An Examination of Preschool Services in Selected Communities

in Tema Municipality (Ghana)

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This dissertation titled
An Examination of Preschool Services in Selected Communities
in Tema Municipality (Ghana)

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ABSTRACT

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An Examination of Preschool Services in Selected Communities in Tema Municipality (Ghana) (175 pp.)

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This dissertation examines the nature of services provided in four contrasting preschools in the Tema municipality of Ghana. The purpose is to determine whether children in diverse communities within the municipality have access to a fair start in life, where their survival, nutrition, health and growth are considered as primary pre-requisites to their human development. The study therefore included an examination of the context, and quality in terms of children’s protection from abuse, professional training of the staff, delivery of child care services by preschool officials and availability of learning and recreational resources. It included an examination of the role of parents, public officials and service providers at the preschools. The study also examined whether the type of preschool a child attends is connected to the socio-economic status of the child’s family.

A qualitative multiple case study approach was used. The approach allowed the examination of each distinct preschool site as a unit of analysis that fostered comparison and brought to the fore the diversity among the communities and their link to the nature of services at the respective preschools. The key instruments used for the data collection after an initial document analysis included survey questions, interviews, focus group...
discussions and observations involving both adults and preschool children. Among the 31 adults who participated in the study were private sector preschool service providers, parents of the preschool children and public officials from the national, regional, municipal and community levels of the Ghana Education Service.

The findings revealed the diversity of services and corroborated literature review which indicated that childcare services in general, inclusive of preschools are at the nexus of globalization, modernization and urbanization while simultaneously being challenged by cultural values of the society within which they are situated.

Approved: _____________________________________________________________

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“Woforo duapa a, na wo pia wo.” A Ghanaian proverb literally translated as “He who climbs a good tree, is given a push by those on the ground”.

My path to the PhD goal has only been possible with moral, spiritual, emotional, technical and physical support of several people from diverse walks of life. The leader of this group is Prof W. S. Howard whom I met at the mid-career point of my life. Together with others who have come from nuclear and extended families, friends and colleagues from across the globe, church members, supervisors and colleagues in my work place, wonderful professors and advisors from academia and Ohio University in particular, I have survived the journey.

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The climax of my appreciation I give to Mr. Godwin Dogbey (Efo) and Emily ‘V.’ Anytime the birds start chirping in the early hours of the morning, please note that they are singing a song of gratitude from me to you with the hope that our feet shall dance together again in joy. Last but not the least, to all the participants who made themselves available, during my data collection, I say a big thank you and may God bless you all.
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### ABBREVIATIONS

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<tr>
<td>ADEA</td>
<td>Association for the Development of Education in Africa</td>
</tr>
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<td>AMA</td>
<td>Accra Metropolitan Assembly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DANIDA</td>
<td>Danish International Development Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DSW</td>
<td>Department of Social Welfare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DWDA</td>
<td>Dangbe West District Assembly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECCD</td>
<td>Early Childhood Care and Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECCE</td>
<td>Early Childhood Care Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECD</td>
<td>Early Childhood Care and Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECD-SG</td>
<td>Early Childhood Development, Survival and Growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECEC</td>
<td>Early Childhood Education and Care</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EFA</td>
<td>Education for All</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FLRC</td>
<td>Future Leaders Resource Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDA</td>
<td>Ga East District Assembly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GES</td>
<td>Ghana Education Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GHS</td>
<td>Ghana Health Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GNCRC</td>
<td>Ghana National Coalition on the Rights of the Child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GNMNS</td>
<td>Government National Model Nursery School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ILO</td>
<td>International Labor Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JSS</td>
<td>Junior Secondary School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MNS</td>
<td>Model Nursery School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOE</td>
<td>Ministry of Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MOH</td>
<td>Ministry of Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NAC</td>
<td>National Advisory Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OAU</td>
<td>Organisation of African Unity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PACED</td>
<td>Practice Appropriate to the Context of Early Childhood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PROCEED</td>
<td>Program for Childcare and Early Educational Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCREAM</td>
<td>Supporting Children’s Rights Through Education, the Arts and the Media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TMED</td>
<td>Tema Municipal Education Directorate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNICEF</td>
<td>United Nations Children’s Fund</td>
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<td>WB</td>
<td>World Bank</td>
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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Preamble

A product of traditional practices common in Ghanaian society, I grew up within an extended family of grandparents, parents, uncles and aunts, and maternal cousins. Older children took care of younger ones, and there was no distinction made among parents about whose child it was; we were all children of the household with one head of family, my aged grandfather. This family structure reflects Nelson Mandela’s childhood, which he describes in his biography:

My mother presided over three huts at Qunu which, as I remember were always filled with the babies and children of relations. In fact I hardly recall any occasion as a child when I was alone. In African culture, the sons and daughters of one’s aunts or uncles are considered brothers and sisters, not cousins. We have no half brothers or half sisters. My mother’s sister is my mother; my uncle’s son is my brother; my brother’s child is my son, my daughter. (Mandela, 1994, p. 8)

Childcare in traditional African settings was a communal responsibility. It was in such a tradition that I grew up and started school at primary one (the equivalent of first grade in America) in the local Presbyterian school, which my parents, siblings, and, indeed, all the educated members of the household had attended with no formal preschool experience. Older siblings and cousins had, however, already taught me some rhymes, alphabets, and counting before my entering school. My personal encounter with formal early childhood care and development (ECD) began years later in marriage as a working mother hundreds of miles away from the family support systems that I had experienced in childhood. Although my mother came to stay with me sometimes, I was compelled to send all my six children to daycare centers, as they were then called. This large number
of children provide-d me with diverse daycare experiences in both the private and public sectors. The varied encounters raised several questions at various times in me; questions such as, “Did I make the right choice? Would the caregiver have done that if it were her own child? Should I change the daycare center; Is the curriculum appropriate?”

When my daughter, who is now in me dical school, was disqualified from attending primary one because as the school mistress stated, “Due to her preschool training, she is not cognitively ready,” I began to consider even more questions: “Did the daycare center fail to bring her up to the required level, or did the child not take advantage of the services provided? Did the caregiver fail to make the best of the teachable moments? Are there any legal or policy avenues that I can pursue to ensure my child gets the right service?” On further reflection, during the night after her failure at the entry interview, I came to the conclusion that the primary school admission interview was beyond the maturity of my six-year-old child. Indeed, the resources used for the interview were not appropriate. For example, the cat in the picture was too fat and furry, far more so than the local cat that the child was used to seeing at home. I asked myself anxiously: “What will be the effect of the disqualification on the young child? How do you explain to her that she is not ‘ready’ for basic education and that she cannot go to the same school as her friends? Should I send her to a new progressive preschool, where she may receive quality care and teaching, and if so, how will that affect my schedule of taking her and picking her up?” The current preschool was just two blocks away, which allowed the house help to walk her to and from school conveniently. I eventually explained things to her and kept her in the same preschool.
My daughter passed the entry interview and was eventually admitted the following year, became the assistant head prefect of the school, and is now in medical school. With respect to her non-admission the first time, I ask whether it was because the interviewing teacher realized that my daughter had not had an adequate fair start in life and needed a further boost of preschool experience. As the years rolled on, I found myself a public administrator heading a children’s department and asked to participate in the development of a national ECD policy. I had to work with a team of experts to define an ECD policy framework that would affect all levels of the society and provide equal access to all children. While access to all could be possible, my greatest challenge was how to ensure that every child was provided with a fair start in life. While on the job I enrolled in a distance-learning ECD program. I had to abandon the course halfway through because of Ghana’s then-unreliable internet services and my time constraints due to my domestic and official responsibilities. During the period of my study, there was a sudden public interest in childcare services and a huge upsurge in the establishment of ECD centers that provided crèche, nursery and preschool services to children. People were providing services in their homes, under trees, in sheds and in their garages, as well as in well-built structures. Although there were some guidelines provided by Ministry of Education the lack of supervision by the Ministry meant that most preschools operated independently without adherence to the guidelines.

Over the past two decades, I have watched with interest the development of the preschool component of ECD as a business enterprise, as a right and human capability development strategy, or a support structure for parents who need a place to deposit their
children in order to have time to do other things. Considering the proliferation of preschools, as a public servant with an intense interest in social justice, I strongly believe that the means to establish effective preschool services partly depends on the availability and application of accurate data and information for formulating policies and implementing quality programs.

Public outcries against poor-quality preschools, and the subjecting of young children to inappropriate practices, has led to calls from diverse quarters, such as the media, child development professionals, and members of civil society for redress (Boakye, Adamu-Issah, & Etse 2001; Ghana National Association of Teachers, 2001). These calls and the paucity of literature on preschool service delivery in Ghana that I discovered in my review to learn more about the phenomenon have served as catalysts to my desire to be an instrument that could contribute to the body of knowledge on preschool in Ghana.

Background of the Study

_Wotetew abofra na wonnyen abofra_ literally translates as “A child is brought up and not reared,” and is a well-known adage of the Akan ethnic group in Ghana. It is a loaded derogatory statement when used in reference to a particular person. In behavior belongs to the category of beasts. As a result, traditional childcare practices are directed at child upbringing and not rearing; preschool practices are therefore expected to conform to the culture by ensuring that children are brought up.

Child upbringing is premised on an adage that while in the womb the child belongs to the mother; once delivered, and in line with African collectivism, the child
becomes the property and responsibility of the community. To ensure that the child will grow up to be productive and responsible in the society, *wotetew abofra no na wonnyen no* (it has to be brought up and not reared). In the Akan semantics, the verb *wotetew* that is, “bringing up” captures the objective, the quality, and manner of the activity. It encapsulates a systemic filial, developmental, interactive, progressive, and committed approach towards a defined goal. On the contrary, rearing connotes a detached, ad hoc, unplanned and indifferent approach traditionally associated with breeding of livestock, which, in most African communities, are allowed to roam and find food for themselves. Therefore, in accordance with African cultural values and to ensure that children have a good foundation in life so as to become productive adults, each child has to be brought up by the community and not reared.

Historically, the process of raising a child is the role of the nuclear and extended family members and the community as a whole. The traditional nurturing of children, including domestic work, was done by the nuclear family while cognitive development and cultural training were the concern of the whole community (Swadener & Kabiru, 2000). The cognitive ability of the child was developed through the use of songs, riddles, and puzzles while physical ability and dexterity were developed through practical activities such as wrestling (Achebe, 1958; Bassey, 1999; Mandela, 1994).

Although the early childhood socialization process was supposed to be non-discriminatory, it was highly gendered due to the mostly patriarchal African traditions that considered men as the leaders in the society to be given preferential treatment and more varied forms of skills training (Achebe 1958; Bassey 1999; Busia 1964; Fafunwa &
Aisiku 1982). Traditionally, by the age, at the latest, of about eight years, male children are exposed to the occupation of the family, such as farming, fishing, or blacksmithing; while girls acquire skills in domestic management, since domestic work is considered the natural role of women (Timyan, 1988). As with the boys, by the age of eight, a girl should be able to cook and take care of younger siblings. Significantly, the age for exposure to skills training in traditional childcare coincides with the chronological and modern scientific age of transition from early to middle childhood when a certain degree of responsibility must have been attained.

The non-discriminatory but gendered traditional care of children changed with the introduction by Western colonial powers of formal education to Ghana in the 1920s (Fafunwa & Aisiku, 1982; Graham, 1971). In the absence of documented records to determine the age of children ready for entry into school, European Christian missionaries in Ghana who pioneered formal education, and later, preschool estimated the school readiness of children by the ability of the child to reach over his or her ears and touch an ear with the opposite hand. Children who could not pass this physical entry test were refused admission to primary school. No scientific basis has been found in the literature for this practice, but it changed education from a traditionally universally accessible right to all to a privilege granted to selected children.

The introduction of formal basic education in the 1840s also shifted the training of children from family and community to entirely outside the home in the public domain. It also introduced preschool education for children below school age. Prior to formal education, young children stayed at home playing under the supervision of older siblings or
an adult, mostly grandparents who did not go to farms or work outside the home. However, after the establishment of the schools, young children and children disqualified through primary school readiness (touching an ear with the opposite hand) followed their school-enrolled friends and siblings to the school compound. In an effort to solve the problem of the loitering of “unqualified” children on the school premises, the Basel Mission in 1843 attached kindergarten (childcare services with emphasis on recreation and the arts) to the formal primary schools (MOE, 2000). Records indicate that by 1920 other missions, such as the Wesleyan and Catholic churches that had established schools in Ghana, were replicating the kindergarten system. A few private individuals also established similar formal preschools (Amponsah, 2004).

In other non Christian communities, Muslim merchants, who migrated through the Northern part of Ghana, also established centers known as Koranic school. Mostly located in Muslim communities, the Koranic schools focused on teaching the Muslim religion and were attended by children between two and six years of age. Apart from the rote learning of the Koran and the Arabic language, not much is known about the curriculum of the schools as no in-depth studies have been documented on these Koranic schools (Eduful, 2000). However, due to their faith-based vision; and absence of nutrition and health services, and age limitations that exclude infants and toddlers, and its objective of teaching Arabic and the Koran, these schools were classified with early childhood care for development or preschool oriented. Despite these developments by religious institutions, it was not until after independence that the government involved itself with early childhood care and development activities on sectoral basis in the areas
of health and nutrition, education and welfare. These child-related services formed fragmented social services provided by specific public departments that were introduced after Ghana became independent in 1957.

From its emergence as an offshoot of the introduction of formal education through to nuclear families in place of traditional family structures, social changes including migration of families have greatly contributed to the growth of preschool. In most cases, the change has resulted in the erosion of socially distributed support systems of childcare from extended family and community members.

According to Hyde & Kabiru (2006), traditional childcare systems had built-in emotional, social and economic support with wide and varied experiences that helped children relate to others and their environment. Records, however, show that by 40 years after independence, 52% of Ghanaians were migrants who had relocated from their places of birth (Ghana Statistical Survey Report, 1999). This meant that over half of the population could have lost the traditional support provided by extended families in indigenous communities. Such migrant families therefore might not enjoy easily accessible family socialization including care of children for working parents. Further, compounding the erosion of these support systems arising from migration is the movement of increasing numbers of traditional childcare givers, namely women (estimated at 29%), into the formal labor force. Of that 29% who are working mothers, this means time away from child care and family. Apart from this estimated 29% of women in the formal sector, Ghanaian women also form the majority labor force in informal employment outside the home, notably in commerce and agriculture (UNICEF
Ghana, 2000). This development has increased the demand for external childcare services. The demand has led to the emergence of diverse childcare services that are compatible to nuclear family systems and employment outside the home. Various childcare systems, such as employed child minders, institutional day care centers and communal arrangements have therefore evolved to meet this growing demand (Amponsah, 2001; Hyde & Kabiru, 2006). Also, the dissemination of information related to preschool, especially through research and implementation of international development programs, has contributed to the introduction of various forms of Western center-based childcare services that have either been juxtaposed with or have replaced traditional practices (Marfo, Biersteker, Sagnia & Kabiru, 2008).

This study seeks to examine existing preschool services in different socioeconomic communities and how they provide an equitable fair start for children in those locations. The study also seeks to understand the legal and policy frameworks of preschools in Ghana and the extent to which they benefit children and eliminate childrearing to promote child upbringing in line with cultural practices through programs that enable the children to be physically and mentally alert, emotionally secure, socially competent and ready to learn, all being elements that are counted as contributing to a fair start in life (Meyers, 2000). The study will examine practices at the research sites in relation to literature on theories and recommended preschool programming approaches that have been validated and considered appropriate for children. The study will include an attempt to find the underlying reasons of programming in order to draw out some conclusions and make recommendations where necessary.
Statement of the Problem

The study examines existing preschool services offered in different geographical locations of urban and peri-urban communities and by the private and public sectors. It will involve an assessment of the nature and care-giving services of the preschools. Hyde & Kabiru (2006) point out that from a rights-based approach, state governments are required to ensure a fair start for all children with the elements outlined in the preceding paragraph in making budgetary allocations for preschools. The authors, however, found as presented in Table 1, that preschool enrollment vary greatly on the African continent but the majority has enrollment rates below 25% for both the private and public sectors. In most cases, however, the relatively high cost of services in the private sector often results in exclusion of some of the population from accessing services (Department of Children, 2004). In their consultative meetings on the development of an ECD policy for Ghana, it was pointed out that the concentration of private preschools in the urban communities means that children in most rural communities are deprived entry (Ghana National Commission on Children, 2002) As a result, services in the private sector, which are often considered better, unfortunately have low coverage and high charges that deny the majority of children access and therefore opportunity to compete on a level playing field in situations such as entry assessments to formal basic school. The main question addressed in the study therefore is: “What preschool services exist in urban and peri-urban communities in the Tema Municipal Area of Ghana?” Other related questions are:
1. How are preschool legislation and policy currently being implemented in Ghana?

2. What Do Parents, Public Officials, Practitioners, and Children Expect from Preschools?

3. What resources and care practices exist in the preschools?

Significance of the Study

The study seeks to understand the legal, policy, cultural, and theoretical underpinnings of preschool services in urban and peri-urban communities in Tema Municipality. I will endeavor to ascertain, through a case study investigation, in-depth information on preschool operations in two contrasting communities in order to delineate the factors that affect the nature of preschool service. The objective is to find out whether children in different communities can benefit from the elements that lead to their fair start as explained earlier. The study is significant as it could help the Municipal Assembly to identify opportunities and challenges for enforcement of legislation and policy related to preschool. It could also help the parents of children in the preschool research sites to gain some knowledge about services received by the children as well as giving the care-givers a second opinion about their work.

The choice of study, apart from its genesis in my personal quest recounted in the preamble, is to obtain empirical information that will help inform planning and program interventions. It is also, in particular, to help parents obtain a better understanding of existing services to enable them make informed decisions on preschool services. From the literature review, UNICEF (2000) states that “ECD (of which preschool is a
component) in Ghana generally has a narrow focus and is accessible to relatively few affluent people.” The report further explained the narrow focus to mean the over-emphasis on cognitive development. In particular, the UNICEF 2001 Ghana national report asserts that general ECD services in Ghana have questionable quality and widespread use of poorly trained and untrained caregivers (UNICEF, 2001).

By 2001, enrollment in preschool in Ghana, identified as pre-primary education by Hyde & Kabiru (2006) was below 25% of eligible children. Out of the gross enrollment ratio, 59.59 percent was in the private sector where there were more girls enrolled than boys, resulting in a gender parity index of 1.26%. In addition to the low access, another study by the Ghana National Association of Teachers (2000) found that the content of the program also emphasizes rigid formal learning contrary to child development principles. Although, actual spending on preschool in the private sector and by the Government have not been available, it has been indicated that despite the acknowledged benefits of ECD to social and economic development, Ghana, has “negligible Government spending on ECD” (UNICEF, 2001, p.165). By inference therefore, with preschool being an integral part of ECD, the likelihood of inadequate preschool funding by Government is high.

In light of the above, this case study investigation of preschool services at the community level is an important research that will focus on the examination of environmental and legal frameworks and the roles of caregivers, parents, and children. The community-level study will give the Municipal Education Office some knowledge about some of the services being provided in the preschools under its jurisdiction. The
information is important as it invariably has implications for the human resource
development of the communities and the municipal area. This view of the link between
child development and socio-economic development is explicitly stated in the end-
Fit for Children* by the Organization of African Unity, now the African Union as follows:

> The socio-economic transformation of the continent rests with investing in the young people….responding to the needs of Africa’s children is imperative. Children should be the core of priorities for policy makers. (Organization of African Unity, 2001, par. 6)

In addition, the study could lead to improvement in curriculum and service
delivery in the research preschools that could, it is hoped, extend to other communities.
The study’s potential of bringing awareness of the scientific approaches to preschools in
the communities could also through the interviews inform caregivers about various
preschool programs. Parents participating in the study will also gain some knowledge
about the evaluation of childcare services which could possibly also enhance their
involvement in their children’s preschools. The involvement of parents can help in the
development of context-appropriate preschool models based not on theories alone but
also on attending to the cultural, social, and economic resources of the communities.

In summary, the study is significant as it seeks to find the interface between
theories and programming in relation to the cultural and socio-economic variables of the
location within which the preschools are located. Ultimately, the study in the selected
centers will serve as a means of bringing awareness about current trends in preschool
administration that can help providers, parents, officials, and caregivers assess, develop,
or enhance services at the community level. More importantly, the study will be a
significant step in discussing with preschool service providers in the identified communities principles of preschool programming directed at the optimum development of children. The study findings will add to the existing body of knowledge on preschool practices.

Delimitations and Limitations of the Study

In terms of delimitation, the study is confined to one urban and one peri-urban community in the Tema Municipal Area in Ghana. The geographical coverage is based on proximity to my residence to reduce the cost and time of commuting between the research sites. In addition, the common language of the two communities avoids the need for translations. At the same time, the sharp contrasting social and economic indices offer opportunity for in-depth study and comparison. With respect to the topic, the study focuses on preschool-age children who are in transition between the early and middle childhood stages as well as early childhood care and development and the formal compulsory school periods. The preschool children also make up the majority of the older group of children at childcare centers. Besides their majority, this age group is often the most articulate category of children in childcare centers, which aids in conducting of interviews.

There were, however, some limitations encountered during the research. A major one was the reluctance of caregivers in the private preschools to respond to some of the questions. This hesitation was partly due to the presence of the proprietor of the school during the interview. Their (proprietors) insistence on always being present during interviews with the caregivers may have been intimidating, affecting the honesty of the
caregivers’ answers. Another major limitation was my inability to observe children in the home to find out how they apply some of the care practices from preschool in the home setting and how activities in the home environment are transferred to the preschool.

Definition of Terms

The following operational definitions are used in this study for clarity:

*Care:* Refers to all the supports that a young child requires in order to thrive, including appropriate nutrition, health, active feeding, stimulation, communication, safety and protection, affection, appropriate modeling, and time to assimilate and grow (Evans, Meyers, & Ilfeld, 2000, p. 392).


*Development:* A process of change in which a child comes to master more and more complex levels of moving, thinking, feeling, and interacting with people and objects in the environment (Evans et al., 2000, p 392).

*Early childhood:* The period of a child’s life from conception to age eight (Berk, 1999; World Bank, 2000)

*Makaranta:* Muslim faith-based daycare center for teaching of Arabic and the Koran (Field Data, 2005)

*Peri-urban:* Locations at the outskirts of urban communities (Ghana Statistical Service, 2003).
Organization of the Study

The study is organized into six chapters. The first chapter of the inquiry covers the background of the study including the reason and significance of the study and operational definition. Chapter two presents the literature review inclusive of the concept and theories and programming of early childhood care and development and some best practices of preschool services from other countries. Chapter three discusses the research design for the study. It covers the methodology and justification for the choice of the research design, field activities and data analysis, ending with a summary of the methodology. The fourth chapter provides an overview of the geographical, historical and legal context of the study. The chapter five contains the findings from the field study. The sixth chapter ends with recommendations and conclusions drawn from pulling together the study findings analyzed through the literature review.
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This section of the report covers the literature review of the study. It starts with a look at the origin and concept of early childcare and development at the global level and in the African contexts. The review of the conceptual frameworks includes an examination of diverse orientations of preschools and their merits and demerits. This is followed by a review of childcare in Ghana, including traditional childcare, the development of the country’s preschool system, and the various actors involved in the delivery of services. The section on the development of the preschool provides an overview and analysis of the history, as well as the legislative and the policy frameworks for preschool service delivery in Ghana. The last section examines some theoretical underpinnings of ECD. The chapter ends with a summary and conclusions of the literature review and their linkage to the study.

Overview of Early Childhood Care and Development

Preschool is an integral part of early childhood care for development (ECD). Any study of preschool must, therefore, start with an assessment of the location of preschool within the broad scope of ECD. Early Childhood Care for Development sometimes called by the acronym of ECCD is the terminology used by the World Bank. ECD has become a global issue of interest and concern due to empirical research findings that the nature of care given to children in the first eight years of their lives is directly linked to an individual’s health and productivity during adulthood, and to the economic development of society as a whole (Fogel, 1994). Fogel’s assertion was reiterated by the Vice
President of the World Bank Vinod Thomas (2000) in his statement that, “because the world’s young children are the human capital of the future, ECCD is becoming recognized worldwide as an essential element in any long-term, sustainable development strategy” (p. vi).

