

ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation: TEACHERS' BELIEFS AND PRACTICES TOWARD CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES IN ETHIOPIA

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The purpose of this study was to examine the beliefs and practices of teachers toward students with disabilities at one early childhood school in Ethiopia. I conducted a case study that included ethnographic features in order to examine teachers' beliefs about children with disabilities, factors that influence their beliefs and ways in which teachers' beliefs are evidenced by their daily classroom practices. I used the bioecological systems theory as a framework to consider data for this study. I conducted a series of classroom observations and interviews with 12 teachers at Addis Early Childhood School (AECS) for this study. I also gathered extensive background and contextual data interviews with other Ethiopian education professionals in order to gather additional data on this topic and to triangulate data I gathered from primary sources. Findings of the study indicate that, although AECS teachers acknowledged that Ethiopian traditional beliefs linking disabilities to supernatural causes persist in Ethiopia, most AECS teachers rejected those beliefs and believed children with disabilities could learn with appropriate support. Teachers' prior training and experience related to teaching children with disabilities influenced their beliefs about children with disabilities. They held similar expectations for all of their students regardless of their abilities, and they often provided assistance and differentiation to students in order to help them meet participatory,

behavioral and academic standards. Findings from this study provide valuable information for Ethiopian teachers, education policy makers, and international organizations as they continue to reform Ethiopia's education system and attempt to improve education for all children.

TEACHERS' BELIEFS AND PRACTICES TOWARD CHILDREN WITH
DISABILITIES IN ETHIOPIA

by

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Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my family and friends who supported me through this seemingly unending journey. Your compassionate encouragement and patience with me over the past seven years helped me to reach this goal. I love and appreciate you all.

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

AECS	Addis Early Childhood School
ASD	Autism Spectrum Disorder
AAU	Addis Ababa University
CTE	College of Teacher Education
ECE	Early Childhood Education
EFA	Education for All
MoE	Ministry of Education
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
SNE	Special Needs Education
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
CwD	Children with disabilities

Chapter I

Introduction

Background

The education of children with disabilities is a matter of international concern. In the 2011 World Report on Disability, The World Health Organization estimated that 15-20% of the world's total population has a disability and only a small fraction of school-aged children has access to schooling. In developing countries, including many countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, factors such as poor nutrition, lack of prenatal care, poor hygiene and dangerous living conditions increase the prevalence of people with disabilities to as high as 40% (Charema, 2007). Children with disabilities in developing countries are often "marginalized, segregated, viewed as objects of pity, and disadvantaged in both school and in society" (Charema, 2007, p. 1). Widely held cultural beliefs in Sub-Saharan Africa relate disabilities to evil spirits, witchcraft, demonic possession or punishment by divine beings for the faults of family members (Abosi, 2007; Bore, Mukuria & Adera, 2007; Charema, 2007; Mba, 1987; Teklemariam, 2010). Consequently, children with disabilities are often discriminated against in their communities and schools. A background paper for the 2011 Education for All Global Monitoring Report identifies discriminatory attitudes among school staff as a reason children with disabilities are excluded from their local schools in one sub-Saharan country (Lewis, 2010). Teachers' attitudes toward and management of children with disabilities is an area of concern related to educating children with disabilities (Abosi, 2007).

The current international focus on children's early development is an important step in addressing low education rates, specifically school enrollment, literacy, academic

achievement, and school completion in Africa (UN, 2013). The first years of children's lives are vital to their development and lay the foundation for future learning (Dewey, 1916; Froebel, 1904; Montessori, 1912; Piaget, 1936; Vygotsky, 1978). More recently, researchers have learned that the human brain develops the majority of its neurons and is most receptive to learning between during the early years and that experiences children have during the first few years of life can impact the development of the brain and children's future capacity to learn (Cowan, 1979; Huttenlocher, 1984; Klass, Needlman & Zuckerman, 2002; Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000). Shonkoff and Phillips also theorize that children's early exposure to learning in stimulating environments can lead them to perform better in later schooling. In line with the findings of Shonkoff and Phillips, the development of many children in developing African nations is challenged by poverty, poor health and nutrition and lack of access to education. The WHO reports that "early identification and intervention can reduce the level of educational support children with disabilities may require throughout their schooling and ensure they reach their full potential" (p.221). Education Ministers in Africa have begun to focus on quality education reforms that consider the needs of all students in Africa including young children and children with disabilities.

International initiatives. In response to the lack of educational opportunity for school-aged children with disabilities worldwide, national governments and international aid organizations have created initiatives that focus on improving educational opportunities for all children. The World Education for All (EFA) goals accepted by The United Nations (UN) in 1990, the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education accepted by the UN in 1994, and the "Millennium Development

Goals” (MDGs) accepted by The UN at the Millennium Summit in 2000 all focus on improving access to and quality of education for all children around the world, including children with disabilities. At the World Conference on Education for All in 1990 in Jomtien, Thailand, representatives of the international community from 155 countries and 150 organizations met to discuss the state of and learning needs of children and adults around the world. Based on their concerns regarding the state of education in the world, the representatives agreed to an initiative to “universalize primary education and massively reduce illiteracy by the end of the decade”. This initiative includes six major EFA goals:

- Goal 1: Expand and improve comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children.
- Goal 2: Ensure that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, those in difficult circumstances, and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to and complete, free, and compulsory primary education of good quality.
- Goal 3: Ensure that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life-skills programs.
- Goal 4: Achieve a 50 % improvement in adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults.
- Goal 5: Eliminate gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieve gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls' full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality.

Goal 6: Improve all aspects of the quality of education and ensure the excellence of all so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills.

The adoption of these goals was an important step in establishing the importance of educating children with disabilities because they emphasized the importance of universal education and the importance of educating *all* children. Moreover, goal one established the importance of comprehensive early childhood education at an international level.

In 1994, UN members met again to “further the objective of Education for All by considering the fundamental policy shifts required to promote inclusive education, namely enabling schools to serve all children, particularly those with special educational needs” (The Salamanca Statement, 1994, preface). At the Salamanca Conference UN members met to lay out a statement about principles, policy and practice in special needs education and a framework for action in order for the world to achieve the EFA goals.

Following the Millennium Summit in 2000 UN members met in New York to adopt the Millennium Declaration, an initiative with the stated aim of reducing extreme poverty by 2015. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), contained in the Millennium Declaration, are eight international development goals that concentrate on development by improving social and economic conditions in the world's poorest countries. The eight goals and 21 targets focus on reducing extreme poverty, reducing child mortality rates, fighting diseases, and developing a global partnership for development. The United Nations and several other international organizations agreed to achieve The MDGs by the year 2015. Goal 2, which focuses on achieving universal primary education, particularly emphasizes the importance of education for *all* children.

This is another example of the international community focusing on improving educational access for children with disabilities.

Following the International Year of Disabled Persons (1981), the adoption of the United Nations World Programme of Action Concerning Disabled Persons (1982), and the release of the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities (1993), the global community has focused more on people with disabilities. As stated by the United Nations Secretary General in a message on the International Day of Disabled Persons on December 3, 2005

The United Nations Population Information Network estimates nearly 900 million people living in Africa, and of those, 50 million are disabled. Of disabled people only 2% have access to some form of rehabilitation, 90% of children with a mental disability die before the age 5, and 70% of disabled adults are unemployed and live in poverty.

The goals outlined in EFA and the MDGs focus on education and development worldwide from a broad perspective. According to United Nations annual reports, many countries, especially those in Africa are far from meeting the EFA goals and the MDGs. Most African countries continue to lag behind, specifically in the area of educating young children with disabilities or special needs. Despite these and other efforts, the majority of children with disabilities in developing countries continue to experience inequitable educational opportunities (Mulama, 2004; Mukuria & Korir, 2006). As stated by the WHO, "countries cannot achieve EFA or the Millennium Development goal of universal completion of primary education without ensuring access to education for children with disabilities" (p. 205).

Research is needed to better understand factors that prevent countries from including children with disabilities in the education system. In the World Bank's report focused on achieving EFA, Peters writes that the attention to social context "is perhaps the most significant [gap in the literature] of all, especially considering the numerous social, political and economic context barriers to attendance and participation that have been identified in the literature" (Peters, 1999, p. 3). Similarly, literature suggests that one factor that may prevent countries from including children with disabilities in the education system is cultural beliefs about disability (Abosi, 2007; Bore, Botts & Evans, 2010; Charema, 2007; Chitiyo, 2006; Kristensen, Lewis, 2010; Mba, 1987; Mukuria, & Adera, 2007; Omagor-Loican, Onen, & Okot, 2006; Peters, 1999; Teklemariam, 2010).

Education in Ethiopia

As an example of one country's progress toward improving access and quality of education for all students, Ethiopia can be examined. An estimated 91,195,675 people live in Ethiopia, and 46.3% are below the age of 15 (CIA, 2012). On average 85% of Ethiopians live in rural areas and 85% live below the international poverty line. There are considerable gaps in the data available regarding children with disabilities in Ethiopia and available statistics vary. For example, The Ethiopian government reported that 690,000 school-aged children had disabilities in 1997 and that only 1% of those students attended school. A recent Ethiopian Education Sector Development Program Report, EDSP IV, reported that that percentage had increased to 3% in 2010. This statistic is much lower than the 15-20% estimate made by the WHO. In her presentation at the International Special Education Congress (ISEC, 2000), Agegnehu reported that there were 5.3 million people in Ethiopia with disabilities and that .7% received educational

services. It is important to note that various sources cite different figures about the prevalence of disabilities in Ethiopia even within the same time frame; therefore statistics about disability in Ethiopia should be considered cautiously. However, all of the existing data suggests that, in spite of international initiatives focused on persons with disabilities, few in Ethiopia are receiving services.

Regardless of the specific numbers of children with disabilities in Ethiopia, sources agree that children with disabilities continue to be negatively impacted because of the beliefs about disabilities held by people in their lives, including teachers. In the Education Sector Development Program IV, a policy developed by the Ethiopian Ministry of Education in 2010, teachers' lack of awareness of all children's rights to education was listed as a key reason why children with disabilities were generally not in schools. At the ISEC in 2000, Agegnehu reported that Ethiopian teachers believe they are "unable to provide special attention to educate, motivate and assist children with disability [ies]" (p.1). She also states that people with disabilities and their families often suffer from social stigma, economic lack, discrimination and physical and emotional abuse because of their condition, and that some schools are not willing to enroll children with disabilities.

The Importance of Teacher Beliefs

Evidence from the United States suggests that understanding the beliefs of teachers in Ethiopia is an important component of understanding their educational practices, particularly when it comes to its relationship to the education of children with special needs. A large body of literature links teachers' beliefs to their classroom practices (Clark & Peterson, 1986; Lieber, Capell, Sandall, Wolfberg, Horn, & Beckman,

1998; Marchant, 1995; Mitchell & Hegde, 2007; Odom et al., 2004; Peck, Hayden, Wandschneider, Peterson, & Richarz, 1992). In each of these studies, researchers found that teachers who reported positive beliefs related to children with disabilities and their ability to teach them responded positively to students with disabilities in their classrooms. These studies also revealed that teachers who had positive attitudes about teaching children with disabilities saw better student outcomes. Although it is clear that cultural and religious factors may influence teachers' beliefs in Ethiopia, most studies of the relationship between beliefs and practice have been conducted in the United States and focused on Western teachers. There is a lack of literature that examines the beliefs of teachers from culturally diverse backgrounds, especially from sub-Saharan countries, namely Ethiopia.

Problem and Purpose

Although there is a global push to improve education for children with disabilities, the majority of Ethiopian children with disabilities are not in school. One potential reason, among many, for children with disabilities being largely excluded from school is teachers' negative perceptions about disabilities. Research conducted in Western contexts links teacher beliefs and practices. Research focused on teachers' beliefs about disabilities from the context of Ethiopia is extremely limited. The purpose of this research is to explore the beliefs of Ethiopian teachers about children with disabilities and how their beliefs are evidenced in their classrooms. Research about Ethiopian teachers' beliefs toward children with disabilities will provide valuable information about whether a relationship between teacher beliefs and practices is present in the context of Ethiopia.

Research Questions

Through this qualitative case study I will explore three specific research questions:

1. What are early childhood teachers' beliefs about children with disabilities?
 - a. What do teachers believe about the origins of disabilities?
 - b. What do teachers believe about the nature of disabilities?
 - c. What do teachers believe about children with disabilities being in their classrooms?
2. What factors influence early childhood teachers' beliefs about disabilities?
 - a. What cultural factors influence teachers' beliefs about disabilities?
 - b. What experiences influence teachers' beliefs about disabilities?
 - c. What prior education or training influence teachers' beliefs about disabilities?
3. How are early childhood teachers' beliefs about disabilities evidenced in their daily classroom practices?
 - a. What kinds of school activities do children with disabilities participate in?
 - b. What kinds of behavioral and performance expectations do teachers hold for students with disabilities?
 - c. Do teachers differentiate in their general treatment of or in their planning, instruction, or assessment for students with disabilities?

Significance

Exploring the beliefs of Ethiopian teachers and the way their beliefs are evidenced in their classroom practices has implications for research, policy and practice. Findings

from this study will enhance the larger body of research related to teachers' beliefs and practices by adding data from a setting where disabilities are not widely accepted by society and the majority of children with disabilities are not in school.

Education policy in Ethiopia is increasingly focusing on the education of children with disabilities. To improve education in Ethiopia and achieve Education for All, the Ministry of Education MoE developed the Education Sector Development Program (ESDP). Stated aims of this policy are to increase enrollment of children with special needs at all levels of education, increase the number of trained teachers in Special Needs Education, and improve the capacity of schools to address the academic and social needs of children with special educational needs including disabilities. The ESDP has been updated three times since 1990 and focuses more on children with disabilities in each version. Findings from this study will provide insight to Ethiopian policymakers as they plan for future education policies. Findings will also provide contextually relevant data to Ethiopian education policymakers, NGOs and private institutions as they plan for future teacher training and other initiatives focused on improving education for children with disabilities and achieving Education for All.

This topic also has great significance for practice. Teachers' beliefs, and as a result their practices, are influenced by a variety of factors including their culture. In the United States various laws are in place to protect students with disabilities (i.e., Individuals with Disabilities Education Act; Americans with Disabilities Act) and children with disabilities are generally accepted by society (Odom et al, 2004). In line with the research linking teachers' beliefs to their practices, the acceptance of and practices with children with disabilities by teachers in the United States is likely a result

of a culture that accepts people with disabilities as a part of society. The lack of research about Ethiopian teachers' beliefs about disabilities makes it difficult to assume that this linkage holds in the context of Ethiopia. Given the widely held cultural beliefs about disabilities and children with disabilities in Ethiopia, beliefs that they are generally not accepted into mainstream society, it is important to explore Ethiopian teachers' beliefs and evidences of their beliefs in their classrooms. Practically, data from this research can be used to raise awareness among teachers about beliefs and practices toward children with disabilities in Ethiopia that they can use to inform and enhance their classroom practices as more students with special needs join their classrooms.

Chapter II

Literature Review

Background

Improving education for children with disabilities is an increasing international area of focus. The World Health Organization (2011) estimates that there are between 93 million and 150 million children with disabilities worldwide and many of them are excluded from mainstream education. Due to the large number of children with disabilities who do not have access to education, national governments, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO), religious institutions and private organizations have initiated countless laws, programs and policies to improve access to education to include children with disabilities. Examples of national laws include the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act in the United States, the Canadian Human Rights Act in Canada, and the Strategy for Special Needs Education in Ethiopia. International initiatives include Education for All, The Salamanca Agreement and the Millennium Development Goals. Despite worldwide progress toward achieving Education for All in recent decades, children with disabilities remain less likely to attend school than other children (WHO, 2011), and lack of access to education remains a dominant problem for children with disabilities (Lindqvist, 1999).

Focusing on Ethiopia. Ethiopia is a developing country in which the majority of children with disabilities are not in schools. The Ethiopian Ministry of Education reported that only 0.3% of children with disabilities were attending school in 1997. The 2010 Education Sector Development Plan IV report states that 3% of children in schools had disabilities. The limited literature focused on Ethiopia suggests that teachers' beliefs about disabilities are a reason many children with disabilities in Ethiopia are excluded

from school (Charema, 2007; Lewis, 2010). A large body of literature conducted in the United States links teachers' beliefs to their classroom practices (Clark & Peterson, 1986; Lieber et al., 1998; Marchant, 1995; Mitchell & Hegde, 2007; Odom et al., 2004; Peck et al., 1992). Other research from the United States links teachers' classroom practices to student outcomes (Clark & Peterson, 1986; Wenglinsky, 2002). In a literature review about factors that make up teachers' beliefs, Pajares (1992) states, "Few would argue that the beliefs teachers hold influence their perceptions and judgments, which, in turn affect their behavior in the classroom, or that understanding the belief structures of teachers and teacher candidates is essential to improving their professional preparation and teaching practices" (p.307). Significant contextual differences exist between the United States and developing countries such as Ethiopia that make it difficult to apply the findings from research done in one country to the context of the other. For example, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, 2007) requires that, to the maximum extent possible, young children with disabilities receive services and support in the same settings as their same-age peers. Although the Ethiopian government has indicated that improving the education of children with disabilities is a priority, requirements such as those found in IDEA are not currently evident in Ethiopian laws and practices. It is difficult to know whether the trends that emerged from studies conducted in the United States apply in contexts such as Ethiopia where laws protecting and ensuring education for children with disabilities are either not present or not effectively implemented (Lewis, 2010). Further research focusing on teachers' beliefs about children in developing countries such as Ethiopia is warranted.

History, Culture and Education in Ethiopia. A brief overview of the culture and history of Ethiopia provides context for understanding the reasons that children with disabilities are largely excluded from schools there. Ethiopia is among the oldest countries in the world and has a rich history. Ethiopia is known by many for its biblical history, rich culture, and Olympic athletes, as well as famine, poverty, disease and instability. Ethiopia has never been colonized by westerners; however the country has been battered by conflict over the years. The Italian army occupied the country from 1936 until 1941. During and following the Italian occupancy there was a period of relative peace and development in the country under the rule of Emperor Haile Selassie (1930-1974). The Ethiopian government created the first laws and policies protecting people with disabilities during this time. From 1974-1991 Ethiopia was ruled by a communist group known as the Derg. During this time Derg soldiers tortured and/or killed thousands of their suspected enemies, all religion was outlawed, and education began to focus heavily on socialism. Although the Derg was overthrown in 1991, Ethiopia has had continuous war with Eritria over border lands until the present time. Along with Ethiopia's history, scarce resources and economic hardship, historically the investment of resources in education, especially education for young children with disabilities has been low in Ethiopia (Lewis, 2011).

The Ethiopian Orthodox church has had a major influence on education over the history of the country (Ethiopian Treasures, 2012). Before the Derg the majority of formal education focused on religion, and was given by the priests and monks of the Orthodox Church at that time (Teferra & Altbach, 2003). After the Derg, practical education was taught in schools. Education received roughly 13% of the national budget in 1992. By 1995

the rate of illiteracy had dropped substantially to 64.5%. In 2007 the estimated literacy rate was 39% and the public expenditure on education was 4.7% (CIA World Fact Book, 2012). As a comparison, during the same time period in the United States, the literacy rate was 99% and the public expenditure on education was 5.4%.

Education. Ethiopia faces many challenges that have restricted development in education for many years. Poverty is a major reason that many children do not attend school there (Lewis, 2011). In 2006 an estimated 39% of Ethiopia's population lived below the poverty line (CIA World Fact Book, 2010). According to UNESCO reviews, many Ethiopians believe that work is more important than education, so they begin to work at a very early age with little to no education (Teferra & Altbach, 2003). Children in rural areas are less likely to go to school than children in urban areas. Since an estimated 85% of people living in Ethiopia live in the rural areas, many children are either out of school or have to walk long distances to get to a school. Additionally, many rural families are living below the poverty line and so cannot afford the cost associated with sending their children to school. Many rural parents also do not send their children to school either because there is no school nearby or because they need their children to work to generate income for the family.

People with disabilities in Ethiopia. Conditions for people with disabilities are even more complex. In Ethiopia, people with disabilities often have no access to education or job training. A survey on disability in Ethiopia reported that 60% of persons with disabilities of working age were unemployed in 1995. Of these, approximately two-thirds were self-employed in rural areas in occupations such as agriculture, animal husbandry or forest activities (EFA Global Monitoring Report, 2011). Children with disabilities living

in cities often generate income by selling small items such as tissue or chewing gum or by making change for taxi drivers. People with disabilities also often engage in begging as a means of survival in cities. In the Ethiopian Orthodox Church it is believed that if one gives money to a beggar that person is considered to be righteous. Some very poor families have been found to injure their children so that they can engage in begging to generate income for the family. Additionally, people with disabilities often receive support from religious institutions and charities. Dozens of private or religious schools and other programs for people with disabilities are present in Ethiopia today.

In addition, there is a great deal of social and cultural stigma associated with disability in Ethiopia (Teferra & Altbach, 2003). Disability is often seen as a curse from God or an evil spirit given to a person by an enemy. Some families are extremely afraid and/or ashamed to have children with disabilities. Some children with disabilities live their whole lives in their homes without their neighbors ever knowing they are there. Community education related to the causes of disability and the abilities of children with disabilities is warranted.

National initiatives and policies. Education policy in Ethiopia guarantees children with disabilities a right to education suitable to their capability and disability (Ethiopian Constitution). In an effort to promote the EFA goals, the government of Ethiopia has adopted and implemented some laws, policies and standards pertaining to people with disabilities, including their right to productive and decent work. The Ethiopian Education Sector Development Program III reported over 16,000 primary schools in Ethiopia but identified only 15 schools or programs for students with special needs. The program report identified an additional 285 classes that were attached to

regular government schools (ESDP III, 2010). Despite the policies and initiatives, the overwhelming majority of children with disabilities are not in school. In the 1996 census, only 2,572 students with disabilities reported to be in regular schools. In a report prepared for the UNESCO EFA Global Monitoring report in 2011, Lewis writes:

Ethiopia's constitution states that all international agreements (including the Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities, 1993, and the Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education, 1994), are an integral part of the law of the land. It upholds those rights of citizens to equal access to publicly funded services and the support that shall be given to accommodate the needs of people with disabilities. The country has a National Plan of Action for Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities, but it is not yet effectively implemented (Lewis, 2011).

Ethiopia is making some progress in improving the educational circumstances for children with special needs. The Ethiopian Ministry of Education has begun including the education of children with disabilities into its policies and budgets, special needs programs have opened to train teachers, and school enrollment of children with disabilities has increased in recent years. Even so, the vast majority of children with disabilities in Ethiopia are excluded from schooling. Teachers' beliefs about disabilities may be contributing factors that discourage children with disabilities from enrolling in Ethiopian schools. Since Ethiopia was so far from achieving the six EFA goals when they were set in 1990, even with the recent progress there is a long way to go before EFA is achieved. Given the large number of school-aged children with disabilities and their

relatively low school enrollment, the possibility of Ethiopia achieving Education for All in 2015 is slim.

About the Review

This literature review summarizes the state of knowledge about teachers' beliefs toward children with disabilities with an eye toward its implications for children with disabilities in Ethiopia. Literature related to teachers' beliefs and practices is extremely limited in developing countries overall, and no research was found about this topic specific to Ethiopia. Therefore, most of the studies included in this review were conducted in the United States. Four articles in this review focus on teachers in contexts other than the United States. Data from this review can be used to support the need for further research about teachers' beliefs about children with disabilities in Ethiopia.

Theoretical framework. I conducted this review of literature through the lens of the bioecological systems theory. This theory, developed by Bronfenbrenner in 1979 and elaborated further in later papers (1994, 1998, and 2006), notes that people exist not in isolation but in the context of wider relationships or contexts within society. These systems include the biosystem— the specific characteristics of the child, the various microsystems in which children and families function, the mesosystem – which includes the interaction between various microsystems as well as the people who interact directly with children and families within each microsystem; the exosystem, which includes wider organizational systems such as health or social care agencies in which children and families are involved, even if not a direct participant; the macrosystem of the wider cultural, religious and economic factors which influence the functioning children and families; and the chronosystem, which refers to how these systems interact over time.

The way that people relate with, influence and are influenced by each of the *systems* determines their overall functioning according to this theory. Bioecological systems theory has evolved over time and the number of systems described by Bronfenbrenner has evolved as well. For the sake of clarity and to keep the theoretical framework consistent, any references to the bioecological systems theory will refer to the six sub-systems described above.

The ecological systems perspective can be applied to children with disabilities in Ethiopia. The biosystem involves individual brain and bodily characteristics about the child, including his or her physical appearance and functioning, health, intelligence, temperament, interests and other personal features. A child in Ethiopia who has been impaired by a disease from their environment may have a developmental delay or impairment. This delay or impairment may lead to the child having difficulty learning and interacting with others in the same way as children his or her age. They child may also require more or different types of support from family, educational programs than other children his or her age. School policies and practices related to enrollment and instruction may impact the child's access to appropriate education. Further, traditional Ethiopian beliefs may impact the way people interact with this child and expectations for what he or she is capable of in life. These specific characteristics interact with, influence and are influenced by other systems in the child's world throughout his or her life, according to Bronfenbrenner.

The microsystem consists of the settings in which the child generally participates including his/her classroom, home or community. Individuals are often part of multiple microsystems, for example, the microsystem of the family, that of the classroom, etc. The

microsystem contexts can be long lasting, as in the case of the family setting, or short term, as in the case of a classroom that the child attends for a short time but has to leave after the school director tells the parent that the child can no longer attend because he or she has autism. The microsystem contexts of a child with autism in Ethiopia may consist of the child's daily interaction at home with his or her family, a daycare, special school or other setting in which the child generally participates.

The mesosystem includes contexts in which there is an interaction between two or more of the child's microsystems. When the people or activities from individual microsystems come together, there may be an impact on one or both of these settings which in turn, influences the child. Mesosystems can be long term and recurrent, as in the case of ongoing interactions between the family and school personnel; or one-time occurrences, as in the case of a community gathering to celebrate a wedding. One important mesosystem for children with disabilities is the relationship between the caregiver and the teacher.

The exosystem is made up of settings or events that influence the child indirectly. Factors such as the policies of a school system or NGO that provide services to the child can impact the child through the way it affects factors at the microsystem and mesosystem level. Like micro- and mesosystem contexts, the exosystem effects on a child can be short term, as in the case of a child whose parent needs to work overtime for several weeks because of policies at his/her place of work, or long term, as in the case of a child who is participating in a program in which the policies and practices have changed. Exosystem influences that may be present for a child with disabilities in

Ethiopia could include a school or program that establishes a policy preventing the participation of children with disabilities.

The macrosystem includes international and national policies that influence how schools or NGOs function as well as broader, cultural values and beliefs that influence the family, school and community. In the case of Ethiopia widely held cultural beliefs about the origin of disabilities or attitudes about school for children with disabilities would be included in this category – particularly if such beliefs are accepted by the child's family members, members of the community, teachers and, the education policy makers.

Finally, the chronosystem includes changes that take place at each level of the child's ecological systems as a result of transitions and shifts that occur over the course of his or her lifetime. For a child with disabilities in Ethiopia the chronosystem may include the increasing attention by the Ethiopian government and international organizations as they work to accomplish the EFA goals. As national and international organizations focus more on awareness about disability and improving teacher preparation around special education, schools may become better equipped to serve students with disabilities. All levels of the ecological systems work together to impact children's development and functioning. According to Bronfenbrenner, positive development happens when all six systems work well together.

About the Literature

In this chapter I review the literature about teachers' beliefs regarding children with disabilities through the lens of the Ecological Systems framework. First I describe the methodology and parameters of this review. Next I describe and synthesize the

studies from the perspective of bioecological systems theory. Finally, based on the findings of this review, I draw conclusions and make recommendations for future research.

Search strategies. I conducted an electronic search of Education Resources Information Center (ERIC) to find literature related to teachers' beliefs and practices toward children with disabilities. I originally searched the databases using the terms "teacher's beliefs" AND "disabilities OR children with disabilities OR students with disabilities" AND "practices", AND "Ethiopia". Because literature about early childhood special education in Ethiopia is so limited and my initial search yielded no related literature, I expanded my search to (teacher beliefs) OR (practitioner beliefs), AND (practice) OR (inclusion), AND (disabilities) OR (disability), AND (early childhood) OR (preschool) OR (early intervention). I also limited the search to articles written between 1990 and 2012 that were published in peer reviewed journals. I chose this time frame to coincide with the time following the first Education for All initiative. I read through each abstract and eliminated studies that did not include teachers of children aged 3-5. Studies that did not specify the ages of teachers' students and studies that focused on teachers of students aged 3-5 and another age group (i.e., preschool and primary grades) were included in this review. I excluded articles that focused on people other than teachers, settings that were not schools or childcare locations, and were not published in peer reviewed journals. After excluding articles that were out of the scope of this review nine articles remained. I then did an archival search by using the reference lists from the each of the identified articles to locate other related articles. Therefore, in this paper I review

10 articles focusing on teachers' beliefs and practices toward children with disabilities including 3 qualitative studies, and 7 quantitative or mixed methods studies.

Definitions. Prior to proceeding with an analysis of the literature related to teachers' beliefs and practices about children with disabilities, it is important to define these terms. *Belief* is a complex term that has various definitions. According to Rokeach (1968) beliefs are "any simple proposition, conscious or unconscious, inferred from what a person says or does, capable of being preceded by the phrase, 'I believe that . . .'" (p. 113). Rokeach also argues that, to understand a person's beliefs, inferences about that person's underlying state have to be made. Pajares (1992) states "beliefs cannot be directly observed or measured but must be inferred from what people say, intend, and do" (p. 314). Beliefs include people's values, plans and ideologies (Garner & Alexander, 1994; Stoiber & Houghton, 1994). Research suggests that beliefs about the inclusion of children with disabilities are formed by practitioners through personal experience and create expectations about how a child with a disability may function in a classroom (Stoiber, Gettinger, & Goetz, 1998). For the purposes of this review teachers' *beliefs* are defined as tacit, often unconsciously held assumptions about students (Kagan, 1992) and may be made up of the teachers' experiences (Sigel, 1985), knowledge (Lewis, 1990; Rokeach, 1968), attitudes and values (Rokeach, 1968). The term *practices* refers to methods, procedures or processes that teachers follow when planning or delivering instruction or assessing students.

Due to the lack of universal terminology and definitions related to young children with disabilities, working definitions are listed below. I use the terms *early childhood education*, *early education* and *preschool* interchangeably in this review which is

consistent with the way those terms are used in the literature. These terms refer to a country's or an organization's definition of pre-primary education, generally education for children aged 3-5 years. The terms *disability* and *special need* refer to "any restriction or lack, resulting from an impairment of ability to perform an activity in the manner or within the range considered normal for a human being" (United Nations, 1983). *Special education* refers to education for students with disabilities. *Inclusion* refers to students with disabilities being educated in regular classrooms with age-appropriate peers (WHO, 2011), and *inclusive environments* are settings where children with disabilities and without disabilities are being educated together. *Differentiation* or *differentiated instruction* is providing different students with different avenues to learning in terms of: acquiring content; processing, constructing, or making sense of ideas; and developing teaching materials and assessment measures so that all students within a classroom can learn effectively, regardless of differences in ability (Tomlinson, 2001). *Accommodations* are changes made to instruction and/or assessment intended to help students with disabilities fully access the general education curriculum without changing the instructional content. Although these terms may have other meanings as well, I refer to the definitions above throughout this paper. A complete list of definitions used in this dissertation is found in the glossary.

Selection of the studies. I included 10 studies that examined teachers' beliefs and practices toward children with disabilities in this review. Studies are organized into three main categories: 1) empirical studies using qualitative research methods conducted in the United States, 2) empirical studies using quantitative or mixed methods research conducted in the United States, and 3) empirical studies using quantitative or mixed

method research conducted outside of the United States. It is important to note that studies identified in this review focused primarily on teachers' beliefs about inclusion as opposed to their more general beliefs about children with disabilities. Nevertheless, each of the studies addressed the topic of teachers' beliefs about children with disabilities in one way or another. In each of the following three sections, I describe the individual studies and provide a brief critical analysis. I focus more on the qualitative studies in the first section than the other two sections because of the rich and descriptive nature of this type of research. Next, I summarize the findings in the section and note any trends. Finally, I give a brief summary of trends that were evident in all sections.

