). Social and interaction skills are essential for all children. Across the case sites, increased socialisation and interaction skills were seen as a major IECE outcome. This was attributed to the perceived availability of peers without disability, play opportunities, and other adults in ECE settings.

Friendship development

IECE was perceived to foster friendship development among all children, a perspective shared by two education officials, two headteachers and five teachers across all case sites. These participants believed that IECE facilitated friendship development as children with disability played and socialised together with many peers without disability. Such friendships were characterised by interactions, care and affection, and peer support, which are critical to children's success. It is useful for enhancing the sense of belonging, acceptance and participation of all children, not only in social activities, but also in learning. Among the few participant roles and across all the sites, friendship development was seen as crucial for IECE. For the education officials, "good friends" provided "genuine assistance", which enhances the involvement and interrelations of children with disability in ECE settings. The teachers who identified this outcome felt that "everyone" needs a friend to play with or interact with in ECE settings, hence IECE offers opportunities for all children (FT-Akasi-CS2). Friendship among all children was seen as a critical ingredient to foster learning, playing and living together.

Acceptance and belonging

Acceptance and belonging were seen as two interrelated social outcomes of IECE. In particular, all children were perceived to learn about individual differences and to accept the strengths and uniqueness of others. Acceptance, appreciation and "valuing of the worth of others" are essential to effective IECE (MT-Kabenla-CS1). Two education officials, three headteachers and four teachers at case sites 1, 3 and 4 believed children without disability mostly developed increased appreciation and acceptance while empathising with children with disability. For teachers at case site 1, "valuing others" ensured belonging in IECE settings. Belonging was seen as a critical outcome for all children especially children with disability. Two education officials, three headteachers and ten teachers identified that IECE settings enhanced a better sense of belonging than segregated settings for children with disability. Children with disability become "part" of ECE settings, and the varying socialising avenues and the "opportunity to belong" essentially foster the learning, self-worth, emotional well-being and acceptance of all children. Notably, if "children with disability were in their own territories, segregated settings, they feel isolated or ignored" (HT-Esi-CS4). Across all the case sites, belonging and acceptance were seen to promote togetherness, as seen in these extracts:

Peers learn and play with disabled children, which makes these children to feel at home. At the playground or during break time they are all together. *The disabled feel loved and they can take part in the school activities or society.* They feel belong or accepted. (FT-Abiba-CS2)

A child with disability in an inclusive setting learns to relate well with colleagues even in adult life and feel part of society. The child realises that no matter what, he's not separated, which helps the child to learn. For example, a child who is hard of hearing *when separated from the rest firstly loses emotional well-being.* *The isolation might affect the child psychologically.* (MT-Kabenla-CS1)

Confidence building and self-esteem

According to one education official, two headteachers (at sites 1 and 2) and two teachers at case sites 2 and 4, an important outcome of IECE was to develop the confidence of children with disability. They felt that children with disability gain confidence as they relate with peers without disability and other people, and participate in activities in the ECE setting. These participants saw that children with disability have low self-esteem, and IECE develops their self-esteem and confidence. Such confidence or a high self-esteem is likely to improve the performance or success of all children in ECE settings, and reduce stigmatisation:

Many a time children with disability naturally feel inferior. As disabled children participate in class activities or answer questions that boost their morale or confidence, they realise they are in the same school or can do something just like any other person. So the stigma people or that kind of shyness, or thinking that I am a lesser person is reduced. (HT-Dede-CS2)

Communication skills

One education official and one teacher at case site 3 identified a specific outcome, that IECE improves the communication of skills of some children with a mild communication disability. This was attributed to the early exposure of children to appropriate ECE activities, good speech models (e.g., peers, teachers and parents) and motivation. IECE enhanced children's language and communication competence through facilitated interactions and exchanges, although this required effective teacher planning and parental support. The acquisition of effective communication skills was seen to support children's participation and success in ECE settings.

I had child who couldn't talk well in my class. *Gradually through the activities and interactions with other children the speech got better.* I encouraged the child

to talk even if it wasn't clear. Bit by bit the boy started talking "well" after *almost two years*. It was difficult at first, but I told the parents to support. The parents were advised to send the child to that special school. I don't know what would have happened. Another one was brought but the problem was severe, we try but ... (FT-Yaba-CS3)

Behavioural problems

A few participants (three headteachers and five teachers) in all the case sites reported some children with disability exhibited withdrawal or hyperactive and disruptive behaviours. These participants perceived that the physical aggression or destructive behaviours (e.g., "beating; pinching") exhibited by children with disability endangered other children or affected effective learning and teaching. These behaviour problems were sources of concern for teachers, and also parents, as captured in this excerpt:

Some children with disability disturb in class. Those with hyperactive behaviours move round or tend to beat their friends. Sometimes the normal children report such incidents to parents who usually come to the school to complain. The head or teachers educate parents, but some think such children should be sent elsewhere. A parent asked, should a child who's hyperactive keep on pinching her child? When parents come to the school the headteacher says it's okay; we are trying to mix all of them? (HT-Dede-CS2)

A few children with disability feel shy to engage in class activities. Sometimes they stay alone. But how some behave is a concern. This boy can't stay in the desk unless the teacher keeps on telling him to sit down. It's a problem for the teacher too. (FT-Araba-CS4)

Teasing and bullying

Two education officials and two teachers at case sites 2 and 4 commonly observed that children with disability were teased in ECE settings. Experiencing recurrent teasing (e.g., mocking or derogatory remarks) affected their socio-emotional well-being and academic learning or led to isolation and unhappiness, and made children with disability uncomfortable. However, teachers deterred peers without disability from teasing children with disability in order to create a peaceful atmosphere for all children.

Other children make fun of children with disability. They call them names and all sorts. They are young, but some of the things the "normal ones" say about peers with disability aren't good. As such, some children aren't happy and may

isolate themselves. But we try our best to deal with or punish children fond of mocking them since their parents won't accept such attitudes. (FT-Akua-CS2)

In addition, one education official and one teacher at case site 4 felt that children with disability were bullied by peers without disability in ECE settings. However, the education official observed that a few peers with disability were strong enough, and also bullied other children without disability. Thus children without disability were also not immune to bullying from peers with disability, implying that the potential for bullying exists in all children. This is an interesting result as children with disability are often perceived to be bullied by their peers without disability in Ghana (e.g., Obeng, 2012).

Some children with physical disability or others are strong and they also beat other children. There is a boy with 'certain behaviour' who is fond of biting others. But the other kids normally bully those with disability a lot. (EO-Kofi)

Boredom

Although identified by only teacher, FT-Oba Yaa-CS4, children without disability were perceived to experience subtle boredom in ECE settings. One reason for this boredom was the fast completion of tasks or lack of adequate activity for children without disability or the teacher's desire to attend to other children with disability or difficulty. While the teacher felt children with disability should not be excluded from ECE activities, it indicates that a teacher's quest to meet the needs of all children, if not well managed, may have an impact on the learning of other children. This result highlights the need for teachers to provide task differentiation and planned participation to meet the differential interests and needs of all children in ECE settings.

Clearly, all children were perceived to attain valued IECE outcomes that included academic learning and social benefits such as improved social skills, acceptance and belonging, and friendship. However, there were negative outcomes such as behavioural problems and boredom. But the general consensus among most participants, irrespective of roles, was that children with mild-moderate disability benefitted more from IECE. This may be influenced by some participants' disability-oriented perspective of IECE.

4.6.4 Outcomes for Headteachers and Teachers

IECE was seen as both beneficial and burdensome for teachers. Although IECE was perceived as creating extra tasks and as time consuming, teachers especially derived valued outcomes in terms of professional knowledge, learning and expertise, and self-fulfilment and personal satisfaction.

Professional knowledge and learning

The majority (21) of the participants across all case sites similarly identified that headteachers and teachers attain professional knowledge, learning and expertise as the major outcome of IECE implementation. While teachers developed new knowledge and understanding of children's uniqueness, and proficiency with instructional skills, headteachers also became knowledgeable about managing and learning about the everyday challenges of inclusive settings. Teachers became "dynamic and flexible in the use of instructional methods" (FT-Oba Yaa-CS4). Such professional learning enhances teacher practice of IECE. For teachers at case sites 2 and 4, professional knowledge also meant teachers were knowledgeable of the situational needs of children with disability, and hence were able to demonstrate effective qualities (e.g., empathy and patience) in IECE.

Self-fulfilment and satisfaction

Self-fulfilment was an IECE outcome that only teachers shared. Six teacher participants from the case sites, except case site 3, found IECE both self-fulfilling and satisfying. For these teachers, self-fulfilment and satisfaction with IECE was a significant outcome they derived from including children with disability. Such teacher self-fulfilment was linked to improvements in the behaviour, learning and skills acquisition and functioning of children with disability at school or in society, which signifies a window of hope for teachers' efforts towards effective IECE. It means that teachers' capacity to make a difference in the education and lives of children, especially those with disability, was seen as highly rewarding. Teachers who are satisfied with IECE express positive attitudes towards children with disability and are more likely to use effective pedagogical practices and demonstrate increased concern for all children, as seen in these extracts:

I remember after my ECE degree from the university most parents from a former station were looking for me. *They wanted me to see some improvements in children with disability I taught in KG and primary.* This boy who couldn't talk and walk properly has finished junior high school. I tried many methods. *So for [me] the benefit of teaching children with disability is the fulfilment.* The boy has improved and he is learning a trade. (FT-Ama-CS1)

As a teacher I become happy if I am able to teach all children. If this child with disability who couldn't do much and by God's grace as I am helping and trying all methods and the child can do something *then I am making a great effort. So I am satisfied.* (FT-Abiba-CS2)

Additional responsibility and time consuming

Most (15) participants across all case sites found IECE was an additional responsibility and time-consuming aspect of the program for teachers. Including children with disability in ECE settings was seen as an extra burden and hence a difficult task. Irrespective of participant roles, the perception was that IECE was demanding and constituted an extra workload since teachers must care and attend to the needs of all children. One explanation may be the reported large class sizes and disruptive behaviours in some case sites and the need to individualise instruction:

Some teachers don't want much work to do so they see IECE as an additional responsibility. I have to make extra time to help the child with disability cope or put in more efforts.... Once teachers aren't getting any form of remuneration they think it's another task. (EO-Kofi)

IECE was challenging due to the extra support and time demands required. Some teachers felt that if teachers concentrated more on children with disability, other children sometimes missed out. It was not surprising that teachers who understood IECE from a disability perspective felt “near to all the time in the world” (FT-Antwiwaa-CS3) was required to effectively include all children (especially those with severe disability). Despite the negatively perceived outcome, almost the same number of teachers identified IECE as an “interesting experience”, which contributed to their professional knowledge and practice (FT-Aba-CS1).

4.6.5 Outcomes for Parents

All parents, especially those of children with disability, were reported to benefit from IECE, though negative outcomes were also reported. Happiness and positive perceptions, and parent complaints are discussed next.

Happiness and satisfaction

Three education officials, two headteachers and nine teachers across case sites commonly reported that parents of children with disability experienced happiness and satisfaction with IECE, as their children were effectively supported in ECE settings and not segregated. These participants felt parent satisfaction was heightened when children with disability also attained learning and socialisation outcomes similar to those of children without disability. Such parent happiness/satisfaction was seen as an emotional relief and

motivation, which may trigger increased support and involvement in children's education. This view may influence teacher attitudes towards the inclusion of all children.

Parents initially think about the child's disability, and are sad. But if the child is included in the same classroom with their counterparts, and as teachers are helping, parents feel happy. Some parents don't want their children to be separated. (EO-Akos)

Parents enrol the child with disability in the school to also learn reading and writing like other peers. Especially if such objectives are being achieved, parents feel satisfied. But all the same parents are satisfied if the child is in the inclusive than the segregation. (HT-Aka-CS1)

Parents of children with disability are excited. They want to give the child the best education; they feel the child with disability is also with other children. Parents believe the centre can serve the child's needs or get something at the end. (FT-Ebela-CS3)

Positive perceptions

Parents of children with disability were seen to develop positive thinking or perceptions about the capacity of children with disability and IECE. Although only one teacher at site 4 held this view, it is worth mentioning because positive attitudes are important. IECE resulted in changes in parents' self-fulfilled prophecies or doubts about the capability of children with disability, or increased parent appreciation of children's potential and self-worth. With time, parents set realistic expectations and a re-conceptualised view of their children with disability, which is a critical support for IECE.

Initially when children with disability are brought to the school, some parents say that they want such children *just to be* in education. But after some time when such children have interacted with other peers or had more experiences, the same parents start to realise what these children can do. Oh, my child can also learn... Whatever parents' thoughts were changes ... (FT-Oba Yaa-CS4)

Parents' complaints and concerns

Parents' complaints and concerns were the main negative outcomes of IECE. Although not shared by education officials, one headteacher at site 2 and four teachers at sites 3 and 4 associated IECE with parent complaints and concerns. These participants felt that parents of children without disability expressed feelings of apprehension about IECE or were dissatisfied with the behavioural problems of some children with disability. But teacher Oba Yaa also felt some parents of children with disability were also concerned

about the behaviour of children without disability (e.g., bullying, teasing). This means that parents of children without disability were perceived to have negative attitudes towards IECE, as captured in these extracts.

Naturally, some parents like IECE but others think disabled children should be separated. I remember there was a boy who went round eating other pupils' food. One day he ate someone food; not even the mother, but the father came to the school. I tried to calm him. But he said "then they should find a place and send him there" [sic]. The father complained but we can't withdraw this boy from the school. So from time to time we counselled him. (HT-Dede-CS2)

Some parents express reactions when children with disability are with the normal children in the class. Such parents usually complain and aren't comfortable. They see it from different angles. One time a parent said she felt frightened but what can we do as teachers? I believe parents must accept other children's plight no matter what! (FT-Oforiwaa-CS4)

4.6.6 Economic Benefits

The majority (25) of participants across roles and sites similarly identified that IECE promotes economic benefits for all children, and ultimately for society. This included early skills acquisition, and the development of all children's potential for the world of work. Most participants recognised that from an early age, participation in IECE programs unearthed the talents of children with disability, and enhanced their independence and readiness for economic activities. Essentially, the changing world and times meant effective IECE supported all children's future employability and contributions to national development. This view is shown in the following extracts:

IECE is important because everybody has ability. When children with disability are educated, they acquire skills and other things; they will also grow up and contribute to the nation's development. If such children are left behind their potential won't be tapped. So, IECE will help to unearth everyone's potential and talents. We don't want them to become beggars or otherwise in future... (EO-Alua)

[T]he world keeps changing so if children with disability aren't educated, I don't know? If they are denied education, they may end up becoming beggars. Whether the child is disabled or abled, they should have equal chance to education to be academically sound or acquire certain skills. Children with

disability can get job to fend for themselves. *I always think about when they grow up.* (HT-Dede-CS2)

When we include all children, especially disabled ones, they also get skills or develop their abilities. *In future they won't be found wanting as they become independent.* (FT-Akua-CS2)

Indeed, the economic perspective likens IECE to a futurist approach to education and development, evident in comments above and best articulated in:

We know for sure *that the future lies with children.* If we want to see our nation develop for the next 50 years and beyond, much attention should be focused on educating today's children, which encompasses all children no matter their ability. What is the basic aim of education? Consider what education can do...
So, IECE is for the future of all. (MT-Kwame-CS1)

Implicitly, IECE makes an economic difference in the life of children, while eliminating future disadvantages associated with dependency and exclusion from education and employment. Most participants across roles and sites observed similarly that IECE provided economic benefits, but they assigned different reasons to justify why investment in IECE is vital. While two education officials felt IECE is cost-effective as it maximised resource use (e.g., monitoring ECE centres, teaching children together), some headteachers and teachers stressed the future economic independence of children with disability. Thus, an economic consideration in valuing of IECE warrants investment in high-quality and effective IECE programs for supporting the individual needs of children and optimising their potential.

4.6.7 Early Learning and Intervention

Another IECE outcome identified by participants was early learning. Three education officials, two headteachers at sites 1 and 4, and seven teachers at all sites shared that IECE fostered early learning for all children. Thus, “at an early age learning and socialisation *formally* begins for all or most children” (EO-Abi). Teacher Kwasi, at case site 3, strongly believed that after many years of segregation of children with disability, that with enlightenment and education, IECE ensures that all children start learning early in the inclusive class. Early learning is also seen to foster “future learning in IECE settings” (HT-Esi-CS4). Through IECE, all children are exposed to early stimulating experiences that may enhance learning and brain development. Across all the case sites, IECE was

perceived as the only avenue through which all children can experience early learning or learning together:

The IECE means all children start learning early in the same class. In the olden days children with disability weren't normally included in our system. With civilisation, education and others, it brought enlightenment to society so all children can have that education. (MT-Kwasi-CS3)

However, three education officials felt that early learning required effective early identification of disability or difficulties and intervention. These education officials found that children with disability benefitted from early access to IECE opportunities that improved their functioning or learning. Beginning identification and intervention early, children no longer have to wait for their "preventable difficulties" to be addressed or wait for later school enrolment or remediation attempts. They believed that early intervention would make a difference in the lives of all children, and facilitate continuous education in inclusive settings rather than excluding children or adopting a wait-and-see approach. However, the education officials stated that such early intervention mostly benefited children with mild-moderate disability:

In the early childhood, children with disability are young and still developing. If we have them early those with non-severe difficulties can be "corrected" if they mingle with peers and learn. Children with "mild" speech problems develop good language through activities, songs and rhymes. *It's good all children start early and continue in the normal stream right up to the higher level...* (EO-Abeka)

These identified importance and outcomes of IECE that have been drawn from the comments of participants in different roles and across different settings indicate that IECE has mixed outcomes. Similar positive outcomes have been reported in previous research.

Valued outcomes of IECE for all children include academic and social benefits (Allen & Cowdery, 2012; Guralnick, 2001; Hanline & Correa-Torres, 2012; Moore, 2009; Mulvihill et al., 2004; Odom et al., 2011; Salend, 2010; Simpson & Warner, 2010; Smith et al., 2012). Varied learning avenues and opportunities for reciprocal learning in ECE settings enhance the learning of all children (Hanline & Correa-Torres, 2012). Further, improved communication skills of children with disability (Gruenberg & Miller, 2011; Hanline & Correa-Torres, 2012; Killoran et al., 2007; Simpson & Warner, 2010), and

friendship development (Buysse et al., 2002) are identified social outcomes of IECE. Buysse et al. (2002) found that all children developed friendships in ECE settings, and the availability of more playmates was significant in fostering increased friendship development for children with disability. Similarly, children without disability in inclusive settings develop increased acceptance of peers with disability or diversity (Hanline & Correa-Torres, 2012; Simpson & Warner, 2010). In this study, both children with and without disability were seen to develop acceptance and valuing of the uniqueness or differences in all children, which reflects positive attitudes for IECE practice.

In contrast, behavioural problems associated with children with disability are seen as concerns related to IECE (Leyser & Kirk, 2011; McLeskey et al., 2013). Peers with disability may also experience teasing, negative comments, staring, social isolation (Meadan & Monda-Amaya, 2008; Pivik et al., 2002), and bullying in IECE settings (Frederickson, 2010; Obeng, 2012). Similar to the research cited, this study identified that children with disability were bullied by peers without disability; however, a few participants observed that children without disability were also bullied by some children with disability.

Previous studies have highlighted that teachers acquire additional professional knowledge while implementing inclusive practice (Gruenberg & Miller, 2011; McLeskey et al., 2013; Moore, 2009) and increased personal satisfaction from working in inclusive settings (Finke et al., 2009). Although there are differences in the context of practice, effective IECE enhances the knowledge repertoire of teachers. In this study, however, teachers' satisfaction with IECE was a lasting experience that supported their daily practice.

Research has found that parents of children with disability were also satisfied with IECE experiences for their children with disability (Leyser & Kirk, 2011). As similarly identified in the current study, some parents of children without disability had reservations and resentment about the behavioural problems of children with disability (Allen & Cowdery, 2015; Leyser & Kirk, 2011; Rafferty and Griffin, 2005; Simpson & Warner, 2010). For example, Rafferty and Griffin found that parents of typically developing children identified fright from unusual behaviours as the main risk or concern in including all children in preschool settings. Hence, re-orientating all parents to develop positive perceptions and understandings of disability and inclusive issues is critical to foster acceptance and reduce parent concerns.

Economically, across the world, IECE has emerged as a cost-effective practice (Peters, 2007a; UNESCO, 2009), securing continuity, productivity and regeneration of human resources for society, and expanding the platform for human learning and development (Montgomery, 2003; WHO, 2011). This implies that investment in high-quality and effective IECE programs to support all children optimises their potential and can save substantial expenditure from costly future interventions (Darragh, 2010; Heckman, 2006a).

In summary, while mixed reactions exist about the perceived outcomes of IECE, there is high optimism that IECE is an economic investment that benefits all children and society, which reinforces the need for quality programs and provisions. As such, if concerns of headteachers, teachers or parents are addressed, and necessary resources are provided, IECE can be effective as a philosophy and educational practice.

4.7 RQ 5: What Training and Professional Development are Provided for IECE?

4.7.1 Training and Professional Development

Training¹⁷ and PD are vital elements for successful IECE. Broadly, training and PD encompass all the professional learning and continuing education teachers and headteachers undertake to enhance their preparedness, readiness, and efficacy for IECE practice. Although training and PD were provided for all teachers, a range of training needs was still identified as necessary for effective IECE. There were similarities and differences in the training and PD needs, but some were specific to the participant roles and case sites. In the following sections, the nature and importance of training and PD, and essential training needs are discussed.

4.7.2 Preservice Teacher Training

All the participants in this study indicated that teachers and headteachers had received initial training and preparation for IECE at the colleges of education or universities. Only one teacher reported not having “formal training” to include all children because inclusiveness was not part of the teacher’s secondary education. Although the preservice training provided fundamental knowledge and skills for teachers, such as knowledge about children with disability or how to use individualised instruction, the majority of the participants (21), irrespective of roles, found such training inadequate. The training did

¹⁷ “Training” refers to all initial or preservice teacher education and preparation for IECE practice.

not equip “teachers to be ‘competent’ instructionally to include children with disability” in ECE settings (EO-Abeka). Therefore, teachers were seen to be under-trained and under-prepared for effective IECE. This was attributed to insufficient IE courses in the existing teacher education programs, or the perceived theoretically- oriented training that offered teachers limited practice and experience-based learning opportunities. For most participants, “the insufficient inclusive training courses and programs” affected teacher acquisition of knowledge, skills and insights of IECE (FT-Adwoa-CS2). As best reinforced in the following extracts, most teachers lacked the necessary competency or *in-depth* inclusive knowledge and pedagogy for IECE.

Generally, all colleges of education do some aspect of special education. It’s assumed the teacher with Diploma in Education can teach a child with special needs. But the Special Education course was just a semester program, *and teachers didn’t get in-depth knowledge as to what really they will meet in the field. What teachers might have studied in college is more of theory. When they face reality in the schools, there are problems. In principle, teachers have been trained all right, but in practice they lack knowledge to handle such children effectively in the regular schools ...* (EO-Kofi)

During training at the university, we [teachers and headteachers] take courses in ECE and exceptional individuals. The courses help us in managing all children in the setting. *But I believe more “special” courses in IE would benefit headteachers and teachers a lot.* (HT-Aka-CS1)

We had a course on special children for two semesters at the university. We were introduced how to detect problems at the early stage with normal and children with disability. *At university I got insights of what actually the “inside” of this IE. The university course actually enlightened my understanding of IE in the early childhood level. What about teachers who have been in the field for many years, and aren’t going to the university or upgrading? Other teachers don’t take inclusive courses, and they may not have the inclusive knowledge or skills.* (FT-Ama-CS1)

Teachers did not have sufficient “insights of what IECE actually is” (FT-Ama-CS1) or “were not grounded sufficiently in the practicality of IECE”, hence they may “feel apprehensive or unprepared when faced with the reality” (EO-Kofi) when experiencing or including children with disability in ECE settings. Across most case sites (except case site 1), initial teacher training and preparation were considered mostly

inadequate. At case site 1, initial training was seen as somewhat adequate. This is not surprising, as most teachers at this site were engaged in continuing training through a partner university before their teaching assignment, hence the teachers felt better equipped for inclusive practice.