The literature also points to overwhelming scientific evidence that an individual’s first three years of life are critical since all behavioral patterns of a lifetime are established during this period (Berk, 2000; McCain & Mustard, 1999; Myers, 1993; Woodhead, 1988). Findings particularly from studies in psychology, posit that the abilities to thinking, speak, learn, and reason are all rooted in the first three years of life (State of the World’s Children Report, 2003). In addition, the foundations for personal values and social behavior have been found to be dependent on the care given to children in their early stages of life (Rutter, Giller, & Hagell, 1998). Quantitatively, some empirical research findings argue that quality investment in early childhood programs could yield as much as sevenfold returns to some national economies in the areas of healthy human resources, labor skills, knowledge, and physiological endowments (Anselmo, 1987). At the individual level, Rutter et al. (1998) asserted that “signals indicating the more serious and antisocial behavior in adulthood can be detected as early as age three in the form of oppositional and hyperactive behavior” (p. 307).

Although most research has established the first three years as the most critical period of rapid and explosive changes in human development, as a discipline of study, early childhood covers the period from conception to age eight, by which time the fundamentals of personal character have been formed (Berk, 1999; Woodhead, 1996).
While the chronological time frame is universal, due to the convergence of diverse disciplines in the understanding of child development, the concept of early childhood care and development itself has not been standardized. It has sometimes been based on the professional or disciplinary orientations of the author or the purpose to which the definition is being applied. Some definitions put forth by development oriented organizations, public policy institutions, academics, and childcare professionals have contained some variations which, although subtle or minor, could have major implications for service delivery. Jordan (1982) argues that the way in which development is defined could lead to a mechanistic or organismic delivery of childcare services.

Jordan (1982) posits that programs that view development from a universal perspective, as a general actualization of potential, dismiss individual differences in interests, needs, and aptitudes among children and suppress the creativity of the child. To avoid such pathology, child development services should be a process of positive interaction of a child’s genetic endowment and the environment, an approach that promotes the child’s growth from within. Other authors, such as Anselmo (1987), define early childhood development as “the orderly psychosocial physical and cognitive changes that take place between prenatal months and the early elementary school years.” The author’s definition provides a non-specific time frame and is also silent on the care aspect or the processes that lead to the changes in the child. The definition appears vague as the period of “early elementary years” could be subjective depending on the child’s growth pattern.
From a rights-based perspective, ECD covers the broad needs and indivisible rights of children and spans various subjects such as nutrition, safe environment, health and stimulation plus psychosocial and cognitive development. Several authors concur that the integration of the various disciplines constitutes early childhood care and development (Auerbach, 1981; Berk 1999; Evans, 2000; Streets, 1982). In its definition of the concept, UNICEF uses the terminology “Early Childhood Development, Survival and Growth” (ECD-SG) and moves beyond the activity of care to include the actors and the environment to define a comprehensive approach to policies and programs for children from birth to eight years of age, their parents and care givers. Its purpose is to protect the child’s rights to develop his or her full cognitive, emotional social and physical potential. Community-based services that meet the needs of infants are vital to ECD and they should include attention to health, nutrition, education, water and environmental sanitation in homes and communities. This approach promotes and protects the rights of the young child to survival, growth and development. Unlike UNICEF, the World Bank, also a member of the UN family, contrary to most academics, excludes the period of conception in its definition. The World Bank definition also does not cover services for parents and caregivers which are a focus of interest for UNICEF. Instead, the Bank defines it as follows:

Early Childhood Care and Development includes all the supports necessary for every child to realize his/her right to survival, to protection, and to care that will ensure optimal development from birth to age eight. (Evans, Myers & Ilfeld 2000, p. 5)

Similarly, other definitions focus primarily on the children. For example, due to the education focus of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
(UNESCO), the concept is known as “Early Childhood Care and (Initial) Education” (ECCE) with a focus on the preparation of children aged four to six for basic education.

This is in contrast to the World Bank that focuses more on the caring aspect in the delivery of services, based on the view that the caring aspect of the program leads to development. The Organization of Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) uses the terminology “Early Childhood Education and Care” (ECEC) to give priority attention to education in the delivery of services. The UNESCO definition is the closest to the aim of this study as it focuses on preschool, the period for preparation of children between the ages of four and six. In view of the research population of preschool children, this next section examines the concept of childhood development which forms the objective of preschools; the care aspect is often applied to children younger than four years.

Childhood Development

Diverse definitions of child development have been put forth by various authors (Berk, 1999; Evans, Myers, & Ilfeld, 2000). Child development, according to the literature, may be defined as the “actualization of potentialities, a process which depends on the human being’s genetic endowment, the environment s/he is in, and the interaction of the two” (Street, 1982, p. 10). Street (1982) identifies two segments of development, the biological and the psychosocial, and breaks the latter down further into psychomotor, perceptual, cognitive, affective, and volitional. Other authors are more specific in their concept of development and refer to growth and development in the physical/motor, psychosocial, and cognitive/language and literacy domains. While these developments
may be assessed separately, the literature indicates that they are interactive although the rate of development may vary with each child (Black, Puckett & Bell, 1992).

In defining development, Woodhead (1996) presents it not from the angle of interacting forces but from measurable and observable changes and explains that when psychologists and educators speak of development, they typically mean more than just growth and change. The word is used to imply change in particular ways, along with particular expectations of maturity (Woodhead, 1996). In a figurative presentation of development, Mussen, Conger, and Kagan (1984) state:

In the first twenty years of life, these changes result in new, improved ways of reacting—that is, healthier, more organized, more complex, more stable, more competent or more efficient....We speak of the advances from creeping to walking, from babbling to talking, from concrete to abstract thinking as development. (p. 7)

While it is easy to measure the biological or physical, there is a general consensus among authors about the complexity and problematic nature of measuring the psychosocial development of children due to its intangible nature.

To facilitate the assessment of development, some authors have argued for indicators in the curriculum that will draw out certain skills through preschool activities. These include play and physical knowledge, play and logico-mathematical knowledge, play and language, play and curricular integration and play and socio-moral environment (Chaille & Silvern, 1998). According to Hancock and Wingert (1998), it is because of these critical stages in the development of children that caregivers at childcare centers should be trained professionals. In a national study on preschool education, the authors lament that many programs are unlicensed; staffed with poorly trained adults; do not
have basic toys, books, or a hygienic environment; and are hazardous to a child’s safety and health, as well as social and intellectual development (Chaille & Silvern, 1998).

To address the lapses in providing conducive environment for child development, the Bernard van Leer Foundation (BvLF) cautions against universal processes of development and posits that a more developmentally appropriate approach that takes into consideration the environment of the children would be more expedient. Evans and Myers (2000) also argue that although it would be acceptable to adopt universal frameworks of development that have been scientifically proven, the transfer of Western processes for the realization of developmental goals could be anachronistic in certain societies. The authors recommend a context-sensitive appropriate approach that is relative to the values, resources, and beliefs of the environment.

In an analysis of context appropriateness and development, Woodhead (1996) presents a model that combines contextual appropriateness with developmental appropriateness into a principle of “Practice appropriate to the context of early childhood” (PACED). He argues that conventional theories about child development are also about culture. Drawing from Burman (1994), Woodhead recommends a developmental niche where theories of child development are shaped by variables like family organization, parental roles, expectations of families, economic bases (national, community, and family), religious beliefs, and gender among others. Adopting the niche approach will, from the viewpoint of the author, helps to embrace both the tangible aspects of children’s physical and social environment and the more elusive but equally
powerful meaning systems that regulate their relationships—the expectations that affect the way they are treated and which children themselves incorporate into their identity.

In summary, the hybrid PACED approach promotes child development based on knowledge and experience of families and communities, especially the hidden and unwritten traditional childcare and socialization processes, combined with modern methods, thus incorporating the validity of the local and the global. The approach resonates with Ball and Marfo’s eco-cultural theory of early child development that recommends that fusion of a Western scientific approach with the indigenous beliefs and practices of the First Nations in Canada. In a metaphoric visualization on child development, Levine & White (1994) present an organic hardware that is species-specific of biological features that involve basic universal need for survival, growth and health.

African Concept of Childhood Care

Historical accounts of childcare practices in Africa reveal that early childhood care and nurturing were not center based but were equally directed at providing emotional, physical, cognitive, and socialization support for human development (Busia, 1968). In Things Fall Apart, Chinua Achebe’s (1958) fiction on African societies’ initial encounter with Europeans and Western culture, and Nelson Mandela’s (1994) biography provide insights into childcare practices on the African continent before, during, and after the arrival of Europeans. Both authors reveal the communal support of child upbringing with the philosophical view that the child belongs to the community and represents the future values and aspirations thereof. African governments and governments of developed countries operate upon the same philosophy of children as the future of the
community whose needs should be addressed as a social service responsibility for the public good in the absence of immediate family care (Evans et al., 2000; Aidoo, 2008).

Ultimately, both the individual and the society benefit as depicted in the diagram on page 40.
Individual Outcomes
Optimal intellectual, physical emotional development; social competence, improved school participation; more productive adult life

Social Outcomes
Increased gender, economic, and geographic equity; improved opportunities for sustainable development, social empowerment

Caregivers
Health, nutrition, social and intellectual emotional support, cultural values and norms

ECD Teacher
Intellectual and social stimulation education, emotional support

Family
Financial resources, emotional support, intellectual and social stimulation

Community
Clean and safe environment, health services, social stimulation, cultural values and norms

Coordinating Structures covering Government Ministries, NGOs, CBOs, and Local Government

INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL LEGAL AND POLICY FRAMEWORK
/INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL RESOURCES

Figure 1: Holistic Child Development Framework
The Bernard van Leer Foundation (1994), in an analysis of African childcare practices from a public responsibility approach, observes that the powerful family and community structures in African traditions for early socialization of children attest to the collectivism and community ownership of children. Weisner, Bradley, and Kilbride (1997), in an examination of African childcare practices, describe the practices as socially distributed social support systems that respond to the cultural, institutional, and economic challenges and opportunities of the respective environmental context. The authors’ relativism approach to African childcare is an indication that in all societies, nurturance, training and initiation of children are defined not primarily by scientific theories but by the economic, political, and cultural variables of the community.

In acknowledgement of the link between community resources and values on one hand and ECD frameworks on the other, Marfo et al, (2008) posits that in the development of ECD programs (preschool inclusive), contextual relevance must be a priority consideration. Innovative programs that draw on the resources of the community rather than the adoption of imported models should be paramount. Thus in either an adaptation or convergence of Western and indigenous practices, Marfo (1998) argues that due to conceptual differences and contextual beliefs and values related to early childhood care, programming should be guided by an eco-cultural context-based generative curriculum model that fuses worldviews of local people and scientific theories.

In studies of First Nations communities in Canada, Ball & Marfo (2000) observe that introduction of ECD programs need to consider existing services so that the modern concept of ECD and traditional childcare practices can be integrated. Echoing similar views, Dove (2002), in her “Child Upbringing Practices in Some
Communities in Ghana, “reiterates that the presentation of ECD from a Western perspective is difficult to assess in indigenous communities. She argues that all communities have their own traditional childcare knowledge and nurturing practices. Accordingly, Dove posits that instead of allowing such indigenous knowledge to die through neglect, their positive attributes should be refined and implemented in conjunction with modern scientific approaches.

For example, in Ghana as in some other African countries, a low literacy level that does not foster a documented scientific approach to the development of children in most rural communities, a child’s rate of growth is mostly assessed by incidences of physical stages of development such as sitting down, teething, or putting of the toes in the mouth as signs of readiness to stand up. Unlike Western societies where documentation is the norm, childbirth and upbringing practices are associated with some major family or social phenomenon occurring at the time of a child’s birth (Akwesi, 1985; Mwamwenda, 1996). Accordingly, in traditional childcare practices, the age of a child is not determined chronologically but through characteristic stages of childhood such as crawling, walking, and talking and in adolescence through menarche or puberty rites. The practice is diminishing rapidly with the expansion of education, and hence literacy, in almost all communities.

The literature review also reveals that in acknowledgment of the importance of ECD to national development, countries such as Sweden, Canada, and Denmark have put in place comprehensive ECD programs for children (SOWCR, 1999). On the contrary, the World Bank Consultative Group on Early Childhood Care and Development, 2001) points out that in developing countries where economic growth is critically needed, the level and quality of ECD, especially in Africa, is low; the problem is even more acute in rural areas. The Association for the Development of
Education in Africa (ADEA, 2001) attributes the dearth of ECD services in Africa to the fact that provision of ECD services is always relegated to the periphery in government budgetary allocations.

To address the challenges impeding quality ECD in Africa, since 1990 ADEA has supported African countries in developing national policies for effective ECD implementation. One of ADEA’s major projects on ECD policy formulation was carried out in three African countries, Ghana, Mauritius, and Namibia. In 1992, ADEA initiated consultations for the development of an ECD policy framework for Ghana to guide program delivery. In 1993, consultations at the national, regional, and community levels culminated in the adoption of the Accra Declaration, a resolution to formulate and implement an ECD policy for Ghana. It was more than a decade later that the policy came into being (Boakye, Etse, Adamu-Issah, Moti, Matjila & Shikwambi, 2008).

The slow process of ECD policy formulation has been attributed to diverse causes. Woodhead (1996) observes that ECD programs in Africa are often located at the margins of education and social welfare programs and not given priority attention. He also argues that in some cases the program is treated as a mere holding base for children who are too young for school but do not have a place in the community, especially when parents need to work. The outcome has been the development of diverse forms of child-related services under the guise of ECD that do not promote the best interests or an equitable fair start for children. Despite its importance, most governments, especially in Third World countries, play down the link between development and quality care and adopt a fragmented patchwork of work services, such as immunization by the health sector, education by the education sector, and nutrition by the agricultural sector, resulting in uncoordinated
delivery of services that do not meet quality ECD standards (United Nations General Assembly on the Special Summit for Children, 2001).

However, desiring that ECD be promoted in tandem with social and economic development programs, several international policy formulations and protocols have, since 1990, included provisions to advocate and give visibility to holistic care of children in the early years (the Cairo Declaration, 1990; Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1990; the Declaration and Framework for Action of the United Nations General Assembly on the Special Summit for Children, 2001; Education for All, 1990; the Millennium Development Goals, 2000; New Partnership for Africa’s Development, 2001). Following ratification of these international instruments, African governments, including Ghana, have been encouraged to put in place various interventions to ensure quality early care of children (World Bank Consultative Group on Early Childhood Care and Development, 2001).

In particular, at the ADEA Biennale held in Mauritius in 2003, the association called on governments to recognize the link between ECD, particularly preschool and the attainment of the EFA goals of universal basic education, as well as the Millennium Development Goals and poverty reduction in general. Preschool has been identified as a key option for meeting the Education for All Declaration of (2000). ADEA’s stand, according to Hyde and Kabiru (2008) is based on findings from experimental and quasi-experimental studies that focused on analysis from preschools.

Preschool Within ECD

Preschool also referred to as pre-primary is defined as the time in young children’s lives before they enter primary (first, second or third grades) (Black, Puckett & Bell, 1992). Preschool is seen as the critical transition period from early
childhood development to formal learning; from a home or home-like environment to a school environment (Biersteker, Ngaruiya, Sebatane & Gudyanga, 2008).

Bredekamp (1987) finds that traditionally, preschool is a period when child-centered interactive methods are used to help a child develop. Jordan (1992) provides some key characteristics of preschool. He posits that preschools have a developmental theme with a positive regard for the uniqueness of each child. Due to their developmental goals, preschools accommodate differences among children and make an effort to respond to individual needs. To meet the diverse needs of the children, it might be necessary for a steady introduction of novelty or variation in the experiences offered to them. This is in contrast to the school environment where a uniform instructional approach is employed with a goal of getting the children to acquire knowledge.

With respect to the preschool stage of childhood, (Evans et al., 2000) find that preschool children though often between the ages of four and six, could be slightly younger or older. The authors argue that preschool is a necessity if a child is to do well in formal school. Apart from studies of the benefits of ECD to health and its social impact in adulthood, one of the areas where a number of longitudinal studies have been carried out is the benefits of ECD in education; in almost all of the studies, the focus has been on preschool. Unfortunately, none of these longitudinal or tracer studies has been in Ghana. Among the well-known studies such as the High Scope/Perry Preschool Project in Ypsilanti in 1962 and the Abecedarian and Brookline Early Education Projects both of which started in 1972 in the United States of America, findings indicate positive outcomes (Mingat, 2005).

Similar findings have been obtained in the few studies carried out in African countries. The observations from tracer studies in Guinea and Cape Verde by Jaramillo and Tietjen (2001) indicate that children who attended preschools
exhibited more school readiness, had lower repetition and dropout rates and also performed better academically. Njenga and Kabiru (2001) report similar findings with respect to Madrasa (Islamic-oriented) preschools in Kenya, Uganda and Zanzibar. Besides the benefits related to the children’s academic progress, the reports identified positive social attitudes in terms of neatness, respect, obedience, self-confidence and determination alongside family support and interest in the children’s performance. In addition, because preschool includes parental involvement as one of its key strategies, the tracer study reports revealed the ripple effect of positive parenting including interaction with children and monitoring of their health. The two authors caution however that the positive outcomes were mediated by the quality of service and programs of the preschools. The following sections of the study will, therefore, cover a more detail look at quality preschool and later use that are indicators for assessing the nature and quality of preschool in the research sites.

Types of Preschools

Literature identifies three main types of preschools: the community-based, home-based and center-based. Community-based preschools, which involve the participation of the community, appear to occur in less-urbanized communities and could involve a lot of volunteer service. They also seek to meet the needs of the community children and draw a great deal on the resources from within the respective community. Various institutions such as the Aga Khan Foundation have been promoting community ECDs inclusive of preschools in Kenya for several years. The focus in most community services has tilted towards care to address home care, disease prevention, support and the creation of a safe and enabling environment for children. In some cases, arrangements have taken the form of communal living
arrangements where adults take turns looking after several children. In all cases, the involvement of either the traditional or local governance structures has the potential to sustain the project as happened in such a project in Accra, Ghana.

The women involved in buying and selling in the Malata marketplace were interested in starting a child care program for their children, to keep them safe and to free the women to conduct their business. They approached the Accra City Council, which agreed to fund the program. A committee was formed, consisting of members from the Women’s Association, the City Council, the Department of Social Welfare (which is mandated to oversee early childhood programs), the Ministry of Health, and the Ministry of Water and Sewage. A building near the market was refurbished. The program operated under the Administration of the Regional Medical Officer of Health. Thus, it had a strong health and nutrition focus.

Mothers of infants were encouraged to come to the center to breastfeed them. Children were provided with a morning snack and a full lunch. To enter the program children had to have a physical examination and appropriate immunizations. Once a month, a public health nurse inspected the facilities, provided immunizations as needed and completed children’s medical charts. In a report on the project, it was concluded that the Malata Market child care center experience had been successful largely because of the support the center received from appropriate agencies, together with the keen interest of the mothers. (Myers, 1995)

Figure 2: The Accra Market Women’s Association, Ghana

Other type of preschool is the home- based family daycare where child minders come to a home to look after the child or children. In some cases parents take on additional children alongside their own and provide needed service to the children. In most cases such home based services do not have trained personnel and the required infrastructure to provide quality service. Parents who patronize such services sometimes do so due to familiarity with the service provider or proximity to work or
home. These services often have limited number of children that facilitates close monitoring and attention. Individual attention can also be given to children easily.

The third type of preschool, center-based, is established to take in more children. A common type of center-based preschool is found in conjunction with primary schools. In most cases such added-on preschools are possible because of some unused space in the primary school. The children could be engaged in rote learning of alphabets, numbers and songs without any organized curriculum, but as a pseudo-extension of the primary school curriculum. In the private sector, preschools could be stand-alone programs not linked to any schools. Auerbach (1981) points out those center-based preschools may not be strategically located, resulting in the need to commute, possibly resulting in the some children being tired and stressed out on arrival; others may enjoy the traveling. Temperament affects a child’s behavior and the caregiver’s reaction. In general however, centers once licensed, would meet the required infrastructural standards and would be likely to be spacious and have more resources than home-based childcare services.

On the other hand, such centers could be expensive and operate on schedules inconvenient for the parents. Unless they comply strictly with the regulations, some centers may admit too many children and therefore not provide the attention that each child might need. In some cases because the centers or preschools provide extended hours of service, some parents turn over their children to the care-givers and only pick them up to sleep at home (Amponsah, from interviews). If not properly managed, the practice could result in conflicts between parents and care-givers. There are also indications that exposure to communicable diseases could be high if the preschool centers do not conform to required specifications. Regardless
of the type of preschool, literature points to the fact that the overarching goal of all such services should be the optimal development of the child (Woodhead, 1996).

All three forms of preschools are found in most countries (Auerbach, 1981). Requirements for the different types of centers are often due to their respective set-ups. Biersteker, Ngaruiya, Sebatane & Gudyanga (2008) state that in South Africa, all three forms of services are required to register with their provincial departments of education. In the areas where public primary schools are not available, the community based preschools could become part of the public primary school. Apart from meeting the needs of the children, the possibility of integrating the center into the public school system is likely to promote partnership and commitment from the community.

Legislative and Policy Frameworks of Preschool

With the exception of Somalia, all African countries have signed the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child that obliges them to invest in children. In addition, preschool in Africa apart from being contained in the resolution passed by the OAU in 2001 as indicated earlier on in this chapter is a focus for action by African governments. Thus legally, the required framework for the promotion and implementation of ECD has been established. However, following the slow progress being made, at a follow-up meeting of the EFA in 2000, a Fast Track Initiative was adopted by which African Governments were to allocate 50% of their budgets to the education sector. They were also encouraged to provide one year of free preschool for all children as strategy to encourage school enrollment. Figures available show little or insignificant allocations to the preschool in the public sector as presented in the table below:
Table 1: Percentage of Public Education Expenditure Going to Pre-Primary Level, LYA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Benin</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>1.23**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Botswana</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Burundi</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>0.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chad</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comoros</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cote d’Ivoire</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>0.01**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equatorial Guinea</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>4.21**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gabon</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>10.50**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kenya</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>0.24*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lesotho</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mali</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>0.96**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Namibia</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Niger</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>2.30**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senegal</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>2.59*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sierra Leone</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>0.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>1999</td>
<td>1.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swaziland</td>
<td>1998</td>
<td>0.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Togo</td>
<td>2000</td>
<td>0.51**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*National Estimate** UIS Estimate


Public spending in ECD has been found to be less than 2% in most countries (Jaramillo & Mingat, 2008). Although a figure for Ghana was not included, Gabon which has 10.5% and Equatorial Guinea with 4.2% are oil-producing countries in Central Africa with a relatively higher GDP than most Sub-Saharan nations. By inference, it is unlikely that Ghana could be committing a high percentage of its budget to the preschool sector in line with the EFA Fast Track initiative. A number of authors have also pointed out that high budgetary allocations do not necessarily imply high quality of service. Combes (2003) and Tokington (2001) point out that implementation of policies always poses a challenge as it entails defining of strategies, responsibilities and resources. African governments in efforts to meet the objectives of the numerous conventions and protocols alongside other national
development programs have engaged organizations for assistance. For example, Ghana has been supported by institutions such as UNICEF, the WB, ADEA and the Danish International Development Agency to improve ECD services. Despite its robust ECD policy that should guide preschool delivery, the issue of holistic early childhood care and development that cuts across sectors was not visible in its poverty-reduction strategy document, the national development framework of the country.

Principles of Preschool Programming

Several authors agree that there are some fundamental principles that should be taken into consideration in the establishment and operations of preschools (Evans et al., 2000; Hyde & Kabiru, 2008). Principles of ECD have been categorized into three classifications by Evans et al (2000). The principles have been used to develop the following sub themes from the literature review:
Table 2: Fundamental Principles of Preschool

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Broad Principle</th>
<th>Sub themes</th>
<th>Findings from the Literature Review</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Contextual principles</td>
<td>Political climate and stability, Governmental organization (Centralized or decentralized) Economic policies Size of program Cultural homogeneity Settlement patterns Poverty, livelihood and employment Community organization and tradition Family structure and functioning Educational levels Natural and unnatural disasters</td>
<td>The legislation and policy frameworks should provide administrative, educational and social space for preschool service delivery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Social principles</td>
<td>Equity Children at risk Building on existing resources Development of programs with families community involvement</td>
<td>Child care is part of state’s social responsibility; responsibility. Parents should receive require assistance to ensure access of quality ECD to all children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Technical Principles</td>
<td>Flexibility with diverse situations Cost effective programs Quality assurance Small beginnings with incremental development In-built sustainability and benefits for beneficiaries Integrated monitoring and evaluation Mechanisms</td>
<td>Resources should be made available for existing and new ECD services Enhanced training of care-givers must be given priority Continuous supervision is a necessity and non negotiable.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Developed from literature review

While the above classifications could serve as guidelines for the establishment of preschools, they do not provide explicit steps for promoting the principles. Authors such as Streets (1992) and Hyde et al (2006) give detailed processes for the establishment of preschools, including community-level resources of the physical environment, leadership, administration and curriculum besides indicators for quality.
Preschool Quality

According to the literature, the quality of preschool services from the literature appears to be a matter of importance but also of some controversy. Determining quality requires a definition of quality, processes for promoting quality, indicators for its determination and general framework, as well as its application at community national and international levels. Quality in preschools can be measured by tangible and intangible outcomes. Among the tangible is the physical development of the child and measurable skills such as reading and numeracy. Physical development could be measured by indicators such as adequate nutrition, immunization, and safe environment. In contrast, quality indicators of psychosocial, emotional, and some aspects of cognitive development are problematic. Due to this problematic nature of measuring quality, a number of authors recommend the assessment of quality by the curriculum, infrastructure, qualification of staff, climate of the center, and the processes of delivery of services.