Qualitative Studies Conducted in the United States

Three studies used qualitative research methods to describe teachers' beliefs about including children with disabilities in their classrooms. Lieber, Capell, Sandall, Wolfberg, Horn and Beckman examined the beliefs and practices of early childhood teachers about inclusion in their 1998 study. In this study, researchers conducted interviews and observations of 29 teachers from 23 preschool settings across the United States in order to describe teachers' beliefs and the way they enacted them in their classrooms. The researchers maintained detailed field notes and included recorded and transcribed interview data in their findings. They also used inductive analysis methods such as constant-comparative coding as described by Glasser and Strauss (1967), cross site analysis, and triangulation to ensure that data were credible.

Findings from this study indicated that teachers generally believed in inclusion and that all children were members of the group. However, the way inclusion was enacted varied among teachers based on how those teachers defined inclusion. For

example, teachers who believed inclusion involved a classroom group consisting of many individuals expected that children might do different activities in different ways. In contrast, teachers who believed inclusion involved group norms that must be followed and expected all children to fit in and behave similarly. Teachers also believed that inclusion was beneficial to children with disabilities as well as children without disabilities. Although the qualitative nature of this study and relatively small sample of teachers makes it difficult to generalize the results, findings do suggest that teachers' beliefs about inclusion had a clear impact on their practice in the programs that were studied.

As stated above, the researchers appeared to use valid and reliable procedures to carry out this study. The validity of the findings could have been enhanced by including more information about the assistant teachers. According to the authors, classroom assistants played a significant role in every classroom; however no background information was included in the report about them. The authors say that many of them have considerable experience and education; however specific information about their background was not included. Since the classroom assistants played such a significant role, information about them would have added to the validity of the findings. Additionally, the researchers conducted interviews with the teachers in the classrooms but not the assistant teachers. Adding the voices of the assistant teachers may have added to the validity of the findings, especially if the assistant teachers held beliefs similar to the lead teachers.

Leatherman and Niemeyer (2005) had similar findings in their study about teachers' attitudes toward inclusion. The researchers conducted open-ended interviews,

observations, and follow-up interviews to discover teachers' attitudes about inclusion.

They also kept detailed field notes and transcribed interviews with participants. Like the study by Lieber et al. (1998) the researchers used a variety of strategies to ensure that the data were trustworthy. The researchers analyzed data sources separately and then collectively, coded data inductively, and conducted triangulation of data sources. Additionally, they conducted member checks with participants to ensure that the interview data was accurately represented and an independent observer analysis was conducted to ensure that the themes identified by the researchers were also identified by the independent observer. Findings indicated that both children with disabilities and children without disabilities were included in all aspects of the classroom activities and interacted with each other daily during the study. Additionally, they found that teachers' prior knowledge and classroom experiences contributed to their positive attitudes about teaching all children in their classrooms.

A study conducted by Berry (2010) yielded slightly different results. In this study, researcher used the Q-method to examine the attitudes of beginning and early career general education teachers about teaching in inclusive classrooms. Although the Q-method is a type of survey, it is considered a qualitative research method by many due to the rich nature of the interview-like survey items. Sixty graduate students and early career teachers completed the Q-sorts survey at the completion of their graduate special education course. Participants evaluated responses about their attitudes toward inclusion, instructional accommodations, and fairness indicating whether they felt positively or negatively about the statements and whether they felt anxious or confident about the statements. The researcher identified three groups of teachers using the data from the Q-

sorts survey: “keen but anxious beginners”, “positive doers”, and “resisters”. Keen but anxious beginners were generally preservice teachers who had positive attitudes but worried about being effective teachers. Positive doers were more experienced teachers who struggled with inclusion but continued to have a positive attitude about it. Resisters were generally experienced teachers who were concerned that inclusion impacted fairness and resisted inclusion. Like the previous two studies, Berry’s 2010 study revealed that most teachers agreed that including all children was a good thing, and that teachers should make accommodations or changes in the instruction and/or assessment for students with disabilities.

Synthesis and critical analysis of the qualitative studies from the US. Several trends were evident throughout the research included in this section. In each study researchers gathered information from early childhood teachers and practitioners in the United States, mainly through interviews and observations. Although the studies were conducted by different researchers at different times and with different participants, several trends were evident. Each study highlighted what teachers believed about the inclusion of children with disabilities in their classrooms, the benefits and disadvantages of educating children with disabilities together with children without disabilities, and barriers to inclusion.

Findings from all three studies revealed that teachers believed that educating all children together, including children with and without disabilities, in their classrooms was important. In addition to teachers’ beliefs about all children learning together, teachers also believed there were benefits and disadvantages to including children with disabilities into regular education classrooms. Lieber et al. (1998) found that teachers

believed that both children with disabilities and children without disabilities benefited from inclusion because it encouraged children to learn about and accept differences and respect and help others. This was evident in the way that all students participated in school activities and worked together. Teachers addressed differences between students with disabilities in various ways in their classrooms by either attempting to explain and recognize differences to students, or ignoring and minimizing differences; in each case children were learning together in their classrooms.

In line with these findings, Leatherman and Niemeyer (2005) found that teachers believed that settings where children with disabilities and children without disabilities learned together were ideal environments for all children. This was evident in the way teachers involved all students in classroom activities and the way they spoke about including all students in classroom activities during interviews. Some teachers also believed that resources such as support from paraprofessionals were helpful for inclusion.

Berry (2010) found mixed results about what teachers believed about the benefits of inclusion. Although the majority of teachers responded positively about including children with and without disabilities in the classroom, fairness of educating children together and the necessity of providing accommodations to children with disabilities, some teachers expressed resistance to inclusion. These teachers believed that inclusion of special education students might hinder the learning of non-special education students, affect the teacher's attention to children without disabilities, and be unfair to both children with and without disabilities. In addition, many teachers believed they were ill-equipped to meet *all* students' needs regardless of whether they believed including children with and without disabilities in their classrooms was beneficial.

Another trend that was evident in these studies related to resources, support and benefits in their classrooms. In all three studies, teachers identified resources they either used in their inclusive classrooms or needed in them. Berry (2010) found that teachers who had positive beliefs about inclusion also believed they had the tools they needed to be effective teachers in inclusive settings. Leatherman and Niemeyer (2005) discovered that teachers relied on paraprofessionals such as occupational therapists (OTs) and physical therapists (PTs) for support when they needed support with students with disabilities. Teachers also believed past experience and prior knowledge was helpful to them in working with children with disabilities. Additionally, they found that teachers believed instructional techniques they used with children with disabilities could be adapted and used with general education students, and children with and without disabilities learned from each other. Similarly, Lieber et al. (1998) found that teachers believed children with disabilities learned from children without disabilities and vice versa. These examples highlight that teachers generally believe that resources in the form of support people including other children, past experience, and prior knowledge about teaching children with disabilities was beneficial for children with disabilities.

The qualitative studies reviewed in this section provide important descriptive data about teachers' beliefs and practices toward children with disabilities. As stated by Brantlinger et al., 2005, the goal of qualitative research is to "produce evidence based on the exploration of specific contexts and particular individuals" (p. 203) and not for the purpose of generalization. According to the standards of quality and credibility for qualitative research described by Brantlinger et al. (2005) the three studies included in this section generally appear to be of high quality. Specifically, each study used various

methods to ensure credibility and trustworthiness of the findings such as including participants from different sites and different demographic backgrounds and using triangulation of data to identify themes and findings. The descriptive nature of the studies, especially the Lieber et al. (1998) study and the Leatherman and Niemeier (2005) study, also provide a great deal of information about the participants, settings, and the specific words of the participants that give readers a rich picture of the context.

Although the studies included in this section appear to be credible and of good quality; including additional details in the reports would have enhanced them. For example, the Lieber et al., 1998 study report did not address participant confidentiality; the Berry (2010) study did not list limitations of the study; and some of the participants in the Leatherman and Niemeier 2005 study report gave very little information about the participants given the small sample size. In the Berry article, the study aimed to find out general education teachers' beliefs and attitudes about inclusion; however the data were gathered following completion of a special education course. This factor may have influenced the way participants answered the Q-sorts questions. Additionally, none of the studies addressed the topic of researcher bias. Given the qualitative nature of this research it is important for the researchers to consider their own background and connections to the research as they certainly may have influenced the findings. Additionally, the studies paid little attention to factors that make up teachers' belief systems such as culture. It is possible that the researchers addressed these issues during the study or that space constraints led to this information being cut from the published report; however this was not evident in the reports. If the missing features were in fact missing from the research, the overall quality and/or credibility of the research decreases.

Quantitative and Mixed Methods Studies Conducted in the United States

Four studies that used quantitative or mixed methods research designs to explore teachers' beliefs and practices toward children with disabilities are included in this section. As in the last section, studies in this section focused mainly on teachers' beliefs about including children with disabilities in their classrooms. Researchers gathered information from early childhood teachers and practitioners in the United States primarily through surveys in these studies. Several trends were evident throughout the research. Each study highlighted a relationship between education or experience and what teachers believe about inclusion, teachers' beliefs that specific disabilities required greater amounts of accommodations, and teachers' beliefs that limited time or opportunities for collaboration is a barrier to inclusion.

In a 1998 study, Stoiber, Gettinger, and Goetz sought to investigate factors influencing parents' and early childhood practitioners' beliefs about inclusion. The researchers used a 28-item scale they created to examine parents' and practitioners' core perspectives, expected outcomes of inclusion and classroom practices related to inclusion. Participants included 415 parents and 128 early childhood practitioners that the researchers recruited from various areas in Wisconsin. A geographical sampling plan was used by the researchers to solicit involvement and to ensure representation from the four state quadrants and from diverse communities in urban, rural and suburban areas. Participants were affiliated with kindergartens, Head Starts, itinerant- supported day care centers, and university affiliated private preschool programs. Although participants appeared to be from diverse backgrounds, it is not clear if non-respondents were of similar backgrounds. Also, since participation was voluntary, it is not clear if those who

chose not to participate did so because they did not think their beliefs and attitudes were in line with the researchers' beliefs and attitudes. The lack of information about non-respondents limits the validity of the findings.

Findings from this study were numerous and revealed some differences in the beliefs of parents and practitioners. Education and experience were found to affect the way teachers and paraprofessionals thought about inclusion. For example, teachers with both general and special education training held more positive beliefs about inclusion than paraprofessionals did, and practitioners with extensive special education training had more positive beliefs about inclusion and felt better prepared to teach children with disabilities than did practitioners with only high school training. Practitioners also believed that children with challenging behavior require the greatest amount of accommodation. Practitioners felt that children with autism and neurological problems required more accommodations than children with milder disabilities including speech or language delays. Finally, practitioners believed that limited time and limited opportunities for collaboration were perceived by practitioners as "barriers to inclusion". Researchers found that parents of children with disabilities were more positive about inclusion than were parents of children without disabilities. Parents' beliefs were related to their educational level, number of children, and marital status. Based on their findings, the researchers recommend that future research focus on the impact of early childhood practitioners' beliefs on how individuals from different cultural groups view inclusion.

In this study, researchers used rigorous methods to conduct the study and the results appear to be valid and reliable. Empirical research about the topics of beliefs and inclusion provided a rationale for this study. References to key studies, including

research about inclusion by Peck (1993) and the role of beliefs in learning by Shommer (1994), were included. The research purpose and questions were all related to gaps in the literature and focused on the topic of parents and practitioners' beliefs about inclusion. The "methods" section clearly described sampling procedures, study participants, the survey tool and research procedures. Methods appeared adequate for the purpose of addressing the research questions. The included tables were detailed and could be understood apart from the text of the article. In the results section, the researchers describe the findings of the study as well as indicators of validity. As noted in the report, the researchers calculated correlational data and used reliability analyses to examine internal consistency of the findings. The discussion section explained the research findings, limitations of the study and research implications.

Some questions remain regarding the instrumentation and study participants. The My Thinking about Inclusion (MTAI) scale was described and included in the research report; however specific technical data about the reliability or validity of the instrument was not included. This information would have enhanced the credibility of the study. Also, in the article the researchers explain that the participants were recruited from 10 early childhood inclusive programs in Wisconsin and that all schools that the researchers invited to participate did so. Although the authors explain that 85% of parents and 92% of teachers who were asked to participate in the study did so, some important voices may have been left out of the study as described below.

According to the report, participants were all associated with an inclusive school. The nature of teachers' employment or students' enrollment in an inclusive school increases the likelihood that they would have positive beliefs about inclusion. Parents,

who themselves had reading difficulties, may have also been unintentionally excluded from the sample because of the necessity of reading to complete the survey. Teachers and parents with negative perceptions of inclusion may have chosen a different type of school. It is possible that the non-responders either chose not to participate or did not complete the survey in the allotted time; however, it is also possible that the people who did not participate in the study may have held negative beliefs or perceptions about inclusion that they were not willing to share. Given the federal and local laws protecting students with disabilities and increasing social acceptance of educating students with and without disabilities in the same classroom environment, it is possible that people who did not believe their views were legally or socially acceptable chose not to participate.

Another question about the sample focuses on the people who chose to participate and things that may have influenced the way they responded to the survey questions.

Although the researcher informed the participants about the confidentiality of data, the participants may have responded to survey items in ways inconsistent with their beliefs. Peer pressure to say the “right thing” or concern that the wrong answer could impact their employment are reasons why participants may not have responded honestly to survey items. If any of these possibilities was the case, important data may have been left out of the study.

Like the study conducted by Stoiber et al. (1998), Bruns and Mogharreban (2007) used a survey they created to examine the beliefs and practices of Head Start and public pre-kindergarten professionals about inclusive practices. This study was conducted based on the increase in early childhood aged children in inclusive programs such as Head Start and pre-kindergarten (Pre-K) in public schools. For this study, 120 teachers, including 83

Head Start teachers and 37 pre-k teachers, completed the Support and Technical Assistance through Relationships and Skill-building (STARS) needs assessment. Findings of the study indicate that professionals generally held inclusive beliefs. Most teachers indicated that they believed all children can learn, and that they believed children with disabilities and children without disabilities should learn alongside one another. Most Head Start and pre-k teachers believed they had the skills necessary to assess children with and without disabilities; however most found inclusive practices were difficult. For example, less than 8% of teachers perceived that “strategies and adaptations necessary to assist a child with a disability are easy to prepare and implement” (Bruns & Mogharreban, 2007, p. 234). As was found in the Berry (2010) study, researchers found that some teachers had negative perceptions about their ability to prepare and/or implement accommodations in the classroom. Over 80% of participants agreed that they could effectively observe children with and without disabilities to learn about their developmental skills and needs, and approximately 70% of all teachers believed they had knowledge of IEP goals and objectives. Consistent with the findings of Leatherman and Niemeyer (2005), this study revealed that teachers felt comfortable working with paraprofessionals. In addition, like nearly all of the studies described thus far, participants indicated that they needed more training to implement inclusion. The top three areas in which participants identified they needed training were behavioral strategies, positioning young children with motor impairments and alternative forms of communication. Like Stoiber et al. (1998), the researchers recommended that future studies focus on participants from different geographical contexts.

Overall the research article was well written and described the study well. All sections of the research report, including background, setting and participants, procedures, methods of data analysis, results and discussion, were clearly written and demonstrated that the study is of good quality. The researchers' thorough description of the survey and limitations of the study also increases the credibility of the study.

Similar to the previous two studies, Mitchell and Hegde studied the beliefs and practices of preschool teachers in their 2007 study. Using a mixed methods approach, the researchers examined early childhood teachers' attitudes and beliefs about developmentally appropriate practices (DAP) and how those beliefs affected their attitudes toward, knowledge of, and comfort levels regarding working with children with disabilities. The researchers set out to answer four research questions focusing on the relationship between teachers' beliefs and stated practices regarding DAP in inclusive settings; the relationship between teachers' knowledge of, attitudes toward and comfort levels in working with children with disabilities; the difference between teachers' beliefs and practices based on their education and or experience; and teachers' perceived levels of preparation for the inclusive classroom.

Researchers collected data from teachers through both qualitative and quantitative methods. Participants completed three survey tools including the Teacher Belief Scale (TBS), the Instructional Activities Scale (IAS), and In-service Teacher Self-Report Survey (ITSRS) along with open-ended questions. Unlike the previous survey studies in this section, two of the three surveys used by the researchers were created by people other than the researcher. Findings from this study indicate that there were no significant relationships between teachers' beliefs about developmentally appropriate practices and

their attitudes toward, knowledge of and comfort levels about inclusion. Additionally, neither teacher's education level nor their level of experience indicates their preparedness to teach in inclusive classrooms. This finding contradicts the other studies included in this review. Specifically, Leatherman and Niemeyer (2005) found that teachers' previous experiences with children with disabilities, including prior knowledge and classroom experience contributed to their positive attitude toward inclusion. Similarly, Stoiber et al. (1998) found that teachers with special and regular education training shared more positive beliefs about implementing inclusive practices than did people with less education such as paraprofessionals. Lieber et al. (1998) also found that teachers in their study, the majority having a bachelor's degree or higher, generally had positive attitudes about inclusion.

A few aspects of this study could have been improved to add to the overall validity of the findings. First, researchers describe several methods they used to ensure reliability and validity for research including using the constant comparative method to code data, having an independent observer analyze a portion of the data, and analyzing data using Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). The reliability and validity measures for the TBS, IAS and ITSRS were not noted in the report. It is possible that the scales are reliable and valid for the stated research questions and goals; however they are not provided in the report. Without this information it is not possible to determine whether the results are valid.

In a similar study about teachers' beliefs and practices, Sexton, Snyder, Lobman and Daly (2002) examined the beliefs of 113 early childhood practitioners who worked in either general education or special education settings. As in other studies in this review,

the researchers used a survey to address their research questions. Specifically, like Mitchell and Hegde (2007), researchers used the Teachers Beliefs Scale (TBS) to investigate the research questions. Research questions were related to Developmentally Appropriate Practices (DAP) for early childhood general education teachers and early childhood special education teachers. Findings indicate that early childhood general education teachers and early childhood special education teachers had similar beliefs about DAPs. Additionally, practitioners held different beliefs about behavioral, teaching and classroom management strategies. For example, participants from both groups generally believed that DAPs were important. Both groups also generally believed that social development, child independence and engagement, and parental input were important areas of focus for teachers.

In their study the authors provide adequate detail about many aspects of the research. The authors describe the background and rationale for the study thoroughly and make a strong case for why the topic of teachers' beliefs and practices for early childhood students is important to investigate. The research methods including the selection of participants and description of the survey instruments were described adequately. The researchers gave especially detailed information regarding the participants including demographic information, experience and prior training. The results section is very detailed and includes information about the measurement integrity, validity, and reliability of the findings. Each measure of quality indicated that the research is reliable and credible. Finally, the discussion section explains the findings and gives implications for future research and practice. All of these features add to the credibility of the study.

Despite these positive features, a more thorough description of some aspects of the study would add to the credibility of the research. The procedure section provided very little information. To complete the survey, participants were asked to think about the young children and families they were currently serving. It is unclear, based on the report, if any other instructions were given to the participants. It is also unclear, based on the research report, how participants were chosen to participate in the study, how they obtained the survey, or when or where they completed the survey. This missing information detracts from the credibility of the research.

Synthesis and critical analysis of quantitative and mixed methods studies from the US. Several trends emerged from the studies reviewed in this section. The first and most consistent finding in all of the studies is that teachers and other practitioners generally believed that inclusion was appropriate. Although, in some studies teachers believed that implementing accommodations was difficult and some teachers believed that they needed more training to work with all of their students, these studies generally found that teachers held positive attitudes about inclusion. Another topic that was evident in the literature was the link between practitioners' education and experience and their beliefs about inclusion. Most studies revealed that teachers or other practitioners with more education and experience had more positive beliefs and/or attitudes about inclusion than did teachers or practitioners with less education and/or experience. Overall, the literature reviewed in this section was rigorous and included standardized statistical methods to support the validity of the findings.

Some limitations were consistent across all studies in this section. The first is related to the nature of the studies. Since all of the studies included closed-response

surveys it is difficult to know whether the participants' were able to indicate their true beliefs and or attitudes about inclusion or working with children with disabilities. Most studies used a Likert-type scale to rate their beliefs and attitudes and did not include an interview component. Adding open response or interview questions would have enhanced the studies by allowing the participants to discuss beliefs or attitudes that may not have been included in the surveys. Another limitation of the studies is that they all relied on participant self-report. There is no way to know if participants reported their true beliefs and attitudes or if the settings of the studies influenced their responses. For example, each of the studies recruited participants from their place of work. It is possible that participants thought their responses would be shared with their employer or that responses perceived as negative by their employers could result in them losing their jobs. A similar limitation related to the surveys is that the researchers had little control over when and how participants responded to the surveys. None of the studies explicitly stated what instructions were given to participants in order to complete the surveys. It is possible that participants collaborated with each other when completing the surveys. It is also possible that participants took the surveys lightly and did not put very much thought into their responses, especially if their beliefs or attitudes were not listed. All of these limitations limit the validity of the findings. Adding qualitative elements such as observations and or interviews to these studies would have enhanced the studies.

Quantitative and Mixed Methods Studies Conducted Outside the United States

Three studies used quantitative or mixed methods to explore teachers' beliefs and practices toward children with disabilities outside of the United States. I included studies conducted in England, Portugal and Lesotho in this section. Given the diverse contexts in

which the following studies were conducted, findings also represented a variety of perspectives, conditions and implications.

In her 2005 study about the knowledge, attitudes and beliefs of teachers of children with a preschool diagnosis of speech-language impairment, Sadler investigates British preschool teachers' beliefs about training, knowledge, confidence, attitudes related to working with children with diagnosed speech language impairments (SLI). Eighty-nine teachers from inclusive schools in North East England, called "mainstream schools" , participated in a three-year, longitudinal study focused on examining teachers' beliefs about the impact of SLI on students' social, emotional, language and educational development. Participants each had at least one student in their class with SLI. Thirty-six teachers participated in the first year of the study, an additional 30 teachers participated in the second year and an additional 24 teachers participated in the third year. The researcher used a 12-item questionnaire he created to elicit information from teachers about their beliefs. The questionnaire was created by researchers for the purpose of this study and validity and reliability information were not included in the report. The lack of technical data about the questionnaire limits the validity of the findings. Findings indicate that teachers generally held positive attitudes about mainstreaming, or including children with moderate to severe speech/language impairments into general education settings. Many teachers reported that they had minimal training about SLI and they learned most of their knowledge about SLI through their own "hands on" experience and through reading books about SLI. They also reported that mechanisms were not always in place to share information between professionals about their students with SLI.

Teachers' confidence in their abilities to meet the needs of children with SLI in their classrooms was low.

Although this study was conducted by researchers in England, the findings appear to be consistent with research conducted with teachers in the United States. Like teachers in the United States, teachers generally had positive attitudes about including children with disabilities, in this case SLI, in their general education classrooms. In this article the researcher speaks about "mainstreaming" instead of inclusion when describing educating all students together. As is described in the article by Lieber et al. (1998) different terms have been used to describe educating children with disabilities together with their peers without disabilities in the United States as well, and the term inclusion was previously called mainstreaming, and integration. Regardless of the specific term used to describe the practice, teachers generally were in favor of having children with SLI participate in their classrooms and believed that the advantages of inclusion for children outnumbered the disadvantages. This finding is consistent with that of Lieber et al. (1998). Additionally, like the studies conducted by Berry (2010) and Stoiber et al. (1998), teachers identified limitations such as including lack of support and lack of time for individual attention as disadvantages of inclusion.

This study has several strengths. Background and previous research supported the need for the study. The research aims were clearly stated in the study and related directly to gaps in the literature. In the article, researchers discussed the study procedures, methods, results and discussion in a way that was descriptive and credible. The researcher also included specific information about the research participants and the survey that the participants completed. However, even though the research article

described the study in detail, no information was provided about the potential limitations of the study. Since all studies have limitations, leaving out this information detracts from the credibility of the study. Additionally, the report does not include information about the reliability or validity measures that were used by the researchers. The lack of reliability and validity information greatly reduces the credibility of the study and the validity of the findings.

Another study that explored teachers' beliefs and practices toward children with special needs was conducted by Silva and Morgado (2004). The researchers surveyed 76 teachers in Lisboa, Portugal about their beliefs about the elements that play a part in the academic achievement of students with special needs. The research findings indicate that teachers believed their instructional practices are important, and that students with special needs benefit academically from accommodations and modifications to curriculum.

Five factors that impacted the academic achievement of children with special educational needs were identified and included teaching approach, school climate, curriculum design, student characteristics and out- of-school context. Teaching approach was the main factor that influenced student achievement and was mentioned by 37% of participants as being important. Teaching approach included teacher-student interactions, teachers' expectations of students, specialized teaching techniques, teaching rhythm, feedback, flexibility of strategies, individual teaching and skills development. School climate was described as important for the academic achievement of students with special needs by 21.3% of teachers and included teacher collaboration, school attendance of staff and students, resources for teaching children with diverse needs, and teacher training that addresses attitudes towards students with special needs. Curriculum design was

identified as important by 20.5% of support teachers and included the use of curricular schedules that involve pedagogical resources that are adaptable to students' needs, and arranging activities and materials in accordance with students' interests. Student characteristics were viewed as important by 11% of teachers and include students' prior assessment data, academic motivation and affective factors. No description of "effective factors" was provided in the report. Finally, out-of school contexts were listed as important factors for student achievement by 8.8% of support teachers. Out of school contexts included parental involvement and participation in decision-making about curriculum planning, support in instructional options in the classroom and positive family climate favoring student learning.

Like the previous study by Sadler (2005) the researchers used terminology about inclusion that was different from what is generally seen in United States literature. The term "mainstreaming" was used to describe educating children with disabilities and children without disabilities in the same environment. Additionally, the term "support teachers" was used to describe people who identify and assess students with special educational needs, train and support the general education teachers through co-teaching, and directly support students with special educational needs. "Support teachers" as described in this study appear to be the equivalent of special education teachers in the United States.

It is unclear, based on the report, what education and training support teachers had, however. In the section describing participants, the researchers describe participants as being mostly female (93%), with an average age of 43, and an average amount of experience being 20 years for general education teachers and 12 years for support

teachers. Most participants (63%) were also described as having attended special education training; however in the background section of the report the authors state that 70% of support teachers do not have special training in teaching children with special needs. There is no further information regarding the type or length of special education training. Information about the participants would be helpful shedding light on why they may have held certain beliefs about children with disabilities. Additional information about the participants might have allowed for comparisons to be made between teachers in Portugal and teachers in other countries such as the United States.

Another component of the report that could have enhanced the overall credibility and quality of this study was the presentation of results. The survey questions were not included in the article and it is not clear exactly what items were included in the survey. The lack of information specifically about the survey detracts from the credibility of the research. Survey questions could have been written in a non-leading, appropriate way or they could have been leading or not focused on the research questions. Without having at least some of the questions it is difficult to know whether the survey was appropriate to address the research aims and questions. Although this study could have been enhanced by providing more details about the participants and survey instrument, other features of the study were straightforward and of good quality.

Johnstone and Chapman (2009) explored the implementation of inclusive education in Lesotho in the last article in this review. It should also be noted that the study conducted in Lesotho did not focus specifically on teachers of preschool children. This study was included in the research in order to add a non-Western perspective to the research base. Additionally, although the study did not specify the age level of children

with whom the teachers worked, it is possible that early childhood teachers may have been included in the participants. Lesotho's inclusive special education policy was the subject of this case study. The researchers used a multi-method approach that included interviews, observations, and survey to study the implementation of inclusive special education policy in Lesotho.

The researchers sought to explore two research questions: 1) To what extent did national policy influence inclusive education policy; and 2) what factors fostered or constrained the implementation of inclusive policy. The term "implementation" was defined according to local norms and included social inclusion of students with disabilities, the ability of teachers to differentiate instruction, educational progress of students with disabilities, and students with disabilities who are welcome members in general education classes.

First the researchers give background about the history of special education in Lesotho. Lesotho's special education policy, one that focuses on inclusive education, has been in place since 1989, two years prior to the introduction of EFA. This policy included the Special Education Unit that was responsible for training teachers in inclusive practices. Special education in Lesotho began with a group of 10 primary schools and increased the number of teachers being trained each year. Schools were "registered" by the Special Education Unit after completing the training. The researchers aimed to study the implementation of inclusive practices at the Special Education Unit registered schools. Research questions focused on the influence of national special education policy on inclusive pedagogy and the factors that fostered or constrained inclusive practices being implemented in schools.

The research findings indicate that special education policy was not fully implemented in schools. Many schools did not implement inclusive practices and many others had received no training in special education at all. Where inclusive special education policy was implemented, perceived teacher knowledge and skills related to teaching children with disabilities was a strong predictor of how successful they were with students and how positive their attitude was toward teaching children with disabilities.

This study provided valuable information about inclusive practices in Lesotho during the time of the study. This article was well written and is clear. The authors clearly state the background and reasons for research, definitions of key terms, research questions, setting, participants, data collection methods, data analysis methods and findings. The limitations of the study and implications for further research were also described in detail. Data from this study supports much of the previous data about inclusive education in Africa. Lack of trained staff, financial constraints and lack resources consistently limit the implementation of inclusive practices.

Synthesis and critical analysis of international studies. Overall, the studies in this section identified some common themes. First, the inclusion or mainstreaming of children with disabilities into general education settings is increasingly being accepted by teachers. The studies conducted in England and Portugal, both of which are developed countries with established laws and practices protecting children with disabilities, revealed that teachers believed inclusion was beneficial for students. Teachers generally believed that with appropriate training and experience they could meet the needs of all students in their classes. Although teachers in Portugal identified external factors as

potential negative influences to the academic achievement of children with disabilities, neither of the studies conducted in Europe identified negative beliefs about children's disabilities as being a barrier to students' access to education or achievement. This is consistent with the findings of the research conducted in the United States. The study conducted in Lesotho had slightly different findings. Although national and international initiatives have focused on students with special needs' access to education, teachers are just recently becoming more open to inclusive practices. In one interview conducted in a school in Lesotho, a teacher noted:

In the past we were not used to working with these children, but of late now we are very positive and we like that thing (inclusive education) in our schools because we have changed our behaviors toward the disabilities and we know that we too might get the disability... In the past we thought "now God is punishing you" but I think it's very good to work with these children. (Johnstone & Chapman, 2009)

Although teacher's attitudes are changing, some teachers continued to have negative attitudes about disabilities and inclusion and taught in ways that were not conducive to inclusive classrooms.

Overall the studies contained in this section were limited in their context and focused on a narrow international perspective. Although the three studies in this section were conducted outside of the United States, two of them were conducted in developed Western countries that had similar culture, economic situation, laws and practices around disability as the United States. It is not surprising that the themes that emerged from these two studies were consistent with the findings of studies conducted in the United

States. Findings from the study conducted in Lesotho indicated that the attitudes and beliefs of teachers in developing countries may be becoming more positive toward children with disabilities and inclusion. All in all, the research findings of the studies included in this section, although conducted outside the United States, largely represented the beliefs of Western teachers with Western perspectives. The one study that was conducted in a developing country focused minimally on culture as a potential influence on teachers' beliefs and practices toward children with disabilities. Since the majority of research about teachers' beliefs and practices toward children with disabilities focuses on the United States, and teacher's culture is one factor that influences their beliefs, future research on this topic should focus on countries and cultures that are different from the United States.

Applying an Ecological Systems Perspective

Some common trends arose as I applied the bioecological systems theory to this topic. The research identified in this review focused mainly on microsystem level factors. Several factors related to the classroom contexts were identified as having an impact on early childhood teachers' beliefs and practices toward children with disabilities. The first and most prevalent theme that was present in the research related to teachers' beliefs about inclusion. Teachers generally believed that inclusion was a good thing and was beneficial to both children with disabilities and children without disabilities for all children to learn together. Although teachers had different perspectives about what inclusion meant, (i.e., whether all children should be treated the same or if teachers should have different expectations for children based on their ability) most teachers believed that they should implement inclusive practices in their classrooms.

Mesosystem variables related to teachers' beliefs and practices toward children with disabilities were also evident in the literature. The nature of the inclusive classroom environment calls for collaboration between teachers, families and people from other microsystems. The importance of interactions between teachers and families was evident in the literature. In most studies, findings indicated that teachers worked with members of other microsystems, including families, in their everyday work life. Based on this research, I suspect that by collaborating with families of children with disabilities, teachers gain insights about students that can be helpful to them as they teach students in their classrooms.

Exosystem variables also impacted teachers' beliefs and practices toward children with disabilities in the reviewed research. As schools in the United States implement national mandates, teachers have been compelled to obtain education and training that prepares them to teach all students in their classrooms. In general, these studies found that teachers with higher levels of education and more experience generally felt more comfortable with their ability to meet the needs of all of their students. Teachers with less education or experience generally felt less comfortable with implementing accommodations and modifications for children with disabilities.

