



**THE ROLE OF TOY LIBRARIANS IN GAUTENG PROVINCE IN PROMOTING
INCLUSIVE EDUCATION**

by

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MASTER OF EDUCATION

in the Faculty of Humanities

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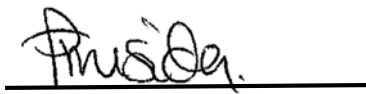
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Declaration

I, Pauline Turusida declare that this research report is my own, unaided work. It is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the Master of Education degree at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, South Africa. It has not been submitted before for any degree or examination at any other university or educational institution.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Pauline Turusida', is written over a solid horizontal line.

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Abstract

Toy libraries are part of early childhood development (ECD) programmes in South Africa. Many ECD programmes do not ensure environments are conducive for learning by young children with diverse needs. This study investigated the role of toy librarians in promoting inclusive education. It is set within a constructivist theoretical framework, which focuses on Piaget and Vygotsky's theories. In order to explore the role of toy librarians that promoted inclusive education, this qualitative research focused on finding out how toy librarians included young children with diverse needs in their early learning programme. Nine toy librarians were purposefully selected from toy libraries in Johannesburg that conducted play sessions with young children. The data obtained was analysed using inductive methods, and the following themes emerged: knowledge about inclusive education; the use of the medical model to identify children with diverse needs; how to implement a curriculum; train parents; and, adapt the environment. Additional sub-themes emerged: teaching; assessment; support; adapting toys; and a lack of knowledge. The overall findings of this study indicated that toy librarians lacked knowledge and skills about inclusive education and how to implement it. Instead, they used a medical model of disability. But more research is needed to investigate how toy librarians could implement differentiated activities in toy libraries.

Key words: Inclusive education, young children, barriers to learning, toy librarians, toy libraries

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List of Abbreviations

CREATE:	Consortium for Research on Educational Access Transitions and Equity
DBE:	Department of Basic Education
DoE:	Department of Education
DHET	Department of Higher Education & Training
DSD:	Department of Social Development
ECD:	Early Childhood Development
IE:	Inclusive Education
EFA:	Education For All
LoLT:	Language of Learning and Teaching
NIECDP:	National Integrated Early Childhood Development Policy
NPO:	Non-profit organisation
PIRLS	Progress in International Reading Literacy Study [
SAQA:	South African Qualifications Authority
SIAS:	Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support
SSA:	Statistics South Africa
SSFASNE:	Salamanca Statement and Framework for Action on Special Needs Education
UDL:	Universal Design for Learning
UNDP:	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO:	United Nations Education and Scientific Organisation
UNICEF:	United Nations Children's Fund
ZPD:	Zone of Proximal Development

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction to the Study

"[A]ll children who have been historically excluded from opportunities for early learning should have an opportunity to participate in a quality age and needs specific early learning programme" (National Integrated Early Childhood Development Policy [NIECDP], 2015, p. 59).

The above quotation is one of the 2030 objectives of the NIECDP in South Africa. This quotation stresses the importance of giving access to education to all children to enable their full participation in it, which is an essential principle of inclusive education. In 2015, the Department of Social Development (DSD) introduced the NIECDP. Toy library services were first highlighted in this policy, although these libraries "have been in existence since 1977 in South Africa" (Poller, 1988, p. 91). Toy libraries render ECD services as defined by the NIECDP, (2015). These services aim to, "promote young children's early emotional, cognitive, sensory, spiritual, moral, physical, social and communication development" (NIECDP, 2015, p.12). This is the reason why toy libraries were recognised as part of ECD programmes (NIECDP, 2015, p.13), while toy librarians were acknowledged as early childhood workers (NIECDP, 2015, p. 14).

In South Africa, toy libraries are mostly run by non-governmental organisations (NGOs). The Department of Higher education and Training [DHET] (2019, p. 3) defines an NGO as "any non-profit, voluntary citizens' group which is organised on a local, national or international level driven by common interest". NGOs run independently, as the government does not interfere in their governance. A survey conducted by the DHET in (2018) indicated that in 2017 there were about nine thousand two hundred NGOs registered in the education sector. The Department of Education [DoE] is an important stakeholder that works with NGOs. According to the DHET survey (2018, p.18), "the NGOs in the education sector contributes to the economy indirectly by providing a strong foundational phase for children's growth and education". This suggests that toy libraries contribute to the children's

learning through their early learning programme. The NIECDP highlights the need to increase access to participation for all young children in ECD programmes. Furthermore, it stresses the importance of providing opportunities for young children "to participate in a quality early learning programme"(NIECDP, 2015, p. 59).

The NIECDP (2015) identifies the Education White Paper 6: Special Needs Education: Building an inclusive education and training system¹ (2001) as one of the critical policies to ensure that all young children have an opportunity to participate in the early childhood programmes, such as toy libraries. This means that everyone who works with young children should be guided by the principles of inclusive education that are highlighted in White Paper 6. The aim is to ensure that barriers to learning are minimised for all children. Toy librarians are included as people who are able to identify and help remove any barriers to learning that young children experience (NIECDP, 2015). This means that the toy librarians ought to ensure that all children meaningfully participate in early learning programmes. Armstrong, Armstrong and Spandagou (2010, p. 124) highlight this idea, when they state: "developing a truly inclusive system begins with the recognition of the importance of early childhood education as a crucial area providing a foundation for future educational success". The recognition of the need to provide access to participation and support in children's early learning is one of the principles of inclusive education in South Africa. Further, the NIECDP (2015, p. 51) stresses that "no child should be excluded from ECD services on the bases of race, gender, sex, marital status of their caregiver, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, language, culture and birth". This means children with diverse needs must be given opportunities to participate in early learning programmes such as toy libraries.

White Paper 6 (2001, p. 58) states that "inclusive education is broader than formal schooling and acknowledge that learning also occurs within formal and informal

¹ In the rest of this report, "Education White Paper 6: Special Needs Education: Building an inclusive education and training system" will be referred to as "White Paper 6".

manners at home and in the community". This idea, that learning happens not only at schools but also at home and in the community, broadened my thinking to consider learning beyond formal schools. Toy libraries, as ECD programmes in South Africa, offer early learning opportunities to young children in an informal way through play-based learning. The National Plan of Action for children in South Africa (2012, p. 19) states that, "the exposure of young children to early childhood development is critical in ensuring that they reach their full potential". Toy libraries are part of early childhood programmes, and they have the potential to enhance young children's learning experiences by addressing their diverse needs. Thus there is a need to investigate the role of toy librarians in toy libraries, because their practices may affect children's learning and development.

Toy librarians are in the process of being recognised as a new profession in South Africa, although there are no formal university qualifications for toy librarians in South Africa. However, there are skills development courses that are offered by NGOs for those who wish to work as toy librarians. Despite no formal qualification for toy librarians, the NIECDP (2015) considers them ECD workers. Thus, toy librarians need to have South African Qualification Authority (SAQA) accredited qualifications for ECD, because they work directly with young children and parents. In addition, the toy librarians are expected to include children with diverse needs in their early learning programme. The NIECDP (2015) requires toy librarians to utilise their toy libraries by selecting educational play materials that will assist young children's early learning and development. The policy states that they should use a range of educational play materials that are age appropriate. In addition, the toy librarians ought to provide guidance as well as instructions on how to use the materials to young children, their parents or caregivers. Okwany and Ebrahim (2019, p. 1) maintain that "ECD programmes are critical in establishing a solid and broad foundation for lifelong learning and for influencing wellbeing throughout the life course". Toy libraries are part of ECD programmes that could provide firm foundations for future learning. However, we do not know enough about the role of toy librarians and how they promote the inclusion of young children with diverse needs.

The NIECDP (2015) and White Paper 6 (2001) are the policies that mandate toy libraries and toy librarians to include all children of diverse needs and to ensure that they participate meaningfully in early learning programmes. The NIECDP (2015) also acknowledges the White Paper 6 on Inclusive Education as a "policy that seeks to establish procedures for early identification and interventions for children with diverse needs as well as for addressing barriers to learning in the education system" (p. 36). For toy librarians to respond to young children's diverse needs, they need to have knowledge about inclusive education and be well equipped in implementing inclusive strategies.

As part of ECD services, toy libraries are mandated by the NIECDP (2015) to provide access to early learning opportunities to all young children, regardless of their race, gender, economic status and ability, which aligns this policy with inclusive education (White Paper 6, 2001). The toy librarian is the person who works with young children in a toy library in a similar way to a teacher in the classroom. This means that toy librarians play a crucial role in promoting inclusive education, as they might work with vulnerable children. Providing access to these children is in line with inclusive principles as outlined in White Paper 6 (2001), but a lack of access to early learning opportunities excludes many young children, as Slee (2011, p. 111) argues that "inclusive education calls on our ability to recognise and understand the mechanics for exclusion". It is important for toy librarians, and everyone working with young children, to understand how many young children are excluded from early learning programmes, so that the toy librarians include these children. I was prompted to carry out this study to understand in greater depth how toy libraries could help to promote inclusive education.

1.2 Background to this Study

South Africa, like many other sub-Saharan countries, has children who are excluded from the education system (Lewin, 2009). In (2009) the Consortium for Research on Educational Access Transitions and Equity [CREATE] carried out a study which was led by Lewin. The findings of the study proposed a model of educational exclusion which revealed how many children are excluded from the

education system. This model is divided into seven zones: Zone zero shows children who have little or no access to organised pre-schooling, and this is zone where toy librarians offer their services. Toy libraries provide early childhood education services through play for children from birth up to the age of six. Lewin's (2009) zones of exclusion indicate that educational exclusion is a nuanced phenomenon, because it has different patterns. Lewin does not only look at access to education, but he also focuses on the quality of education within schools. The latter idea is important, because the quality of education determines children's achievement at school and in life. Morrow (2007) distinguishes between formal access, which is access to schools, and epistemological access, which is access to knowledge. However, formal access does not necessarily translate into epistemological access. For example, young children might have access to early childhood education, but this does not ensure access to knowledge. Morrow (2007) argued that teacher education should equip teachers to enable epistemological access to children. This implies that toy librarians need to be skilled in teaching young children.

For toy librarians to enable epistemological access, they need to be knowledgeable on how young children learn. Lotz-Sisitka (2009, p. 67) argued that "teach teachers discipline based knowledge they are required to teach and differentiate the curriculum". This suggests that toy librarians should have knowledge on how young children learn and develop in order for them to enable young children access to knowledge. In addition to enable epistemological access Lotz-Sisitka (2009, p. 67) suggested that, "teach teachers how to assess learning and provide accurate feedback". This means that toy librarians must be skilled in assessing young children. Furthermore, Lotz-Sisitka (2009, p.67) argued that, "teach teachers how to access and adapt to a changing knowledge environment". This implies that toy librarians' knowledge on ECD should be updated so that they could enable young children gain access to knowledge. Lastly, Lotz-Sisitka (2009, p.67) suggested that, "teach teachers how to use learning support materials systematically in schools". This suggests that toy librarians should be equipped in using resources such as play materials for young children to gain access to knowledge. Toy libraries provide both formal access

and epistemological access. Toy librarians attain formal access when they allow children to attend their programme. Epistemological access is achieved when toy librarians have knowledge and skills on how young children learn and develop, curriculum differentiation, assessing learning and utilise learning and teaching resources. When toy librarians achieve formal access and epistemological access young children will be included in their learning programme. This will enhance young children's participation to the best of their abilities as it is the NIECDP (2015) and White Paper 6 (2001) imperative.

There is strong evidence in South Africa that suggests that children in South Africa have formal access to schools, but they do not have epistemological access. The recent report on the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study [PIRLS](2016) results indicated that, South African children could not read for comprehension at Grade 4 level. South Africa was ranked last out of fifty countries that participated in the study. Donahue and Bornman (2014, p. 2) highlighted: "South African children still perform towards the bottom of the spectrum on both mathematics and reading". The PIRLS' recommendation number 3 stated that, "the importance of early literacy activities should be emphasised to parents and in ECD".