Woodhead (1996) adopts a three-pronged indicator of quality, namely, input indicators, process indicators, and outcome indicators. Under the input indicators, he indicates that they are the easiest to define and measure and are often used for the setting of regulations. These could include building and surroundings, materials, equipment, and staffing. They are further broken down under building and surroundings to heating, ventilation, toileting, and space per child. In an analysis of the materials and equipment, Woodhead identifies play equipment, learning materials and furniture as some of the indicators while the qualifications of the staff serve as the indicators for the personnel.

With respect to the process indicators, the methods of caring, teaching, and learning; relationships among stakeholders; methods of supervision, and controlling,
guiding, and disciplining are key indicators of the quality of process. Woodhead (1996) identifies four outcome indicators of child health, abilities, adjustment to school and family attitudes. Although the process indicators could provide an indication of the quality of service, the outcome indicators could still be problematic since they could embody some element of subjectivity. Other authors such as Auerbach (1981) talk about physical, social and emotional climate indicators that are given values to assess the weight of each climate. Similar to Woodhead’s outcome indicators, the weighting of the indicators could similarly involve some form of subjectivity also. Auerbach therefore recommends that parents and users of preschools should examine the preschool’s registration and license prior to enrolling their children. While a license may be available and be in accordance with the laws and policies governing preschools, its existence does not guarantee quality service. Kagan and Neuman (1999) argue that the license in itself should not be restrictive but should allow for flexibility and creativity, both of which are beneficial to the child. The two authors present the following comprehensive approach based on a study that optimizes children’s healthy development.

Reporting on the multi-funded study, *Quality 2000: Advancing Early Childhood Care and Education*, Kagan and Neuman (1999) identify eight areas for quality assessment. These are (1) program, (2) results for children, (3) family engagement, (4) staff credentialing, (5) staff training and preparedness, (6) program licensing, (7) funding and financing, and (8) governance structure. Elaborating on each aspect of quality assessment, the authors provide the underlying principles of each aspect of quality and the strategies to be adopted in achieving them. Collating the various areas of quality, they can be seen as similar to Woodhead’s classification into environmental; resources, including staffing; stakeholders, which covers children,
parents and caregivers; licensing, which emanates from legislation and policy; and
cost and management issues. All these are interlinked with accessibility and
utilization of services and need to be critically evaluated to inform choice of
preschool.

Access to Preschool

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) in
the US has defined access in terms of the extent to which children utilize preschool
services. In Ghana’s new education reform, access to preschool is free, compulsory,
and universal. The implication is that childcare services should be within reach of
every child of preschool age. Access to education under the Convention on the Rights
of the Child and UNESCO’s functional literacy provisions is a right and social
responsibility to be provided by governments. Records from all over the world show a
growing demand for childcare services arising out of the reality that more women are
moving into formal employment, both parents are working and extended family
support systems are eroding. Bredekamp (1987) and Phillips (1987) recommend that
such childcare centers should cover all ranges of children instead of confining them
all in nurseries, daycare centers, or preschools.

According to McCain and Mustard (1999), preschool accessibility goes
beyond simply the existence of the program to equal opportunity for all parents who
want to take advantage of the services. Such services include special-need cases for
children who might have physical, developmental, language, learning, or behavioral
challenges (Tokington, 2005). Access also does not imply entry or admission but
utilization of services that include awareness, convenience, cost, availability of
spaces, preferences, and quality of programs (United States Department of Education,
2006)
Although access to preschool has often been viewed in the institutional setting, evidence from a number of countries such as Canada, Denmark and Sweden attest to the effectiveness of home-based and community-supported systems (Early Childhood Education, 2004). In all cases, it behooves governments to provide, through appropriate legislation and policy, the enabling frameworks for high-quality delivery of service. Such policies will unite the population and avoid social stratification. According to the Children’s Defense Fund (1998), the creation of such an environment hinges on the strengthening of licenses and follow-up enforcement and regular monitoring of services to build the confidence of parents. Auerbach (1981) argues that families in low socioeconomic brackets should be supported to avoid their children being excluded, a phenomenon that could lead to social exclusion. To achieve this goal, there is need for public education on available services to help parents make informed choices as well as to generate networking among childcare services so referrals could easily be made. Polakow (1999) recommends an alternative tradition where governments and parents share responsibility.

In the provision of access, particular attention should be paid to children with special needs or in special circumstances. Nunez and Collignon (1999) call for specialized access that would remove obstacles to children with special needs. Citing examples of homeless children, Nunez recounts experiences of such children who were traumatized and teased by schoolchildren any time they were picked up from or dropped off at their shelter. From that experience, even though access to preschool had been provided, the stigmata and derogatory remarks from children from “regular” homes nullified the effectiveness of the access. Thus, in determination of access, proximity, cost, and availability cannot be the primary factors. Additional criteria of safety, emotional stability, easy communication and child friendliness should be key
considerations in the creation of access. Such an approach results in positive perception and reception from stakeholders, especially the parents as exemplified in figure 3.

Thakani Devi Choudhare — parent: “Why would we not be satisfied? Every activity of the center helps our children improve. They learn so much from games and songs, and they don’t feel stress in learning this way. They share the things they learn each day with us, and it makes us happy to see what they are learning. These children are so different from other children! They know how to speak to others. If you asked a non ECD child a question, you wouldn’t get an answer - - they would probably run away if they saw a new person. But you can go test this at the center and see how confident they are. They’ll answer you very confidently. They are all friendly with one another and they play without quarrelling. These children are talkative, and they never stop asking questions.”

Figure 3: Reaction of Nepali Parent to Effort of ECD Centre
Source: Accessed from www.childcareexchange.com

Preschool Curriculum

Preschool curricula are analyzed from the content and from mode of transmission. Hancok and Wingert (1998), in summing up the content of the preschool curricula state:

Education at this stage is not about imparting facts and imposing strict schedules. It is about listening, guiding, helping individual children to make sense of their real world. The curriculum is learning to say goodbye to Mom, forming relationships to others, feeling competent exploring their world. With these emotional skills reinforced…reading, writing and physics will come more easily when kids are ready. (p. 86)

In view of its indispensability, Epstein, Larner and Halpern (1995) equate curriculum to the part of an engine which together with the motivation and energy of the school staff will provide the momentum for the program to thrive. Among the key characteristics, the preschool curriculum is expected to be appropriate to the child’s level of development, which from child development theory is technically referred to as scaffolding.
Winter (1999) similarly posits that planning of preschool curriculum should be carried out under a SMART system, an acronym that stands for select, match, adapt, relevant, and test. Selection of curriculum should be done to meet the individual characteristics of the child, particularly when the child has some disabilities or challenges. In addition, the curriculum should involve parents and should be done from a constructivist approach that will allow children to explore and draw out their own creativity. In delivery of curriculum, it is also recommended that subjects or themes should be taught at least more than once (Walmsley, 1998).

Other authors recommend the adaptation of an existing curriculum, development of a new one based on needs or creation a completely innovative curriculum. Among the most recommended curricula, is the generative curriculum that pulls together indigenous practices, values and empirical theories, according to Ball (1999) since it also relies greatly on Chambers’ (1997) participatory approach, the generative curriculum has an in-built empowerment values for the adults involved with the centers.

A critical factor in the delivery of services is the attitude of the caregiver. Experience has revealed that children’s creativity can be fostered by the teachers’ or caregivers’ attitudes. An atmosphere of trust can result in more harmonious interaction and positive behavior from children. Bredekamp (1987) presents six major guidance practices that a care-giver could apply to promote high-quality effective curriculum in the classroom. The practices extend from teacher self-realization of the complicated nature of social skills that could reduce mistakes, to teacher-child relations to partnership and teamwork with parents. Recruiting professionals for the preschool does not only improve quality of service but directly impacts the children as well.
Using professionals facilitates the adoption of context-appropriate methods. Bredekamp (1996) finds that adopting a playful method of instruction is very effective when dealing with children. Chaille and Silvern (1997) argue that children understand through play, and they identify a number of goals that can be achieved through play. First is active education that children gain through practice and symbolic play and games with rules. Others are play and content, play and physical knowledge, play and logico-mathematical knowledge, and play and language. The last two are play and curricular integration, and play and socio-moral environment. Lauding the play approach, the authors argue that, apart from its informal method, it facilitates cross-fertilization of ideas and connections across content areas. They write that:

Literacy and spatial relations come together in play when a child builds a set of gears and labels each part to keep track of where they belong. Mathematics and oral communication occur simultaneously as children play an exciting card game and debate the ways to keep score. (p.88)

Preschool Staff

A number of authors have identified the basic qualifications for preschool managers and caregivers. Authors such as Marino (1992) provide recruitment and selection procedures and what to look for during interviewing. Apart from staff members having a clear knowledge of the philosophy of the center, Marino notes that they are expected to have a good understanding of the macro-level legislative and policy frameworks. Ideally, staff should have some experience and be given in-service training during their tenure of office. On-the-job training should include knowledge about the cultural, social, emotional, and physiological, as well as the spiritual aspects of children’s lives. In general, staff members are expected to be empathic, well-trained and talented and to have stable temperaments.
Staff credentials and licensing may differ from country to country. Although obtaining a license could be a one-time activity, there is the need for in-service training to ensure that staff members are abreast with new trends. Streets (1992) finds that the criteria for preschools caregivers should not be just academic credentials, but should also include cultural expertise, versatility and willingness to learn new methods.

**Theoretical Frameworks of the Study**

Two development-related theories, the human capability theory developed by Martha Nussbaum (2000) and the bio-ecological theory by Urie Brofenbrenner, have served as the theoretical frameworks for this study. Anselmo (1987) defines theory as “an organized system of hypotheses or statements, based on observations and evidence that explains or predicts something” (p. 7). Other authors posit that theory has the dual purpose of providing a framework for posing questions and analyzing findings and giving meaning in relation to cultural values and belief systems of their times (Berk, 1999). Most literature on child development has used theories from education, health and psychology disciplines to examine childcare and development. Due to the multidisciplinary approach of ECD, human capability and bio-ecological theories have been used as a backdrop for interrogating the findings in the research sites. The eclectic nature of the two theories allows for the examination of a broad spectrum of subjects such as context, policy and process in the provision of ECD services in Ghana.

**Preschool in Ghana**

Preschool service in Ghana is the only segment of early childhood care services that targets children of the upper age range of early childhood. The development of preschools in Ghana has its roots in pre-colonial education. Prior to
colonization by Western European countries, namely the Danes, the Dutch, and the British, the indigenous people of Ghana had traditional forms of informal maternal care and childcare which took place in the home but was supported by the entire community. Introduction of education by Western colonialists started as formal schools established for evangelical purposes by European missionaries in the nineteenth century. Educational goals focused on the cognitive development of children above six years of age. Early reports of education recount the inception of formal education as home schools by wives of foreign settlers for their own children. The facility was later extended to the communities (Graham 1971). The initial schools outside the home environments excluded childcare services for younger children which were later added to prevent younger siblings of pupils from disrupting classes. It was, however, provided from a needs-based approach and was not an integral part of basic education.

Despite global calls, ECD services in Ghana have received relatively little attention at the national level. Apart from the formulation of a national policy and assignment of oversight responsibility to some identified government agencies, notably the Ministry of Education in 1978 and 1983, the Department of Social Welfare (DSW) in 1979 and 1999, and the Ghana National Commission on Children in 1993, the involvement of the government in center-based ECD services has been negligible in terms of infrastructural provision and fiscal allocation. Monitoring of services has also been minimal. Equal access to quality ECD programs as a fair start for all children therefore appears to be an illusion. The trend in Ghana mirrors the situation in Africa in general as reflected in the observation by ADEA:

To date, however, ECD has had low priority in government policies, ECD initiatives are limited and unevenly distributed, and there are wide differences in quality of the initiatives. Most ECD programs are developed and maintained by private sector, international and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). They
suffer from inadequate funding and a lack of coherence, coordination, sustainability and long-term policies. This is particularly true in Africa, where scarce resources, especially for education, suggest that investment in ECD could endanger the commitment to other education sectors. (ADEA, 2000, p. 7)

In Ghana, as in most developing countries, the provision of ECD services occurs in various forms that differ from or are not fully in conformity with the researched-based holistic approach (Irvine, 1999). The multiplicity of contextual factors that dictate the nature of childcare has led to a disjunction between ECD theory and practice and expectations and realities. Consequently, childcare programs in Africa range from traditional to transitional to the modern. Most programs are structurally fragmented into education, health, social welfare, and women’s issues, resulting in lack of coordination, non-integrated delivery of services, and less than optimal benefits to children (Tokington, 2004).

This dependency of ECD on other programs, such as being tacked them onto other programs rather than existing as freestanding activities, often results in poor leveraging of resources to enhance quality of service (World Bank, 2001). In addition, inadequate resources, civil unrest with its attendant displacement of people and environmental problems, along with politics, also impact early childcare given to African children. The result is that Africa has the highest death rate of preventable childhood diseases, malnutrition and undernourishment of children, and low school enrollment (Bellamy, 2004; Human Development Report, 2003), all of which point to inappropriate early childhood care and development. After several attempts (since independence in 1957) to integrate preschools into the basic curriculum in 2007, the government included preschool as a component of free compulsory universal basic education. Despite this move, public preschool services have become operational in 68 out of the total 142 districts where personnel have been trained in the management
of preschools. With the low public preschool coverage, more than 50% of Ghanaian preschool children are in the private sector and in urban communities.

Theoretical Frameworks of the Study

*Human Capability Theory*

Nussbaum’s (2000) human capability approach argues that each individual, when given the required resources and support within the appropriate institutional structures, should be able to develop to his or her optimum potential. The approach conforms to the rights-based approach of giving each child a fair start in life through equal access to holistic ECD. However, Nussbaum argues that individuals vary greatly in their needs for resources and in their ability to convert resources into valuable functioning capabilities. This assertion has an underlying principle that human development is patterned but unique and corresponds to Berk’s (1999) acknowledgment of consistency and variability in child development. In considering of ECD from a rights-based perspective, therefore, it becomes necessary that the curriculum be tailored to the peculiarities of the social context and personal idiosyncrasies of the child.

Nussbaum’s assertion also echoes Kozol’s (1994) observation that restraining contextual forces embedded in public and social policies in the United States account for “savage inequalities” in school facilities and academic achievement of children in schools located in low- and high-income communities. Thus, with respect to ensuring a fair start for all children, there is a need for enabling political, religious, economic, social, and cultural structures in the communities. Accordingly, this study, through the human capabilities theory, will examine how political, social, economic and cultural forces promote or constrain private and public provision of ECD services for preschool children, between ages four and six, in the research site.
**Bio-ecological Systems Theory**

Focusing mainly on the environment of children’s development, bio-ecological theory argues that the characteristics of children are the outcome of biological and ecological forces, specifically, genetics and the environment, known as nurturing and nature (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). The bio-ecological approach posits interplay in the development of the child between genetic factors, health and nutrition on one side and the ecology covering the family and community inclusive of its policies, laws, and structures on the other. Ball et al. (2000) in application of the theory to the African context, argue for a bio-eco-cultural generative model that considers cultural factors such as the languages, beliefs and practices of the heritage within which the child is located.

The bio-eco-cultural approach, which fosters the development of a generative curriculum model, also underscores Nussbaum’s call for consideration of context in the development of human capability. In consideration of context, Bronfenbrenner (1979) presents a nested system of various levels of environment starting with the micro-system at the innermost family circle through the meso-system at the neighborhood level inclusive of school, and the exo-system covering the social setting to the macro-system level of cultural values, laws, policies and resources that all play vital roles in the development of children. These four levels of nested systems will bring to light the effect of context in the provision of equitable, quality childcare services in Ghana. Various authors have examined the causes of the inadequate quality of ECD in Africa (Vargas-Baron, 2004; Nsamenang, 1992). In an analysis of ECD program delivery in Africa, Vargas-Baron, (2004) categorizes challenges into environmental, institutional, education, conflict prevention, health, nutrition, and sanitation factors. The classification provides a lens for analysis of factors impeding quality of early care of children at each social level.
This classification is useful since each identified challenge can be located
within one of the ecological system levels proposed by Brofenbrenner (1979). The
various levels also cover the political, social, economic, cultural and institutional
structures that Nussbaum (2000) advocates as essential for achieving individual
human capability. Using the literature, mostly from Western studies due to the dearth
of publications and research in the field in Africa and particularly in Ghana, the four
cognitive, physical, emotional, and social development components of holistic
childcare are examined within the human capability and bio-ecological theoretical
frameworks. The strategy offers a template for standard examination of the factors
affecting ECD program delivery in each of the preschool sites.

ECD is considered holistic and of good quality when it covers cognitive,
emotional, physical, and social development and draws from theories of education,
psychology, and medicine. Of the four integrated areas, cognitive development draws
from behaviorism, which argues that people learn through observation and classical
and operant conditioning. It also draws from social learning theory which posits that
children develop through their modeling and imitation of observable behavior
(Bandura, 1979). Due to the continuous development spanning eight years, the
holistic approach draws heavily from Piaget’s cognitive-developmental theory that
acknowledges four stages of development. Three, namely, the sensorimotor, the
preoperational, and the concrete operational stages, occur during the early childhood
period. For emotional development, ECD draws on the theory of ethnology.

Berk (1999) defines ethnology as imprinting where a living being observes,
adapts, and survives. Ethnology as a child development theory has become prominent
since it acknowledges critical and sensitive periods of imprinting. The critical period
in ECD is defined as “the time span during which the child is biologically prepared to
acquire certain capacities but needs the support of an appropriately stimulating environment” while “sensitive time is a time that is optimal for certain capacities to emerge and in which the individual is especially responsive to environmental influences” (Berk, 1999, p. 25). The consideration of a critical period during the first three years of life with the following five years as sensitive to human development, therefore, makes this theory relevant in understanding preschool since it leads to an examination of how the child and the environment respond to each other.

However, while cognitive developmental, behaviorism, and social learning theories focus mainly on the child, ethnological theory extends beyond the child to the caregiver who serves as the model and has influence on the child’s emotional development. Simultaneously, ethnology also looks at biological and genetic roots of development and thus attends to the child’s physical development. Focusing on the influence of the environment on human development, ECD also draws from ecological systems theory which explores the micro environment and macro-environment of the child (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). A perspective similar to the bi-directional influence of the environment and the child on each other, Vygostky’s (1978) socio-cultural theory, which posits the development of the child as socially mediated by the values, skills and values of the community, also serves as a theoretical framework for quality preschool.

Consequently, due to the multidisciplinary nature of ECD including preschool, no single theory meets all the requirements. Despite the diverse theories, Berk (1999) argues that there is, however, both consistency and variability in child development, in the same way that child development is patterned but unique. The consistency is based on scientific findings of universal biological growth patterns of children while variations result from genetic idiosyncrasies of children and variability in the
environment within which the development occurs. Due to this multi-dimension aspect of the ECD concept, as indicated earlier, its components such as preschool is now being analyzed within the dynamic systems theory that considers the child’s mind, body, and social and physical worlds as an integrated system that directs the mastery of new skills.

Based on some of the theories indicated in the preceding paragraphs, child-related organizations and professionals have established guidelines for the development of quality in preschools (The Institute of Child Resources, 1979). Key among the criteria for good quality is licensing that attests to compliance with official regulations on health and safety requirements. The regulations require centers to offer more than custodial services to include programs directed at emotional, social, and intellectual development of children using appropriate curricula, teaching resources, and physical infrastructure at the centers. Some specific quality standards include:

- Caregiver ratio of one adult to six children, two adults to six to nine children,
- Daily time allocation covering activities inclusive of nap, mealtime, learning, arts and crafts, group activity time, and individual activity time.
- Trained and competent staff
- Nutritious meals
- Opportunities for parents to observe and discuss children’s needs and evaluation programs.
- Periodic medical examination for both children and staff.

Best Preschool Practices

Studies carried out in Western countries indicate that for optimal benefits of preschool to be obtained, programs need to be multidimensional to meet the four child developmental goals. Meyer (1995) recommends a three-dimensional comprehensive
framework that first addresses child developmental status, followed by a complementary approach that attends to family, community, institutional and cultural considerations, and, third, program characteristics that focus on the special circumstances of the child. Woodhead (1996) also calls for three-pronged programming of input, process, and outcome strategy. He argues that quality preschool is only possible when contextual appropriateness, stakeholders, and beneficiaries are part of the planning process. Also using a three-dimensional framework, Levine & White (1994) also provide another metaphorical framework that argues for consideration of organic hardware (biological features and needs of the child), ecological firmware (stratification of the context, similar to Bronfenbrenner’s nested ecological systems) and cultural software (equivalent to the beliefs and values within which the child is located). In effect, preschool service delivery cannot be possible without an integrated planning that brings together the context, resources, and values within which the child resides.

In a study on ECD in Ontario, Canada, McCain and Mustard (1999) argue that ECD programs should be practical and accessible to all children. Programs should not be uniform but be based on the needs of the child and community and should be participatory in the planning stage. While most authors agree to the context-demand approach, Meyer (1993) argues that such planning should form part of broad country development programs but must be flexible, built upon effective local practices of childcare, and financially sustainable. Based on studies carried out in India, Peru, Nepal, Indonesia, and China, Nunes (1994) sees a need for rejection of universalism in ECD programming. He calls for relativism and reiterates Meyer’s view that “an intervention program that seeks to transform the children living in
threatening environments into what one might call textbook children loses sight of the strengths of those children on whose behalf it is acting” (p. 163).

Ideally, all these programs should occur within a rights-based approach of legislative and policy frameworks that will ensure an equal and fair start for all children. The literature points out that in countries, such as Sweden and Canada, where ECD programs have been effective, legislations and investments in ECD have been directed at modifying childhood inequalities emanating from poverty and discrimination by making required services available to all children right from birth. As a result, these best practices have been accessible comprehensive models of seamless supports (not demarcated into health, education, etc.) and early interventions, family friendly, and aligned to the resources in the community. In Canada preschool services are well regulated to two hours a day for children while the remaining hours are spent in day care centers. The schedule is to have a balance between preparation for school and personal development through play and the creativity of the child.

To ensure quality of service and to promote patronage, complementary services, in the form of extended maternity leave, reduced and flexible work hours, and nutrition allocation, are available to ensure that full-time attendance at childcare and preschool centers would be less than eight hours in a day (McCain & Mustard, 1999). In the United States, the almost half-a-century-old Head Start programs, covering nutrition, health, home and outside care services for children by parents, caregivers and social service professionals, have brought to the fore evidence of positive effects on children exposed to good quality child care and preschool services, as opposed to those who did not receive such exposure (Berger, 1983; USDHHS, 1997).
In particular, the Ypsilanti program for high-risk children in Michigan acclaimed for having had long-term effects in the reduction of the school dropout rate, drug abuse, and teenage pregnancy (cited in McCain & Mustard, 1999), substantiates Meyer’s (1993) position that programs should be tailored to the special circumstances of children. Another program, the Carolina Abecedarian Project, which started with some children at the tender age of six weeks, attests to the same positive development of children exposed to quality care. Not only in the U.S., but also in Canadian, Swedish, French, and British ECD studies, similar positive outcomes have been obtained (Osborn, et al., 1987 cited in McCain & Mustard, 1999). There are, however, no such longitudinal studies in communities in Ghana to determine the effect of ECD on child development.