Macrosystem variables such as widely accepted cultural beliefs about disability were evident in the literature (Johnstone & Chapman, 2009; Leatherman & Niemeyer, 2005; Lieber et al., 1998; Sexton et al., 2002; Silva & Morgado, 2004). Generally, teachers held the belief that children with disabilities should be educated with their peers without disabilities. Societal norms present in the Western countries represented in the research support diversity, including children of varying abilities, in the same learning

environment. In the study that was conducted in Lesotho, research findings showed that the general public, there at least, has begun to accept inclusive education as well.

System level influences across time, or chronosystem variables, also impacted teachers' beliefs and practices toward children with disabilities. Teacher experience was identified as having a positive impact on teachers' beliefs and practices toward children with disabilities. Experience goes hand in hand with time. Throughout this review the research has documented changes that have occurred for teachers over time (Leatherman & Niemeyer, 2005; Lieber et al., 1998; Sadler, 2005; Silva & Morgado, 2004; Stoiber et al., 1998). Over the course of a school year or many school years, teachers gain valuable education and experience that can influence their practices with children with disabilities. For example, as teachers spend more time teaching students with disabilities in their classrooms, they develop more skills in teaching that can benefit students and lead to greater student outcomes. Also, teachers that spend more time working with related service providers and others who are knowledgeable about ways to effectively teach children with disabilities become more comfortable working with children with disabilities in their classrooms (Leatherman & Niemeyer 2005; Mitchell & Hedge, 2007).

Summary and Conclusion of Review

For the purpose of this review I reviewed and synthesized the relevant and available literature in order to ground my understanding of early childhood teachers' beliefs and practices toward children with disabilities. Because I was unable to find any research about the specific topic of early childhood teachers' beliefs and practices toward children with disabilities in Ethiopia, I expanded the focus of the literature review to focus on early childhood teachers from any country. Although I included 10 specific

studies in this review, the literature was limited and was dominated by studies that focused on Western contexts that are different from Ethiopia. Differences in contextual factors make findings from the studies difficult to generalize to Ethiopia. To determine if this literature can be generalizable outside of the United States, studies that include more diverse participants and contexts is warranted.

Moreover, although the aim of this literature review was to focus the broad topic of early childhood teachers' beliefs and practices toward children with disabilities; most of the existing literature focused on the narrower topic of teachers' beliefs about inclusion. I was not able to locate a single piece of research that focused on teachers' beliefs and practices toward children with disabilities that included a focus on cultural or traditional beliefs. Although Ethiopia has made notable progress in improving access to education, the vast majority of children with disabilities have no access to schools, let alone inclusive schools. Widely held cultural and traditional beliefs about disabilities, specifically beliefs linking disabilities to curses, witchcraft, and evil spirits, have been identified as factors that are likely to limit children with disabilities from accessing education in Ethiopia. As is demonstrated by Ethiopia's acceptance of EFA, the Salamanca Agreement and the MDGs, creating inclusive schools is a goal; however several sources, including the Ethiopian Ministry of Education and the United Nations, agree that this goal remains distant. By studying teachers' beliefs and practices toward children with disabilities, valuable information can be gathered and shared with Ministry of Education policy makers, the UN and other stakeholders as they continue to prepare Ethiopia's education system to meet the needs of all its students. Investigating teachers'

beliefs and practices is a first step that can be taken toward realizing the goal of inclusive schools in Ethiopia.

At the international level, based on Ethiopia's recent push to improve educational access for children with disabilities, it is clear that high-quality studies about early childhood special education in Ethiopia is warranted. Areas for future research include studies that examine people's beliefs and understandings about disabilities in Africa, studies that focus on access and availability of quality early education programs for children with disabilities and studies focusing on skills and practices of teachers working with early childhood aged children with disabilities. The data from these kinds of studies can provide local educational stakeholders with information that can be used when planning and implementing early childhood special education initiatives at the local level. Findings from these studies can provide non-profit organizations such as the UN and education policy makers in Africa with data that can be used in the planning and implementation of future early education initiatives and the evaluation of current initiatives such as EFA and the MDGs.

This review suggests that further research focusing on early childhood teachers' beliefs and practices toward children with disabilities from a diverse context such as Ethiopia is warranted. A better understanding of Ethiopian teachers' beliefs toward children with disabilities will provide valuable information for education policy makers as they continue to reform Ethiopia's education system and attempt to improve education for all children. Findings from this study will also enhance the larger body of research related to teachers' beliefs and practices by adding data from a setting where disabilities

are not widely accepted by society and the majority of children with disabilities are not in school.

Chapter III

Methodology

Introduction

In this chapter I describe the methods I used to examine early childhood teachers' beliefs about children with disabilities and how those beliefs are evidenced in their practices. After listing the research questions, I provide a rationale for my use of qualitative methodology followed by a description of the setting and participants, the way in which the setting and participants were selected, and the methods I used to collect and analyze the data. This description is followed by a discussion about trustworthiness and credibility of this study.

Research questions. Three main research questions to guided this study. Each guiding question includes more detailed sub-questions for clarity and specificity.

1. What are early childhood teachers' beliefs about children with disabilities?
 - a. What do teachers believe about the origins of disabilities?
 - b. What do teachers believe about the nature of disabilities?
 - c. What do teachers believe about children with disabilities being in their classrooms?
2. What factors influence early childhood teachers' beliefs about disabilities?
 - a. What cultural factors influence teachers' beliefs about disabilities?
 - b. What experiences influence teachers' beliefs about disabilities?
 - c. What prior education or training influence teachers' beliefs about disabilities?

3. How are early childhood teachers' beliefs about disabilities evidenced in their daily classroom practices?
 - a. In what kinds of school activities do children with disabilities participate?
 - b. What kinds of behavioral and performance expectations do teachers hold for students with disabilities?
 - c. Do teachers differentiate in their general treatment of or in their planning, instruction, or assessment for students with disabilities?

Rationale for Methodology

To gain an understanding of Ethiopian teachers' beliefs and practices toward children with disabilities and to address the research questions, I conducted a qualitative case study using ethnographic methods. In this section I provide a rationale for this methodological approach. Finally, I describe how findings from this study will add to the research base around the topic of teachers' beliefs and practices toward children with disabilities.

As described by Creswell (1998), "qualitative research is an inquiry process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social or human problem." (p. 15). In qualitative studies, researchers build complex, holistic pictures of the setting and participants, and participate in the natural setting. The research design is emergent and is developed inductively by the researcher based on the data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam, 1998). In this method, the observer is situated within phenomena and collects data in the form of field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings, and memos to the self and involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. A qualitative methodology is well suited to capture the complex

topic of teachers in Ethiopia and their beliefs about children with disabilities in the context of the Ethiopian culture through the eyes of the researcher.

According to Creswell (2007), a case study is a qualitative approach in which the investigator explores a case or multiple cases over time, through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information such as observations, interviews, audiovisual material, and documents and reports, and reports a case description and case-based themes. Case studies are particularly useful in situations where (a) the focus of the study is to answer “how” and “why” questions; (b) the researcher cannot manipulate the behavior of those involved in the study; (c) the researcher wants to cover contextual conditions because he or she believes they are relevant to the phenomenon under study; or (d) the boundaries are not clear between the phenomenon and context (Yin, 2003). In this study, the case includes teachers in one school for young children in Ethiopia. I chose a case study design because the beliefs and practices of teachers must be considered within the context of the culture of the teachers, the context of Ethiopia, and the context of the classroom settings.

To gain more understanding of the participants, their beliefs and their daily practices, I included some ethnographic elements to the design. According to Creswell (1998), an ethnography is a description and interpretation of a cultural or social group or system. Additionally, ethnographic research examines objects' or groups' observable and/or learned patterns of behavior, customs, and way of life through prolonged observation of the group and one-on-one interview with members of the group. I investigated teachers from a different culture than my own, a culture in which traditional and social beliefs about disability are quite different than the beliefs with which I am

familiar. By becoming immersed in Ethiopian culture while living there for six months, spending time at the school several days per week, getting to know the research participants, recording my thoughts and observations, collecting confirming and disconfirming evidence related to my hypothesis, and being transparent with the participants and myself, I was able to collect data that incorporated the views of the participants while considering my own experiences. Through using the aforementioned research methods I was able to collect rich data that describes what Ethiopian teachers believe about children with disabilities and how those beliefs influence their practices.

Setting and Participants

Case selection. I selected the case of Ethiopian early childhood teachers at an early childhood school for several reasons. First, the focus on education of children with disabilities is fairly new in Ethiopia where very few children with disabilities attend schools. Initiatives by the Ministry of Education (MoE) and the international community have begun to include a focus on early childhood education and education for children with disabilities following the Ethiopian government's acceptance of Education for All (EFA) and the Millennium Development Goals (MDG). The MoE has pledged to increase enrollment of children with disabilities and improve teacher training relating to teaching children with disabilities. Focusing on the case of teachers at an early childhood school will provide insight into teachers' beliefs and practices toward children with disabilities given the new focus on this topic.

Second, I have personal and professional experience in Ethiopia that provides me with perspective into the beliefs and practices of teachers there. I have been teaching and working in early childhood special education in the US and Ethiopia for more than ten

years. Prior to this study I spent 18 months in Ethiopia teaching children with disabilities and interacting with other teachers daily. While in Ethiopia I had the opportunity to learn a great deal about some of the Ethiopian cultures and to observe the situations of some children with disabilities there. Although I am not Ethiopian, my husband is Ethiopian American and I speak Amharic, a language widely spoken in Ethiopia. This connection to Ethiopia gives me a special interest in exploring the beliefs and practices of Ethiopian teachers toward children with disabilities. My experience in Ethiopia and interest in the Ethiopian MoE's current focuses on early childhood education and education for children with special needs have led me to select the case of "Ethiopian early childhood teachers at an early childhood school" in order to examine the research questions.

Site selection and setting. The setting for this study is a private early childhood school serving children aged 3-6 in the city of Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. To ensure confidentiality of the research site and participants, I use the pseudonym *Addis Early Childhood School* or *AECS* to refer to the research site throughout this dissertation. Prior to going to Ethiopia, I had planned to use another early childhood school in Addis Ababa to be the research site. Upon arrival at the original site I was told by the school director that all of the students with disabilities had left the school and she recommended that I seek another research site. The teachers and school director of the original site also invited me to conduct a single group interview, or focus group, with teachers later in the research period. I sought recommendations for a new site from faculty members from local Colleges of Education and the Ministry of Education, but I was not able to locate a public school that serves early childhood aged children and includes children with disabilities. I learned from those stakeholders that most public schools serving early

childhood aged children in Ethiopia do not serve children with disabilities, and that most schools and programs serving young children with disabilities were run by churches, NGOs and individuals. I was able to locate one government-run special program for children with disabilities in Addis Ababa; however that program served students aged five through forty in one classroom and was not focused on early childhood development. For this reason I was directed by a university faculty member to AECS.

The AECS site was the most appropriate and accessible site I was able to find to gather data to address the research questions. The school has 12 full-time lead teachers, 12 assistant teachers, 2 school directors and serves approximately 500 early childhood students. Although AECS is a general education school, four of its classrooms include some students with disabilities. All lead teachers at AECS have completed the typical teacher training and certification process created by the Ethiopian Ministry of Education.

Participants. A total of 29 participants were involved in this study. Twelve were teachers at AECS, eight were teachers at other schools, five were school directors, three were college or university faculty members and one was a government official. I focused primarily on data related to AECS teachers for this study. In chapter IV I describe 3 of the 12 AECS teachers, one from each grade level, by providing detailed narratives about their lives for the purpose of giving a rich description of the case. I also used data from other participants to gain insight into AECS teachers' beliefs and practices toward children with disabilities. In this section I describe the study participants and focus especially on AECS teachers, the primary participants in the study.

AECS teachers. All twelve lead teachers from KECS participated in the study.

All teachers were female. Although most teachers were relatively young and had minimal teaching experience, there was some variability. Seven were between the ages of 18-24, three were between the ages of 25-30, and two were over the age of 40. Two teachers had been teaching for one year, seven teachers had been teaching from 2-6 years, and 8 had been teaching 8 years or more. All teachers had completed secondary education up to at least grade 10 and were certified in teaching. All teachers had also taken at least one course in special needs education during their certification process. One teacher had taken an additional course in special needs education.

Teachers from other schools. Eight teachers from other schools participated in the study. Three of the teachers were employees of the school where I had originally planned to conduct the study. Although I determined that the original site was not appropriate for the study and moved to another site, teachers from the original site agreed to participate in a focus group. I became acquainted with five additional teachers when I was introduced to them by participants from teacher training colleges and the local university. I solicited help from these participants in identifying teachers who worked in a variety of settings including public, private and religious schools for the purpose of triangulation. All of the teachers from other schools agreed to participate in the study after I explained the purpose of the study and obtained their consent.

Of the teachers from other schools, three were male and five were female. Teachers ranged in age from 21 to 56 years of age and most had more than 10 years of teaching experience. One teacher was aged 18-24, one teacher was 25-30 years of age, two were between the ages of 31-35, one was aged 35-40, and three were older than 40

years old. Two teachers taught at an international church school focusing on inclusive education, three teachers taught at a private early childhood school, one teacher taught in a multi-age, self-contained public school for children with special needs, one taught in a public, general education school without children with special needs, and one teacher taught at an elementary school associated with AECS. All teachers had earned certification to teach. Two teachers from the private early childhood school had never taken a course in special needs education. Both teachers from the international church school had received multiple courses in special needs education.

AECS school directors. Both school directors from AECS participated in the study. Both were females over the age of 40. Both were school teachers prior to becoming school directors and both had been working in the education field for more than 10 years. Neither had any special training in special needs education.

School directors from other schools. Three other school directors participated in the study. I was introduced to these participants by university students studying special needs education (SNE) after I requested their help in identifying school directors with experience in supporting teachers in inclusive settings or special needs education settings. After explaining the purpose of the study and obtaining consent, three school directors from other schools agreed to participate. Of the school directors from other schools, two were female and one was male. All three directors were over the age of 40. All directors worked in a school that focused on educating students with disabilities. One director operated a school for children with autism and related developmental disorders, one director operated a school for children with intellectual disabilities, and one school director operated a school that focused on including students with special needs,

especially blindness, into general education classrooms. All had taken extensive training in special needs education. All had been working in the field of special needs education for more than 10 years.

University or college faculty members. Three faculty members from Colleges of Teacher Education (CTEs) and one university faculty member participated in the study. All three were male and were over the age of 40. Two faculty members had earned Master's degrees in special needs education and one had earned a Ph.D. in special needs education. Two of the faculty members had been working in the field of special needs education for more than 10 years. One faculty member had been working in the field of special needs education for over 30 years.

Government official. One official from the Ethiopian Ministry of Education (MoE) participated in the interview. This faculty member was a male over the age of 40. He had over 30 years of experience in education and had received a Master's degree in special needs education.

The table below summarizes basic information about the study participants. This includes information about participants' sex, age, role related to teaching children with disabilities, and years of experience in their role.

Table 1

Participant Information

	Participant Pseudonym	Sex	Age Range	Role	Years of experience
1.	Alemnesh	F	18-24	AECS teacher	1
2.	Asalech	F	40+	AECS teacher	11

Teachers' Beliefs and Practices Toward Children with Disabilities

3.	Ayalesh	F	18-24	AECS teacher	2
4.	Betty*	F	18-24	AECS teacher	3
5.	Fana	F	40+	AECS teacher	12**
6.	Hirut	F	25-30	AECS teacher	6
7.	Menna*	F	18-24	AECS teacher	5
8.	Nigist	F	18-24	AECS teacher	2
9.	Taye	F	18-24	AECS teacher	1
10	Tinishwa	F	25-30	AECS teacher	6
.	*				
11	Tsega	F	25-30	AECS teacher	8
.					
12	Wagaehu*	F	18-24	AECS teacher	5
.					
13	Zachieus	M	31-35	Primary teacher	7
.					
14	Ababech	F	40+	ECE teacher	10
.					
15	Dinkenesh	F	35-40	ECE teacher	10
.					
16	Hannon	F	40+	ECE teacher	11
.					
17	Ayana*	M	31-35	SNE teacher	7
.					
18	Tsegereda*	F	40+	SNE teacher	25
.					
19	Dagem	M	18-24	Gov. teacher	2
.					
20	Hewan*	F	25-30	Gov. SNE teacher	6
.					
21	Aida	F	40+	School director	12
.					
22	Fikernesh	F	36-40	School director	8
.					
23	Freyalesh	F	36-40	School director	10
.					
34	Tekle	M	40+	School director	30
.					
25	Zenu	F	40+	School director	12
.					
26	Teshome	M	40+	Univ. faculty	35
.					
27	Alex	M	40+	CTE faculty	20
.					
28	Bruk	M	40+	CTE faculty	10
.					

29	Samson	M	40+	MoE official	7
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*This teacher had students with disabilities in her/his class at the time of the study.

**This number includes 11 years of assistant teaching.

Selection and involvement of participants. I used various methods of selection to identify participants including convenience sampling, purposive sampling and snowball sampling. I selected teachers at AECS through convenience sampling. After explaining the purpose and procedures of the study to school directors they invited me to conduct the research at AECS. All lead teachers at AECS agreed to participate in the study after I explained the purpose and procedures of the study at a staff meeting. One teacher did not participate in an individual, audiotaped interview but did participate in classroom observations, a focus group and unrecorded interviews.

One additional teacher from AECS's elementary sister school was selected to participate in the study because he teaches young elementary school children and expressed interest in participating in the study. No other teachers from the elementary school expressed interest in participating in the study. This participant teacher participated in an individual, open-ended interview but did not participate in a focus group interview. AECS has two school directors, one at each of its two buildings. Both school directors chose to participate in the study. I identified 15 participants in this way. Twelve teachers and two school directors participated in individual, audiotaped interviews and classroom observations. One teacher chose only to participate in an unrecorded interview and classroom observations. Twelve teachers participated in a focus group interview.

To strengthen the study and gain further insight into AECS, purposive sampling was used to identify five additional participants including one faculty member from Addis Ababa University (AAU), two faculty members from colleges of teacher education (CTEs), and one Ministry of Education (MoE) official. Upon my arrival in Ethiopia I contacted AAU, the MoE and the two local CTEs to solicit participants for the study. I selected these participants because of their knowledge about teacher training and policies related to children with disabilities in Ethiopia. Five participants responded to my request for participation, agreed to participate in the study, and took part in individual, open-ended interviews as a part of this study.

As I became acquainted with the setting and spoke to participants I was introduced to additional contacts with insight into the research questions. I used snowball sampling to identify teachers and school directors from other local schools in order to gain insight into the beliefs and practices of other people involved in educating young children and for the purpose of triangulation. I also identified three school directors from special schools for children with disabilities in Addis Ababa, two teachers from government run schools in Addis Ababa, two teachers from schools supported by an international religious organization, and three teachers from a private early childhood school. These participants offered insight into the history of teaching children with disabilities, laws and common practices related to children with disabilities, and ways in which teachers are prepared to teach, including pre-service and in-service training related to teaching children with disabilities, all in Ethiopia. Ten participants were identified this way. Participation in the study was voluntary and all participants were informed about the study.

The following table displays information about ways in which participants were involved in the study. The table lists each participant's role related to the education of children with disabilities, the number of formal, audiotaped interviews in which they participated, the number of focus groups in which they participated and the number of hours they were observed teaching and interacting with students in their classrooms.

Table 2

Participant Involvement

	Participant Pseudonym	Role	Formal Individual Interviews	Focus Group Participation	Classroom Observation Hours
1.	Alemnesh	AECS teacher	0	1	20
2.	Asalech	AECS teacher	1	1	20
3.	Ayalesh	AECS teacher	1	1	20
4.	Betty*	AECS teacher	2	1	40
5.	Fana	AECS teacher	2	1	20
6.	Hirut	AECS teacher	1	1	20
7.	Menna*	AECS teacher	1	1	40
8.	Nigist	AECS teacher	1	1	20
9.	Taye	AECS teacher	0	1	20
10.	Tinishwa*	AECS teacher	1	1	40
11.	Tsega	AECS teacher	0	1	20
12.	Wagaehu*	AECS teacher	1	1	40
13.	Zachieus	Primary teacher	2	0	0
14.	Ababech	ECE teacher	0	1	0
15.	Dinkenesh	ECE teacher	0	1	0
16.	Hannon	ECE teacher	0	1	0
17.	Ayana*	SNE teacher	1	0	0
18.	Tsegereda*	SNE teacher	1	0	0
19.	Dagem	Gov. teacher	2	0	0
20.	Hewan*	Gov. SNE teacher	1	0	0
21.	Aida	School director	2	0	N/A
22.	Fikernesh	School director	1	0	N/A
23.	Freyalesh	School director	1	0	N/A
34.	Tekle	School director	1	0	N/A
25.	Zenu	School director	1	0	N/A

26.	Teshome	Univ. faculty	2	0	N/A
27.	Alex	CTE faculty	1	0	N/A
28.	Bruk	CTE faculty	2	0	N/A
29.	Samson	MoE official	3	0	N/A

*This teacher had students with disabilities in her/his class at the time of the study.

Research Design

I completed a process of data collection for this study over the course of approximately six months. These phases overlapped and were dependent on each other. During Phase I, prior to conducting interviews or observing classrooms, I gathered preliminary information about the Ethiopian culture, policies and laws related to children with disabilities. I continued to gather this data throughout the research period for the purpose of explanation and clarification. I call this phase one. Since phase one focused on gathering background and context I did not code the data in this phase. The information I gained during this preliminary phase helped to frame and inform the subsequent phases of the study. In phase two, I spent time observing teachers in their early childhood classes at AECS and interviewing them about their beliefs and classroom practices related to children with disabilities. I also participated in several school and community events including professional development days, holiday celebrations, and the kindergarten promotion ceremony during this time. In phase three, I continued to interview teachers to follow up with questions related to my observations in their classrooms and new information I gained in the field during the research period.

I collected data through conducting document review, observations of AECS teachers in their classrooms, and interviews. This process included individual, open-ended interviews with teachers, school directors, college of teacher education, university

faculty, and a Ministry of Education official. Classroom observation notes, transcripts of interviews with teachers and school directors from AECS served as primary sources of data. Interviews with teachers and school directors from other schools, faculty members from a university and two Colleges of Teacher Education and a Ministry of Education official, along with data I gathered in the form of field notes and memos served as secondary sources of data. Field notes and memos were based on my daily interactions with teachers in public contexts. I also used documents I gathered in the form of MoE policy documents, AECS enrollment policies, and CTE course documents as secondary sources of data.

Data Collection

The methods I used to collect data for this study are organized within the three-phase process I described in the previous section. This section describes the procedures I used for individual interviews, focus groups observations and document review. Following the procedures, I discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the participant observer and strategies used to address the weaknesses of this methodology.

Phase I: Gathering preliminary data. I obtained and used several sources of preliminary, background data related to the research questions during my time in the field. This included information about the setting and the topic by gathering relevant documents, participating in contextualized coursework and conducting a small study, attending a national conference on special needs education and engaging in special training in Ethiopian culture and language. This background data provided me with context that framed my perspective while in the field. Information I gained during this

phase served as preliminary, contextual information, and therefore I did not code these data. I did, however, consider this information as I analyzed interview transcripts, observation notes, field notes and memos. This information also helped to derive the themes that I eventually developed based on the data.

Relevant documents. Prior to observing or interviewing teachers I obtained and reviewed several documents. Marshall and Rossman (2011) state that documents can be used by researchers as a means of supplementing other data collection methods. The documents I obtained and reviewed in this phase were not coded but were considered in the development of themes in the data. When I arrived in Ethiopia I immediately began to collect background data for the study. I met with a university faculty member to discuss the aim of the study, gather some background data about the topic and to review the research questions. The faculty member, a well-known researcher and practitioner with over thirty years of experience in the field of special needs education in Ethiopia, gave me basic information about the history and current situation of special needs education in the country. He directed me to a few relevant documents about the topic including the *Education Sector Development Program IV, The Strategy for Special Needs Education*, and the *Special Needs Education Implementation Guide*.

The information the faculty member gave me about special needs education in Ethiopia was very similar to what I had read and learned prior to my arrival in country. He confirmed that although teacher preparation and services to support students with special needs had improved in Ethiopia in recent years, the vast majority of children with special needs remain out of school. He explained that widely held traditional beliefs and perceptions about people with disabilities, the origins of disabilities and the potential of

people with disabilities appear to influence children with disabilities' access to education in Ethiopia. Additionally, he gave me reference articles he had written about special needs education in Ethiopia. The faculty member encouraged me to participate in as many classes and other activities at the university as possible in order to learn as much about the context as possible prior to collecting interview and observation data. He invited me to join an upcoming three-week doctoral seminar in special needs education and introduced me to six students in the special needs department who had been working in the field of special education for several years.

I also met with a ministry of education official soon after arriving in Ethiopia to gain background information related to teacher preparation. The government official informed me that most teachers in Ethiopia complete their teacher preparation in the same way. After completing compulsory education, grades 1-8, students take a national exam. Those who earn high scores on the exam are chosen to matriculate to secondary schools, grades 9 and 10. Students earning low scores on the 8th grade exam generally go on to a 9th and 10th grade track focusing on vocational training or drop out of school. Students earning high scores on the 8th grade exam continue to 9th and 10th grade in a math and science track. At the end of 10th grade students take another national exam. High achievers on this exam are chosen to join preparatory schools, grades 11 and 12. Students who score poorly either begin searching for unskilled jobs or apply to different vocational or Colleges of Teacher Education (CTEs). Most teachers enter teaching this way. Students who successfully complete 12th grade take a final national exam. The top students, about 50% of 12th grade students, are selected to join one of 31 government funded, 4-year universities. Students who do not earn a place at a public university may

join a private university if they can afford to pay the tuition. Most students in Ethiopia cannot.

Most teacher trainees are trained at government sponsored Colleges of Teacher Education (CTEs). There are 11 CTEs in Ethiopia. Of the 11 CTEs, 6 allow students to major in Special Needs Education (SNE), and 1 is solely dedicated to preparing teachers to teach children with special needs. All teacher trainees, regardless of their major, take one required course in special needs education (SNE) as a part of their teacher training program. This course covers the basic history and definitions related to education for children with disabilities but does not include a practical component. The course also focuses largely on blindness, deafness, and physical impairments. Disabilities that are not apparently visible, such as specific learning disabilities, attention deficit disorders, and communication disorders are generally not focused on by instructors of the SNE course. According to the Ministry of Education official, teachers who major in SNE, a small fraction of total teacher trainees, take additional coursework in psychology, and special needs education. SNE teacher trainees are also required conduct an observation in a special school and experience mobility training through walking blindfolded and moving around in a wheelchair during one of their courses. Despite this, most teacher trainees complete their certification coursework with very few strategies for teaching children with disabilities.

Documents from coursework. I participated in two graduate level courses during my time in Ethiopia to gain background and context about the research questions. The first was a three-week seminar on special needs education. During the seminar each of the six students gave a presentation on services and support that are available to school-

aged children with special educational needs in a different region of Ethiopia. Students gave background information about the state of special needs education in the areas where the programs were situated and discussed the demographics of the students at the schools/centers, the needs and abilities of the students in the schools, and ways in which the schools or centers are/are not meeting the needs of their students with special needs. I learned that very few schools or centers in Ethiopia support children with special needs. Of the schools that do, the vast majority are private and are located in Addis Ababa, the capital city. Moreover, most services for children with disabilities are for children who are blind or deaf. Support for children with non-physical disabilities such as learning disabilities and behavioral disabilities is generally unavailable.

I also participated in a three credit hour, doctoral level course called Current Trends and Practices in Special Needs Education. I attended this course once per week outside of my time collecting data from primary sources. This course covered the history and current practices in special needs education from an international perspective but focused heavily on trends and practices in Ethiopia compared to the rest of the world. As a major course assignment I was required to work with another student to conduct a small case study about how teachers, school directors and parents feel about inclusion in a public elementary school in Addis Ababa, the capital of Ethiopia. We administered a survey that was adapted from the Index of Inclusion (Booth & Ainscow, 2000) to eight participants at a school: two teachers, two students, two administrators and two parents, to find out how inclusive their school is. We found, based on the surveys, that the school was generally not inclusive since there were very few children with any special needs, but that teachers were open to having students with disabilities in their classrooms. Also,

according to survey findings, administrators believed their schools were moderately inclusive but parents did not. Additionally, parents thought that students with special needs should go to special schools instead of public, government-run schools with children without disabilities. The data I gained from participating in this course gave me additional insight into typical and cultural views about children with disabilities in Ethiopia.

Conference documents. I attended a three-day national conference on special needs and inclusive education. At this conference, the first national conference of its kind in Ethiopia entitled, “Accessible education to citizens with special needs for our Renaissance,” Ministry of Education officials, teacher training faculty, non-governmental organization staff members, teachers and people with disabilities discussed the current situation related to people with disabilities in Ethiopia. Conference participants also discussed new laws implemented by the Ethiopian Ministry of Education to support and protect people with disabilities and planned next steps to make education in Ethiopia more inclusive. Participants from each of Ethiopia’s eleven regions gave reports on statistics, services and needs related to people with disabilities in their region. Ministry of Education officials gave a report on the country’s overall progress in making education inclusive and on meeting the EFA goals by 2015. They also explained the most recent updates to the national Education Sector Development Program and the Special Needs Strategy. Finally, participants were given opportunities to voice questions and concerns directly to Ministry officials. Attending this conference gave me further insight into the current situation of people with disabilities in Ethiopia and additional context for teachers’ beliefs and practices toward children with disabilities.

Immersion in the setting. In addition to participating in formal courses and workshops, I tried to immerse myself in as much of the Ethiopian culture as I could during my time there, especially during the first few months. Although I was comfortable and conversational in Amharic, a language widely spoken in Ethiopia, prior to arriving in Ethiopia, I focused on continuously improving my Amharic skills by speaking Amharic with others whenever possible. I also met with a language tutor several times per week to help me become more comfortable with grammar and language commonly used in special needs education in Ethiopia. In addition to my daily time with teachers during the week, I participated in cultural events, holidays, weddings and funerals with my Ethiopian hosts. These things gave me insight into the lives of the participants in the study. I do not claim to know everything about the study participants or to be “one of them”; however I believe that my participation with them over the course of the study gave me very important glimpses into their lives that help me to better understand the data I collected.

Phase II: Observation and interviews. Phase II took place during approximately 16 weeks of the academic year. I conducted observations of AECS teachers in their classrooms and interviewed them about their beliefs and practices during this phase. I also interviewed teachers and school directors from other schools, a MoE official, and faculty from CTEs and AAU during this phase.

Participant observation. I acted as a participant observer for this study. As discussed previously, I spent time at AECS daily for approximately 16 weeks observing in classrooms and interviewing teachers and other relevant stakeholders. I also interacted with study participants and members of the community daily during the course of the

research. During my first week in the school I introduced myself to all staff and explained the purpose of the study to the staff. I also familiarized myself with the school, teachers, and typical classroom norms and routines. While in Ethiopia, I lived in a neighborhood near the school site and participated in several community events during the research period. By being immersed in the setting, I had the opportunity to hear, see and begin to experience reality as the participants did. Although I did not participate in teaching in classrooms, I interacted with staff and students at the school daily. I attended faculty meetings, after-school activities and professional development activities with staff. When invited, I also spent time with AECS teachers in their homes, at their churches and in their communities. I was a friendly, but neutral observer. I encouraged teachers to do everything they would normally do in their classrooms while I was present. As a participant observer, I had the opportunity to participate in the lives of the teachers, learn from my experiences and reflect on them. By doing this I believe I was able to get an accurate picture of teachers' typical beliefs and practices.

As described by Marshall and Rossman (2011), participant observation has advantages that were particularly helpful in this study. Participant observation fosters face to face interactions with participants and is useful for uncovering participants' perspectives in a natural setting while providing opportunities for immediate follow-up for clarification through validity checks and triangulation. This method is useful for describing complex interactions, and obtaining data on nonverbal behavior and communication. Additionally, participant observation allows the researcher to discover nuances of and context in culture. This type of observation fit well with the study due to the study's focus on teachers' beliefs.

I observed teachers in classrooms for approximately 320 hours during the research period. I observed in each of the 12 AECS classrooms for a minimum of 20 hours, spending four hours each day for one week in each classroom. I then spent an additional 20 hours, one week, in each of the four classrooms at AECS that teachers or school directors identified as having students with disabilities or special needs. I was able to observe most parts of the day in each classroom including direct instruction, independent activities and group activities. I did not observe nap time or unstructured play time at the end of the day. I observed classrooms one at a time in random order; however I allowed for flexibility and changed my schedule of observations a few times during the research period because of school closures, holidays and unexpected events that did not allow me to observe in a classroom on a particular day. Observations of teachers focused on their daily classroom practices with a focus on teachers' practices toward children with disabilities. I completed an observation log each day indicating the date, the classroom activities observed, and teachers' classroom practices. I used the formal observation guide found in Appendix C to inform my observations across classrooms.