These findings are consistent with international research that suggests most teachers are inadequately prepared and lack appropriate experiences for IECE (Ackah Jnr, 2010b; Deiner, 2013; Hughes & Valle-Riestra, 2007; Obeng, 2012; NPDCI, 2007; Simpson & Warner, 2010). Obeng (2012) found that about 90% of Ghanaian teachers (Grades 1 to 3) lacked formal training, knowledge and pedagogical skills for effective instruction and inclusion of children with disability and SEN. Similarly, (Agbenyega & Klibthong, 2014) reported that the majority of Thai early childhood teachers had inadequate knowledge of IECE, which was attributed to the limited practical knowledge teachers acquired during training. It means that irrespective of contextual differences, teachers are under-trained, as training programs are inadequate or lack practical learning components. Results of the current study further highlight that teacher preparation programs in Ghana do not adequately equip preservice teachers with initial professional capital or the requisite skills and competencies required of inclusive teachers to effectively support IECE. Consequently, teacher education programs should be reviewed to ensure preservice training develops teachers' knowledge, skills and competency, and nurtures favourable attitudes. Education officials and teachers especially felt that IECE should become an "essential part of the curriculum of teacher education programs" (EO-Alua).

4.7.3 Professional Development

Ongoing PD¹⁸ was commonly identified by almost all the participants and across the case sites as important for IECE. Most participants shared that inservice teacher training workshops and seminars, which occurred mainly at resource centres or in individual schools and cluster-based settings, were the main PD vehicles for headteachers or teachers. Although PD programs somewhat enlightened teachers on new developments on inclusive practice and sharpened their existing understanding of practice, most (22) participants perceived that they were offered these programs only occasionally, and there was minimal focus on inclusive issues. Teachers and headteachers had "in-service

¹⁸ "Professional development" denotes continuing training or programs offered to teachers, headteachers or implementers after their initial teacher education and training.

training periodically at the school level” (HT-Dede-CS2). Evidence from key extracts showed that PD programs were insufficient and emphasised inclusivity passively; hence, they were inadequate to equip teachers with the necessary knowledge and skills. This view was widely held across the different participant roles:

Headteachers and teachers have PD through workshops, seminars and symposia, or inservice training, *but inclusive practice isn't very paramount. It's done in passing as the number of pupils with special needs is far below the ordinary school children.* Special education is responsible for these things. If the child has special needs then he should be referred to the special educational units. Much emphasis isn't laid on helping ordinary schoolteachers to cope with IE. *Ideally, all teachers in private or ordinary schools need in-depth knowledge about IE to accommodate such children.* (EO-Kofi)

Teachers and headteachers have seminars or workshops, and *inservice training periodically. In fact, for the workshops I have attended, there was nothing like today you are going for training on IE.* But once a while, trainers chip in something and the need to embrace the idea and the children in our midst. It's left to the headteacher to find out more about the practice. (HT-Dede-CS2)

We had training programs from the government [GES] and seminars some time ago, but for the IE ...? *The facilitators just say it in passing during workshops that you need to include all children in the centre; they don't say much on it.* But at this centre we benefit from some lecturers who provide information of teaching such children. (FT-Ama-CS1)

Across the case sites, except at case site 1, PD was mainly characterised as periodic, occasional or non-existing. At case site 1, however, PD was somewhat frequent, which also occurred through “university courses” (MT-Kabenla-CS1). This is no surprise, as case site 1 benefitted from PD organised by lecturers from a partner university, aside from the “traditional” training workshops and seminars for all teachers in the metropolis. It means that considerable PD opportunities existed at case site 1, which supported teachers:

We have inservice training every Friday [fortnight]. *If the headteacher can't handle the situation, we rely on experts or resource persons from the university. Some lecturers in IE come in.* Training provides teachers with insights on children with disability, their needs, or the methods. Inclusive issues are handled during in-service training programs. (HT-Aka-CS1)

Considerable research highlights the importance of ongoing training and PD for teachers implementing IECE (Ackah Jnr, 2013, 2014b; Buysse & Hollingsworth, 2009; Carrington et al., 2013; Deiner, 2013; Deku & Ackah Jnr, 2012; Florian, 2008; Forlin, 2010; Forlin & Chambers, 2011; Kearney, 2011; Odom et al., 2011; Simpson & Warner, 2010). The findings also support the results of two previous international studies (Clough & Nutbrown, 2004; Nutbrown & Clough, 2006) that showed that many preschool educators, including teachers and school leaders, were inappropriately equipped, while PD opportunities for inclusion were minimal or even non-existent for some teachers. These results are reinforced in the current study and also indicate that specific course work for inservice teachers (Sheehy et al., 2004), or workshops, additional courses and PD programs for teachers (Mitchell & Hegde, 2007) are essential training, although there are contextual differences in inclusive policies and practices.

Overall, PD programs were seen to be insufficient, and there was a need to sharpen or extend the knowledge and skill repertoires of teachers after preservice training through ongoing training and PD. As Florian (2008) and McLeskey et al. (2013) argue, teachers need effective inservice training to be skilful to meet current and future needs, and the challenges of IECE. Effective PD enables teachers to reflect on their beliefs, values and attitudes, and their relationships with their daily practice (Carrington et al., 2013). Therefore the view that “Special Education had responsibility for children with disability” appears to be a disincentive for providing PD for teachers in Ghana (EO-Kofi). Notably, IE policy and research in Ghana identify the need for training and PD for headteachers and teachers (Ackah Jnr, 2014; Deku & Ackah Jnr, 2012; ESP 2010–2020; Kuyini, 2014; Obeng, 2012), but it does not identify what training and PD best meet the situational or inclusive and pedagogical needs of teachers. Interestingly, the current study identified that training and PD should focus on teachers’ professional learning needs, while the training format should be more practical, blended and authentic (based on situational needs), and adopt a collaborative approach (see next section). Therefore, training and PD programs that emanate from the GES/MOE, especially the Special Education Directorate, should adopt a carefully planned and collaborative approach to foster inclusive philosophies, principles and practices.

Interestingly, most participants (22) acknowledged the need to train all teachers. Training and PD were seen to develop knowledge, skills, and positive attitudes; serve as a support for meeting future challenges; and enhance teacher readiness to effectively include children with disability. But, while inclusive training was considered valuable for

all teachers, four teacher participants were opposed to inservice training and PD or training all teachers for IECE. These teachers rather felt such training should be reserved for teachers interested in inclusive practice. While a few teachers held this view, it signalled an unfavourable posturing that indicates that inclusive practice and associated issues were the preserve of *some teachers*. Teachers with such a mindset may resist or be ambivalent to IECE, or see it as other people's responsibility. However, most participants' strong recognition of the need to train all teachers for IECE, and the articulation of the importance of such training is encouraging, as exemplified in these extracts:

All teachers should have inclusive-oriented training. Exactly! Because despite the level teachers are teaching, they encounter people with disability or problems. It doesn't matter if it's KG, class 1 or 2. I think all teachers should be trained to deal effectively with inclusive teaching. We [teachers] are all in it [inclusive practice] together so we need training. (MT-Kabenla-CS1)

Yes, all teachers need [inclusive] training for the policy to succeed. Teachers will have children with disability in the class, if not now, so we need to prepare for including them. (FT-Abiba-CS2)

Three teachers critiqued the GES/MOE or organisers for using trainers who lacked practical knowledge and experiences or insights of inclusive practice for inservice training workshops and seminars. In the view of these teacher participants, trainers who are competent and conversant with inclusive practice and issues may support teachers in co-constructing knowledge and effective ways for dealing with daily challenges. The perceived use of incompetent trainers was demotivating and may be a deterrent to future attendance at training workshops, as teachers and headteachers may feel they would not benefit from such sessions. Since training workshops appear to be the most used format for reinforcing new insights, skills and values for most inservice teachers in Ghana, it is vital to address this concern by using multiple practitioners, researchers or academics:

We need competent people who know about IE to handle training programs. Sometimes when you go for a workshop and the trainer doesn't have much insights of IE, but "facilitates" the training. These trainers aren't actually in the classroom, so they don't see what we see about inclusion. Trainers need to be trained or competent and conversant with inclusive practice. When you go to workshop and trainers aren't competent you feel... We go to workshops for some "solutions". (FT-Ama-CS1)

4.7.4 Training and Professional Development Needs

A range of training and PD needs was identified as necessary for effective IECE. Of 12 valued training needs, four were frequently mentioned, which included IE courses, pedagogical practices/management skills, knowledge of disability, and knowledge of IECE legislation and policies. Other relevant but less frequently identified training needs were early detection/intervention skills, rights of children with disability, and knowledge of curriculum/IEP development, as well as knowledge of child development and counselling. Practice-oriented, authentic, and blended training were seen as an effective training and PD format. While most of the training and PD needs were similar, others were unique to the participant roles and case sites (see Appendix H). This shows the importance of identifying training and PD needs from the perspectives of different users.

Table 4.7: Essential Training and PD Needs, and Participant Roles (N = 27)

Training needs	Participants			Total
	EO (N = 6)	HT (N = 5)	T (N = 16)	
IECE courses	6	5	13	24
Pedagogical practices/management skills	3	5	14	22
Knowledge of disability (special education courses)	3	3	12	18
Knowledge of curriculum/IEP development	2	1	1	4
Rights of children	2	2	7	11
Knowledge of child development	—	1	6	7
Knowledge of IECE legislation and policies	3	2	8	13
Early detection & intervention (assessment)	4	1	2	7
Counselling	—	-	2	2
Blended training (integrate ECE and IECE courses)	1	-	2	3
Practical training (hands-on/on-site training)	4	4	9	17
Authentic training (specific class/local issues)	1	-	-	1

Inclusive education courses

Almost all the (24) different participants (all education officials and headteachers, and 13 teachers) across the case sites commonly identified IE courses as essential for training and PD. Expectedly, IE courses were considered relevant to enhancing headteacher and teacher knowledge and skills, and improving their professional competency and attitudes towards IECE. For example, there are “special inclusive courses” that all teachers needed to enhance their knowledge of inclusive practice (HT-Dede-CS2). Some teachers felt IE

courses should involve “courses on disability or special education” (FM Abiba). Inclusive courses were seen to expose teachers to the philosophy, principles and theories, and understanding of IECE implementation.

Previous international studies (Agbenyega & Klibthong, 2014; Mitchel & Hegde, 2007; Spratt & Florian, 2013) and Ghanaian studies (Ackah Jnr, 2013; Deku & Ackah Jnr, 2012) have also stressed the importance of exposing teachers to IE courses and knowledge of effective practice. Deku and Ackah Jnr (2012) reported that teachers and headteachers required extra intensive inclusive courses to develop knowledge about the philosophy, principles, theories and practice to promote effective IECE implementation. Other studies in Ghana have also found that teachers need additional IE courses to enhance their preparedness for inclusive practice (Ackah Jnr, 2010b; Opoku-Inkoom, 2009). This need can be attributed to the single inclusive course and lack of emphasis on inclusive practice in teacher education programs. It suggests that IECE courses are critical, enabling teachers to develop appropriate knowledge, skills and competencies.

Pedagogical and management strategies

“Specialised” pedagogical (instructional) and management strategies were perceived to be vital for implementing IECE. The majority (22) of participants—three education officials, all headteachers and 14 teachers—reported that teachers needed adequate knowledge and competencies of a range of pedagogical or instructional strategies (e.g., differentiated and individualised instruction, behaviour and class management skills) to foster children’s involvement, participation and engagement in ECE settings (section 4.4). Particularly, teachers needed a repertoire of pedagogical practices or strategies to effectively include all children, rather than exclude them from the daily activities. Effective IECE was seen as teachers having appropriate skills. Although there were some differences in the “specialised” pedagogical needs across case sites, the teacher participants focused mostly on involvement and individualisation. However, behaviour management skills were identified as a specific need at case sites 1 and 2. These pedagogical and management strategies were seen as part of the IE needs that should be addressed. Essential teacher training needs, including pedagogical practices are best captured in these extracts:

Early identification... How teachers to identify some challenges. If they are able to conduct early identification it helps... *Knowledge of disability, managing and instruction...* (EO-Kofi)

In training colleges they don't go deep into child development and the inclusive. *Teachers need training on the developmental challenges of children and how to detect problems. Training on child development, early detection and intervention* will help in managing and teaching inclusively. Some teachers aren't accepting the inclusive because they don't have the *instructional strategies* to handle such children with the so-called normal ones. If teachers don't have the knowledge and skills, how can they include the disabled children? (FT-Ama-CS1)

These results are again reflective of earlier international research (Agbenyega & Klibthong, 2014; Akalm et al., 2014; Bruns & Mogharreban, 2007; Hughes & Valle-Riestra, 2007; A. A. R. Kuyini & Abosi, 2014; L. C. Mitchell & Hegde, 2007) that found knowledge and competencies of instructional strategies (e.g., individualised instruction, adaptive instruction) as prominent training needs of teachers implementing IECE. For instance, many inservice preschool (Mitchell & Hegde, 2007) and primary school teachers (Kuyini & Abosi, 2014) had limited knowledge of specific strategies (adaptive instruction) for educating children with disability. Kuyini and Abosi (2014) noted that teachers needed adequate competence in adaptive instruction for effective inclusion of children with disability (LDs) in regular classrooms in Ghana. It implies that training for acquisition of pedagogical or instructional strategies is necessary.

Knowledge of disability

Another critical teacher training need was knowledge of children's disability and/or diversity. Half of the education officials and three headteachers, as well as the majority (12) of teachers, identified that teachers required specific knowledge of disability (e.g., types, causes, characteristics or management) and the necessary associated support as part of the IE or special education training. Knowledge of disability was seen to enhance teachers' skills and ability to effectively include all children. But some participants felt teachers also needed knowledge of diversity—for all children and those with differing backgrounds. Thus, knowledge about all children, and not just children with disability, was essential for IECE. For example, "teachers need training and knowledge of the diverse children" to foster IECE (FT-Araba-CS4). Although participants from all the case sites expressed the need for knowledge of disability, at case sites 1 and 4, knowledge of diversity was also seen as essential for IECE, as it enhances teachers' understanding of individual differences in children.

Previous research has shown that knowledge of children's disability is a critical teacher training need (Florian, 2008; Gruenberg & Miller, 2011; Mitchell & Hegde, 2007). Importantly, teachers' knowledge of disability enhances their skills and ability to meet the needs of all children (Carrington et al., 2013), understanding of inclusive practice (Deku & Ackah Jnr, 2012; Purdue, 2009), acceptance/appreciation of all children (Mulvihill et al., 2004), and development of positive attitudes towards IECE (Carrington et al., 2013; Sharma et al., 2008). It means that knowledge of disability is essential although IECE is not only about children with disability. Thus, teacher knowledge of diversity is necessary.

Knowledge of IECE legislation and policies

Another important teacher training need was knowledge of IECE legislation and policies. Half of the education officials, two headteachers and eight teachers felt teachers required knowledge of IECE legislation and policies underlying implementation (e.g., the CRPD, Ghana IECE policy, Ghana Education Act, the Disability Act). Knowledge of legislation and policies enhanced teachers' understanding of IECE and the "limits of IECE practice" (HT-Esi-CS4), if any. These participants found that knowledge of legislation and policies as a guide to IECE would enable teachers to understand the individual needs of children, and the expectations for effective implementation. Only participants from case sites 1 and 4 expressed the need for knowledge of IECE legislation and policies because they identified such knowledge as important in supporting inclusive practice and educating parents about their roles:

Still more training on inclusive early education to improve practice, and also knowledge of IECE polices and laws so we can educate parents. (HT-Esi-CS4)

We are doing our best but knowing the laws on inclusive practice is important.

It's like a compass that guides you. The [Education or Disability] Act on IECE.

I think there should be special training on the IECE policy. (FT-Oba Yaa-CS4)

These findings are significant, as research has shown that teachers lack the knowledge of legislation and policies that support IE implementation (Gruenberg & Miller, 2011; Kearney, 2011; Simpson & Warner, 2010). Legislation and policy usually carry messages of expectations and roles for inclusive practice (Armstrong et al., 2010; Carrington et al., 2013; Gibson & Blandford, 2005; Liasidou, 2012; Nutbrown & Clough, 2006). It means that knowledge of IECE legislation and policies is vital. So, headteachers

and teachers need to be knowledgeable about IECE policy and legislation in order to put such policies into practice.

Other less frequently identified training needs that are essential for IECE. Four education officials, one headteacher and two teachers at case site 1 asserted that teachers needed early detection and intervention skills to enhance the early identification of children's disability or difficulties in order to provide appropriate support intervention. As seen earlier, knowledge of early detection and intervention can foster early identification of preventable difficulties, rather than adopting a wait-and-see approach. Further, two education officials and one headteacher at case site 1, perceived knowledge of curriculum/IEP development to be an essential training need. These participants underscored the need for teachers to have knowledge of curriculum/IEP in order to provide differentiated tasks to meet the specific needs of children. As noted earlier, a few teachers reported the use of task differentiation for children with disability in ECE settings. Knowledge of curriculum is critical to foster the involvement of all children in learning and social activities.

Similarly, an understanding of the rights of all children, especially those with disability, was a key training need. Eleven participants considered knowledge of the rights of children with disability essential to IECE, which shaped the acquisition of support, and what teachers and parents especially can do to augment the education of such children. As such, knowledge of the rights of children was seen as critical to IECE. Knowledge of child development, identified by one headteacher and six teachers across the case sites (except case site 2), was another essential need. These participants felt that such knowledge enables teachers to understand the trajectory of "typical development" and the associated developmental needs. Such knowledge enables teachers to also understand atypical development so that they can appropriately meet the needs of all children. Thus, teachers would know the uniqueness or differences in each child and support children according to their level of development with appropriate tasks through effective care and education. It implies that to effectively work with children with atypical development, including those with disability, teachers must have a sound knowledge of normal growth and development. Knowledge of children's development helps to improve the overall development and inclusion of each child in ECE settings (Allen & Cowdery, 2015; Deiner, 2013; Essa, 2014). In addition, two teachers at case site 1 considered knowledge of counselling as significant for IECE. They believed that teachers need effective counselling skills to support not only children with disability, but also their parents, who

often experience emotional reactions about their children's disability. Clearly, participants at case site 1 expressed a need for a wider range of training needs to foster IECE.

Practice, authentic and blended training

Teachers also needed a revitalised training format, including practical, authentic and blended training to promote IECE. Most participants—that is, four education officials, four headteachers, and eight teachers—similarly identified practical training that involved real activities rather than theoretical training or information workshops as vital for teachers to acquire first-hand knowledge and experiences for IECE practice. These participants felt teachers must know what to do or “see” IECE in action. Hence, hands-on activities and on-site or experiential learning in real-life settings (e.g., inclusive and special schools) were important. Thus, practice-orientated training is essential, as elucidated in these excerpts:

Practice makes man perfect! Teacher trainees must go for field practice so that they are conversant with what is actually happening. With IECE, all teachers need more experience to manage those situations. It's important for teachers in the field to have practical activities in workshops. (EO-Alua)

Teachers usually go through theory so they need more practical training workshops for the inclusive childhood education. Teachers should be mentored. There's little practical during teaching experience, so on the field teachers need mentoring. It should be mostly on-the-job training so that immediately teachers can put what they are learning on the inclusive into action. At the school teachers can identify their own problems and find answers from the trainers ... (HT-Baa-CS1)

I think teachers can visit special schools around for their practice. Over there, teachers can learn about the behaviours of children with disability and how to manage such children. Also, schools practising inclusion, the inclusive schools in the region, teachers can go there to observe ... (FT-Antwiwaa-CS3)

Two headteachers attributed the essence of practical training (mainly on-the-job training) to the immediacy of application of learned knowledge and skills, and learning from local classroom problems or issues. One education official participant claimed that since practice makes perfect, practice training was inevitable for both preservice and inservice teachers. Whereas the need for practical IECE training was shared across all the

case sites, at case site 1 it was regarded as a dominant need for teachers. At case site 1, student-teachers had inclusive practicum or experiences, which are seen to enhance teacher knowledge and support for the actualisation of IECE practice.

Previous researchers have also identified the value of hands-on activities for IECE practice (Smith et al., 2012; Mitchell & Hegde, 2007). When teachers learn from or experience actual inclusive settings, it fosters the observation and imitation of critical dimensions of inclusive practice (Smith et al., 2012). Irrespective of contexts, adequate practice opportunities during initial training and ongoing PD is important.

In addition, authentic training that focused on local processes, challenges, and understandings of IECE was an identified need of teachers. Though reported by one education official only, authentic training dealt with “unique classroom problems” or “specific disability of children”, and is important to equip teachers with knowledge of the individual learning and social needs of children. But, authentic training may not come easily, considering the differing needs and challenges of teachers and schools implementing IECE with limited resources. Authentic training that focuses on situational needs of classroom teachers is also important for IECE (Ackah Jnr, 2013; West & Pirtle, 2014):

Training must consider unique classroom problems of teachers so that it will be effective. Some teachers face different challenges. For example some schools have children with LDs and others, autism or intellectual disabilities. Sometimes different or special training for schools is better. (EO-Atta)

Furthermore, one education official and two teachers at case site 3 identified integrated training that concurrently addressed teachers’ needs and prepared them to work with all children as necessary for IECE practice. Teachers were trained or prepared separately for inclusive practice during their teacher education programs, hence these participants thought teachers needed an integrated IECE training and PD. By integrating ECE and IECE courses and topics, it prepares every teacher for the inclusive task:

In fact PD should be two-way: traditional training on children without disability, and training designed to help teachers educate children with disability in regular schools. It should be for all teachers. So, the usual traditional training must also have periods designated for IE. In preservice too, training in both areas should go together for teachers. (EO-Abeka)

We need training in both ECE and IECE at the same time during workshops. The GES, university or trainers *should combine these courses or topics during training to prepare every teacher for the task [IECE]*. (FT-Yaba-CS3)

Grisham-Brown et al. (2005) have also stressed the need for inclusive training programs that integrate effective practices for addressing the needs of all children. Such integrated practices equip teachers with knowledge and skills so that they become competent and comfortable in inclusive settings. It means that IECE training can shift from traditional approaches that separately reinforce knowledge and skills to integrated programs.