Family and Social Benefits of ECD

A considerable body of empirical studies provides evidence of the benefits of both traditional and modern ECD forms. Mwamwenda, (1995), Dove (2001), and Eduful (2001) find that traditional forms of childcare, such as breastfeeding beyond the age of two years, was, in addition to nutritional value, used as a form of contraception that led to the spacing of children (Kabiru, Njenga, & Mutua, 1998). In addition, the communal support given to parents in the nurturing and care of children in traditional societies ensures protection and elimination of orphans in the community. In all countries, the provision of institutionalized ECD services has also been positively acknowledged due to its ability to free parents and siblings from childcare services for other productive activities.

Young girls of preschool age in particular are acknowledged to have been relieved from ECD from family childcare responsibilities for enrollment in basic education. Ballara (1991) attributes the narrowing of the gender disparity in basic
education in Guinea to the changing pattern of early childcare. Fafunwa and Aisiku (1982), in their analysis of formal education, observe that formal education in Africa delineated social responsibilities of the learners by educating males for public space responsibilities while girls attended to house chores, including child minding in the private space. The practice for a long time accounted for the persistent lower enrollment of girls in education until recently. There has been a gradual closing of gender disparity in Ghana’s education to 81% and 78% for boys and girls, respectively, from the ratio of six boys to one girl in the 19th Century (Graham, 1979). In sum, the studies in Ontario, Canada, confirm that the level of care and stimulation correlates with the benefits of school readiness, increased efficiency of primary school investments, and human capital formation (McCain & Mustard, 1999).

Summary and Conclusions of Literature Review

The literature review has brought to the fore the eclectic nature of the ECD concept. There is, however, a paucity of literature on preschool services in Ghana that could have contributed to an in-depth review of the phenomenon; the state of affairs justifies the need for research about preschool services. Among the key outcomes of the review are:

- Firstly, the consensus that preschool involves a well-planned, integrated, and systematic delivery of nutritional, health, and psychosocial nurturing and training procedures for children below the age of eight years (Anselmo, 1987; Berk, 1999; Myers, 1993; Nsamenang, 1992; Woodhead, 1988). The various terminologies have not only led to misconceptions about the program but also to the provision of a variety of services that are described as day care, nursery or preschools in various contexts. In most cases, services have been based on the orientations and objectives of the preschool service providers.
• Secondly, despite the differences in definitions, there is acknowledgment that the stages of development are not static but form a continuum; they are also not uniform for all children. According to Anselmo (1987), seven or eight years is the period of intellectual transition when most children begin to think logically and solve problems and is, therefore, appropriate as the transition from early to middle childhood. Some children may, however, achieve logical thinking and problem solving before seven or after eight years. The age synchronizes with traditional stages of child development in Ghana.

• Besides the terminological differences associated with the care component of the definition, the development component is also alleged to be contextual. According to Meyer (1993, p. 19) “child development is a process of change in which the child learns to handle ever more complex levels of moving, thinking, feeling, and relating to others.” Thus in Meyer’s definition, the focus is on activities carried out by the child and not services given to the child by others.

• In her definition, and similar to Meyers, Berk (1999) also places emphasis on the child but moves it further beyond activities to the nature of the child’s activity. Among other things, she brings to the fore issues such as the continuous or discontinuous nature of development, stages of development, and the controversy as to whether development is nurture or by nature, integral and/or interactive, patterned or unique. Despite these issues, there is consensus on the multidimensional nature of child development as being inclusive of the physical motor dimension (the ability to move and coordinate), the cognitive dimension (the ability to think and reason), the emotional dimension (the ability to feel), the social dimension (the ability to relate to others) and the
preschool stage as a transition period for children. This literature review serves as a lens for analysis of findings from the field study.
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter covers the methods used to examine and analyze preschool services in two communities in the Tema Municipality in Ghana. It includes the processes for the collection and the analyses of the data. The methods include review of empirical information from governmental human development and annual institutional reports and literature review, as well as anecdotal reports from traditional caregivers. Triangulation with observations, interviews, and surveys was done to verify data.

The methodology and methods approach of this study drew from Harding’s (1986) position that identifies two aspects of a research design, namely, methodology that involves the theory and analysis of how research proceeds or should proceed, and the method that deals with techniques for gathering and analyzing data. Therefore, the first part of this chapter outlines the methodology of the study while the second part covers the methods and techniques that were used in the gathering and analysis of data on preschool services in the two research communities.

Research Design

As indicated Chapter One, the objective of the study is to gain insight into the nature of preschool education in rural and urban communities in Tema Municipality. Accordingly, I drew on the recommendations of Borg and Gail (1996, p. 324) that researchers should design a study so that it will yield the strongest possible evidence to support or refute a knowledge claim; and that the purpose of the study should be central in making decisions against a continuum of alternative research designs.

I used a qualitative methodology for this study. In addition to Borg and Gail’s principles, the choice of research design also drew from Patton’s (2002) assertion that the research design should be guided by the purpose of the study, the sample,
available resources, ability of the researcher, and academic disciplinary procedures of rigor and validity.

Using qualitative design to explore and obtain an in-depth understanding of existing preschool services and their underlying causes, a case study approach has been used. Leary (2001) observes that a case study is a detailed description of an individual, group, or event. Yin (2003) defines the case study as “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident (p. 13).” In a meta-analysis of case studies, Yin identifies four categories--namely, the single case (holistic), single embedded case, multiple holistic case, and multiple embedded case. From a similar perspective, Stakes (2000) also points out that in multiple case studies, the individual cases serve as the units of analysis and could be incidents, individuals, programs, or anything that can be defined as a “specific, unique, bounded system” (p. 436). Since this study covers four different geographical contexts, the holistic multiple-case-studies design was found to be the most suitable for this inquiry as it allowed for simultaneous examination and comparison of two or more cases as a composite study.

Providing a more practical approach, Patton (2002, p. 450) identifies a three-step process of constructing case studies and describes the procedure as the process of organizing data by specific cases using all available data collection strategies, namely, observation, document analysis, and interview including contextual information about a phenomenon. Patton’s procedure was therefore employed in the study with each preschool center serving as a unit of analysis for observation, interview, and document analysis. The design was robust because it allowed me to literally replicate using the interview protocol developed and the matrix for notes-taking at each project
site. This approach was a critical factor in ensuring uniformity and comparison among the four cases studied. The approach also lent itself to the presentation of the findings in a matrix form for analysis within the diverse theoretical and thematic frameworks discussed in the literature review in the preceding chapter.

Multiple-Case-Study Protocol

The multiple-case-study protocol of this study covered three aspects: the questionnaire, the procedures, and general guidelines that were employed in the field. Three separate sub-protocols covering document analysis, observation, and interviewing that spelled out questions, procedures, and rules for each of the three methods were developed to guide the study. I used the developed protocols as a guide throughout the field activities and sequence of the information-gathering process to ensure uniformity for the four preschools under study (Creswell, 1998; Patton, 2002).

The protocols were then refined through consultations with my academic advisor and participants in the field. A pilot study was carried out and the findings used to improve the field protocol, especially related to linguistic issues. The interview protocol focused on basic information on the preschool, management, curriculum, parent-center relations, external supervision and children’s services in each of the centers. Multiple sources of information from the stakeholders, notably parents, providers, and caregivers, were used to corroborate and verify information collected from literature and public officials and also to establish credibility of the report.

As part of the protocol, I made contact with public officers and preschool participants through letters and personal communications prior to any visit or field exercises. The letters to the Municipal Education Office, in particular, informed participants about the proposed research, the planned use of the findings, and the benefits that could be derived from the study. Although primarily for seeking entry,
the introductory letter sought technical advice in the identification and selection of the
preschools. Since my schedule could be constrained by respondents’ programs,
scheduling was made as flexible as possible to accommodate the availability of the
researchers, especially the public officers. There was also provision in the field
timetable for changes in schedules for networking, planned interviews, observations,
and document analysis to accommodate my participants’ availability.

Research Methods
Based on the objective of finding information on preschool service delivery in
contrasting settings in the Tema Municipality, I used the qualitative method of
inquiry. This method was appropriate as it facilitated achieving my goal of describing,
examining, and interpreting the preschool phenomenon within a cultural, social,
economic, and political milieu. Noting the dynamic nature of the method during the
study, I came to agree with Patton’s (2002) observation that researchers should be
open to multiple social dimensions related to the issue being investigated. This is due
to the fact that unexpected occurrences such as seeking direction to preschool from a
street hawker who was not one of my participants in the street provided another
perspective to the preschool concept. Although the inquiry was qualitative, I
collected some complementary quantitative data during the field survey to facilitate
comparisons of some existing services and infrastructure.

My use of the quantitative data in the qualitative study was based on Leary’s
(2001) view that quantitative research methods could be used to describe the
characteristics or behaviors of a given population in a systematic and accurate
fashion. Complementing the study with some quantitative study drew from Harris’s
(1998) assertion and argument that descriptive quantitative research leads to the
presentation of information in an accurate, concise, and understandable manner,
which is the goal of this study. Therefore, in this study, some descriptive statistical
research methods have been employed in the survey questionnaires, interviews, and observations to collect information about the physical infrastructure, resources, care processes, parents, children, and care providers at the preschool centers. The methods included the use of nominal and ordinal levels to determine frequency, ratio, and rating.

I also found that using the quantitative data was appropriate for minimizing the element of subjectivity often associated with qualitative studies. This was particularly useful during the examination of resources at the center where I was able to count some items. The specific number of recreational equipment and toys I counted eliminated subjective and relative descriptions such as adequate or satisfactory. The data were used as indicators to complement the responses from interviews. In general, however, the data collected from varied multiple methods of interviews, observation, questionnaires, and document analysis were based on Patton’s (2002) argument that the use of multiple research data collection procedures leads to triangulation that yields detailed insights about an existing situation. The multiple sources also offer an opportunity for the verification of the collected data. The following sections provide details of the various data collection procedures employed in the field.

Sample Population and Selection of Participants
Although there is a large number of preschool centers in Ghana, with the majority located in the urban and private sectors, the case study research design did not foster the use of a large sample. Due to resource constraints and the interest in the procedural and contextual differences of the preschool services, a purposive sampling process was found most expedient. Initial sampling that involved classification of the locations into urban and rural communities, using existing official demarcations of the area council zoning of the Tema District Assembly, was used. Similarly, for private
and public distinction of preschool, I depended on existing official registration classifications.

Purposive sampling was again used to identify centers that were established within the same year to ensure historical uniformity. In the absence of preschool centers which started the same year, I made use of proximity in the period of establishment, with a maximum of a two-year differential interval.

The sampling of the preschools was done with the assistance of the Tema Municipal Education Office (TME). My initial plan was to carry out the studies in urban and rural communities. Consultations with TME led to a revision of research sites. With a population of 504,400 in 2000, Tema Municipality has less than 10% of its population living in rural communities. The majority lives in densely populated peri-urban communities with relatively limited social amenities. TME was more interested in knowing about quality of preschool services in these peri-urban and slum communities in the area under its administrative jurisdiction. I therefore revised my proposal to work within the peri-urban, deprived communities of the municipality.

There were five different groups in this study. Using pseudonyms, they have been listed in the chronological order in which I interviewed them:

- National and municipal officials in charge of preschool education: 7
- Managers of public preschool centers: 2 (Josephine and Felicia)
- Proprietors of private preschools in the study: 2 (Gifty in the peri-urban school and DM in the urban private schools
- Caregivers at preschools: 8
- Parents and guardians: 12 (3 from each preschool)
- Children: 20 (5 from each preschool)
After the initial interview, during the course of the study, there were follow-up discussions with some of the participants, notably the caregivers and officials.

The national officers were selected purposively. They included the national director of the DSW, who is in charge of registration of daycare centers, and the Head of Preschool Education at the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports. Information received from these two officers deepened my knowledge immensely as it provided both historical and policy direction of preschool education in Ghana including a new education reform that was to make preschool education an integral part of basic education.

Research Sites
The preschool centers served as one case in the study. Selection of the centers was done with the assistance of the Municipal Education Officer who recommended that I consider only schools that had been in operation for a minimum of five years. In accordance with official standard procedures, newly established schools have a five-year grace period during which all standard requirements must be met. Each of the four preschools in the study, therefore, served as a unit of analysis to examine four thematic components of ECD, namely, cognitive, emotional, physical, and social goals. These were examined individually to ensure uniformity of methods and themes among the centers.

Data Collection
Data were collected over a three-month period. Data collected during this period included document analysis at government offices and the preschool centers, over a period of three weeks. The Tema Municipal Assembly co-ordinating director helped me obtain, in one day, the necessary approval from the Tema Municipal Education Directorate (TMED) to conduct the studies at the preschool centers. The officers at the TMED made up my second batch of interviewees. The director of the
DSW and the director of Preschool Education had already been interviewed separately. Two officers participated jointly in the interviews which lasted about two hours. All interviews had been preceded by short meetings during which officers were briefed on the background and purpose of the study.

Although the first three weeks were spent scheduling appointments and interviews and on official document analysis, the analysis was carried out continuously during the entire field studies process as I had to refer and verify information throughout the period. The initial document analysis was followed by four weeks in the field, with one week spent in each preschool as a participant-observer. The last three weeks were used to follow up and verify findings with the participants.

During the discussions with the TMED, my original site was changed from a distant rural community to a peri-urban community, Kpone, just at the outskirts of the Tema Township. The community comprised indigenous fisher folk who, given their economic indicators, physical environment, and lifestyles would not be considered as urban. Thus, the contrasting socioeconomic context fitted in perfectly with my originally planned research site of a rural community. The change in research site eventually proved beneficial as it allowed me to commute easily between the study locations.

The qualitative data were obtained through document analysis, surveys, interviews, and observation. The technique of using different strategies for data collection, which is viewed as triangulation of techniques and ensuring rigor, ultimately helped me in assembling data from different perspectives. While Denzin and Lincoln (2000) argue that this use of multiple sources enhances credibility and trustworthiness of the research, Richardson (2000) posits that multiple sources lead to
crystallization of data, which connotes depth, complexity, and thoroughness.

Richardson further explains that although triangulation could convey an image of fixed ideas, crystallization portrays an image of infinite components. In his view, crystallization connotes a thorough but partial understanding of an issue, thus allowing room for more knowledge. Although all the various instruments were employed, a great deal of time was spent in observation, especially of the children and caregivers.

Methods for Data Collection

Document Analysis

Glesne (1999) observes that information from documents may corroborate findings from observations and interviews. She argues that critical examination of documents, including artifacts and relating them to interviews helps in the development of further questions for an enhanced understanding of the topic under study. It was therefore necessary for me to have a clear understanding of the national early childhood policy framework in order to prepare myself adequately for the field exercise. Among official documents studied were the Constitution, National Early Childhood Policy, and the new education policy document which was then awaiting a Government White Paper. The new education reform policy, unlike all previous education policies, now includes a two-year preschool component as part of the free compulsory basic education.

The document analysis started at the national and municipal offices with a review of legislation and policy documents related to both ECD and preschool education. It included reports, old and pending education policies, monitoring reports, and guidelines for establishment of ECD and preschools. My entry was facilitated by previous working relations with most of the officers when I worked at the Ghana National Commission on Children. The officers introduced me with other officers. I
also sought permission from the Association of Private Daycare Center Operators and had access to their constitution.

At the premises of the four research sites, I reviewed general information about the centers but focused on specific areas. Significant areas in the document review included the background, vision, written curriculum, teaching materials, admission documents, and school regulations. I also examined attendance registers, health records, reports of the children and non-confidential staff records at the center. I looked at correspondence between the school and some parents. One of my aims in exploring the documents was to unearth differences in services, ideological approaches, costs, care practices, and qualification of the care-giving personnel. The information obtained helped immensely in the interviewing of parents on the nature and cost of services, both for verification and opinions about service delivery at each center.

While working on this project, I found three feature articles on the topic in the local newspapers, which provided insights into public opinion on the preschools and indicated how topical ECD had become in relation, not only to the national development agenda but also to global human rights and public health. Other documents included art work by children, graffiti on walls, and artifacts displayed in the schools; these also became a focus of interest and served as reference for probes during my interviews. In addition, measurable information, such as funding and time and spatial use, was examined.

Survey Questionnaires

One method used in the data collection was a survey using structured questionnaires to be completed by parents and caregivers on their views on ECD services with a view to address question two of the study. Auerbach’s (1981) parental guide for assessment of various childcare services, attached as Appendix A, was used
for examination of specific themes to determine the core interest of the preschools. I distributed twenty questionnaires to five parents in each preschool and had assurances from them that I would receive the completed forms within three days.

Only seven out of the twenty parents were male and they were in the company of their wives. All were parents in the private school. Administering the questionnaire took a little longer in the public preschool since most of the children were brought to and picked up from school by domestic servants or siblings. Although was just 60% response to the surveys, the surveys using Appendix B contributed to insight about parents, officials’, and caregivers' attitude and performance. Survey questions in Appendix C threw light on the factors impacting preschool access, operations, and quality and thus responded to the third research question.

Interviews
Patton (2002) observes that an interview guide serves several purposes. It helps in addressing common questions to the participants. It also helps in focusing on the subject, thus allowing the maximum use of the interview time. An interview guide also allows flexibility in asking follow-up questions. I decided to adhere to a maximum of 75 minutes (inclusive of pleasantries) to avoid respondents feeling that too much of their time was being taken. During my interviews, I used interview guides especially at the beginning of the interview session and semi-structured and open-ended interviews to avoid influencing the responses of either individuals or groups. I started with broad questions on impressions about preschool services and zeroed in on the specific preschool. I always started with the owner or most senior caregiver at the preschool. Prior to the interviews, I had requested a tour of the premises and all four centers obliged.
Wengraf’s (2001) recommendation that much preparation on the part of the researcher is required before the use of open–ended interviews was very useful; equally useful was Beebe’s (2001) advice to use the interview guide, journal, and recording to ensure recollection and verification of the interview proceedings. Both methods were employed during the interview. I developed questions, likely follow-up responses, and their follow-up questions and wrote them all down. I charted them out and memorized them before the interviews. Although the interviews primarily sought to obtain the same information from each preschool, the content, wording and order of questions were changed in relation to circumstances in the field as advised by Fetterman (1989). In the peri-urban communities, I had to resort to the local Ga language with which the teachers felt at home but, still used a structured approach. Time was not an issue in the public school in the peri-urban community; the children were asked to put their heads down and sleep while we talked.

The interviews with the children were very informal, unstructured, and conversational. Of the 20 children selected at random, three were either too shy to talk or felt intimidated by a new teacher and not even the candies could help. While the interviews with the adults were scheduled, interviewing the children took a completely different form and was carried out at times when they were considered “interviewable.” This was based on advice from my advisor who had always recommended making the most of “teachable” moments in class; identifying the most expedient time for interviewing children was an essential strategy. The interview sessions with the children were intermittent as I could not go more than 20 minutes without losing the child’s attention. The best moments were during snack periods and recreation and took more time and effort than I had anticipated. In one of the public preschools, I had to take on my lap a child who had fallen down and use that as an
opportunity to chat with him and obtain the information that I needed. Fortunately, my preparation for the interviews, based on guidelines from literature on qualitative research methods, reduced my being flustered by such unexpected incidents. All the interviews included verification of information from document analysis and the observations which I had previously recorded in my notebook. Appendix D shows an interview guide designed for the study.

In the private schools, the “interviewable” moments occurred during my participant/observation role. Prior to those sessions, I had received the consent of both caregivers and parents to be in class and also to interact with and interview the children. I had gained the trust and confidence of the children as I participated in their class activities, recreation, serving of meals, solving jigsaw puzzles, and attending to individual needs of the children. Interviews took place in such varied settings as meal times and recreation, in an informal chatting manner which occurred at different times for the two stream classes. This arrangement meant I had to break my observation in one class to carry out interviews with the group of children on break. The interruptions in observation and nature of the interviews demanded intensive journaling to ensure that all needed information was captured during the intermittent interviews throughout the week. I had to fill out a contact summary sheet (Miles & Huberman, 1984), paying particular attention to themes and issues voluntarily raised by the children. In some cases, information received from one class could be observed in the other, requiring the need to return to check whether it was applicable in the first context. Time was critical in these circumstances when I had to balance a child’s interest in the midst of the curious interest of other children all the while jotting down notes in a record.
Observations

Observation is one of the main methods of gathering data in qualitative research. It involves paying attention, seeing what there is to see, and hearing what there is to hear; practice in writing descriptively; acquiring discipline in recording field notes; knowing how to separate detail from the trivial to achieve the former without being overwhelmed by the latter; using rigorous methods to validate and triangulate observations; and reporting the strengths and limitations of one’s own perspective, which requires both self-knowledge and self-disclosure (Patton, 2002, p. 261).

The process entails systematic planning with a clearly defined objective since the art of observation involves different strategies by the researcher, as an outside observer, described as an etic approach to being involved or immersed through the emic approach as a participant in the context under study (Lincoln & Denzin, 2000). A greater part of the observation was done using the emic approach both as an observer-participant and as a full observer. At my entry to the preschools, I was introduced to the children as a researcher. I had reason to believe that they did not know what researcher meant, however, a few children started calling me teacher or Madam and brought their class work to me for guidance and marking. Others reported to me on other students who were abusing or bullying them and also pointed out some who were misbehaving or talking and expected me to discipline them. My sitting together with the caregivers had apparently conveyed a message that I was one of their caregivers.

To avoid any confusion in the minds of the young children, I was punctual at the center throughout the week and participated fully in the care of the children, including serving of meals and attending to toiletries and recreational activities. The exercise was very rewarding, although challenging, due to the large numbers of
children in the peri-urban classes. The best time for developing rapport with the children was during their recreation period.

I had another opportunity when I went to the National Model Nursery School to see the director. When the children were attracted by my colorful key-holder and wanted to play with it, I used the opportunity to have a small focus-group discussion with children outside my research group to enrich my findings. Although Sidorkin (2002) recommends “third places,” such as coffee houses, as ideal interview locations, the playground and stairway served similar purposes in this study. One thought that kept lingering at the back of my mind was a concern as to how the children would interpret my sudden appearance and disappearance, especially when we had just started bonding at the end of the week.

Despite the use of the emic approach, since neither approaches is static and they are interchangeable along a continuum from observer (spectator with little or no interaction) through observer participant (researcher primarily as observer but with no interaction with participants), participant observer (member of the study group while simultaneously observing) to full participant (fully fledged functioning member of the group/context being studied), all the various strategies had to be used appropriately. The flexibility in the observation method contributed to the emergent design approach of the qualitative study.

Wolcott (1981), cited in Glesne (1999), offers four activities to guide the observation process: observations by a broad sweep; observations of nothing in particular; observations that serve paradoxes; and, lastly, observations that search for problems facing the group. All four processes were employed at one point or another during the study. Observation focus included deviations from ECD procedures as reflected in the literature. Findings from the interviews and documents were also used
to corroborate observations. Using electronic technology was permissible alongside journal recordings, but I found it distracted the children and discontinued it. Ballenger (2001) recommends the use of a double-entry journal which divides each page into two columns, and I used it in the field. One column was used to record raw observations as they occurred in the field; the other was used for ideas, reflections, analysis and connections between different observations. With the children, raw observations had to be recorded quickly and analysis deferred till later.

My observations occurred during interaction between the children and their caregivers, among the children themselves, and between the children and their parents as they brought them to and picked them up from the school. I also observed physical structures and care giving procedures during my attendance at the school; I had access to all locations on the premises. I documented some of the observations on a scoring chart that I had developed. They included observation of the children, physical infrastructure, service delivery procedures in relation to specific themes such as recreation and learning, ratio of teachers to children, and time allocation for activities. Notes were taken intermittently during my stay at the school and collated and reviewed at the end of the day.

*Focus-Group Discussions*

Quasi focus-group discussions of children and caregivers helped to enrich the findings of the study. Although I had planned to have focus-group interviews with all participants, this activity was not in the strictest sense a focus grouped. I met two officials together, three parents together, and two caregivers and the proprietors of the private preschools separately. Most of the caregivers were not ready to communicate much in the presence of their bosses. I was fortunate to have focus-group discussions
with the children; as explained later, one was accidental, and the other was during recreation periods at the preschools.

Data Analysis

Prior to meeting with officials of the Ghana Education Service, (GES), I had reviewed the *Medium Term Development Plans of the TMA, the Human Development Report on Atwima, Builsa and Tema, Ghana Statistical Core Welfare Indicator Questionnaire (2003); and the District Education Report.* Although the schools selected for the study were found from the official records to have been registered in the same year, field research revealed that both private preschools had been in operation for various periods of time before the official registration dates. This normal procedure permitted educational institutions, including preschools, to be in existence for some time before official inspection and formal registration as private institutions. The cases for the study were therefore, four preschool sites: one private and one public preschool in an urban area that was replicated in the peri-urban communities in Tema, the findings of which are analyzed in a later chapter of this report.