Toy libraries could provide a way of addressing this recommendation, as they foster early literacy activities for young children through play-based learning. In addition, toy libraries also provide early mathematics and scientific skills. In a large-scale international study of school readiness, Duncan, Dowsett, Claessens, Magnuson, Huston, Klebanov, Pagani, Feinstein, Engel, Brooks-Gunn, Sexton, Duckworth and Japel (2007) provide evidence that skills in maths, reading, as well as attention, are important predictors of later academic achievement. In South Africa, toy libraries provide a wide range of early learning skills which includes maths, reading and concentration. This suggests that the skills that are provided in toy libraries have a positive impact on academic success in later grades. The NIECDP (2015, p. 70) recognises that "a toy library is one of the critical services that promote early learning". Although toy libraries may be viewed as promoting early learning, there is a need to know more about the role played

by the toy librarians in promoting inclusive education, which is the reason for this study.

1.3 Problem Statement

In my practice as a training facilitator at an NGO that focuses on early childhood education, I have interacted with toy librarians and they would frequently pose questions that related to inclusive education, when they asked how they may cater for children with diverse needs. These questions prompted me to think more about their role in promoting inclusive education. When I observed the toy librarians at work, it struck me that they were in a strong position to promote inclusive education in South Africa. As a result, I decided to find out how the toy librarians were promoting inclusive education, when they offered play sessions to young children with diverse needs. Toy librarians are crucial role players in preparing young children for formal schooling. However, they need to employ inclusive pedagogies that ensure that all children fully participate in early learning activities. The NIECDP (2015, p. 44) highlighted the issue: "the current provision of early learning and development programmes, mainly provided through the non-profit organisations (NPO) and private sectors, does not ensure environments conducive to learning by young children with diverse needs". This situation is problematic, because if young children's diverse needs are not being met, then this might lead to them being excluded at school, which would defeat the goals of inclusive education. Although inclusive education aims to remove barriers to participation in toy library programmes, we do not know whether the work of toy librarians minimise barriers and maximise participation or promote exclusion. This study's focus is to investigate the role of toy librarians in promoting an inclusive pedagogy.

Although there is abundance of literature on inclusive education at both international and local levels, there is very little that focuses on toy libraries. This means that there is a gap in the literature on inclusive education regarding toy libraries. Stach (2017) has called for more research about toy libraries, which this research aims to address. The roots of toy libraries are grounded in providing access to early learning through play, and the implication is that toy libraries could

be used as a model for inclusive education. Yet, little is known about the role that toy librarians play in promoting inclusive education. This means that a study into their role in promoting inclusive education would be useful. To date there has been limited research on toy libraries in South Africa: I found one unpublished master's dissertation Poller, (1987) and two published peer-reviewed articles from the same author, (1988; 1989). I also found a South African published doctoral thesis by Stach (2017), which looked at the role of toy libraries in the provision of play-based learning opportunities for young children. However, I could not find any evidence-based literature relating to toy libraries and inclusive education in South Africa, which means that this study might make an important contribution to the body of knowledge about inclusive education and toy libraries in this context.

1.4 Rationale of Study

Many studies on inclusive education have been conducted in South Africa; however, there is no study that has focused on inclusive education and an ECD programme like toy library. A previous study by Stach (2017) focused on how toy libraries provides play-based opportunities for young children; it was not set in the context of inclusive education. Studies in toy libraries may address access to early learning opportunities for young children. However, the role played by toy librarians in promoting inclusive education with children in toy libraries focuses on the teaching methods and practices that addresses the diverse needs of all children. The NIECDP (2015) put forward a long-term goal by 2030 to have included all young children in quality early childhood development programme. Objective number 3 under this goal states that, "all children who have been historically excluded from opportunities for early learning, must be given opportunities to participate in a quality age and needs specific early learning programme"(NIECDP, 2015, p. 59). To achieve this objective requires commitment from everyone who works with young children especially toy librarians who meet young children. This study was therefore worth undertaking taking into consideration targets the roles of toy librarians in promoting inclusive education. It was therefore, important to investigate the roles of toy librarians in including children with diverse needs in their early learning programme. There is

lack of knowledge on how toy librarians include young children with diverse needs in their programme. Thus, this study aims to fill this gap in South African research.

1.5 Purpose Statement

The purpose of this study was to examine the roles of toy librarians in promoting inclusive education. The general roles of a toy librarian is known, however the roles of a toy librarian in promoting inclusive education is not known. Therefore, this study seeks to investigate the role of toy librarians in promoting inclusive education focusing mainly on the role of toy librarians as found in the following: the White Paper 6 (2001); the NIECDP (2015); the literature on inclusive education; and, the developmental theories of Piaget and Vygotsky.

The findings of this research could serve three purposes:

- investigate how toy librarians define inclusive education;
- explore how toy librarians create inclusive environments for learning;
- describe how toy librarians view their role in early childhood education from an inclusive perspective.

1.6 Aim of the Study

This research aims:

- To expand the body of literature on inclusive practices in South Africa;
- To provide an understanding of the role of toy libraries in the South African context, which is an area where very little research exists;
- To provide additional insight into the role of toy librarians in South Africa.

1.7 Research Question

The main research question that guided this study was:

What is the role of toy librarians in promoting inclusive education in the Gauteng province?

In order to answer this question, the following three sub-questions were formulated:

- How do toy librarians define inclusive education?

- How do toy librarians create an inclusive environment for learning?
- How do toy librarians view their role in early childhood from an inclusive perspective?

1.8 Delimitation of Study

This study was conducted in the broader Johannesburg area, which is in the Gauteng province. The toy librarians who participated in this study worked in toy libraries that were found in Soweto, Orange Farm, Alexandra, Diepsloot, Germiston, Lenasia, Westbury and Craighall. The study was confined to toy libraries in these specific areas because the librarians conducted play sessions with young children from impoverished backgrounds. In Chapter 4, the contexts in which the study was carried out will be discussed in detail. The research focus was to investigate the role of toy librarians that promoted an inclusive pedagogy in nine toy libraries.

1.9 Breakdown of Chapters

Chapter 1 was an introduction to this study. It discussed the background to the study, and it presented a brief overview of the study's context. This chapter identified the knowledge gap that the study aimed to examine, by clearly outlining its research aims and objectives.

Chapter 2 examines critically the relevant literature related to the research topic. It discusses the theoretical and conceptual framework that guides this study. Finally, this chapter aims to define relevant concepts for this research topic.

Chapter 3 discusses the paradigmatic perspective that informs this study. It also presents a qualitative research design, and it describes the data collection tools that were used. Furthermore, it describes how the data was analysed, and the issue of trustworthiness is addressed in detail.

Chapter 4 presents the data obtained through questionnaires and interviews in the form of tables, charts and graphs. It elaborates on the detailed findings and provides a synopsis about each of the toy librarians who participated in this study.

Chapter 5 analyses and discusses the findings of the research. The chapter matches the themes that emerged to the research questions, and it discusses how the research question was answered.

Chapter 6 gives a summary of research findings. It highlights the recommendations that are related to the findings, discusses the implications of this research for future study as well as the limitations of the study.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This study focuses on toy libraries and the role of toy librarians in promoting inclusive education. Research on toy libraries and the role of toy librarians adds to the scholarly literature on inclusive education in South Africa. Since this research is viewed through the lens of inclusion, I begin by discussing the ideas that inform inclusive education: exclusion; marginalisation; barriers to learning; inclusive pedagogy; differentiation; the social model; and the medical model of disabilities. Next, I discuss two policies that are related to the study, the White Paper 6 and the NIECDP (2015). Then, I explore some vital concepts found in ECD, namely, the importance of play, play materials, toy libraries and toy librarians. Further, concepts relevant to this study are clarified, and the conceptual and theoretical framework used in this study is explained. Finally, a summary of the chapter is provided.

2.2 Inclusive Education

Inclusive education is a contested term, as there are many definitions which inform it. For the purpose of this study, I use the following definition of inclusive education: "maximising the participation of all children in the culture and the curricula of educational institutions and uncovering and minimising barriers to learning" (Department of Education [DoE], 2001, p. 16). This definition of inclusive education aligns with Booth and Ainscow (2002, p. 3) who further defines inclusive education as "a process of increasing participation and decreasing exclusion from the culture, community and curricula of mainstream schools". Thus inclusive education not only goes beyond giving access to all children, but it also ensures that all children, irrespective of age, gender, ethnicity, language, class, disability or HIV status, are able to participate meaningfully in all learning environments. Inclusive education is also about increasing all children's participation and minimising exclusion. Nind (2014, p. 527) argues that "in inclusive education, the same term is used across a range of disciplinary and national context to describe something quite different". However, in South Africa inclusive education is perceived as a move away from the apartheid educational

system, which segregated children according to race, language, ability and socio-economic status. Thus, inclusive education is strongly grounded in human rights principles and it promotes social justice (DoE, 2001). Corbett (2001, p. 12) suggests that "inclusive education is not a merger of special and regular education". By combining children with physical impairments and those who are not physically impaired, this does not mean that inclusive education is being practised. Instead, inclusive education goes beyond integrating children with and without impairments together. It means ensuring that all children with diverse needs are able to participate to the best of their abilities in all learning environments.

Inclusive education may mean different things in different contexts. Different countries perceive inclusive education in various ways. Most countries understand inclusive education as a transformation in education that accommodates children with diverse needs into the education system. It is concerned with how we respond to diversity and engage every child in meaningful participation in their education. Inclusive education acts to bring children who are excluded into the education system, by including them so that they meaningfully and actively participate in the education system. White Paper 6 (2001, p. 5) highlights that, "relevant principles that are integral to an inclusive education system are justice; human rights; a healthy environment; participation; social integration and redress; equal and equitable access to education; community responsiveness; and, cost effectiveness". Although the White Paper 6 does not specifically mention toy libraries, the NIECDP (2015, p. 12) recognises toy libraries as ECD programmes that offers early learning opportunities to vulnerable children. The principles of inclusive education highlighted in White Paper 6 were also adopted by the NIECDP. In South Africa, many young children under the age of six are excluded from participation in early learning programmes. Statistics South Africa [SSA] (2016, p. 67) revealed that "in 2016 close to half of the children aged 0–6 in the lower income quintiles households did not participate in any learning activity". These children live in environments that affect their survival, protection and development in negative ways. ECD programmes, such as toy libraries, may be used to better the life chances of these children (National

Curriculum Framework [NCF], 2015, p. 13). Toy librarians should give opportunities to these young children for meaningful participation by removing the barriers that impedes their participation.

2.3 What Is Exclusion?

Booth (as cited in Kearney, 2011, p. 11) defines exclusion as "the process of decreasing the participation of pupils in the cultures and curricula of mainstream schools". Exclusion goes beyond mainstream schools, as it may start before children even start formal schooling. An UNESCO Policy Guidelines on Inclusion in Education (2009, p. 7) highlights that "exclusion can start very early in life". Furthermore, this report states that a holistic lifelong vision of education is important. It acknowledges the importance of early childhood education (ECE) programmes, as these programmes aim to do the following: to improve children's wellbeing; to prepare them for primary school; and, to give them a better chance of succeeding once they are in school. Toy libraries may play a part by including young children who are excluded from the education system through their early learning programme. This is because when young children are included in early learning programmes, then they benefit from the process. According to UNICEF's global report (2019, p. 15), "attending an early childhood education programme is one of the strongest predictors for supporting a child's readiness for school, regardless of household or national income level". Excluding young children in early learning programmes puts their lives at risk of failing in the early grades at school, because they will not be ready to cope with the challenges in school. Toy libraries aim to ensure that all young children fully participate in early education programmes in order to minimise exclusion. The aims of inclusive education are to minimise barriers that hinder young children from participation and to give them opportunities to develop to their full potential. This means that both inclusive education and toy libraries have similar aims. The inclusion of young children in early learning programme helps to curb their exclusion later in schools. The concept of exclusion is closely linked to marginalisation, and this latter concept is discussed in the following section.

2.4 Marginalisation

Since the goal of inclusive education is to include the vulnerable and the marginalised, it is important to understand the meaning of marginalisation. The United Nations Development Programme (as cited in Misseou, 2012, p. 11) defines marginalisation as "the state of being considered unimportant, undesirable, unworthy, insignificant and different resulting in inequality, unfairness, deprivation and enforced lack of access to mainstream power". This study uses this definition of marginalisation, because it includes pertinent aspects that leads to many young children being marginalised. The roots of educational marginalisation are diverse and linked. The UNESCO report (2010, p. 8) maintains that the causes of marginalisation range from "poverty, ethnicity, religion, physical disability, gender, race, minority groups, curriculum, structures and policies". In ECD, the learners experience marginalisation in the following ways: when they are unfairly treated; deprived of opportunities to participate in learning activities; and, when they lack access to early learning experiences due to poverty. The NIECDP (2015, p. 14) stressed that "children living in poverty are vulnerable" therefore they would be at a high risk of being marginalised. Toy libraries work with these children from poor communities.