Self-learning

Whereas there were a number of identified training and PD needs, some teachers also engaged in self-learning for IECE practice in the absence of training and PD opportunities. Three education officials, three headteachers, and most (13) teachers across the case sites commonly referred to self-learning that included self-directed readings, research from libraries and internet surfing, and action research valuable, as it also enhanced the knowledge, skills and preparedness of headteachers and teachers. This was rather an unexpected finding, implying that self-learning is an emerging form of PD for IECE. It signifies that if teachers choose to exercise their agency for learning, it improves practice. Teacher professional learning, growth and improvement may contribute to successful IECE. From the illustrative quotes, effective self-learning deepens teachers' understanding and offers real opportunities for them to construct personal knowledge, and reflect on good IECE daily practices, as similarly noted by Carrington et al. (2013):

We have literature that gives guidelines, so an IECE teacher must read. Self-learning supports teachers and is becoming popular. With workshops and others, teachers are encouraged to learn to improve their work. It's motivating if you know about what to do. Teachers must learn and share ideas about IECE to support all children in the setting. (MT-Kwame-CS1)

I do my best to teach all children and learn about what I do. If you don't have [enough] knowledge about IECE, you challenge yourself. You do some research at the library or internet to get some information that helps you do what you are doing well. It helps you to learn about new ways to improve inclusive teaching every day. (FT-Oba Yaa-CS4)

Across the case sites, self-learning was seen as a valued professional support, but it was most frequently mentioned at case sites 1 and 2. The possible reasons may be headteachers' encouragement, or the availability of educational literature and internet resources. But for some teachers, they were willing or excited to self-learn because teachers' knowledge of their professional practice and, for that matter, inclusive practice, matters. Others felt teachers should "know about their doings" as active agents of change. This means that if all teachers are similarly motivated and supported, they will learn about their practice.

The findings reveal that through effective self-learning, teachers can discover and share experiences, ideas and practices with other teachers and professionals to improve IECE and develop cultures of learning (Fullan, 2007; Fullan et al., 2005). While the results of this study indicate that the propensity for teachers to learn exists, and that teachers are taking agency of their learning, sustaining *the learning for IECE* is important. Teachers may need enhanced commitment and motivation as self-learning may be voluntary. Supportive school leadership is thus necessary to strengthen teachers' self-learning for IECE.

In summary, training and PD are critical for effective IECE, but they were mostly perceived as being inadequate and less practical for under-equipped teachers. Hence, adequate training and PD, and revitalised teacher education programs are required to prepare teachers to gain both theoretical and practical knowledge in order to provide appropriate inclusive experiences. Thus, teacher training and PD need reformation, with an emphasis on inclusive practices. Also, there was a recognised need to train and empower all teachers, as well as the provision of varied training opportunities. Teachers are taking agency for their own learning, but require increased motivation to intensify their learning for IECE.

To further improve teacher effectiveness, training and PD that involve inclusive courses, knowledge of disability and IECE legislation and policies, and pedagogical strategies were seen as high priority targets. Practical training that offers varied opportunities for hands-on activities and onsite learning for both preservice and inservice teachers were seen to be equally important. Other training formats were less frequently identified, but using multiple training formats can accommodate the different needs of teachers or promote variety in training. While the GES has primary responsibility for organising training and PD, a collaborative approach drawing on expertise from different professionals and agencies is useful, as collaboration is a hallmark of inclusive practice.

4.8 RQ 6: What Support is Available and Desirable for IECE?

4.8.1 Availability and Desirability of Support for IECE

The findings of this study highlighted the importance of support as an essential element influencing IECE. Support represents the array of available and desirable resources that facilitate IECE practice. While a number of supports (e.g., headteachers, teachers' peers) were available for some, the results indicated the need for adequate support for teachers to effectively include all children in ECE settings. The range of somewhat available but desirable types of support clustered into four aspects: (1) professional support, (2) motivational support, (3) material/technical/financial support, and (4) human support, including school personnel, parents and other people such as resource persons/experts, former lecturers, or critical friends, and NGOs.

Table 4.8 presents the support dimensions discussed in this section. Similar support was identified by the participant roles and case sites, but there were a few differences in the level of desirability of support (see Appendix I).

Table 4.8: Dimensions of Essential Support for IECE

Dimension	Type of support	Definition
Professional	Additional training/PD Self-learning	Knowledge and skills required to enhance teachers IECE practice
Motivational	Incentives, money, praise, encouragement Teacher passion; reduced class size	Different motivational factors to motivate teachers for IECE
Material/technical/financial	Adaptive technology (e.g., equipment/devices) Teaching-learning materials Facilities (e.g., infrastructure) Resources (e.g., funds, policy documents)	Variety of teaching and learning resources/facilities needed to promote IECE
Human resources (Leadership and collaboration)	Collegial (e.g., headteachers and teachers) Leadership Parents Collaboration (e.g., resource persons/experts/professionals/former lecturers, NGOs) Other critical friends	Leading and collaborating with key persons in and outside the school to support IECE practice

4.8.2 Professional Support

The need for professional support, including additional training and PD, and self-learning, was frequently shared among most participants and across all the case sites. This was also discussed earlier as valued expectations and needed for IECE. Although somewhat

available, almost all participants (25) found additional training as the most desirable support for IECE. Irrespective of participant roles, “additional training” was seen as a great enabler that enhanced teachers and headteachers’ “proficiency or commitment to IECE implementation” (EO-Kofi). For inclusive programs to be effective, *more* knowledge and skills gained through training were important. One possible explanation for the high agreement among the different participant roles was the perceived inadequacy of training workshops, seminars and training programs (see Section 4.7). As initial and inservice teacher training programs were insufficient, additional training was considered necessary to foster teacher preparedness and receptiveness to IECE. The education officials especially reported that additional training was a motivation for teachers that equipped them with knowledge and skills to make the IECE task less difficult. The need for additional training was shared across all the case sites, but was most frequently reported at case sites 1, 2, and 4.

These results are consistent with those of previous research that additional training/PD support is needed for teachers to develop inclusive knowledge and pedagogy for IECE (Carrington et al., 2013; Deku & Ackah Jnr, 2012; Liasidou, 2012; Spratt & Florian, 2013). Hemmings and Woodcock (2011) and Horne et al. (2008) also reported that additional training was the most valuable support inservice teachers needed to implement IECE.

In addition, most participants (19) found self-learning as a desirable support for IECE. This finding indicates that in the face of no physical support, what teachers do to address their lack of knowledge of IECE is important. As noted earlier, self-learning is an emerging form of PD. Therefore, participants felt that teachers in particular needed “adequate time and commitment to effectively learn” for IECE (EO-Abi). Thus, if all teachers are given time and resources that will allow them to self-learn, or seek information, it will improve practice.

4.8.3 Motivational Support

Across the participant roles and case sites, differential motivation, both extrinsic and intrinsic, was identified as a desirable support, though some forms available to a degree. Most education officials, headteachers and teachers similarly perceived motivation that included praise, money and incentives, teacher passion and reduced class size as important for teachers implementing IECE. Although teachers have the professional obligation to include children with disability, the majority of the participants felt

motivation (as described) provided recognition and satisfaction, and was a morale booster. For some education officials, motivational incentives were especially necessary for those teachers who may find IECE to be an extra duty or burden, or decline the responsibility for including all children. Motivation was considered an additional impetus that energised all teachers to support or search for better ways to promote inclusive practice. The participants assigned similar reasons for the need to motivate teachers. For education officials, if teachers were motivated, they were more likely to be receptive to IECE, as the motivated teacher demonstrated responsibility and willingness to include children with disability in ECE settings. Headteachers aligned the need to better incentivise teachers for the crucial roles teachers play as “key persons on the ground” to implementing government’s policy, and ensuring the attainment of Ghana’s IE goal (HT-Esi-CS4). In the teachers’ view, motivation also meant recognition of teachers’ efforts, which stimulated them to do more. However, this also means that some teachers may perceive IECE as extra work. Notably, the motivated teacher expresses receptiveness and commitment to including children with disability:

What else? Motivated teacher! When teachers are satisfied they work more. IECE is an [extra] job compared to normal children in regular schools. So, teachers need to be motivated in a way by GES or government. Not only money—praises, even a pat on the shoulder or recognition. (EO-Alua)

If teachers get encouragement from parents, government or community and other stakeholders, we all will be willing or sacrifice to achieve the goal of IECE. It doesn’t mean teachers wouldn’t do their best. Even the verbal encouragement is good for teachers, like the incentives. (FT-Oforiwaa-CS4)

Indeed, the participants felt that teachers also needed other motivation beyond monetary incentives. Particularly, a reduced or reasonable class size was one motivational support similarly shared across all the case sites, but mostly among the teacher participants. Two education officials and three headteachers, along with the majority (12) of the teachers, found that reduced class size was an essential motivation that lessens teacher burden and the stress of including students with disability, and promotes the effective use of differentiation practices such as individualised attention or instruction (see Section 4.4). The teacher participants especially stressed the need for a reduced class size. They believed that small class sizes enable teachers to have “eyes” for the needs of all children, especially those with disability, and effectively manage inclusive classes:

The number one motivating factor is to have a reasonable class size. Other things aren't so profound because with a reasonable class size, maximum of 30 children, it may be easy for teachers to attend to the needs of children, including those with disability. The teacher can put children in groups knowing their abilities, or handle the class effectively and the results will be rewarding. (MT-Kabenla-CS1)

If you have one or two children with disability in the class it's good. These children shouldn't be many so that teachers can pay attention to them and the other children. So, the class shouldn't be big when we have inclusive practice. (FT-Yaba-CS3)

Teachers had direct experience with children with disability in IECE classes, which accounted for their strong desire for class sizes to be reduced, when compared to education officials and headteachers. For example, “teachers are on the ground so if the class size is large, what happens to children with disability?” (FT-Ama-CS1). This suggests that teachers found the task of meeting the needs of all children in large-sized classes with children with disability challenging. Implicitly, the class size may affect the effectiveness of IECE. Across all the case sites, reduced class size was a common motivational support, but frequently expressed at case sites 1, 3 and 4. As noted (Tables 3.6 to 3.9), the class size¹⁹ of some KG and primary schools (ECE settings) in the case sites was some extent large (e.g., 54, 32, 40, 52), although a few classes were smaller (e.g., 19, 26). Most class sizes were above the ‘acceptable’ student-teacher ratio for KG 1 and 2, and primary schools in the Central Region and CCMA (see Tables 3.1 and 3.2). Except at case site 1 (e.g., KG 1 and 2 where there was one teacher and an attendant), only one teacher was responsible for all the students at all the case sites. This could explain the differential emphasis on the need for a reduced class size at the case sites. Unsurprisingly, at case sites 1, 3 and 4 where class sizes were large, reduced class size with “a small number of children with disability”, or “additional teachers/aides” was a preferred support for IECE (FT-Ama-CS1). But at case site 2, where the class size was comparatively smaller, some teachers still clamoured for a reduced class size in order to promote IECE.

¹⁹ Class size refers to the actual number of students in a class or average number of students per class, including students with disability. In Ghana, the class size of KG to primary level classes should be between 25 and 35 students.

While there are differences in contexts, these results are similar to earlier studies. Horne et al. (2008) and Hughes and Valle-Riestra (2007) found in a study on important resources for inclusive practice that reduced class size was the highest ranked and most important support that assists KG/elementary school teachers to meet the needs of all children. However, the average class size was 26 (Hughes & Valle-Riestra), which is smaller compared to the class size at most case sites. A large class size is problematic for teachers and may have an impact on instructional practices in inclusive settings in Ghana (Ackah Jnr, 2014b; Agbenyega, 2007; Kuyini & Abosi, 2014; Kuyini & Desai, 2008; Obeng, 2012). Kuyini and Abosi (2014) noted that large classes (of more than 45 pupils) affected teachers' ability to gain and maintain pupils' attention, and effectively control the class. In the current study, the large classes may also create problems with effective behaviour management and class control. Hence, considerations of the class sizes are critical to IECE.

Although identified as an essential teacher quality, teacher passion was also seen as a driver of IECE. Most education officials (four), three headteachers and the majority of the teachers acknowledged that passionate teachers enhanced IECE. Besides other forms of motivation, teachers mostly felt that passion was the prime motivation needed for IECE. Across all the case sites, teacher passion was commonly seen as a motivational support, but it was more frequently expressed at case sites 1 and 3. At these case sites, and as noted earlier, effective IECE was all about having passionate teachers. As best exemplified in the following extract, teachers who are passionate showed commitment and willingness for successful inclusion, and may not necessarily rely on external motivation:

The *interest* is what makes the teacher to go all out to include children with disability. You want to be with all children, and you won't look for other motivation or things. The interest is first. In this centre we prepare a lot of materials for our classrooms for the sake that all children will leave "my hands" well prepared ... we just do things to help all children to achieve something. For me it's about the interest! (FT-Ama-CS1)

Evidently, external motivation is important, but what teachers bring (intrinsic) to IECE matters. Such teacher disposition (i.e., passion), as McLeskey et al. (2013, p. 23) claim, is comparable to "having appropriate content knowledge and pedagogical skills". Teachers therefore need multifaceted motivation. Reflected in international research

literature, motivation (e.g., incentives, smaller classes) provided in recognition of teachers' efforts towards IE policy is critical to successful practice (e.g., Armstrong et al., 2010; Horne et al., 2008). As such, teachers need inspiration from the government, education officials, ECE settings, parents and other stakeholders to prevent situations where implementation of educational policies is problematic or may stagnate due to a lack of motivational support. Hence, stakeholders should collaboratively motivate teachers who make IECE happen, as the commitment of some teachers is not necessarily volitional (Ainscow & Miles, 2008).

4.8.4 Material/Technical/Financial Support

The availability of support such as funds, resources and facilities was seen by some as desirable for IECE across all the case sites and participant roles. In particular, the majority of the participants (24)—four education officials, all headteachers and 15 teachers—similarly found adaptive technology or “specialised” teaching-learning materials (TLMs) as a necessary support not only for children with disability, but also for children without disability and teachers. Although specialised teaching-learning materials and resources were identified mostly by the headteachers and teachers, some education officials preferred adaptive technology that enhanced the involvement, functionality and independence of all children in ECE settings. One explanation for the high consensus for adequate adaptive technology and/or specialised TLMs was the lack of such resources for children with disability in many Ghanaian schools. Another reason was that adequate teaching materials enabled teachers to “give of their best” (EO-Atta), and effectively enhanced children's involvement in daily activities. This means that the availability of specialised teaching materials may enable teachers to implement more child-centred pedagogical practices and break away from the dominant teacher-centred practices in ECE settings.

Across the case sites, specialised teaching-learning materials were similarly identified as a desirable support that enhanced teachers' instructional capacity. However, at case sites 1 and 4, the availability of special equipment or devices (Braille and magnifiers) was deemed necessary to enhance the inclusion of children with a specific disability (e.g., low vision). This means that the case participants' perspectives are influenced by their students' disabilities.

Three education officials, two headteachers and four teachers felt the availability of policy documents was also an essential support for IECE as they served as useful

guidelines and learning resources. They suggested that policy documents provided teachers with insights on expectations, which served as incentives for practice. Thus, without policy documents, teachers may embark on inclusive practice without being equipped with the knowledge of the underlying policies and legislation. Specifically, the education officials felt that national policy documents enhanced further reading and a realignment of teachers' knowledge with practice expectations. The availability of national policy documents was likely to enhance teachers' understanding. With the exception of case site 3, policy documents were seen as a relevant support. However, no study was found in the literature that indicated that policy documents served as a support for IECE. Armstrong et al. (2010) claim that what education technocrats, bureaucrats and teachers enact as policy may differ in key respects from the written or official documents articulating both national policies and international proclamations, hence it is important that teachers and headteachers, as the primary implementers, have such policy documents to guide their practice.

Two headteachers at case sites 2 and 3, however, criticised the GES/MOE for “always” introducing policies without necessary resources. Policy implementation was perceived to lack requisite support. While these headteachers acknowledged the situation was not unique to IECE, the non-alignment of policy with working resources, as seen earlier, was considered a great concern. This may lead to ambivalence among teachers or headteachers. In the minds of the headteachers, adequate resources must drive a desirable policy to make implementation less burdensome for teachers. It means that resources and support were considered key to implementing IECE:

The GES/MOE can't just make policies. When they make the [IECE] policy, necessary things must be provided for it to work. The policy is okay, but I have a problem with implementation. We need the necessary resources and support. IECE shouldn't be a burden for teachers or heads. (HT-Dede-CS2)

Clearly, a range of material and technical supports are desirable for children, teachers and ECE settings, as well as the education system. As similarly highlighted in other studies, the availability of funds, resources and facilities is key to IECE (Carrington et al., 2013; Deiner, 2013; Nutbrown & Clough, 2006; Purdue, 2009; Underwood, 2013). For example, lack of specialised teaching materials/resources affects instructional practices (Allen & Cowdery, 2015; Deiner, 2013; Hughes & Valle-Riestra, 2007; McLeskey et al., 2013; Obeng, 2012; Simpson & Warner, 2010). This means that

inadequate teaching materials for instructing children with disability are a burden for teachers, and a barrier to IECE.

Support in terms of funding was seen by all education officials and four headteachers, but only by four teachers, as important for effective IECE. These participants considered funds to be a critical ingredient to ensure the desirable support mentioned earlier was possible (e.g., user-friendly school buildings, self-learning, incentives). The education officials specifically identified that funds were needed to ensure everything was inclusive, ranging from PD to resourcing ECE settings. Such understanding aligns with the resource-driven perspective of IECE. The education officials' strong emphasis on the desirability of funds could be attributed to their position at the systemic level. As policy makers, they felt the availability of other necessary resources depended on financial support. Potentially, inadequate funds can be used as an excuse for not supporting children with disability or teachers, hence constraining IECE. Accordingly, the participants felt that sufficient funds from the central government or the GES/MOE, NGOs and other stakeholders were needed to resource ECE settings. While not prominently shared across the case sites, funds were seen as a critical support.

These results are consistent with previous research that has identified funds as essential for effective IECE (Deiner, 2013; Hemmings & Woodcock, 2011; Purdue, 2009). Although funds may come from sources different from those identified in this study, insufficient financial support at the systemic level affects inclusive practice (Carrington et al., 2013; Deiner, 2013; Purdue, 2009), resulting in the lack of important teaching materials and other resources. As Purdue (2009) affirmed, funding and resourcing constraints led some teachers and ECE centres to oppose the inclusion of some children with disability. Financial support is thus instrumental in IECE practice. .

4.8.5 Human Resources/Support

Human resources were perceived by most participants and across the case sites to be available to some extent but desirable for IECE. Human resources that included headteachers and teachers, peers and parents, and leadership and collaboration within and outside the school were found to be vital. In particular, most (16) participants commonly shared that headteachers were a chief support for the provision of resources, and helped teachers who encountered difficulties, including with all the children at the ECE level. Hence, strong school leadership was seen as important for successful inclusion. Three headteacher participants felt that headteachers set the tone for IECE through the

admission of children with disability, and by demonstrating favourable IECE attitudes (e.g., commitment, acceptance and warmth). Headteachers considered schools as entry points for initiating and sustaining inclusive practice, and that they “open” the gates or acted as gatekeepers. It implies that headteachers set IECE in motion, and their support is indispensable. Headteachers can use their positions to lead and create supportive environments for IECE, as succinctly expressed in these extracts:

I think I demonstrate “good” *leadership* ... I admit children based on their abilities. I tell teachers about individual differences and the need to accept or help all children. *In this way I lead the practice* [IECE] by admitting the children with disabilities. (HT-Baa-CS1)

Once a disabled child comes to the school and the head gives the child admission, it means I support it [IECE] automatically. *If the leader doesn't admit this child, even the all-inclusive early education won't be possible*. Some heads may not admit the child with disability. (HT-Dede-CS2)

Across the case sites, headteachers were seen to be supportive of IECE. Also, at case site 1, headteachers collaborated with teachers to share knowledge and expertise, and “provide input for IECE practice” (MT-Kwame-CS1). This indicates that shared leadership, when effectively harnessed, can create learning communities. It means that there is a collegial support at case site 1 and IECE may be construed as a joint responsibility requiring mutual efforts and contributions from headteachers and teachers. Such collegial leadership within a collegial inclusive setting may enhance IECE.

Research has similarly identified strong leadership (administrative support) as important for successful inclusive practice (Cook et al., 2008; Leatherman, 2007; Loreman et al., 2014; McLeskey et al., 2013). The results of the current study shows that headteachers set the vision for an inclusive school (Billingsley et al., 2014; Gibson & Blandford, 2005) and they are indispensable in influencing the attitudes and behaviours of other school staff towards IECE (Kearney, 2011; Smith et al., 2012).

Other teachers were also identified as a source of valuable support. Two education officials, two headteachers and most (12) teachers found support from other teachers was available and desirable for IECE. Other teachers provided diverse help, entailing the exchange of knowledge and expertise and ideas within a collegial environment that supported teachers to implement IECE. The teacher participants mostly found that their peers were useful since they conceived IECE as a collaborative entity. For example, “one

teacher cannot do it (IECE) alone” (FT-Adwoa-CS2), so some “teachers exchanged ideas or insights for handling children with disability from their colleagues” (FT-Antwiwaa-CS3). Teachers provided in-school support and collaboration that enhanced other teachers’ understanding of IECE. Such collegial or moral support from other teachers helps to validate the practices of teachers. The willingness of teachers to collaborate is potentially a vehicle for improving IECE. Hence, in the absence of headteachers’ support, or where headteachers lack knowledge or feel apathetic about IECE, teachers may rely on their colleagues. Although across the case sites, teachers were seen as an effective support, at case site 3, teachers frequently supported each other for IECE. Case site 3 valued teachers’ collaboration for sharing knowledge, which may be due to the limited internal support. Generally, teachers felt that by combining expertise, they can mutually work towards the common goal of including children with disability in ECE settings.

The results reflect the findings of other studies (e.g., Hemmings & Woodcock, 2011; Leatherman, 2007). Leatherman (2007) found that teachers were comfortable with interactions and support from their peers more than with administrators (i.e., headteachers) to meet the needs of children with disability. Therefore, teachers collaborated with other teachers; as McLeskey et al. (2013, p. 22) stress, “given the diversity of students with disabilities, it is not possible for any single teacher to have all the knowledge and skills that are needed to meet every student’s needs” in inclusive settings. It means that teachers can have opportunities for sharing their mutual fears and concerns, and to identify common problems and solutions.

Equally, external collaboration with professionals, NGOs and other benevolent groups was seen as a desirable support. Three education officials, four headteachers and four teachers across sites found that external collaboration facilitated the acquisition of resources. For headteachers, the need for teamwork means engaging all stakeholders is important for successful inclusive practice. For example, teachers need support from resource persons/experts, hence external collaboration is a conduit for ECE settings and education officials can work cooperatively with other stakeholders to support IECE. The need for collaborating with resource persons is also highlighted in other studies (e.g., L. C. Mitchell & Hegde, 2007).

Similarly, all education officials, five headteachers and most (12) teachers identified parents as a pivotal support that was somewhat available for IECE. As mentioned earlier, parents are important partners and excellent knowledge sources though some were not actively involved in IECE due to their low socio-economic status. By

contrast, “a few enlightened parents” of children with disability were quite involved in IECE (EO-Abi). For this reason, effective collaboration with parents was seen as desirable. In fact, teachers found that parents’ support motivated teachers to do extra for all children. Thus, if parents provided a continuous link with the school and supported their children and teachers, it was more likely to promote IECE. While the case sites similarly found parents as critical resources, at case site 1, parents were a prominent support. This was attributed to the strong parent-teacher association at the site, the education background of parents, and their somewhat high socio-economic status. This appears to suggest that differences in socio-economic status of parents affected the level of parent involvement in IECE.

These results support other studies that stress the key role of parents in IECE (Allen & Cowdery, 2015; Deiner, 2013). Hemmings and Woodcock (2011) also found that parental assistance to teachers promotes inclusive practice. It is important for ECE settings to establish partnerships with parents to tap such a rich source of support as most educational programs are strengthened by parental support (Smith et al., 2012).

