

Challenges Faced by Students with Special Educational Needs in Early Childhood Development Centers in Zimbabwe as Perceived by ECD Trainers and Parents

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ABSTRACT The study sought to determine perceived challenges faced by: (a) students with special needs in Early Childhood Development (ECD) centres in Zimbabwe; (b) teachers of students with special needs in ECD centers in Zimbabwe; and (c) to assess how these perceived challenges could be addressed. A survey design was used to assess these perceived challenges. Data were collected using questionnaires, interviews and observations check list. A random sample of 50 ECD teachers (40 female, 10 male) and 20 parents (10 male, 10 female) of children with special needs were used in this study. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics and themes derived from research questions used in this study. The study found that children with special needs in ECD centers were being taught by untrained teachers; these children were used as surrogate mothers at the centers; and the school curriculum was inappropriate; and the physical environment was poor. Students with special needs are learning under very challenging conditions in these centers.