Grantham-McGregor (2016, p. 1) stated that "about forty-three percent of children younger than 5 years in low-income and middle-income countries are at risk of not reaching their developmental potential because of extreme poverty". South Africa is among those low-income and middle-income countries. Statistics South Africa [SSA] (2016, p. 67) stated that "in 2016 close to half of the children aged 0–6 in the lower income quintiles households did not participate in any learning activity". This showed that many young children, whose families were poor, did not have access to any early learning programme. In order to overcome poverty, South Africa needed to include young children from poor communities in early learning programmes. Research conducted by Gertler, Heckman, Pinto, Zanolini, Vermeersch, Walker, Chang and Grantham-McGregor (2014) on labour market returns indicated that there were long term outcomes for early childhood programmes based on low-income and middle-income countries. A programme

that was run twenty-five years ago that aimed to, "increase cognitive development of children in Jamaica resulted in a significant, twenty-five percent increase in average adult earnings"(Gertler et al, 2014, p.1). Jamaica and South Africa are categorised as low-to-middle-income countries by the World Bank. This suggests that by including young children in early learning programmes, such as toy libraries, it might be able to minimise their potential marginalisation later in life.

2.5 Education White Paper 6 Special Needs Education: Building an Inclusive Education and Training System

The demise of the apartheid era in South Africa brought about some changes in the education system. Key education policies were transformed in order to redress the inequalities and injustices that were created by the apartheid government. The transformation of the education policies was also a result of South Africa's need to conform to international educational practices. One of the policies that was developed by the new South African democratic government was called *White Paper 6: Special Needs Education: Building an inclusive education and training system* (DoE, 2001). This policy helped to provide a framework which aimed to change and develop inclusive education in a systematic way (Walton, 2010). During the apartheid era, children in South African schools received their schooling via segregated schools, which was based on race. However, the White Paper 6 (2001, p. 36) stated that "the segregation of learners on the basis of race was extended to incorporate segregation on the basis of disability". This resulted in many African children with disabilities having no access to education whatsoever. Black African learners attended poorly resourced schools while white learners attended richly resourced schools. One of the reasons for this inequality was that the apartheid government spent more money on schools that white learners attended and less on schools which black African learners attended (White Paper 6, 2001, p. 9). The White Paper 6 was introduced to address the imbalances in the education system, but this paper prioritised children living with disabilities, because they were the most vulnerable. It also focused on including every child in the education system. Children from poor communities and less privileged communities were also

considered to be vulnerable. As a philosophy, the concept of inclusive education in the South African context embraced the democratic values of equality, human rights and the recognition of diversity, which aimed to move away from the apartheid system of education (White Paper 6, 2001, p. 5). The White Paper 6 on Inclusive Education shifted from the medical model of disability to a social model. In the following section, I discuss both models of disability.

2.6 Medical and Social Model of Disability

Nel, Nel and Hugo (2016, p. 15) argued that "learners who experienced barriers to learning were categorised according to their medical conditions during the apartheid era". This gave rise to the medical model which identified the difficulties and deficiencies within learners. Learners were diagnosed and placed in specialised environment based on this diagnosis. Nel, Nel and Hugo (2016) also argued that "learners had to follow a special curriculum and learners received intervention from specialised professionals". Learners were categorised and separated to receive this special curriculum. According to the White Paper 6 (2001, p. 7), "the medical model did not consider factors outside the learner, such as the socio-economic conditions of the learner, language, teaching methods and the home environment which can be barriers to learning". Nel, Nel and Hugo (2016, p. 15) further highlighted that "with the introduction of inclusive education, the focus shifted from locating barriers within the learner to the removal of stumbling blocks found within the learners' society". This gave rise to the social model of disability. Inclusive education in South Africa shifted from viewing barriers to learning as located within the learner to viewing barriers to learning as located within the society. Nel, Nel & Hugo, (2016, p. 15) further stated that "the social model of disability focused on a learner's strengths, and it took the environment and communities into consideration too". This social model of disability viewed barriers to learning as emanating from the social environment. The White Paper 6 (2001, p.12) used the term "barriers to learning" when it referred to challenges that children faced in learning environments, and I will discuss this concept further in the following section.

2.7 Barriers to Learning

The White Paper 6 (2001, p. 12) used the term "barriers to learning" as a way of identifying exclusionary factors that might hinder children from learning. In addition, Nel, Nel and Hugo (2016, p. 21) defined "barriers to learning" in the following way: "factors that may cause a breakdown in learning". These barriers might be conditions within a person (intrinsic barriers) or conditions outside a person (extrinsic barriers). Furthermore, the White Paper 6 (2001, p. 18) highlighted that "these barriers may arise from biological factors and social factors". By minimising these barriers, it created an inclusive learning environment. This meant that a toy librarian would need to be aware of these barriers, so that he or she might work towards decreasing them, in order to include all children. In the following section I will discuss the NIECDP (2015).

2.8 The National Integrated Early Childhood Development Policy [NIECDP] 2015

The NIECDP policy was developed in line with inclusive policy principles of equality, human rights and recognition of diversity, hence it stressed the importance of providing access to early learning opportunities for young children with diverse needs. This policy put the child at the centre of learning, and it stressed the role of adults such as toy librarians, in providing early learning opportunities to young children. NIECDP (2015, p. 7) highlighted that "adults who work with young children must provide opportunities for early learning and development to diverse children". This suggested that toy librarians should provide such opportunities. In addition, the NIECDP (2015, p. 7) stated that "it is committed to ensure that no child is left behind". Thus, the NIECDP (2015) stressed the importance of providing quality early learning to young children with diverse needs.

2.9 The Role of Toy Librarians

The role of toy librarians is to promote children's learning through play and to ensure that young children reach their full potential. This means that a toy librarian needs to accommodate the needs of all children irrespective of their

gender, race, socio-economic status and ability. According to the NIECDP (2015, p. 61), toy librarians as ECD workers are expected to do the following:

- Provide a safe and secure environment;
- Conduct play sessions with young children with diverse needs;
- Select developmentally appropriate educational play materials;
- Guide and instruct parents, ECD service providers and young children on how use the play materials;
- Demonstrate how to make toys;
- Lend toys to parents, ECDs service providers and young children.

This showed that the expectations of toy librarians as articulated in the NIECDP were in line with an inclusive pedagogy, which is the next concept to be discussed.

2.10 Inclusive Pedagogy

An inclusive pedagogy is intended to provide equal opportunities for learning and participation in non-discriminatory learning environments. Spratt and Florian (2015, p. 89) defined an inclusive pedagogy as "a method of teaching that responds to learner diversity in ways that avoid the marginalisation of some learners in the community of the classroom". Toy librarians are in a position to employ an inclusive pedagogy when they respond to the young children's diverse needs. An inclusive pedagogy entails changing the curriculum, teaching methods, structures, cultures and practices in order to meet children's diversity. I have derived the following characteristics of an inclusive pedagogy from Spratt and Florian (2015, p. 92):

- "It accounts for difference in children, we do not teach for most or give something special to some;
- It extends what is readily available to cater for all;
- It focuses on what is to be learnt instead of who is learning;
- It means differentiating instructions;
- It happens in a non-discriminatory learning environments".

Toy librarians need to commit to an inclusive pedagogy to ensure that all young children are included and participated actively in an early learning programme. Florian and Rouse (2009, p. 599) argued that "an inclusive pedagogy was concerned with how teachers respond to the diverse needs of all children". In the following section, I discuss how toy librarians could employ an inclusive pedagogy.

2.11 Toy Librarians' Roles in an Inclusive Pedagogy.

In this study, I have looked at how toy librarians could employ an inclusive pedagogy when conducting play sessions with young children. I have chosen to use the above principles of an inclusive pedagogy as articulated by Spratt and Florian (2015), because they align with the roles of toy librarians as indicated in the NIECDP (2015). There were many roles of toy librarians that might be considered inclusive, although it was impossible to list all of them, as there were too many. However, I have selected the roles of toy librarians, which were informed by the principles of an inclusive pedagogy. This means that toy librarians need to change the following: their attitudes towards inclusive education; teaching methods; curricula; and, the environment. These changes aimed to meet the needs of all children. This study's aim is not to theorise the role of toy librarians. Instead, inclusive pedagogy is used as a tool to guide this study, and it assisted with the gathering of evidence. The table on the following page indicates the principles I used to guide my study as well as to narrow the focus on the roles of toy librarians:

Principles of an inclusive pedagogy Spratt and Florian (2015)	The Role of a toy librarian (NIECDP, 2015)
Changing attitudes	Having the right attitudes towards inclusive education
Creating a non-discriminatory enabling environment learning environment through the curriculum: Teaching, assessment, support	Utilising appropriate teaching methods for young children Implementing a curriculum-Teaching, Assessment and Support

Table 1 Principles of an inclusive pedagogy

2.12 Changing Attitudes

In considering whether the roles of toy librarians were inclusive or not, an important factor to consider was the toy librarians' attitude towards inclusion. Loreman, Deppeler and Harvey (2010, p. 39) argued that "our attitudes affect our thoughts, feelings and what we do". If toy librarians reacted negatively to children with diverse needs, then this would create a barrier to learning. The DoE (2005, p. 17) stated that "negative and harmful attitudes towards difference in our society remain critical barriers to learning and development". If there was to be a successful implementation of inclusive education in toy libraries, then toy librarians would be required to have a positive attitude towards this practice. According to Donahue and Bornman (2014, p. 5), "attitudes and value affect the meaningful participation of children in schools and communities". Thus, toy librarians were required to have a positive attitude to mitigate marginalisation of young children. Dapudong (2014, p. 1) stated that "the attitude of teachers towards educating learners with diverse needs has been put forward as a decisive factor in making schools more inclusive". This idea could also apply to toy librarians, because the toy librarians' attitude towards teaching young children with diverse needs determines how successful they are in making toy libraries inclusive.

2.13 Teaching Methods

Toy librarians should employ teaching methods that ensured that all children fully participate to the best of their abilities, as the White Paper 6 (2001, p. 7)

highlighted that "inclusive education calls for a change in teaching methods". Teaching methods might be a barrier to learning, when they are inflexible. Young children could fail to participate meaningfully in early learning activities, because the toy librarian might adopt a teaching method, which did not address the children's diverse needs.

2.14 Curriculum Differentiation

Toy librarians were expected to employ the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) when working with young children, as the NIECDP (2015) clearly stated that the programmes should follow the UDL principles. Closely linked to the concept of UDL is the idea of curriculum differentiation, but Loreman, Deppeler and Harvey (2010) made a distinction between the two: "universal design for learning refers to the design of learning activities in such a way as to ensure all learners are able to access them, while differentiated instruction mostly refers to the implementation of this plan utilising different teaching techniques" (p. 141). This suggested that curriculum differentiation was one of the strategies used in UDL, designed to meet young children's diverse needs. Loreman, Deppeler and Harvey (2010, p. 141) further argued that "when planning for instruction in inclusive classroom you must bear in mind not only what must be taught but also how it should be taught". This showed that differentiation should take both the content and the teaching methods into account. In addition, the National Strategy on Screening, Identification, Assessment and Support [SIAS] (DBE, 2014 p. viii) stated that "curriculum differentiation could be done at the level of content, teaching methodologies, assessment and learning environment". When curriculum differentiation is implemented in toy libraries, then toy librarians differentiate in the following ways: what they teach; how they teach; the way they assess; and, the environment in which young children learn.