According to Glesne (1999), data analysis involves gleaning raw data to separate the significant from the trivial, synthesizing and drawing out patterns in the array of information, defining a framework for making sense, and coming out with some finding. Beebe (2001) posits that analysis can start in the field during the collecting of data. My qualitative data analysis, in accordance with Patton’s view, has been guided by the central purpose of adding knowledge to social science theory and meeting audience expectations and academic discipline. I adopted Miles and Huberman’s (1994) three-step interactive model of analysis, which starts with coding the data, displaying it, and drawing of conclusions, and I combined it with
Gubah’s (1978) method of systematic categorization, which entails identification of recurring regularities in the data collected.

Based on Miles and Huberman’s data analysis sequence, my field notes from interviews and observations were assigned codes. I first developed three-columned pages for analyzing the data. The first column contained the raw data; the second column recorded my remarks and reflections and I used last column for coding. The codes represented the labels for meaning assigned to either descriptive or inferential information to sort and organize the collected data using similarities of phrases, relationships in variables, and patterns and differences in themes for each preschool.

The quantitative responses from the questionnaire were analyzed and developed into tables for comparison of resources. Ratios of teachers to pupils were included as part of determining the quality of services and the individual characteristics of each preschool. The individual cases were then put together in matrix form and analyzed to depict frequencies, matchings, patterns, and differences about the children, parents, caregivers, physical structures, and resources of the preschool centers. Two main approaches were adopted in the matrix analysis, pattern matching and cross-program comparisons, to bring to the fore similarities and disparities in services in the selected centers and also to provide information on parents’ perception of the services in the four research sites.

The analytic process started with self-assessment and a critical look at my proposal; the first determinant was whether my planned activities had been carried out (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984). More important was my constant check whether the data were responding to my research questions. The frequent referrals helped me identify any changes to the proposal, such as the inclusion of issues related to infants in some of the responses. Fortunately, though I had not deviated from my planned activities, I
had lost time due to the inability of officials to keep appointments. There had also been delays in receiving responses to my questionnaires. In general, however, I used the process to check for thoroughness of my data collection and to reacquaint myself with the collected data (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984). Taking a cue from my academic advisors to record all incidents, the exercise helped me jot down significant points that were easily referred to during the writing of this document (Lindlof, 1995).

My data analysis started right at the inception of the fieldwork since the document analysis of each preschool had to be captured in the matrix to provide the background for observations and interviews. It was followed by transcription of the few interviews held in the local dialect of the interviewee. Fortunately, I could speak the local language and did not require an interpreter. I coded the gleaned data using a separate color to represent each case study site mentioned and grouped the colors in categories of sub-headings of the research questions. I wrote a brief memorandum on each category on any observed patterns and relationships; these briefs were extremely useful in synthesizing the findings as I drew lines between any identified similarities. The memorandum writing facilitated my pattern coding since it helped me detect emerging themes and constructs. I then numbered each theme that emerged. The preschools were entered as headings in a table with the emerging themes as the variables on the vertical axis.

Finally, I transferred my reflections into the table and looked for commonalities, differences, and unusual occurrences. The final part of the analysis entailed pattern capturing each topic as a bullet point in a synopsis of the findings. This exercise resulted in the grouping of smaller themes and drafting of summaries for each research site. Comparison of the summaries eventually led to convergence of themes and constructs as well as deviations from known theories. It also helped in
identifying unique incidents at the various preschools, which will be discussed under
the appropriate themes. Some of the data analysis processes were based on guidelines
drawn from Glaser and Strauss (1967) and Landlof (1995), which provided me an
analytic inductive approach to scan for typologies of phenomena that stood out and
findings that responded to the research questions after comparisons and interpretation.

Reliability

Yin (2003) posits that in all types of case studies, the best way to establish
reliability, through which future studies could arrive at close or similar conclusions, is
through documentation. Reliability of the study has therefore been established
through the operational steps for the studies documented in the following case study
protocol. For validation, transcribed data were submitted to adult participants for
review and confirmation of interpretation and for identification of omission of any
themes covered during interviews.

Limitation of the Research Study

Despite my wish that the study be applicable to most children, this was not
possible due to some limitations. In venturing into the field, the following limitations
of the study were encountered:

- Some stakeholders, notably public officials as well as institutions connected to
  provision of ECCD services, expressed concern about the motives of the study
  and resorted to bureaucratic administrative procedures resulting in unnecessary
delays in responding to the questionnaire. However, after persuasion and
  extensive discussions of protocols, they finally yielded and cooperated.

- The qualitative part of the study, which focused mainly on sampling of parents
  of five children enrolled in each ECCD, became very difficult to administer.
  Preschool management personnel wanted to be present at the interview which I
did not permit as I felt that their presence could influence the discussion. The parents were unsure about how the management would react.

- Another limitation was the fact that, in the peri-urban community, due to the high rate of illiteracy, parents were unable to comprehend and answer the questionnaire without extensive assistance. To facilitate the process, five pupils were randomly selected from each preschool and their parents were subsequently interviewed in their homes and helped to answer the questionnaire.
CHAPTER FOUR: GEOGRAPHICAL, HISTORICAL, LEGISLATIVE, AND POLICY CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

Introduction

This chapter presents the geographical, historical, legislative and policy context of the study. My decision that a complete chapter on the context of the study was needed resulted from the literature review that explicitly related to the quality of ECD services which cannot be divorced from the community within which they occur (Berk 1999; Ball & Marfo 2000). Goteberg (2001), in an analysis of the link between quality child development and sustainable economic development calls for an equilibrium between nature (environment and ecology) and human development, particularly at very early ages, in research communities. The author further argues that the environment, inclusive of the ecology, is one of the three key pillars by which early childhood education methods can be assessed and used for sustainable development. Therefore, this chapter endeavors to present the multiple contexts within which the study occurred. The chapter starts with a political and economic overview of Ghana. From that national geographical context, the background information narrows down to the local government administrative area and then to the communities of the study through to the preschool locations.

Geographical Context

Geographically, the study was carried out in Ghana, the first Sub-Saharan African country to gain independence from the British, in 1957. This Anglophone country lies on the Greenwich Meridian just above the equator and shares borders with three Francophone countries. Set within the tropical rain forest with high temperatures, its location makes it prone to infestations of mosquitoes. These cause malaria, the highest (but preventable) childhood killer disease in Africa and therefore
the most commonly recorded cause of absenteeism among schoolchildren in Ghana. The country’s population of over 20 million people comprises 51% female and 49% male; 54% of the children are under the age of 18 (Ghana Statistical Service, 1999). Although the number of children under the age of eight is not known, it is estimated that only 28% of this group is enrolled in ECD programs (UNICEF, 2005).

The country is primarily agro-based, for both export and domestic consumption. However, in the past 25 years, there has been an emerging service industry. The change from agriculture to a service economy has resulted in the decline of its agricultural labor force from 70% in 1970 to 60% in 1999. The decline was partly due to increased urbanization that pulled many youth, in particular, away from rural farming communities. This internal migration is a major social change that has resulted in the decline of traditional childcare services provided by extended family members, notably, grandparents. Unfortunately, however, there are inadequate public child welfare services to compensate for the erosion of family support. This phenomenon is not unique to Ghana. McCain and Mustard (1999) posit that in all societies, institutional and social service structures have not kept pace with emerging economies and changing social environments. This is typical of childcare service structures in Ghana.

Within this country is Tema, the coastal capital city of the Tema Municipal Assembly (TMA), situated about 30 kilometers east of Accra, the national capital. The TMA shares boundaries on the north with the Dangbme West District Assembly (DWDA), on the west with the Accra Metropolitan Assembly (AMA), on the northwest with the Ga East District Assembly (GDA), northeast with Akuapem South District Assembly, and to the south lies the Atlantic Ocean, also known as the Gulf of Guinea. The municipality covers about 396 square kilometers and lies within the coastal savannah zone.
The city of Tema is directly situated on the Greenwich Meridian with the 0° longitude passing through it. It serves as the administrative capital of Tema Municipal Assembly. The objective of developing the town came into focus in 1957 when Ghana’s newly independent government decided to construct a port to serve the eastern and central parts of the country. Tema’s natural geographical advantage earned it the name “The Eastern Gateway of Ghana.” Previously, the country had only one seaport, in the southwestern corner of the country. Due to its industrial layout, Tema emerged as a cosmopolitan city that brought together people of different political and economic backgrounds, in addition to diverse cultural beliefs and norms. The city is currently the largest industrial location with most of the country’s major factories. This is largely due to the presence of the harbor and the availability of industrial lands and infrastructure.

Although well-planned with lots of housing for factory workers, the economic decline in the 1980s led to the emergence of slum areas with large populations of job-seeking migrants from rural communities. The growth of industries in the municipality and the development of residential facilities could not keep pace with the population growth and resulted in low provision or lack of social services, especially sanitation, health, and education. The developments confirm McCain and Mustard’s (1999) observation on the dissonance between population growth and the development of institutional structures and social services. The study was carried out within this city and its peri-urban communities.
Figure 3: Map of Ghana showing regional distribution of children.
Source: Ghana Statistical Service: Ghana Child Labour Survey, March 2003, p. xx

Historical, Legislative, and Policy Context

Information on historical, legislative and policy information was the outcome of document analysis carried out during the first two weeks of the study. It came from the offices and premises of the preschool officials at the national and municipal offices and the four research preschools, as well as from my literature
review. According to the official records and history of education in Ghana, prior to colonization by the Danes, the Dutch and the British, the indigenous people of Ghana had traditional forms of informal maternal and childcare services which took place in the home but were supported by the entire community. Nineteenth-century Western colonialists introduced formal schools for evangelical purposes, and the educational goals focused on developing the cognitive capability of children from about the age of six years or older. Early reports of education recount the inception of formal education in the form of home schools offered by wives of foreign settlers for their own children; the educational services were later extended to the local communities (Graham, 1979).

My literature review showed that the initial schools established by the missionaries for the indigenous communities excluded young children. The lack of birth registrations made it difficult to determine the ages of children, assessment of the school readiness was determined by asking a child to reach over his or her head with right hand to touch the left ear. Ability to do so was a pass for entry to primary one of basic education.

Mission school authorities solved the problem of young children loitering at the school by developing and establishing recreational activities for them. Thus, the inception of institutionalized childcare, then called daycare centers, emerged in Ghana as an offshoot of the introduction of formal education, the Basel Mission took care of children not yet ready for but desirous of being on the school premises (Amponsah, 2001). Development of the daycare center was primarily meant to solve the disruption of school activities by young siblings who followed enrolled children to school. Adults had turned a blind eye since the school enrollment had eroded sibling childcare services, thereby placing additional responsibilities on the adults, particularly females.
Although the practice eventually led to formal recognition of daycare centers by the government, the process of the inception, and much later the establishment, of preschools in Ghana belies Woodhead’s (1996) view that ECD programs should be independently planned and implemented. The author argues further that the development of ECD as a byproduct of formal schooling or other programs, and not as an independent program, eliminates opportunity for inclusion of quality, process, and outcome indicators that are critical for the evaluation of services. Literature reveals that, unlike basic education that has indicators for curriculum; pre-independence preschools had no formal indicators and focused primarily on recreation. However, since the establishment of preschools in the 1940s in colonial Ghana, institutionalized early childcare has undergone major developments including establishment of standards, enactment of legislation, and formulation of policies with indicators for infrastructure, curriculum, and quality. The Ghana Education Service has also created a division solely for preschools.

Historical records indicate that official recognition of formal care for Ghanaian children in their early years occurred when the services were included in the Education Legislation Act 87 of 1961. In the legislation, all nursery schools, then known as preschools, were placed under the Ministry of Education, though they were not part of the free compulsory universal basic education for all school-age children. Following reforms in the education sector in 1987, proposals were made for the inclusion in basic education of two-year preschool education for children between the ages of four and six (Dzobo, 1974). The recommendations were never implemented. In 1975, a Government White Paper, the Evans Anfom Report (1975), presented by another committee on education reforms, reiterated the call for nursery and kindergarten education. This recommendation also was not endorsed by the
government. The failure of implementation of the preschool programs attests to the minimal importance attached to childcare and preschools by the government.

While the Education Act 87 (1961) was in force and recommendations by the Dzobo (1974) and Anfom (1975) committees on preschools inclusion in basic education were still pending, a military government, the Supreme Military Council, which assumed power in 1979, mandated that the DSW, under the Ministry of Employment and Social Welfare, register and regulate the establishment of daycare centers. This lumped all the services given to various categories of children into daycare centers. Since then, lack of clear definitions of what constitutes nursery, kindergarten, preschool, or daycare makes up one of the major controversies undermining early childcare programs in Ghana. To compound the problem, a subsequent decree in 1983 by another military government, the Provisional National Defense Council, made the State Secretary for Education responsible for all policies related to preschool.

Also in 1983, the Ghana National Commission on Children, the government agency responsible for all children’s welfare and development issues, then operating under the Office of the President of Ghana, convened a meeting jointly with UNICEF to streamline preschool education. The meeting brought to the fore the duplication of functions between the Ministry of Education and the DSW, which was under the then-Ministry of Social Welfare in the establishment of institutionalized childcare services. Competition for control of the preschool services, lack of clearly defined boundaries of responsibilities for the various departments providing child-related services, and lack of implementation of reform policies fragmented ECD programs in Ghana.

The meeting also revealed the absence of structured curricula, inconsistencies in regulations, lack of supervision of the centers and trained caregivers with direct
implications for quality. Facilities for public preschool children were found to be inferior to those of basic schools (Boakye, Adamu-Issah, & Etse, 2001). These revelations led to a countrywide survey of early childhood center-based services. Findings of the survey once again highlighted a conflict for control between the DSW and the Ministry of Education because of a lack of defined responsibilities.

To address the problem, a National Advisory Committee (NAC) was appointed to develop an ECD policy, training materials, and curriculum for the consistent training of personnel. The committee was also charged with coordination of the publication of an ECD newsletter and with advising the Ghana National Commission on Children on all ECD-related matters. However, in the course of these developments, the Ministry of Education in 1982 unilaterally established Ghana’s Program for Childcare and Early Educational Development (PROCEED) with the goal of identifying and understanding the extent of available services and gaps in ECD programs. The study covered models of ECD, qualification and levels of teachers, provision and usage of equipment, infrastructure, parental involvement, and ownership of facilities.

This Ministry of Education action fomented the fragmentation and departmental competition for control of ECD services in Ghana. The Ministry of Education based its ECD supervision authority on Education Act 87 (1961) and PNDC Law 42 (1983). It also claimed control of service delivery based on its preschool resources at national, regional, and district levels in addition to some trained personnel and a national nursery training center that developed guidelines for establishment of preschools. The DSW claimed its authority from SMC Decree 144 (1978) and accompanying Legislative Instrument 1230 (1979) and possession of a
training center for daycare givers. Both government agencies were advised to relinquish control to the GNCC in 1993.

In a joint effort of the GNCC, the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, and DSW, an ECD policy with parameters for holistic ECD services delivery was adopted in April 2005. Some key features were on age limit of children at ECD centers and the role and responsibilities of stakeholders comprising parents, communities, private and public sectors, local governments, and NGOs. In addition to the holistic content of the program to cover cognitive, emotional, physical and social development, services were to be accessible, equitable, and affordable in all communities. The policy required that, besides care of children, parents and primary caregivers were to be given training in childcare and parenting.

The policy encompasses a broad array of regulations including directives that legislations against child abuse and deleterious socio-cultural practices at childcare centers are to be enforced (Boakye, 2001). Environmental quality standards and adherence to regulations are also to be enforced through supervision. Other provisions cover mechanisms for collaboration and coordination of services among designated agencies for young children. Also included in the policy guidelines are health and sanitation procedures, particularly in the areas of nutrition, immunization against preventable diseases that lead to infant and maternal mortality, HIV/AIDS, gender disparities, birth registration, and measures undertaken to prevent poor growth of children in their early years.
CHAPTER 5: PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS OF FIELD DATA

Introduction

Chapter Five presents findings from the field. It is a collation of observations and information received, gleaned, analyzed, and in some cases, triangulated from surveys and focus groups of the four research sites in the Tema Municipal Area. As indicated earlier, the need for this research emanated from my personal encounters with various types of preschools that left me with concerns about their implications for children’s actualization of their potentials and a fair start in life. Based on my field experience, the presentation of the findings is organized under three major headings for the three research questions around which the study revolves, namely legislation and policy; the expectations of parents, preschool practitioners, and children; and preschool access, operations, and quality. Each thematic section comprises a number of subheadings that collectively led to insights into the existing strategies and practices of child development.

The structure of the presentation under the various themes is to facilitate easy reference for readers interested in particular topics related to preschools. It is also to provoke debate on identifiable themes that could contribute to redefining specific aspects of preschool issues for the promotion of quality service for all children and eventually contribute to healthy human development from an early age. Overall, the findings have further deepened my conviction of the need for the study.

For a better understanding of the strategies and practices at the four preschools, the findings will start with the status of preschool legislation and policy in Ghana to provide the frameworks in which the study was carried out. Three main themes emerged in response to my first research question as depicted in the following module forming the main segment of my discussions relating to that question.
Findings from the literature review indicated there was no legislation in Ghana specifically tailored to preschools as defined in the operational definitions of preschools. However, there are provisions on childcare in the 1992 Constitution of the Republic of Ghana and the Children’s Act (1998). Neither of the two documents contains any reference to preschool services. While the Constitution deals with welfare of children in general, that is, citizens under the age of 18, in the interpretation section of the Children’s Act, it is stated that “day care centre” means “any early childhood development establishment where children below compulsory school-going age are received and looked after for the day or a substantial part of the day with or without a fee’” (Children’s Act 560, p. 37). In my field study, however, the words “preschool” and day “nursery” appeared to be used interchangeably both in official and unofficial settings to describe formal services provided to children not enrolled in basic education but received and looked after for the day or a substantial part of the day. The different names are used to describe the same entity.
The lack of knowledge about preschools as an institution was one of my earliest experiences in the field. It became evident from the beginning of my research that the terminology used for center-based childcare services was problematic not only for the ordinary person in the street but for preschool practitioners as well. This became apparent during my first visit to the public preschool as I sought directions from a street hawker in the peri-urban community I inquired about the local church building which I had been given as the landmark adjacent to the preschool. The hawker was visibly confused and explained that she did not know what a preschool was. I described it as the place where little children are sent to be cared for and given some recreation and minimal education during the day. She then smiled and said, “Oh, daynurslefo no?” literally translated “Oh, the day nursery kids,” and pointed to the cross towering over the church to my right. I went in the direction she pointed and within five minutes saw a nicely painted sign board with the inscription “Trinity Presbyterian Day Care” (pseudonym).

As I entered the premises, I was met by the church secretary to whom I had talked on the phone about my visit. She greeted me with a warm handshake and a smile, adding “Madam, let me show you around the nursery school first before we talk.” I became aware that within the space of five minutes, childcare services had been described as a day nursery by the hawker (not one of my target participants), a daycare on the signpost, and as a nursery school by the secretary instead of the preschool that I was looking for. Thus, I discovered that there appeared to be no standard terminology for the care of children in institutions outside the home. This interchangeable terminology reoccurred at the three remaining research sites and confirmed my perception.
Even more baffling was the name of the model demonstration school for the training of people wishing to work in early childhood care and development centers. Although the law makes no reference to nursery, and the GES does not have any program called nursery services, its training school is known as the National Model Nursery School (MNS). According to the *Oxford Advanced Learners’ Dictionary*, the word “nursery” means, among other things, “connected with the education of children from 2 to 5 years old.” The dictionary further indicates that it can be compared to kindergarten.

One of my earliest findings showed that the name of the demonstration school was inconsistent with official records and services provided. First, the GES has a mandate for preschool and not nursery; second, the National Model Nursery School’s services are targeted at children between the ages of four and six years and do not fit strictly into the dictionary definition. Furthermore, at the private peri-urban site, the center was called a school because of the proprietor’s ultimate goal of establishing a school. At the private urban site, the center’s name included the services provided by the center, namely, crèche and nursery, while in the public basic school, the children in classes below the school-going age are referred to as preschool children.

After a tour of the “nursery school” with the secretary, I started my discussion with a question about her views about the provisions in the Constitution and the Children’s Act 560 of childcare services. She had no knowledge about either of them and explained that the pastor of the church was likely to be knowledgeable. In follow-up discussions with the caregivers, I found the same lack of knowledge about either the constitutional or legislative provisions on childcare services. I sought an audience with the pastor and met him the following day. He had heard about the provisions during meetings at the church headquarters but had not personally confirmed them.
from the law or the Constitution. He explained that the childcare services had been established as part of the church’s social development programs. Although he believed that it was necessary to have such provisions in the law, he saw the childcare services as primarily a moral and divine mission.

Interaction with the proprietor of the Future Leaders private preschool in the peri-urban community was no different. She had been informed by the officers of the preschool Division of the GES that there were some legal and policy provisions that she needed to know if operating a preschool. The officers did not have copies in the office, and she had made no any effort to obtain one once she received her registration. Her caregivers indicated that they also had no knowledge about any law and indicated that the proprietor had only discussed center regulations with them but nothing from a national perspective.

The findings at the Urbanprivy crèche and nursery, the private urban preschool, were more encouraging. The proprietor said she had a disagreement with some parents whose children arrived late to school. Following that, a parent who worked for a child-related organization gave her a copy of the Children’s Act. She had looked at it a few times out of curiosity to find out whether she was complying with the law and regulations. Unfortunately, she did not find it useful as it was just too broad and focused on the rights of children and responsibilities of the parents more than those of preschools and similar care-giving centers. In one of her weekly staff meetings, she had read out the provisions but could not say how well they were understood.

With this information, I tried to learn from the caregivers themselves their level of knowledge of and opinion of any legislation related to preschools or early childhood in general. Only two could recall the meeting at which they were informed
about laws and policies on daycare centers. The rest thought they were in their positions at the time the meeting took place and had no knowledge of any existing laws or policies. One middle-aged staff member with plans of establishing a preschool in the future said she had asked her colleagues and some friends about requirements but was told by one friend that she did not need to worry as the Ministry of Education staff was too under-resourced to monitor schools. Since then, she had made no effort to know in detail what was in the law. She had, however, developed her own constitution for her planned school.

The public local authority school was the only place where the teachers proved quite knowledgeable about the Children’s Act though not the Constitution. Both teachers had previously participated in a workshop organized by the Ghana National Association of Teachers and Education International, which had focused on preschool education. They had been given copies of the legal provisions on childcare. In addition, the workshop compared preschool services in Denmark with services in Ghana to find gaps and opportunities with the goal of enhancing services. It was during this session that legislative and policy frameworks for center-based childcare services had come up. The teachers’ participation in the workshop had made them quite knowledgeable about preschool as a right of children. In general, however, I found that knowledge about the laws and policies on childcare was very minimal.

**Dissemination of legal and policy information on preschools**

According to constitutional provisions, the dissemination of constitutional information is primarily the responsibility of the National Commission for Civic Education. Accordingly, as part of its routine civic education role, during the year the commission sets aside time as a constitutional week for education of the public about selected portions of the Constitution. Since the Constitution covers a wide range of
topics, not much in-depth education can be done within the short time allotted, so
text is focused on specific topics, such as democratic or local governance. The
activities of the National Commission for Civic Education are complemented by the
Information Services Department which is charged with dissemination of government
activities and policies and collation of feedback from the public.

Discussions of officials from the two institutions clearly indicated that they
were both highly under-resourced. For any effective dissemination or public
education about programs, each organization was requested to provide public
education materials and other resources, such as vehicles or, in lieu of logistics, funds
for acquisition of the needed services and items. The degree of public education and
the penetration into the various communities was directly linked to the available
resources. My meeting with the director of Preschool Education of the GES vividly
brought home the reality of the challenges to the dissemination of information and,
hence, the low awareness and paucity of legal and policy knowledge about
preschools. According to both the National Commission for Civic Education and the
Information Services Department, no specific dissemination of laws and policies on
preschools had taken place because no such request had been received from either the
DSW or the GES.