4.8.6 Knowledge of Support

While most participants appeared to be knowledgeable of support for IECE, evidence from extracts of two headteachers and four teachers at case sites 2 indicated there was seemingly an issue of “lack of knowledge of what constituted support” among some teachers and headteachers. These participants felt that IECE or the presence children with disability in ECE settings apparently necessitated additional or specialised support. To clarify, “teachers aren’t given special support in the name of inclusive education” (FT-Akasi-CS2) or “in this private school teachers are handling children with disability but I don’t know whether support comes from government or somewhere” (HT-Mansa-CS3). They felt that support existed outside ECE settings or must come from the government or its agencies. The “no-support” argument suggests that these headteachers and teachers may lack knowledge of existing types of support for IECE, or think about types of support differently. If headteachers or teachers are knowledgeable of available and desirable support, it may facilitate utilisation, or prevent the perception that IECE undoubtedly warrants additional support (Nutbrown & Clough, 2006). Clearly, knowledge of what constitutes support is essential.

Interestingly, one education official strongly argued that support was “not really available” for IECE if the facilities or resources in ECE settings, including infrastructure

and materials, are not adaptable to the needs of all children or are inappropriate for teachers. This implies that effective support is about utility, adaptability, appropriateness, and suitability.

Support...? Not really. I wouldn't say support is available. *With IE we are looking at infrastructure, materials and other things that are adapted to suit the conditions of all children.* And many classrooms don't have them, and teachers don't have the right support. (EO-Atta)

In sum, a range of professional, motivational, material/financial and human supports is critical for IECE. Importantly, these enhance teachers' repertoire of knowledge, skills, and motivation, and are a means of facilitating the process of IECE. The identified types of support indicate that a shared understanding of what is available and also desirable must characterise IECE practice. School-level support from headteachers, teachers and their peers, and time and resources for self-learning are essential, but these should be complemented with systemic support, including PD, funding, and other materials beyond the scope of ECE settings.

4.9 Conclusion

This chapter presented key findings that emerged from the research questions. Further analysis and synthesis of the cross-case findings from participants and case sites across the research questions identified four key themes: (1) understandings; (2) expected and reported practices, and attitudes; (3) teacher quality and dispositions; and (4) training and PD and support, which are considered in Chapter 5. These four themes and other findings are examined in Chapter 5 in relation to the change factors underpinning educational change and IECE identified in Chapter 1.

CHAPTER 5: CROSS-CASE SYNTHESIS AND DISCUSSION

5.1 Introduction

Inclusive education represents major policy change and practice change for Ghana, which reflects worldwide trends towards the realisation of accessible and equitable education for all. It is clear there are considerable initiatives and activity in Ghana to move educational policy and practice in a more inclusive direction (Chapter 2). Principal cross-case findings across the participant roles and case sites were presented and discussed in Chapter 4. There were 27 participants, including 6 education officials, 5 headteachers and 16 teachers, and four ECE centres and schools.

Successful implementation of major policy change is known to be dependent on a range of factors (Ainscow, 2005; Fullan et al., 2005; Peters, 2004; Hargreaves & Shirley, 2012). In Chapter 1, seven principal change factors underpinning educational change, and in particular change factors to realise IECE, were identified. These change factors are: (1) moral purpose guiding IECE policy, (2) principles and objectives of IECE, (3) attitudes towards IECE, (4) context of implementation, (5) capacity and support for IECE, (6) leadership and commitment, and (7) evaluation of inclusive practice.

The findings in Chapter 4 are now examined further in the light of these factors, to identify where IECE policy and practice implementation in Ghana have been successful, where change/implementation is not being achieved, and what steps may be necessary to address the latter.

5.2 Moral Purpose Guiding IECE

Moral purpose includes the enforcement of human rights and economic benefits for society. The moral purpose guiding any educational policy, including IECE, is central to effective educational change and practice (Ainscow, 2005; Fullan, 2007; Hargreaves & Shirley, 2012). As the overriding driver of change, moral purpose relates to human and social development and signifies the why (rationale) of change (Fullan et al., 2005). Moral purpose is thus an all-embracing construct involving both ends and means, and is about improving society through improving educational systems and learning of students. Simply expressed, moral purpose is to make a difference in the lives of all students and society (Fullan et al., 2005). Differing understandings expressed by participants of IECE articulated moral purpose, creating a pathway to make a difference in all children and

society. These differing understandings of IECE and how it should be implemented were nevertheless consistent with moral purpose.

First, IECE is seen to be a means for realising the human rights of all children and ensuring all children have equitable, accessible and quality educational and social opportunities. Children's human right to IECE was a stance strongly shared by all the different participants, as hitherto involvement and participation in ECE settings were the preserve only of children without disability. The strong international human rights framework and conventions on IECE and disability (e.g., UNESCO Salamanca Statement, CRPD, and CRC) that Ghana has ratified, which encompass its laws and policies (e.g., Article 38(2) of The Constitution of Ghana, Draft IE Policy 2013, Education Act of 2008), are a strong support that fosters the realisation of the rights of all children to IECE. From the findings, it was evident that these supporting legislation and policies were an essential incentive. Thus, all children were valued socially and viewed by almost all the participants as having fundamental human rights, which was critical for IECE policy and practice implementation. This also shows a shift in the socio-humanistic values for all children in Ghana.

Research has similarly identified children's human rights as a central pillar and justification for IECE (e.g., Deiner, 2013; Moore, 2009; Smith et al., 2012); hence, the realisation of such rights makes education a key social and moral value in Ghana. It affirms Ghana's obligation to provide an IE system at the ECE level, devoid of discrimination, and with equal opportunity as a vehicle for realising this right; and for all children to develop their full human potential and personality (CRPD, Article 24(1)). Therefore, full enjoyment by children with disability of all human rights, and on an equal basis with other children, is in the best interests of all children. Such a value recognises children with disability as humans (Darragh, 2010), highlighting a key moral purpose of IECE.

However, generally, most participants restricted the "full applicability" of human rights and IECE predominantly to children with mild-moderate disability, with a limited inclusion of children with severe-profound disability, explained in part by a lack of expertise or resources. This perpetuates a dual system of education as some children are still excluded from ECE settings based on the severity of their disability, in policy as well as in practice. Research shows that a fundamental right to a full life and education for all children is best experienced in inclusive settings, and not in segregated settings that are deemed inherently unequal (Deiner, 2010; Heward, 2013; Moore, 2009). It means that a

rights-based approach to IECE, underpinned with equity, capability and resource-oriented perspectives, as identified by some participants, is needed to ensure the full IECE rights for all children. This suggests an ideological shift by educators to a broader focus of IECE, instead of a disability-oriented view that reinforces exclusive practices, segregation and limiting access to inclusive settings, is still necessary for fully realisation of IECE. Such a changing view among Ghanaian ECE settings and participants, that IECE is for all children, would support full implementation. Therefore, it is important to ensure that education officials, headteachers and teachers, and educators and stakeholders adopt a broad perspective of IECE that recognises the rights and capabilities of all children, in order to fulfil the moral purpose of IECE. This may also require enhanced resources for teachers and learners, and ongoing equitable access and involvement of all children who have basic rights to IECE.

The participants' viewpoints extended moral purpose from the individual (i.e., children with and without disability) to the common good of the entire society, and further, to national benefits, including economic and workforce factors. Education that includes IECE was viewed as a common public good that should secure wider support and participation from the vast majority of children. The majority of participants, regardless of their role and site, considered IECE as an economic investment that promotes economic empowerment and skills development for all children, hence enabling more individuals to make collective contributions to societal and national development. Thus, IECE expands the scope for developing human resources, and was linked to economic productivity and well-being. This moral purpose was strongly articulated and shared in this study because Ghana as a nation still has a need for economic and human capital that IECE may offer the whole workforce, including persons with disability. If all children have equitable access to IECE, their potential and talents can be collectively developed for the common good of society. Future independence and empowerment, and engagement in income-generating ventures, rather than social disadvantage (e.g., begging, unemployment), are highly valued socio-economic and socio-cultural outcomes, as well as cherished aspirations in Ghana, as evident in previous studies (e.g., Turnbull et al., 2013; WHO, 2011). The need to care for oneself and others is also recognised as socio-culturally important. These are desired improvements that society stands to gain from successful IECE. From the participants' responses, it is clear that effective IECE can minimise socio-economic costs associated with exclusion from education and employment opportunities (WHO, 2011). The empowerment of children supports

international understandings of equitable provision for children with disability (Cumming, 2012). Hence, IECE was seen by most participants as a current or future-oriented educational and developmental approach/ practice that provided economic benefits for all, and was hence a rational economic entity (e.g., Deiner, 2015; Odom et al., 2011). The participants in this study felt that to ensure all children are empowered, and contribute to the world of work requires massive investment in IECE programs, as identified in previous research (Darragh, 2010; Heckman, 2006). Thus, government and other stakeholders need to invest in quality IECE for all.

The participants perceived that all children were deriving both academic and social outcomes from IECE, which is consistent with moral purpose. Education officials, headteachers and teachers identified that IECE provided all children with improved academic learning and socio-emotional benefits, including increased socialisation skills, friendship development, acceptance, belonging and valuing of others. However, as academic learning was perceived by most teachers to be “slow” for children with disability, extra teacher time and support were identified as necessary to foster such learning. In addition, children with disability are developing their confidence and self-esteem, and communication skills critical for enhanced social relationships in school and in society. Most participants, especially teachers, considered these social benefits as equally valuable to the academic outcomes. However, behavioural problems, such as teasing and bullying, were reported as affecting effective IECE. For instance, behavioural problems were seen as affecting teachers’ class control and management, and resulted in complaints, especially from parents of children without disability. Therefore, the results suggest that teachers need to ensure effective behaviour management of all children, especially those with disability, to minimise behaviour problems in ECE settings. In managing children’s behaviours, teachers can collaborate with parents so that they collectively manage such behaviours. Teachers must also use task differentiation to meet the unique needs of all children, and foster participation and engagement in ECE activities to lessen boredom among children in ECE settings.

The findings indicate that there are common expectations of IECE outcomes for children, as in other countries (Chapter 2). The presence, participation and performance of more children with disability in IECE settings who were hitherto mostly segregated from ECE settings, and the attainment of academic and social benefits are highly valued moral purposes and goals in Ghana. It is thus important to mitigate the associated challenges or concerns about IECE by supporting all learners and teachers, and enhancing

teachers' expertise to promote effective practice. The achievement of these goals requires teachers, headteachers, and education officials to have shared understandings of IECE, as well as extra commitment to realise the moral purpose to eliminate exclusive practices and social disadvantages experienced by children. Importantly, all teachers, headteachers and education officials require change knowledge (Fullan et al., 2005) and commitment to the guiding philosophy of IECE (Peters, 2004). Therefore, moral purpose must remain the central driver (Fullan et al., 2005) that motivates all stakeholders to engineer individual and collective efforts towards successful IECE.

5.3 Principles and Objectives of IECE

The second important change factor relates to the intended principles and objectives of IECE policy (Ainscow, 2005; Peters, 2004; NCSE, 2010). These principles are the fundamental norms or values that represent what is desirable and positive in inclusive practice for Ghana as a society. Hence, the principles inform the actions that are taken by teachers, headteachers and government towards IECE implementation. Although Ainscow (2005) did not explicitly state the principles of IE, they are considered to guide IECE policy and its objectives. Hence, the acceptance of the principles by all implementers ignites commitment to change implementation and the philosophy of IECE (Peters, 2004).

It was evident from study findings that key inclusive principles underpinned IECE. The different participants and case sites articulated shared principles perceived to enhance IECE implementation. They included the principles that all children should learn together regardless of disability, capability or differences; that all children must have access to a quality education, including IECE; that children with disability must be supported to succeed in inclusive settings; and that IECE is not only about children with disability, but all children (diversity). These principles indicate that children with disability and SEN were seen to belong in inclusive education and settings, and that IECE reinforced a member-support status for all learners as opposed to a visitor-survival status (Chapter 2). The findings show that education officials, headteachers and teachers have a joint responsibility and commitment to implement effective IECE. An examination of the identified principles also reveals that to be inclusive, teachers and ECE settings must accommodate and support the varying needs of all children and welcome diversity. Therefore, teachers need to ensure that all children participate in the daily activities of

IECE. These and other inclusive principles considered essential must thus guide effective IECE practice.

The principles of IECE identified by the participants are consistent with most of the principles captured in Ghana's IE Draft Policy 2013 and ESP 2010–2020; for example, “all children can learn irrespective of differences in age, gender, ethnicity, language, or disability” and “all children have the right to access basic education” (p. 14). They also reflect principles seen as fundamental to inclusive practice in research (e.g., Allen & Cowdery, 2015; Carrington et al., 2013; Darragh, 2010; NCSE, 2010). As noted in Chapter 2, those principles that support IECE policy and practice align with conceptualisation of IE as a continuing process (e.g., Ainscow 2005), a radical reform, and a sense of belonging, community and full participation. It means that the different participants had shared knowledge of valued inclusive principles that enhance practice implementation. The findings suggest that some principles also aligned with teachers' and headteachers' belief systems (e.g., IECE is for all children) and understandings of IECE (e.g., capability and equity perspectives). This may propel heightened commitment for realising the goal of IECE. Further, their perceived principles informed teachers' implemented IECE practices as they focus on individualisation, involvement and equalisation of opportunities, to support the enactment of IECE practices. This highlights the importance of inclusive principles underpinning change implementation.

Key objectives of IECE were also identified from participants' responses that enhanced implementation. Objectives denote specific measurable results of IECE policy and what an IECE system aims to achieve within a timeframe and with available resources. The findings showed that participants identified short- and long-term outcomes and benefits of IECE (e.g., increased socialisation skills, improved communication and friendship). These identified objectives from the different participant roles and case sites were similar not only to those expressed in Ghana's IE and ECE policies, but also to essential objectives identified in inclusion research as supporting IECE implementation (e.g., Allen & Cowdery, 2015; DEC/NAYEC, 2009; Deiner, 2013; Winter, 2007). For example, the objective of Ghana's IE policy that supports IECE implementation is to provide equitable educational opportunities for all children. While not all objectives of IECE policy are being realised in Ghana, there was optimism among most participants that with requisite support and resources for implementers, especially teachers, IECE would be an effective philosophy and educational practice. Because objectives also influence teachers' enactment of IECE practices, their clarity and consistency are

essential for implementation practice (Fullan, 2007), as well as their acceptance by implementers. This means that IECE policy should have realistic objectives, which should be shared by all implementers to foster change implementation.

Education officials, headteachers and teachers also shared knowledge of expected and reported IECE practices that aligned with attainment of the principles and objectives. The findings show that practices such as involvement of children with disability in daily activities, and individualised instruction and prompts promoted the principles of differentiation and equalisation of opportunities for all children, identified as effective practices in previous research (Allen & Cowdery, 2015; Chandler et al., 2011; Tomlinson, 2014). The reported IECE practices supported attainment of objectives such as increased involvement, participation and engagement of all children in daily activities, indicating a transformation of practices and action from one-size-fits-all practices (Chandler et al., 2011; Tomlinson, 2014) to practices that are responsive not only to the changing needs and characteristics of all children, but also to inclusive education for all. As identified by some participants, the IECE practices indicate that changes, creativity and dynamism in some teachers' practice architecture promote implementation and attainment of IECE objectives.

However, the findings showed that not all teachers reported implementing IECE practices, perhaps because they were less knowledgeable of such practices (e.g., curriculum adaptation, use of effective motivation and peer support). To accomplish successful change and inclusive outcomes, some teachers may need additional professional knowledge and expertise in the use of effective IECE practices. Inclusive schools and classrooms require teachers who are knowledgeable and are able to employ a range of effective pedagogies and practices to meet the needs of diverse children (Allen & Cowdery, 2015; Carrington et al., 2013; McLeskey et al., 2013). Teachers thus need strong professional knowledge and skills for effective inclusive practices. To ensure all teachers use effective IECE practices for attainment of IECE principles and objectives, there should be specific preservice and inservice training and education for teachers to develop appropriate inclusive knowledge and IECE practices. Training and ongoing professional learning must thus support teachers' enactment of IECE practices to promote change implementation.

5.4 Attitudes Towards IECE

The attitudes of teachers, headteachers and parents are considered another key change factor underlying IECE implementation (Cologon, 2014; Peters, 2004). These attitudes included their perceptions and beliefs. First, from the participant and case site findings, it is clear that there were positive teacher attitudes and perceptions towards children with disability that enhanced IECE policy and change implementation. In particular, IECE was an interesting experience for some teachers. Most of the different participants perceived that some teachers also demonstrated effective teacher quality and dispositions such as high passion, commitment and motivation that enhanced the inclusion of children with disability. This finding showed that teachers had a professional, moral and cultural obligation for IECE, and may explain why some teachers sought effective pedagogical or organisational practices that supported IECE implementation. It was also evident from the findings that most teacher participants were generally satisfied with IECE outcomes attained by some children with disability (e.g., improved social and communication skills). These positive teacher attitudes and perceptions are also seen as key ingredients facilitating IECE (e.g., McLeskey et al., 2013; Salend, 2010; Sharma et al., 2008). The results identify the importance of teacher attitudes, and also reinforce previous studies in Ghana that teacher attitudes are generally positive towards inclusive practice (Ackah Jnr, 2010a; Kuyini, 2014; Obeng, 2012).

In addition, the findings revealed positive teacher beliefs that encouraged teachers to include all children in ECE settings. Positive beliefs or perceptions, including that all children should benefit from participating in IECE, all children have a right to IECE and can learn, and children with disability are humans, were seen to encourage some teachers to be actively involved and engaged with children with disability in daily activities. While these expressed beliefs showed some teachers were willing to accept differences or diversity in children, it can also be argued that in the absence of a national or school level IECE policy or support, the positive beliefs and attitudes acted as an enabling force in the schools that ensured some Ghanaian teachers promoted IECE. Thus, teachers' belief systems about what all children can do generally facilitate IECE. As Carrington et al. (2013) claim, teachers' beliefs influence inclusive practices and policy implementation. If teachers believe it is their responsibility to teach all children, they will employ a range of effective pedagogies to meet the needs of learners. Positive teacher beliefs and values thus enhance inclusive practices and are a key factor in creating inclusive classrooms and schools (Carrington et al., 2013). These positive teacher motivations, and attitudes, beliefs

and perceptions have also been found in other studies as important factors enhancing successful IECE (e.g., Deiner, 2013; McLeskey et al., 2013; Sharma et al., 2008).

Whereas some teachers in this study expressed passion, enthusiasm and commitment, and positive attitudes and perceptions towards IECE policy and change practice, there were indications that in ECE settings, some teachers demonstrated negative attitudes and dispositions. The findings showed that most participants perceived IECE as an additional responsibility or burden for teachers, and time consuming. Some participants felt that IECE imposed new demands on teachers to meet the needs of all children, or resulted in changes in their roles and responsibilities that were not envisaged. Other teachers believed that IECE was challenging, or should be the responsibility of others. These reported teacher attitudes were seen to influence teachers' efforts to include children with disability, as it limited the participation and engagement of all children in daily activities. It was also evident from some participants' comments that other teachers neglected children with disability, while some teachers felt IECE was not beneficial for children with severe-profound disability. As noted earlier, this may be a genuine concern for teachers who lack expertise. It may also indicate that some teachers at the case sites were likely to resist IECE change as it challenges their beliefs.

These negative teacher attitudes and dispositions are also reported in other research as a major challenge for IECE implementation (Deiner, 2013; Peters, 2004; Purdue, 2009; Kearney, 2011; Underwood, 2013). As indicated in Chapter 4, negative teacher attitudes were linked to a lack of expertise and the reported large class size, which affected teachers' overall willingness, commitment and responsibility for all children. Similarly, as noted in Chapter 1, negative teacher attitudes were attributed to teachers' working conditions, and lack of capacity and incentives for participation (Peters, 2004). Such negative teacher attitudes may also compound the existing societal attitudes that serve as a context for IECE. It is therefore necessary to empower teachers working in inclusive settings to develop positive attitudes, perceptions and dispositions for IECE practice. A number of education officials, headteachers and teachers in this study identified monetary rewards and other incentives, especially reduced class size and resources, as desirable to enhance teachers' capacity and motivation for IECE.

In addition, the findings showed that positive headteacher attitudes and dispositions towards IECE (e.g., increased commitment, admission of children with disability, and identification of training programs for teachers) enhanced IECE practice implementation. Such positive attitudes were especially seen as a great enabler for change

implementation as they set the tone for IECE (Deiner, 2013; Idol, 2006) and were necessary for successful implementation of inclusive practice (Kearney, 2011). From the participants' responses, it was apparent that some headteachers expressed positive attitudes that created the necessary conditions for effective IECE. As figureheads, positive headteacher attitudes enhanced IECE as headteachers were identified as leading the acceptance of any policy. It is important, therefore, that all headteachers in inclusive settings are supported to develop favourable attitudes.

Overall, some participants identified negative headteacher attitudes and dispositions (e.g., refusal of enrolment, demeanour, and insinuations) that served as barriers, which impacted the general context of ECE settings and inclusion of children with disability. As noted earlier, as headteachers were considered by some participants to be the key pacesetters of inclusive practice, their negative attitudes constrained IECE. For example, while there is a free EFA policy and recognised rights for all children to accessible and equitable quality IECE in ECE settings (e.g., Ghana IE Draft Policy 2013), the evidence from some participants' extracts indicated that some headteachers still deny the admission of children with disability, a stance opposite to the principles, objectives and moral purpose of IECE. Based on the critical role and position of headteachers (Billingsley et al., 2014; Kearney, 2011), their negative attitudes may also influence the attitudes of teachers, children without disability, and other members of ECE settings. The findings show that perceived negative headteacher beliefs, such as fear of children with disability, are problematic for teachers and other children; and non-encouragement and liking for enrolled children with disability affects IECE practice. It is thus important to educate headteachers about disability and IECE issues, while supporting them appropriately to develop favourable attitudes and dispositions.

Some parents were also believed to express positive attitudes that supported IECE practice. Several education officials, headteachers and teachers asserted that some parents, especially those with children with disability, expressed positive attitudes that reflected their support, involvement and contribution to IECE. It was evident from the participant responses that some parents expressed positive perceptions, such as valuing the self-worth and potential of their children, and happiness and satisfaction with IECE. These positive attitudes are considered important because parents who perceive children with disability attaining learning and social outcomes are more likely to see IECE as a positive experience, which may result in increased involvement in IECE. Positive parent attitudes and perceptions are also reported in research to facilitate IECE (e.g., Leyser &

Kirk, 2011). Therefore, positive parent attitudes and perceptions are necessary for IECE implementation.

In contrast, the findings also reflected the presence of some negative parent attitudes and perceptions of IECE. The majority of participants believed that many parents of children with disability also held negative attitudes that resulted in their limited involvement and support for IECE. They felt that parents' negative attitudes (e.g., non-exposure of children due to induced gaze or status) and low perceptions of the worth and potential of children with disability affected IECE practice. As noted earlier, although some of these negative parent attitudes are attributed to parent backgrounds or devaluing of inclusive practice, a few headteacher participants believed that some parents were reluctant to educate their children with disability despite free EFA. Such parent attitudes and posturing are detrimental to effective IECE. However, participants argued that some parents of children without disability had concerns and reservations for IECE as they felt children with disability should be segregated.

Parental attitudes, especially those with children with disability, are also cited in inclusion research and by change theorists as significant barriers affecting inclusive practice (e.g., Ainscow, 2005; Leyser & Kirk, 2011; Peters, 2004). It is therefore vital to educate all parents to develop positive attitudes and perceptions, and empower and encourage them to participate actively in their children's IECE. Increased education and sensitisation, coupled with support, may be necessary. Specifically, parent education on their children's needs and knowledge of IE policy and legislative framework will enable parents to understand their expected roles and responsibilities, and become involved in IECE accordingly.