Differentiation could also mean multilevel teaching whereby children would access content at different levels. Sapon-Shevin (2007, p. 93) argued that "when teachers thoughtfully implement multilevel, multimodality curriculum and pedagogy, students at all levels have the opportunity to engage meaningfully with

a full range of academic topics". Thus, children would not be given the same task, but they might learn the same content at different levels. This meant that children would be given activities that they could achieve. Walton (2016, p. 139) emphasised that "differentiation is one way of enabling learners to show what they can do, rather than what they cannot". This approach was important, as it focused on the strengths of the learners rather than their weaknesses, and should lead to young children experiencing success. This is because activities are planned to suit the children's level of ability. Although curriculum differentiation has many benefits for children, Walton (2016, p. 141) argued that "differentiation focuses on difference and preoccupation with differences obscures ways in which children are the same". Paying attention to differences might lead to separation of children which could also lead to segregation and marginalisation. Despite this problem of differentiation, Liasidou (2012) emphasises that the concept of educational differentiation holds the key in order to accommodate children's diversity in informed and effective ways. In order to address the diverse needs of young children, toy librarians would need to employ a differentiated approach in their teaching, so that all young children could participate meaningfully in their early learning programmes.

2.15 The Curriculum

According to White Paper 6 (2001, p. 19), "the curriculum is one of the most significant barriers to learning". The curriculum included the following components: what is being taught; how it is being taught; the pace of teaching; the language used; and, assessment methods (White Paper 6, 2001). If there is inflexibility in any of the curriculum components mentioned, then this might cause barriers to learning. UNESCO's Policy Guidelines on Inclusion in Education (2009, p. 18) stated that "an inclusive curriculum addresses the child's cognitive, emotional, social and creative development". This meant that an inclusive curriculum aims to develop the whole child. An inclusive curriculum plays an important role in promoting human rights and catering for diverse needs of all children. The NCF (2015, p. 17) suggested that "adults need to build children's rights into all activities they offer when working with and for children". This

indicated that toy librarians needed to promote children's rights in all toy library activities. All activities that happen in the toy library should consider young children's gender, culture and language background. Flexibility in the use of language is required when working with young children from diverse cultures, because language as a component of the curriculum might be a barrier to learning if young children misunderstand what was being communicated.

UNESCO's Policy Guidelines on Inclusion in Education (2009, p. 18) further stated that "multilingual approaches in education, in which language is recognised as an integral part of children's cultural identity, can act as a source of inclusion". Young children who attend toy libraries programmes should be given opportunities to learn in their mother tongue, because there is a general consensus among researchers that young children learn best in their mother tongue. Awopetu (2016, p. 59) argued that "one of the appropriate ways of teaching and learning in early childhood is the correctly selected medium of instruction and communication". By application, this suggested that toy librarians should use mother tongue instruction too.

Furthermore, the UNESCO's Policy Guidelines on Inclusion in Education (2009, p. 20) stated that "a child-centred curriculum moves away from rote learning and towards greater emphasis on hands-on, experience-based, active and cooperative learning". This indicated that toy librarians should ensure the implementation of a child-centred curriculum. The National Curriculum Framework [NCF] (2015, p. 16) stated that "adults needs to make sure that young children have opportunities to learn through play also called active learning", which is a similar idea to that expressed in UNESCO's policy document. Thus, a toy librarian would need to understand all aspects of the curriculum in order to implement an inclusive pedagogy. In the following section, an inclusive learning environment is discussed.

2.16 An Inclusive Learning Environment

An inclusive learning environment should encourage the participation of all children to prepare them to function in the world. Nel, Nel and Hugo (2016, p. 36)

argued that "learning in an inclusive environment should prepare learners to function well in a diverse society and address marginalisation of certain individuals". Equity and equality are two elements that are important in an inclusive learning environment, because "equity addresses marginalisation of certain individuals while equality stresses on treating everyone with equal respect" (Nel, Nel & Hugo, 2016, p. 36). This meant that a toy librarian should create an inclusive environment that addressed issues of marginalisation, where everyone would be treated with respect. The UNESCO's Policy Guidelines on Inclusion in Education (2009, p.15) stated that "an inclusive environment ought to encourage the participation of the children themselves". This suggested that a toy library should be an environment which was child-friendly and responsive to all the children's needs. In the following section, I discuss the Policy on Screening Identification and Support, Department of Basic Education [DBE] (2014).

2.17 Policy on Screening Identification and Support

All young children needed support to maximise their participation in the learning process. In 2014, the DBE developed the SIAS policy to assist in identifying and assessing barriers that many learners face. This policy guided everyone who worked with children on how to identify barriers to learning and how to provide support for them. Since toy librarians worked with children who might have diverse needs, they should be able to identify barriers to learning and development that might hinder those children's development. In addition, they should be able to assess the children's learning and development. Finally, they ought to provide support to those young children who need it. In the following section, I discuss assessment.

2.18 Assessment

Assessment is an important component of inclusive education. According to Nel, Nel and Lebeloane (2016, p. 59), "if barriers are identified too late in a child's life, they could lead to academic backlogs and learning difficulties". Assessment was the process that enabled toy librarians to identify barriers to learning and development. The National Protocol on Assessment [NPA] (2012, p. 3) defined

assessment as "a process of collecting, analysing and interpreting information to assist teachers, parents and other stakeholders in making decisions about the progress of learners". Information about a child would be gathered and analysed in order to plan for a child's support. The SIAS policy (2014, p. 9) stated that "assessment needs to identify barriers to learning, with the purpose of improving the teaching and learning process". Therefore, toy librarians should assess young children who attended their programme, so that the toy librarians could decide on the kind of support the children required. SIAS (2014, p. 9) further stated that "assessment must be fair, bias-free and sensitive to gender, race, cultural background and ability". When toy librarians assessed young children, the assessment method must be fair and sensitive. Since this study focuses on an ECD programme in the next section, I discuss ECD from an international perspective.

2.19 ECD: An International Perspective

This study focused on one of the ECD programmes in South Africa, namely toy libraries. However, it is also important to discuss ECD from a global perspective. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) Global report (2019, p. 6) indicated that "50 per cent of pre-primary-age children around the world – at least 175 million are not enrolled in pre-primary education". This huge number helped to enlighten all stakeholders in ECD on the urgency of implementing ECD programmes, especially as pre-primary education is a component of ECD. According to UNICEF (2019, p. 8), ECD refers to "all the important policies and programmes required to support the healthy development of young children from birth to 8 years of age, including health, nutrition, protection, early learning opportunities and responsive caregiving". Globally, the recognition of the importance of ECD has gained momentum. This is because early childhood is seen as a gateway to achieve the Sustainable Developmental Goals (SDG).

In 2015, 193 countries agreed to the seventeen United Nations (UN) sustainable development goals. These goals set out to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure prosperity for all by 2030 (UN, 2015). Poverty was identified as a major

stumbling block to quality early learning. Goal number four is directed to education and its objective is to give quality ECD to all young children. In the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, under objective 4.2 (2015, p. 21) it stated that "by 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education". By investigating the roles of toy librarians in promoting inclusive education, this study sought to promote the right to education of young children and their inclusion in ECD programmes. Access to quality early childhood services, such as toy libraries, is a fundamental right. If this right is achieved, then it could assist in achieving other SDGs, such as the alleviation of poverty, hunger, health issues, quality education, gender issues and other inequalities. As this study focused on an ECD programme in South Africa, namely, toy libraries, I discuss ECD in South Africa in the next section.

ECD: South Africa

South Africa was a signatory to the SDG in 2015, so it has also prioritised ECD. This was shown in the NIECDP (2015, p. 86), which stressed that "the early childhood development is recognised as a national priority because it advances the rights of the child, education and promotes economic productivity". In South Africa, ECD was regarded as a broad term, because it included references to the policies and practices that focused on the development of children from birth to 9 years of age (White Paper 5, 2001). ECD's focus has been directed towards health, nutrition and early learning of young children. Among researchers in South Africa and internationally, there was agreement that early childhood learning laid the foundation for all future learning and success in later life (Richter 2016; Mbarathi, Mthembu & Diga (2016). Liddell & Rae (2001) carried out a longitudinal study in South Africa which revealed that early academic achievement was a strong predictor for smooth progression in school. In addition, Moloi and Chetty (2010, p. 82) study on the conditions of schooling and the quality education revealed that "children with two or three years preschool exposure perform well on reading and mathematics tests conducted in later schooling phases". This suggests that exposure to early learning programmes has a positive impact on

school achievement. The results of these studies corroborate with international studies conducted in Guatemala by Behrman, Hoddinott, Maluccio, Soler-Hampejsek, Emily, Behrman, Martorell, Ramírez-Zea and Stein (2014), which indicated that exposure to early childhood learning has a positive impact on adult cognitive skills. As mentioned before, ECD programmes were the strongest predictors of a child's readiness for school, regardless of household or national income level (UNICEF, 2019). Van Zyl (2011, p. 83) stated that "school readiness indicates a level of readiness in totality for a learner to enter the formal education situation".

Young children should be ready in all aspects, such as the physical, cognitive, language, social and emotional domains when they start formal schooling. Bruwer (2016, p. 188) stated that "school readiness also includes schools and communities that are ready to support beginners with diverse educational needs". In addition, Ritcher (2016, p. 1) indicated that "ECD programmes will enable young children to survive and thrive, by becoming developmentally ready to reap the full benefits of education when they reach school age". Furthermore, Heckman's (2016) research showed that "high quality birth-to-five programmes for disadvantaged children can deliver a 13% per year economic gains". Thus ECD programmes, such as toy libraries, would not only have short-term benefits for young children, but also there could be long term economic benefits. As mentioned earlier in this section, ECD has been prioritised in South Africa, because of its future benefit on economic productivity. Therefore, investigating the role of toy librarians in promoting inclusive education should be of paramount importance, as it might enlighten us on how young children were included during this sensitive period. In the next section, I discuss the meaning of play.

2.20 What is Play?

Weisberg, Zosh, Hirsh-Pasek and Golinkoff (2013, p. 3) stated that "play has blurry edges and takes many forms therefore those who study it wrestle with how best to define it". There are many definitions of play, which makes it difficult to define. However, in this study I follow a definition of play that is child-centred:

Pres and Thornton (2017, p. 4) defined play as "any behaviour, activity or process initiated, controlled and structured by children themselves, it takes place whenever and wherever opportunities arise". Furthermore, according to UNICEF (2019, p. 86), "ECD programmes usually employ a play-based, child-centred approach and active learning techniques in order to create a nurturing learning environment". Toy libraries are ECD programmes, but they differ in the way they teach from primary schools. Although play is non-compulsory and driven by intrinsic motivation, toy librarians should guide young children during play and prepare environments that would be conducive to play. Furthermore, the NIECDP (2015) expected toy librarians to implement a play-based pedagogy.

The importance of play

The NCF (2015, p. 16) stated that "young children learn when they play", and research has indicated that play benefited young children in many ways. An example, Guirguis (2018, p. 45) argued that "during play children learn to interact with one another in ways that are acceptable in social contexts established by society, culture, and history". Young children learnt behaviours that were socially accepted in their culture during play. In addition, Weisberg, Zosh, Hirsh-Pasek and Golinkoff (2013, p. 39) emphasised that "play benefits children's language development because it incorporates many of the socially interactive and cognitive elements known to enhance language skills". Guirguis (2018, p. 47) also mentioned that "children practice different forms self-regulatory skills during play". The benefits of play providing regulatory skills were based on Vygotsky's (1978) idea that young children learnt through social interactions with knowledgeable adults and peers. Furthermore, Piaget in Bergen (2015, p. 16) maintained that "peer play in games fosters children's moral development". The use of play could help to develop young children in the following domains: physical, social, emotional, language and cognitive. In early intervention disciplines, specialists, such as occupational therapists, used play to assist children with developmental delays.

Toy libraries

There is no universal definition of toy libraries, as different countries have various definitions of toy libraries. In this study, a definition used in the NIECDP (2015) was adopted, because it fitted the South African context. The NIECDP (2015, p. 70) defined toy libraries as "early childhood programme that provide access to developmentally appropriate educational play materials". The toy libraries' services might be extended to include play sessions, individual lending of play materials to parents for their children, or lending play materials to other early childhood service providers (NIECDP, 2015).

Toy librarian

The NIECDP (2015, p.14) saw a toy librarian as "a person qualified or experienced in working in a toy library to assist different early childhood development service providers, parents or children". This definition implied that a toy librarian was a professional, who should have skills and expertise in providing guidance and instructions on how to use the play materials to children and adults. The NCF (2015, p. 17) emphasised that "adults need to provide opportunities for young children to learn", and a toy librarian should provide such opportunities in an inclusive manner.