Findings from the ECD Division of the GES were no different. My reception
at the ECD Division at the national headquarters of the GES was very warm as I knew
most of the staff and had had an opportunity to engage with them in various ways
prior to leaving public service in pursuit of higher education. The entire ECD Division
was housed in one office at the end of the first floor with the head and her assistant
sharing the only ECD office. One corner of the small room was heaped with booklets,
the “National Policy on Early Childhood Care and Development for Ghana,” which
the head indicated had been printed with financial support from UNICEF. At the time I spoke with her she was searching for funds to distribute the booklets to the government ministries, departments, agencies, municipal/district assemblies, and communities. She indicated that although the districts were required to distribute the booklets within their respective administrative jurisdiction and also to disseminate and implement the policy, the dissemination had not been carried out due to lack of funds.

The ambience of the office, it is very old worn-out furniture, rusty window frames, and crowded setup, reflected the lack of adequate budgetary allocation to the division. Next to the director’s table was a stack of tool kits and CDs, *Support to Children through Reading, Education, Arts and the Media* (SCREAM), received from the International Labour Organization (ILO). The division was supposed to distribute these throughout the country and use them to train preschool teachers who would, in turn, use them to train schoolchildren. As with the ECD policy documents, distribution and use of the tool kits had been constrained by lack of money. The director indicated she would ask the ILO for additional funds for distribution.

After introducing me to her colleague in the office, the director pulled out some documents from the top of a battered cabinet and handed me a number of booklets including the ECD policy document, the Children’s Act 560, the draft education reform which was to include preschool as a component of the free compulsory universal basic education (FCUBE) and DSW guidelines for the establishment of daycare centers. When I asked whether it was the role of the GES to disseminate the DSW guidelines on the establishment of daycare centers, the director explained that since most proprietors of ECD centers simultaneously operate crèches, nurseries, or preschools on the same premises, the two institutions have agreed to distribute all ECD documents whenever the opportunity arose.
I found the guidelines very useful in the field as they served as indicators for assessing the service delivery processes of my research sites. However, despite the importance of quality early childhood care to the entire human resource development of the country, the message I received from the education officials was that government budgetary allocation for preschool was woefully inadequate and the division needed, to a great extent, to rely on external support from donors and therefore had to prioritize its activities carefully. I could not, however, obtain the exact percentage of the education budget that goes into early childhood care services.

Although distribution of the laws, policies, and documents to officials and practitioners could not be carried out due to inadequate logistics, the director asserted that distribution alone could not solve the problem of the ignorance about them regarding early childcare. She was of the view that due to the responsibility for childcare services shared between the DSW and her outfit in the GES, there had to be training programs so that practitioners could differentiate among various services such as crêches, nurseries and preschools. From her perspective, because of the multidisciplinary nature of ECD, most training programs should ideally be developed jointly with other agencies such as the DSW and the Ghana Health Service (GHS). They then should be made available, especially as most practitioners provide various forms of childcare services on their premises simultaneously.

Opportunities for and Challenges to Dissemination of Preschool Legislation and Policy Information

My interview and observations revealed that apart from the distribution of the legal and policy documents, one of the main channels for making the regulations operational and well known was through the training programs at the national Model Nursery School (GMNS), one of the only national public training centers for
training preschool teachers. The three-month training by the school runs throughout
the year and has an attached preschool for practical demonstration for trainees.

From the Ministry, I went directly to the director of GMNS, Mr. Felix
Agorsah, also a colleague of mine, has an office overlooking the school compound
which is the main playground and children’s assembly place. While I waited for the
Director, I watched the activities in the adjacent room where trainee teachers were
being given practicum about the use of certain toys for engaging children. Soon after
the children left, the director arrived. He had had to conduct monitoring visits to two
new preschools seeking certification. Due to the inadequate supervisory staff at the
national and district offices, he also takes on monitoring duties in addition to
management of the demonstration school.

I informed him about the purpose of my visit and first requested his opinions
about the implementation of the legal provisions on childcare and the ECD policy.
Mr. Felix said that he had been involved in all the consultative meetings at the
national, regional, district, and community levels as well as the development of the
Constitution. He identified strongly with both the constitutional provisions and the
policy which he said was an indication of the government’s commitment to child
development and was also an opportunity for the GES to have standards for
assessment of services. When I probed about the name of the school and the type of
services being rendered, he agreed it was an anomaly that the GES mandate is for
preschool and not nursery. However, he dismissed it as trivial since the public was not
aware of what he considered subtle differences. I disagreed on the basis that the name
translates into the type of services and also has direct implications for the
development of children. At the back of my mind, I had the nagging question,
“Should the public be misinformed?”
In the course of the interview, I recounted my meeting with the two young girls in front of his office. I had asked them why they were at the model school and expressed my surprise at their perception of education as a right. In response, the director stated that one major opportunity for the promotion of preschool was the support from international development organizations such as the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA) that is working assiduously to promote preschool services. The major opportunity, however, came from UNICEF which had supported the simplification of the Children’s Act with its provisions on childcare services. The child-friendly nature of the simplified Children’s Act with its pictures is being used in the school to teach children their rights and also to promote peer education among the young children.

After I probed further about the opportunities from this external support of dissemination of the legal provisions and policy, the director added that the ILO had recently introduced another child-friendly tool kit, SCREAM, which I had seen in the ECD division at the GES national headquarters. He noted that SCREAM was very user and child friendly and well-received by the children. Thus, the main opportunity for implementation of legislation and policy on childcare services has been support from the international donor community that places a high premium on the development of children in their early years.

At this juncture, I interrupted the director to learn whether he had copies of the documents he had mentioned. Mr. Felix said he did and explained that his outfit was the operational arm of the National ECD Office of GES and therefore had direct access to all the resources and most of the funds that the division receives. He quickly added, however, that they never had enough money for the quality of services that they wanted to provide. He began listing a litany of challenges, emphasizing the
division’s low budget and thus affirming the information that I had received from the director herself at the national office.

Another challenge identified by Mr. Felix was practitioners’ low reading skills and lack of desire to learn about the legislation and the policy. He explained that without the logistics for training it was impossible to get the message across to practitioners, who seldom seek information voluntarily unless they would pay a price for their ignorance. He explained that the majority of the preschool practitioners are women who believe that since they are mothers, they are childcare professionals. Giving examples from his monitoring visits, he said he had come to the conclusion that the proprietors and caregivers had become complacent about the laws because there was little supervision or monitoring, and no enforcement. Some centers could operate for years without any visit from the national office. Later in my field visits I recalled his observations when I found a high degree of ignorance about the law and the policy in three of my research sites and also on the street.

Responding to my question about whether additional staff could be recruited, Mr Felix explained that the timing of the problem was a big challenge. Due to the capitation grants which have absorbed some of the costs in basic school education, school enrollment had shot up and increased class sizes to unacceptable levels that were not ideal for teaching. Some classes had teacher ratios of 1 to 80; in some rural communities, the ratio could be as high as 1 teacher to 120 children ranging in age from preschool to primary three, all under one teacher. As a result of the inadequate teachers in the basic schools, the focus of the GES for the past four years has been the training of teachers for the primary school grades. Expressing his frustration, the director of the GNMS exclaimed:

You know, sometimes I have a feeling that even the officers think that anything goes for the preschool children or we are just here singing songs and repeating
rhymes. I guess they think any untrained person can do that, even if you put hundred children or more together. (Felix, Director GMNS, 2007)

Continuing after a pause, he identified international donor agencies’ fatigue as a major emerging challenge. He compared the process of donor support to a situation where a donor provides food only to be told to just keep it warm and put it in the mouth of the eater when the latter requests for it. He said that he felt embarrassed to go back after the donor’s publication of the books to ask for distribution and training funds because the division did not receive its budget allocation for one reason or another. He ended by saying, “These agencies also have other programs and besides it does not show national commitment on our part when even the inadequate budget is not received, do you agree with me?” I did not respond. To him the challenge lies with the government delivering on its promises. In all cases, there is complete failure or delay which translates into inadequate or non-delivery of services both by the ECD Division of the GES and by the GMNS.

Citing some of the challenges, Mr. Felix said the school was a major opportunity to demonstrate and showcase delivery of high quality services, but school capacity was far below the number of the applications received, Due to limited resources only 30 applicants be admitted at a time school currently has a long waiting list of applicants. The only option for the numerous crèches, nurseries, and daycares springing up daily was to manage with unskilled and untrained personnel. However, he added that currently some private preschool teacher training institutions were being established. He was not very conversant with the syllabi and wished for close supervision, monitoring, and enforcement of the regulations of these training institutions

Summing up, Mr. Felix observed that even given both the private and public resources available for training of preschool teachers, the teacher requirements for
ECD establishments still cannot keep pace with demands. Essential service that it is, proper training can be only a future goal and not an enforced regulation at present. He also lamented that such a critical aspect of human development was being commercialized by most proprietors with the proliferation of schools. He added that the preschool marketplace had become very competitive, depending on the services rendered, including daily care and the type of equipment, such as e-toys which are not available in the national training school, although some of the trainees may be employed by such “elite” preschools. He concluded that people who patronize such services are more concerned about the facilities than the legislative and policy frameworks, forgetting that facilities can offer the most up-to-date technology but still lack quality.

In general, my findings indicated that there was inadequate knowledge by the public and practitioners about the laws and policies governing preschools. Although officials are fully informed on what is expected, dissemination of the provisions and their enforcement are greatly challenged by lack of resources for getting the documents and training programs to the community level. As a result, there was low, or in some cases, a genuine lack of understanding about what constitutes daycare, day-nursery and preschool. The terms were being used interchangeably by some of the participants in the study without reference to the age categories in the law and services being provided in relation to the DSW guidelines. A few of the participants interviewed, mostly those in the peri-urban communities, were not even aware of the law and the policy.
What Do Parents, Public Officials, Practitioners, and Children Expect from Preschools?

It was within the context of a general low awareness of the laws and policies governing preschool services that I examined the expectations of parents, public officials, and practitioners with respect to preschools. As an initial step, I had identified stakeholders in preschool service delivery from the literature and categorized diverse personalities and professionals into three main groups. The first comprised parents who, by virtue of being the first-line stakeholders are legally responsible for providing care to children; the second group was made up of the mandated officials who are paid from public funds to promote and oversee the implementation of preschools; in the last category were people who deliver direct services to children in preschool institutions and comprised the proprietors and caregivers. At the converging point of this triad of practitioners is the child as depicted in figure 5.

Figure 5: Model of Interactive Influences of child development.
Source: Designed by researcher from the literature review, 2008
These three groups of people operated within a community, which in Bronfenbrenner’s (1979) theory, would represent the macro level in the bio-ecological systems theory. The diagram below represents the manner in which expectations have been captured in this chapter.

**Figure 6: Research Question 2 and Emerging Themes**

**Expectations of Parents**

Findings revealed various parental expectations. They appeared to be closely related to the economic and social status of the parents. The literature showed that the decline in the economy, coupled with major natural disasters and wildfires in the 1980s, adversely affected agriculture and resulted in severe hardships for rural communities. The outcome was to more migration of families from rural communities to urban areas in search of jobs, leading to an increase in the number of nuclear
families in the urban communities. Most of the migrants who were unskilled and had low earning capacity ended up primarily in the peri-urban communities. Under such circumstances, the extended family structure could not be imported from the rural to the urban communities. Swadener, Kabiru, & Njenga (2000) argue that the trend which led to the emergence of nuclear families also eliminated the social support systems of extended families, especially the presence of grandparents in the traditional rural set-ups. Ultimately, it eroded communal childcare support.

The study showed that parents in the peri-urban communities were all migrants from other ethnic communities and belonged to the low-income group. Almost all were also self-employed in the informal sector. Three of the mothers traded in small wares and foodstuffs; two older women out of the three were in polygamous marriages and responsible for the upkeep of the home and sustenance of the husband and children, and sometimes for the senior wife or wives and their children. Although I met the husbands of the two polygamous women and the men had nothing to do with the care and maintenance of the children and showed no knowledge or interest about the preschool that their children attended. One of the remaining two mothers (both single parents) sold porridge in the morning and cooked rice and beans in the afternoon and evening; the other sold bread in the morning in the community and braided hair in the afternoon and evenings. Since the mothers were very busy selling all day from dawn, the children walk to the schools by themselves. Fortunately, their households were located within of about 300 yards of the preschool and the children did not need to cross any streets.

In my discussions with them, the parents in this peri-urban public school all expressed their gratitude to the church for establishing the school within the community. They considered it a great help as it allowed them the freedom to
concentrate on their economic activities. They just wished the school stayed open until 5 pm rather than closing at 3 pm. A shocking revelation, however, came from a woman I will call Hawa one of the women in a polygamous marriage who stated that she sent her boy to school to spite the older wife whose children just play around during the day. She said this was also to prevent her child from being bullied and sent on errands by the senior wife and her children. Her expectation was to send her child to a good school for good education so he could look after her in her old age. She had acquired all the books used in the school and found a student in the junior secondary school to help the boy with his studies in the evening. She expected the preschool to lay a good foundation for her boy’s education.

On the other hand, Assibi, a teenage mother, had sent her child to the preschool in desperation. Her parents had reacted very negatively when they found that she was pregnant in her terminal year in basic school. The driver’s mate who impregnated her, had denied responsibility. Although the school had advised her to complete the term and take part in the basic education certificate examination, she was afraid of being taunted by her peers and had stayed away. She left her village to live with aunt in the city to avoid the taunting of her parents and peers. The aunt had given her some small capital to sell bananas and groundnuts for the upkeep of herself and her daughter. Assibi found hawking difficult with the child following her all day and decided to send her at a very tender age to the nursery; she has been there for about three years. Assibi had explained her circumstances to the head teacher who waived the daily feeding fee for her. Thus, Assibi’s expectation was that the nursery would continue to be the solution for her childcare problem. At least the child is safe at the center and can get food while mother struggles for her own upkeep.
In the course of my observing at the public preschool and probing into the feeding requirements, I learned about the waiver by the head teacher of fees for parents facing economic hardships.

Insert in figure 7 are her views about the fees paid for the children:

The children are required to pay C2,000 ($1.80) daily for one meal, but some families still find it difficult even though this is heavily subsidized by the church. Some children bring their own lunch; that is acceptable. This is a community where a man could have many wives. Mostly it is the women who have to work to look after the children. In fact most of the children do not come from families of church members. The truth is that you cannot deny the child food when others are eating or send the child home because it has not brought money. Besides, the Church Presbytery decided to establish a preschool because there were so many vulnerable children loitering in the community. I believe some parents are taking advantage of our generosity but from our Christian doctrine, Jesus said, “suffer the children to come unto me” so we believe a child should not be the victim of parental irresponsibility; we simply cannot turn them away.

Figure 7: Comment by Public Preschool Head Teacher during Interview

The story in the private peri-urban was different. Privaperi preschool which is made up of a crèche, daycare and preschool, is located on the outskirts of the municipality, close to the Dangbme West District border in a sprawling community where new buildings have just started springing up. Since the area was agricultural land being turned into a residential area, the residents in the community were mainly vegetable growers and artisans working on the new mostly private residential structures under construction. The only transportation to the community is by drivers of trotro the local name of private commuter buses using unpaved, bad roads to their residences. The community has no public primary school within reasonable walking distance. In a conversation with the Gifty, the proprietor, said:

Getting the parents to appreciate education is no joke. The people do not understand the value of education; and you are asking them to pay money.
The children just follow them around in the community and to the farms where they work all day. It was only when the children saw the play things in the yard outside and started pestering their parents that some of them brought their children voluntarily. Getting them to pay fees was a complete tug of war even though the children were being fed at the school. The first years of most school childcare establishments are often sacrificial services to the community. (Response from Privaperi interview, 2007)

There was also in this private peri-urban preschool an unusual finding that some parents tend to see the preschool as a form of surrogate parenting instead of daily preschool services. It was an arrangement whereby two children, aged four and five, were boarders staying permanently with the owner of the peri-urban private school. Since I wanted to find out what the parents expected from the preschool-cum-parenting arrangement, Gifty arranged an international phone interview for me with the parents who are living outside the country. During our conversation, it was confirmed that the children had been sent down from Britain by their parents who did not want to send them to family members. The mother had a difficult pregnancy which the couple attributed to the negative thoughts and wishes of family members who were jealous of them.

Due to their busy schedules, it was difficult for the parents to take care of the children. High-quality childcare services which they desired for their children, was too expensive so other option was to send the children home to Ghana to a non relative and have free time to work. The arrangement worked perfectly for them as the children was not even known to be in Ghana by the parents’ immediate families and would, therefore have no dealings with any biological relations. Their peculiar circumstances meant that the children were pseudo family members enrolled in the school with the proprietor being totally responsible for their entire upkeep, including care and tuition, in exchange for an amount of foreign exchange that she was not willing to disclose. Thus, the expectations of these parents are also to keep the
children out of sight of jealous family members. For the parents, the expectation was primarily the seclusion and safety of the children from supposedly spiritual opponents.

In the urban communities, the expectations were different. Parents were middle-income residents working in the formal sector or were relatively higher-income private sector entrepreneurs. The findings in the urban communities affirmed previous studies that indicated that the entry of some of urban families, notably women, into the formal labor market, increased the need for formal childcare services (Beneria, 1988; Swadener & Bloch 1997). Similar to Romero’s (2000) findings that progression of American women’s careers necessitated the need to recruit the services of other women to take care of the home and children, interviews with all the parents at the preschool revealed that the children had been sent there to free parents, particularly mothers to engage in employment or careers.

Out of the five parents, two couples with children in the urban school had brought their children as soon as they were weaned, around the age of six weeks. That was to enable the mothers to return to work to avoid losing their jobs in a bank and a printing factory, respectively. The other three parents had enrolled their children in the preschool at the age of three but had had to rely on home-based childcare to enable them to return to work. One of them, a teacher, used to take the domestic help and the baby with her to school. She had enrolled the child in the preschool because she had planned to send the child to a private preparatory school where the quality of service was better than at the public school.

The parents expected to provide their children with a good education so that they would be productive in adulthood. This required resources that could only be available when they were engaged in income-generating activities. It also entailed
enrolling the children in high-quality preschools that prepared them adequately for the entrance interviews at the private schools. Thus, the expectation of the parents in the urban communities was ultimately to give their children the best education; the first step being preparation for entry into private basic schools. Although the parents of children in the public preschools had the same expectation as those in the private schools, they were constrained by the costs of services in the private schools and had to send their children to the public schools.

A common statement that ran through the expectations was the hope that the children would be properly cared for and given needed attention. While the parents in the peri-urban communities had limited resources to supplement the services being given, the trend was different in the urban private schools. In the rural public schools, parents were required to bring along toiletries every month since the school did not receive any funds from the government. However, in the urban schools, toiletries were included in the fees paid and no demands were made on the parents. Parents however gave gifts to the caregivers as a means of ensuring that their children would be well cared for.

Interviews and responses to questionnaires by parents revealed some interesting insights. For some parents, sending the children to public school was in response to the government policy that all children of school age should be enrolled in school. They had enrolled their children in the closest school because they did not have the time and the means to commute to distant schools. The main reason, however, was the smaller amount of money that they would have to pay. One mother said, “The teachers are also quite understanding; they will allow you to pay a small amount, if you do not have the whole amount.”
On the other hand, some parents with children in the private urban school complained about the high-handedness of the private preschool personnel. One parent described them as unsympathetic and money-minded. Complaining bitterly, she added:

They know about the traffic and other problems in town, and, of course, every worker would like to get home quickly after work, but if you arrive a few minutes late, they talk to you as if it is the most heinous crime committed and make you look bad in front of the child. It is all business, no empathy; is that how it should be? (Akos, mother of a child in the urban private school, 2007)

She went on to explain about how she has been giving money and gifts to the caregivers secretly to ensure that her child would be well cared for.

The parents informed me about the hidden side of childcare in the private sector. Each of them indicated the need to develop rapport with the caregivers; some mentioned the need to occasionally give them gifts. One parent thought that the caregivers stayed on the job, for which they are paid poorly, because of the additional benefits provided by parents and networks that they also develop with them. One parent was, however, very critical of the caregivers and accused them of eating the children’s food and benefiting from the toiletries that the children are required to send to school every month. She felt the fees paid should be able to cover these basic items without asking parents to bring such items every month for the use of the children.

These interactions brought to the fore some indication of favoritism in caregiving, based on the relation between the parent and the caregiver. This appeared to occur more in the private preschool with more affluent parents being the culprits. The private urban proprietor indicated that she was aware of it and had developed a roster for escorting of the children to the parents when being picked up, to avoid too much familiarity between parents and caregivers. She said all relations had to be cordial. I observed the closing of her school at the end of the day and the practice seemed
thoroughly professional due to the manner in which the children were tidied up and escorted to the parents.

Expectations of Public Officials

The literature review had recommended that due to the multidisciplinary nature of childcare, people of diverse professions should be involved in preschool service delivery under a coordinating director with training in childcare education (Auerbach, 1981). This was the exception with all the four cases studied since none of the research sites had employed staff of different key professions identified in the literature and the policy document.

My inquiries in the GES offices and at the preschool centers revealed that several public officials were providing some form of service or the other to the preschool children; their services are mainly in the public schools. I grouped them into two categories, the direct public officials and the occasional or distant ones. The occasional ones included people such as nurses and school health personnel who go to the public schools on specific assignments, such as de-worming, provision of iodine supplements, and immunization of the children. Others are the dieticians who administer nutritional supplements such as Vitamin A to the children at specified periods. Such exercises are first done in the public schools and, on request in the private ones.

The second group of people comprised the mandated officials working on a daily basis on preschool issues. My discussions with them revealed that the public officers in the research sites put more emphasis on cognitive development, as their profession demanded. However, I perceived an attitude of complacency in which officials did not take the initiative but waited for resources and services. For example, with respect to immunization, none of the officers interviewed had carried out a
follow-up action to ensure that booster vaccinations were given to the children who needed them, thus defeating the ultimate goal of the vaccination.

The study also revealed that teachers in the public preschool saw their role as promoting and protecting the rights of the children. Thus, one teacher in the urban public school is sponsoring two children of a woman near the school who could not afford to provide the required uniform for her children. She had been working closely with the assembly member (local elected government officer) in the community to get children enrolled in school. Together, they had managed to get the council to sponsor one hot meal a day at the school. She had urged parents to find snacks to supplement the one-meal-a-day school feeding. In describing her efforts, she saw herself as a catalyst to protect and nurture the children. Thus, some of the parents expected full implementation of the free compulsory basic education including the two-year preschool.

Officials at all levels, from the direct services to children in the nursery school to the municipal and national supervisory offices, wished that there could be more resources, especially logistics for supervision to check the rampant spread of poor ECD services. The municipal director, in particular, expected that the new education reform that includes preschool in basic education will help address the dissociation and neglect of preschools from mainstream education. During the interview, she recalled that, partly due to a decline in the economy, between 1996 and 1998, the government level of expenditure for education fell from 23.4% to 16.5% and from 7.6% to 4.3% in the health sector. With the government’s focus on basic education, public preschool services declined. The observation gave me an understanding of an assessment of the economic constraints related to child upbringing and education discussed by Anamuah-Mensah (1998). He had observed that at the time of education
reforms in 1987, despite the “free universal basic education for all school-going children,” resulting from a resolution of the 1961 Education Conference of African States in Addis Ababa, and Ghana’s subsequent Education Act 87 of 1961 which stipulates free basic education, parents were on average spending about 18% of their total household income on one child’s basic education.

Expectations of Proprietors and Caregivers

There were two main expectations from the proprietors, based on whether the school was private or public. The public preschool owned by the church saw the preschool as a public good and a rights-oriented service that should be accessible to all manner of children. As a result, the church was always ready to admit even those children whose parents indicated their inability to pay the minimal fees charged. This was made explicit in the words of the head teacher quoted earlier on in this chapter.

During the interview, it became evident that the preschool was not established as a profit-making venture. On the contrary, it was to help meet the developmental rights of children. The head teacher also saw it as part of her social and religious work after retirement and was therefore drawing no salary but instead a monthly allowance to cover her transport and some minimal expenses related to her job. She viewed the whole activity as keeping herself occupied after retirement. This was not the case with the private preschools.