Field notes and memos. I maintained field notes detailing the things I saw, heard and experienced throughout the research period. Field notes, as described by Berg (2007) are notes the researcher takes during or immediately following time in the field they are studying that provides a “narrative account of what goes on in the lives of study subjects” (p 197). At the end of each day, I wrote my impressions of the classroom, the teachers, the students and any other relevant details in a journal. I especially focused on information that was not apparent in the audiotaped interviews or observation logs including non-verbal cues I gathered from participants, conversations I had with the

participants when they were not being audiotaped and contextual data such as descriptions of the settings in which I observed or interviewed participants.

Memoing, as described by Glasser (1978), is the theorizing write-up of ideas about codes and their relationships as they strike the analyst while coding data. Memos can be sentences, paragraphs or a few pages of writing that exhaust the analyst's momentary ideation based on data, with perhaps a little conceptual elaboration. Miles and Huberman (1994) note that memos report data and tie different pieces of data together into recognizable clusters, often to show that those data are instances of a general concept. During the processes of data collection and analysis I engaged in a regular process of writing memos describing my ideas about links I observed between the data I collected. Maintaining memos helped me document my impressions about the data and determine next steps in the form of follow-up interviews with participants and gathering further related documents.

Interviews. Another source of data I obtained was interviews with key informants. I conducted open-ended, in-depth interviews with teachers and other relevant stakeholders to gain insight into the research questions. According to Seidman (1991), ethnographic interviewing helps researchers understand the experience of other people and the meaning they make of their experiences. By interviewing participants I was able to gain insight into teachers' beliefs about children with disabilities.

I used the guiding interview questions in Appendix D as a starting point for interviews with the participants and followed up based on participants' responses. During the first several weeks of the research period I conducted initial interviews with a university faculty member and a Ministry of Education Official. Data I obtained in these

interviews gave me helpful contextual information and guidance for observations in classrooms and teachers' interviews. After interviewing the aforementioned participants and observing in AECS classrooms for several weeks, I began interviewing AECS teachers. Teacher interviews focused on teachers' beliefs about their school, their students, their daily practices, their strengths and the challenges they face in their classroom. I also asked teachers about their classroom practices. I was able to conduct follow-up interviews with some teachers and asked them questions about things I saw in their classrooms and asked clarification about questions I developed based on the previous interviews. I had originally planned to conduct a series of individual interviews with teachers at AECS. Due to scheduling difficulties I was only able to conduct follow-up interviews with two teachers during Phase II. For example, I scheduled follow-up interviews with Nigist on two separate occasions. She did not show up to the first scheduled follow-up interview time, and cancelled the second interview on the day of the interview because she thought she would miss her bus if she stayed after school that day. All AECS teachers participated in a focus group for the purposes of triangulation and member checking at the end of the research period. I used questions listed in the Interview Guide as initial questions for participants and asked follow-up questions based on their responses. The Interview Guide is provided in Appendix D.

I conducted 29 individual interviews as a part of this study. This includes 17 that were conducted in the Amharic language, 9 in English, and 3 in a mix of English and Amharic. I interviewed participants in the language that they chose at the start of the interview. Most teachers, including all teachers and school directors at AECS, chose to be interviewed in Amharic. Two teachers from other schools were interviewed using a

mix of English and Amharic. Faculty members from the university and colleges, school directors from schools other than AECS, and the Ministry of Education official were interviewed in English. An interpreter accompanied me for the first few interviews but began conducting interviews with them alone after determining, with the help of my interpreter, that my Amharic was more than sufficient. I also presented the guiding interview questions to participants in written form both in Amharic and English in case clarification was necessary. All interviews were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim. The Amharic and Amharic/English interviews were transcribed verbatim in the spoken language by a research assistant in Ethiopia. The research assistant was an early childhood teacher at a government school and a graduate student in the education department of AAU.

Phase III: Follow-up individual interviews and focus groups. Phase III took place after the academic year was finished and students were no longer in school. Hence, I did not conduct classroom observations during this phase. I conducted additional interviews with participants for the purpose of follow-up, clarification and member checking during this phase. I also conducted some individual interviews with AECS teachers who were not available for follow-up interviews during the previous phase, follow-up interviews with CTE faculty members, and focus groups with teachers from AECS another school during this phase.

Follow-up interviews. I conducted follow-up individual interviews with four teachers at AECS. As described in the interview guide, I asked clarifying questions about what I observed in the classrooms during these interviews. I also conducted follow-up

interviews with two CTE faculty members based on my initial data analysis of interviews and observations from phase one.

Focus groups. I conducted two focus groups; one with all 12 of the lead teachers at AECS and one with three teachers from a private early childhood school in another part of Addis Ababa. Focus groups were not originally a part of my research plan but were added to the study based on unexpected occurrences during the course of the study and as a form of member checking.

I conducted one focus group interview with three teachers from a small private early childhood school serving approximately 75 children in Addis Ababa. I had originally planned for this school to be the research site. After arriving in Ethiopia I visited this school daily and spent time in each of its three classrooms. After two weeks of spending time at the school the school director recommended that I relocate to another site because the children with disabilities who had attended the school in the past were no longer there and she felt another site would be more appropriate for me. In addition, she invited me to conduct a focus group interview with the teachers. All three teachers were informed about the study and agreed to participate.

I also conducted a focus group interview with teachers at AECS. Before getting acquainted with the school and the teachers, I planned to conduct a series of interviews with the teachers at the research site based on my initial research questions and the questions that developed throughout my time at the site. After being at the school for about two months and learning more about the teachers and their day to day activities, it became clear that adding a focus group interview would be the most effective way to

follow up with them based on some teachers' time constraints. The school directors invited me to conduct a focus group interview with teachers during a professional development day. All 12 lead teachers were informed about the aim and procedures of the focus group, and all 12 teachers agreed to participate. The focus group was conducted in Amharic, audio recorded and transcribed verbatim.

Data Interpretation Procedures

I used several tools and processes to collect, manage and analyze the data I obtained during this study. In this section, I discuss those processes and tools.

Data management. I maintained and analyzed the data I obtained from interviews, observation and data analysis using a paper notebook and ATLAS.ti, a qualitative data analysis software manufactured by Scientific Software Development GmbH (Copyright © 1993). This software enables researchers to transcribe, code and retrieve data, build theories and conduct data analysis. I used a small audio recorder to record all interviews with participants. I also made notes on the Interview Guide form when I observed things that would not be apparent to me when replaying the recording for transcription and when I made connections or developed new interview questions based on the data. Given the unreliable nature of electricity in Ethiopia, I kept all forms I used at the school in paper form and then transferred data from paper form to the electronic format on my personal laptop within one week. I transcribed all of the interviews I conducted in English myself. The research assistant transcribed all Amharic interviews. The research assistant and I transcribed the first several interviews together at the beginning to ensure that we were transcribing in the same way. This included adding symbols for repetitions, emphasis on words that were said strongly, pauses that conveyed

meaning, etc. I hired a professional translator to translate all Amharic interviews into English. I stored all data electronically using the ATLAS ti software.

Data coding. According to Merriam (1988, 1998, 2002) and Marshall and Rossman (1989, 2006, 2011) data collection and analysis should be a simultaneous process in qualitative research. I began analyzing data as soon as was possible after it was collected so that I could make decisions about subsequent research activities based on salient information. I coded all observations and interviews using the constant comparative method discussed by Glaser and Strauss (1967). I also used the bioecological systems theory to frame the data throughout my analysis. Since I had all interviews translated into English, I coded the English transcripts. First, I read through the interview transcripts and observation data from the 320 hours of classroom observation several times to familiarize myself with the data. After reading through each transcript I created a preliminary list of codes that features the data that I considered notable. I considered quotations and observation notes as notable when they directly related to the research questions. This included statements or observations that supported teachers' beliefs and/or practices. I used the participants' words as codes whenever possible. My preliminary list of codes can be found in Appendix E. Next, I re-read transcripts and notes and grouped similar data together by their codes to create a refined list of codes. The refined list of codes can be found in Appendix F. Based on the codes, I then identified common themes that were evident throughout the data and connected themes to the research questions. I then sorted and classified the information according to the major concepts or headings derived from the data itself. Then, I constructed theme titles based on the major research questions. The list of themes and related codes can be

found in Appendix G. This process included identifying key points in the data, grouping similar codes into categories, and identifying where or how categorized groups of data related to the research questions.

I coded most of the interview data myself; however, an independent coder coded 20% of the data in order to increase the dependability of the data (Lincoln & Guba, 1981). The independent coder was a student from the Special Needs Department from AAU with knowledge about teaching and was familiar with the context of early childhood schools in Ethiopia. This process of coding allowed me to obtain a rich understanding of the data I gathered from observations, interviews and record review.

Indicators of validity. Marshall and Rossman (2011) identify several indicators that contribute to the validity of research, a concept they call soundness. Although the indicators that Marshall and Rossman identify are not the only ones that measure validity, they encompass important characteristics of qualitative research that can lead readers to be confident in the findings of this study. The indicators of research validity I used for this study were a) credibility, b) transferability, c) dependability, and d) confirmability. In this section I describe each of these concepts and how I applied them in this study to assure the soundness of the research.

Credibility. The first criterion Marshall and Rossman (2011) describe is credibility. According to Marshall and Rossman, the goal of establishing credibility is for the researcher to demonstrate that he or she conducted the inquiry conducted in such a manner as to ensure that the participant was appropriately identified and described. Credibility is closely related to a concept that Bogdan and Biklen (2007) and Brantlinger et al. (2005) call triangulation. Triangulation is the use of multiple sources of data

(interviews with teachers, the director, and university personnel) or types of data (e.g., observations and interviews) to confirm the data that emerge from the research. During the study, I worked closely with a research assistant. This person was an Ethiopian national who was familiar with Ethiopian culture and special education. I was able to discuss the data I gather during my observations and interviews. I shared information and asked clarifying questions during a weekly meeting to verify that I understood correctly what I heard, saw and experienced. This person also listened to and independently coded 20% of the interviews I conducted. We met a minimum of once per week to share information, provide clarification, and answer questions that I had about things I saw, heard or experienced during the research period.

Transferability. The second criterion Marshall and Rossman attribute to the soundness of a study is transferability. Transferability of data allows the findings to be useful to others in similar situations, with similar research questions or questions of practice. Transferability is closely related to the concept described by Brantlinger et al. (2005) as “particularizability”. For this study I have used rich and detailed descriptions about the research methods, setting, and participants so that it is clear I was exploring and what the research findings are. I hope that by doing this, future researchers will be able to use the findings of this study appropriately.

Dependability. According to Marshall and Rossman (2011), dependability of data allows the researcher to account for changing conditions in the phenomenon chosen for the study and changes in the design created by an increasingly refined understanding of the setting. For the study I have described the conditions under which the research was

done including the unexpected conditions and situations that arose during my time in the field.

Confirmability. The fourth criterion that Marshall and Rossman (2011) attribute to the soundness of research is that research is confirmable. The researcher's assertions are strengthened by confirming the inferences and interpretations of the researcher with others who are familiar with the topic. During this study I constantly conferred with others including an advisor in the special needs department at Addis Ababa University, an Ethiopian research assistant, and the AECS directors in order to clarify whether the research findings look or sound true to them or if they had seen, heard or experienced what I did during the study.

Member checking is another process that can add to the confirmability of research. Member checking involves the researcher testing their own meaning of the data by going back to and getting feedback from participants to ensure that their data is accurate (Brantlinger et al., 2005; Miles & Huberman, 1994). In this study, I conducted follow-up interviews with teachers in the form of focus groups to clarify my observations and questions that arose from interviews. I also provided data to participants in the form of a drafted final report at the conclusion of my time in the field. All study participants indicated that the data I collected were accurate and no participants asked that I make changes to the data.

Limitations and counteracting threats to validity. This study, like most research, has some limitations. Educational researchers such as Berg (2008), Creswell (2008), Marshall and Rossman (2011), and Maxwell (2006) all address common threats

to validity in their books about qualitative research methods. In this section I discuss potential threats to validity and the steps I took during the study to address them.

One potential limitation that is often present in research using ethnographic techniques relates to the researcher as a participant observer. This method of participation is dependent on the researcher's interpersonal skills and the cooperation and honesty of key individuals. In this case, I had to rely on my own interpersonal skills and the relationships I built with participants during my time in the field. Although this method had the potential to lead me as the researcher to fixate on details or misinterpret events due to cultural differences, I used several tools to help me limit these mistakes. I describe ways in which I counteract the study limitation below.

Researcher's role. As stated in Marshall and Rossman the researcher should “allow time and be sensitive to the need for time to pass, for flexibility in their roles and for patience because confidence and trust emerge over time through complex interactions” (Marshall & Rossman, 2011, p. 80). Because I have been to Ethiopia a few times before, have family there and speak Amharic, the national language, it was easy for me to assume that I had gained insider status. Throughout my time in the field I made it clear to study participants that I was there to learn about them. I was clear at the outset of my interactions that I did not understand everything about the participants or their lives and I asked for clarification often. I often made fun of my Amharic language challenges and encouraged the teachers at the school to correct me when I made grammatical errors during our conversations. These things helped the participants and me to become more comfortable with each other. I hope that this also encouraged them to trust me, to be honest with me during interviews and to act normally during my observations.

Prolonged field engagement. I used prolonged field engagement to encourage trust by spending approximately six months in the field, including 16 weeks at AECS in classrooms.. I was also intentional about having transparent interactions with people at the school and open about the nature and purpose of the research with participants. By doing this, I believe I was able to gain the participants' trust and obtain accurate and useful data.

Building rapport. Several factors are critical to establishing rapport with the study participants. One concern is that it may be difficult to gain the confidence of participants so that they speak openly during interviews and perform normally in their classrooms during the observations. Participants may have difficulty with being honest during interviews and authentic during classroom observations. Ethiopian culture often values saving face and pleasing one's guests. To address this problem, I used prolonged engagement in the research setting, participation in community activities outside of school, triangulation of data between multiple data sources and triangulation of data between multiple data points, and member checks in order to increase the trustworthiness of this study.

Addressing cultural challenges. I designed this study in a way that minimized possible cultural challenges. As in many places around the world, the practice of agreeing to do something undesirable for the purpose of pleasing people perceived as being in positions of authority or power is common in Ethiopia. Even though I received written consent from all participants in the study, I also reiterated the purpose of the study to participants and let them know that their participation was voluntary throughout the study. Also, to avoid misinterpretation of data because of my different cultural and

experiential background, I conferred with nationals to ensure what I saw, heard, and understood made sense to people more familiar with Ethiopian culture than I was.

I had one particular challenge with conducting interviews with teachers at AECS. The school director initially told me that I was permitted to conduct interviews during teachers' planning period, lunch break, before school or after school, however scheduling the interviews was logistically challenging. On several occasions teachers either did not show up or had to reschedule their interview time. Time and time again, teachers assured me that they wanted to give the interview but needed to do it another time. No one told me they did not want to do the follow-up interviews; however most teachers appeared, for whatever reason, to not be available for further interviews. After several weeks of trying to schedule follow-up interviews with teachers I requested help from one of the school directors. She informed me that many of the teachers had second jobs or lived far away from the school. Because of this they had little time to spend before or after school. She suggested that many teachers may have just been too busy but did not want to let me down. She reminded me that in Ethiopian culture people often do not admit when they are not able to do something in order to avoid disappointing someone. She explained that many teachers, because of other commitments, are only at school for the minimum amount of hours each week. She said this could be related to the low pay they receive and that they were probably unfamiliar with the type of study I was conducting. She recommended that I conduct a focus group interview at an upcoming professional development day. After I obtained IRB approval to alter my initial research plan to accommodate the teachers, I added focus groups to my plan. During that professional

development day I was able to successfully conduct a focus group interview with the teachers at AECS.

Subsequent conversations I had with the teachers confirmed what the director said. Later in the research period I was able to follow up with teachers about their perceptions as participants in the study. All of the teachers said they were not inconvenienced by the interview process or by having me in their classrooms. Some of the teachers told me they held second jobs or took classes in the evenings that they had to rush to after school. Others told me that transportation was difficult for them and they would not be able to get a taxi or bus home if they stayed after school. By consulting with the school director and following up with teachers I was able to gain a better understanding of why teachers missed their interview times and I was able to come up with and implement a solution in the form of a focus group interview.

Addressing ethical issues. Since I was involved in the everyday lives of the students, teachers and other staff at the school site and the faculty and students at Addis Ababa University, I paid close attention to ensure the rights, privacy and welfare of the people with whom I interacted. By making participants fully aware of all aspects of the research, including the procedures for observations in their classrooms, their interview responses and other impressions I observed that were included in the research, participants were able to make an informed decision about their participation in the study. Issues of confidentiality were discussed with participants. All aspects of the research were approved by the University of Maryland's Internal Review Board (IRB) as well and I obtained clearance from Addis Ababa University to conduct the research in Ethiopia.

Confidentiality. I have taken several steps to assure confidentiality in this study. First, the research was conducted in a way that it did not result in harm or retaliation to participants. All documentation of interviews and observations were kept confidential. The name of the school, classroom names and teachers' names were replaced with pseudonyms in the research report as were the names of other informants. Prior to collecting data, I disclosed the scope and sequence of the study to participants and explained what I would do with the data. I let participants know that I would provide them with a copy of the research report at the conclusion of the study. I also reminded participants that their participation was voluntary and that they could stop participating at any time.

Although I explained the study to teachers at AECS and ensured that the interview data would be kept confidential, some of them were initially hesitant about participating. I explained to participants, both collectively at a staff meeting and several times individually that the interviews would be anonymous and that I would not share their specific interview responses with their school director or with newspapers or government officials. Several participants were initially skeptical of the audio recorder I used and asked why I needed to record the interviews. Two participants made references to the communist era in Ethiopia when people were arrested because of statements they were recorded saying that were considered by the government to be inappropriate. As a result of this, I explained thoroughly what I would do with the data I gathered with the participants. Once this was clarified, all but one teacher agreed to participate in a tape recorded individual interview. This teacher explained that her schedule did not allow time to participate in an individual audiotaped interview. She did, however, agree to

participate in an interview without the audiotape and to participate in an audio recorded focus group interview at a school wide professional development day.

Research relationships. I interacted with the research participants daily, being present at AECS, observing in classrooms, and interviewing teachers. I was also involved in community events and informal interactions during my time in the field. As the participants and I became familiar with each other, I was able to develop relationships with them and we began to interact in a personal way. My background of previous work in Ethiopia, family connection and working knowledge of the Amharic language helped to facilitate this. Although I clearly described my role as researcher to participants, at times they asked for advice about their teaching. I was also encouraged to participate in teaching at the school during my time at AECS. Because of my role as researcher, I kindly reiterated that I was there to observe and learn about the school and the teachers. In order to maintain the trustworthiness of the research findings, I did not give advice, coach teachers or provide instruction to students during the research period.

Building trusting relationships with the teachers at AECS was very helpful to me as I collected data. As I stated earlier, I had some difficulty getting teachers to participate in individual interviews. As I spent time at the school each day, socialized with the teachers more outside of school hours and participated in cultural events, the staff members became more open to me. I was able to conduct individual interviews with 11 out of 12 lead teachers, follow-up individual interviews with two of the teachers and a focus group with all 12 lead teachers during the research period. My efforts to build rapport and trust with teachers likely influenced their willingness to invite me into their classrooms and to participate in interviews.

Summary

In summary, I conducted a qualitative case study using ethnographic methods in order to explore the beliefs and practices of early childhood teachers at one school in Ethiopia toward children with disabilities. Through gathering background data and context, observing AECS teachers in their classrooms over 16 weeks and interviewing them, and interviewing various other professionals with insight about teachers' beliefs and practices, I was able to address my research questions. As I analyzed the data I collected I engaged in a continuous process of comparing and linking data while keeping the bioecological systems theory framework in mind. I also used several strategies to increase the overall soundness of the study and to minimize threats to validity.

Chapter IV

Research Findings

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to investigate the beliefs and practices of Ethiopian early childhood teachers toward children with disabilities. In this chapter, I discuss the findings of the study in detail. After restating the research questions, I describe the research site and then provide detailed descriptions of three of the twelve AECS teachers to provide insight into the lives of the teachers at the school. I also describe widely held Ethiopian traditional beliefs about disabilities and people with disabilities. Following these descriptions I address each of the research questions based on the data I obtained in the form of background data, transcribed interviews, observation logs, field notes and memos.

The following research questions guided this study:

1. What are early childhood teachers' beliefs about children with disabilities?
 - a. What do teachers believe about the origins of disabilities?
 - b. What do teachers believe about the nature of disabilities?
 - c. What do teachers believe about children with disabilities being in their classrooms?
2. What factors influence early childhood teachers' beliefs about disabilities?
 - a. What cultural factors influence teachers' beliefs about disabilities?
 - b. What experiences influence teachers' beliefs about disabilities?
 - c. What prior education or training influence teachers' beliefs about disabilities?

3. How are early childhood teachers' beliefs about disabilities evidenced in their daily classroom practices?
 - a. In what kinds of school activities do children with disabilities participate?
 - b. What kinds of behavioral and performance expectations do teachers hold for students with disabilities?
 - c. Do teachers differentiate in their general treatment of or in their planning, instruction, or assessment for students with disabilities?

About the School

The primary research site for this study was Addis Early Childhood School. In this section I describe the school through the use of written descriptions and pictures of the setting. I describe the research site in this section based on my observations and experiences at AECS over the course of approximately six months in the field. I also include quotes from study participants to provide additional context about the setting. The photographs included in this section are my own, and were taken with consent by the participants, including AECS administrators and teachers. To maintain confidentiality, I only included pictures that did not identify the site or participants.

Addis Early Childhood School (AECS) was a private school for children ages three through five in the capital city of Ethiopia, Addis Ababa. AECS was located in a typical, working class neighborhood in the heart of the city and largely served working class and middle class families. The school was part of a cluster of three schools supported by a large local church. Two schools in this cluster, a primary school serving students grades 1-8 and a secondary school serving students grades 9-12, shared the school's campus and received students who were promoted from AECS. At the time of

the study AECS served approximately 500 children and had 12 classrooms staffed with 12 full time teachers, 12 assistant teachers, two school directors and two non-instructional staff members responsible for cleaning the school, providing food service, and washing laundry. Each classroom had between 39 and 45 students enrolled. One certified teacher taught in each classroom. All teachers at the school held a minimum of a teaching certificate and had received at least one common course in special needs education.

In line with the mission of its benefactor, a local church, the school aimed to provide support and refuge for marginalized people in the society, including children with disabilities. The majority of students at AECS did not have disabilities at the time of the study. However, 10 students enrolled in AECS were regarded by the school staff as having some form of disability based on formal medical records, reports from parents or based on teacher's assumptions. Families were required to pay tuition however, and according to the school directors, the tuition cost is modest and similar to that of other early childhood schools in Addis Ababa. Teachers received a modest salary and were considered working class. All participants reported that teachers' salaries are generally low in Ethiopia and range from approximately 500 birr per month for certificate holders at private or elementary schools to approximately 1,400 birr per month, equivalent to \$26 to \$72 per month, for bachelor's degree holders who teach high school. One MoE official, Samson, talked about the low salaries of Ethiopian teachers. He stated, "You can't exist with this salary, you see! They are paid only 1,400 before income tax. This is very difficult to live [on] because, maybe, house rent is 800 birr. So how can you live?"

A teacher from a government school, Dagem, offered more information about teacher salaries and the status of Ethiopian teachers during an interview. When I asked

him about the status of teachers in Ethiopia he informed me that teaching was not a respected career and that most educated people preferred other jobs. When I asked Dagem if he had wanted to be a teacher as a child he responded strongly saying,

Never! I had no interest to be a teacher. Being a teacher is not a good job. Even, when I go home to my village I don't tell them I'm a teacher. People would laugh and not respect me. I have been to the university so how can I just be a teacher for elementary school? I was majoring in English at Addis Ababa University and I hoped to be an instructor in a college or university. The Ministry of Education came to recruit us at the University and said that if we joined the program we would be teaching English at the college level. When we graduated the story changed. Now I am in my placement teaching elementary school! I am not using my skills because my English is very good, don't you agree? This was not my expectation and I will leave teaching if I can. And the pay is very bad. How can I live?

AECS was made up of two concrete buildings, one single story building and one two story building. The single story building housed three and four-year-olds and was connected to a large church. The two-story building housed five-year-olds and was located across the road. Both buildings had empty concrete playgrounds in front and painted pictures of numbers, letters, shapes, colors and animals on them. Compared to other schools and buildings in the city, the AECS buildings appeared newer and better maintained. Aesthetically, the school looked clean and safe and was surrounded by large gates with security guards armed with sticks positioned at the entrances. Enclosing large homes, schools and important buildings in protected compounds such as this is typical in

Addis Ababa. The walls of the compounds and the classrooms were brightly colored and lined with student academic and art work. Internationally donated large-sized picture books, also known as “Big Books”, were displayed on tables or shelving in each classroom. There were also various books, puzzles, number and picture cards, and other manipulatives on the shelves in each room. Many of the Big Books and manipulatives on display in classrooms appeared to be for decoration as I never observed any of them being used for read aloud activities or other forms of instruction. During my time at AECS I only observed the teachers using letter cards to practice naming letters during class time. I never observed any other materials being used. I have chosen to include pictures of the school compound and classrooms in order to provide readers with a thick description of the setting in which I conducted the study. Pictures school are shown in Figure A below as well as in Appendix H.

Figures 1-6

Pictures of the School



Picture of the School 1: Academic instruction in a 5-year old classroom.



Picture of the School 2: The school compound.



Picture of the School 3: Physical education.



Picture of the School 4: Structured outdoor play and activities with a 4-year-old class.



Picture of the School 5: 3-year-old classroom.



Picture of the School 6: Classroom library, manipulatives and word wall.

Rooms were generally very similar in their physical set-up and overall daily procedures. Classrooms were relatively small, approximately 20 x 30 feet, and housed between 40-45 students each. Desks were arranged in rows facing a large chalk board at the front of the room and classrooms were quiet outside of specific activities that required singing or movement. Each classroom had an assistant teacher responsible for writing the homework assignments in students' homework notebooks each day, grading homework, passing out materials and assisting the teachers with behavior management in the classroom, however, assistant teachers did not plan lessons, deliver instruction or assess students' skills.

Academic requirements were clearly established for all students. All students were expected to demonstrate mastery of the nationally established learning standards for their grade level. Teachers used the learning standards to plan long term and daily lesson plans. All students were graded A-F based on their mastery of skills taught by teachers each grading period. All students completed quarterly oral and written exams to demonstrate their mastery of content and skills they learned in school. For example, three-year-old children identified colors, shapes and numbers during oral exams and wrote letters and numbers during written exams. Four-year-old children wrote counted to 100, and spelled and defined important vocabulary words during oral exams and solved math problems during written exams. Five-year-old children conversed with the teacher in English, answered facts about Ethiopian history and civics, and solved math facts during oral exams and answered comprehension questions about a story they read or heard during written exams. Students who performed well on the exams, regardless of

their abilities or needs, earned passing grades. Students who did not perform well on the exams, regardless of the reason, earned failing grades.

The school day, which ran from 8:00am until 3:20pm each day, began with a 20-minute flag ceremony that included prayer, saluting the Ethiopian flag, singing the national anthem, singing various religious songs and previewing the day. Following that, children participated in 30-minute periods of mathematics, Amharic, English, spoken English, science, social studies or civics, physical education and art or music. They also received a 15-minute snack break in the morning, a 30-minute lunch period, a 45-minute recess time and a 75-minute nap/rest period. Students spent an additional 15-minutes preparing for dismissal at the end of the day. All activities were held in self-contained classrooms except for recess, physical education and the flag ceremony which were all held in the school courtyard. Classes were taught by the lead teacher in the room except for the Spoken English class which was taught by an official Spoken English teacher.

During the 14 weeks I observed in classrooms I observed that teachers and classrooms were extremely similar and that that most students were obedient and enthusiastically participated in classroom activities. Teachers delivered instruction while standing at the front of the room wearing white lab coats and using wooden meter sticks to point to things on the chalkboard or around the room while they taught. Daily lesson plans were exactly the same in each classroom and were delivered using a daily lesson guide that teachers had created by grade level each week during a shared planning time. Teachers did not diverge from the lesson plans during instruction. All children, regardless of their abilities and special needs, participated in all school activities including structured and unstructured play time, direct instruction time, guided practice,

independent work time, and exams. I observed very few incidences of children, regardless of their abilities or disabilities, displaying behavioral difficulties. Rarely, when students were off task, teachers redirected them verbally or by using physical punishment or the threat of physical punishment.

About the Teachers

Most teachers at AECS were similar with respect to the training they had received as well as their beliefs about and practices toward children with disabilities. Their beliefs and practices appeared to be influenced by several complex and competing factors which I illustrate by describing, in detail, the stories of three teachers; one from each grade level at AECS. I selected these teachers by placing the names of all four teachers in each grade level into hats by grade level and randomly pulling one name from each of the three hats. I pulled Menna's name for the nursery level (3-year-olds), Tinishwa for the lower kindergarten level (4-year-olds) and Fana for the upper kindergarten level (5-year-olds). The following narratives were written based on data I collected from the three teachers in the form of field notes, informal conversations with teachers, formal interviews and observations in the school and community during the research period. As you will see in the following pages, the narratives are written differently based on what teachers shared with me and what I observed in their classrooms, their communities, and their homes. Some teachers shared more personal information and details about their lives and beliefs with me during our interactions while others shared more information about their training, beliefs and education. The aim of the following narratives is to give readers a glimpse into the lives of AECS teachers that will provide context for the research findings.

Menna. Menna lived in a small community on the outskirts of Addis Ababa with her mother and five sisters. The family lived near the top of Entoto Mountain in a small government owned house with three rooms. At nearly 10,500 feet above sea level, Entoto Mountain is the highest peak overlooking Addis Ababa. Like most houses in their neighborhood, theirs was made of mud and had a tin roof. Although they had no indoor plumbing, their house had electricity and an outdoor pit latrine that they shared with five other families in their compound. Like she did every morning, Menna prepared a simple breakfast of tea and bread or *gunfo*, a thick, wheat porridge, for her family. The three youngest girls attended a local public primary school that was walking distance from the family's home. The girls dressed in their school uniforms, purple sweaters and navy blue pleated skirts, and headed to school around 8:00am. Menna and her eldest sister Sara left much earlier, by 7:00 am at the latest to get a seat on the bus and reach the city in time.

As Menna and Sara walked through their neighborhood to the bus stop on the main road they passed a large Ethiopian Orthodox Church named for the Virgin Mary. Many men, women and children on canes and crutches, blind people, deaf people, sick people being carried by others, and people with mental illnesses lined the church gate waiting to receive *sebel*, holy water believed by many to heal curses, sickness, and disease. A blind woman lying on the ground holding an infant begged the sisters for money. Menna responded saying "Igziabeher yestellinge", may God bless you on behalf of me. Even though she knew that the baby the woman was holding had likely been purposely disfigured for the purpose of begging, Menna, careful to avoid touching the woman, dutifully placed 10 centimes in her hand. Although Menna said she believed disabilities were not contagious her behavior indicated that she may have believed

otherwise. Menna and Sara, being devout Orthodox Christians, bowed and kissed the church gates in reverence as they passed. After a 15 minute walk to the nearest bus stop, Menna and Sara pushed and shoved through the crowd to pay 1 Birr and 40 centimes each before boarding the city bus to Shiromeda, a neighborhood at the base of the mountain. The busses were always crowded, standing room only, and the girls were always mindful to hold their belongings close so as to not fall victim to pickpockets. As the bus descended the mountain, a winding 3,000 foot descent, the driver swerved to avoid hitting groups of women, children and donkeys carrying heavy loads of firewood on their backs to sell in the market. Selling wood at the market is the main source of income for most people from Entoto. Drivers are challenged by the narrow, foggy road filled with people, livestock and minivan taxis driven dangerously around the curves and ditches. During the rainy season the trip was often more hazardous as the unpaved, muddy roads are often slippery. Accidents on this road were not unusual and many vehicles had gone over the side of the mountain, sometimes leading to fatalities. As they reached the base of the mountain the smell of diesel fuel overwhelmed the people on the bus. The sounds of honking horns, animals and religious music and prayers blaring on loudspeakers filled the air. Menna and Sara quickly disembarked and rushed to their next bus to the city center. This bus was even more crowded and stuffy. By the end of the trip the sisters welcomed the dusty diesel smell of the air. They kissed each other on the cheeks three times and said “melkam ken”, have a good day, as they parted ways.