5.5 Context of Implementation

The context of implementation, comprising the social, political, cultural and economic conditions in which IECE policy must be implemented, is also identified as a key factor enhancing or inhibiting change implementation (Ainscow, 2005; Fullan, 2007; Peters, 2004). Contextual and environmental factors provide both opportunities and constraints for effective change implementation, and thus determine how IECE policies are actioned (Fullan, 2007). As the context is generally complex, it interrelates with and influences other change factors.

First, the findings indicated some changing societal perceptions and attitudes towards children with disability and IECE. This was reflected in positive attitudes, such

as reported parent and community participation and contributions, local NGOs' support for IECE, which promoted resource acquisition, and creation of some awareness about the place of IECE in society. From the participants' comments, it is clear that different stakeholder interests (e.g., parents, community members) need to be involved to support IECE policy and change implementation. As noted in Chapter 4, societal attitudes are changing due to enlightenment and education, resulting in the need for early learning for all children. This social context thus provides an enabling environment for IECE. Increased parent and community participation in the delivery of quality IECE has also been recognised in research and policy as enhancing implementation (e.g., Ghana's Draft IE Policy 2013; Peters, 2004).

However, the findings largely indicated traditional societal attitudes and perceptions remain negative in some communities and these are a dominant contextual factor affecting IECE policy and change implementation. The majority of education officials, headteachers and teachers in this study shared perceptions that pervasive societal attitudes, attributed to socio-cultural or superstitious beliefs (e.g., disability is contagious or results from reincarnation, past misdeeds or children with disability are outcasts and evil or a curse) constrained IECE. As noted earlier, societal attitudes may compound the attitudes of teachers, headteachers and parents. These socio-cultural attitudes underline how children's differences, especially their disability, influence the general education and acceptance, and the degree of interactions and interrelationships that others have with children with disability. They also project discrimination, stigmatisation and dehumanisation of some children with disability, which are contrary to inclusive values and principles. Such negative societal beliefs were perceived as contributing to a carry-over-attitude syndrome (e.g., withholding of types of support for children with disability or teachers) or inexplicable reactions to IECE, which are likely to influence the attitudes of teachers, headteachers and parents, constraining effective IECE implementation. These findings also indicated that societal negative attitudes, perceptions or beliefs, together with those of teachers, headteachers and parents, as seen earlier, explain why some children with disability had negative experiences in IECE. This finding clearly reinforces the social model perspective of disability, which identifies society as a major contributing factor to the exclusion, discrimination and marginalisation of children with disability in the society.

Societal attitudes and perceptions have been recognised as a barrier to IECE (Agbenyega, 2007; Deiner, 2013; A. B. Kuyini, 2014; Okyere & Adams, 2003) and as

among the most influential socio-cultural factors that have an impact on effective change (Ainscow, 2005; Peters, 2004). Researchers (e.g., Kuyini, 2014; Obeng, 2007) have previously identified superstitious beliefs of some Ghanaian societies about children with disability, attributed to unexplained spiritual factors (e.g., curses or past deeds), that constrain inclusive practice. Deiner (2013) also notes that disability has been frequently blamed on sinful living, and that such historical and societal beliefs affected the education and inclusion of children with disability in ECE settings. This means that socio-cultural beliefs are fundamental contextual factors that may also influence teacher attitudes towards children with disability and IECE (e.g., Obeng, 2007). It is thus suggested that holistic, societal attitudinal and perceptual changes are desirable to achieve full IECE implementation in Ghana. Society in general, including all stakeholders, may need positive attitude development that incorporates sustained education, reorientation and sensitisation about disability issues and the value of IECE. As some teacher participants stressed, attitudinal changes should also involve recognition of IECE as a moral practice that fosters children's early and future learning or playing and living together in society.

The findings further revealed that the economic context influenced IECE implementation. The results showed that the socio-economic conditions of some parents were perceived to enhance their participation and involvement in, and contribution to, IECE change implementation. As identified in this study, the support and involvement of parents of high economic status and education were more visible in IECE settings compared to parents of low socio-economic status. Educational interventions programs, including capitation grants, free school programs, and free textbooks and uniforms, were identified by some participants as creating a supportive economic environment for parents, hence enhancing IECE. As mentioned in Chapter 2, these intervention programs relieve parents of the financial burden, hence providing an economic incentive for IECE practice. However, the low socio-economic conditions of some case site school communities affected IECE. This was confirmed by some education officials, headteachers and teachers, who claimed that the background of parents, along with the unemployment or economic situation in some communities, affected parents' ability to provide effectively for the needs of their children, especially those with disability. Conversely, low socio-economic status was reported to affect some parents' financial and material capability, hence limiting their contribution to IECE. It can be argued that a low socio-economic context may lead to exclusion of some children with disability. Reflecting this argument, Peters (2004) notes that the economic survival need of parents

was a predominant factor that limited children's access to and parent involvement in IE. It means that the socio-economic context of inclusive settings (e.g., unemployment or poverty) may constrain effective IECE implementation.

The involvement of parents in education and IECE is generally regarded as essential to effective learning and participation (e.g., Allen & Cowdery, 2015). Ghana's Draft IE Policy 2013 supporting IECE recommends strong parent involvement in the education of children with disability and SEN. However, can parents participate effectively in IECE if they are poor or perhaps are living in communities where the socio-economic conditions have an impact on education policy, including IECE, coupled with the emotional reactions of having a child with disability? Facilitating parent involvement in IECE in a low economic context requires more than inviting parents and encouraging them to participate in the affairs of their children and school. It may demand in-depth understanding of and responsiveness to the situations of parents, rather than placing responsibilities on them. Thus, there is a need for government to understand how to work with parents from low socio-economic backgrounds to improve IECE practice. Overall, of course, the goal would be to improve the socio-economic status of society in order to enhance parents' involvement and contribution to their children's IECE.

The findings further indicated that the current Ghanaian political economy or context (e.g., government commitment, will and policy) creates a favourable environment for IECE. As noted in Chapter 2, Ghana has endorsed major international conventions and declarations that support IE (e.g., UNESCO Salamanca Statement, EFA, UN CRPD, 2006). These international commitments, together with national commitments (e.g., The Constitution of the Republic of Ghana (1992), ESP 2010–2020, Education Act 778 of 2008) were identified by some participants as providing a supportive framework for IECE policy and change implementation. In Chapter 2, IE, including IECE, has been an overriding philosophy and principle for educational provision for all children. However, from most participant responses, it was clear there is no concrete IECE policy and legislation, although Ghana's IE and ECE policies and legislation generally provide a supportive framework for its implementation. The absence of a concrete national IECE policy, which at a school level may indicate a lack of political commitment from central government or school leaders in Ghana, may inhibit IECE implementation. Research shows that as countries move towards inclusive practice, supportive government policies are an important and enabling factor in policy implementation (e.g., Armstrong et al., 2010; Peters, 2004). National and school policies provide essential support and

commitment to implementation (Jones, 2004; Purdue, 2009). While Ainscow (2005) asserts that policy documents are low impact levers for change, Jones (2004) and Peters (2004) identify the development of IECE policy that is culturally and morally informed as necessary. This was also identified by some participants in this study as an essential guide for practice implementation. It suggests the need for an enabling national and school level IECE policy to support practice. As noted in Chapter 4, the majority of participants suggested that a democratic approach (combined top-down and bottom-up approaches) was necessary for IECE policy development and implementation. In their view, a democratic approach may capture policy implementers' perspectives to complement those of policy makers. It is therefore desirable that the development of a national IECE policy should not employ the traditional top-down approach, considered by most participants in this study and other researchers to have an impact on implementation (e.g., Jones, 2004), but rather engage with all stakeholders to facilitate change implementation.

Change theorists (e.g., Ainscow, 2005; Peters, 2004; Fullan, 2007) agree that policy implementation is affected by the social, political and economic context. Clearly, the context of IECE in this study posed some challenges, limiting teachers, headteachers and the education system in general from realising the set expectations, objectives and moral purpose of effectively including all children in ECE settings. Since policy implementation cannot be devoid of the context in which it takes place, it is necessary to address those contextual factors that tend to limit effective change practice.

5.6 Capacity and Support for IECE

Participants reported that capacity building and support were also evident in practice, and are important factors for successful IECE (Ainscow, 2005; Fullan, 2007; Hargreaves & Shirley, 2012; Peters, 2004). Study findings indicated that existing capacity and support for IECE involved training and PD, self-learning, partnership with universities or other training bodies, and diverse resources. The majority of participants identified that preservice teacher training and PD were provided to enhance teachers' professional capital, preparedness or readiness; knowledge, skills, and competencies repertoire; and to support teachers' development of inclusive attitudes. It was also evident from the participants' responses that such capacity, entailing knowledge, skills and competencies, was also considered vital for teachers to enact educational change and move IECE forward (Ainscow, 2005; Fullan et al., 2005; Peters, 2004). While education officials,

headteachers and teachers asserted that the capacities of teachers and headteachers are being augmented for IECE, most of them felt that the training of all educators was desirable for IECE. Investing in teachers as key change agents, and supporting the (re)construction of knowledge and thinking to cope with the demands of inclusive settings were perceived as important in fostering successful IECE.

Although a few participants at some case sites acknowledged they were prepared for IECE, responses from the majority of the participants indicated that preservice training and PD were insufficient and lacked practical components to adequately develop the capacities of most teachers for IECE. The responses identified the need for teachers to be provided with both theoretical and practical knowledge of inclusive practice. It is clear from the study findings that IE courses, knowledge of disability, IECE legislation and policies, and pedagogical practices are high priority training and PD needs for enhancing teachers' capacity, reflecting findings in previous research (e.g., Akalm et al., 2014; Kuyini & Abosi, 2014). Some participants also felt both preservice and inservice teachers needed collaborative training approaches, involving practical, authentic and blended training.

Interestingly, there is an emergence of self-learning for IECE (e.g., engagement in self-directed readings or research). It was evident from most participants' responses that some individual teachers and headteachers demonstrated scholarship or learning in context to enhance IECE implementation. Self-learning to support IECE practice has not been found in previous studies in Ghana or international research reviewed in Chapter 2. There are indications that some Ghanaian teachers utilised self-learning as a key avenue for overcoming the barrier of lack of knowledge or resources for IECE. This practice demonstrates teachers' resourcefulness, and professionalism and commitment to the moral purpose or objectives of IECE. Therefore, if all teachers have extra time, motivation, or supportive leadership, self-learning can be enriched and sustained to enable further capacity for successful IECE. Self-learning can create a culture of learning within schools to support teachers who may feel isolated when implementing IECE (Fullan et al., 2005; Hargreaves & Shirley, 2012).

The findings of this study also showed that considerable capacity building opportunities existed for some teacher participants in an ECE setting through a partner university (e.g., training programs, practicum experiences or material support). A few participants perceived such partnership arrangements to strengthen the capacity of teachers and IECE settings. Increasing the capacity of inclusive schools to meet the

diverse needs of children, for example, through collaboration with educators from higher institutions, has also been identified as a critical lever of change (Ainscow, 2005). As the university's partnership program in this study aligns with the goal of empowering ECE settings to promote inclusive practice, it is desirable for other ECE settings to partner with universities or colleges of education in Ghana that offer training programs and support to increase teachers' capacity for IECE. Such effective training and PD would develop the capacity of all teachers and ECE settings for IECE. Therefore, adequate training opportunities are necessary to enable all teachers to effectively perform their inclusive roles and responsibilities. Re-examining training and PD programs, informed by teachers' identified needs and expectations for IECE, is necessary to build capacity for implementation.

While diverse types of support (e.g., professional, motivational, material/financial, and human resources) were seen to be somewhat available, most participants indicated that more capacity was desirable for successful IECE. The findings showed that support manifested as varied resources, enhancing individual and collective capacity for change implementation (Fullan, 2007; Peters, 2004). Support identified by participants as available reflects the types of support identified in research as important for facilitating educational change and inclusive practice (Ainscow, 2005; Fullan et al., 2005; Peters, 2004). In most of the participants' interview extracts, teachers were seen as the significant players of IECE, hence they had the greatest need for additional support to increase their capacity, motivation and commitment to IECE. Although there was evidence of teachers' knowledge improving, additional training was deemed necessary for extending their knowledge of inclusive practice. Motivational support (e.g., incentives, encouragement) was available for most teachers, but most teacher participants particularly indicated that reduced class sizes with only a few children with disability, along with other enabling incentives, including financial incentives, are a desirable support. Some participants further identified that more passionate teachers and those who considered IECE as both a professional and moral responsibility were necessary for implementation. From these findings, it is clear that teacher motivation is a necessary element of successful IECE implementation (e.g., Armstrong et al., 2010). As teachers are expected to implement IECE, enhancing motivation, other than more money, is important in order to change practices.

Most participants perceived that human resources were desirable to support teachers (e.g., support from headteachers, other teachers and parents) and increase the

capacity of ECE settings. It was evident that some headteachers supported teachers, but such support was deemed limited due to headteachers' inadequate inclusive knowledge. Hence, knowledgeable headteachers are considered important for IECE. Further, some teachers shared their knowledge, skills, ideas and expertise, or learned from their peers about IECE. These are considered enabling factors for implementation (e.g., Hargreaves & Shirley, 2012; McLeskey et al., 2013). Such learning fosters shared professional capital (Hargreaves & Shirley, 2012). Collaboration among teachers to share knowledge and learning, characterised in some ECE settings in Ghana, enhances IECE implementation. Such collaborative practice may create lively learning communities where teachers learn and improve together in cultures of trust and responsibility (Hargreaves & Shirley, 2012). Fullan et al. (2005) affirm this approach, asserting that capacity building must involve shared identity and new knowledge that creates the desire for people to work collaboratively. Enhanced learning, not just by teachers, but also among teachers and schools, must be an important part of successful IECE.

In addition to support from teachers, the results showed that some parents contributed to their children's inclusive education and the work of teachers. Such parent support and collaboration were seen to enhance the capacity ECE settings. Parents are considered important collaborators in IECE (e.g., Allen & Cowdery, 2015). However, as seen from most of the participant responses, it was evident that parent involvement in IECE was limited particularly for parents of children with disability. Hence, continuing and increased involvement, support and contributions from all parents were seen as desirable and important. Explicit avenues that encourage all parents to contribute to IECE or a parent involvement policy are deemed necessary for successful IECE.

Whilst some material supports were available to enhance capacity for IECE, most education officials and headteachers identified that further funds and government support were required. Overall, participants indicated that material resources (e.g., TLMs and adaptive technology) and other facilities were inadequate for effective IECE. Material resources and facilities are important for IECE (e.g., Carrington et al., 2013; Underwood, 2013), with inadequate material resources (Peters, 2004) limiting the capacity of inclusive settings to include all children. There is, therefore, the need to procure adequate material resources for IECE in Ghana. As revealed in participants' comments, funds are considered to be a significant factor in realising the available and desirable types of support (e.g., training and PD, self-learning and other material resources). The need for available funds was strongly articulated by education officials and headteachers, with

appropriate funding noted as an enabling change factor (Purdue, 2009; Peters, 2004). If the Ghanaian government is committed to IECE, its agencies need to provide adequate financial resources for resourcing ECE settings to enhance the capacity for IECE.

Further, collaboration between ECE settings and other professionals, NGOs and other sectors was reported to enhance support for IECE practice. It is clear that some ECE settings and school personnel identified a need to work collaboratively with other individuals and institutions to attain successful IECE. However, such collaboration was deemed limited, with increased collaboration seen as desirable. Collaboration across settings is also seen as a key enabler of change (e.g., Peters, 2004) and identified in inclusion research as an important support for IECE (e.g., McLeskey et al., 2013). The findings indicated that some participants perceived that collaboration facilitates acquisition of resources and support for teachers and learners, congruent with the philosophy and principles of IECE. Collaboration in IECE policy and change implementation may demand active partnership with all stakeholders to provide mutual benefits. Therefore, strengthening collaboration between ECE settings and stakeholders is necessary to build capacity and support for IECE practice.

As reinforced throughout the findings, capacity and support are key enablers of change, and invaluable to IECE policy and practice implementation. Change theorists also agree that system capacity and support are essential for sustaining change implementation (Ainscow, 2005; Fullan et al., 2005; Hargreaves & Shirley, 2012). This means that educational agencies at the local, regional and national levels in Ghana must be able to deliver new capacity and support to implementers (Fullan et al., 2005). It can be said that capacity building and support indicates commitment of the education system to IECE practice. It means that capacity and support must be evident in practice and be ongoing, implying singular PD events are insufficient for sustaining IECE implementation (Fullan et al., 2005). The GES/MOE must ensure capacity and support for IECE are continuous, extensive, and responsive, to enhance successful implementation.

5.7 Leadership and Commitment

Leadership and commitment were also identified as essential change factors for IECE policy and practice implementation. They involve the leadership and commitment of headteachers, teachers, education officials and system leadership for effective change implementation.

First, the findings indicated that some headteachers demonstrated leadership and commitment (e.g., enthusiasm and passion, procurement of key resources for teachers, and admission of diverse children) that set the tone for meaningful IECE. It was evident from the participant responses that some headteachers were supportive of IECE, and led innovative changes in ECE settings that enhanced implementation. It was also clear that some headteachers had a personal interest in the IECE policy, hence they communicated the goal of IECE and, more importantly, championed implementation. Thus, some headteachers had a vision and a commitment to the philosophy, principles and practice of IECE. Such leadership, according to Hargreaves and Shirley (2012) and Billingsley et al. (2014), sets the direction for and shapes the overall professional culture of their schools for effective implementation. In addition, it was evident from the findings that there was shared leadership in a few ECE settings that fostered the exchange of knowledge and expertise. These headteachers saw collaboration and cooperation with teachers as key principles for IECE, and hence the sharing of leadership to improve implementation. This means that they were supportive and committed to leading to the process of IECE change.

Supportive headteacher leadership makes a difference in successful inclusive practice (Billingsley et al., 2014; Fullan, 2007b; Fullan et al., 2005, 2009; Hoppey & McLeskey, 2013), hence it is central to operationalising the shared vision of inclusive practice. Hoppey and McLeskey (2013, p. 4) identified that the effective headteacher of an inclusive setting considered their [leadership] primary role as “lubricating the human machinery” or providing support for teachers to best do their work. In support of this view, Precey and Mazurkiewicz (2013, p. 117) assert that “to get beyond the rhetoric so that practice matches policy requires effective inclusive leadership”. This means that headteacher leadership will enhance inclusive schools and inclusive practice. Therefore, headteacher leadership, reflective of knowledge and support, is an enabling factor for IECE practice.

However, the findings also showed that some headteachers lacked the leadership and commitment to IECE policy necessary for change implementation. This was reflected in headteachers’ unwillingness to accept children with disability, denial of admission to children with disability, or opposition to IECE philosophy. Importantly, some education officials felt that headteachers lacked inclusive knowledge essential to providing instructional leadership and supporting teachers with resources, or leading IECE effectively. Instructional leadership is also deemed important for promoting inclusive practice (Billingsley et al., 2014). As noted in Chapter 4, although these limitations were

linked to inadequate IE courses in headteachers' preservice and inservice training programs, the perceived lack of inclusive knowledge affects headteachers' commitment to IECE practice. Headteachers may lack the capacity to effectively support teachers who encounter daily challenges in inclusive settings. Inclusive leadership knowledge was seen to ignite commitment to IECE, but was also deemed important for teachers and education officials. Fullan et al. (2005) assert that effective leadership must spread throughout the organisation, hence headteachers should be capable of developing leadership in teachers so that they also lead change implementation. This means that all headteachers must build the capacity of teachers for inclusive practice. Therefore, headteachers require training programs that augment their inclusive leadership knowledge in order to play effective inclusive roles. They need knowledge and competencies to create a positive climate and provide supportive leadership for successful inclusive practice.

The findings also revealed that IECE was perceived to lack the "right" leadership at the system level, although effective leadership at all levels is a significant driver for implementation (Fullan et al., 2005; Hargreaves & Shirley, 2012). System leadership plays a critical role in IECE practice. As noted in Chapter 4, system-wide, effective leadership was identified as a key expectation for successful IECE. In particular, some education officials felt that the perceived lack of leadership from the GES/MOE level to the school level was "purely" an attitudinal issue. Other attitudes were discussed above. It means that changing attitudes across the education system is highly important. For example, the findings showed that some education officials lacked leadership to provide essential resources or training for teachers. If education officials disseminating policy information or monitoring implementation fail to provide supportive leadership, then IECE may be challenging for teachers and headteachers. Hence, a lack of complementary leadership from education officials may have accounted for some headteachers or teachers feeling isolated and expressing negative attitudes. Because of the complexity of IECE and perceptions of IECE as a collaborative practice, effective leadership at all levels is needed for sustainable change (Fullan et al., 2005; Loreman et al., 2014). Thus, the education officials particularly found visionary, committed, and supportive leadership from all levels necessary for IECE.

Further, some headteachers and teachers especially demonstrated qualities and dispositions (e.g., passion, caring and loving, flexibility or scaffolding) that were perceived to enhance commitment towards IECE implementation. These identified teacher quality and dispositions have not been noted in previous studies or studied in

Ghana, but are similar to effective attributes reported in inclusion research (Allen & Cowdery, 2015; DEC/NAEYC, 2009; McLeskey et al., 2013; West & Pirtle, 2013). They also shape the commitment of teachers and headteachers to IECE (Fullan et al., 2005). These reported teacher qualities and dispositions enabled headteachers and teachers to take responsibility for all children (e.g., Allen & Cowdery, 2015; Deiner, 2013). Significantly, most participants shared that passionate, caring and loving teachers and headteachers were more committed to IECE.

However, not all teachers and headteachers were committed to IECE, as they exhibited attributes not supportive of IECE. There is the need to ensure all teachers and headteachers implementing change have or develop these teacher qualities and positive dispositions so that they can effectively play their inclusive roles. Therefore, teachers must have quality preparatory and ongoing professional learning programs that align with the qualities and dispositions of effective inclusive educators. The need for committed teachers and effective teacher qualities can also be used to revise, renew or revitalise programs to better prepare teachers for IECE. Training and PD programs at universities and colleges of education, and organised programs by the GES/MOE should be crucial avenues for creating awareness of positive qualities and dispositions in headteachers and teachers, who are the heartbeat of inclusive practice and change.

As noted earlier, there was some evidence of leadership and commitment to providing training and PD, support and other resources for IECE. Change theorists assert that leadership and commitment are central to educational change (e.g., Fullan, et al., 2005; Peters, 2004). Therefore, effective leadership and commitment are required to create suitable environment for IECE practice.

5.8 Evaluation of Inclusive Practice

Evaluation of IECE is the final identified key change factor that enhances practice implementation (Ainscow, 2005; Fullan et al., 2005; Hargreaves & Shirley, 2012; Peters, 2004). Such evaluation is identified as a means of tracking the success or failure of implementation activities, especially inputs, processes and outcomes (Peters, 2004). Evaluative practices were not clearly evident from the participants' comments. The relatively small evidence of evaluation was manifested in a few participant comments that some teachers "engaged in mini action research" as part of self-learning for IECE. While this practice may be not well planned, it is similar to the process assessment that involves action research projects conducted by teachers, with technical support and training, that

is seen to improve inclusive practice (Peters, 2004). The limited evidence of evaluation of IECE policy and practice implementation in these case sites may be attributed to the “seemingly newness” of IECE or lack of shared definition of IECE among policy makers and policy implementers that supports such measurement (Ainscow, 2005). It also appears that ECE settings and the GES/MOE are not well prepared or resourced for this task. Expertise from universities may be useful to assist schools and education officials to undertake evaluations of IECE.