2.21 The Link between Toy Librarians and Inclusive Education

According to the White Paper 6 (2001), inclusive education highlighted the need to remove barriers to participation for all children with diverse needs. Teachers were required to acquaint themselves with practices and strategies that enabled them to teach inclusively. Toy librarians worked in early learning programmes and they met children with diverse needs, therefore they also needed to be acquainted with practices and strategies that promoted the inclusion of children with diverse needs. This could allow them to identify and to intervene in a range of learning needs for all young children in their early years, thus they would be able to assist in the building of a quality education system.

2.22 Conceptual Framework

Ravitch and Riggon (2012, p. 10) stated that "a conceptual framework seeks to identify presumed relationships among key factors or constructs to be studied". This suggested that a conceptual framework was the researcher's explanation of how the research problem could be explored. In addition, Imenda (2014, p. 193) argued that "a conceptual framework is created by the researcher from a variety of conceptual or theoretical perspectives". This meant that the researcher selected essential concepts and theories that lays the foundation of the study. This study's research problem is: What is the role of toy librarians in promoting inclusive education? The theories of Piaget and Vygotsky together with the following concepts play, inclusive education, barriers to learning, toy libraries and ECD forms the conceptual framework of this study. These theories and concepts will guide the researcher to address the problem in an integrated way.

2.23 Definitions of Relevant Concepts/Words

In this study definitions of the following concepts/words are clarified as they may mean something different in different contexts and may be practised differently: role; inclusive education; young children; play-based learning; toys/play materials; physical environment; barriers to learning; level of support provision; low level of support provision; moderate level of support provision; profound intellectual disability; and additional support needs.

Role

There are many definitions of the word 'role', and in this study the definition adopted is from the Oxford English Dictionary Online (2015), where a role is defined as "the function assumed or part played by a person or thing in a particular situation". This study intended to discover the part played by the toy librarians in promoting inclusive education in ECD.

Inclusive education

Inclusive education is a contested issue and there are many definitions, which are both narrow and broad definitions. However, in this study inclusive education is narrowly defined as "a process of increasing participation and decreasing exclusion from the culture, community and curricula of mainstream schools" (Booth & Ainscow, 2002, p. 3).

Young children

The NIECDP (2015, p. 11) defines early childhood as "the period of human development from birth until the year before a child enters formal schooling". In this study, the term young children referred to children younger than six years, namely, the period of early childhood in South Africa.

Play-based learning

Play-based learning referred to a child-centred method of teaching where an adult guided and supported the young children's play rather than teaching them formally. The toy librarian selected play materials and play was structured to achieve curriculum and developmental outcomes (NIECDP, 2015).

Toys/play materials

Trawick-Smith, Wolff, Koschel and Vallarelli (2014, p. 249) defined toys, "as commercially bought toys and objects found in the environment that young children can play with". These objects included the following items: outdoor equipment for play, namely, jungle gyms and swings; furniture, such as wardrobes, beds, couches that are child-sized; and, games, for example, snakes and ladders. But this definition could also be applied to play materials. For this reason, the term 'play materials' was used throughout this report, as it included any items bought or found that young children could use for play.

Physical environment

Vickerius and Sandberg, (2006, p. 215) stated that "play has to be looked on in the context of the environment in which it takes place, both physical and the social

environment". In this study, the physical environment refers to the physical setting in which play takes place. This includes the indoors and outdoors play environment.

Barriers to learning

SIAS (2014, p. vii) defined barriers to learning as "difficulties that arise within the education system as a whole, the learning site and/or within the learner him/herself which prevent access to learning and development". In this study, barriers to learning are defined as "factors that may cause a breakdown in learning" (Nel, Nel & Hugo 2016, p. 21). These factors may be outside the child or within the child, therefore both definitions of barriers to learning are accepted in the study.

Level of support provision

SIAS (2014, p. ix) defines level of support provision as "the scope and intensity of support needed at system, school, teacher and learner level". This study defined the idea of level of support provision, as the support needed at system, toy library, home and the child's level. This included internal support from the toy library and external support from other professionals.

Low level of support provision

According to the SIAS (2014, p. ix), "low level support is mostly preventative and proactive". This support could be provided in public schools. In this study, low level support was defined as support that could be provided within a toy library by the toy librarian. Young children who required low level support might be assisted within the toy library environment.

Moderate level of support provision

SIAS (2014, p. ix) stated that "this kind of support is provided once-off, on a medium-frequency, intermittent or short-term basis or through the loan of physical devices". This level of support could also be provided in a toy library, where assistive devices could be loaned from a Resource Centre to young children who

were identified as in need of these devices. The toy librarian could support young children who required moderate level of support by slightly adapting the environment and play materials.

Profound intellectual disability

SIAS (2014, p. x) defined an individual with profound intellectual disability "as someone who depends on others for all aspects of daily physical care, health and safety, although he or she may be able to participate in some of these activities as well". In this study, children with profound intellectual disability were defined as those who depended on the toy librarian for physical care, health, care, safety and play. These children required a high level of support from medical professionals. Furthermore, they coped in a toy library environment with adapted toilets, ramps and ground level classrooms.

Additional support needs

According to SIAS (2014, p. ix), "every learner needs support, however due to other factors, some learners may need additional support" For instance, learners with learning difficulties, behavioural challenges, and those with sensory or mobility impairments require additional support.

2.24 Theoretical Framework

A theoretical framework refers to the researcher's choice of a specific theory or a combination of theories that guides a researcher to give the best answer to the research question (Imenda, 2014). Some researchers have compared the role of the theoretical framework to using a map or a travel plan (Sinclair, 2007; Fulton & Krainovich-Miller, 2010). The basis of the comparison is that when travelling to a destination, then a map guides your journey. Similarly, the theoretical framework guides a researcher so that he or she uses accepted theories to make his or her unique contribution to a scholarly and academic field. In this study, I have chosen specific theories that guided my research and helped to contextualise this study. The developmental theories of Piaget and Vygotsky acted as my map to guide me in answering the research questions. I have chosen

the developmental theories of Piaget and Vygotsky, because their theories stressed the adult's role in children's development and learning. In addition, Piaget and Vygotsky's theories fully explicated young children's development in relation to learning. Their theories were relevant to this study, as the research investigated toy librarians, who are adults, and how their role could promote inclusive education with young children. In this study, as mentioned previously, the idea of inclusive education went beyond simply giving children access to education, as it aimed to ensure that all children participate meaningfully in the process of education. Both Piaget and Vygotsky also emphasised the importance of play in the early years of a child's life. Thus, their theories help to provide a framework that can be useful when applied to toy librarians in toy libraries.

Jean Piaget (1952) is an individual constructivist who associated play with learning in ECD. Piaget (1945) observed his own children playing in their early childhood and then he studied older boys' playing with marbles (1965). Next, Piaget proposed the stages of play development and their meaning as developmental constructs. He differentiated play from imitation and argued that "play is primarily an assimilation process, while imitation is primarily an accommodation process" (Bergen, 2015, p. 15). Piaget (1964, p. 9) proposed "four stages of play development: the sensory motor stage, which starts from birth to about 2 years; the pre-operational stage, which starts from about 2 years to about 7 years; the concrete stage, which starts from about 7 years to 11 years; and, the formal operation stage which starts from about 11 years through to adulthood". The most important stages of development relevant to this study were the sensory motor and the pre-operational stages, because toy librarians worked with young children who were at these developmental stages. According to Piaget (1964), all young children passed through these biological stages. In addition, Piaget explained how the various stages of play corresponded to a child's developing cognitive processes. It would be important for toy librarians working with young children to understand these stages of development, so that the toy librarians could apply this understanding when they planned and did activities with children. Piaget's theory was of relevance to toy librarians, because they were expected to provide age and developmentally appropriate activities for

young children (NIECDP, 2015). These activities must not be too easy or too difficult for a child's level. Furthermore, Piaget's stages of development would also assist toy librarians to identify barriers to learning that a child might experience. As discussed earlier, barriers to learning might be located within a child, such as developmental delays. In addition, Piaget's theory would also assist toy librarians to identify external barriers within the environment that might impede young children's learning and development.

According to Bergen (2015, p. 15), "Piaget believed that young children used play to construct their knowledge of the world by trying to relate their new experiences to their existing cognitive schema". Piaget (1965) viewed the child as an "explorer who makes his or her own discoveries" (Crain, 1992, p. 210). The toy library environment provided a space where young children explored with different play materials. Bergen (2015, p. 15) also stated that "Piaget proposed three types of play: practice play, pretence play and games with rules". Practice play is noticed in the birth to two age group. In addition, Bergen (2015, p. 15) stated that "Piaget noted one important aspect of practice play whereby the child changed the play activity by making it more difficult or adding new elements". Piaget also noted that pretence becomes a major play type for young children between the ages of four to seven. According to Bergen (2015, p.15), "Piaget believed that in pretence, children create worlds that make sense to them". Toy librarians should observe children when they engage in pretence play, "to learn much about children's understandings and misunderstandings" (Bergen, 2015, p. 15). Lastly, Piaget identified games with rules as a common type of play for young children. Piaget argued that "when young children played games that had rules with their peers, then moral development was fostered, as they solved problems related to fairness and equal chances in the play" (Bergen, 2015, p. 15). Toy librarians should facilitate all these kinds of play in toy libraries to enhance young children's learning and development, so that they could reach their full potential as envisaged in the NIECDP (2015). Piaget's theory was not sufficiently comprehensive to form the theoretical framework of this study, so I used Vygotsky's theory to complement Piaget's theory too. In the following section I turn to a discussion of Vygotsky's theory.

Vygotsky (1978) is also a social constructivist who linked play to learning as did Piaget, but Vygotsky believed that play was mediated by language through social interactions. According to Vygotsky (1978, p. 102), "play contains all developmental tendencies in a condensed form and is itself a major source of development". Vygotsky (1978, p. 90) further stated that "learning is not development, however properly organised learning results in mental development". This implied that play should be the foundation for learning in ECD, but Vygotsky's (1978) theory suggested that young children learn best when they engaged in social interactions with adults and peers. In addition, Vygotsky (1978, p. 102) argued that "play creates a zone of proximal development of the child". The zone of proximal development is defined as "the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (Vygotsky 1978, p. 86). Wood (as cited in Bergen 2015, p. 45) used the term scaffolding "to describe the support that adults or older peers provide as children develop skills within their zone of proximal development". When these ideas were applied to toy librarians, then it suggested that they needed to act as guides who scaffolded play activities carefully for young children during their play sessions.

Vygotsky (1978) identified pretend play as an important form of play. Vygotsky, (1978, p. 103) argued that "creating an imaginary situation can be regarded as a means of developing abstract thought". He believed that in pretend play a child developed higher levels of thinking. According to Bergen, (2015, p. 16) "Vygotsky described the age period from two to eight as the time in which children learned the language of their culture and stated that this learning was evident in their play". This age period was also important to this study, as toy librarians engaged with young children in this age range. During play activities, the toy librarian should guide young children to use pretend play materials that represented real objects. Vygotsky's theory stressed that the children's learning happened in socio-cultural environments, which was an important idea for this study. As discussed earlier, inclusive education in South Africa has moved away from viewing barriers to learning as located only within the child to focusing on those

outside the child too. Vygotsky's theory would assist toy librarians to identify barriers that are located outside a child within the social environment and how that hindered a child from learning. Both Piaget and Vygotsky's theories were relevant to this study, as they informed how toy librarians should teach young children and how they might identify barriers to learning so that they were able to include every child in their activities in the toy library.

2.25 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have discussed the following: Inclusive education; ECD; the importance of play; and, access to play materials. I have also highlighted the role of toy libraries and toy librarians. Next, I explained the conceptual framework, and clarified the concepts relevant to this study. Finally, I explored the theoretical framework that guided this study. The next chapter will discuss the paradigmatic perspective, research method and design employed in this study.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter focused on reviewing the literature related to the concepts under study. First, this chapter discusses the paradigmatic perspective that informs this study. Secondly, it describes the reason for my choice of the research methodology, and the research sites. Thirdly, I explain the sampling procedure, which consists of the sample criteria, sample method and sample size. Fourthly, the data collection instruments and how data was analysed are discussed. Fifthly, I raise issues concerning trustworthiness, which entails transferability, credibility, dependability and confirmability. Finally, I discuss ethical considerations.