Sara had scored well on the 10th grade national exam and was lucky enough to be a preparatory student at a government high school in the city. She studied hard and hoped to be accepted to the university the following year so that she could study to

become a doctor or an engineer. Those professions were the most sought after in Ethiopia and paid good salaries. Although Sara loved and respected her sister, she had no desire to follow her footsteps of becoming a teacher. Teaching was one of the most undesirable jobs in Ethiopia and paid very little.

At 24 years of age, Menna was the main provider for her family. Menna's father, Ato Tesfaye, died five years earlier after he succumbed to a serious case of pneumonia. The elixir of eucalyptus leaf, honey and ginger root that was generally prescribed by the local healer in their area was not able to cure Tesfaye's illness and he died. Before his death, Tesfaye had owned a small neighborhood store that supported the family of eight and allowed them to live a modest life. The family lost the store after his death because, like most Ethiopian couples, Tesfaye and Menna's mother were never legally married and Ethiopian law prohibited the property from being transferred to anyone other than the legal spouse. The family was left to survive on the income Menna's mother earned selling *berbere*, a local spice mixture made from Ethiopian chili pepper, at the Entoto Market each Saturday.

Although Menna had never wanted to become a teacher, she was left with few options after she earned low scores on the 10th grade national exam. As a teacher, Menna earned a meager salary of 950 Birr per month (approximately \$52.00). This wage was far from enough to cover the family's monthly expenses. The family was thankful that they only paid 100 Birr per month for their government owned house. This was a fraction of what other families in rental homes paid. After paying for food, daily transportation costs, school supplies for her sisters, monthly utility bills, and local *eder* (community

support group) fees, Menna had little money left for emergencies and barely any for leisure.

Although teaching was not Menna's dream job and she hoped to get the opportunity to do another job someday, she loved the children at Addis Early Childhood School and she enjoyed teaching. Like the other teachers at AECS, Menna arrived before 8 am each day just in time to welcome her arriving students. After leading the school-wide morning flag ceremony, she led her 41 students in a straight, silent line into her small classroom. Menna taught all subjects to her students except spoken English, which was taught by a separate teacher. She got two breaks during the day; one 20 minute break during the spoken English class and a 30 minute lunch break when her assistant teacher was responsible for the students. Menna also had a 30 minute planning period each day that she used to prepare her lessons for the upcoming days. After teaching all day, Menna left soon after school ended at 3:20 each day. She wished she could spend more time at school planning but that was out of the question for Menna. In order to get home in time to meet her younger siblings, help with their homework and cook dinner, she had to leave work by 4 pm. If she left any later she would miss the bus and be forced to take a minivan taxi which cost triple the price of the bus and was much slower.

Menna had been teaching for five years, and four of those years had been spent at AECS. She had a kind yet firm way with her students. She believed that children should learn through playing and singing and also expected her students to follow her instructions and show respect in the classroom. Her classroom, like the others in the school, was arranged in the typical Ethiopian classroom style. As Menna taught, she stood in front of a large blackboard at the front of forty-two children seated in desks

arranged in neat rows. When she entered the room students stood to their feet and said “good morning teacher”. Her response, “Good morning students. You may sit down”, was the same each time. Menna was respected by her students and she hardly ever had behavior problems in her class. Although Menna did not use it to punish students often, she kept her meter stick with her at all times while she taught. Like the other students at AECS, Menna’s students knew their teacher would use corporal punishment if they misbehaved.

Menna delivered the same lessons as her other teachers in her grade level and she gave the same quarterly exam to students. She had two students with disabilities in her classroom this year, both diagnosed with intellectual disabilities. During her five years of teaching experience she had taught several students with disabilities. Unlike some of Menna’s coworkers who believed children with disabilities were lazy, naughty, and should be sent to other, special schools, Menna believed she and other teachers had to give extra help to students by repeating the lesson until students learn. Menna said, “If your job is to work with children, you must allocate some time to provide some assistance to them”. She also thought that having strict rules and reprimanding students with disabilities could help them to “improve their behavior”. Menna believed she was a good teacher but that she lacked the training and resources to effectively teach all of her students. Since she had only taken one SNE course during her two years of teacher training in college, she hoped that AECS would provide more resources and training for her in the future. Menna said that “if [she] had more practical skills training for teaching children with disabilities and resources such as books and teachers guides [she] would be more successful in teaching all of [her] students.”

Before joining the AECS staff Menna had worked at another school that she said “catered to children with special needs.” Menna attributed her skills and practices about teaching students with disabilities to the time she spent there. Prior to taking the SNE course in college, Menna thought that disabilities were caused by curses or were the result of God’s punishment toward parents for their wrongdoing. In her SNE course, Menna learned that disabilities have natural or genetic causes and are not contagious. Menna thought that many Ethiopians attributed disabilities to curses and evil things because of their lack of awareness about disabilities. She also said that she believed people could change these negative beliefs about disabilities if everyone worked together to raise awareness about the subject of disability.

Tinishwa. Tinishwa was an experienced and knowledgeable teacher. She had been teaching for six years, five of which she had spent at AECS. At 26 years of age, she held a certificate in early childhood education from the local CTE. She was also an Orthodox Christian and a member of the church affiliated with AECS. Although she was shy and reserved in the presence of new people and outsiders, her colleagues described her as kind and helpful. Tinishwa did not talk much about her background or her family but was willing to talk about her professional beliefs and practices. During her six years of experience she had taught many students with various disabilities including one year teaching in a special school for deaf children. Additionally, during the six months I spent at the school, Tinishwa had two students with intellectual disabilities in her classroom.

Tinishwa did not love teaching but was happy to be teaching at AECS instead of a public school. She believed that, because of AECS’s affiliation with the Orthodox Church and focus on Biblical principles and character building, children were better

behaved and more disciplined than students in public schools. Class sizes were also smaller at AECS than they typically were in public schools. The 40 students in Tinishwa's class were much more manageable than the 60 to 100 students in many public school classes. Even though she said that 2 of her 40 students had disabilities and caused her trouble, the majority of her students were well behaved. She stated in an interview,

There are 40 students in my class. Out of these 40 students there are 2 students who cause me trouble. Why? Both of them are not focused they are not like the other students. They like playing more than learning. The other one keeps mumbling by herself she also have a problem of failure to pay attention.

Like many teachers in Ethiopia, Tinishwa wished she had a job that was more respectable and paid more money. Tinishwa had studied at the main university, AAU, prior to becoming a teacher. This was not her plan. Very few early childhood or primary school teachers attend universities or have university degrees in Ethiopia. Most join teacher training colleges, and eventually the teaching profession, because becoming a teacher is the best or only choice for them after they fail the 10th grade national exam and are not promoted to preparatory grades 11 and 12. After two years of courses at a public CTE, teacher trainees were able to begin working. This was a much more promising option than unemployment, the condition of many young ladies Tinishwa's age in Addis Ababa. Even so, teaching, especially teaching young children, was not a respected profession in Ethiopia and paid very little money. Tinishwa believed she was smart and hoped that one day she would get a better job.

Tinishwa believed the students at AECS were diverse in their abilities and knowledge. She said that she and the other teachers “teach them by trying to accommodate all of them”. Like the other teachers at AECS, Tinishwa said that there were three groups of students in all classrooms. Unlike her fellow colleagues, Tinishwa described the groups of students in detail and explained the strategies teachers should use when working with diverse groups of students. The first group of students came to school already knowing the skills the teacher would be teaching. Teachers needed to “keep these students engaged in learning by teaching them more challenging skills and allowing them to help other students” so they would not “get bored” or “disturb other students”. The second group of students were typical students. According to Tinishwa, “typical students can learn anything their teacher teaches them with some effort and practice by the student”. Teachers needed to “consistently follow [their] lesson plans” and “be engaging” so these children would continue to learn. The third group of students “needed more assistance” to learn such as sign language interpretation and repetition of the lesson until students understand.

Tinishwa believed that students with disabilities and students without disabilities should be educated in separate environments. She believed that students with disabilities were unable to compete with other students and needed special care. As a teacher trainee Tinishwa completed one common course in SNE. She believed this course was not sufficient to prepare her to teach students with different disabilities and special needs. She described the course focused mainly on the causes and indications of disabilities and was devoid of practical training or strategies to use to teach children with disabilities.

Tinishwa believed that teachers with special training in SNE should be teaching children with disabilities.

Prior to joining the AECS staff, Tinishwa worked at a school for deaf children. She felt unsuccessful there because she believed she did not know sign language, did not have the required experience, and students were not able to learn from her. The school only employed a few interpreters and there was not an interpreter available for her classroom. Most teachers at the school had minimal experience and had similar concerns about teaching at the school. Tinishwa said it was “difficult to deal with students who have special needs” because she only completed one course on special needs during her studies. After one year of teaching at that school she quit and joined the AECS staff.

Since joining AECS Tinishwa has taught a variety of students and has helped to identify students with disabilities. In one case she observed a student who displayed unusual behaviors and physical gestures. After observing the student for several days Tinishwa contacted the student's parents to express her concerns and reported her concerns to a school director. The student's parent agreed with Tinishwa and took the student to a health center for follow-up. Tinishwa explained that the school allowed children with disabilities to enroll but had no special programs or classes for them and provided no special training for teachers about SNE. This report was confirmed by the school directors and other teachers at AECS. As a result, teachers were forced to determine on their own how to assist students in their classrooms with disabilities.

Although Tinishwa did not personally know anyone with a disability outside of the students she had taught over the years, she often saw people with disabilities outside

her church and on the road begging for money. She gave alms to them when she was able. While studying at Addis Ababa University she observed a blind student in one of her classes. She observed that the student had to audio record the lectures or convince others to read material to him. She believed this incident was an example of the challenges that people with disabilities face when they are learning in the same environment with people without disabilities. She also believed that students with disabilities needed to be taught separately in order to be competitive with other students in their classes.

Tinishwa believed that various factors could cause disabilities. She believed it was very rare that children were born with disabilities at birth and that many disabilities occurred due to accidents after birth such as road accidents. When asked her views about traditional beliefs linking disabilities to spiritual things such as witch craft, the devil or punishment from God, she replied by saying, “this is not the case. It is not due to a curse. They acquire the problem after birth due to various reasons such as accidents”. She acknowledged that in Ethiopia, it is traditionally thought that a child becomes disabled due to the curse of the child’s mother, father or grandparents but made her beliefs clear by strongly saying “I reject this belief”!

Fana. Fana was a mother, a wife and a teacher. She enjoyed cooking for her family and friends and loved the time she spent teaching students at AECS. Fana’s family was middle class and owned a small, two bedroom house with electricity in a compound shared with two other families. Her husband worked for the government and one of her children worked for a local private college. As a mother of adult children and many years of experience as an assistant teacher and an accountant, Fana believed that

showing love and good character to children was very important. She was a follower of the Ethiopian Orthodox faith and she believed that teaching children religious principles was very important. She loved AECS and was satisfied with the resources that were available to her through the program.

Fana was much older than most of the lead teachers at AECS. Unlike most of the teachers, Fana had lived and worked during the time of the Derg (military government in Ethiopia between 1974 and 1991) and Qey Shibber (Red Terror). During the Qey Shibber, the Communist leader, Mengistu Haile Mariam, took control of the government and led the killing of more than 500,000 people who were accused of being in opposition to the government or its leader (Ethiopian Treasures, 2012). Fana was well aware of the danger previously associated with appearing to disagree with the government or its functions. Although the Derg was overthrown in 1991, the remnants of the previous time was fresh in her mind, like that of most people of her age group. Also, like most Ethiopians over the age of 40, Fana knew people who had been imprisoned or killed by the Derg. She measured her words carefully and always spoke positively when discussing topics that could be related to the government, especially in recorded conversations.

Fana's home was approximately 30 minutes away from the school by public bus, which she rode to and from work daily. She had worked at AECS for 12 years, 11 of which she spent as an assistant teacher. This was her first year serving as a lead teacher. Fana enjoyed teaching at AECS because of the school's attention to loving children, academic rigor, moral development and religion. She knew firsthand that the kind of education students got at AECS was very good because her children had attended and

graduated from AECS's sister schools. Although one of her children had been looking for work for nearly two years because he had not earned a place at any of the public universities in Ethiopia, she was sure that the education he received was "very good". Despite the high unemployment rate for urban males in Ethiopia, approximately 44% according to a recent country study on Ethiopian youth unemployment (Broussar & Tekleselassie, 2012), Fana believed that her son would have a "good future". Like other Ethiopian Orthodox Christians, Fana always wore a necklace made of black thread and a metal crucifix. Also, as was customary for many older women and women from the countryside, she had a small tattoo of a cross on her hand.

As a teacher with a warm and kind demeanor, Fana was well liked by the 41 students in her classroom. She often hugged and kissed her students and always praised them for good work. Her classroom was orderly and her students were usually attentive, calm and well behaved. Although I never observed her using corporal punishment with her students, they tended to follow her instructions and stay on task during the lessons. Fana was also well respected by the other teachers and considered a leader in the school. This was likely related to her long tenure at the school and her age. In Ethiopia, respect and obedience for rules, elders and those in power is highly valued. Like the other teachers at AECS, Fana followed the daily lesson plans as she taught students and administered quarterly common exams. She believed that she would know her students were learning if they performed well on the exam. She also believed that if many of her students were not mastering the skills she taught she should continuously repeat the lesson until they demonstrate understanding on exams and quizzes.

Fana was a hard worker who believed that hard work and persistence led to positive results. Although in her 12 years of experience she had never taught a student with a known disability, Fana said she believed that all children, including children she described as “lazy” could learn if the teacher taught them properly. She believed that any student could learn if the teacher taught them until they understood what was being taught. When asked what she thought about the idea of inclusive education she said she thought inclusive learning was good because, “the lazy students would be motivated to become as brilliant as their smart classmates”. She believed that students’ hard work and efforts would help them to improve their skills and behaviors.

Fana believed she would be a better teacher if she had more training. Like her colleagues at AECS, Fana had taken one course in SNE as part of her certification program at the local teacher training college. She said she believed the course was sufficient but wished the course were more practical.

When asked what she believed about traditional beliefs linking disabilities to curses or evil she said “I hate such kind of thinking”. She believed that if a student with a physical disability were to join her class, she would be required to support the child and teach the others that he or she could learn. She believed that disabilities were “what God has given” and she did not consider disabilities as being bad. She believed children with physical disabilities can learn and understand as well as work. Regardless of children’s abilities or disabilities, Fana’s hope was that after they leave her classroom at the end of the year they would have a strong belief about what they would like to be.

Near the end of the school year, Fana missed several days of work. She returned from nearly two weeks of being away with a shaved head and wearing all black. Her younger sister had died suddenly. In Ethiopia when a woman's close relative or friend dies it is customary for her to shave her head and sit on the ground in mourning with family and friends for seven days for the *lexo* (funeral and mourning period). People were generally very expressive in their grief and often screamed, beat themselves with stones and jumped up and down in anguish during the *lexo* time period. Women often expressed their grief by dressing in all black for six months to one year after the death and commemorating the person's life with a traditional ceremony at the six-month anniversary of the person's death and every year thereafter for seven years on the anniversary of their death. During this time of mourning it is considered by many as a time only for sadness, smiling or enjoying life is not appropriate. Fana was extremely saddened by her sister's death, and it was apparent in her demeanor and interactions with the students and staff when she returned to work. The other staff members were aware of the situation and respected her time of mourning. At times, funny things would happen at the school, such as children singing or dancing during recess, and Fana would cover her mouth with her headscarf and look away to avoid smiling or laughing.

Considering the narratives. As I considered the three teachers I discussed in the previous narratives, several commonalities were apparent. First, the teachers were from similar religious backgrounds and all acknowledged their religious beliefs as being important. According to the Ethiopian Orthodox faith, all people are created in the image of God regardless of their physical or mental abilities (Teklemariam, 2010). Additionally, people with mental impairments are seen as children of God requiring pity

or alms. This may explain the teachers' agreement that children with disabilities should receive education. Second, all teachers agreed that traditional beliefs linking disabilities to spiritual things persist in Ethiopia, although they all denied holding those beliefs. It is possible that the common course in SNE taken by the teachers influenced their beliefs, or that teachers were unwilling to admit that they held traditional beliefs about disability. It is also possible that teachers held complex, competing beliefs that were influenced by both their training and their backgrounds. Third, all teachers said they believed they needed more practical training in order to effectively teach all of their students. The need for more practical training was described by each teacher, regardless of her age, years of experience and training background.

The narratives also highlighted some contradictions in teachers' stated beliefs and behaviors that I observed or they described during my time with them. For example, in several informal conversations and formal interviews Menna indicated that, although she knows many people considered disabilities to be contagious, evil, curses or punishment from God, she did not personally hold those beliefs. However, during a casual walk to a coffee shop one day, Menna and I were walking along the road and she gave some change to a physically disabled person begging on the side of the road. She, like other Ethiopians I had observed, dropped the coins in the person's hand without touching the person. When I asked her about it she said people should not touch beggars so they do not get sick. Like Menna, Fana said she believed disabilities were naturally occurring and not contagious during the formal, audiotaped interview. However, during informal conversations she attributed disabilities to God's will. This may suggest they still hold some of the traditional beliefs.

Considering contextual factors may also shed light on the data contained in the narratives. Although the teachers were similar in many ways, only Fana said she was happy with the teacher training that she received through the CTE. While she said she believed she needed more practical training, she praised the college and her training. Both Menna and Tinishwa said that their training was insufficient and inappropriate. An important historical factors may explain this difference in expressed belief. Fana was considerably older than the other two. While both Menna and Tinishwa were in their 20s, Fana was over the age of 40. Fana experienced and lived through a time in Ethiopia's history when saying things that the government considered negative often led to people being imprisoned, hurt or killed. It is possible that, because of fear or uncertainty about what could happen if she spoke against the government training, Fana may have not been honest about her beliefs. Both Menna and Tinishwa were young children when the Derg was removed from power so it is possible that they were more confident about speaking openly with me during our interactions. It is also possible that Fana had a different experience in her teacher training than Menna and Tinishwa because she had been working as an assistant teacher for many years prior to completing her certification program at the college. These factors may have influenced the data contained in the narratives.

Addressing the Research Questions

The narratives of the three teachers described above highlight four major themes that were evident during the study. The themes described in the following sections summarize the ideas I gathered in the form of interview transcripts, classroom observations, field notes and memos I recorded during the research period. I chose these

themes because they describe the ideas that were discussed by participants most often when I asked them questions directly related to the research questions. Each of the following themes summarizes the main ideas about a corresponding research question or questions. The theme title is made up of a summarizing statement and two juxtaposed quotes from participants that represent a range of viewpoints that I uncovered in the data. In this section, I address the research questions and highlight the themes that became evident to me as I analyzed the data based on each question.

Question One: What Are Teachers' Beliefs about Children with Disabilities?

Theme 1: Beliefs are complex and often conflicting. “Children with special needs can learn.”(Ayalesh). “They cannot compete with the normal students” (Tinishwa). A major theme that was evident throughout the data was that teachers' beliefs were quite complex. As early childhood teachers with various types and amounts of experience working with young children they had beliefs about child development and pedagogy. As certified teachers who had completed at least one course in SNE, they had beliefs about the definitions and origins of disabilities from a theoretical standpoint. As Orthodox Christians, they had beliefs about the way God viewed disability and how they were supposed to treat them. As people who grew up surrounded by Ethiopian traditional culture, they had beliefs about the origin, nature and function of disabilities, and how to respond to people with disabilities. As people with limited interaction with others with disabilities outside of beggars, they had beliefs about how to relate to people with disabilities. For some teachers these beliefs seemed to fit well with each other and led to teachers being confident about their beliefs about children with disabilities, while for others, the beliefs conflicted with each other and resulted in confusion or the

unwillingness to identify their beliefs. Complex and often conflicting beliefs about children with disabilities were apparent in all AECS teachers. Prior to describing teachers' specific beliefs, I provide a description of widely held Ethiopian traditional beliefs about disability for the purpose of framing the data.

Widely Held Traditional Beliefs about Disabilities. Disabilities were often described by participants and others in the community as a sickness that was caused and cured by supernatural forces. This was evident in the words used to describe those with disabilities, the ways disabilities were addressed, and the expectations placed on those with disabilities. The following descriptions of traditional beliefs includes information I obtained through formal interviews with participants, informal conversations and observations of participants recorded in field notes, other observations and experiences I had in the field as recorded in field notes, and relevant document review for the purpose of clarification.

Words and descriptions. While in Ethiopia I attended a MoE sponsored workshop that focused on education of people with disabilities. All workshop participants held higher education degrees in various disciplines; many were Ph.D. holders. Participants were shown a picture of a person with a visible physical disability, Cerebral Palsy, and asked to anonymously write down words that they or people in their communities might use to describe people like the one in the picture. There is not one specific word that is equivalent to the English word, disability, in most Ethiopian languages; therefore Ethiopian people often use words describing failure or incomplete body parts when they describe those with disabilities (Weldeab, Opdal & Nevin, 2007). Conference participants used words such as *yamoal* (sick), *beshita* (illness); *shibah*

(crippled) *akale godolo* (incomplete); *ebd* (crazy); *akale sinkul* (imperfect body); *dunkoro* (dull or dumb); *dudah* (deaf); *godolo* (unfulfilled); *nik* (insane); *ye amero zigemtenya* (delayed mind); *ewer* (blind); and *buda* (attacker or victim of an evil eye) to describe the person with a disability in the picture they were shown. Pictures used in this activity are included in Appendix H.

The words used by workshop participants reflect the common practice of labeling people based on characteristics about them, including their disability. According to Weldeab (2007), "labeling persons after their impairment is still common in most parts of Ethiopia... In most places, people use such terms as an insult which really have psychological impact on persons having those impairments and their families"(p. 21).

Because of the negative and often derogatory nature of many of the terms listed above, the Ethiopian government, including teacher training faculty members, has begun using new terms related to people with disabilities. A CTE faculty member, Alex, discussed this change in an interview. He explained that "after the intervention of our department in special education there is great change in the attitudes of the community". Teacher training officials, government officials and recent graduates in SNE have begun using words such as *liyu felegot* (special needs), *akal gudetanya* (physically disabled); *mesmat yetesanachow* (not hearing/deaf); and *mayet yetesanachow* (not seeing/blind) in place of other words that are often considered insulting or derogatory. Although some people have begun using new, less-derogatory terms to describe people with disabilities, deeply rooted religious and traditional beliefs about the origin and nature of disabilities continue to influence existing attitudes and practices towards people with disabilities in Ethiopia (Teklemariam, 2010).

Traditional and religious practices. Many Ethiopian people describe and/or explain sickness, diseases, and disabilities through spiritual perspectives and understanding, and widely held traditional physical, medical, emotional needs are generally understood and explained as resultant of the devil, or evil spirits (Teklemariam, 2010; Tirrussew, 2005). During an informal conversation with Fana she explained that when a person fails to fulfill their religious or traditional obligations, such as rituals, worship and sacrifices, it is widely believed that the person, the person's family member or the person's offspring could become mentally, physically or emotionally sick or disabled. It is also believed that at night evil spirits or the devil can attack a person not wearing a crucifix or traditional amulet containing herbs under their clothing, a person without a religious tattoo on their forehead or hand, or a person not holding an iron or metal object. I observed that all of the AECS teachers wore crucifixes such as these.

Curses and witchcraft. Another example relates to spiritual retaliation and curses. It is widely believed that a person can curse someone whom they believe has wronged them (Teferra, 2005; Teklemariam, 2010; Weldeab et al., 2007). This curse could result in the person becoming sick, losing their possessions or becoming physically or mentally disabled. Many Ethiopians believe that physical or mental illness caused by curses can be cured by herbal remedies given by herbalists, called *debtera*, witch doctors, called *tenquay*, and spiritual healers, called *weqabe* (Kassaye, Alemayehu, Getachew, & Mussema, 2006). Many Ethiopians also use religious practices for healing of physical or mental illness caused by curses. Religious practices such as praying, going to a church or mosque, drinking or bathing in holy water, called *tsebel*, for Orthodox Christians, or

zemzem for Muslims, are frequently used to treat physical or mental illness or conditions that appear to be physical or mental illness.

One group of people from specific regions of the country are believed to have the evil eye, called *buda*. Many Ethiopian people believe that people with *budda* have the power to cause physical, mental or emotional harm to their enemies or victims through glaring at them or touching them (Teklemariam, 2010). People considered by society as being *buda* are often discriminated against and forced to live as outcasts in the society. They are only allowed to work in certain industries such as handcrafts, pottery and making tools. People who are not considered *buda* generally fear them and avoid interacting with them. Dagem, a teacher from a government elementary school who reported having no special training or experience working with children with disabilities described his beliefs when I asked him if he believed disabilities resulted from *buda*. He said,

As I have told you, even now the society has such kind of perspective. I, myself, believe in that. I mean, for example, if Mr. X's family were evil eyes [*buda*], one of his children became [*sic*] physically impaired. Partially, I believe that evil eye [*buda*] person can make a negative impact on other people.

Potential of people with disabilities. Historically in Ethiopia, people with disabilities have been considered as subjects of pity and as people who are not able to contribute to society (Teferra, 2005). Many in the society assume that people with disabilities are incapable of doing anything (Japan International Cooperation Agency, 2002). Teklemariam describes traditional attitudes toward people with disabilities in his

2010 article on traditional customs related to people with disabilities in Ethiopia and Eritria, called Abyssinia. He explains,

In Abyssinia, traditional midwives practiced infanticide, particularly to children born with visible disabilities. Such children end up in the streets as beggars and the homeless; and some are made to lose parts of their bodies (such as a leg, an arm, or an eye) to increase public sympathy and the value of begging they become a source of income for close relatives (p.38).

Despite the recent adoption of a new definition of disability or special needs by the Ethiopian MoE that includes a wide variety of disabilities, teachers and school directors commonly only acknowledge children with visible physical disabilities (i.e., cerebral palsy, impaired limbs) or sensory impairments (i.e., blindness, deafness) as having disabilities that require special support or accommodations. Children with less visible disabilities often fare poorly in schools and fail or drop out (Teferra, 2005). Children with less visible disabilities such as emotional disorders, behavioral disorders, and hyperactivity disorders are often considered by their teachers as naughty or mischievous. Those with learning disabilities are often called lazy or not smart. Conversely, blind children, deaf children and children with physical impairments are generally called disabled or having a special needs. These examples highlight ways in which traditional and spiritual beliefs embedded in Ethiopian culture influence the way many people treat those who are different or considered different in Ethiopia. It also provides background information about the AECS teachers.

Teachers' beliefs. AECS teachers' beliefs about the origins of disabilities, the nature of disabilities and their capacity to effectively teach children with disabilities were

mixed. Overall, teachers said they believed disabilities had natural or genetic causes, students with disabilities could learn with the appropriate type and level of support from teachers, and they did not have the appropriate training or resources to effectively teach students with disabilities in their classrooms. As I describe below, these findings were supported by data I collected with teachers from other schools, school directors, college and university faculty members and a Ministry of Education official.

The origins of disabilities. When asked about the origins of disabilities, most teachers said they believed they originated from natural or genetic causes. Even so, all participants agreed that traditional beliefs linking disability to spiritual or supernatural phenomena such as God's will, a curse, or the work of the devil persist in Ethiopia. Of the 12 AECS teachers that participated in the study, 5 of them attributed disabilities to natural causes. In an interview, Menna described her beliefs saying, "I think that their problems are related to some natural problem." Natural causes included genetic or inherited disabilities or disorders, exposure to alcohol or drugs during pregnancy, problems that occurred during pregnancy because of the mother's sickness or overwork, or accidents that occurred after birth. Four teachers were unsure of the cause. When I asked Alemnesh, who taught 4-year-olds, how she thought disabilities came about she responded saying, "I don't know". Two teachers attributed disabilities to supernatural occurrences. In an interview, Tsion said, "It might result from such things, but I do not think completely it is. Sometimes it could happen naturally". Supernatural causes included the will of God, evil spirits and curses. One teacher did not respond to the question nor did she provide a reason for not answering the question.

Other participants outside of AECS provided additional data about this topic.

Faculty members from the CTEs and the university and a MoE official all said that most teachers, prior to receiving training about special needs education, believe that disabilities are related to spiritual phenomena. They all also thought that as teacher trainees and teachers receive training about special needs and disabilities, their beliefs about the origins of disabilities often also change. When speaking about his experiences with teacher trainees, one CTE faculty member said,

Especially the trainees who come to this college for the first time think that way [that disabilities are results of sin or curses]. We always brainstorm with them before we conduct the courses. And they think this [disability] is a result of sin and a curse from the ancestors or something like that. Many of them still have this view even though they have a tenth grade education when they enroll in the college. So it's after they stay here for 2 or 3 years that they get the change. And they even start to preach to change the people's attitudes towards disability and disabled actors [people]. (Bruk)

When asked to describe what the traditional beliefs about which he spoke were he stated, "There are different types of traditional beliefs, like they [teachers] may think that it is something related to evil spirits, being cursed, and doing wrong things. They attribute disability to some sort of supernatural source as the cause." Overall, the data show that teachers attribute the origins of disabilities to many factors including genetic or natural causes, difficulty during pregnancy, accidents after birth, supernatural causes or unknown causes.

School directors and teachers from other schools reported similarly. Both AECS school directors said they believed that disabilities were the result of natural causes but that they would not rule out supernatural influences as well. One teacher from a government run school, Dagem, said that he believed that disabilities could be the result of a curse or “the evil eye”. Teachers from a private early childhood school indicated similar beliefs during a focus group. When I asked them directly what they believed the causes of disabilities were, they named drug exposure, abuse, advanced maternal age and birth accidents as possible causes. When I asked them if they believed disabilities could be caused by supernatural phenomena such as “the evil eye”, they all agreed saying:

Abebech: It is right, it can be the result of a devil spirit.

Dinkenesh: If you have an evil spirit in you then it is possible to give birth a baby who is deformed.

Hannon: But if you believe that your child is from God then you will have a healthy child.

A MoE official, Samson, provided more insight into teachers' beliefs about the origins of disabilities. Samson attributed beliefs to teachers' early learning experiences. He notes,

So, this idea of curse and punishment from supernatural force is running [widely believed] in our community. Parents themselves are part of this community. Teachers are part of this community. So they share these ideas. And, as you know, most of the things that are inculcated in our minds are during early childhood. Even, when we are learning, we may be learning and sharing to some extent, but we are fixing ourselves in our previous ideas.

The nature of disabilities. AECS teachers generally defined disabilities and special needs as visible sensory or physical impairments such as blindness, deafness, paralysis, missing, deformed or impaired limbs, autism spectrum disorders, intellectual disabilities or other visible impairments. They omitted less visible impairments such as learning disabilities in their descriptions of disabilities and described children with attention and behavior-based disabilities as *rabbash* “naughty”. Most teachers also said that children with disabilities and special needs could learn if they had access to teaching and materials that support their learning needs. In an interview, Wagaehu who taught 4-year-olds, described her beliefs about the abilities of children with disabilities saying, “They can learn. They can [become] especially very talented if you can handle them in accordance with their specific needs. But they become bored very easily unless you use different methods so as to keep them engaged” (Wagaehu).

Participants outside of AECS provided additional information on this topic. During an individual interview, a faculty member at the university explained his perception of how many Ethiopian people, including teachers, think about the nature of disabilities. He explained,

The other misconception is ignorance about the potential of persons with disabilities. They [Ethiopians] may think that they're [people with disabilities] only the subject for charity and looking for alms, and because of this wrong understanding or out of ignorance they think that persons with disabilities do not need education or whatever social service that's available in the country. And that has contributed a lot in the exclusion of persons with disabilities from the mainstream society (Teshome, faculty member).

Alex also recounted the story of a woman he met who had been hiding her young, paralyzed niece in the back room of her home for many months. The woman's sister had brought the child from a rural area to Addis Ababa a few months earlier and left her with her sister because she was poor and could not care for the child. The woman was being interviewed in her home about her experience with her niece. The interviewer noticed an exposed electric wire near the ground in the house and asked the woman about it. The woman replied saying,

What can we do? We can't kill her. She is eating. She is toileting here. She can't go to school. We are helping her. She is dependent on us. If we kill her we are criminals. But if unintentionally she touches this electric shock she might die. We prefer this opportunity. (Alex)

Teaching children with disabilities. AECS teachers' beliefs about including children with disabilities into their general education classrooms were mixed. At the time of the study most teachers were not teaching students with disabilities in their classrooms. Although all teachers said they thought they might have children with disabilities in their classrooms in the future because of national laws, most said they believed they lacked the skills and/or resources to effectively teach them.