Nonetheless, evaluation is essential as it fosters sustainability and accountability of inclusive programs (Ainscow, 2005; Fullan et al., 2005; Peters, 2004). As Ainscow (2005, p. 120) claims, we “measure what we value”, and “what gets measured gets done”, hence evidence must be gathered relating to the “presence, participation and achievement” of all students to determine the progress towards greater inclusion. IECE in Ghana should be evaluated to identify barriers or opportunities that promote change practice. The lack of evaluation of IECE in the case sites, however, may not be surprising as evaluation is identified as one of the most underdeveloped domains and a significant challenge to inclusive programs (e.g., Peters, 2004).

Theorists of change agree that there should be criteria for evaluating inclusive practice (e.g., Ainscow, 2005; Fullan et al., 2005; Peters, 2004; Hargreaves & Shirley, 2012). It is thus important to evaluate IECE implementation with appropriate criteria to benchmark best practices, which can be shared among teachers and other educators. Research shows that the Index of Inclusion developed by Booth et al. (2006) provides a useful tool that could be used to evaluate IECE implementation (e.g., Carrington et al., 2013; Peters, 2004). Appropriate criteria for evaluating IECE should also be socio-culturally and educationally relevant in Ghana, so that lessons learnt from such evaluation can be shared with change agents. As Fullan et al. (2005) assert, ongoing school-based self-evaluation will permit the collection of critical information that can aid development of school improvement action plans to support IECE. Therefore, the GES/MOE should collaborate with experts from universities, headteachers and teachers to develop a standard for evaluating IECE practice (e.g., training and PD, resources, and inclusive practices).

Figure 5.1 summarises the principal change factors influencing IECE policy and change implementation in Ghana. As identified from the findings, the change factors act as enablers: facilitators, enhancers, and leverages; and barriers: challenges, inhibitors, and constraints, which must be addressed to foster successful IECE implementation. These

change factors also interrelate and interconnect, and they concurrently influence IECE; however, the context of implementation is fundamental to all the change factors.

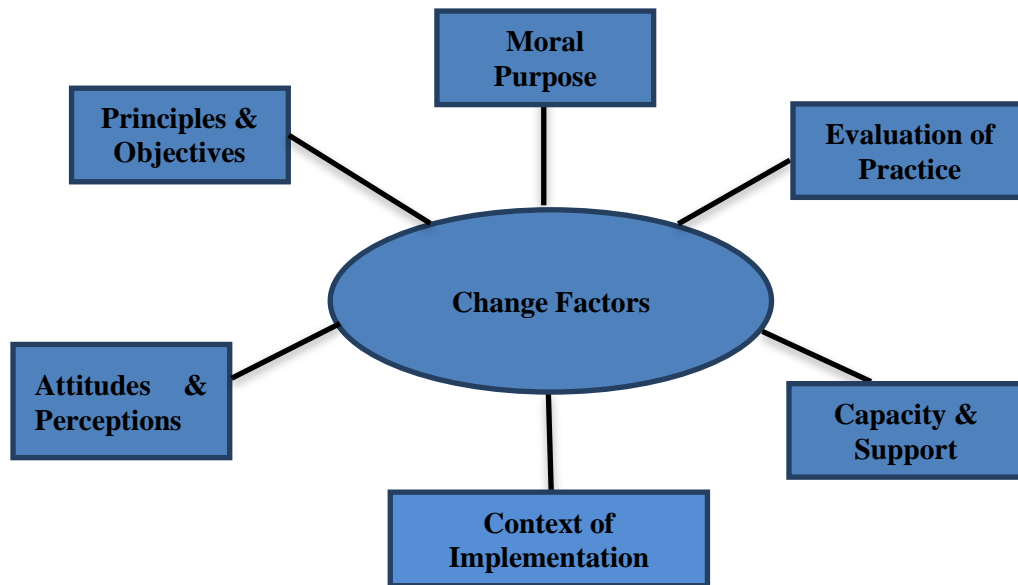


Figure 5.1: Change factors affecting IECE policy and practice implementation.

5.9 Summary and Conclusion

This chapter has shown that IECE is a key policy and change implementation in Ghana. Overall, the participants’ responses indicated that essential change factors are present to varying degrees in IECE implementation in Ghana. While there were enabling change factors fostering successful IECE policy and practice implementation, there were also constraining factors that limited attainment of the desired change and implementation. These findings provide useful insights about the complexity of IECE in Ghana, and also effective ways of enhancing successful change practice. What emerged strongly in this study is that children’s human rights and economic benefits are fundamental moral purposes that frame IECE policy and change implementation. The full realisation of human rights, however, must be supported by the equity, capability and resource components of IECE policy and implementation. Economically, investing in IECE is perceived as a socially just action society can undertake for all children, and thus effective change should be promoted. In IECE, all children are seen to derive academic and social outcomes that are valued socio-culturally, although there are variations in attainment of such outcomes. Further, the principles and objectives of IECE are a key change factor that drives implementation, informing the use of effective practices and teachers’ beliefs.

Hence, shared knowledge of the principles and objectives, and their acceptance by implementers, is critical to IECE practice. In addition, the attitudes and perceptions of teachers, headteachers and parents influence IECE practice and implementation, as do the socio-cultural, economic and political contexts. Such context is a fundamental change factor since it determines how much can be attained in implementation.

Varied contexts were perceived to influence the level of parent involvement in IECE. Supportive national and school-level IECE policies are needed as commitment to guide effective practice implementation. However, the prevailing societal attitudes in some communities are still a dominant contextual factor affecting IECE practice. More significantly, there is some capacity and support for IECE, including partnership programs with universities for teachers and headteachers, and self-learning, as professional empowerment for some teachers. However, sustained and responsive training and PD for all educators, as well as other enabling resource support that serves as additional motivation, are deemed desirable for teachers and should be fundamental to successful IECE. System-wide leadership and commitment, especially by headteachers, are significant change factors required for IECE. Effective teacher quality and dispositions are also identified as needed, as these were perceived to increase teachers' commitment to IECE. However, evaluation of IECE necessary to benchmark success or failure in order to improve practice was less developed in the case sites. Further implications of these findings and change factors are presented in the final chapter, Conclusions and Implications for Future Research.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

The study explored implementation of IECE in Ghana, drawing on the perspectives of key education officials, headteachers and teachers in four purposively selected ECE settings. These ECE sites were maximum variation and typical cases, as such good practice examples of the types of settings implementing IECE. As seen in Chapters 1 and 2, little is known about IECE policy implementation in Ghana, and the literature reviewed for this study was mainly drawn from an international perspective or Western countries. This study was thus undertaken to address the question: *How is IECE being implemented in Ghana?* The interview data collection explored six key subquestions:

1. How is IECE understood in Ghana?
2. What are the expectations for IECE in Ghana?
3. What are the expected and current reported practices of, and attitudes to, IECE?
4. What are the importance and perceived outcomes of IECE?
5. What training and professional development is provided for IECE?
6. What support is available and desirable for IECE implementation?

The study utilised a qualitative multiple case study approach. In-depth individual interviews were used to collect data from 27 different participants. Within- and cross-case thematic data analysis and findings were discussed (Chapter 4), and principal cross-case findings were further examined within the framework of seven key change factors (Chapter 5). This final chapter presents conclusions, implications for further research, and recommendations of the study. The chapter ends with some important concluding reflections.

6.2 Conclusion

Some final conclusions are drawn from this multiple case study that contribute to the corpus of literature on IECE policy and change implementation in a different context. Notably, this study contributes to the limited contextual knowledge and research evidence about IECE implementation, gleaned from the multiple perspectives of key education officials, headteachers and teachers.

It was evident that while there were differing understandings, IECE was broadly interpreted in terms of human rights and equity, capability and resources, instead of a

disability-oriented perspective that restricted the inclusion of all children. As a globalising discourse and educational policy, IECE is considered to be a valuable practice that presents essential academic and social outcomes for all children, and benefits for teachers and parents. This study has shown that IECE is a future-focused educational and developmental approach, and an economic investment for society. The idea of “inclusion” in the early years is key to all education. Thus, ongoing commitment is necessary to remove barriers, challenges, and inhibitors to meaningful and maximum participation, and to promote belonging and learning together of all children.

There are also high expectations for IECE practice, including training and PD, system leadership, active parent involvement and policy development, which are regarded as high priority considerations for successful IECE. Some teachers used effective pedagogical and organisational IECE practices to promote individualisation, differentiation and equalisation of opportunities for all children. Further, although effective teacher quality and dispositions such as passion and caring and loving are deemed critical, not all teachers and headteachers demonstrated qualities that supported IECE practice. There were mixed attitudes and perceptions or beliefs about children with disability from teachers, headteachers, and parents which affected IECE. Negative societal attitudes and perceptions of children with disability and IECE are still prevalent in some communities. However, attitudes were generally positive towards children with mild-moderate disability and their IECE.

Teacher training and PD were generally considered insufficient for IECE practice. More courses focused on inclusion, and practical and authentic training, as well as collaborative training approaches, and prioritising teachers’ identified needs, were identified necessary to enhance teachers’ knowledge, skills and competencies and preparedness for IECE.

Essential support including, adequate material and financial resources, human resources and motivation were desirable for IECE practice. Other desired support was systemic leadership, especially headteacher leadership, and enhanced motivation, especially reduced class sizes and other incentives. Shared leadership was an indispensable component of IECE in a few schools. In addition, some teachers enhanced their knowledge, or lack of support for IECE through ongoing self-learning. Partnership programs with one university served as additional support or training and learning opportunities for some teachers and headteachers in an IECE setting.

As evident in Chapter 5, change factors interact; they are all necessary but no single change factor is sufficient to achieve change or IECE implementation. Ghana has strongly moved in some way in terms of moral purpose, and principles and objectives of IECE. There are, however, mixed attitudes towards IECE, partial capacity building and support, and a lack of system leadership and commitment. Further, a clear IECE policy, and evaluation of practice are still missing. Nonetheless IECE remains a rational practice worth pursuing for attaining EFA and MDG, and CRPD goals.

Explained differently, it is through effective IECE that we can develop the knowledge and skills of all children that are essential for individual empowerment, national economic growth, and socio-humanistic development or political excellence—and for the success of our current and future generations. Therefore, IECE policy and change practice is an inspiring moral, social and cultural purpose that should draw the collective efforts of all educators, stakeholders and government in its pursuit for the common good of all children and society. For all children are better together, and everyone can learn whatever is learnable, and also succeed within a moderating but scaffolding environment (Ackah Jnr, 2014a). These findings also resonate with the following extract: “more than anything, the idea [and implementation of IECE] stands for hope and a belief in the possibility of fair and just relationships [particularly early learning and socialisation for all children]. Even recognising the importance of a critical engagement with [and commitment to the] idea [of IECE] is worth the struggle [and societal investment and contributions]” (Armstrong et al., 2010, p. 138).

6.3 Limitations of the Study

This research study had a number of limitations. First, this multiple case study with its intention to gain an in-depth understanding replete with meanings had a small sample of participants and case sites in Ghana. The study focused on selected ECE sites and participants from a single metropolis and educational district, and region in Ghana. Conclusions drawn from these cases may not be generalisable to all ECE settings in Ghana, or globally. However, the multiple ECE settings and different participants were maximum variation and typical cases, or exemplifying cases (Bryman, 2016) and their careful selection provided a more rigorous and complete approach to understanding similar IECE practices or issues in Ghana. Again, the triangulation of evidence and member checking of some interview extracts (Stake, 2010) maximised the accuracy and authenticity of participants’ experience. For example, key findings were confirmed in

different participant responses, and in different case sites. The case sites provided deep interpretations of IECE, which was complemented and confirmed with rich insights from key education officials. Nevertheless, presenting a localised depiction and analysis of a research problem—as this study sought to do—may still present valuable implications for ECE settings, including for teachers, headteachers, and education officials, and a range of contexts.

Second, the findings were mainly based on self-reported interview data (Stake, 2010), which may contain elements of biases and inaccuracies, and selective responses from participants because they wanted to present themselves in a more socially acceptable manner. However, the interviews provided opportunities for clarification of issues, and the researcher's biases are also acknowledged (Chapter 3). Further, more fine-grained data may have been attained through observations of teachers' inclusive practice in the ECE settings (Stake, 2010; Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2009) to capture key moments that confirmed some reported responses. This means that diversification of research methods to include direct observation of teacher practice may have garnered other insights of IECE. Despite these limitations, the data set provided useful insights and descriptions of participant experiences and feelings that enabled the co-construction of meanings about IECE policy implementation, within the contexts studied.

6.4 Implications for Further Research

While this study contributes to understandings of IECE policy and change practice, other research areas for further examination regarding IECE practice are suggested. First, diversification of the research methods to involve observation of teacher practice may garner additional insights about IECE implementation. Replicating this study in other settings with similar participants and education stakeholders to explore IECE practice may be necessary to gain a holistic view of IECE. Additionally, surveys with a larger sample of participants and case sites could explore the perspectives of IECE. Surveying the range of change implementation factors may help policy makers and professional teaching institutions to be sensitive to the socio-culturally context in which IECE is implemented in different countries.

An examination of the perspectives of additional stakeholders, especially parents, would provide a broader picture of IECE in Ghana. This study indicated that parent attitudes and involvement in IECE were affected by the dynamics of socio-economic factors (e.g., poverty and education). Undertaking such a study will essentially capture

the missing voice of parents of children with disability. In addition to broadening the scope of the study to achieve more and different participants and settings, examining societal attitudes and perceptions, and their influence on children with disability, would be an addition to IECE literature research.

Investigating the role of leadership for IECE could provide a further in-depth and rich perspective of IECE implementation. Effective leadership was seen as an important facilitator of change and valuable expectation for IECE, but was found to be lacking within and across the education system in Ghana. School leaders are at the centre of a dynamic educational system, shaping and leading discourse around policy and IECE. Specially, research on headteacher leadership for IECE and change practice is vital, as headteachers instigate IECE implementation. Such studies may help address the gap in inclusive leadership knowledge and research.

A study to evaluate IECE policy and change implementation would make a valuable contribution to research on IECE in Ghana, currently a missing area of evidence in Ghana. More broadly, more research should be conducted on situational issues to garner knowledge and insights about IECE. Such research must not only identify challenges, but also provide potential solutions. Insights into inclusive practices should be appropriately shared among teachers and other stakeholders so that relevant knowledge and learnings are applied to IECE. Ongoing evaluation and research should thus underpin IECE change practice.

6.5 Recommendations for Practice, Policy and Research

In light of the findings and discussions, the following recommendations are proposed for enhancing successful IECE policy and change implementation in Ghana.

6.5.1 Shared Understandings of IECE

The findings indicated that IECE remains a significant educational goal for all children. In order to enhance IECE implementation, it is suggested that:

1. Full realisation of all children's rights to IECE be ensured through appropriate practices, and supporting policies and legislation;
2. Education Officials, headteachers and teachers, or policy makers and policy implementers continue to consider IECE a paradigmatic shift founded on human rights, equity, capacity and resources, rather than a disability view that promotes selectivity, exclusivity, and determinism;

3. Education Officials, headteachers and teachers, or policy makers and policy implementers continue to negotiate and develop shared understanding of IECE;
4. Government and society continue to invest substantially in IECE programs as an economic good that empowers all children with skills for the world of work;

6.5.2 Effective IECE Practices

To ensure IECE meets the educative and social needs of all children, it is proposed that:

1. The GES/MOE and teacher education institutions continue to train teachers to be knowledgeable of, and use effective child-centred IECE pedagogical and organisational practices;
2. Teachers use appropriate IECE practices to promote equalisation of learning opportunities for all children;
3. Teachers acquire a store of effective IECE practices to meet diverse needs of children through individualised and differentiated learning.

6.5.3 Effective Teacher Quality and Dispositions

Since effective teacher quality and dispositions were identified as critical to IECE, enhancing commitment of implementers, it is recommended that:

1. The GES/MOE and teacher education institutions continue to educate and sensitise teachers and headteachers about the value of effective teacher quality and dispositions during training and PD programs, and IECE implementation;
2. More passionate, caring and loving teachers and headteachers be identified to lead, and serve as the receptacle for IECE.
3. Educators demonstrate effective qualities to support successful IECE.

6.5.4 Attitudinal and Perceptual Changes

Changing attitudes and perceptions means changing values and beliefs about children with disability and IECE. In order to change negative attitudes and perceptions of children with disability and IECE, it is proposed that:

1. The GES/MOE and schools organise ongoing and broad-based education, re-orientation and sensitisation of society and all stakeholders about disability issues and the value of IECE;
2. Society develops positive attitudes towards children with disability to promote acceptance and interrelationships and give up traditional values, beliefs and

- understandings of disability to reduce stigmatisation, discrimination or dehumanisation;
3. Teachers recognise the individuality and uniqueness of all children, the potential of children with disability, and be driven by the belief that all children can learn;
 4. Headteachers demonstrate positive attitudes and perceptions of children with disability to set a tone for IECE, and to admit and encourage all children;
 5. Headteachers and teachers be continuously educated on disability and inclusive issues, and be introduced to more IE courses to enhance their understanding of children;
 6. Parents be educated and sensitised to value the potential of their children, and down play self-fulfilling prophecies;
 7. A parent involvement policy in IECE and strong parent groups be developed to encourage parents to increase support and contributions for their children;
 8. Government develops further intervention programs that assist parents who struggle with providing for children with disability, or meet their economic survival needs;
 9. The GES/MOE, in collaboration with other agencies establishes strategies to encourage the adoption of IECE policy, to mitigate resistance and to manage implementation.

6.5.5 Sustained Training and PD

It was evident that sustained and responsive training and PD will equip teachers with the professional needed for IECE practice. In the light of this, it is proposed that:

1. The GES/MOE sustains preservice training and PD for teachers;
2. The GES/MOE, in collaboration with universities and colleges of education continue to make IECE training the epicentre of all teacher education programs;
3. Teacher education programs be continuously reformed to include specific and generalised inclusive courses, which are premised on broad understandings and changing thinking about IECE;
4. The GES/MOE ensures preservice and inservice training programs are mainly informed by both the expectations of IECE policy and the needs of teachers;
5. More emphasis be placed on practical-orientated training and PD, as well as authentic, integrated and collaborative training to develop all-rounder teachers;

6. More importantly, the GES/MOE and ECE settings strengthen motivation and leadership to support teachers to engage continuously in self-learning or develop professional motivation for self-empowerment and development;
7. Schools forge continuing professional learning and support partnerships with higher education institutions, and serve as centres for professional experiences or practicum programs.

6.5.6 Enabling Support and Resources

In order to meet the challenges of limited support or provide desirable support for IECE practice, it is recommended that:

1. Government and GES/MOE further resource ECE settings financially and materially; adopt a funding model that ensures adequate funds are allocated to provide desirable and enabling supports;
2. Schools forge ongoing collaborative partnerships with other stakeholders and NGOs to acquire additional support and resources;
3. Headteachers and teachers develop further knowledge of what constitutes support and resources to ensure their utilisation for IECE;
4. The GES/MOE continues to provide enhanced motivational and incentive schemes for teachers, including reduced class sizes and other financial rewards.

6.5.7 Supportive Leadership

What emerged strongly from the study was the lack of leadership at all levels to lead and support IECE practice. To address this challenge, it is recommended that:

1. More visionary and committed system leaders drive sustainable IECE;
2. Headteachers give voice, vision and consideration to IECE issues, and ensure the school's inclusive culture propagate the belief and philosophy that IECE is a whole-school responsibility;
3. Headteachers model appropriate behaviours and dispositions, support PD and learning for teachers, and create an enabling IECE environment;
4. Educational leaders, including headteachers and teachers be supported with leadership training programs to develop inclusive leadership knowledge and experiences;

5. Shared leadership be promoted to ensure collective sharing of knowledge, expertise, and experiences that create strong inclusive schools, and avoids feelings of isolation;
6. Government, in collaboration with its departments and agencies, and the wider community provides supportive leadership for IECE practice.

6.5.8 Supportive IECE Policy

The findings showed that an IECE policy was lacking as a key component of successful implementation. If IECE has to be effectively implemented, it is proposed that:

1. The GES/MOE develops a comprehensive national IECE policy, which is socio-culturally and socio-educationally relevant, but crafted within international human rights, conventions and declarations on IECE and disability, and EFA;
2. The GES/MOE ensures all stakeholders, policy makers and policy implementers are actively involved in IECE policy development, especially in a democratic society;
3. IECE policy delineates expectations, roles and responsibilities of implementers and stakeholders that support implementation practice;
4. IECE policy incorporates a ‘working’ and ‘acceptable’ definition of IECE to prevent arbitrariness, or discretionary practices, and to minimise tensions and contestations from school staff, education officials, policy makers, and parents;
5. Schools develop IECE policies that establish inclusive cultures, ethos and values of the setting, involving a democratic and collaborative approach, with active involvement of all the school staff, parents, and the school community.

6.5.9 Effective Evaluation of IECE

While the findings indicated that evaluation of IECE is a key change factor, it was not well-developed in Ghana. Notwithstanding the relatively ‘newness’, it is suggested that:

1. The GES/MOE develops a socio-culturally and educationally relevant criteria or acceptable standards to evaluate IECE;
2. Evaluation identifies best practices and be based on the needs of implementers;
3. The GES/MOE collaborates with teachers and headteachers, as the practical implementers, and inclusive education experts and researchers from universities and colleges of education to undertake holistic evaluation of IECE;

4. Individual schools organise mini-research and regular meetings to discuss the progress, challenges, and needs of teachers;
5. The GES/MOE ensures ongoing, system-wide evaluation as a critical part of IECE so that change practice is informed by identified implementation needs.

6.6 Final Reflections

Finally, on a personal level, this doctoral research has proven challenging but also humbling in that I have gained varied insights, learnings and experiences for life, and for conducting qualitative and change implementation research that is potentially rich for further academic learning, research and development. I am, however, still learning the craft or art of research... “and not becoming a slavish adherent of methodological rules” (Miles et al., 2014, p. 7). I am finding out and trying to apply what qualitative researchers do when they identify a problem, and assemble and analyse data from the field, and make meaning, which entailed a pensive transcription process and data management. But, access negotiation proceeded smoothly, evidenced by a high level of reception, cooperation and willingness from participants, which tempted me to collect ‘too much data’ at some research sites, although I ensured that key persons were interviewed since data collection is inescapably a selective process; and the researcher cannot and does not have to ‘get it all’.

In my professional and personal experience of working with students, parents and other stakeholders, I have been asked several questions about IE, and how it should be implemented. I have received complaints from teacher-trainees about their practicum experiences with children with disability. But, I remember vividly that a former student, asked: “Why are children with disability not included effectively from the scratch, but *we* wait until they are ‘grown’”. When you go to the centres or schools they are there”. While this initial question was mind-boggling, and attracted varied answers from me and other students, it was insightful, and my search revealed that *this IE thing* should start when all children are young. Secondly, I have undertaken mainly quantitative research prior to this doctoral study, and I must acknowledge clearly that at the outset of this journey my chemistry was not attuned to the qualitative research paradigm. Despite, the need for new challenge, combined with my experiences inspired me to undertake this qualitative research as I also found out that there was limited research on IECE.

Importantly, this thesis remains an enlightening experience and a self-fulfilling venture, but I feel elated that through this study and findings, I have also contributed to

the knowledge and scholarship on IECE policy and change implementation research in Ghana and within the global context. This can add to the discourse and research aimed at improving IECE practice for all children. I can breathe not only a sigh of relief, but also appreciate the value of three critical research resilient qualities—*focus, stamina and passion*—that I inadvertently or mindfully acquired, serving as a moral compass and scaffold throughout this journey. Thus I constantly *engaged in* what I called *the little things—doings* as a daily practice to unravel meanings and interpretations; sometimes forgetting about the repetitiveness or laborious nature of doing such little things. Thus the research journey, involved several reconstructions and engagements in little things; where learning becomes work and life, but they were worth doing and pursuing:

²⁰The [*l*]ittle things I do today become better tomorrow;
And I also become better at *doing* those things.
If I *continuously do those things, they become best*;
And I also become best at *doing* those things.
I will *do* those least things to become better and best.