3.2 Paradigmatic Perspective

Guba and Lincoln (1994, p. 107) stated that "a paradigm represents a worldview that defines, for its holder, the nature of the world, the individual's place in it, and the range of possible relationships to that world and its parts". This study used the interpretive paradigm, which is also referred to as the constructivist paradigm, in order to understand the roles of toy librarians in promoting inclusive education. Yardley and Bishop (2017, p. 400) indicated that "this constructivist perspective claims that our awareness of the world is completely mediated by our particular subjective and socio-cultural experiences". This view suggested that in a constructivist paradigm, researchers brought their assumptions and beliefs to the research process and that these guided their actions. The constructivist paradigm also allowed for active involvement of the participants in the research process. In this study, knowledge about the role of toy librarians in promoting inclusive education would be constructed by the toy librarians themselves. Guba and Lincoln (1994, p. 111) stated that "individual constructions can be elicited and refined only through interaction between and among investigator and respondents". The toy librarians played a key role during this study, as through the interview process, the researcher gained insights into their roles in promoting inclusive education. This constructivist paradigm suites the questions that were answered in this study, because knowledge about the role of toy librarians and

inclusive education were constructed through interactions with them. The roles of the toy librarians, as indicated in the NIECDP (2015), would be best understood through the constructivist paradigm. In the following section the three components of a research paradigm ontology, epistemology, axiology and methodology are discussed.

3.3 Ontology

Ontology refers to "the nature of reality or truth" (Davis & Fisher, 2018, p. 22). As a researcher, I bring my own assumptions about what the truth is. This informs the kind of knowledge that the research subscribes to and what the researcher's beliefs are about the characteristics of knowledge. Wahyuni (2012, p.71) argued that "individuals with their own varied backgrounds, assumptions and experiences contribute to the on-going construction of reality existing in their broader social context through social interaction". This suggested that the nature of truth in this study was subjective, as it was constructed by the researcher and the participants based on their experiences of the world. In addition, in this study the truth was not discovered, but it was obtained by using open-ended questions whereby participants shared their opinions about their roles in promoting inclusive education.

3.4 Epistemology

Maxwell (2011, p. 10) argued that epistemology "refers to how we know and the relationship between the knower and the known". Since this study was qualitative and it followed the constructivists' paradigm, it supported the position that "our understanding of reality is a social construction, not an objective truth, and that there exist multiple realities" (Maxwell, 2011, p. 10). This suggests that knowledge was produced through social interactions between the researcher and the participants during this research. This showed that the researcher was entwined in the production of knowledge (Davis & Fisher, 2018). In addition, the participants also came to know their roles as toy librarians as a result of experience and social interactions within their social context.

3.5 Axiology

Wahyuni (2012, p. 69) argued that axiology was "concerned with ethics, encompassing the roles of values in the research and the researcher's stance in relation to the subject studied". This meant that the research was about the researcher and participants' values. Since the constructivist paradigm was value laden, the researcher ought to make his or her values known. As a researcher, I have declared my own values and biases in relation to this study towards the end of this chapter. In addition, Wahyuni (2012, p. 71) stated that "constructivists researchers take the stance of the insider perspective, which means to study the social reality from the perspective of the people themselves". This suggested that the data collected was influenced by the experiences and values of the researcher and the participants. In order to apply the components of the research paradigm discussed above to this study, a particular methodology was chosen, and it is discussed in the following section.

3.6 Methodology

Methodology refers to the strategy used (Davis & Fisher, 2018, p. 21). It answers the question: "how do we find out". The research paradigm for this study influenced the methodology that was used. This study followed the interpretivist/constructivist paradigm, which renders it qualitative in nature. Qualitative research is conducted in natural settings to understand in depth participants' experiences and views of a phenomenon (Creswell, 2014). The researcher intended to understand the role of toy librarians in promoting inclusive education. In qualitative research, the researcher is the key instrument for data collection (Creswell, 2014). Data collection tools that were used are interviews and questionnaires which enable participants to express their views on the issue under study. In addition, the qualitative study captured multiple subjective views of participants. The data collected was analysed using inductive methods. Furthermore, the data collected in this study was descriptive (Creswell, 2014) which meant that it was stated in the participants' words and not in numbers.

3.7 Qualitative Research Methodology

This study sought to explore toy librarians' role in promoting inclusive education. Qualitative research was most suitable for the topic under investigation. According to Creswell (2012, p. 16), "qualitative research is best suited to address a research problem in which you do not know the variables and need to explore". Since this study sought to explore the roles of toy librarians in promoting inclusive education, qualitative research was appropriate for the topic under investigation. Merriam and Tisdell (2016, p. 5) argued that "qualitative research is interested in uncovering the meaning of a phenomenon for those involved". This suggested that the researcher's role is to discover the impact of the toy librarians' roles on inclusive education. Merriam and Tisdell (2016, p. 6) further stated that "qualitative researchers are interested in understanding how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences". This suggested that the researcher should try to understand how the toy librarians constructed the idea of inclusive education and how this conception influenced their respective practices. Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004, p. 20) postulated that "qualitative research provides understanding and description of people's personal experience of a phenomena". This meant that this study should give detailed descriptions of the toy librarians' role in promoting inclusive education. Inclusive education is a complex phenomenon, therefore a qualitative research approach would enable the participants, who are toy librarians, to describe their role in their own words.

Choosing a qualitative research over quantitative research is an ideal choice for this study, because quantitative research methods "do not fully capture the extent and complexity" found in a topic such as inclusive education research (Barnes 2003, p. 10). Inclusive education was a complex phenomenon, which required a qualitative research method, because it enabled individual cases to be studied in depth. Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004, p. 20) argued that "qualitative research describes in rich detail, phenomena as they are situated and embedded in local contexts". This suggested that the phenomena studied in qualitative research would be context specific, which would provide information on the reality of that

situation in a particular context. In addition, Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004, p. 20) argued that in qualitative research "data is collected in naturalistic settings". This meant that the data collected was a true reflection of the phenomena that was being studied. Furthermore, in qualitative research "the researcher identifies contextual and setting factors as they relate to the phenomenon of interest" (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p. 20). In this study, the researcher related toy libraries to the phenomena inclusive education. Qualitative research would enable the researcher to identify factors in toy libraries that influenced the implementation of inclusive education.

Although a qualitative research method was best suited to this study, a major weakness of its findings was that they were specific to a few people who participated in this study. This meant that qualitative research findings "may not be generalised to other people or other settings" (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004, p. 20). The researcher was aware of this limitation of a qualitative research method. In order to address this issue, a researcher should reflect on her own biases, values and assumptions, then discuss them in the research (Creswell, 2012), which I intend to do so later in this chapter.

3.7.1 Case study

The chosen research approach was a case study. Leedy and Ormrod (2013, p. 141) argued that "in a case study a particular individual programme, or event is studied in depth for a defined period of time". In this study, the researcher analysed toy librarians' roles that promoted inclusive education. In addition, Leedy and Ormrod (2013, p.141) stated that "a case study may be suitable for learning more about a little known or poorly understood situation". One of the reasons for this research was that little was known about the toy librarians' role in promoting inclusive education. Therefore, a case study was appropriate to gather this information, although this study employed a collective case study. Leed and Ormrod (2014) stated that in collective case study, researchers might study two or more cases that are similar or different in specific ways. In this research, more than two cases were used as they were similar, because the toy librarians who participated in the research conducted play sessions with young

children. The researcher needed to get the participants' views, who operated in different toy libraries, to see how these views matched. Creswell (2012) argued that the studying of collective cases permitted the researcher to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomena under study. This study was carried out in five organisations that ran toy libraries in the Gauteng province. Two of these organisations operate more than one toy library in Gauteng. The researcher sought to gain a deeper understanding about the toy librarians' roles that promoted inclusive education from the toy librarians themselves.

3.8 Research Sites

The sites chosen for this study were four toy libraries in the southern Johannesburg, two toy libraries in northern Johannesburg, two toy libraries in eastern Johannesburg and one in western Johannesburg. I chose these toy libraries because they offered services that were outlined in the NIECDP (2015). These services included: conducting play sessions with young children catering for young children with diverse needs; and, lending them toys. These activities made them an ideal choice as sites to conduct my research.

3.9 Sampling

Sampling is the process of selecting a subcategory of people from a larger population (Scott & Morrison, 2005). In this study, the sampling was carried out before data collection. Purposeful sampling was used in this study. Leedy and Ormrod (2013, p. 152) stated that "qualitative researchers' sampling is purposeful, they select those individuals or objects that will yield the most information of the topic under investigation". The selected nine toy libraries and toy librarians were all utilised for the research. The researcher chose toy librarians as they would provide the best information about the topic under study. By conducting this research, I intended to understand what role the toy librarians played in promoting inclusive education. The sampling strategy used was applied to both the participants and the site. While purposeful sampling was used, this strategy was applied before the collection of data began.

3.10 Sample Criteria

In this study, sites and participants were selected because they possessed similar characteristics, which lent itself to homogenous sampling. All participants were toy librarians and the sites were toy libraries. Homogenous sampling was ideal for the topic under investigation, as the researcher intended to discover in detail what role toy librarians played in promoting inclusive education. Creswell (2012, p. 207) argued that "the intention of homogenous sampling is to describe some subgroup in depth". All the participants met this criterion.

3.11 Sample Size

The sample size consisted of nine toy librarians from five organisations that ran toy libraries in the Gauteng province. The details of the participants and sites are found in Table 2.

Participant	Organisation	Site	Type of toy library
Toy librarian A	1	A	Conduct play sessions
Toy librarian B	1	B	Conduct play sessions
Toy librarian C	1	C	Conduct play sessions
Toy librarian D	2	D	Conduct play sessions
Toy librarian E	3	E	Conduct play sessions
Toy librarian F	3	F	Conduct play sessions
Toy librarian H	3	H	Conduct play sessions
Toy librarian G	4	G	Conduct play sessions
Toy librarian I	5	I	Conduct play sessions

Table 2 Participants' details

3.12 Data Collection Instruments

Data was collected using semi-structured interviews which were audio taped. These data collecting methods were used in order to gain insights into the toy librarians' role in promoting inclusive education, as stated in the NIECDP (2015). Before conducting the interviews, the researcher utilised biographical questionnaires to gather information such as the participants' gender, race, age and work experience. The questionnaires, together with the semi-structured interviews, were piloted with a sample of toy librarians who showed similarities to the selected sample. After obtaining ethics clearance from the University of the Witwatersrand's Ethics Committee, questionnaires were distributed to selected participants. These questionnaires were in the form of structured questions.

3.12.1 Structured questionnaires

The researcher utilised questionnaires to obtain information from participants. Questionnaires were defined as forms that the participants completed in order to generate data (Creswell, 2012). The researcher chose structured questions, because they were best suited for the information that needed to be gathered. According to Leedy and Ormrod (2013, p. 191), the advantage of using a questionnaire was that "participants respond to questions with some assurance that their responses will not come back to haunt them". This suggested that

participants were more likely to give honest responses in questionnaires rather than in interviews. The use of questionnaires was also economical, and the same questions were used for all the participants. A copy of this structured questionnaire can be found in Appendix A.

3.12.2 Interviews

In addition to questionnaires, semi-structured interviews were used to collect data from the participants. The interviews were carried out over a period of two months. One-on-one interviews were conducted with the nine toy librarians selected from the five organisations (see Appendix A for the interview questions). Creswell (2012, p. 218) described one-on-one interviews as "a data collection process in which the researcher asks questions and records answers from only one participant in the study at a time". The researcher audio-recorded the interview, as it was impossible to remember everything said during interviews after they had been conducted. By recording the interview, it made it possible to refer to what was said during the interviews while analysing the data. Leedy and Ormrod (2013, p. 190) stated that "face to face interviews have the distinct advantage of enabling the researcher to establish rapport with potential participants and therefore gain their cooperation". When the participants cooperated with the researcher during interviews, it produced a higher response rate. The results enabled the researcher to obtain more information from the participants. Although individual interviews were ideal for this study, there were disadvantages of conducting one-on-one interviews, such as the expense, and they took a long time to conduct (Creswell, 2012).