One teacher summarized the beliefs of most AECS teachers about teaching children with disabilities in their classrooms. She said in an interview, "We have the obligation to help them by using the various methods of teaching" (Nigist). Three out of four teachers who had students with disabilities in their classrooms at the time of the study said they believed inclusive education was "good" and "beneficial" for students. They said that with "motivation", "teaching students in the way they learn", "assistance"

and “punishment” from teachers, students with disabilities could learn. One teacher, a teacher with past experience teaching in a special school for deaf students had a different opinion. She said that she believed students with special needs should be taught in separate schools. In an individual interview she said she thought students with disabilities should be taught in separate schools because they, “cannot compete with the normal students”. She said that special schools with specially trained teachers was more appropriate for students with disabilities.

Most AECS teachers said that they believed children with disabilities could learn but believed that as teachers they did not have the skills and or training necessary to teach children with disabilities in their classrooms. Some teachers said they do not know if children with disabilities can learn and used words like *rabbash* “naughty”, *senef* “lazy”, and *gobez aydellem* “not smart” to describe them. Even so, most AECS teachers said they would be open to teaching in inclusive classrooms if they had the necessary training and resources to do so effectively. One AECS teacher, Fana, said, “I think that inclusive learning is good. Because, the lazy students would be motivated to become as brilliant as their smart classmates.”

Although most AECS teachers said they were open to teaching in inclusive classrooms, many of them believed parents should send their children with disabilities to separate or special schools. Some said that children with disabilities could influence children without disabilities to copy their behavior or to be off task. One teacher said that the educational setting for children with disabilities should be determined based on the type of disability they have. She said,

Deaf students should be taught with students who have similar disabilities.

Similarly, blind students should be taught with the blind. They should not be mixed with others, however, those children who are mentally retarded can learn in the same class with others. These [children] can change themselves or their behavior when they observe how others behave. (Asalech).

Teacher training faculty members described what many Ethiopians believe about the capabilities of people with disabilities to learn and contribute to society. Alex, Bruk and Teshome agreed that many Ethiopians do not believe that children with disabilities can learn and place little value on the lives of children with disabilities. Alex described the argument that many people are opposed to investing in the education of children with disabilities. He described their argument saying,

You see, because of unemployment in our country situation, an able bodied person who graduates with a bachelor's degree has no work. What is the advantage of disabled people attending school? "Once you are disabled, wait for your death", they are saying. (Alex)

All teachers and school directors from special schools or classrooms for children with disabilities outside of AECS said they thought that special schools were better for children with disabilities than general education schools. Most said this was because schools and teachers from general education schools were not trained or resourced to meet the needs of children with disabilities. Some non-AECS teachers said that children with disabilities could negatively impact students without disabilities if they were taught in the same classroom. During a focus group interview, Lucy, one teacher from a private general education classroom said, "I believe that is good to teach him [a student with a

disability] with other similar students. Students do not focus their attention in the class when there is a strange looking handicapped student with them together.”

Table 3 below summarizes the study findings about what AECS teachers believe about students with disabilities. The first column labeled “Origin of Disability” refers to what teachers believe about the causes of disabilities. As is indicated in the following table, five teachers attributed disabilities strictly to natural causes, four teachers were unsure about the origins of disabilities, one teacher attributed the origins of disability to both natural and supernatural causes, one teacher attributed disabilities solely to supernatural causes and one teacher declined to answer the question. The column labeled “Nature of Disabilities” refers to teachers’ beliefs about the characteristics and/or qualities of children with disabilities. As is indicated in the table, seven teachers reported believing that children with disabilities have the ability to learn and the others described children with disabilities using words such as “naughty”, “lazy”, “disruptive” and “not smart”. The column labeled “Teaching Strategies” refers to techniques teachers reported as useful in teaching all students in their classrooms including students with disabilities. As is indicated in the table, teachers listed a variety of strategies and techniques to use when teaching students. The column labeled “Educational Setting” refers to the setting that AECS teachers believed was most appropriate for children with disabilities. As is indicated in the chart, six teachers said they believed inclusion was best for students, four teachers said they believed special schools were best for students with disabilities and two teachers were unsure of the best setting for children with disabilities. Although no clear trends were apparent in the data represented in the table, the table clearly shows important information about teachers’ beliefs about children with disabilities.

Table 3

Teachers' Beliefs about Children with Disabilities

Teacher Pseudonym	Origin of Disability	Nature of Disabilities	Teaching Strategies	Educational Setting
Asalech	Natural causes	Naughty, not like others, discriminated against	Maintain students' attention, share with other teachers, provide motivation	Special schools
Ayalech	Natural causes	Can learn, need more assistance	Allow students to work with peers	Inclusion
Betty*	Natural causes	Can learn, slow learners	Provide motivation and discipline	Inclusion
Fana	Supernatural	Can learn, need to be pushed more to learn	Teach the lesson repeatedly until they understand	Inclusion
Hirut	Unsure	Can learn from teachers with special training	Teach, practice, assess, assign homework for practice, assess	Special schools
Menna*	Natural causes	Can learn from other typical children	Teach, assess, teach, reprimand	Inclusion
Nigist	Unsure	Can learn, need more assistance	Use songs and special teaching aids	Unsure
Tinishwa*	Natural causes	Naughty, not focused, do not understand, do not learn	Assist students who need more help	Special schools
Tsega	Natural or supernatural	Naughty, disturb others, from poor families	Teach students in the way they understand	Inclusion

Wagaehu*	No answer	Can learn, slow learners, hyperactive	Teach students in the way they understand	Inclusion
Taye	Unsure	Not smart	Teach, assess, reteach	Unsure
Alemnesh	Unsure	Lazy, not smart	Teach, assess, reteach	Special schools

*These teachers taught children with disabilities in their classrooms at the time of the study.

“I reject this belief!” During formal interviews most teachers said they are aware of traditional beliefs but do not hold them. Field notes from informal conversations and observations indicate that some teachers’ behavior shows that they may hold traditional beliefs or that they may struggle with their beliefs about disabilities. Teachers’ beliefs about disabilities and people with disabilities are quite complicated and are influenced by many factors including their background, daily interactions with people with disabilities, training, and religious beliefs. When asked if she held the widely held traditional belief linking disabilities to supernatural causes such as witchcraft, curses, the devil or punishment from God, Tinishwa, who taught 4-year olds including two with special needs, responded saying *“I reject this belief!”*. This sums up the stated sentiments of most AECS teachers. Teachers from AECS generally said they believed disabilities were naturally occurring, either as a result of a birth defect or accident, poor nutrition of the mother during pregnancy, overwork of the mother during pregnancy, or unexplained natural causes. All AECS teachers, who had each taken at least one course in special needs education as a part of their teacher certification, acknowledged Ethiopian traditional beliefs linking disability to supernatural causes but only two said they personally held those beliefs. Several teachers from other sites, teachers with little to no

formal training or education related to teaching children with disabilities attributed disabilities to supernatural intervention. Many participants said that they believed that ignorance about disabilities and lack of training were behind the perpetuation of traditional beliefs about disabilities in Ethiopia. These findings indicate that training about teaching children with disabilities may influence teachers' beliefs about children with disabilities.

Question Two: What factors Influence Teachers Beliefs?

Theme 2: Multiple influences. “Now the government is doing well...things are getting changed” (Ayalesh). “In my Classroom, there is no slow-learners” (Nigist).

The second theme that emerged from the data was that several factors appeared to influence teachers' beliefs about children with disabilities and teachers' practices toward them in their classrooms. These factors include teachers' previous personal and professional experiences, traditional Ethiopian beliefs, and various regulations and mandates from their schools, the Ministry of Education, the Ethiopian government and international initiatives such as EFA and the MDGs.

Laws and Regulations. Government regulations and international initiatives appear to have indirectly influenced teachers' beliefs about disabilities. Although teachers acknowledged that they knew these laws and mandates existed and were willing to comply with them, they focused more heavily on religious, cultural and experiential factors when describing factors that influenced beliefs about children with disabilities. As stated earlier in Chapter II, the Ethiopian government adopted Education for All (EFA) in 1990, the Salamanca Agreement in 1994, and the Millennium Development Goals in 2000, in efforts to improve education in the country overall and to place special

focus on educating children with disabilities. To address some of the goals outlined in EFA and the MDGs, and because of Ethiopia's slow progress toward achieving EFA and the MDGs, the Ethiopian Ministry of Education (MoE) created a national policy that focused on improving education in Ethiopia overall called the Education Sector Development Program. This policy includes a specific initiative called the Strategy for Special Needs Education (SSNE) that aims to increase enrollment of children with disabilities in schools, improve teacher training, create awareness about disabilities and provide materials and resources to schools in order to meet the needs of children with disabilities in schools.

One important focus of the SSNE is inclusion. To make education accessible to as many students as possible, the MoE has placed an emphasis on making schools inclusive. A formal statement by the former Ethiopian Minister of Education, Dr. Sentayehu Woldemichael, in 2008 illustrates this focus. In his speech he said,

In our Education Sector Development Programme, we are highly committed to ensure accessible, equitable quality and relevant education for all level of students. As we all know, one of the major universal Millennium Development goals is to provide quality primary education for all school age children by the year 2015. These attainment targets are a good opportunities to make education inclusive. We cannot attain MD ignoring the marginalized and those with learning difficulties and impairments.

Another way the MoE is attempting to make education more accessible for children with disabilities is through teacher training. Since 2006 the Ethiopian Ministry of Education has required all teacher trainees at Colleges of Teacher Education to take one

common course in SNE prior to completing their certification. This three credit hour, theoretical course was a basic overview of definitions, causes and characteristics of disabilities and other special needs without a practical component. Prior to 2006 there was no required course in SNE. Teachers entering the education field through other avenues, such as holding a Bachelor's degree, were not required to take a course in SNE, although they took required coursework in psychology where they learned about human development and briefly covered the topic of disabilities. Entering the teaching field with a Bachelor's degree was uncommon for teachers at the primary level, however the government's recent initiatives to increase student enrollment has opened opportunities for more teaching job vacancies, and some Bachelor's degree holders who had been unable to secure a job in another field have joined the field of teaching. Although all AECS teachers had taken at least one common course in SNE as a part of their certification or continuing education, all said it was not enough to prepare them to teach in inclusive classrooms. When I asked AECS teachers about their training specific to SNE, the most common response I received from teachers was "I only took one course". Only one AECS teacher took more than the single, required course in SNE. All AECS teachers having taken a minimum of one course in SNE is evidence that they have been influenced by government initiatives such as the Strategy for Special Needs Education IV which focuses on increasing teacher preparation related to SNE and the MOE's mandate that all teacher trainees take one common course in SNE prior to certification.

When asked what they believed about the new laws and regulations mandating the inclusion of children with disabilities in their general education classrooms, teachers frequently acknowledged that since MOE is encouraging inclusive education they

expected to have more children with disabilities in their classrooms in the future. Tsega said, "These children do not come from nowhere. They are our children and teaching them will be the responsibility of teachers. Though these students may not be the same as the others, I will teach them in a way they could understand". Most teachers at AECS said they would need more training and resources to effectively teach students with disabilities in their classrooms. Ayalesh explained what she thought she needed to effectively teach in an inclusive classroom in the future. She said, "The course and the training must be given very well."

No AECS teacher indicated that they were aware of specific laws about SNE laws and no teachers credited EFA or the MDGs for reasons why they were open to teaching children with disabilities in their classrooms.

In contrast, all college and university faculty and Ministry of Education officials referred to international initiatives and government mandates in their responses to questions related to inclusion in schools and increasing the amount of children with disabilities in schools. One MoE official, Samson, explained that because of the Ethiopian government's commitment to Education for All, many new schools had opened in recent years. Samson noted that schools are also being required by the government to enroll students with disabilities as a result of these new initiatives. Additionally, he said, "the problem is that teachers are not equipped to effectively teach these students because of their lack of training and resources to teach this new group of students", and "most teachers not only lack training to teach students with disabilities, but they also lack the basic skills necessary to teach in general". According to this official, "Those learners who graduated in tenth grade; after getting training for two years in college become

teachers. I think they, themselves, may have difficulty in reading and writing. So due to this, it is very difficult for them to support their learners.”

Traditional beliefs. As stated in theme one, All AECS teachers acknowledged widely held traditional beliefs in Ethiopia that link disabilities to supernatural factors such as curses, witchcraft, evil spirits and punishment from God. Only 2 of the 12 AECS teachers reported that they personally believed disabilities could be caused supernaturally. When asked what she thought about these traditional beliefs Menna said, “I do not think that way. I think that their problems are related to some natural problem. There is lack of awareness [about disabilities]. But I am sure that this will change if we work together”. Fana agreed saying,

I hate such kind of thinking. If there is a student with physical disability in my class, I am required to support the child and teach the others that he/she too can learn. The rest is what God has given; and, I should not consider this as something bad. In my view, a child with physical disability can learn and understand as well as work. Thus, I want them to leave this place with a strong belief about what they would like to be.

Teachers from other schools indicated different opinions about Ethiopian traditional beliefs about disabilities. As I discussed in the earlier section about traditional beliefs, during a focus group, all teachers from an early childhood school admitted believing disabilities could be caused by evil, supernatural forces. These teachers had each been teaching for more than 10 years and had no special training in SNE.

All teachers and school directors of special schools for children with disabilities agreed that disabilities are naturally occurring, and none attributed the origins of

disabilities to supernatural forces. When I asked them if they were aware of the traditional beliefs that disabilities were caused by supernatural forces they all said they were aware of the beliefs. One director described her experiences working with children with disabilities and their families over the past 12 years. She said,

Some say that it is a result of wrongdoing of the ancestors. That is what they believe. And others also say it is a curse. And that's why they hide their children at home. If people think it's a curse then they have to hide them. Until they die, some people they hide their children at home. If some neighbors or the community sees them they say that it's because of their wrongdoing [that] they got this child. (Aida, school director)

Another school director described the experiences she had as she opened a school for children with disabilities. She spoke of the community's response to her opening a school for children with Autism,

They believe they were possessed by the evil eye or by the devil, or you know, all those strong beliefs. And they were scared of them. They even didn't want to get closer to them. When we had teachers coming here, we had parents of the teachers who opposed the teachers to work here... They were, you know, discouraging them to work in the area. Even myself, I had people asking me how long am I [*sic*] going to work with those kids. If I stay with them every day I will deteriorate. (Zenu, school director)

Experiences. No AECS teachers indicated having personal relationships or experiences with children with disabilities outside of work. When asked to describe people with disabilities, some teachers, such as Menna, told stories about street beggars

and children they observed coming to their church for healing water. No AECS teachers reported having family members or other personal acquaintances with disabilities in their lives outside of children at the school. Of the teachers at AECS, six were either teaching students with disabilities in their classrooms at the time of the study or had taught students with disabilities in the past. Of the six, four teachers said they believed inclusion was good or appropriate, four teachers said disabilities were caused by natural occurrences, and two teachers said that teaching students in the way they understand was the best way to teach children with disabilities. Wagaehu described her beliefs about inclusion in an interview saying, "That [inclusion] is very good, because, these children can be motivated by observing their peers. I think that it is important. There should be at least 3 or 4 of them in a classroom."

One AECS teacher who said she believed inclusion was "bad for students" and that children with disabilities were "naughty" and "cannot compete with others" had a negative past experience teaching in a special school for children with disabilities prior to coming to AECS. As I described in Tinishwa's narrative, she left her previous job because she believed she lacked training and she was unsuccessful. An excerpt from an interview with this teacher describes her experience,

I. Where did you work before you came to this school?

T. I worked in a private school for special needs.

It was after this that I came to this job. It was difficult for me to deal with students who have special needs.

I. How was it difficult?

T. Because I studied only a single course on special needs during my studies.

- I. Could you describe the students?
- T. The students did not listen to me. They did not understand what I taught them. I thought that I did not have the required experience. Thus, I quit.
(Tinishwa, AECS teacher)

According to Education Sector Development Program reports, most schools in Ethiopia, especially those schools located outside of Addis Ababa, do not include children with disabilities. Statistics published by the Ethiopian Ministry of Education in 2013 indicate that roughly 97% of children with disabilities do not attend schools. The government, teacher training stakeholders and schools focus mostly on educating children without disabilities during their in-service training, requirements for hiring teachers, and compensation for teachers.

Prior education and training. Teachers' prior education and training background appeared to influence their beliefs about children with disabilities and teaching them in their classrooms. Of the 19 teacher participants in this study, four of them had not taken coursework in special needs education. Of the four teachers, three related disabilities to supernatural causes and thought that children with disabilities should stay home or be taught in a separate school for children with disabilities.

Teachers with minimal training in SNE generally believed they were unprepared to teach students with disabilities. All AECS teachers had minimal education and/or training related to SNE, and only one had taken more than the single required SNE course as part of their certification at the time of the study. All teachers, regardless of their beliefs about inclusion, or the nature and origins of disabilities, said that the one required SNE course was not sufficient training to prepare them to effectively teach children with

disabilities. Although two AECS teachers said they believed they could teach children with disabilities in their classrooms, neither of them was teaching children with disabilities in their classrooms at the time of the study. Additionally, no teachers with more than one course in special education, including teachers outside of AECS, said they believed that disabilities were caused by supernatural factors or that children with disabilities should be kept at home.

Teacher training faculty and a Ministry of Education official agreed that the single required course is insufficient to prepare teachers to teach children with disabilities. A school director for children with intellectual disabilities, Aida, described her experience working with teachers. When I asked if the common course was enough training to prepare teachers to teach children at her school she said,

That's not [enough training]! It's not because they are taking only one; as a common course they are only taking one. I know that all primary school teachers they went through that course. Whenever they take that course, it is only one course. They are not capable to support these children with disabilities. For example, the types of disabilities are too much. Even they cannot differentiate the children. Theoretically they can learn it at school. Even students of special education who are in college and universities, they are learning theoretically very well. But what they lack is practical skills. Practically, whenever they have to differentiate, they don't have the practical knowledge. One course is not enough for teachers.

A MoE official, Samson, described his experience working with Colleges of Teacher Education. He said that although graduates of the certificate programs often know a great

deal about SNE theory, most do not get jobs in SNE because they lack the practical skills they will need to teach children in classrooms. He also said that these graduates are also generally not chosen to continue their education at the university level because “we don’t need theoreticians”.

Based on my exploration of the previous subtopics, it appears that teachers’ adherence to traditional Ethiopian beliefs, personal and professional experiences, training and education, and laws and mandates impacted their beliefs about children with disabilities. Table 4 below summarizes the study findings about research question two.

Table 4

Factors Influencing Teachers’ Beliefs

Teacher Pseudonym	Laws and Mandates	Personal Experience	Professional Experience	Traditional Beliefs	Training and Education
Asalech	Yes	No	Yes	No	2
Ayalech	Yes	No	No	No	1
Betty*	Yes	No	Yes	No	1
Fana	Yes	No	No	Yes	1
Hirut	Yes	No	No	Unsure	1
Menna*	Yes	No	Yes	No	1
Nigist	Yes	No	No	Unsure	1
Tinishwa*	Yes	No	Yes	No	1
Tsega	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	1
Wagaehu*	Yes	No	Yes	No answer	1
Taye	Yes	No	No	Unsure	1
Alemnesh	Yes	No	No	Unsure	1

* These teachers taught children with disabilities in their classrooms at the time of the study.

Question Three: How are Teachers' Beliefs about Children with Disabilities Evidenced in Their Practices?

Theme 3: Plans and practices are often contradictory: “We have one plan” (Alemnesh): “Slow learners need my support” (Menna). A third theme that was apparent in the data was that teachers had standard policies and plans for working with all students, regardless of students' abilities or disabilities, but altered them when they deemed it necessary to support students. Data I gathered in the form of observations over the course of the study support these findings.

Student participation. Of the nearly 500 children enrolled in AECS at the time of the study, 10 were considered by the school staff as having disabilities. During the first several days of being at AECS, the school directors met with me to discuss information about the school including the makeup of the student population. Frealesh, one of the school directors explained that there were 10 students with disabilities in the school who were assigned to 4 of the 12 classrooms at the school. She explained that students were identified as having disabilities by their parents. Betty's classroom had one child with a disability, Menna's classroom had three children with disabilities, Tinishwa's classroom had two children with disabilities, and Wagaehu's classroom had four children with disabilities. In each of these classrooms I observed children with disabilities participating in the same daily routines and activities as their non-disabled peers. All students at the school, including children with disabilities, generally participated in the same activities each day. This consisted of math, Amharic, English, science, music, art, civics, physical education, play time, and nap time. There were no special classes, teachers or plans for children with disabilities in the inclusive school.

Although teachers expected children with disabilities to participate in the same activities as their non-disabled peers, I observed some instances where teachers provided accommodations for students with disabilities to help them participate. For example, Betty gave a student with a disability more scaffolds or prompts before calling on him to answer questions aloud in class. In another instance, Tinishwa assigned a peer to help one student with a disability to open her lunchbox and clean up after lunch each day. I also observed that Menna gave more redirections and positive feedback to students with disabilities than to other students in her classroom, and Wagaye provided hand-over-hand support to students with disabilities during writing class. While I clearly observed teachers having consistent participation expectations for students during my 16-week time at AECS, I also observed them supporting children with disabilities to participate with their peers. When I asked Menna why she gave more redirection to some students she said, "They understand what I teach them in accordance with their level of understanding. There are smart students who learn faster than others. Those who are slow learners need my support to repeat the lessons until they understand better."

Behavioral and performance expectations. Teachers generally held the same kinds of behavioral and performance expectations for all the students in their classes, including children with disabilities. Despite the informal provision of accommodations, teachers gave students common exams and did not modify them for students with special needs. All teachers said that they expect that some of their students will be very smart, some will be in the middle and some will be low academic achievers. They agreed that their job is to help all students to improve. All students were required to satisfactorily complete daily classwork activities, homework and quarterly exams in order to earn

grades and be promoted from one grade to the next. Teachers graded all student data using a single scale regardless of students' abilities or disabilities. When students completed tasks satisfactorily they received satisfactory grades. When students failed to complete tasks satisfactorily they received failing grades. According to teachers and school directors at AECS, this system is strictly followed.

Teachers at AECS managed behavior in similar ways. All students were expected to be quiet and on task during teacher-led lessons and activities. All students were expected to be respectful of other students and the teacher by giving attention to the speaker in the room at all times. During group activities, all students were expected to participate enthusiastically and when called on, to answer appropriately. When students answered correctly the teacher praised them by saying "gobez" (you are very clever), clapping for them, or saying "correct". Teachers often allowed students who followed school rules and were successful academically to lead classroom songs, tell a story or erase the blackboard at the end of a class lesson. When students answered incorrectly teachers generally said "sorry, that's incorrect" or gave them prompts to help them think of the correct answer. When students were off task, did not follow school rules, or displayed undesired behaviors in class teachers used various strategies to address students' behavior including verbal redirection, increasing proximity to the student, non-verbal cues, warnings of corporal punishment and corporal punishment. I observed very few instances where students displayed non-compliant behavior, but did not observe a difference in the way that teachers addressed this type of student behavior based on students' abilities or disabilities.

Differentiation. Findings indicate that although AECS teachers said they believed that all of their students, regardless of their abilities or disabilities, should participate in the same daily tasks and activities, adhere to the same behavioral rules, and meet the same academic standards; some teachers provided additional support for students when they deemed it necessary to meet the participatory, behavioral and academic standards. All students were required to attend school, follow school rules, complete daily classwork activities, complete nightly homework and take quarterly exams in each subject area. In an interview with an AECS school director, Frealesh, I asked how the school determined students' achievement. She explained, "Of course there is a syllabus provided by the government that dictates how much a 3 year old must know". Teachers were consistent in their planning for and learning assessment of all students in their classes. During a focus group with AECS teachers I asked how they plan instruction. Alemnesh responded saying, "first we have a plan for the year then for a month finally we have daily plan. We have one plan". Taye added to this by saying, "Our plan is based on the students age; that is, nursery [3-year-olds], upper nursery [4-year-olds] and LKG [5-year-olds]". Teachers determined students' academic proficiency based on students' abilities to pass oral and written exams in each of the subject areas. The same exam was given to every child in a particular grade. Students were all graded based on a single rubric, regardless of their abilities or disabilities. No teachers talked about creating special or separate lesson plans for students with disabilities. Also during the focus group with AECS teachers, I asked teachers how they knew students were learning. Hirut, who taught 3-year-olds, explained saying, "Our way of checking our

students whether they grasp or not the lesson is by asking questions and give [*sic*] them the examination.”

Although teachers and school directors at AECS said they treated all students the same regardless of their abilities or disabilities, I observed teachers differentiating instruction for their students. During structured academic tasks such as guided math practice and group reading activities, teachers often only called on children with disabilities to share answers verbally or written on the board if they were confident that students knew the correct answer. Teachers also often gave more positive praise and reinforcement to children with disabilities who answered questions correctly than they did to students without disabilities who answered correctly. I also observed teachers, Betty, Menna, and Asalech holding students' hands hand to let them know where to go or what to do during transition times, and giving extra praise for on task or appropriate behavior.

Teachers also provided accommodations for students not identified as having disabilities. During a class observation I witnessed a child coming into school late and without a book bag. The student was not able to turn in his homework that day. The next day the teacher, Betty, allowed the student to turn in the missed assignment. Since I had not observed this kind of exception being made in the past I asked the teacher why she allowed the student to make up the work. She said that the child had a problem in his home and he needed more time to get his work done. These examples highlight ways in which teachers, despite the school policies, adjusted their instruction and assessments of students when they determined it was necessary.

Theme 4: Resources for Inclusive Education: “After they learn there is great change.”(Alex) “They should go to another school.”(Lucy). The final theme that was evident throughout the data is the topic of resources, including teacher training, learning environment and materials. Since the new governmental mandate for inclusive education teachers was initiated in 2006, teacher trainers and their students have been forced to change the way they teach and learn about education. A common course in SNE has been added to the teacher training curriculum. Likewise, teachers and school directors have had to comply with new regulations about inclusive schools. Schools are no longer able to deny registration or instruction to any children of compulsory age, regardless of their abilities or disabilities. Although this change seems positive for the Ethiopian education system, it brings new challenges and areas of growth to those involved in the education system. Teachers and teacher trainers alike believe that teachers are ill prepared to meet the needs of all students in inclusive classrooms. When I asked participants what they believed they needed in order to effectively teach students with and without disabilities in inclusive settings nearly all participants spoke of the same ideas. The theme *resources* refers to ideas participants identified as being critical to their ability to be effective in classroom environments that include students with and without disabilities. This theme touches on each of the three main research questions and encompasses the topics of teacher training, learning environments and materials as they relate to teachers' effectiveness in educating children with and without disabilities in inclusive classrooms.

Teacher training. Most participants spoke about the resource of teacher training when I asked them what teachers needed in order to effectively teach in an inclusive

environment. As I discussed earlier in this dissertation, all primary (ECE-grade 8) teacher trainees who are certified at colleges of teacher education are required to take at least one course in special needs education (SNE). Although the SNE course is largely theoretical, it gives trainees an opportunity to gain a basic understanding of what disabilities are, how they occur and how they are manifested. Teachers who were certified before 2006 or teachers with Bachelor's degrees are not required to take the SNE course.

Teacher training officials and school directors of special schools for children with disabilities agreed that adding the SNE course to the certification program has been helpful in providing trainees with basic information about disabilities but argued that the course should be more practical. When I asked Alex, a CTE faculty member, if he thought one required course was enough to prepare teachers to effectively teach all students he replied saying, "No. Not enough. This three credit [hour course] is only just it is an introduction. It can't bring attitudinal change." Aida, the director of a private school for children with severe disabilities added that one course lacks a practical element. She said,

"They [teacher trainees] are learning theoretically very well. But what they lack is practical skills. Practically, whenever they have to differentiate, to assign their children from the beginning, they can't. They have to get the practical knowledge. One course is not enough for teachers."

Teacher training officials all said they were pleased that 5 of the 11 national teacher training colleges offered a two-year certification program in SNE. One of the 11 colleges was exclusively dedicated to preparing trainees with and without disabilities to

become teachers for children with disabilities. All faculty members believed that intensive training in SNE helped to change trainees' misconceptions and negative perceptions about people with disabilities. When asked about the beliefs and attitudes of teacher trainees majoring in SNE in his classes, Bruk, a CTE faculty member said that when most trainees begin their teacher training they have negative perceptions and misconceptions about people with disabilities. He went on to say, "They believe disability is a result of punishment of God, the bad deeds of his or her parents, or a curse from an evil person or enemy".

Alex also spoke about his observations and conversations with teacher trainees after they had taken the required special needs education (SNE) coursework. He said that training about the origins and function of disabilities impacts trainees beliefs about disability and, "after they learn there is great change". He also said that students who major in SNE are very prepared to raise awareness about disabilities. He noted that some trainees who believe disabilities were the result of the devil at the beginning of their studies became the strongest advocates for people with disabilities at the end of the two years of SNE coursework.

All teacher participants with extensive practical training in SNE, specifically those teaching at special schools for children with disabilities, said they rejected negative traditional beliefs linking disabilities to spiritual factors. Hewan, a teacher with extensive SNE training who taught in a government-run, self-contained classroom of 37 students aged 5-40 years old described her beliefs about disabilities. She said, "There are people who believe it [disability] to be the result of devil works completely. That is not true." All teacher participants without training in SNE, those from general education schools

outside of AECS, acknowledged beliefs linking disabilities to spiritual things. For example, all three teachers from one early childhood school, all of whom had no formal training in SNE, said they believed disabilities could be caused by the devil or an evil spirit. Zachieus, a primary teacher who had seven years of general education teaching experience and had not taken a special needs education course because he had earned a Bachelor's degree in English, offered an explanation for why he believed many Ethiopians linked disabilities to evil spirits. He explained that many Ethiopians believe disabilities are related to evil forces because of their lack of training and awareness about disabilities. In an interview Zachieus said,

Bad spirit exists as good spirit exists. But I don't believe it is the very reason in our counting [the way we think]. Mostly, it is the problem of lack of awareness. The other thing, for instance, is that a person who don't [*sic*]sleep for three to five days considers that he is caught by an evil spirit, and people think he must be put in *sebel*, holy water. But this can easily be resolved using sleeping pill. It is not all about bad spirit. Bad spirits exist but can be resolved with prayer. It should not be mixed with problem[s] that we create out of misunderstanding.

Nearly all AECS teachers said that their training was insufficient in preparing them to teach all children. All teachers also said they needed more practical training. In an interview Wagayehu said, "It [one course] is not enough. There are children with different disabilities. You may have to know about sign language. But we were taught only about slow learners and the like." In general, AECS teachers said they believed they lacked the training and other resources necessary to effectively teach children with disabilities.

Materials. In addition to training, teachers also said they lacked necessary teaching materials such as teacher's instructional guides, pens, markers and manipulatives in order to teach all of their students in the way they understand. During an interview, I asked Nigist, an AECS teacher who taught 5-year-old students and had no experience teaching children with disabilities, if she foresaw any challenges she would face if and when she had the opportunity to teach in an inclusive classroom in the future. She responded saying, "Yes. There are challenges particularly in relation to the school. For example, there is no teacher's guide, there are no reference materials for the students. It would have been very good [*sic*] if the school solves these problems."

Most participants outside of AECS thought that because of the lack of resources such as trained staff, teaching materials and accessible learning environments, special schools for children with disabilities were the most appropriate places for children with disabilities. Directors of special schools for children with disabilities agreed that most typical schools are not inclusive and "lack necessary resources" to teach children with disabilities. Tekle, a school director, explained that students with disabilities are often unsuccessful and excluded from regular schools because they lack the resources to support all students. He believed the new mandate for inclusion has led government-run schools that are called inclusive allow children with disabilities to enroll but are not meeting their needs. He expounded on this saying, "When they fail [at general education schools] they come here. So, this shows you that schools are not ready, and school administrations are not ready to take children with disabilities. They can make all sorts of excuses. This, to my knowledge, is unacceptable."

Facilities and learning environments. Participants agreed that teaching children with and without disabilities in the same environment is best for students only when schools have the appropriate resources for children with disabilities, including accessible facilities and accommodating learning environments. One director of a special school for children with disabilities, Aida, said that, despite their new label of being inclusive, most government-run schools are not appropriate or supportive of children with physical disabilities because of their environments. She described government-run, general education schools saying,

The government says that it is inclusive, but when you enter in one school compound, even starting from the compound [the school gate] it is not inclusive. It is not inviting. Even the road and, nowadays this four story building is not accessible for them, and it is hindering the children from school; that is what I say. And the other way round is, all schools, they don't have trained teachers in special needs education.