These *little things—doings* and actions—were transformative and responsive to changing times and needs, shaping my understandings, beliefs and attitudes, and may also be applicable to IECE policy and practice implementation. Thus, the little things and doings, supported with ongoing learning and knowing can leverage practice. These can equally motivate teachers in particular when they consider implementation as a daily practice requiring continuous *little doings—efforts, energies and engagements—*for meeting the needs of, and including all children in ECE settings, and also refining their practice. It can also motivate teacher educators, parents and policy makers enmeshed in IECE practice. Therefore teachers' pursuits of the little [*inclusive*] things are the *real change factors* that enhance successful IECE practice. Implicitly, teachers may thus not be skilful or knowledgeable of IECE, but through continuous interrogation of, and search for better practices, principles and philosophies, marked by persistence and staying power (i.e. focus, stamina and passion), they will become proficient at “even attempting” to implement IECE. In a like manner, while IECE may be at best challenging for some teachers, and there is no easy road to IECE, nevertheless successful IECE is *mainly* about [all] teachers' doings, actions, and practices or knowing and being. Thus, as teachers

²⁰ *The little things and doings—motivational words/poem* the researcher composed (22/09/2014) and reflected on, inspiring the writing of this research.

grapple with the challenges of inclusion, the more they will realise that the most effective teachers [leaders] use practice as their fertile ground for learning and knowing. In another breath, while a supportive IECE policy can be developed with wide-ranging stakeholder involvement, what matters is the staying power from all to translate policy into practice. So, teachers' reflections and beliefs that IECE is in constant motion, a process of change evolving to devise best practices, should be a strong incentive for implementation. For Fullan (2011), the teacher should try to figure out what's working, what could be working better and *then* look into how research and theory might help. Nonetheless, capacity and support, and system leadership remain non-negotiable for operationalising IECE as:

the passionate teacher will also teach all children, or does certain things [self-learn or collaborate with others; seek support] to enhance IECE practice. (FT-Ama-CS1)

But, my pursuit of the little things was also made possible through the ongoing scaffolding and moderating environment I enjoyed. Linking this to the work of teachers, will also require that teachers are 'continuously' supported so that they can reach a zone of proximal proficiency, and commandeer the leadership for, and to lead effective IECE now and in the future. Thus, the professional capitalisation of teachers will enable them to know more and do more. Since the IECE project is on wheels, the continuing pursuit of little things, encrusted in our collective hope, belief and efforts will support effective and successful IECE, serving the common good of all children and society. As a motional construct, IECE needs evolving thinkers, actors, practitioners and supporting believers; hence motion leadership. Therefore, the critical and constructive feedback I received from my supervisors provoked self-reflection—where you as the researcher step back and start 'seeing things' from a new perspective—from both the writer and reader's perspective, although the researcher has the final stamp to feed-back. I thus explored varied approaches, experimented and learnt from such experiences. As Fullan (2011) advises, teachers should be critical consumers of *received wisdom* in the light of *their own practice* and that of their peers, and only after thorough *consideration of that practice*. Importantly, if practice is going to drive improvement, the teacher's [leader's] job is to liberate practice. With thought-provoking insights from my supervisors, I thus navigated through the muddy shades of doing this qualitative research, piecing little things to (re) construct the labyrinthine—IECE implementation. In doing so, I hope I was challenged and I gave my best and all—to get along and through ...

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APPENDIX

Appendix A. Interview Protocols for Participants

Appendix A1. Teacher Interview

IECE Implementation Interview Protocol for ECE Teachers

Section 1: Demographic Information of ECE Teachers

1. What is your designation? (Teacher, Attendant, Caregiver)
2. What is your ECE Class? (KG1, KG2 or P1)
3. What is your gender?
4. What is your highest educational level?
5. How many years have you taught in the ECE level?(or previous level)
6. What is the total number and age range of children in your ECE class?
 - a. How many children have disability (types and ages)
7. How/when did you experience teaching children with disability/SEN? (ECE level?)
8. What do you understand by inclusive early childhood education?
9. What knowledge do you have about (a) Disability Act [715] (2006) (b) IE Policy (c) ECE Policy (d) Others
10. What qualities do you expect from teachers in IECE?
11. Tell me or describe the experience of teaching in IECE setting?

Section 2: Research and Interview Questions

- 1. What IECE practice do teachers report?**
 - a. How do you include/teach children with and without disability in ECE setting?
 - b. What are the approaches, strategies, methods (pedagogy) for IECE?
 - c. Which of the approaches or strategies are more useful and successful? Why?
 - d. Describe a typical day in an IECE setting.
- 2. How important do teachers consider IECE?**
 - a. What do you see as important about IECE?
 - b. What makes IECE important?
- 3. What are the perceived outcomes of IECE?**
 - a. What outcomes do children with and without disability/SEN attain from IECE?
 - b. What outcomes do teachers derive from IECE?

- c. What outcomes does IECE provide for parents/families?
 - d. What are the outcomes of IECE for society or government?
 - e. What are your feelings about outcomes of IECE?
- 4. What training and professional development are provided for IECE?**
- a. What prior training did you receive for IECE?
 - b. What professional development do you obtain for IECE?
 - c. What type of training and professional development do you need for IECE?
 - d. Who and where should training or professional development be provided?
- 5. What support is available and desirable for IECE?**
- a. What types of supports do you receive for IECE?
 - 1. What supports are available and which are beneficial to teachers?
 - b. What are the sources of supports? (personal, school, GES/MOE, community)
 - c. How are supports delivered to teachers? What mechanisms exist to support IECE?
 - d. What supports are necessary for effective IECE?
 - e. How do you define support for IECE? (Resources, Materials)
- 6. What are the barriers to or enablers of IECE?**
- a. What barriers/challenges are associated with IECE?
 - 1. What types of barriers (personal, school, home, government) do you face?
 - i. Disability? Training? Support/Resources? Roles? Policy?
 - b. How do these barriers affect IECE?
 - c. What factors motivate you to practise IECE?
 - 1. What are the enablers (personal, school, home, government) of IECE?
 - a. Knowledge? Training? Support/Resources? Roles? Policy?
 - 2. How do these enablers enhance IECE?
 - d. What are your concerns or suggestions for IECE?

Appendix A2: Headteacher Interview

IECE Implementation Interview Protocol for ECE Headteachers

Section 1: Demographic Information of Headteachers

1. What is your designation (Headteacher ECE or Headteacher Basic School)
2. What is your gender?
3. What is your highest educational level?
4. How many years have you been headteacher at the ECE level? (or previous level)
5. How or when did you experience children with disability/SENs in the ECE level?
6. What types (gender, age, number) of children with disability and SENs are in your ECE Centre? (Total number of children)
7. What do you understand to be inclusive early childhood education?
8. What knowledge do you have about (a) Disability Act [715] (2006), (b) IE Policy (3) ECE Policy (4) Others
9. What qualities do you expect from teachers and headteachers in IECE?
10. Tell me or describe the experience of IECE.

Research and Interview Questions

- 1. What approaches, methods or pedagogy do you expect teachers to use in IECE?**
 - a. How are children with and without disability/SEN included in ECE programs?
 - b. Which of the approaches or strategies are more useful and successful? Why?
 - c. What are the expectations for IECE?
 - d. Describe a typical day in an IECE setting.
- 2. How important is inclusive early childhood education?**
 - a. What do headteachers see as important about IECE?
 - b. What makes IECE important to head/teachers?
- 3. What are the perceived outcomes for IECE?**
 - a. What outcomes do children with and without disability attain from IECE?
 - b. What outcomes do teachers derive from IECE?

- c. What outcomes do IECE provide for parents/families?
 - d. What are the outcomes of IECE for society or government?
 - e. What are your feelings about IECE?
- 4. What training and professional development are provided IECE?**
- a. What prior training do headteachers obtain for IECE?
 - b. What prior training should teachers receive for inclusive ECE?
 - c. What PD do headteachers receive for IECE? What about teachers?
 - d. What type of training/PD do headteachers/teachers need for effective IECE?
 - e. Who and where should training or professional development be provided?
- 5. What support is available and desirable for IECE?**
- a. What support do headteachers receive for IECE? What supports are available and beneficial to teachers?
 - b. What are the sources of supports for teachers/headteachers? (personal, school, GES/MOE, community)
 - c. How (where) is support delivered to headteachers and teachers? What program exists to support headteachers and teachers?
 - d. What supports are necessary for effective IECE?
 - e. How do headteachers define support(s) for IECE?
- 6. What are the barriers to or enablers of IECE?**
- a. What barriers are associated with IECE?
 - 1. What barriers (personal, school, home, government) do headteachers and teachers face in implementing IECE?
 - a. Disability? Training? Support/Resources? Roles? Policy?
 - 2. How do these challenges affect IECE?
 - b. What factors enable IECE practice?
 - 1. What are the enablers (personal, school, home, government) of IECE? (Disability? Training? Support/Resources? Roles? Policy? Incentives?)
 - 2. How do the enablers influence IECE education?
 - c. What are headteachers' concerns/suggestions for IECE?

Appendix A3. Education Official Interview

IECE Implementation Interview Protocol for Education Officials

Section 1: Demographic Information of Education Officials

1. What is your designation?
2. What is your gender?
3. What is your highest educational level?
4. How many years have you been in policy at the ECE level?
5. How do you understand inclusive early childhood education? (personal & policy)
6. What knowledge do you have about (a) Disability Act [715] (2006), (b) IE Policy (3) ECE Policy (4) Others
7. What is your role as Education Officer?
8. What qualities do you expect from teachers and headteachers in IECE?
9. Describe the experience of IECE.

Research and Interview Questions

- 1. What are the expectations for IECE?**
 - a. What are your expectations for delivery and implementation of IECE in centres and schools? (pedagogy, approach, provision)
 - b. What are the expected IECE practices (pedagogy, approach, provision)
- 2. How important do education officials consider IECE?**
 - c. What do education officials consider important about IECE?
 - d. What makes IECE important to education officials?
- 3. What are the perceived outcomes of IECE?**
 - a. What outcomes do children with and without disability attain from IECE?
 - b. What are the outcomes of IECE for teachers and headteachers?
 - c. What outcomes does IECE provide for parents/families?
 - d. What are the outcomes of IECE for society or government?
 - e. What are education officials' feelings about IECE?
- 4. What training and professional development are provided for IECE?**
 - a. What prior training do teachers obtain for IECE?
 - b. What professional development do headteachers/teachers receive for IECE?
 - c. What training and PD do headteachers/teachers need for IECE?

- d. Who and where should training or professional development be provided?

5. What support is available and desirable for IECE?

- a. What types of supports do headteachers/teachers receive for IECE? What supports are available to headteachers/teachers?
- b. Name the sources of supports (personal, school, GES/MOE, community)
- c. How (where) is support delivered to teachers? What mechanisms exist to support teachers?
- d. What supports are necessary for effective IECE?
- e. How do education officials define support for IECE?

6. What are the barriers to or enablers of IECE?

- a. What barriers are associated with IECE?
 - 1. What are the barriers (personal, school, home, government) to IECE?
 - a. Disability? Training? Support/Resources? Roles? Policy? Cultural?
 - 2. How do these challenges affect IECE?
- b. What factors enable IECE practice?
 - 1. What are the enablers (personal, school, home, government) of IECE?
 - a. Disability? Training? Support/Resources? Roles? Policy?

Incentives?

- 2. How do the enablers influence IECE?
 - c. What are education officials' concerns/suggestions for IECE?

Appendix B. Participant Interview Timelines (2014)

Appendix B1. Teacher and Headteacher Interview Timelines

Case site 1 and 2 participants

Case Site 1		Date	Duration	Case Site 2		Date	Duration
FT-Ama	T1	20 March	66 mins	FT-Abiba	T1	24 March	20 mins
FT-Aba	T2	21 March	39 mins	FT-Akasi	T2	20 March	21 mins
MT- Kwame	T3	28 March	46 mins	FT-Adwoa	T3	20 March	32 mins
MT-Kabenla	T4	27 March	47 mins	FT-Akua	T4	18 March	23 mins
HT-Baa	HT1	3 April	47 mins	HT-Dede	HT1	11 March	55 mins
HT-Aka+	HT2	2 March	45 mins				

Appendix B2. Teacher and Headteacher Interview Timelines

Case site 3 and 4 Participants

Case Site 3		Date	Duration	Case Site 4		Date	Duration
FT-Yaba	T1	04 March	21 mins	FT-Maama	T1	03 March	33 mins
FT-Ebela	T2	04 March	20 mins	FT-Oba Yaa	T2	06 March	39 mins
FT-Antwiwaa	T3	05 March	23 mins	FT-Araba	T3	06 March	33 mins
MT-Kwasi	T4	04 March	24 mins	FT-Oforiwaa	T4	07 March	45 mins
HT-Mansa	HT1	05 April	27 mins	HT-Esi	HT1	10 March	43 mins

Appendix B3. Education Official Interview Timelines

EO Participants

EO Participant		Date	Duration	EO Participant		Date	Duration
EO-Alua	EO1	02 April	46 mins	EO-Abeka	EO4	12 March	70 mins
EO-Kofi	EO2	11 April	78 mins	EO-Atta	EO5	24 March	43 mins
EO- Abi	EO3	17 March	38 mins	EO-Akos	EO6	27 March	45 mins

Note. All names in the tables are pseudonyms

Appendix C. Participant Information Package and Ethics

Appendix C1. Information Sheet

(Teachers, Headteachers and Education Officials)

Implementation of IECE in Ghana: Four Case Sites of Practice in ECE Settings

Reresearch Team

Dr Susanne Garvis (Co-Principal Supervisor)
School of Education and Professional Studies
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QLD 4222, Australia
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Phone: 07 5552 9789

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Dr Yoon-Suk Hwang (Associate Supervisor)
School of Education and Professional Studies
Mt Gravatt Campus, Griffith University
QLD 4122, Australia
Email: yoonsuk.hwang@griffith.edu.au
Phone: 07 37355 660

Why is the research being conducted?

This research project forms part of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) study. IECE is a means for creating meaningful educational and social experiences for children with disabilities and special educational needs, and students without such needs, aged 0–8 in early childhood education settings. As an international and stated national goal, IECE has developed in practice in Ghana through policy commitment and activity to both IE and ECE. However, little research evidence is currently available on implementation of IECE. Through four case studies of practice in ECE settings, with comments from one educational directorate in the Cape Coast Metropolitan Assembly, the research will identify current practices, perspectives and issues in implementation of IECE.

What you will be asked to do

Teachers and headteachers of ECE Centres and schools, and Education Officials will take part in semi-structured interviews for approximately 30 to 45 minutes, recorded for transcription with prior consent. Participants will also be required to provide documents or materials considered relevant to policy, practice and implementation of IECE. No confidential data will be accessed.

The basis by which participants will be selected or screened

Teachers and headteachers, and Education Officials in the Cape Coast Metropolitan Assembly will be invited to participate in this research. Only teachers in Kindergarten 1 and 2, and Primary 1 and headteachers, and senior Education Officials (Director, ECE Coordinator and Circuit Supervisor), will be purposively selected for the study. Participants will be identified through the Cape Coast Metropolitan Education Directorate, and recruited through the distribution of letters.

The expected benefits of the research

The research will identify current practices, perspectives and issues in implementation of IECE, to enhance the education of all children, including children with disabilities in ECE settings. It will offer recommendations for consideration in policy, provision and practice in IECE.

Risks to participants

This research poses no risks as you will be required to identify your practices, perspectives and issues in implementation of IECE. Transcriptions from interviews will be confirmed by participants during and after the research.

Your confidentiality

Data will be reported as aggregate of all participants and research sites, and findings will not involve publication of identifiable data. All data will be kept confidential, and secured on a password protected computer or in a locked filing cabinet within the School of Education, and only accessible to the research team. Recorded interviews will be used solely for this research.

Your participation is voluntary

Participation in this research is completely voluntary, and you may decline to participate or withdraw at any time, without penalty or consequence.

Questions/further information

For further information about this research, please contact Dr Susie Garvis (s.garvis@griffith.edu.au), Professor Joy Cumming (joy.cumming@acu.edu.au), or myself (f.ackah@griffith.edu.au).

The ethical conduct of this research

Griffith University conducts research in accordance with the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research*, and this study has ethical approval number EDN/B1/13/HREC. If you have any concerns or complaints about the ethical conduct of the research project, please contact the Manager, Research Ethics on 3735 54375 or research-ethics@griffith.edu.au.

Feedback to you

ECE Centres and schools, and Education Officials will receive summaries of identified practices, perspectives and issues in implementation of IECE, and recommendations for consideration in future policy, provision and practice. Information on published findings in national and international forums including journals, and at conference presentations, will be communicated to participants. Guidelines for professional development identified through the research will be communicated to participants.

Privacy Statement

The conduct of this research entails the collection, access and/or use of your identified personal information in the form of your opinions and responses provided during the interviews and supply of documents. The information collected is confidential and will not be disclosed to third parties without your consent, except to meet government, legal or other regulatory authority requirements. The data will be retained for a minimum of 5 years under the control of the University, within the office of the Co-Principal Supervisor in the School of Education and Professional Studies. The research team will be the sole persons to have access to the de-identified data, and coded information will be stored in a separate location. Recorded interviews will later be destroyed and other materials shredded appropriately in accordance with Griffith University Code for Retention Periods for Research Data and Primary Materials. A de-identified copy of this data may be used for other research purposes. However, your anonymity and privacy will at all times be safeguarded. For further information consult the University's Privacy Plan at <http://www.griffith.edu.au/about-griffith/plans-publications/griffith-university-privacy-plan> or telephone +61 (07) 3735 4375.

Thank you for your consent and participation in this study.

Appendix C2: Teacher Consent Form

Implementation of IECE in Ghana: Four Case Sites of Practice in ECE Settings

Research Team

Dr Susanne Garvis (Co-Principal Supervisor)
School of Education and Professional Studies
Gold Coast Campus, Griffith University
QLD 4222, Australia
Email: s.garvis@griffith.edu.au
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QLD 4122, Australia
Email: yoonsuk.hwang@griffith.edu.au
Phone: 07 37355 660

By signing below, I confirm that I have read and understood the *Information Sheet* and in particular have noted that:

- I understand that my involvement in this research will include responses to semi-structured interviews and supply of relevant documents on IECE;
- I understand interviews will be audio recorded as part of this research;
- I will have had any questions answered to my satisfaction;
- I understand the risks involved;
- I understand that there will be no direct benefit to me from my participation in this research
- I understand that my participation in this research is voluntary;
- I understand that if I have any additional questions I can contact the research team;
- I understand that I am free to withdraw at any time, without explanation or penalty;
- I understand that I can contact the Manager, Research Ethics, at Griffith University Human Research Ethics Committee on +61 7 3735 4375 (or research-ethics@griffith.edu.au) if I have any concerns about the ethical conduct of the project; and
- I agree to participate in the project– *implementation of inclusive early childhood education.*

Name	
Signature	
Date	

Appendix C3: Headteacher Consent Form

Implementation of IECE in Ghana: Four Case Sites of Practice in ECE Settings

Research Team

Dr Susanne Garvis (Co-Principal Supervisor)
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School of Education and Professional Studies
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QLD 4122, Australia
Email: yoonsuk.hwang@griffith.edu.au
Phone: 07 37355 660

By signing below, I confirm that I have read and understood the *Information Sheet* and in particular have noted that:

- I understand that my and ECE Centre or school involvement in this research will include responses to semi-structured interviews and supply of relevant documents on implementation of IECE;
- I understand interviews will be audio recorded as part of this research;
- I will have had any questions answered to my satisfaction;
- I understand that no foreseeable risks are involved for myself, or my teachers or ECE Centre or school;
- I understand that there will be no direct benefit to me from my participation in this research
- I understand that my participation in this research is voluntary;
- I understand that if I have any additional questions I can contact the research team;
- I understand that I am free to withdraw at any time, without explanation or penalty;
- I understand that I can contact the Manager, Research Ethics, at Griffith University Human Research Ethics Committee on +61 7 3735 4375 (or research-ethics@griffith.edu.au) if I have any concerns about the ethical conduct of the project; and
- I agree to participate in this project, and my ECE Centre/school chosen as a research site.

Name	
Signature	
Date	

Appendix C4: Education Official Consent Form

Implementation of IECE in Ghana: Four Case Sites of Practice in ECE Settings

Research Team

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School of Education and Professional Studies
Gold Coast Campus, Griffith University
QLD 4222, Australia
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QLD 4122, Australia
Email: yoonsuk.hwang@griffith.edu.au
Phone: 07 37355 660

By signing below, I confirm that I have read and understood the *Information Sheet* and in particular have noted that:

- I understand that my (GES Official) involvement in this research will include responses to semi-structured interviews and supply of documents on policies and implementation of IECE;
- I understand interviews will be audio recorded as part of this research;
- I will have had any questions answered to my satisfaction;
- I understand that no foreseeable risks are involved for Education Officials or ECE Centres;
- I understand that there will be no direct benefit to me from my participation in this research;
- I understand that my participation in this research is voluntary;
- I understand that if I have any additional questions I can contact the research team;
- I understand that I am free to withdraw at any time, without explanation or penalty;
- I understand that I can contact the Manager, Research Ethics, at Griffith University Human Research Ethics Committee on +61 7 3735 4375 (or research-ethics@griffith.edu.au) if I have any concerns about the ethical conduct of the project; and
- I agree to participate in the project, and ECE Centres or school chosen as research sites.

Name	
Signature	
Date	

Appendix C5: Permission Letters for Main Study

Appendix C5a: Permission Letters from the GES for Education Officials

GHANA EDUCATION SERVICE

*In case of reply the
Number and date of this
Letter should be quoted*



METROPOLITAN EDUCATION OFFICE
P. O. BOX 164
CAPE COAST

REPUBLIC OF GHANA

Tel. 03321-32514/33405
Fax 03321-32199

My Ref. No GES/MD/EP.1/Vol.3/187

20th February, 2014


LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

MR. FRANCIS R. ACKAH JNR (PhD STUDENT)

The bearer of this letter as named above is pursuing his doctor of philosophy (PhD) at Griffith University, Australia. He is undertaking a research project titled "Implementation of Inclusive Early Childhood Education in Ghana: Four case studies of Practice in Early Childhood Education Settings."

Permission has been granted him to conduct the study in the Cape Coast Metro Education Office. However, his project should not unduly interfere with contact hours of officers concerned.

Please, accord him the needed assistance


VIVIAN ETROO (MS)
METYRO DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION
CAPE COAST

OFFICERS CONCERNED

- Deputy Director Administration
- Assistant Director Supervision
- Circuit Supervisors
- ECE Coordinator
- Special/Inclusive Education Coordinator

GHANA EDUCATION SERVICE

In case of reply the

*Number and date of this
Letter should be quoted*



METROPOLITAN EDUCATION DIRECTORATE
P. O. BOX 164
CAPE COAST

REPUBLIC OF GHANA

Tel. 03321-33405/32514

Fax 03321-32199

Email: capecoastmeo@yahoo.com.

My Ref. No GES/MD/EP1/VOL.3//187

YourRef.No.

20th February, 2014


LETTER OF INTRODUCTION

MR. FRANCIS R. ACKAH JNR. (PhD STUDENT)

The bearer of this letter as named above is pursuing his Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) at Griffith University, Australia. He is undertaking a research project titled "Implementation of Inclusive Early Childhood Education in Ghana: Four case studies of Practice in Early Childhood Education Settings."