3.13 Data Analysis

When conducting this study, the data was captured through questionnaires as well as audio-recorded interviews. The data was analysed through an inductive process. Leedy and Ormrod (2013, p. 97) argued that "qualitative researchers make considerable use of inductive reasoning, by making many specific observations and then draw inferences about more general phenomena". The process of analysing the data began with the transcription of the interviews, which

were then paraphrased, and recurring categories were identified. An inductive thematic analysis was used to analyse the data, which is discussed in the next section.

3.13.1 Inductive thematic analysis.

Macmillan and Schumacher (2010, p. 367) stated that "inductive processes move from specific data to general categories and patterns", and the researcher identified categories and grouped them into their subcategories. The interviews were analysed line by line in order to identify themes. Creswell (2012, p. 243) argued that "the process of analysing texts in qualitative research begins when you code the data". The researcher carefully examined the information obtained from interviews to find similar ideas. Leedy and Ormrod (2013, p. 147) defined open coding as "the process of reducing the data to a small set of themes that appear to describe the phenomena under investigation". By coding, it enabled the researcher to lessen the information because by selecting data that linked to the themes, it led to discarding data that did not link to them. Open coding and axial coding were used to analyse the data.

Furthermore, the researcher compared, conceptualised and categorised the themes, which were tested against the research questions. The researcher utilised axial coding to establish links between the information gathered and the research questions. Furthermore, Leedy and Ormrod (2012, p. 147) argued that "in axial coding interconnections are made among categories and subcategories". The identified themes were linked to the research questions. The coding process enabled the researcher to reduce the data so that it was manageable. According to Miles and Huberman (1994, p. 12), "the coding of data, for example (data reduction) leads to new ideas on what should go into a matrix (data display)". An example of how the data was coded is shown in Table 3:

Inclusive principle	Role of toy librarian as stated in the NIECDP	Yes	No
Accommodating all young children with diverse needs	Providing access to play materials for all young children with diverse needs		
Support	Loaning toys to parents Training parents and other ECD workers		
Support	Demonstrating how to use the toys to parents		
Support	Identifying children who need assistance and referring them to professionals		
Curriculum	Demonstrating how to use the toys to children		
Curriculum	Using developmentally appropriate play materials		
Curriculum	Children actively participate in play activities		
Curriculum	Differentiating activities		
Inclusive environment	Adapting play materials to suit children's needs		
Inclusive environment	Adapting the environment to suit the children with diverse needs through teaching, assessment and support Creating a safe and secure environment		
Language	The use of mother tongue or multilingual instructions		

Table 3 Guide to an analysis of data

The ideas that constituted inclusive pedagogy and exclusion were derived from White Paper Six (2001). According to Liasidou (2012), an inclusive pedagogy was socially just, which meant that it entailed diversifying and changing the following: The curriculum; teaching methods; structures; cultures and practices. The aim was to include children with diverse needs. Table 4 indicated what constituted the characteristics of an inclusive pedagogy, inclusionary and exclusionary practices:

Characteristics of an inclusive pedagogy	Inclusionary	Exclusionary
Attitude towards inclusion	Positive attitude	Negative attitude
Access	Accommodates children from diverse backgrounds, especially from poor communities	Does not accommodate children from diverse communities
Curriculum Teaching, assessment and support	1. Activities are developmentally appropriate	1. Activities are not developmentally appropriate
	2. Planning caters for children's diverse needs	2. Planning does not cater for children diverse needs
	3.Children are actively involved in play	3.Children are passive
Language	Used appropriate language of learning and teaching	Used inappropriate language of learning and teaching
Physical Environment	Safe, secure and accessible	Not safe, not secure and inaccessible

The home	Involvement of parents and caregivers	Non-involvement of parents and caregivers
Support services	Refers children to additional support services, for example, therapists and social workers	Does not refer children to additional support services
The toy librarian's knowledge on how children learn	Has proper knowledge and skills to facilitate children's play	Does not have proper knowledge and skills to facilitate children's play

Table 4 Characteristics of an inclusive pedagogy: Inclusionary and exclusionary practices

3.14 Trustworthiness

According to Creswell (2012), trustworthiness was a term used by qualitative researchers to describe the accuracy or credibility of their research findings. Lincoln and Guba (1985) developed four criteria for research trustworthiness, namely, credibility, confirmability, transferability and dependability. In the following section, I discuss the criteria for trustworthiness.

3.14.1 Credibility

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985, p. 296), the criteria for credibility aimed at ensuring that "the findings and interpretations that have been arrived at via the inquiry are credible to the constructions of the original multiple realities". This suggested that when conducting qualitative research, researchers need to be confident of their research findings. Thus, the findings must be a reflection of the participants' true ideas that they shared with the researcher. In order to ensure that this study is credible, the researcher utilised a qualitative collective case study, whereby more than one case study was used. The principles of credibility were incorporated when the researcher shared the interviews transcriptions with her supervisor and the participants as soon as the data collection process was completed. This is referred to as member checking. Member checking was

defined by Creswell (2012, p. 259) as "a process in which the researcher asks one or more participants in the study to check the accuracy of the account". Participants were offered an opportunity to express their opinion on whether the descriptions provided in the interviews were complete and realistic, and whether the interpretations were properly represented.

3.14.2 Confirmability

Research findings should not be the result of a researcher's imagination. Nowell, Morris, White & Moules (2017, p. 3) argued that "confirmability is established when the research interpretations and findings are derived from the data". This meant that findings and interpretations of the study must be supported by the data, so that they would be accepted by other researchers. Lincoln and Guba (1985, p. 318) came up with a technique that established confirmability, which they called a "confirmability audit". This kind of audit could be compared to the audit that was done in companies. To achieve confirmability, the researcher stated a clear process of how the data was processed. This included how the "data was analysed and interpretations of the findings" were outlined (Noble & Smith, 2015, p. 35). In this study, the interviews were recorded, and questionnaires were used to collect data. Since the qualitative research was a collective case study, the data collected from each participant was compared to find similarities and differences (Yin, 2016). In addition, the researcher declared her biases as a researcher in the role of the researcher's section in this chapter. Furthermore, the researcher carefully kept documentation on data and progress of research electronically and used hard copies too. This all aimed to achieve confirmability.

3.14.3 Transferability

Watkins (2012, p. 157) argued that transferability referred to the "degree to which results can be applied to other contexts or settings under similar conditions". As this was a qualitative study, its transferability was limited. However, the researcher provided a thick description of the toy librarians' contexts, which "allow

the reader to transfer what is relevant" (Elo, Kaariainen, Kanste, Polkki, Utriainen & Kyngas, 2014, p. 2).

3.14.4 Dependability

Lincoln and Guba (1985, p. 317) stated that "dependability is achieved when the findings of the research are consistent and could be repeated". Dependability is closely related to credibility. To achieve dependability, the researcher has given a comprehensive description of the research design, which would assist other researchers to repeat the design. Moreover, the researcher utilised three data collection methods, which are questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and photographs, which made it possible to triangulate the data (Noble & Smith, 2015).

3.15 Working with the Supervisor

Working with the supervisor, it ensured that the researcher did not present data that was incorrectly interpreted. This process also safeguarded against the data being fabricated. The supervisor performed the function of an external auditor. Creswell (2012) described this as the services that a researcher obtained from an individual that "is outside the study to review different aspects of the research" (p. 260). The supervisor provided written communication about the evaluation of the study. In this study, the researcher worked with the supervisor and got feedback from the supervisor at regular intervals to ensure that she was on the right track.

3.16 Ethical Considerations

Ethical requirements were adhered to before conducting the study, and all participants were treated ethically during the study. Creswell (2020, p. 148) argued that "it is important to protect the privacy and confidentiality of individuals who participate in the study". This suggested that the researcher ought to protect the individuals' privacy who took part in the study: It was important to refrain from divulging their names and the information they provided without their consent. These considerations were included as their right to confidentiality, the right to

voluntary participation and the right to withdraw from the study in their informed consent forms. The researcher sought ethical approval from the organisations where the study was conducted and the University of the Witwatersrand's Ethics Committee.

3.16.1 Confidentiality

The identity of participants and the data collected for this study was kept confidential. Any information regarding the data collected during this study was not disclosed to anyone in the participants' organisations. Anonymity was assured by "replacing site and participant identities with codes" (Yin, 2016, p.280). The data collected was only used for the purpose of this study (Creswell, 2014).

3.16.2 Voluntary participation

Voluntary participation has to do with participants' right to voluntarily participate in the study and equally to withdraw at any time from the study. It also included the right for participants "to know the purpose of the study" (Creswell, 2012, p. 149). Participants were provided with consent forms prior to the data collection process, which ensured that they knew what the study was about. Creswell (2012) stated that prior to participating in a study, the participants should sign an informed consent form. In this research, the consent form clearly stated that the participants' rights were guaranteed and that their participation was voluntary. In addition, the consent form clearly indicated that by signing the form the participants had agreed to participate in the study.

3.16.3 The role of the researcher

Creswell (2012, p.18) argued that as researcher you need to "discuss your role or position in a research study, called being reflexive". This suggested that the researcher must reflect on her own biases, values and assumptions, which must be declared in the research. As a researcher, I am aware of my own biases, values and assumptions. Therefore, I declare that I have trained early childhood practitioners, and municipal librarians on how to set up toy libraries. I work in an

organisation which runs toy libraries in South Africa. However, none of the toy librarians in my organisation participated in this study. In addition, the concept of reflexivity assisted in a process of self-examination while conducting the research process. I used a reflection journal to control my biases, as it helped me to record my personal reactions, observations and ideas, which I meditated upon during the research process.

3.17 Conclusion

This qualitative study was designed to achieve the aim of investigating the toy librarians' role in promoting inclusive education. Using a collective case study design, it provided a deeper and richer understanding that would help to expand the body of knowledge of inclusive education and ECD in South Africa. This chapter has discussed the paradigmatic perspective that informed this study. It also provided justifications for my choice of the research methods, data analysis, selection of participants, data analysis strategies as well as ethical considerations that were taken into consideration for this study. The next chapter presents the findings of the study.

CHAPTER 4: PRESENTATION OF DATA

4.1 Introduction

In the preceding chapter, the procedure used to collect and analyse the data was discussed. This chapter presents the findings of the study. The categories that emerged from the questionnaires and interviews will be presented in the form of tables and diagrams. I utilised questionnaires and interviews to gather the necessary information to describe how the role of toy librarians promoted inclusive education. Themes that emerged from data were broken down into smaller manageable categories. I begin at first by presenting the information obtained from the questionnaires, then the data from the interviews follows. Finally, I give a snippet of biographical information about the toy librarians who participated in this study.

This research's aim was to investigate how some toy librarians promoted inclusive education, which led me to pose the main research question: What is the role of toy librarians in promoting inclusive education in Gauteng province? In order to answer this research question, the following sub-questions were asked:

- How do toy librarians define inclusive education?
- How do toy librarians create an inclusive environment for learning?
- How do toy librarians view their role in early childhood from an inclusive perspective?

Nine toy librarians in Gauteng province participated in the study.

The major themes that emerged from this study's findings in relation to the role of toy librarians in promoting inclusive education are the following: having knowledge and understanding of the meaning of an inclusive education; defining inclusive education by using a medical model's definition; implementing an early childhood curriculum through teaching young children through play; assessing their learning; supporting them; adapting toys to meets young children's needs; adapting the environment; and practices that the toy librarians considered to be inclusive. In the next section, I present the findings of this study.

4.2 Identification of Categories

The questionnaire handed out to toy librarians had thirteen questions. I have grouped these questions into categories, which are presented in tables and charts. The data in Table 5 was drawn from questions one to four. This data related to the biographical information about the toy librarians. Figure 1 was linked to question five where toy librarians were asked about their awareness of inclusive education. Figure 2 related to question six, which was based on the toy librarians' understanding of inclusive education. Table 6 depicted question seven, which indicated how toy librarians defined inclusive education. The responses to question eight were reflected in Figure 3, which showed how frequently toy librarians conducted play session with young children. Question nine was shown in Figure 4, which illustrated how often toy librarians trained parents. The responses to question 10 were depicted in Table 7, which indicated practices that were considered inclusive by toy librarians. Question 11 is presented in Figure 5, which showed the kind of toys and play materials that the toy librarians used. Figure 6 shows the toy librarians' adaptations to toys and the play environment in order to suit young children's needs, which related to questions 12 and 13 in the questionnaire. The final question was question 14, which concerned challenges in implementing inclusive education. The responses were depicted in Table 8.