Unlike at the church preschool, the proprietor of the private peri-urban preschool told me that the first few years in the establishment were actually not profitable. She explained that the well- established ones often have their infrastructure completed before admitting children. The first few years are then used as cost recovery years, after which the school then starts making a profit. In her case, since she did not have the infrastructure, she needed to use the revenue from the fees to put
up the buildings. This was confirmed by the urban preschool spokesperson who confessed that the structures had been financed from the school fees. The school started in a public-housing garage and then moved to the hall and verandah of the owner, after which the buildings were constructed as and when fees were collected. “It can take some time, depending on the number of children you have; but then, you do not have any loans looming over your head.” (Owner of the Urbanprivy preschool)

Earlier on, Gifty, the proprietor of the Periprivy preschool, had made me aware that inspectors of preschool sites were not particular about the infrastructure otherwise most of the preschools around the communities would not be in operation. Recalling her own experience, she stated that for the inspection, nothing much happened. The inspectors they looked round the classroom and at, the toys and the pictures on the wall, asked about the number of children and whether there had been additional enrollment since the registration form had been filled out and asked the number of teachers; there were no discussions on the space or ventilation.

When I probed further about whether there were any forms for recording findings, she responded: “It was more of a conversation, very informal and very short. I did not see them writing anything down; they might have done that later. However, to me, the inspection was very beneficial; otherwise how do I put up my signboard to advertise the school? Now I have a signboard on the main road with the school telephone number and the directions to the school”. However, she added that the inspectors had advised her to visit the National Model Nursery School to find out about their syllabus and also to enroll in the training school.
Preschool Access and Quality

*District Medium-Term Plan of Education*

My third research question on the state of preschools and whether they are conducive to ensuring a fair start for all children focused on the structure and content of preschools. The findings were varied and significantly linked to the socioeconomic state of the community. The literature review indicated that preschool access, quality, and procedures emanate directly from the manner and extent to which legislations and policies are employed or adapted (Black, Puckett, & Bell, 2003).

![Figure 8: Research Question 3 and Emerging Themes.](image)

Black, Puckett, and Bell (2003) posit that infrastructure, staffing and teaching aids as well as the process for delivering the services are among the factors that contribute to the effectiveness, quality, and relevance of a preschool curriculum. Since preschool curriculum development is within the domain of public policy, and its implementation and enforcement are conducted by mandated public officials, my first discussions were with officials of the GES in the Tema Municipal office. My interactions at the
offices revealed that preschool access and quality objectives of the assembly are in line with the national goal of education that aims to increase access and provide high-quality education under the free compulsory, universal basic education (FCUBE) policy for all children.

During the interview, I learned that the Municipal Education Office had plans to achieve the FCUBE goal through provision of more infrastructure facilities and educational inputs. Other strategies included reducing the number of ‘‘shift’’ schools in the public sector by 30% in primary schools and 20% in junior high school; increasing enrollment, especially for girls, in deprived areas; increasing the retention rate of teachers in deprived areas from 30% to 40%; and improving service delivery of private schools through effective supervision. Shift schools have only one session for four and one-half hours daily in either the morning or the afternoon due to lack of school infrastructure to accommodate the entire population of schoolchildren in that community.

In view of the above, the assembly in 2002 set the following goals:

- Construct and furnish 36 classrooms for primary schools and 24 for JSS by 2004,
- Organize and educate parents, pupils, and communities about the need for formal education,
- Increase the number of beneficiaries of needy but bright pupils’ scholarships from 33 to 120 by the end of 2006,
- Construct a six-unit staff accommodation in selected deprived areas, award monetary, household consumables, and supply motor bikes on hire for teachers in deprived areas,
Constitute private schools’ supervisory boards to undertake comprehensive inspection and rehabilitation of all private schools.

Number of Schools

In spite of the fact that the GES has an ECD Division and the Children’s Act 560 (1998) provides for daycare services for children, Table 3 shows that there are few public preschools. Table 4 shows the number of children enrolled in preschools.

It is evident from the enrollment tables that preschool service delivery was in the domain of the private sector. In spite of this observation, the strategies adopted by the Municipal Education Office, as indicated above, did not reflect any activity directed specifically at public preschool development or improvement.

Table 3: Statistics of Primary and Preschools in the Public and Private Sector (TMA)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Public Sector</th>
<th>Private Sector</th>
<th>Grand Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nursery/KG (Inclusive of Preschool)</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>353</td>
<td>404</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>241</td>
<td>374</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>594</td>
<td>778</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table 4: Children’s Enrollment in Public and Private Preschools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Level</th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>Girls</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public</td>
<td>Nursery/KG</td>
<td>1772</td>
<td>1833</td>
<td>2278</td>
<td>11,643</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1711</td>
<td>1778</td>
<td>2221</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private</td>
<td>Nursery/KG</td>
<td>8623</td>
<td>8723</td>
<td>8923</td>
<td>52,662</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>8622</td>
<td>8802</td>
<td>8960</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Upon further inquiry, I learned that there were only five preschool supervisory officers at the Municipal Education Office for the number of schools listed in Table 3.

The director informed me that it was impossible for the five supervisors to spend a
single day in each preschool in a year. She lamented the state of affairs and explained that, ideally, a supervisor should be able to spend a week or two in one place to gain insight into the strategies and operations at the preschool. This confirmed a statement from one of the private preschool teachers that a whole year could elapse without a supervisory visit from the ECD office, a phenomenon that has led to complacency and poor quality of services in preschools. This also reflected the observation of the director of the National Model Nursery School that the violations of preschool regulations by the proprietors are due to the lack of institutional structures to enforce regulations and policies. Thus, the survey showed that although preschool forms the first two years of the free compulsory universal basic education, development plans did not have any budgetary allocation for its expansion or improvement. Development plans covered basic education in general. Without concerted effort to expand and improve preschool services, the private sector will continue to dominate preschool service delivery in the community.

Preschool Infrastructure

During my visits to the research sites, I assessed the infrastructure and resources using mostly Auerbach’s (1981) guide for assessing childcare services. The guide and the survey attached as Appendix B facilitated the determination of the social, learning, physical, and emotional climate in the four research centers. Obtaining information on access and quality posed the greatest challenge to me. In one of the private preschools, the proprietor wanted to know if I was coming to audit the school. In the public schools, one teacher was annoyed and expressed her frustration by asking whether the people at the education office were saying they did not know about the poor working facilities in the schools. I had to explain that even though I had received that information from the office, I had to verify for myself. This
experience underscores Auerbach’s (1981) caution about the need for the person assessing facilities to be thoroughly familiar with the checklist and all the questions so that the form can be kept out of sight. Following the author’s advice that gathering information unobtrusively is less intimidating and judgmental, as well as more rewarding, I was candid about my goal and explained every move at the preschool premises. Table 5 shows the nature of accommodation facilities of the research sites.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 5: Infrastructure Typology</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Type of building material</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open Space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Types Of Furniture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sanitation Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reception/Staff Offices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sick Bay</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Field Survey at Tema, 2007.*

Although all the structures at the four research sites were cement, there were significant variations in types of architectural design and utilities. Sites 1 and 3 were poorly ventilated since the structures were originally residential places built to accommodate fewer numbers of people. The faith-based, affiliated preschool was the best ventilated since it operates within a church hall. However, the partitioning of the room with wooden screens meant that every interaction in one class could be overheard clearly in the next. I observed that this affected the children’s concentration
in their own classes; in fact, some of the children started singing a song being taught in the next class.

In the public urban school, poor ventilation and little daylight in the room made it difficult for me to read without my glasses. I was told that a number of parents had complained about the situation, expressing fears that it might affect the children’s eyesight. This state of affairs, according to one child-rights advocate who was not a participant in my study, diminishes the learning climate at the preschool. Since the structure was allegedly the standard approved by the Ministry of Education, the school could do nothing about it. In general, the above centers have to have basic infrastructure to operate a preschool, but there were significant variations in the learning climate as the physical facilities of the four centers were very different.

On the other hand, the urban private preschool located in one of the popular middle-class residential areas of the city, which had begun in a garage, is now a three-story building under construction. The school has 260 children of various ages housed in eight classrooms and on the verandas. Offices and classrooms are on the first two floors, with three of the classes for preschool. I found two rooms for toddlers, another for children between three and four, one for infants, and another which served as a storeroom where the children’s bags are hung. One of the verandas had baby cots where children slept. At the end of the same verandah was a feeding area for babies. A summer hut in the small compound also served as a rotational outdoor classroom for all classes.

To describe the center as hemmed in and crowded would be an understatement as it is a residential home with small rooms that have been converted into classrooms. An average-sized person needed to walk sideways to pass by the cots. In one corner were toilets for the children, four on each floor. On the second floor was the
proprietor’s, a well-furnished office, as spacious as a third of the classrooms, with a wide screen TV and a number of e-toys, including ten mini-laptops. An adjoining room led to a pantry for the staff. On the outside wall of the school, facing the main road were a lot of drawings and alphabets. It was evident that the newly constructed wall had shifted the boundaries of the school into the public pathway to expand the compound. Despite this trespassing into the pathway, the compound was relatively small and did not conform to the spatial requirements recommended in the literature review.

**Untrained Human Resource**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 6: Caregiver/Teacher Profile of Centers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Profile</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Staff</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caregiver</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caterer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Length of Service</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Qualification</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Training</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Specialization</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Salary Range</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teacher &amp; Caregiver Ratio</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hours of Operation</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Field Survey at Tema, 2007.*

Table 6 shows that, apart from the teachers, the majority of the caregivers and attendants in both centers have had some sort of training in childcare services; however, the majority of the qualifications were the barest minimum, three-week training. All the teachers and caregivers discussed the need for some kind of
emotional labor with their work. While the caregivers felt overwhelmed and sometimes exploited, the proprietor of the urban private school stated that, considering the high unemployment in the country, she was providing them with good wages. Raising her eyebrows in surprise when told of the caregivers’ feelings, she added, “they are lucky and should be thankful; I receive job applications every single day.” This statement and attitude gave me the impression that she felt she was doing the caregivers a favor.

In respect to staff of preschools, Anselmo (1981, p. 41) advises that the “teachers should vary in skills, backgrounds and ages. Their training is important, as is their attitude, their experience with children, and their personal philosophies.” The official guidelines on preschools also states that caregivers should have in-service training at least once a year. None of the preschools under study have complied with this requirement. Indeed, when I inquired about her qualifications in preschool management, the proprietor of the urban private school confessed:

None at all, but since then I have taught myself by reading books related to school management and early childhood care. Although I do not have a certificate in education, I consider myself a professional. Besides, half of my staff are trained caregivers and I also sponsored one hardworking young lady for the three-week training program. I paid the fees and had to be the substitute caregiver in her absence. You know it is not easy releasing your staff for training; you have to plan carefully and get others to do her work during her absence. In any case, does the Education Service do it for its own personnel in the public schools where they even have student-teachers who come for relieving duties; do they even budget for it? (Proprietor of urban private preschool, 2007)

I inquired about whether, other than training, there are other incentive packages for the staff. The following answer was rather vague:

They are better off than in the public schools. I pay 50% more than in the public school. People think we are making huge profits but running an institution is not easy; utilities, textbooks, feeding, staff costs, and it all adds up and you end up with little, especially with a modern one such as ours which plows back the fees into acquisition of teaching materials. (Proprietor of urban private preschool, 2007)
I disagreed with her, since the staff did not have any social security, she did not reply. From my observation at all the preschools, I pondered whether the caregivers take care of too many children at any given time, despite the guidelines and the literature review. For much of the time, they appeared overwhelmed by the job. Mensah, the head teacher in the public peri-urban school, confirmed my suspicions by saying:

We are terribly overworked. As you can see now, the same caregivers have to cook the children’s lunch and also serve them. The caregivers rotate in the cooking of food; otherwise, it will be too much work for one person. Cleaning up after meals is a complete job by itself. It is just a sacrificial job because the community is poor.

In general, the public sector had a good number of trained teachers in the preschools while the private schools had a sizeable number of untrained teachers. Interviews in the school revealed that the majority of the trained teachers in the public preschools were not specialists in early childhood care education. Eighty-five percent of them were elderly teachers nearing retirement; the head teachers in the two public schools indicated that older teachers were often more tolerant with the children than young teachers.

Care and Learning Materials

In addition to the infrastructure and resources, literature indicated that the type of service provided by a preschool center directly defines the social climate. Similar to the variations in the infrastructure, there were vast differences in the teaching resources and social services of the four preschools. Of the four study centers visited, none offered transport services, although it is an emerging trend in the private school industry. The public basic school, which is also the premises of the public preschool, has a big compound. The three remaining preschools have small compounds serving as the playground. The private peri-urban was the worst. The ground was a narrow parking space the can accommodate two cars in a row. Plywood boards had been used
to construct classrooms at the back of the house, with sunlight and fresh air blocked
by the owners’ residential building at the front. My instinctive reaction was,

“Why would a parent choose to send his or her child to such a place for the greater part of the day and even request for additional care on weekends?”

Table 7: Preschool Services Provided

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Service</th>
<th>Site 1</th>
<th>Site 2</th>
<th>Site 3</th>
<th>Site 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>First Aid</td>
<td>First Aid</td>
<td>First Aid</td>
<td>First Aid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field trips</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreation</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nutrition</td>
<td>Paid school catering</td>
<td>Self-provided</td>
<td>Self-provided</td>
<td>Free</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table 8: Learning Resources (continued on next page)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Material</th>
<th>Site 1</th>
<th>Site 2</th>
<th>Site 3</th>
<th>Site 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Book Per Pupil</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Nil</td>
<td>Few</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chalk/Black-Board</td>
<td>1 per Class</td>
<td>1 per Class</td>
<td>1 per Class</td>
<td>1 per Class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exercise Book/</td>
<td>4 per child</td>
<td>4 per child</td>
<td>6 per child</td>
<td>Varied between 1 and 3 per child</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crayons</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Several Including e-toys</td>
<td>Minimal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toys</td>
<td>1 per child</td>
<td>1 per child</td>
<td>1 per child</td>
<td>Not used</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slate/Counters</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manila Cards</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13 puzzles; 3 logos</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Puzzles /Logos (Boxes)</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>3 Sets</td>
<td>Several</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Templates</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>85 Diff. Kinds</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Few and old</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Among the four preschools, the urban private school contained the best resources, with some modern resources such as e-toys, including mini-laptops. The proprietor exhibited some pride about her e-toys. When I inquired about the purpose of having them, she explained to me that having e-toys and a certain façade attracts a particular clientele, notably children of mainly upper- and middle-class families, which in turn translates into an increase in fees and, invariably, into revenue. The most senior caregiver later told me that to ensure that these few but special e-toys, including mini-laptops, are not mishandled, they were kept at the proprietor’s office and signed for, when needed. Caregivers who sign out the e-toys or other “special” teaching aids are held personally accountable to return them intact. My immediate reaction was to wonder whether the primary goal for these educational e-toys was commercial, child welfare or just for marketing the preschool.

Another observation related to the resources is the use of slate and chalk in some schools. According to new education guidelines, the use of slate and chalk by young children at the start of schooling has been discontinued. The aim is to get children to acquire writing skills using pens and pencils from the beginning. Both public and the urban private schools have fully embraced this guideline which they claim promotes cleanliness. However, the owner of the peri-urban school pointed out that the use of chalk helps children to express themselves better as they wipe out, define, and re-define their thoughts on the slates. Therefore, she allowed the children to use the slates and had made available different colors and shades of chalk. To maintain cleanliness, the children had to wear aprons to cover their uniforms and had to wash their hands immediately after the class.
Preschool Curriculum

In addition to the resources observed at the various sites, I examined the curricula of the four preschools but I had to probe for the information. At the peri-urban public preschool, the head teacher explained that they had collected the syllabus from the National Model Nursery School and were adhering strictly to it. She showed me some of the books being used, guidelines on alphabets and phonetics, and some drawing books. Each child had his or her own table and desk, writing and drawing book, and arithmetic crayons and pencils. The GES curriculum, used in the National Model Nursery School, was the norm. Similar to the peri-urban public school, Koranteng, the proprietor of the urban private school stated,

"We got it from the model nursery school when we registered. I also checked with some of the popular preparatory schools about their entry interviews and requirements so that we can meet their standards. The market has become so competitive that you have to be innovative and, at the same time, modern. The in-thing now is technology, all these e-toys and distance learning. I just had to get some of these mini-computers and electronic teaching materials for teaching and recreation. They attract a certain clientele and place the center in a certain class which in turn determines the fees charged."

At the peri-urban private preschool, it became evident during our discussion that the personnel have neither formal knowledge nor understanding of ECD. The main focus of the syllabus was to prepare children for enrollment into Primary One. The proprietor had found out from other private basic schools what their entry requirements were and had identified a basic curriculum that the children should have gone through in the two-year preschool education. Being a former teacher herself, she believes that her knowledge of pedagogy, coupled with her teaching experience, was enough to meet the requirements. When I referred to a discussion of the curriculum during my inquiry about her registration with no standard syllabus, she blamed the officials who gave her the license without asking to see it. She said:
For the inspection, there was nothing much, they looked round the classroom, the toys and the pictures on the wall; asked about the number of children and whether there had been additional enrollment since I filled the registration form and the number of teachers. It was more of a conversation, very informal and very short. I did not see them writing anything down; they might have done that later.

In response to my inquiry about the relevance of the inspection, she threw a question back to me saying, “It was extremely beneficial; otherwise, how do I put up my signboard to advertise the school? Now I have a signboard on the main road with the school telephone number and the directions to the school.” In response to further inquiry about whether any discussion took place about the curriculum, she recalled that she had been advised to visit the National Model Nursery School to find out about their syllabus and also to attend the training.

The two public preschools were using the syllabus of the National Model Nursery School which had been developed by the GES and was also used for both new and in-service training programs. It had two main components; the cognitive and the recreational. The cognitive comprised arithmetic, English language, and general science and environmental studies; the recreational component was made up of drawing, music, and physical education (primarily outdoor activities on the playground).

Care and Teaching Methods

The preschool curriculum comprised care and teaching components. The care component was directed at the social, physical, and emotional development of children; the teaching aspect aimed at cognitive development. Both the care and teaching methods varied. In the public sector, a recently introduced government policy of free rides for schoolchildren meant that preschool children (depending on bus routes and irregular schedule) could benefit from free transport. Pupils whose parents do not have their own means of transportation have to commute to school on
their own, either independently or under the supervision of an adult. Apart from a few isolated cases in each the schools, all the children brought to the preschool are accompanied by adults. A few children who live close to the public schools commute to school by themselves. The majority of the children who come by themselves informed me that they do not use or cross any roads but use alleys in the community.

Significantly, children in the private urban school are received at the gate by one of the caretakers whether they are brought in by an adult or not. At closing, however, each child must be picked up by an adult, sibling, or somebody registered with the center before being allowed to go outside the gate. The one time incident at the GNMS where I had a hard time convincing a child that she could not leave the school premises with me, could be an indication of inadequate supervision.

I arrived at the local authority basic school fifteen minutes earlier than the teacher, who appeared exhausted on arrival in the classroom, sweating and panting. Due to my early arrival, I was once able to observe the children at their morning assembly before entering the classroom. They stood waiting at the desks and greeted us with, “Good morning, and teacher Good morning, Madam.” We responded: “Good Morning,” after which the teacher motioned them to sit down. She made no reference to the timetable or notes and simply asked them to take out their first copy book. She indicated a page and asked them to copy the letters of the alphabets.

The exercise took about an hour. She then asked the children to sing two songs, in English. She explained that singing in English, especially rhymes, would help them pick up some words and also help with their pronunciation. This was followed by art work, drawing in the exercise books, and they were told to draw something that they saw on their way to school in the morning. By the time they finished, it was 10.30 AM, when they had a break for a snack, then the teacher
clapped her hands to call them back to the classroom for a nap. Each child put his or her head on the table and was required to keep quiet or sleep for one hour. At noon, the teacher went round the class checking the exercise books while the children chatted among themselves. At one o’clock, they lined up outside for the free school lunch, after which the school closed for the day.

The urban public church-owned preschool, located in a relatively poor community, mostly Muslim, was open to all residents in the vicinity. It is housed in the big social hall of the church. Large panels have been used to divide the hall into three, one side for older children, the other one for three- to five-year-olds, and another section for three years and younger. In the sandy yard of the church, which can accommodate no more than six medium-size cars, was a single see-saw, ten old car tires, and two rooms which are the male and female toilets. There were few drawings and alphabets written on the walls in bright colors. The sandy yard was used as playground for different types of athletics and football. Inside the classroom themselves, there were a few pictures. Each child had his or her own table and desk, writing and drawing book, and arithmetic crayons and pencils.

In the corner opposite to the teachers’ desk are two buckets of water and ten drinking cups in a bowl for use by the children. Children use the same cups and had to rotate them during the lunch, obviously, not safe drinking water. The storeroom contained a stack of plates and crockery used by the children during mealtimes. Anytime a child wanted to use the toilet, the teacher had to leave the rest of the children in the classroom alone in order to attend to that single child. The curriculum in this school was similar to the practices observed at the public peri-urban church preschool. There were, however, two differences: the peri-urban school closed at 3PM; and the teacher was holding a cane most of the time. When the children talked
too loudly, she would slash the table with the cane several times to put fear in them. On a few occasions, she would tap the head of a “disobedient” or “naughty” child (one perhaps talking in class or teasing another person) with the cane a few times. I did not consider it as a lashing or spanking since none of the children cried but rather appeared to get the message being given by the teacher.

The learning climate in the private schools was different depending on the caregivers. There were two caregivers at the FLRC, Dina and Grace. Dina, the daughter of the proprietor, had just finished her senior secondary examinations; because of the education structure, she had a six-month wait before admission to the university. She was the nursery teacher and was being assisted by Grace, an acquaintance in the neighborhood. Grace was responsible for attending to the toiletries, nap time, feeding, and supervision of outside recreational activities. Neither woman has had any training in ECD. There was high rote learning, pictorial descriptions, or repetition of sentences read from a book or from the board most of the day. About a third of the day was spent either learning songs in a group and individually or taking a nap. There was a tiny playground and only one seesaw at the premises.

Summary

This chapter has focused on key findings of the study from transcribed interviews with participants, survey reports and observations. Quantitative data obtained from the survey provided descriptive information of existing services in the preschools and served as a lens to gain a better understanding. The interviews provided opportunity for interrogating some of the participants about my observations. Coding of the data resulted in the drawing out of key themes leading to
identification of commonalities and discrepancies to help tell the story in a more vivid
and picturesque manner.

From a thematic point, my encounter with the proprietors revealed low
awareness or regard for the law and policy on childcare services, as well as poor
enforcement and application of the strategies and practices at the preschools. In both
the private and public sectors, officials and caregivers exhibited a certain level of
indifference and, in some cases, even satisfaction about the lack of enforcement of the
legislation and policy related to childcare. Comparative analysis of the findings from
the four case studies have brought to the fore the diverse objectives for the
establishment of preschools; the varied resources and services provided to children
based on the type of preschool attended and the community in which the facilities are
located; and the expectations of parents, caregivers, public officials, and children.
The curricula and performance revealed the varied constructs of childcare in the
society and revealed a link between the socioeconomic status of the family and the
type of preschool attended by the children.
CHAPTER SIX: SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter is a summary of the study including the purpose, procedures, and findings covered in the preceding five chapters and some conclusions and recommendations arising out of the findings of the study. The introductory chapter established the framework for the study and gave a brief overview of early childhood care concepts at the global level, and in Africa and Ghana. In addition to an examination of the concepts, the chapter provided the justification for the study indicating that, despite several studies on preschool education, there are few studies that had the multi-comparative approach of simultaneously looking at preschools from context and sector perspectives; thus, there was an identifiable gap in the studies on preschools in Ghana.

As a result, this study has sought to contribute to the literature on preschool services delivery by bringing to the fore the service objectives, resources and practices in selected urban and peri-urban preschools. There was little in the literature on preschool in Ghana that comparatively examined preschool services delivery from the concept of a fair start in life where children’s survival, nutrition, health and growth are considered as primary pre-requisites to their humanity. This study, therefore, has sought to add to the literature by adopting a holistic approach of looking at the infrastructure, care and learning materials, preschool staff and curricula and methods. To establish the framework of the study, the following three main questions were used as a guide:

1. How are preschool legislation and policy currently being implemented in Ghana?

2. What Do Parents, Public Officials, Practitioners, and Children Expect from Preschools?
3. What resources and care practices exist in the preschools?

The findings have helped determine the facilities and challenges in the four preschools that directly influence the delivery of services to children that could invariably affect their future development. There were, however, limitations in terms of limited geographical coverage, which means that one cannot generalize the findings of the study. It was also not possible to evaluate preschools that all started in the same year so as to chronologically examine the progress of development.