Permission has been granted him to conduct the study in your school. However, his project should not interfere with contact hours of your school.

Please, accord him the needed assistance.


VIVIAN ETROO (MS)
METRO DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION
CAPE COAST

HEADTEACHERS CONCERNED

- University of Cape Coast (U.C.C) KG/PRIMARY
- St. Monicas KG/Primary
- Aboom Methodist Cluster of Schools
- Mfantsipim Basic KG/Primary
- Christ Church Anglican KG/Primary
- Police Experimental KG/Primary

Appendix C5c: Permission Letter from the University of Cape Coast



School of Education and Professional Studies (Brisbane, Logan)

Mt Gravatt campus, Griffith University
176 Messines Ridge Road
Mt Gravatt, Queensland 4122
Australia

Telephone +61 (0)7 3735 5667
Facsimile +61 (0)7 3735 5991

www.griffith.edu.au

10th February 2014



The Deputy Registrar
UCC
Cape Coast

Dear Sir,

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH PROJECT

I write for permission to visit the University's Early Childhood Education Setting, comprising KG 1 and KG 2, and Primary One classes, as part of data collection for a research project titled: **Implementation of Inclusive Early Childhood Education in Ghana: Four Case Studies of Practice in Early Childhood Education Settings.**

This research forms part of my Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) study at Griffith University, Australia. I will be very grateful if you grant me the necessary assistance and support in my interactions with selected staff of the ECE Centre and School.

Further information about this research project is enclosed in the attachment.

Thank you for the anticipated response.

Yours sincerely

Francis R. Ackah Jr

Francis R. Ackah Jr (PhD Student)
(Department of Basic Education, UCC)
f.ackah@griffith.edu.au

0235036775

cc: *DR (SHR) / SAR (T&D)*
HOD (Basic Edu)
HOD (UCC Primary)
HOD (UCC Kindergarten)

② *Mr F.R. Ackah Jr*
Permission granted, please.
By copies of this letter,
the Heads of UCC Primary
and Kindergarten are please
requested to give you the
necessary assistance.
Jehy
14/02/14

Gold Coast Logan Mt Gravatt Nathan South Bank

Appendix C6. Permission Letter For Pilot Study

GHANA EDUCATION SERVICE

In case of reply the
number and date of this
letter should be quoted
Tel No.: 03321-40025 /40048/40017
Tele/Fax: 03321-40016
E-mail: keea.education@ges.gov.gh/
keea_edu@yahoo.com



REPUBLIC OF GHANA

Municipal Education Office
Komenda-Edina-Eguafo-Abrem Mun.
P. O. Box 13
Elmina

19th February, 2014

Our Ref. **GES/ED/UCC/VOLI/116**
Your Ref:

MR. FRANCIS R. ACKAH JNR
DEPT. OF BASIC EDUCATION
UCC
CAPE COAST

**RE: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT PILOT
RESEARCH PROJECT**

Reference to your letter dated 10th February, 2014, on the above subject matter, permission is hereby granted to you to pursue the research agenda.

However this laudable exercise should in **no way** disrupt the schools activities or programmes, as your-time table or itinerary should be well structured.

The Directorate's interest is to have **a copy** of the research for reference and study to improve our setting and inform our future planning.

Wishing you all the best in this high academic exercise.

.....
GABRIEL K. GADEMOR (MR.)
MUNICIPAL DIRECTOR OF EDUC.
K.E.E.A – ELMINA

- cc:** All Frontline D/Ds & A/Ds, MEO, Elmina
- The KG School Co-ordinator, MEO, Elmina
- The Public Relations Officer, MEO, Elmina

gt*/

Appendix D. Thematic Coding and Memo

Appendix D1. NVivo Auto-coding and Manual Coding Process

Step	Task
1	Complete transcriptions of audio interviews
2	Format interview transcripts with appropriate heading style in Microsoft Word
3	Develop folders for each participant and case site in source and node to synthesise information
4	Import interview transcripts in NVivo
5	Auto code all transcripts with interview questions or topics as themes (nodes)
6	Double-check to ensure all responses are gathered to a particular interview question/node
7	Export to Microsoft Word and print for manual coding (jottings, memos and comments)
8	Reread, reflect and code all text data for each research question and across research questions
9	Refine, reduce, and categorise codes to finalise themes
10	Create tabular summaries of each research question, with key illustrative examples and quotes for cross-case thematic analysis and case-specific findings

Appendix D2: Sample NVivo Auto Coding Extract for RQ1

<Internals\Interviews\GES Officials\EO Abeka CCMED>

My personal view on IECE is that every individual who has the strength and has attained the school going age must be admitted into the school. Everyone must be enrolled in the school as long as the person enters into the school to seek enrolment or admission. In fact the policy says [e]very-one, with those with abilities and disabilities. That is those with disabilities should also be enrolled to mingle with those who are able. Yes! It might be sight disabilities or mobility whatever—whatever type of disability the child suffers the child should be enrolled. [Capability understanding]

<Internals\Interviews\Headteachers\Case Site1 FHT1 Aunt Baa>

We should include everybody....That is everybody irrespective of disability, even race, culture, ethnic group or religious affiliations or whatever should be in IECE. Even the policy of GES says so...only that we have not had anybody with severe-profound... [Capability understanding]

Appendix D3: Sample Memos

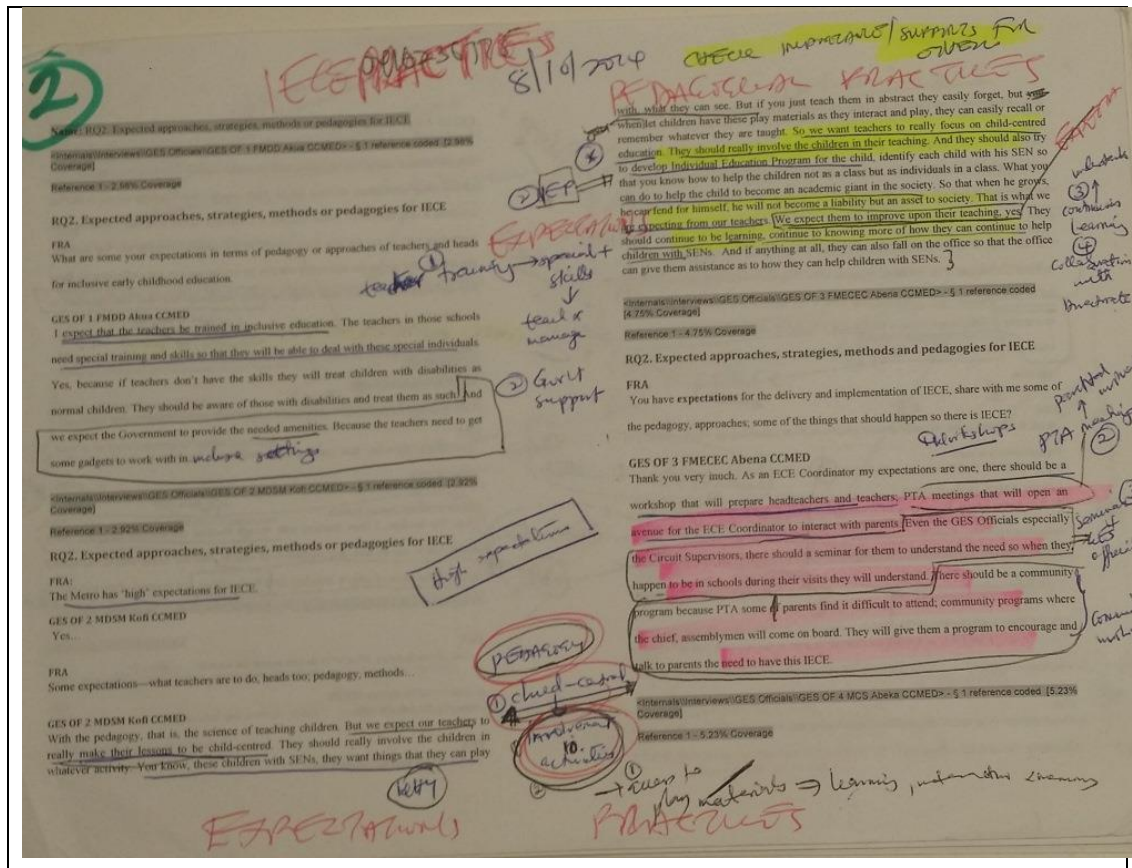
‘Many meanings of IECE’ -10/7/2014

Two teachers in site 1 explained or understood IECE differently from the one in site 2. This is interesting. A similar insight that IECE is about “capability” was shared by EO 4–“IECE is about all children and their strengths”. What does this indicate? Does it mean a changing perception about disability and IECE? This is news. Do other headteachers and the officials have similar or different views?

‘Language use in IECE’ – 20/06/2015

Almost all participants used the word or language ‘normal’ when referring to children with disability. What may account for this? In all the centres, this was a common phenomenon. What are the possible reasons for such language? It may be related their beliefs about children with disability; or devaluing of their potential or capability. Another explanation could be that they use these terms to highlight the ‘difficulties or problems’ of children with disability. But what is the effect of such language use?

Appendix D4: Sample Manual Coding, with Jottings, Notes and Reflections



Appendix D5. Manual data reduction for cross-case and case-specific findings Available and desirable support for IECE

GES Officials[6]	Headteachers [5]	Teachers [16]
Professional Training/PD Self-learning	Professional Training/PD Self-learning	Professional Training/additional training Self-learning
Motivational Motivation/praise/money/appreciation/ incentives Teacher passion and responsibility Reduced class size	Motivational Motivation/money incentives/ encouragement Teacher passion Reduced class size	Motivational Motivation/encouragement /incentives/recognition Teacher passion Reduced class size
Material/technical/financial Special equipment/facility/materials Funds Policy documents	Material/technical/financial TLMs/devices Funds Policy documents	Material/technical/financial TLMs Funds Policy documents
Human support/resources Teachers and headteachers Parental involvement Collaboration with NGOs Leadership	Human resources Head support [Instructional support] Parents' involvement Collaboration-professionals/former lecturers, resource persons/experts/ NGOs Leadership	Human resources Headteachers Other teachers Parents involvement Practicum program Critical friends Collaboration Leadership

Appendix E: Understandings of IECE

Appendix E1. Understandings of IECE

Understandings	Case sites			
	C1	C2	C3	C4
Human rights	All T; HT1, HT2	T2, T3, T4; HT2	T1, T3,T4; HT3	T2,T3,T4; HT4
Equity	T1, T2, T3	HT2	T3	T4, HT4
Disability	-	All T; HT2	All T; HT3	T1,T2,T3; HT4
(Cap)ability	T1, T3, T4, HT1, HT2	-	-	T4
Resource-driven	T1, T2; HT1	T1,T2, T4	HT3	T2; HT4

Note. HT = Headteacher; and T = Teacher.

Appendix E2. Understandings of IECE, and case sites ($N = 4$)

Understandings	Case sites			
	C1	C2	C3	C4
Human rights	↓	↓	↓	↓
Equity	↓	↓	↓	↓
Disability	-	↓	↓	↓
(Cap)ability	↓	-	-	↓
Resource-driven	↓	↓	↓	↓

Appendix E3. Understandings of IECE and Participant roles ($N = 27$)

Understandings	EO ($n = 6$)	HT ($n = 5$)	T ($n = 16$)	Total ($N = 27$)
Human rights	5	5	13	23
Equity	-	2	5	7
Disability	4	3	11	18
(Cap)ability	3	2	4	9
Resource-driven	3	3	6	12

Appendix F: Expected and Reported Practices

Appendix F1. Expected and reported practices

Practices	Case sites			
	C1	C2	C3	C4
Pedagogical practice				
Involvement in daily activities*	T1,T2,T3, T4; HT1, HT2	T2; HT1	T2, T4; HT1	T1,T3,T4; HT1
Individualised instruction*	T3, T4; HT2	T1, T4;HT1	T3; HT1	T3
Prompts*	—	T3	T3	—
Curriculum adaptation/ Task differentiation*	T4, HT1	—		T2
Group instruction/grouping*	T3, T4; HT2	T1,T2,T3; HT1	T4	T3, T4; HT1
Activity Method*	T2; HT1	T3, T4	T1	T1,T3
Demonstration*	T1,T2	T1; HT1	—	HT1
Play*	T1; HT1	—	—	—
Motivation+	T1, T3	—	T4	T2,T3,T4
Re-teaching+	—	—	—	T2, T4
Peer tutoring+	T3, T4	T2	T4	T3
Organisational practice				
Seating arrangement+	T1, T2	T4	—	—
Use of student-teachers on practicum+	T3, T4	—	—	—

Note. *Expected and reported practice; +Reported practice only.

Appendix F2. Expected and reported practice, and case sites (*N* = 4)

Practices	Case sites			
	C1	C2	C3	C4
Pedagogical practice				
Involvement in daily activities*	↓	↓	↓	↓
Individualised instruction*	↓	↓	↓	↓
Prompts*	—	↓	↓	—
Curriculum adaptation/ Task differentiation*	↓	—	—	—
Group instruction/grouping*	↓	↓	↓	↓
Activity method*	↓	↓	↓	↓
Demonstration*	↓	↓	—	↓
Play*	↓	—	—	—
Motivation+	↓	—	↓	↓
Re-teaching+	—	—	—	↓
Peer tutoring+	↓	↓	↓	↓
Organisational practice				
Seating arrangement+	↓	↓	—	—
Use of student teachers on practicum+	↓	—	—	—

Note. *Expected and reported practice; +Reported practice only.

Appendix F3. Expected and reported practices, and participant roles (N = 27)

Practices	Participants			Total (N = 27)
	EO (N = 6)	HT (N = 5)	T (N = 16)	
Pedagogical practice				
Involvement in daily activities*	6	5	10	21
Individualised instruction*	3	3	6	12
Prompts*	2	—	2	4
Curriculum adaptation/ Task differentiation*	2	1	2	6
Group instruction/grouping*	—	3	8	11
Activity Method*	—	1	6	7
Demonstration*	—	2	4	6
Play*	—	1	1	2
Motivation+	—	—	6	6
Re-teaching+	—	—	2	2
Peer tutoring+	—	—	5	5
Organisational practice				
Seating arrangement+	—	—	2	2
Use of student teachers on practicum+	—	—	2	2

Note. *Expected and reported practice; +Reported practice only.

Appendix G: Teacher Quality and Dispositions

Appendix G1. Teacher quality and dispositions

Quality/disposition	Case sites (<i>N</i> = 4)			
	C1	C2	C3	C4
Passion*	T1,T2,T3,T4; HT2	T1,T4; HT1	T3; HT1	T3, T4
Caring and loving*	T3,T4;HT1; HT2	T2, T3	T1,T3; HT1	T1,T2; T4; HT1
Patience*	T1,T2,T4; HT1	T2, T4; HT1	T1,T3; HT1	T3; HT1
Respectful*	T2; T4	T1,T3;HT1	—	T1; HT1
Encouraging/motivating+	T1,T3,T4	—	T2, T4	T2, T3
Attentiveness+	T4	—	T2, T4	T1; T4
Empathy+	T2,T3; HT2	T1; T3	—	—
Skilful+	T1,T3	—	—	—
Resourceful+	T2, T3; T4	—	—	—
Fairness+	—	T1	—	T4
Flexibility+	—	—	—	T2

Note. *Headteacher and teacher quality; +teacher quality.

Appendix G2. Teacher quality and dispositions, and case sites

Quality/disposition	Case sites (<i>N</i> = 4)			
	C1	C2	C3	C4
Passion*	↓	↓	↓	↓
Caring and loving*	↓	↓	↓	↓
Patience*	↓	↓	↓	↓
Respect*	↓	↓	—	↓
Encouraging/motivating+	↓	—	↓	↓
Attentiveness+	↓	—	↓	↓
Empathy+	↓	↓	—	—
Skilful+	↓	—	—	—
Resourceful+	↓	—	—	—
Fairness+	—	↓	—	↓
Flexibility+	—	—	—	↓

Note. *Headteacher and teacher quality; +teacher quality.

Appendix G3. Teacher quality and dispositions, and participants

Quality/disposition	Participants			Total (<i>N</i> = 27)
	EO (<i>n</i> = 6)	HT (<i>n</i> = 5)	T (<i>n</i> = 16)	
Passion*	4	3	11	18
Caring and loving*	3	4	9	16
Patience*	3	4	7	14
Respectful*	2	2	4	8
Encouraging/motivating	1	—	7	8
Attentiveness+	—	—	5	5
Empathy+	2	—	4	6
Scaffolding+	—	—	2	2
Resourceful+	—	—	3	3
Fairness+	—	—	2	2
Flexibility+	—	—	1	1

Note. (*) headteacher and teacher quality (+) teacher quality

Appendix H: Training and PD needs

Appendix H1. Essential training and PD needs

Training need	Case sites			
	C1	C2	C3	C4
IECE/special education courses	All T; HT1, HT2	T2, T3,T4; HT	T1,T3,T4; HT	T2,T3, T4; HT
Pedagogical practices/management skills	All T; HT1,HT2	T1,T2,T3; HT	All T; HT	T2,T3, T4; HT
Knowledge of disability	All T; HT1; HT2	All T	T1,T3; HT	T1,T3; HT
Knowledge of curriculum/IEP development	HT1	—	—	—
Rights of children	T1, HT1; HT2	T1,T4; HT	T4	T2,T3, T4
Knowledge of child development	T1,T2; HT1	—	T1,T4	T1, T2
Knowledge of IECE legislation & policies	All T; HT1, H2T	—	—	All T; HT
Early detection & intervention (assessment)	T1,T2; HT2	—	—	—
Counselling	T2,T3	—	—	—
Blended training (integrate ECE & IECE courses)	-	—	T1,T4	—
Practical training (hands-on activities; on-site learning)	T1,T3,T4; HT1; HT2	T1,T4; HT	T2,T3	T1, T2; HT
Authentic training (specific class/local issues)	—	—	—	—

Appendix H2. Essential training and PD needs, and case sites (*N* = 4)

Training need	Case sites			
	C1	C2	C3	C4
IECE/special education courses	↓	↓	↓	↓
Pedagogical practices/management skills	↓	↓	↓	↓
Knowledge of disability	↓	↓	↓	↓
Knowledge curriculum/IEP development	↓	—	—	—
Rights of children	↓	↓	↓	↓
Knowledge of child development	↓	—	↓	↓
Knowledge of IECE legislation and policies	↓	—	—	↓
Early detection & intervention (assessment)	↓	—	—	—
Counselling	↓	—	—	—
Blended training (integrate ECE and IECE courses)	—	↓	—	—
Practical training (hands-on activities; on-site training)	↓	↓	↓	↓
Authentic training (specific class/local issues)	—	—	—	—

Appendix H3. Essential training and PD needs, and participant roles (*N* = 27)

Training need	Participants			Total (<i>N</i> = 27)
	EO (<i>n</i> = 6)	HT (<i>n</i> = 5)	T (<i>n</i> = 16)	
IECE/special education courses	6	5	13	24
Pedagogical practices/management skills	3	5	14	22
Knowledge of disability	3	3	12	18
Knowledge of curriculum/IEP development	2	1	1	4
Rights of children	2	2	7	11
Knowledge of child development	-	1	6	7
Knowledge of IECE legislation & policies	3	2	8	13
Early detection & intervention (assessment)	4	1	2	7
Counselling	—	—	2	2
Blended training (integrate ECE/IECE courses)	1	—	2	3
Practical training (hands-on activities; on-site training)	4	4	9	17
Authentic training (specific class/local issues)	1	—	—	1

Appendix I: Support for IECE

Appendix I1. Essential support

Support Dimension	Case sites			
	C1	C2	C3	C4
Professional				
Training and PD	All T; 2HT	All T; HT	T1,T3; HT	All T; HT
Self-learning	All T; HT2	T1, T3,T4; HT	T3,T4; HT	All T
Motivation				
Praise/encouragement/	T1,T4; 2HT	T2,T4; HT	T1,T2	T3,T4; HT
Teacher passion	All T; 2HT	T1,T3; HT	T3,T4	T2,T3,T4
Reduced class size	All T; HT2	T2,T4	All T; HT	T1,T4; HT
Money/incentives	T1,T2; HT1	T2,T3,T4; HT	T1,T2,T4; HT	T1,T4
Material/Technical/Financial				
Adaptive technology and TLMs	All T; 2HT	All T; HT	T2,T3; HT	All T; HT
Facilities	T3; HT1	T3; HT	—	T1, T3
Resources(funds)	T3; HT2	HT	T1,T4; HT	T4; HT
Resources (policy documents)	T1,T2; HT1	T3	—	T4; HT
Human resources				
Headteachers	T3,T4; HT1	T3,T4	T2,T3,T4; HT	T2,T3,T4; HT
Teachers	T3,T4	HT	All T; HT	T2,T3; HT
Parents	All T; 2HT	T2,T3,T4; HT	T2,T4; HT	T1,T3,T4; HT
Peers (all children)	T3,T4	T2; HT	T4	T3,T4; HT
Collaboration	T3; HT2	T2,T4; HT	HT	T2; HT

Appendix I2. Essential support, and case sites (N = 4)

Support Dimension	Case sites			
	C1	C2	C3	C4
Professional				
Training and PD	↓	↓	↓	↓
Self-learning	↓	↓	↓	↓
Motivation				
Praise/encouragement/appreciation	↓	↓	↓	↓
Teacher passion	↓	↓	↓	↓
Reduced class size	↓	↓	↓	↓
Money/incentives	↓	↓	↓	↓
Material/Technical/Financial				
Adaptive technology	↓	↓	↓	↓
Facilities	↓	↓	—	↓
Resources(funds)	↓	↓	↓	↓
Resources (policy documents)	↓	↓	—	↓
Human resources				
Headteachers	↓	↓	↓	↓
Teachers	↓	↓	↓	↓
Parents	↓	↓	↓	↓
Peers (all children)	↓	↓	↓	↓
Collaboration	↓	↓	↓	↓

Appendix I3. Essential support, and participant roles (*N* = 27)

Support Dimension	Participants			Total (<i>N</i> = 27)
	EO (<i>n</i> = 6)	HT (<i>n</i> = 5)	T (<i>n</i> = 16)	
Professional				
Training and PD	6	5	14	25
Self-learning	3	3	13	19
Motivation				
Praise/encouragement/appreciation	4	4	8	16
Teacher passion	4	3	11	18
Reduced class size	2	3	12	17
Money/incentives	3	4	9	16
Material/Technical/Financial				
Adaptive technology/TLMs	4	5	15	24
Facilities	2	2	3	7
Resources(funds)	6	4	4	14
Resources (policy documents)	3	2	4	9
Human resources/support				
Headteachers	2	4	10	16
Teachers	2	2	8	12
Parents	6	5	12	23
Peers (all children)	—	2	6	8
Collaboration	3	4	4	11

Appendix J. Physical and classroom settings of the Case sites

Appendix J1. Sample Physical environment and classroom setting of Case site 1



Appendix J2. Sample Physical environment and classroom setting of Case Site 2



Appendix I3. Sample Physical environment and classroom setting of Case Site 3



Appendix J4. Sample Physical environment and classroom setting of Case Site 4



Appendix K. Types of disabilities at ECE settings

Appendix K1. Summary of the types of disability at ECE settings

Type of disability
Learning disability, including slow learners
Emotional and behaviour difficulty, including hyperactive; temper tantrums
[Mild] hearing difficulty
[Partial] visual impairment
Physical impairment
Others (hidden or less obvious disability)

Note. At least one type of children with disability was present at each setting.