Ayana, a teacher at a special school for blind students agreed that general education schools lack materials to support children with disabilities. In an interview, Ayana said,

When it comes to government schools, they don't have enough materials. Specially regarding [sic] visually impaired ... there are still government schools who resist to enroll the disabled of any sort. But two things are [lacking there]; awareness and conducive environment [for learning].

In contrast, a MoE official, Samson, said that some school administrators use their professed lack of facilities and resources as an excuse to not include children with

disabilities. Samson explained that negative attitudes are a bigger obstacle to inclusion than resources such as facilities, saying,

Due to this belief [that children with disabilities are cursed], the school administration themselves do not accept learners. They are using different defense mechanisms [excuses]. [They say] We do not have any training materials. We don't have such and such. But the budget is there. They have tried to prepare these ramps for learners or to buy materials for learners, so and so. But they are not [being honest], because of these ideas. And this negative attitude still persists within the society.

When I asked AECS teachers whether their school had the appropriate resources to support children with disabilities most teachers said no. Although all teachers said they would not reject a child with a disability if he/she joined their classes, most believed special schools were better equipped to effectively teach them. Tinishwa said, "The school accepts children with disabilities. But unless the teachers themselves assist such children, there is no special program for these children." AECS school directors provided more about the school's ability to meet the needs of children with disabilities. Frealesh explained that the teachers greatest strengths were their "love for the children" and their "mothering skills". Fikernesh agreed with this and added, "They are good on child treatment. They know how to teach children and how to conduct the teaching in understandable ways. For example, they use playing, songs, and tales [stories]." When I asked her about any special resources the school had for teaching children with disabilities, Frealesh said,

Obviously there exists nothing that the school provides for the teachers so that they [*sic*] support the children, but it has to... The teachers can do nothing for a deaf or a blind student when he appears. We have to prepare a mechanism; we need to give an appropriate training for the teachers. We need to have a therapist for those who can't speak. The school need [*sic*] to have a fund for this and give it a try.

During a focus group with teachers from a private general education school, I asked if they thought children with and without disabilities should learn together in the same environment. Lucy responded, saying, "They should go to another school". Another teacher, Hannon, said, "They should stay at home. There is a place where the parents of the handicapped student can take [*sic*] and teach him there." When I asked why they thought students with disabilities shouldn't learn in the same classrooms with children without disabilities, Ababech blamed the learning environment, saying,

The place is not comfortable for students who have a special need. Because in the school, for every one student with a special need there are ten other students who don't have special needs. We have to teach to the majority of the students.

Common definitions. Despite the relatively new focus on SNE and inclusion in Ethiopia, definitions related to disabilities, special needs education and inclusion continue to vary. Clarity about common definitions related to disabilities can be a resource to teachers as they work with children with disabilities in their classrooms. Despite the wider definition of disability adopted by the World Health Organization and the Ethiopian MoE that refers to a disabled person as "any person unable to ensure by himself or herself a normal life, as a result of deficiency in his or her physical or mental

capabilities”, most AECS teachers focused on visible impairments such as blindness, deafness, intellectual and physical impairments as disabilities. One teacher, Asalech who taught 5-year-olds, described a wider definition of disabilities saying,

Often, in our country, only mental retardation is considered. But, there are special needs among smart teachers and students. I learned in my training that we should understand special needs among the brilliant students as well and know how to assist them...Now, I have a boy in my class who gets tired and bored quickly. But, his mind does accept you. His problem is getting tired and bored. This boy can be helped by letting him sit with those who engage in their activities so that he can observe them and make efforts just like them.

Although a few teachers described the characteristics of other possible disabilities such as hyperactivity, inability to pay attention, being a slow learner, and having behavior problems, most teachers attributed these characteristics to factors that were in children's control and were not seen as disabilities. Teachers said students with these disabilities needed special support. Asalech described hyperactive children and children with ADHD, behavioral or emotional disabilities as being naughty and requiring discipline. She said, “They cannot be treated as different from others. As such, they are only considered as naughty.”

The Ethiopian Ministry of Education, like international organizations such as the United Nations and the World Health Organization, includes less visible disabilities such as learning disabilities, emotional and behavioral impairments, working children and girls who cannot attend school because of home duties in its definition of disabilities. Some AECS teachers described children with learning disabilities, autism, and attentional or

behavioral disorders when asked to define disabilities; however they generally described children with these disabilities as being “naughty”, “lazy”, “disruptive”, and “not smart”, and many said they needed “to be pushed more”, or they needed “discipline”.

When asked to describe children with blindness, deafness, and physical disabilities, AECS teachers described them as having special needs and needing specific accommodations such as an interpreter, specially trained teachers, wheelchairs, audio recorders and braille. Most teachers used a narrow definition of disabilities that included impairments that could be seen such as blindness, deafness or physical impairments, instead of the wider definition of disability that is referenced in MoE documents and international initiatives.

The director of a school for children with autism spectrum disorders, Zenu, spoke about the misconceptions of less visible disabilities. She said,

If you see a child who's with ADHD, they might say “oh he's rabbash (naughty)” you know he's *kalkalla* (mischievous), he's this and that. But he has a disorder. You know, so nobody has diagnosed those. For disabilities, in many areas, disabilities is just someone with hearing impairment, with blind people or physical impairment for many people. So this is what they count it. The visible ones. But those invisible [disabilities], like autism, they are visible but people don't know them. They don't know them. The learning disability, that's disability. Dyslexia, you know. We have many of those; we have plenty. But we haven't diagnosed them properly.

Despite government initiatives and improved teacher training, differing definitions related to children with disability remain in Ethiopia. AECS teachers tended

to address children with disabilities that they could easily see or recognize by providing accommodations for them. For children with less visible disabilities and/or learning needs, teachers attributed to them being lazy, naughty, not smart, and/or needing discipline. By obtaining the resource of a clear definition of disability, teachers can better frame the way they view and respond to children with disabilities.

Summary

Findings indicate that although Ethiopian traditional beliefs linking disabilities to supernatural causes persist in Ethiopia, most teachers at AECS believed disabilities were naturally occurring. Most AECS teachers said they believed that children with disabilities can learn but believe they did not have the training necessary to effectively teach them. I also found that teachers' prior training and experience related to teaching children with disabilities, among other factors, influenced their beliefs about children with disabilities. AECS teachers held similar expectations for all of their students regardless of their abilities, but often provided assistance and differentiation to students in order to help them meet participatory, behavioral and academic standards. Finally, participants identified resources such as training, materials, learning environments and common definitions about inclusion as being important for teachers' success in inclusive classrooms.

Chapter V

Discussion

In this case study, I explored the beliefs and practices of Ethiopian early childhood teachers toward children with disabilities. The primary data sources were interviews with teachers and school directors from Addis Early Childhood School (AECS), and classroom observation notes. I also included interviews with school directors from the research site and other schools, teachers from other schools, teacher training personnel, and a government official to strengthen my understanding of the research data. In this chapter, I discuss a summary of the findings for each of the research questions in light of relevant literature and the theoretical framework, my reflections about the findings including unexpected events during the study, limitations, as well as implications of the findings for future research and practice.

Summary of Findings

Four major themes emerged from this study. These themes include the ideas that teachers' beliefs are complex and often conflicting, multiple factors influence their beliefs, teachers' plans and their actions often compete, and teachers need resources to teach in inclusive classrooms. In the section below, I discuss these themes in light of the Ecological System theory developed by Bronfenbrenner (1974, 1976, 1977, 1979, 1986) and relevant literature related to teachers' beliefs and practices toward children with disabilities. Bioecological systems theory, which describes a series of nested systems which exert ongoing influence over one another during the process of human development, provides a convenient framework within which results from this study may be interpreted. .

What are early childhood teachers' beliefs about children with disabilities?

Theme 1: Beliefs are complex and often conflicting. The teachers at Addis Early Childhood School (AECS) held beliefs about children with disabilities and inclusive education which were influenced at multiple levels of the ecological system. These included their homes, churches, the school (AECS), their teaching experience, their educational background, traditional beliefs within Ethiopian culture and Ethiopian Orthodox religious beliefs.

At the macrosystem level, AECS teachers acknowledged the persistence of Ethiopian traditional and religious beliefs linking disabilities to sickness caused by supernatural forces such as witchcraft, curses, punishment from God, and attack from the devil. Traditional cultural beliefs also hold that children with disabilities are unable to contribute to society and should be pitied, hidden at home and given alms. While teachers who were not at AECS and had no formal training related to teaching children with disabilities thought that disabilities could be caused from supernatural forces and that children with disabilities should be taught in separate schools or hidden at home, most AECS reported believing that disabilities were naturally occurring due to factors such as genetic problems, accidents, poor nutrition, overwork of the mother during pregnancy, and failure to be vaccinated for or treat illnesses. All AECS teachers also recognized sensory impairments (i.e., blind, deaf) and visible physical impairments (i.e., cerebral palsy, missing limbs) as special needs that required the child to receive accommodations or modifications at school. Some AECS teachers included behaviors and skill deficits consistent with learning disabilities, behavioral disabilities, and

emotional disabilities in their descriptions of disability, but many referred to these students as lazy, naughty and/or not smart.

To a large extent, these alternative explanations about disability appear to have been influenced by factors at the level of the exosystem. For example, their educational background and the training they all received in Special Needs Education (SNE), directly challenged more traditional beliefs and most AECS teachers at least acknowledged the more “modern” view that disabilities are naturally occurring. Moreover, teachers at ACES believed that children with disabilities could learn with access to the appropriate resources such as trained teachers, assessable facilities and appropriate teaching aids and materials.

These beliefs appeared to extend to the level of the mesosystem. Most AECS teachers said they believed that families of children with disabilities should bring their children to schools. Although many AECS teachers thought special schools with specially trained teachers had more resources to effectively teach children with disabilities than did theirs, all teachers agreed that children with disabilities should receive education – a major departure from more traditional cultural views. Even so, participants from AECS and the wider community reported that many children with disabilities in Ethiopia continue to be hidden in their homes, and most Ethiopian schools and teachers are not equipped with training or resources to effectively teach children with disabilities.

Despite arguments that there is very little evidence showing the influence of teacher education on their beliefs (Fullan, 1991; Stoneman, 1993; Tato, 1998), and that teachers beliefs are formed early in life and usually remain constant regardless of

contradictory evidence they acquire through education, the passage of time and experience (Pajares, 1992), findings of this study indicate that teachers' beliefs were likely influenced by their training, especially training related to teaching children with disabilities. These findings are in line with other similar studies which found that teachers' training can impact their beliefs about teaching children with disabilities (Buell, Hallam, & Gamel-McCormick, 1999; Heisner & Leaderberg, 2010; Swain, Nordness & Leader-Jensen, 2012).

What factors influence early childhood teachers' beliefs about disabilities?

Theme 2: Multiple competing factors influence teachers' beliefs. Findings indicate that teachers' beliefs appeared to be influenced by multiple factors including traditional Ethiopian beliefs, religious beliefs, formal education, and their experiences. Like teachers' beliefs, the factors influencing their beliefs were evident in multiple levels of the ecological system.

Macrosystem level factors such as traditional and religious beliefs taught teachers that disabilities are sicknesses caused by curses from enemies, punishment or testing from God, God's will, the attack of the devil, and punishment for the mistakes of ancestors. As noted in chapter IV, AECS is also closely connected to a large local church that is involved with decision making and financial support for the school. Historically, the Ethiopian Orthodox Church has influenced and been influenced by Ethiopia's culture in complex ways. Members of the church often hold beliefs from the church along with traditional beliefs. This could result in people believing disabilities could be either a punishment or burden from God or a curse from an enemy or the devil, depending on the

situation. For this reason, people often use multiple avenues to seek “healing” from disabilities, and negative attitudes about people with disabilities persist, even among many church members. All AECS teachers were members of or affiliated with the church or one of its related churches. The church and traditional beliefs likely impacted the school policies as well as teachers’ beliefs and practices toward children with disabilities. This was evident in the way teachers spoke about their genuine love for students during interviews and the way in which they avoided touching people with disabilities on the road near the school.

Also at the macrosystem level, economic resources appear to have influenced teachers’ beliefs and practices. AECS is a private school for which families pay a modest amount of tuition. Unlike tuition-free, government-run schools, AECS receives church oversight and funding and there is parent involvement. Teachers felt that the school environment at AECS, with its smaller class sizes and responsive parents, is more comfortable for them than that of public schools. Given these features, AECS teachers may have been more open to adding children with disabilities to their classrooms. However, most teachers believed they lacked resources necessary to teach all of their students. This may be the result of the poor economic condition of Ethiopia in general, the relatively small amount of funding available for schools, and teachers’ lack of personal funds to help support their teaching due to their low wages.

As described earlier, exosystem factors such as formal education and training which emphasized that disabilities are naturally occurring (e.g., genetics, accidents, lack of prenatal care, lack of medical treatment for illnesses, or other unexplained reasons). Teachers were taught that there are three levels of children are present in every

classroom: the fast learners, average students, and the slow learners. Teachers learned that they were responsible for teaching all children in a way that they could understand in an inclusive environment. Despite this training, which clearly influenced their views, teachers and other participants reported that they were not able to access the practical training they believed they needed to effectively teach students with and without disabilities.

At the chronosystem level, the interaction factors at various levels of the system over time appears to have impacted teachers' beliefs and practices as well. Education for children with disabilities in Ethiopia has improved over the years. Since, historically having a family member with a disability has been considered a source of shame for Ethiopian families (Chernet, 2000; Weldeab et al., 2007), many families have hidden their children with disabilities in their homes instead of sending them to schools (Abraham, 1998; Teferra, 2005; Weldeab, 2006, 1999; Weldeab et al., 2004). Over time, the Ethiopian government and international organizations have increasingly focused on improving education in Ethiopia, especially for young children and children with disabilities, through national laws and international initiatives. Since the implementation of new government mandates focusing on educating children with disabilities, more students with disabilities have gained access to schools (Chernet, 2000; Weldeab et al., 2004). In addition to the small increase in enrollment, children with disabilities' access to education has increased because of increased teacher training in the area of SNE and government mandates that schools must accept all students for enrollment. Although these improvements are noted, students with disabilities overwhelmingly remain out of school and most teachers have no experience teaching students with disabilities.

Public and private schools have reflected their adherence to these laws and initiatives in their enrollment and hiring policies. As national and international organizations have focused more on awareness about disability and improving teacher preparation around SNE, teachers have begun to receive training in SNE and have become better equipped to teach children with disabilities than they were in years before (Japan International Cooperation Agency, 2002). Teachers and other study participants generally believe that education for children with disabilities is slowly improving in Ethiopia, and teachers' beliefs and practices toward children with disabilities are becoming more positive as well.

How are early childhood teachers' beliefs about disabilities evidenced in their daily classroom practices?

Theme 3: Plans and practices are often contradictory. Teachers' beliefs about disabilities were evident at the microsystem level of the classroom. Several studies conducted in the US and internationally have found that there is a link teachers' beliefs and practices (Clark & Peterson, 1986; Lieber et al., 1998; Marchant, 1995; Mitchell & Hegde, 2007; Odom et al., 2004; Peck et al., 1992). The findings of this study are consistent with this literature. In ACES, the link between belief and practice could be seen in my classroom observations of teachers who taught students with and without disabilities. While these teachers believed school policies about having "one plan" and generally behaved in ways consistent with that plan, they held competing beliefs developed from their training that led them to change their classroom practices for students. In their training, teachers learned that there are three groups of students, fast

learners, average students and slow learners. As a result, they made individual modifications when they could while teaching children with disabilities.

Another example of competing plans and actions is evident at the level of the mesosystem in student enrollment at AECS. Despite the Ministry of Education's mandate that all enroll students with disabilities and that classrooms become inclusive environments, AECS, like most other general education schools in Ethiopia, had few students with disabilities. This finding was in line with a study conducted by Johnstone and Chapman in 2009 focusing on the contributions and constraints to the implementation of inclusive education in Lesotho. Findings of this study indicated that special education policy was not fully implemented in Lesotho's schools. Similar to the situation in Ethiopia, many schools did not implement inclusive practices in Lesotho. Unlike Johnstone and Chapman's findings that most teacher participants had received no training in special education at all, AECS teachers had all completed at least one course in SNE through their teacher training program.

Although macrosystem level agreements and policies such as the Education for All (EFA), the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the Salamanca Agreement, Ethiopia's Education Sector Development Plan IV, and Strategy for Special Needs Education were not named by AECS teachers as reasons for the way they planned instruction and , delivered instruction or the way they assessed students achievement, all AECS teachers acknowledged they thought more students with disabilities would join their classrooms in the future. All teachers reported that they needed more practical training in SNE to effectively teach children with disabilities. A study by Swain, Nordness and Leader-Jansen (2012) found that teacher trainees' completion of a special

education course paired with practical, field experience working with children with disabilities influenced teacher their beliefs about inclusion.

Theme 4: Resources for inclusive education. Participants identified several resources as necessary for inclusive education including practical training, teaching materials, accommodating learning environments and clarity around definitions related to disabilities. These findings are consistent with Johnstone and Chapman's (2009) study about the contributions and constraints of inclusive education in Lesotho. Although Lesotho appears to have had a longer history of focusing on the education of children with disabilities than Ethiopia, both countries lack similar resources for effective inclusion such as trained staff, accommodating facilities and finances to support inclusive systems. Findings of the current study, like the findings of the study on inclusive education in Lesotho, found that focusing on raising awareness through teacher education is the best way to improve education for children with disabilities. Teachers at AECS and participants from other settings agreed that general education schools in Ethiopia typically lack the appropriate microsystem level resources, accessible facilities, teaching aids, the ability to use sign language or braille, and specific teaching needed to effectively support children with disabilities. This is in line with findings from Johnstone and Chapman (2009) which indicated that lack of trained staff, financial constraints and lack resources consistently limit the implementation of inclusive practices.

Training. The most consistent resource participants referred to when discussing what they needed to effectively teach in inclusive classrooms was practical training in Special Needs Education. At the exosystem level, teachers' self-efficacy appeared to be influenced by their reported lack of appropriate training and their need for more training

related to teaching children with disabilities. Bandura defines self-efficacy as “beliefs in one’s capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments” (Bandura, 1997, p. 3). Most AECS teachers had minimal training geared toward teaching children with disabilities, and all but one believed they needed to more effectively do so in inclusive classrooms. Despite having taken an overview course in SNE, and for some, having experience teaching children in their classrooms with disabilities, many AECS teachers felt unprepared to teach in an inclusive environment. This finding is consistent with a study conducted by Sadler (2005) who found teachers with little training to work with children with disabilities have little confidence in their teaching abilities.

Additionally, teachers with training and experience in SNE tended to have fewer misconceptions about disabilities and were more open to teaching children with disabilities in their classrooms. These findings are consistent with a wealth of similar studies conducted in the US and internationally linking teachers’ beliefs and practices (Berry, 2010; Charlesworth et al., 1993; Clark & Peterson, 1986; Hatch & Freeman, 1988; Johnstone & Chapman, 2009; Leatherman & Niemeyer, 2005; Lieber et al., 1993; Pajares, 1992; Smith & Shepard, 1988; Spodek, 1988; Stoiber et al., 1998). The consistency of this body of literature is important to highlight because of the role of teacher practices and efficacy in student education and achievement the impact of teacher effectiveness on student learning and achievement (Sanders & Rivers, 1996; Wright, Horn, & Sanders, 1997; Jordan, Mendro, & Weerasinghe, 1997), and the link between education and the development of countries (UN, 2014). As Ethiopia strives to meet the

EFA goals and MDGs, a focus on teacher education is an important next step for the Ministry of Education and other stakeholders in education and development.

Also at the exosystem level, unlike the previous studies mentioned, findings of this study indicate that teachers with extensive training and experience in SNE did not believe inclusive environments were best for children with disabilities. For this reason, special schools for children with disabilities were identified by participants as being better equipped to support children with disabilities due to their trained staff, resources and accommodating learning environments.

Implications and Recommendations

Findings from this study contribute to the overall literature regarding inclusive education around the world and provide some important information that educational stakeholders can use at the local level when planning and implementing early childhood special education initiatives. Specifically, findings of this study have implications for practice and research focusing on topics such as the effectiveness of inclusive education, teacher expectations for students, differentiating instruction, and the relationship between culture and education. Findings can also provide Ministry of Education policy makers and non-profit organizations such as the UN with data that can be used in the planning and implementation of future early education initiatives and the evaluation of current initiatives such as EFA and the MDGs.

In line with the findings of this study, teachers' beliefs and judgements about the skills, abilities, behaviors and worth of marginalized groups based on characteristics such as ethnicity, sex, socioeconomic status and the presence of a disability have been evident in studies conducted in many studies around the world. Findings of the current study

indicate that many teachers associated children with disabilities as being naughty and not smart. Findings similar to these were evident in several studies conducted in the United States focusing on teachers' perceptions of African American boys. Studies conducted by Barbarin and Crawford (2006), Gillium (2005), and Shaffer and Gordon (2000) indicated that teachers believed that African American boys were "bad", need more attention, and need more disciplinary action as compared to African American girls and students of either sex of other ethnicities.

Literature has also linked teachers' perceptions about students' sexes to their classroom practices. A study conducted in the United Kingdom focusing on the impact of student sex on teachers' beliefs and expectations of them indicated that teachers considered certain undesired behaviors to be typical when displayed by male children but atypical when displayed by female children (Maniadaki, Sonuga-Barke & Kakouros, 1993). This is similar to findings of the current study that many teachers held lower expectations for children with disabilities than they did for children without disabilities.

Another commonality in the current study's findings and other studies in the United States relates to the impact of teacher's personal experience with people from marginalized groups on their beliefs and practices toward them. Findings of the current study were that teachers with less personal and/or professional experience interacting with children with disabilities generally had more negative beliefs about people with disabilities than did teachers with more experience. Studies focusing on teacher's perceptions about homeless children in the United States had similar findings (Hatch, 1995; Milenkiewicz, 2005; Swick, 1996, 2009). Like the current study, Swick (1996) found that as teachers gained more experience and accurate information about their

students they developed more positive attitudes and beliefs about them. Each of these factors should be considered by education stakeholders as they continue to improve teacher preparation overall.

Recommendations for practice. As I stated previously, the focus on inclusive education by the Ethiopian Ministry of Education has led to various government mandates and initiatives with the expressed purpose of improving education for children with disabilities. These mandates and initiatives include forcing all government-run schools to increase enrollment of children with disabilities and forcing all teacher trainees to complete a course in Special Needs Education. Although these mandates and initiatives have been described as positive and necessary by the Ministry of Education, it is not clear whether the Ministry and other stakeholders in Ethiopian education have considered or sought to address several key factors such as Ethiopian teachers' and schools' preparedness to facilitate inclusive education, teachers' expectations of students with disabilities versus their expectations of children without disabilities, and the role of culture and traditional beliefs as they relate to teachers classroom practices. At the time of the study, no data focused on the appropriateness or effectiveness of inclusive education or differentiated instruction in Ethiopia was available. Additionally, data focused on teacher expectations for students with disabilities in the Ethiopian context was not available at the time of the study. Finally, the relationship between culture and education for children with disabilities was minimal. Each of these factors should be researched so that the Ethiopian MoE and other education stakeholders can make good decisions as they continue to reform education and teacher training.

Based on this study's findings, several clear needs emerged focused on expanding and improving teacher training. AECS teachers' divergence from the school's policy for the purpose of teaching students in ways they could understand was likely due to their training in special needs education. Although all teachers at AECS had taken a course in Special Needs Education (SNE), most reported that they felt unprepared to teach children with disabilities and all reported that they needed more training to teach in inclusive classrooms. This suggests that improving teacher training is warranted. The findings of this case study reveal that several steps should be taken by Ethiopian teachers, teacher training faculty, the Ministry of Education and other related stakeholders to improve the overall educational situation for children with disabilities in Ethiopia. In this section I discuss these steps.

Continue to increase teachers' awareness about disabilities. Teachers appeared to view disabilities differently than is stated in Ministry of Education policy documents and at government sponsored conferences. Despite their training in Special Needs Education, teachers generally believed that children with disabilities they could see such as blindness, deafness or physical impairment as having "special needs" and needing accommodations, while they believed children with learning, attentional or behavioral disorders were "naughty", "lazy", or "not smart" and required "discipline". This is different from the Ministry of Education's definition of disability which says a person with a disability is, "any person unable to ensure by himself or herself a normal life, as a result of deficiency in his or her physical or mental capabilities". The discrepancy between the MoE's definition of disability and the teacher's indicates that teacher

training should include a focus defining disability so that teachers are able to identify and provide support for children with a wider range of abilities and disabilities.

The findings of this study also indicate that teachers' with more training and experience related to disabilities and SNE had more positive beliefs and practices toward them. The Ethiopian MoE, CTEs, schools and other stakeholders should continue to raise awareness among teachers about the causes, natures and implications of disabilities by adding special needs education into more teacher education courses, using media campaigns to educate people about disabilities, and continuing to mandate that schools increase enrollment of students with disabilities. As teachers become more aware about disabilities and get to know more students with disabilities, they may begin to further reject negative traditional beliefs and become more open to teaching children with disabilities in their classrooms.

Improve teachers' practical skills in teaching all students. Recent initiatives and mandates by the MoE require all teacher trainees to complete one common course in special needs education. This course is largely theoretical and only provides an overview of the causes, characteristics and history of disabilities. Most teachers become certified to teach without having any practical training or learning any concrete strategies to use when teaching diverse groups of students. Based on the findings of this study, Colleges of Teacher Education (CTEs) should consider adding practical training, such as a one-term apprenticeship in an inclusive classroom to the curriculum for all teacher trainees. Current teachers should also be required to participate in some form of practical training in SNE in order to maintain their teaching credentials. This addition may improve teachers' preparation to effectively teach in an inclusive classroom. This suggestion is

consistent with that of Swain, Nordness, & Leader-Jansen (2012). Moreover, this approach has the potential to ultimately impact teacher attitudes about children with disabilities (Bandura, 1993). This recommendation is also a major focus of the most recent Global Monitoring Report (UN, 2014).

Recent international initiatives have recognized that teacher training and education are essential to improving education for children around the world (UN, 2014). Many developing countries, including Ethiopia, remain far from achieving the Education for All goals (UN, 2014), however some progress is being made. The enrollment of children in compulsory education in Ethiopia has doubled from to 86% of students overall, 3% of whom have disabilities or other special needs. The Ethiopian MoE has determined that inclusive education is the most effective way to increase enrolment and improve educational access for students with disabilities in the nation so that EFA can be achieved. The participants in this study overwhelmingly reported that public schools in Ethiopia are not equipped, in the areas of teacher preparedness, curricular appropriateness as well as buildings and facilities, and learning environments to effectively include children with disabilities at present.

As the Ethiopian government and other stakeholders focus on inclusive education as a way to improve educational access for children with disabilities, the importance of teacher preparation cannot be stressed enough. New national laws mandate that public schools be open to enroll all students, including children with disabilities, for compulsory education. Additionally, initiatives such as the Strategy for Special Needs Education focus on intentional efforts by local schools to enroll students with disabilities. Teachers will need quality training, including theoretical knowledge about disabilities as well as

practical skills in teaching children with disabilities in order to effectively meet the needs of their increasingly diverse population of students. The theme of the 2013/14 Education for All Global Monitoring Report is: Teaching and Learning: Achieving Quality for All (UN, 2014). The report highlights that, “improving quality and learning is likely to be more central to the post-2015 global development framework. Such a shift is vital to improve education opportunities for the 250 million children who are unable to read, write, or do basic mathematics”. Unless teachers are prepared in both theoretical knowledge and practical skills in teaching students with disabilities it is likely that students with disabilities, although enrolled in schools, may not be able to benefit from their new opportunities for education. Without proper training, teachers may not know how to teach them.

Summary of recommendations for practice. Overall, the findings of this study indicate that education stakeholders in Ethiopia must continue to improve teacher education, specifically in practical skill areas, to give teachers the knowledge and skills they need to be effective in teaching all of their students. One theoretical course in SNE, although an improvement from the pre-2006 course of study that included no training about disabilities, is not sufficient to prepare teachers to effectively teach in the inclusive setting that has been mandated by the Education Sector Development Plan IV and the Strategy for Special Needs Education. Without practical training regarding teaching children with disabilities, teachers will continue to feel unprepared to teach, ineffective in their practices, education will continue to be excluded from education, and national and international goals will continue to be unachieved.

Recommendations for future research. The topic of teachers' beliefs and practices toward children with disabilities in Ethiopia has received little attention in the literature. This topic is important to consider because of the established link between teachers' beliefs on their practices (Berry, 2010; Charlesworth et al., 1993; Clark & Peterson, 1986; Hatch & Freeman, 1988; Johnstone & Chapman, 2009; Leatherman & Niemeyer, 2005; Lieber et al., 1993; Pajares, 1992; Smith & Shepard, 1988; Spodek, 1988; Stoiber et al., 1998), the impact of teacher effectiveness on student learning and achievement (Sanders & Rivers, 1996; Wright, Horn, & Sanders, 1997; Jordan, Mendro, & Weerasinghe, 1997), and the impact of learning education on development of the individuals, communities, countries, and the world (UN, 2014). Teachers complex and often conflicting beliefs were evident in that they followed common mandated plans, except when they deemed it was necessary based on students' needs. This divergence from the plans indicates that teacher training influenced their classroom practices.

Future research. Future research related to the topic of teacher education would add to the research base and provide useful information to education policy makers and teacher training colleges as they continue to prepare teachers of young children for inclusive education in Ethiopia. The literature shows that preschoolers learn best if they are taught by well trained teachers (Bowman, Donovan, & Burns, 2001); therefore it is important to find out the type and amount of training that is effective for training Ethiopian preschool teachers well. Future research about the effectiveness of the current teacher training curriculum, especially for general education teachers, in preparing teacher-trainees to teach in inclusive preschool classrooms would provide information useful to teacher training stakeholders as they determine whether to update the

curriculum for future teacher trainees. A study on this topic should compare general education teachers' attitudes about teaching in inclusive settings before and after receiving a practical course on differentiation of instruction for children with learning disabilities. Further, research about the impact of pairing the current theoretical special needs education course with a practical teaching apprenticeship would provide Colleges of Teacher Education curriculum developers with a rationale for whether to add a practical component to general education teacher trainees' course of study.

Given the apparent conflict between international initiatives (i.e., EFA, MDGs, Convention on the Rights of Personnes with Disabilities) focusing on inclusive education and many Ethiopian educators' beliefs that special schools are more appropriate for children with disabilities than inclusive schools due to inclusive schools' lack of resources, future research is also needed which describes the resources available in inclusive schools and special schools in Ethiopia. These studies should also and compare the learning outcomes of students with disabilities educated in inclusive settings to the learning outcomes of students with disabilities educated in special schools in Ethiopia to determine whether there is a significant difference in resources or student outcomes between settings. Findings from these studies can inform policy makers about whether recent initiatives and mandates regarding inclusive education are appropriate for schools in Ethiopia at this time.

Reflections

Some factors should be considered regarding my influence on the data I obtained during this study. As I stated previously in chapter three, I took several steps to reduce

my bias throughout the study. As a professional special education teacher with experience teaching and training teachers both in the United States and in Ethiopia, I brought valuable knowledge and background about the topic into this study. As someone with a family connection to Ethiopia, I brought a genuine interest in the topic and desire to conduct a study that could be used by relevant stakeholders as they continue to develop teacher training in Ethiopia. I designed and developed the study, collected and interpreted the data while keeping my own experiences, expectations and other biases in mind as not to compromise the study. While collecting data, I worked with an Ethiopian research assistant who helped me with translation, transcription of Amharic interviews, coding and interpretation of the data. I also worked with a tutor to help improve my language skills. Nevertheless, my previous background may have had some influence on my interpretation of the results.

Unexpected occurrences. Two events occurred during the course of the study that led me to change the original research plan. Since qualitative research permits changes in the research plan to emerge and change throughout the course the study, a few changes were necessary to address the research questions. The first change that was necessary related to the research site. Although I began observing at my original research site after I had been in Ethiopia approximately two weeks and I observed in each of the three classrooms for three days, it quickly became clear that there were no children with disabilities enrolled in the school at the time of the study. I confirmed this by speaking with the school director and teachers. The school director recommended that I locate another research site. I met with my host from Addis Ababa University to identify another suitable research site. My hope was to identify a public/government-run school

as a research site. The problem was that, according to university faculty and Ministry of Education officials who participated in the study, very few public schools in Ethiopia and even fewer schools with early childhood programs serve students with disabilities. My contact at Addis Ababa University helped me identify another appropriate site for the study. The new primary research site was a good fit for the study because it was a school which served children in early childhood, there were reportedly students with special needs at the school, and the staff at the school were willing to participate in the study.