Chapter Two of this study was devoted to the review of literature that covered an overview of preschools from a global angle and zeroed in on preschool education in Ghana. The literature revealed that preschool is now considered as a developmental discipline. The review, which included theoretical perspectives, served as the guiding framework for the study. Readings indicated that preschools in Ghana developed from being an appendage or offshoot of basic education into a stand-alone social service, as in other developed countries. Literature also revealed that research had greatly contributed to the placement of preschools as a fundamental component of resources needed for economic and human-capability development. The link is based on a number of empirical human development studies, as well as medical and psychological theories, that continue to generate further research into early childhood development.

The first two chapters, covering the background to the study in the first chapter and the literature review in the second, contributed in framing the key questions of the study and the emergence of the research methodology in Chapter Three. Chapter Three, therefore, is an explication of the research methods used, including the tools employed in the collection and analysis of field data. The methodology that focused on obtaining data of the four research sites adopted the
multiple case study approach. As evident above, the research participants comprised children, parents, caregivers and policymakers. The chapter also included justification for the research design and provided details of the research instruments used. Protocols of field activities were also outlined for validity purposes.

In view of the legal and social context being a key variable in the study, Chapter Four was devoted to establishing the contextual framework for the study. It provided not only the legislative and policy framework but also geographical and historical information related to the topic. It is hoped that the chapter will not only provide an overview but will also enable the reader to function as a visitor to the community. This chapter is immediately followed by the findings from field studies and includes descriptions from observations and reports of interviews, focus-group discussions, and surveys at the four preschool project sites. Key presentations portray the context of the studies, interactions with participants, and service delivery at the preschools.

This final chapter covers analysis of the key findings. The analysis of responses from participants and findings from observations and interviews converged into themes that, together with policy and legislation documents, helped answer the research questions. The purpose of this analysis is primarily to bring to the forefront the relevance and interconnectedness of the field data in relation to the three research questions being addressed, to determine whether children have a fair start in life through early childhood care practices. The conclusions and recommendations are addressed under the following topics:

- Legislation and policy
- Role of parents, mandated officials and practitioners
- Preschool Infrastructure, Resources, Curriculum and Methods
Legislation and Policy

With respect to the first research question on the policy and legislative framework on childcare, the existence of a national policy on ECD, though unquestionable, was not well-known to either the public or private officials. With the exception of registration of the preschool, a requirement before advertising the center, most of the respective provisions in the guidelines by the DSW and the ECD policy of the GES are not strictly adhered to. Although the national ECD policy document explicitly spells out the regulations governing the management of preschools, the study found a major gap between policy formulation and implementation. In all the four preschools, knowledge about the law and policy was lacking or minimal.

Policies, including procedures for establishment of preschools, were not enforced, resulting in some blatant violations. Although both the Regulations to the Children’s Act (1998) and the ECD policy provide explicit guidelines, adherence to them was not evident on the ground. None of the three non-state-owned childcare centers indicated that any measurement of space or assessment of infrastructure occurred during the inspection of the premises by registration officials. There were only visual estimates. This situation was partly due to the low staffing capacity of the ECD Unit of the Municipal Office and the use of personnel not trained in ECD management.

Jordan (1982) identifies program planning, policy formulation, and decision making on a daily basis as the three most critical responsibilities in preschool management. Thus, the existence of a policy without application belies its utility to promote a fair start in life for children. Thus for effective preschool administration, it is suggested that:

As a matter of policy, provisions are made for appropriate room temperature to be maintained, proper ventilation, drinking water that meets public health
standards and time for adequate rest. Preschool Administrators must check periodically to see that the policy is enforced. The study revealed that although the national policy document is formulated on the principles of a holistic approach, the focus in the research sites is on the cognitive development of the children with the goal of ensuring that they are admitted into reputable schools. (Street, 1982, p. 7)

In the course of the study, the government integrated preschool into the basic education. However, by the end of one academic year, training and mainstreaming of the service had been carried out in only 68 of the 138 districts. The slow rate of progress has partly been attributed to inadequate resources. Acknowledging this challenge, it can be inferred that, given the adoption of an ECD policy in 2004 and the submission of the education reform report incorporating preschool into basic education in 2005, an accelerated ECD program could be considered.

Role of Parents, Public Officials and Practitioners

In the two private schools visited, genesis of the centers in residential homes, later converted into childcare centers and obvious efforts to utilize all available space for classrooms have resulted in the two places being crowded with little room for recreation and socialization by the children. Grindle’s (1997) view that socioeconomic and cultural factors account for failure of policy implementation may be applicable in the two contexts. As the study revealed, preschool service delivery in the research sites is highly influenced by competing factors, the greatest being socio-economic. The interaction and survey revealed that parents made little enquiry about the mission of preschools at the time of registration. The majority were mostly concerned with the proximity of the preschool to their homes and places of work, the infrastructure (including toys and teaching materials), cost, and the hours of operation. In my research sites, parents’ main reason for the interest in the type and location of
the preschool included cost, hours of operation and location that required less time commuting to drop off or pick up the child before and after school.

These factors have greatly driven my participant parents’ choice of preschool. Some of the parents’ choices are directly affected by income as was the teenage mother in the peri-urban community. In the case of the working mother and the pseudo-parenting by the proprietor in the peri-urban preschool in the study, as pointed out by Beneria (1988) and Romero (2000), the climbing of career ladders by women in the absence of child minders has resulted in the transfer of almost all the total care and development of children to preschool attendants. The nature of this transfer and its outcome are in agreement with Brofenbrenner (1979) meso-system theory, where the social capital of the family plays a key role in the development of the child. For example, parents sending their children to the urban private school provided “perks” to and formed social networks with some of the caregivers. This form of currency was to ensure that extra care and attention were given to their children and wards.

While this practice could promote the interests of a particular child, it erodes the rights-based approach of providing a fair start for all children. The practice of the church in meeting the needs of vulnerable and deprived children in its preschool and the services provided in the public local authority school are the two strategies that respond to the approach for a universal fair start. Although the two services are in accordance with Martha Nussbaum’s (2000) rights-based approach, which calls for the provision of the barest minimum threshold of services regardless of context, class, or race for all persons, practices on the ground are bereft of quality in terms of sanitation, socialization and the comprehensive nature of holistic care.

Childhood potential development, described as actualization of potential, is a right and falls directly within the human capability development theory propounded by
Nussbaum (2000). With respect to the development of children specifically, Brofenbrenner (1979) situates the activities of these actors within four inter-connected frameworks with the home as the nucleus of the system. Within each of the three inner frameworks are people with specific roles to play the fourth frame being a bit abstract as it represents the policy and legislative context of the public good. Findings from this study revealed that roles by all three groups of actors in my case studies were not engineered by the principle of what is in the best interest of the child but by the interest of the actors. In the case of the child from the polygamous home in the peri-urban church preschool, the parent sending the child to the preschool to spite her rivals and their children should not have been the objective; in this case child development became an avenue for status competition. The situation reflects Buchi’s (1979) heroine’s approach in pre-colonial Nigeria.

Parental roles in the study were diverse and tied to economic status. In the case of the two peri-urban schools and the urban public school, which are patronized by low- and middle- income parents, there was little parent involvement in the school activities. Parents adopted the view that the teachers and caregivers were the professionals and knew best, the parents were detached from the preschool activities after providing what was required of them in terms of uniforms, exercise books, and so forth. In the urban private school, the participation of parents also appeared minimal and included only a limited number of parents.

My case studies also revealed the low participation of men in preschool service delivery, and in the case of the peri-urban community, the almost nonexistent support of fathers. The low participation in childcare services by men could be explained by old-age African traditions that view child upbringing as a niche managed by women in the private space of the home (Achebe, 1958; Mandela 1994; Buchi,
Romero (2002), in her book *Maid in the USA*, also shows that paid childcare services are a low-rated extension of the mothering role outside the home and involves some emotional labor.

Despite its occurrence in an “allegedly” affective environment, the work is often associated with emotional labor due to some level of intrinsic indignity of the caregivers who sometimes view it as a menial job outside their own homes. In addition, the practice of parents tipping caregivers to ensure that extra attention is given to their children and wards could lead to unequal power relations between the two adults. The practice further indicated some element of mistrust on the part of parents, especially in the private preschools, that their children would only be given required attention when they the caregivers were compensated privately. Thus, the element of favoritism could not be ruled out and could result in some children not receiving optimum care.

Contrary to this four-level system, an interesting revelation that emerged out of the study was the fact that two of the children, aged four and five, were boarders staying permanently with the owner of the peri-urban private school. The children had been sent from Britain by their parents who did not want to send them to family members. Their peculiar circumstances meant that they were pseudo family members enrolled in the school with the proprietor being totally responsible for their entire upkeep, including care and tuition in exchange for an undisclosed amount of foreign exchange.

Analyzed with the bio-ecological theory, there appears to be a fusion of the micro and meso systems. From another perspective the arrangement could be seen as foster care within the neighborhood meso system. Whichever it is considered, this calls for further studies into this emerging phenomenon of migrant or absentee parents.
and children’s development. The study revealed that the social climate of the preschool sites was quite varied, arising out of differences in services. In particular, the boarding facilities provided at one of the research sites revealed another social paradigm as the relationship between caregiver and child went beyond only daytime care-giving to combined teaching and foster parenting.

These findings provide an opportunity to interrogate Woodhead’s (1996) call for childcare as an independent activity as it is not clear whether the aim of the fostered children’s parents was first and foremost quality preschool or actually foster care services. From Berk’s (1999) ethological theory of imprinting, the foster arrangements may deny the children the opportunity of acquiring certain capacities that are culturally peculiar to their biological family environment and also to differentiating between the school and home environment. In effect, the child’s development will be narrowly mediated due to the combination of the micro and meso systems, contrary to Vygotzky’s broader socio-cultural approach.

Preschool Infrastructure, Resources, Curriculum and Methods

When I used the indicators to analyze my findings in the field, none of the schools from the assessments were providing the recommended preschool services that contribute to the fair start in life called for in the literature. None of the research sites met the recommended ratios of one caregiver to six children or two adults to ten or more children. In sections of the DSW national guidelines, it was indicated that the curriculum would be delivered by a trained preschool teacher and one attendant to a class of 25 to 30 children.

In addition, depending on the theoretical orientation of the preschool, such as Montessori or Piaget, the director of the preschool should have had specialized training in that discipline (Tokington, 1997). The staff was to receive in-service
training at least once a year. All the requirements were to be regularly supervised by
the district ECD coordinators while parents were to be actively involved through
consultations and participation. As with the curriculum, the supervision is not
definitively specified. None of the preschools in the study met the requirements.

The NAC efforts, which resulted in the development of the guidelines for
establishment of preschools, had been followed by a number of official actions to
improve quality and access, of which the prototype was the national ECD policy. A
key objective was the holistic content of ECD programs to cover cognitive, emotional,
physical, and social development, and to make it accessible, equitable, and affordable
in all communities. In the policy, parents and primary caregivers are to be given
required training to promote quality. Findings in the selected communities did not
show that the policy was in operation. From my analysis of the guidelines, the content
gave too much latitude to the proprietors of the preschools. For example, on the
critical and core issue of curriculum, it was stated in the guidelines that centers should
have a proven curriculum that takes a holistic view of a child’s development, and
should provide a variety of relevant, stimulating and enjoyable learning experiences.
Apart from all the adjectives attached to the learning experiences being relative, the
term “proven curriculum” was also too vague and subjective as it did not include any
indicators for assessment. The transfer of authority to the proprietors for
determination of curriculum obviously provides no uniform standard for assessment
and could result in a denial of basic requirements that should lead to children’s fair
start in life. Findings from the research site visits revealed that none of the preschools
was complying fully with the guidelines; neither were they being enforced by the
supervisors.

The findings on inadequate preschool infrastructure, untrained human resource
care and learning materials, unclear preschool curriculum and non-standardized care and teaching method showed inconsistencies in departmental responsibilities and lack of knowledge about the policies. The varied nomenclatures of crèche, daycare, nursery, kindergarten, and preschool, being used interchangeably by proprietors and by parents, as opposed to specific designations by officials depending on their orientations, have contributed to the lack of clearly defined services being provided by the preschools in the study. Some of the caregivers and parents themselves were unaware of the differences and had no concrete expectations from the preschool for their children. Overall, both the legislation and the policy have not been adhered to in preschool practices and strategies.

Literature also indicates that many people of diverse professions should be involved in preschool activities under a coordinating director with training in childcare education (Auerbach, 1981). This was the exception with all the four cases studies. At best, the preschool arranges with a nearby medical center to attend to emergency cases should the need arise. Parents are required to attend to the health needs of the child and are notified to collect an indisposed child. First aid is given in a few cases. However, to encourage parents to vaccinate their children, immunization of children against five lethal child diseases (tetanus, diphtheria, measles, whooping cough, and tuberculosis) has been made a requirement for admission to private preschools. The study revealed that beyond this requirement, none of the schools had carried out any follow-up action to ensure that booster vaccinations have been given, thus defeating the ultimate goal of the vaccinations.

In addition, findings from the study revealed a limited variety of skills and experiences and only one staff member with theoretical orientation training in the urban public school. The majority of the caregivers in the private schools had only
completed a basic education. The staff quality in the study tends to endorse a perception that childcare does not require professional training. A noticeable feature about the teachers was the gender imbalance with only three male teachers among the total staff of nineteen. A number of authors (Berk, 1999; Black, 2000; Pence, 1998) argue that early childhood care has many advantages, including a better understanding of individual sex roles. The Institute of Childhood Resources (2000) posits that children of divorced parents, who do not see their fathers frequently, benefit from interaction with male caregivers. Thus, the low ratio of male caregivers in the research sites, which is representative of the national situation, as shown in Table 3, is not in the best interest of the children.

In terms of infrastructure, none of the four preschools had the space and the play equipment found at the National Model Nursery School. With the role of caregivers being the essence of preschool activities, whether inside or outside classrooms, especially in their recreational arena, some authors (Ball, 1999; Kabiru, 1997) assert that recreation periods offer children the opportunity to grow in their ability to get along with others. Through recreational activities, children build their self-esteem, competitiveness, and tolerance. The involvement of the caregivers; their ability to guide the children; the encouragement, support, and equal treatment of boys and girls mirrors the ideal social ambience of the preschool. My findings at the research sites indicate that access to recreation is highly determined by the economic status of parents and their ability to pay a little extra to ensure their children have exposure to modern child development resources.

Conclusion

A great deal of research on ECD in Africa and Ghana has been done. Some of these studies have been generalized, without deep analysis into the social, economic,
and cultural contexts. In addition, the rapid growth of preschools but even more, the
dynamism and interdisciplinary nature of child care requires continuous assessment of
this phenomenon. It was due to this gap that the study focused on the three research
questions to examine services in relation to the geographical locations of the school.

Findings from the research sites revealed a gap between the existence of
legislation and policy enforcement, on one hand, and theory and practice, on the
other, in the preschools. Accordingly, it is recommended that:

- Education officials should be given resources to ensure effective
  implementation of preschool service delivery.
- Basic standards for preschool service delivery should be enforced and
  required of all proprietors.
- There should be constructive and functioning Parent Teacher Associations in
  preschools to promote the compliance of regulations.
- Preschools should not be used as a substitute for parental responsibility.
- The focus of the curriculum should be holistic and not primarily cognitive
  for the passing of context-based examinations into private preparatory
  schools.
- Preschool curricula should be flexible and delivered in an environment that
  helps children to explore their imaginations, creativity, and environment.

Unless the identified gaps in preschools are closed by the type of services found
in the study, a fair start in life, made possible through the incorporation of high-
quality holistic childcare services rather than a fragmented parent-benefit approach,
will be a mirage for the majority of children living in deprived communities.
REFERENCES


APPENDIX A

QUALITY ECCD THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS CHECKLIST

1. Physical Facility Checklist:

1. Does the space seem safe (lights and electric sockets out of reach of children)?
   Yes---- Satisfactory No----

Is there enough space, well-planned, no crowding or cluttering?
   Yes---- Satisfactory No----

3. Is the equipment inside and outside varied, sturdy, safe and easy to use by children?
   Yes---- Satisfactory No----

4. Is the place attractive and comfortable (Are there pets, plants, decorations)?
   Yes---- Satisfactory No----

5. Can the children get inside and outside safely and without difficulty?
   Yes---- Satisfactory No----

6. Are the materials ample, in good condition and easily available? (Can the children reach a variety of books, toys and resources?)
   Yes---- Satisfactory No----

7. Are the bathrooms clean and easy for a child to use; are they within reach of toiletries?
   Yes---- Satisfactory No----

8. Are the meals nutritious and well-balanced, prepared and served attractively?
   Yes---- Satisfactory No----

9. Do the children have a comfortable and quiet place for naps?
   Yes---- Satisfactory No----

10. Does the place have provisions for an ill child, first aid kit, and health staff?
for emergencies? Yes---- Satisfactory No----

Final tally of observations of physical space

Total number of Yes Answers ________

Total number of No answers ________

Other words I would use to describe the place

How would a child feel about this place?

How do I feel about this place?

2. Emotional Climate Checklist.

1. Do the children show that they really like and trust the adults?

Yes---- Satisfactory No----

2. Do children appear happy comfortable and relaxed?

Yes---- Satisfactory No----

3. Does the staff communicate easily with each child?

Yes---- Satisfactory No----

4. Are children allowed to pursue their own interests according to their abilities?

Yes---- Satisfactory No----

5. Are the children’s emotional needs given first priority?

Yes---- Satisfactory No----

6. Would my child receive the attention he or she needs and be treated fairly here?

Yes---- Satisfactory No----

7. Are problems handled without upset?

Yes---- Satisfactory No----

8. Does the director or teacher answer my question openly?

Yes---- Satisfactory No----
9. Do I feel comfortable with the staff and the place?
Yes---- Satisfactory No----

3. Learning Climate:
1. Is the place arranged for easy learning and growing?
Yes---- Satisfactory No----

2. Does the program seem well-planned?
Yes---- Satisfactory No----

3. Does the program provide many opportunities for the individual child?
Yes---- Satisfactory No----

4. Can children move around and find materials easily?
Yes---- Satisfactory No----

5. Are the learning opportunities suitable for the different age groups?
Yes---- Satisfactory No----

6. Are the children’s questions answered easily?
Yes---- Satisfactory No----

7. Do the children enjoy the available activities?
Yes---- Satisfactory No----

8. Do the children receive enough individual attention and assistance?
Yes---- Satisfactory No----

9. Are individual events and trips arranged frequently?
Yes---- Satisfactory No----

10. Is the children’s work such as drawing and craft projects displayed and discussed with the adults?
Yes---- Satisfactory No----
4. Social climate

1. Do I like how the children behave and relate to each other?
Yes----  Satisfactory  No----

2. Are the conflicts handled with sensitivity?
Yes----  Satisfactory  No----

3. Would my child fit in with the group?
Yes----  Satisfactory  No----

4. Are the language and culture of each child respected?
Yes----  Satisfactory  No----

5. Do the children respond easily and happily to each other?
Yes----  Satisfactory  No----

6. Do the children have many conflicts?
Yes----  Satisfactory  No----

7. Does the staff encourage children to express themselves and participate?
Yes----  Satisfactory  No----

8. Are the children learning non-sexist social roles?
Yes----  Satisfactory  No----

9. Are parents made to feel welcome and encouraged to know each other?
Yes----  Satisfactory  No----
APPENDIX B:

QUANTITATIVE DATA COLLECTION GUIDE

The following data will be collected in the two communities and computed for percentages, ratios, and comparisons.

A. Preschool Center Profile:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ECC</th>
<th># of children</th>
<th># of teachers</th>
<th>Ownership</th>
<th>Services Provided</th>
<th>Teacher/student ratio</th>
<th>Infrastructure Types (#)</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Hours of operation</th>
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B. Profile of Preschool Staff:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Center</th>
<th># of Care Providers</th>
<th>Length of service</th>
<th>Qualification</th>
<th>Training</th>
<th>Specialization</th>
<th>Salary range</th>
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C. Age and Gender Profile of Children:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Name of center</th>
<th>0-1 yrs</th>
<th>1-2 yrs</th>
<th>2-3 yrs</th>
<th>3-4 yrs</th>
<th>4-5 yrs</th>
<th>5-6 yrs</th>
<th>6-7 yrs</th>
<th>7-8 yrs</th>
<th>G/B</th>
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D. Preschool Internal efficiency:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Center</th>
<th>Enrollment</th>
<th>Performance</th>
<th>Attendance</th>
<th>Absenteeism</th>
<th>Repetition</th>
<th>Withdrawal</th>
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E. Preschool Services Provided:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Center</th>
<th>Health</th>
<th>Transport</th>
<th>Communication</th>
<th>Recreation</th>
<th>Nutrition</th>
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F. Preschool Infrastructure typology:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Center</th>
<th>Cement</th>
<th>Garage</th>
<th>Shed</th>
<th>Open space</th>
<th>Class Sizes</th>
<th>Type of furniture</th>
<th>Sanitation Services (%)</th>
<th>Water</th>
<th>Cafeteria</th>
<th>Reception Offices/staff room</th>
<th>Sick Bay</th>
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G. Preschool Sources of Funding:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Center</th>
<th>Government</th>
<th>Parents</th>
<th>Non-Governmental</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>% of budget</th>
<th>Organizations</th>
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H. Preschool Teaching Resources:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of Center</th>
<th>Books Per pupil</th>
<th>Chalk/Black Board</th>
<th>Exercise books</th>
<th>Toys</th>
<th>Slate/counters</th>
<th>Manila cards</th>
<th>Puzzles</th>
<th>Templates</th>
<th>Pictures</th>
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I. Preschool Outdoor recreational resources:

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<tr>
<th>Name of Center</th>
<th>Seesaw</th>
<th>Swings</th>
<th>Slides</th>
<th>Climbers</th>
<th>Rollers</th>
<th>Athletics</th>
<th>Sports</th>
<th>Picnics</th>
<th>Trips</th>
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J. Frequency of interactive programs:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Name of Center</th>
<th>Community</th>
<th>Parents</th>
<th>Public Officials</th>
<th>Outsiders</th>
<th>NGOs</th>
<th>Siblings</th>
<th>Inspectors</th>
<th>Networks/Other centers</th>
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APPENDIX C

MODEL FOR PRESCHOOL STANDARDS

1. Caregiver ratio: 1 adult to group of 6 children
   2 adults to 6-9 children

2. Daily time allocation components:
   - Nap
   - Meal time
   - Learning
   - Arts and craft
   - Group activity time
   - Individual activity time

Preschool Profile
1. Name ___________________ Registration __________ Year of Inc. __________
2. Ownership: Name ___________________ Qualification (Individuals) __________

3. Number /Name of Caregivers:
   Name _______________ Qualification ______________

4. Number/ Names of Supporting Staff
   Names: _______________ Qualifications ______________

5. Number of Children: Female: ___________ Male ___________
   Ages of children: 0-6 6-12 12-18 18-24
   (in months) 24-30 30-36 36-48 48-60
   60-72 72-96

6. Services:
   Health_______ Nutrition_______ Learning_______ Transportation_____

7. Caregiver / child ratio

8. After-school hours care/program
APPENDIX D
QUALITATIVE STUDY OF ECCD SERVICES
QUALITATIVE FIELD STUDY GUIDE

A. Demographic Information (all participants):

1. Name: Age: Marital Status: Children: Children
2. Ethnicity: Education: Occupation: Formal
   Informal/Self-
   Salaried worker Position Employed

B. Parents

1. What are your views on center-based early child upbringing practices?
2. When is the appropriate time for sending the child to an ECCD center and for how long?
3. What factors influence your decisions about sending their children to ECCD centers? (Probes: economic, rights; work; basic school requisites; absence of care.)
4. How do you choose the ECCD center to send your child to?
5. How do you involve yourself in your child’s ECCD programs in school and in the home?
6. What are your views on the nature and quality of care provided in these centers?
7. What suggestions can you make with regard to (a) time spent in school; (b) cost; (c) facilities; (d) services; (e) supervision; (f) communication with parents and wards of children; (g) staffing
C. Providers and Caregivers:

What is your objective in establishing this center?

How do you see the concept of ECCD as defined by WB (copy made available) and the service provided by your center?

What are the implications of the absence of an ECCD policy on your school?

What capacity building plans do you have for the staff?

What roles do you think the public government, local administration, community, and parents should play in the provision of ECCD services for Ghanaians in their early childhood?

D. Public official

What is the official understanding of ECCD and how is it expressed?

How does the policy framework affect ECCD program delivery in the public and private sectors?

What is government’s future agenda for ECCD with respect to equal access and resources?

My observation after reading the guidelines was that the document should be made available to each childcare center despite my reservations about some of the contents which are discussed later in this chapter.