The second change I made to the original research plan related to the interviews. I had originally planned to conduct multiple interviews with teachers at the research site over the course of the 16-week period. As I got to know the teachers and the context of the school I determined that adding focus groups would allow me to follow up with teachers who were not able to participate in initial or follow-up individual interviews because of time constraints, and teachers who may have been apprehensive about participating in interviews alone. It also gave me an opportunity to interview teachers from the original research site. Adding focus groups to the research plan allowed me to gain valuable data that I used to address the research questions.

The last change I made to the original research plan was related to the language interpreter. Although I speak Amharic, the working language of Ethiopia most comfortable to teachers at AECS, I had planned to have an interpreter present at interviews in order to clarify my words to participants and their words to me if needed. After conducting a few interviews with the interpreter we determined that my Amharic was sufficient for the interviews, especially since all interviews were audio recorded and

guiding interview questions were written in Amharic and available for participants to look at during the interviews. Additionally, the interpreter was male and unfamiliar to the teachers because he was not at the school with me during observations each day. I found that during interviews I conducted with the interpreter present teachers were generally less descriptive in their responses. During interviews that I conducted without an interpreter participants generally appeared more relaxed and their responses tended to be longer and more detailed than in interviews I conducted with the interpreter present. Participants also indicated that they understood my Amharic well and that they did not need my words interpreted. These events led to me eliminating the interpreter at interviews.

Conclusions

In conclusion, I explored the beliefs and practices of Ethiopian early childhood teachers from one school toward children with disabilities through this qualitative case study. Findings of the study indicate that teachers at Addis Early Childhood School acknowledged the persistence of traditional beliefs linking disabilities to supernatural forces, and that multiple factors influenced teachers acceptance or rejection of those beliefs. Most teachers believed that children with disabilities could learn with the appropriate support, but thought that they did not have the necessary resources to effectively teach them in their classrooms. Findings also indicated that several factors influenced teachers' beliefs and practices including their previous training and experiences, various policies and laws, and their acceptance of widely held, negative traditional beliefs about disability. Teachers acknowledged school policies that all students should be treated the same way, but provided classroom accommodations for

students as they deemed necessary, likely because of their training. These findings should be used by the Ethiopian MoE, CTEs, and other stakeholders as they continue to reform Ethiopia's education system and improve education for children with disabilities. These findings should also be considered by other developing nations struggling to improve education for children with disabilities and achieve Education for All.

Appendix A: Research Timeline Overview

Weeks	Task
1	Gather background data and interview at Addis Ababa University; gather and review background information
2-4	Interviews with school directors at research the site. Initial interviews with university and College of Teacher Education faculty members and Ministry of Education official.
5-24	Formal observations of teachers in their classrooms at the research site.
9-16	Interviews with teachers at the research site
17-25	Interviews with teachers and directors from other schools.
22-27	Follow-up interviews and focus groups with participants.

Appendix B: Audit Trail

Data Collection Timeline

Phase	Type of Data	Method of keeping data	Time period
1	Background information and records review at AAU about special education teacher preparation and disability laws in Ethiopia.	Data recorded in a field notebook and coded as background	Weeks 1-2
1	Interviews with faculty from AAU and local CTEs focusing on the state of education for children with disabilities in Ethiopia and current teacher training curriculum	Data recorded in a field notebook and coded as background	Weeks 2-4
2	Formal observations, interviews, field notes from AECS	Memos, field notes, audio-recorded interviews and	Weeks 5-24 At the end of each day of observation memo were written describing the

Teachers' Beliefs and Practices Toward Children with Disabilities

		transcribed verbatim, observation notes	observation. Interviews recorded and transcribed during the week of interview.
3	Follow-up individual interviews with participants, focus groups, member checking		Weeks 22-27

Appendix C: Observation Guide

Date:

Classroom:

Activity being observed:

1. What evidence is present that reflects teachers' planning, instruction or assessment of students?
2. What do teachers say or do to communicate their behavioral and performance expectations for students?
3. What evidence is present showing that teachers differentiate in their general treatment of or in their planning, instruction, or assessment for students with disabilities?
4. What kinds of school activities are children participating in?
5. Are all children are participating in classroom activities? Describe.

Appendix D: Interview Guide

English Interview Guide

Guiding Interview Questions for Teachers

1. Tell me about your school.
2. Tell me about your classroom.
3. Tell me about the students in your classroom.
4. Tell me about a typical day in your classroom?
5. What background do you have related to teaching or working with children?
6. What do you enjoy about teaching the children in your class?
7. What are the biggest challenges you face while teaching in your class?

Follow-up guiding interview questions

8. I noticed that _____. What is the best way you have found to handle that?
9. What are your strengths as a teacher?
10. What areas are challenging for you as a teacher?
11. What do you know about disabilities?
12. Have you ever worked with a child with a disability?
13. What do you think about children with disabilities learning together with children without disabilities in the same classroom?
14. In the first/last interview you mentioned _____. What did you mean by that?
15. In the first/last interview you mentioned _____. Tell me more about that.

16. When I was in your classroom I noticed_____. Could you explain_____?

Guiding Interview Questions for Non-Teachers

1. Tell me about your school/program.
2. What are the strengths of the teachers in your school/program?
3. What are the general challenges that the teachers in your school/program face?
4. What are the general demographics of the children your teachers work with/plan to work with?
5. What do your teachers know about disabilities?

Amharic Interview Guide

ተቀጽላ መጠይቅ

መሪ የቃለ-መጠይቅ ጥያቄዎች

ቃለ-መጠይቅ 1

1. ስለሚያስተምሩበት ትምህርት ቤት ቢነግሩኝ።
2. ስለትምህርት ክፍልዎ ቢነግሩኝ።
3. በሚያስተምሩበት ክፍል ውስጥ ስላሉት ተማሪዎች ቢነግሩኝ።
4. በሚያስተምሩበት ክፍል ውስጥ ስላለው መደበኛ፣ ዕለታዊ ሁኔታ ቢነግሩኝ?
5. ከማስተማር ወይም ሕጻናትን/ልጆችን የሚመለከት ሥራ ከመሥራት ጋር በተያያዘ ምን ዓይነት ልምድ አለዎት?
6. በትምህርት ክፍልዎ ውስጥ ልጆችን ከማስተማር አንጻር የሚያስደስትዎ ምንድን ነው?
7. በትምህርት ክፍልዎ ውስጥ ሲያስተምሩ ከፍተኛ የሚሏቸው ተግዳሮቶች ምንድን ናቸው?

ቃለ-መጠይቅ 2 (የግምገማ መሪ የቃለ-መጠይቅ ጥያቄዎች)

8. ለመገንዘብ ችያለሁ። እንዲህ ያለውን ሁኔታ ለማካሄድ ከሁሉ የተሻለ ሆኖ ያገኙት

መንገድ ምንድን ነው?

9. እንደመምህርነትዎ/እንደመምህርነትዎ ጥንካሬዎቼ ናቸው የሚሏቸው ነገሮች ምንድን ናቸው?
10. እንደመምህርነትዎ/እንደመምህርነትዎ ፈታኝ ናቸው የሚሏቸው ነገሮች ምንድን ናቸው?
11. ስለአካል ጉዳተኛነት የሚያውቋቸው ነገሮች ምንድን ናቸው?
12. የአካል ጉዳተኛ የሆነ/ች ልጅ አስተምረው ያውቃሉ?

- 13. የአካል ጉዳት ያለባቸው ልጆች የአካል ጉዳት ከሌለባቸው ልጆች ጋር በተመሳሳይ የትምህርት ክፍል ውስጥ ስለመማራቸው ምን ያስባሉ?

ቃለ-መጠይቅ 3 (የግምገማ መሪ የቃለ-መጠይቅ ጥያቄዎች)

- 14. በመጀመሪያው/በመጨረሻው ቃለ-መጠይቅ ወቅት _____ ብለው ነበር። ይህንን ሲሉ ምን

ማለትዎ ነበር።

- 15. በመጀመሪያው/በመጨረሻው ቃለ-መጠይቅ ወቅት _____ ብለው ነበር። ስለዚያ ጉዳይ በይበልጥ ቢያብራሩልኝ።

- 16. በሚያስምሩበት ክፍል ውስጥ በተገኘሁ ጊዜ _____ ተመልክቼ ነበር። ስለዚያ ሊያብራሩልኝ ይችላሉ _____? ተቀጽላ ረ

መምህራን ላልሆኑ የሚቀርቡ መሪ የቃለ-መጠይቅ ጥያቄዎች

1. ስለሚሠሩበት ትምህርት ቤት/ፕሮግራም ቢነግሩኝ።
2. በሚሠሩበት ትምህርት ቤት/ፕሮግራም ያሉ መምህራን ጥንካሬዎች ምንድን ናቸው?
3. በሚሠሩበት ትምህርት ቤት/ፕሮግራም ያሉ መምህራን የሚያጋጥሟቸው አጠቃላይ ተግዳሮቶች ምንድን ናቸው?
4. መምህራኖቻችሁ የሚያስተምሯቸው/ ሊያስተምሯቸው በእቅድ የተያዙ ሕጻናት/ልጆች አጠቃላይ የሰብጥር ሁኔታ ምን ይመስላል?
5. በእናንተ ዘንድ ያሉ መምህራን ስለአካል ጉዳተኛነት ምን ያውቃሉ?

Appendix E: Informed Consent

University of Maryland College Park

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Date _02/02/13

Initials NTA__

Project Title	Skills and Practices of Ethiopian Early Childhood Teachers Toward Children with Disabilities
Purpose of the Study	This research is being conducted by Nicole Taylor Abera at the University of Maryland, College Park. We are inviting you to participate in this research project because you are an Ethiopian teacher, school director or faculty of a university or college. The purpose of this research project is to explore the beliefs of Ethiopian teachers about children with disabilities and how their beliefs are evidenced in their classrooms.
Procedures	<p>I will conduct this study by reviewing documents related to the education of children with disabilities, observing early childhood teachers in their classrooms, and interviewing teachers, school directors, a faculty member from Addis Ababa University, and faculty members from teacher training colleges in Ethiopia over the course of approximately 14 weeks.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. First I will conduct a records review of documents related to schooling for children with disabilities in Ethiopia. I will also interview a school director from the research site, a faculty member from Addis Ababa University, and a faculty member from teacher training institutes in Addis Ababa at their schools. I will audiotape interviews and will ask questions such as “What are the general challenges that the teachers in your school/program face?” 2. I will conduct initial observations of teachers at the research site School. I will keep field notes in a notebook that describe the general set up of the classrooms, classroom procedures and the culture of the school. I will spend approximately 2 hours in each classroom at the research site School during the first two weeks of the study. 3. I will observe teachers in their classrooms at the research site School and interview them individually or in focus groups about their beliefs and practices toward children with disabilities. I will observe for approximately 30 additional hours in each classroom and will use a formal interview template to guide my

	<p>observations. The observation template focuses on things the teacher does while teaching. I will ask questions such as “Tell me about your classroom.” to teachers during interviews. Interviews will be audiotaped and transcribed.</p> <p>4. Finally I will analyze the data and create a final report to be shared with the school director and faculty members from Addis Ababa University and the Teacher Training Institute.</p>
Potential Risks and Discomforts	There are no known risks associated with this research.
Potential Benefits	This research is not designed to help you personally, but the results may help the investigator learn more about teachers' beliefs and practices toward children with disabilities.
Confidentiality	<p>I will minimize the loss of confidentiality by storing data in a password protected computer in my locked home. My field notebook will be kept in a locked cabinet in my home.</p> <p>If I write a report or article about this research project, your identity will be protected to the maximum extent possible. Your information may be shared with representatives of the University of Maryland, College Park or governmental authorities if you or someone else is in danger or if we are required to do so by law.</p>
Medical Treatment	The University of Maryland does not provide any medical, hospitalization or other insurance for participants in this research study, nor will the University of Maryland provide any medical treatment or compensation for any injury sustained as a result of participation in this research study, except as required by law.
Right to Withdraw and Questions	<p>Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You may choose not to take part at all. If you decide to participate in this research, you may stop participating at any time. If you decide not to participate in this study or if you stop participating at any time, you will not be penalized or lose any benefits to which you otherwise qualify.</p> <p>If you decide to stop taking part in the study, if you have questions, concerns, or complaints, or if you need to report an injury related to the research, please contact the investigator: Nicole Abera</p>

	<p>1427 Farmcrest Way Silver Spring, MD 20905, 011-301-655-6706, and Nicole.abera@gmail.com</p>	
<p>Participant Rights</p>	<p><i>If you have questions about your rights as a research participant or wish to report a research-related injury, please contact:</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">University of Maryland College Park Institutional Review Board Office 1204 Marie Mount Hall College Park, Maryland, 20742 E-mail: irb@umd.edu Telephone: 301-405-0678</p> <p><i>This research has been reviewed according to the University of Maryland, College Park IRB procedures for research involving human subjects.</i></p>	
<p>Statement of Consent</p>	<p><i>Your signature indicates that you are at least 18 years of age; you have read this consent form or have had it read to you; your questions have been answered to your satisfaction and you voluntarily agree to participate in this research study. You will receive a copy of this signed consent form.</i></p> <p><i>If you agree to participate, please sign your name below.</i></p>	
<p>Signature and Date</p>	<p>NAME OF PARTICIPANT [Please Print]</p>	
	<p>SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT</p>	
	<p>DATE</p>	

Appendix F: List of Codes

List of Initial Codes

	List of Initial Codes	Occurrence
1	about the school	33
2	about the students	36
3	attitudinal change	21
4	background	38
5	child find	3
6	college and universities' responses	4
7	community does not accept cwds	9
8	curse	19
9	cwds can learn	18
10	diagnosing disabilities and special needs	14
11	disability contagious	5
12	exclusion of cwds	6
13	government response	15
14	How we know they know	3
15	I took one course	25
16	ignorance	5
17	improving special education training	13
18	inclusive education	16
19	It is God's will	4
20	lack of support for teachers	6
21	low standards for teachers	6
22	materials and resources	29
23	MDGs or EFA motivation for change in beliefs and practices	8
24	media involved in creating awareness	5
25	more advantageous to focus on students without disabilities	7
26	more training doesn't pay off for teachers	7
27	multiple stakeholders work together	10
28	natural or genetic cause of disability	21
29	new, young teachers have a positive attitude	2
30	people want to become teachers	9
31	personal connection to cwds	2
32	problems	4
33	raising awareness	21
34	role	4
35	schools do not accommodate cwds	18
36	schools not ready to teach cwds	3
37	schools work with the community	6

Teachers' Beliefs and Practices Toward Children with Disabilities

38	schools work with the parents	15
39	services for cwds improving	4
40	services for cwds not appropriate	1
41	services sometimes available for cw visible disabilities	7
42	special schools better for cwds	5
43	stories illustrating negative perceptions and practices	8
44	supernatural cause of disability	14
45	supporting cwds expensive	4
46	teacher training	55
47	teacher training not appropriate	21
48	teachers' commitment/dedication	4
49	teachers' negative perceptions about cwds	7
50	teachers' pay	5
51	teachers' strategies for working with diverse students	21
52	teachers' strengths	2
53	teachers' training practical	28
54	teachers' training theoretical	3
55	teachers are afraid of cwds	5
56	teachers do not know how to teach cwds	15
57	teachers lack training	23
58	teachers leave the profession	5
59	teachers want to teach cwds	2
60	teachers/schools do not focus on special needs education	8
61	teaching all students is the teacher's responsibility	3
62	teaching cwds too difficult	4
63	teaching profession not valued	3
64	they love the children	7
65	they shouldn't learn together	16
66	they were kept in the houses	18
67	traditional beliefs about disabilities	14
68	training leads to attitudinal change	8
69	training only for visible disabilities	4
70	training/support from abroad	3
71	urban vs rural	13
72	We don't need theoreticians	7
73	what is a disability or special need	24
74	what is inclusive education	5
75	why so few cwds in schools	21
76	wrongdoing of ancestors	8
		875

Refined Coding Scheme

	second list of codes	Occurrences
1	about the school and teachers	86
2	about the students	39
3	after they learn there is great change	27
4	child find	4
5	collaboration	44
6	cwds can learn	19
7	definitions	48
8	diagnosing disabilities and special needs	15
9	exclusion of cwds	80
10	How can we achieve the EFA goals?	8
11	How can we teach them? Please show us!	158
12	how we know they know	3
13	lack of awareness about cwds	25
14	materials and resources	33
15	natural or genetic causes of disabilities	21
16	raising awareness about cwds	26
17	services for cwds improving	4
18	services sometimes available for those with visible disabilities	7
19	special schools better for cwds	6
20	supernatural cause of disability	45
21	supporting cwds expensive	4
22	teachers' challenges	33
23	teachers' strategies for working with diverse students	22
24	teachers' strengths	29
25	teaching all students is the teacher's responsibility	2
26	traditional beliefs about disability	15
27	urban vs rural	13
28	We have to teach to the majority of the students.	4

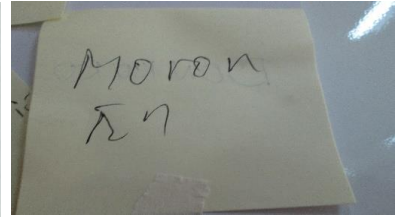
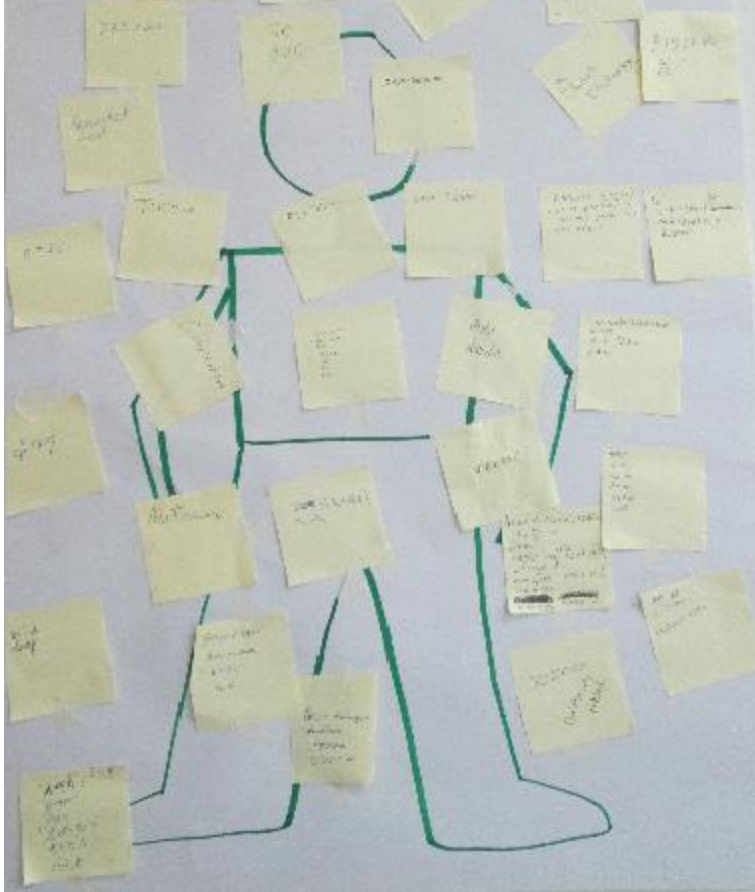
Appendix G: Themes and Related Codes

Beliefs are Complex and Often Conflicting	Multiple Competing Factors Influence Beliefs	Plans and Practices are often Contradictory	Resources for Inclusive Education
Definitions	After they learn there is great change.	Child find	About the school and teachers
About the students	Children with disabilities can learn	Diagnosing disabilities and special needs	How can we teach them? Please show us!
Diagnosing disabilities	Lack of awareness about children with disabilities	Exclusion of children with disabilities	Raising awareness about children with disabilities
Natural or genetic causes of disabilities	Natural or genetic causes of disabilities	How we know they know	Child find
Supernatural causes of disabilities	Supernatural causes of disabilities	Teachers' strategies for working with diverse students	Diagnosing disabilities
	Special schools better for children with disabilities	Teachers' strengths	Teachers' challenges
	Teachers' challenges	Urban vs Rural	Teaching all students is the teachers' responsibility
	Teaching all students is the teacher's responsibility	We have to teach to the majority	
	Traditional beliefs about disability		

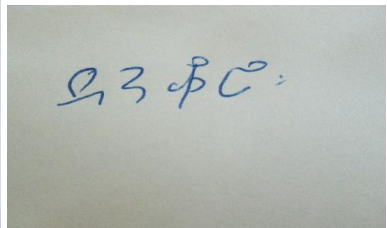
Appendix H: Pictures

Pictures from a Workshop on Disabilities

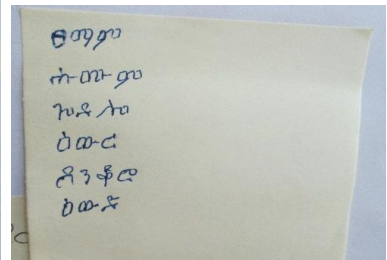
Some words used by workshop participants to describe those with disabilities in various Ethiopian languages.



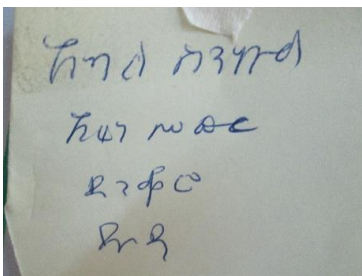
Moron (English language),
crippled (Amharic language)



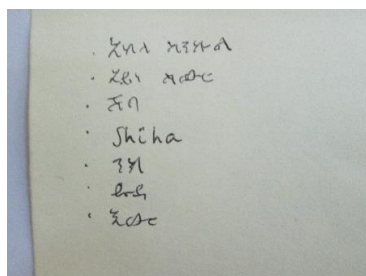
Dumb/dull (Amharic language)



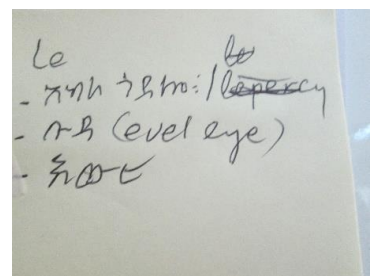
Retarded, sick, blind, deaf
(Tigrinya language)



Lame, blind, dull, deaf (Amharic language)

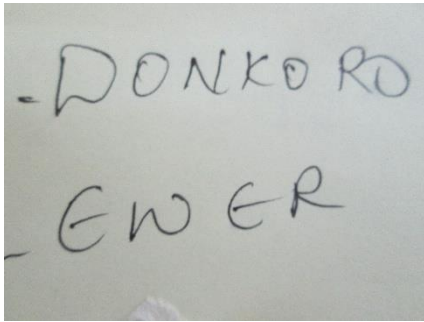


Lame, blind, crippled, deaf,
insane (Amharic language)

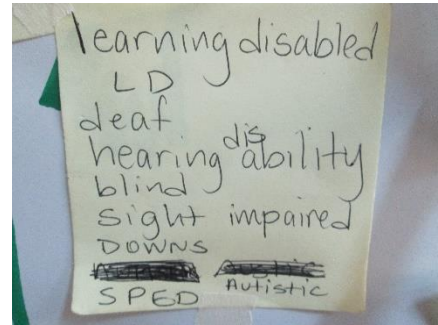


Leprosy, evil eye, blind
(Amharic language)

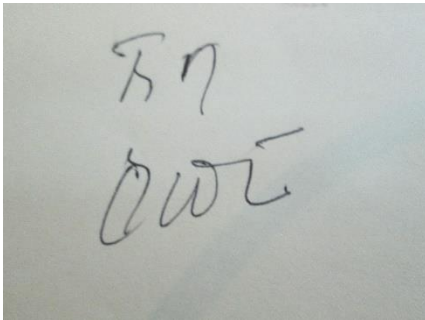
Some words used by workshop participants to describe people with disabilities.



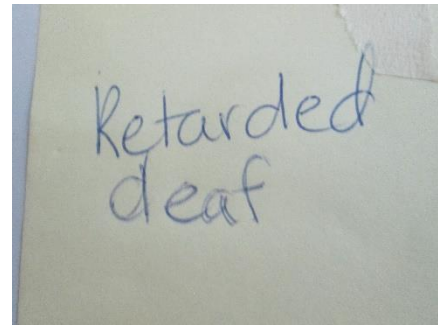
Dumb/dull, blind (Amharic language)



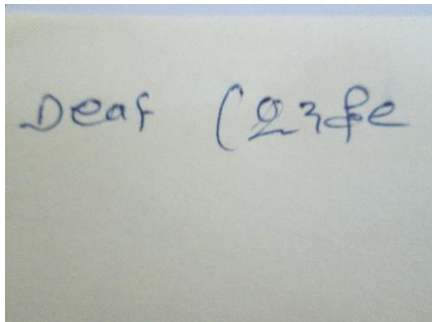
Various terms (English language)



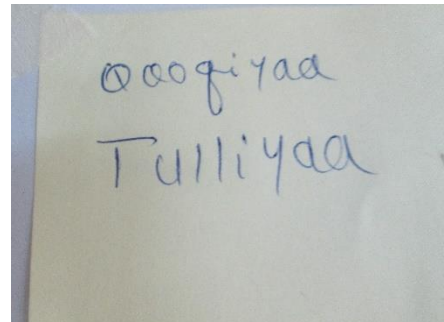
Crippled, blind (Amharic language)



Retarded, deaf (English language)



Deaf (Amharic language)



Blind, deaf (Wolaitta language)

APPENDIX I: IRB Documents



UNIVERSITY OF
MARYLAND

1204 Marie Mount Hall
College Park, MD 20742-5125
TEL 301.405.4212 FAX 301.314.1475 irb@umd.edu
www.umresearch.umd.edu/IRB
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

DATE: March 7, 2014

TO: Nicole Abera, MA
FROM: University of Maryland College Park (UMCP) IRB

PROJECT TITLE: [367315-3] Skills and Practices of Ethiopian Early Childhood Teachers for Teaching Children with Disabilities

REFERENCE #:
SUBMISSION TYPE: Continuing Review/Progress Report

ACTION: APPROVED
APPROVAL DATE: March 7, 2014
EXPIRATION DATE: April 3, 2015
REVIEW TYPE: Expedited Review

REVIEW CATEGORY: Expedited review category # 8 (a) (c)

Thank you for your submission of Continuing Review/Progress Report materials for this project. The University of Maryland College Park (UMCP) IRB has APPROVED your submission. This approval is based on an appropriate risk/benefit ratio and a project design wherein the risks have been minimized. All research must be conducted in accordance with this approved submission.

This submission has received Expedited Review based on the applicable federal regulation.

Please remember that informed consent is a process beginning with a description of the project and insurance of participant understanding followed by a signed consent form. Informed consent must continue throughout the project via a dialogue between the researcher and research participant. Federal regulations require each participant receive a copy of the signed consent document.

Please note that any revision to previously approved materials must be approved by this committee prior to initiation. Please use the appropriate revision forms for this procedure which are found on the IRBNet Forms and Templates Page.

All UNANTICIPATED PROBLEMS involving risks to subjects or others (UPIRSOs) and SERIOUS and UNEXPECTED adverse events must be reported promptly to this office. Please use the appropriate reporting forms for this procedure. All FDA and sponsor reporting requirements should also be followed.

All NON-COMPLIANCE issues or COMPLAINTS regarding this project must be reported promptly to this office.

This project has been determined to be a Minimal Risk project. Based on the risks, this project requires continuing review by this committee on an annual basis. Please use the appropriate forms for this

Teachers' Beliefs and Practices Toward Children with Disabilities

procedure. Your documentation for continuing review must be received with sufficient time for review and continued approval before the expiration date of April 3, 2015.

Please note that all research records must be retained for a minimum of three years after the completion of the project.

- 1 - Generated on IRBNet

If you have any questions, please contact the IRB Office at 301-405-4212 or irb@umd.edu. Please include your project title and reference number in all correspondence with this committee.

This letter has been electronically signed in accordance with all applicable regulations, and a copy is retained within University of Maryland College Park (UMCP) IRB's records.

አዲስ አበባ ዩኒቨርሲቲ
የትምህርትና የባሕርይ ጥናት ኮሌጅ
ዲን ጽ/ቤት
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ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND
BEHAVIORAL STUDIES
Dean's Office
Addis Ababa, ETHIOPIA

April 17, 2013

To Whom It May Concern

Nicole Abera is a PhD candidate of the Department of Special Needs Education at the University of Maryland and Addis Ababa University. She is undertaking research work as part of her study as a Fulbright student. I therefore, kindly request your Organization to welcome and support her to undertake her research work. I would like to express my appreciation for your good cooperation.

With regards



Tirussew Teferra (Laureate Professor)
Dean, College of Education & Behavioral Studies

APPENDIX J: Glossary

- Accommodation:** changes made to instruction and/or assessment intended to help students with disabilities fully access the general education curriculum without changing the instructional content.
- Addis Ababa University (AAU):** The first and largest university in Ethiopia, located in the capital city of Addis Ababa.
- Autism:** a pervasive developmental disorder, characterized by impaired communication, excessive rigidity, and emotional detachment; also considered one of the autism spectrum disorders.
- Children with disabilities (cwnds):** children with any restriction or lack, resulting from an impairment of ability to perform an activity in the manner or within the range considered normal for a human being at his or her age.
- College of Teacher Education (CTE):** one of eleven government-run, post-secondary colleges in Ethiopia where trainees learn to teach students in early childhood, elementary or middle school.
- Early Childhood Education (ECE):** pre-primary education, generally education for children aged 3-5 years of age.
- Education for All (EFA):** a global movement led by UNESCO aiming to meet the learning needs of all children, youth and adults by 2015.
- Cognitive disability:** Intellectual disabilities, also known as developmental delay or mental retardation, are a group of disorders defined by diminished cognitive and adaptive development (Disabled World, 2014).
- Cerebral Palsy:** a general term describing a group of chronic non-progressive neurological symptoms which cause impaired control of movement and which are evident in the first few years of life, usually before age 3. The disorders are induced by damage or faulty development of the motor areas in the brain, disrupting the patient's ability to control movement and posture (Disabled World, 2014).
- Deaf:** having a profound hearing loss, which implies very little or no hearing. They often use sign language for communication (WHO, 2014).
- Differentiation:** providing different students with different avenues to learning (often in the same classroom) in terms of: acquiring content; processing, constructing, or making sense of ideas; and developing teaching materials and assessment measures so that all students within a classroom can learn effectively, regardless of differences in ability (Tomlinson, 2001).
- Disability:** any restriction or lack, resulting from an impairment of ability to perform an activity in the manner or within the range considered normal for a human being (United Nations, 1983).

General education: the program of education that typically developing children should receive, based on standards and evaluated by standards. It is the preferred way of describing its synonym, regular education (About.com, Special Education, 2014).

Inclusion: students with disabilities being educated in regular classrooms with age-appropriate peers

Inclusive classroom: classrooms where children with disabilities and without disabilities are being educated together.

Millennium Development Goals (MDGs): eight international development goals that were established following the Millennium Summit of the United Nations in 2000, following the adoption of the United Nations Millennium Declaration.

Ministry of Education (MoE): The Ethiopian national government agency politically responsible for education.

Special education: education for students with disabilities. (WHO, 2011)

Special needs: any restriction or lack, resulting from an impairment of ability to perform an activity in the manner or within the range considered normal for a human being” (United Nations, 1983). In Ethiopia, special needs is a broader term that includes people with other needs because of disadvantages resulting from gender, ethnicity, poverty, war trauma, or orphan hood.

Special needs education (SNE): a term used by the Ethiopian Ministry of Education to describe Education for people with disabilities and other special needs.

Special schools: a term used by the Ethiopian Ministry of Education to describe schools specially designed to meet the learning needs of students with disabilities and other special needs.

Teachers' beliefs: tacit, often unconsciously held assumptions about students and may be made up of the teachers' experiences knowledge, attitudes and values.

Teachers' practices: methods, procedures or processes that teachers follow when planning or delivering instruction or assessing students.

United Nations (UN): an intergovernmental organization established on 24 October 1945 to promote international co-operation. A replacement for the ineffective League of Nations, the organization was created following the Second World War to prevent another such conflict.

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