4.2.1 Participants' biographical information

The researcher collected biographical information of the nine toy librarians who participated in the study. Table 5 gives a summary of the participants' biographical information:

Participant	Gender (Q2)	Age range (Q3)	Racial group (Q4)	Experience as a toy librarian (Q1)
A	F	31-40	White	0-1 year
B	F	31-40	African	4-8 years
C	F	41-50	African	Over 12 years
D	F	31-40	Coloured	4-8 years
E	F	31-40	African	0-1 year
F	F	31-40	African	4-8 years
G	F	41-50	African	4-8 years
H	F	20-30	African	0-1 year
I	F	51-60	African	4-8 years

Table 5 Participants' biographical information

The biographical information that the toy librarians provided showed that the participants had had some experience of working as toy librarians. There was a range from one year to over 12 years in terms of their work experience. Five participants had worked in a toy library between four to eight years, while three participants were working in a toy library for less than a year. Only one participant had over 12 years' experience of working in a toy library. All the participants were females of different "racial" groups: This shows that most ECD workers in toy libraries are women of different racial groups. Seven out of the nine participants were African, one participant was "coloured" and one was white. This indicates that there is diversity of people who work in toy libraries although the majority are Africans. The participants' ages ranged from 20 to 60 years. Five participants were between the ages of 31 to 40 years. Two participants were between the ages of 41 to 50. One participant was aged between 20 and 30, while another participant was aged between 50 and 60.

4.2.2 Toy librarians' awareness of inclusive education

The following figure shows the participants' responses in the questionnaires when they were asked whether they were aware of inclusive education:

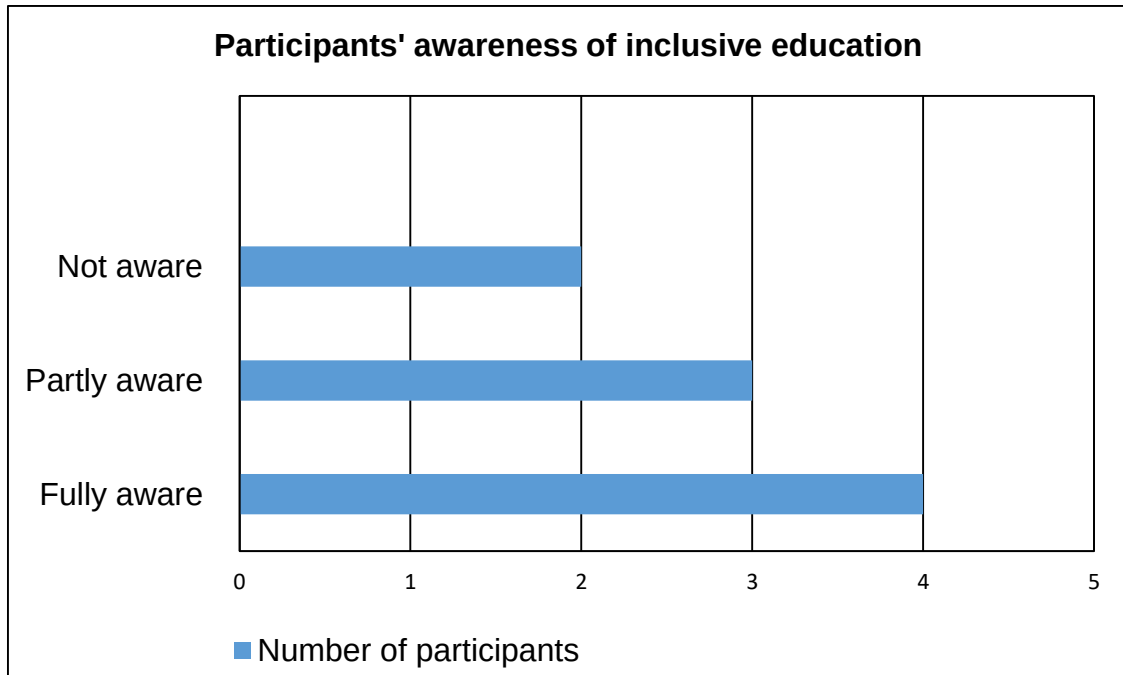


Figure 1 Participants' awareness of inclusive education

When asked if they were aware of inclusive education, two participants indicated that they were not aware of this term and stated that this was the first time they had heard it. However, three participants were partly aware of inclusive education, while four of the participants indicated that they were fully aware of this term.

4.2.3 Toy librarians' understanding of inclusive education

Toy librarians were further asked whether they had any understanding of inclusive education, and the following figure showed their responses:

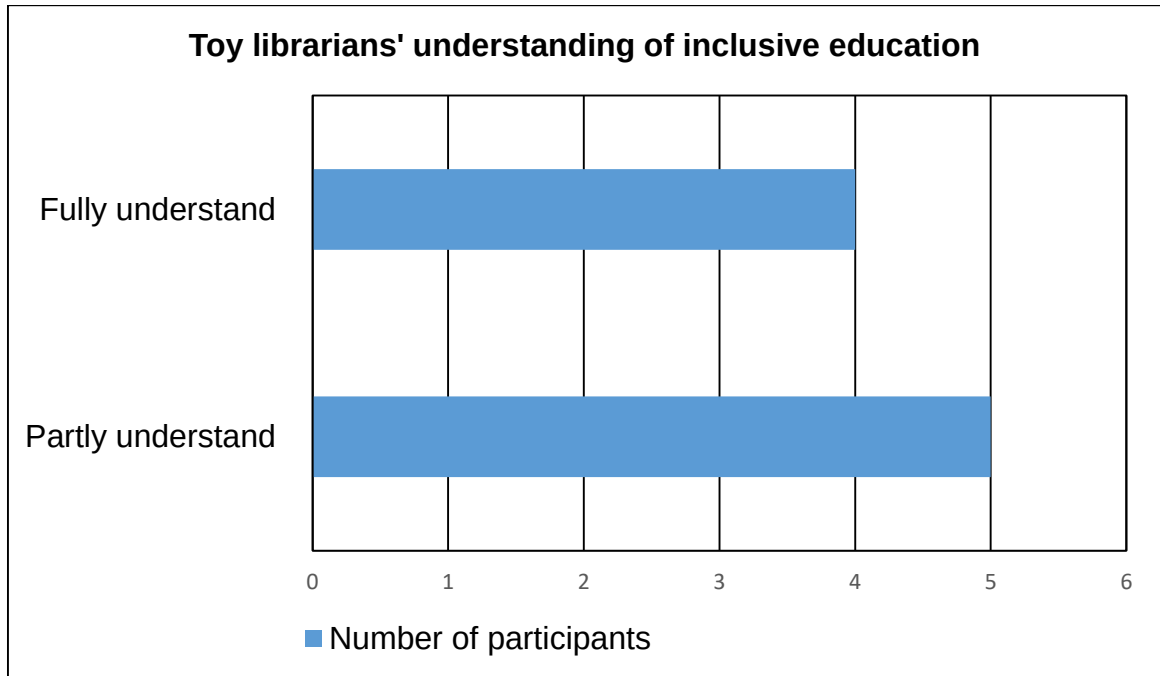


Figure 2 Toy librarians' understanding of inclusive education

The information obtained from the questionnaires indicated that five participants partly understood inclusive education, while four participants indicated that they fully understood the meaning of inclusive education. The table provides participants' responses to their definitions of inclusive education.

4.2.4 Participants' definitions of inclusive education

Table 6 shows the results of the definitions of inclusive education that the participants gave.

Participants	What they understand about inclusive education (7)
A	Abled children in the same class with disabled or special needs children
B	Children with challenges and normal children
C	It is education for children with disability and children without disability?
D	Includes children of different skills, abilities and age groups
E	Including children with special needs and mainstream in same activities
F	Include educational toys for disability learners
G	Including every child whether disabled or not
H	Include children with a disability and children who do not have a disability, and those who are from different backgrounds
I	That what I am doing in the library includes all children even the ones with learning barriers, disabilities and who come from unfavourable conditions

Table 6 Participants' definitions of inclusive education

Toy librarians who participated in this study work directly with young children, hence the need for them to understand inclusive education, so that they could include every child in the play sessions. The NIECDP (2015) clearly indicated that toy librarians should know how to conduct play sessions for all children.

4.2.5 Toy librarians' frequency of conducting play sessions

The following figure shows how often the toy librarians conducted play sessions based on their responses from the questionnaires.

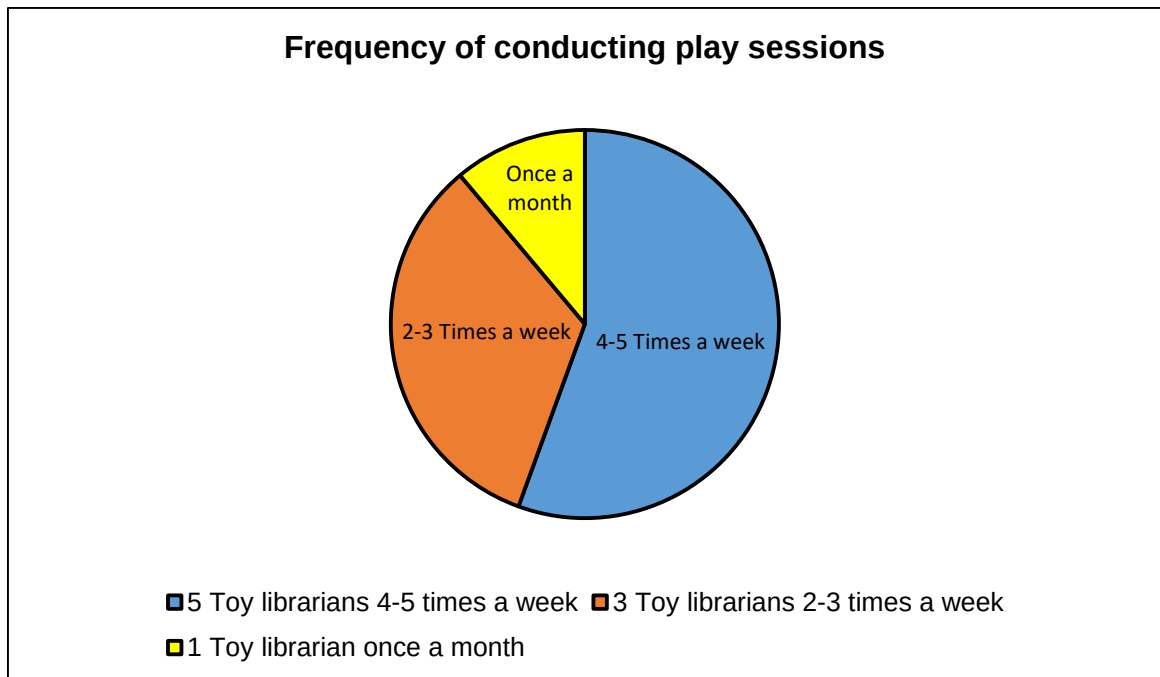


Figure 3 Frequency of conducting play sessions

Toy librarians are expected to conduct play sessions with young children. As discussed in Chapter Two, the toy librarians were expected to "provide access to play for young children" (NIECDP, 2015, p. 61). When conducting sessions, toy librarians should devote some of their time to teaching young children through play. Out of the nine toy librarians who participated in this study, five of them indicated that they conducted play sessions with young children four to five times a week. Three participants indicated that they conducted play sessions two to three times a week. One participant indicated that she conducted play sessions once a month. Most of the toy librarians who participated in this study engage with young children almost every day. In addition to conducting play sessions with young children, the toy librarians in this study also indicated that they train parents. Figure 4 indicates the frequency of how often the toy librarians trained parents.

4.2.6 Training of parents

As part of their role in the NIECDP, (2015) toy librarians are expected to engage with parents. They are expected to demonstrate how they may use toys and play materials and on upcycling toys using waste resources.

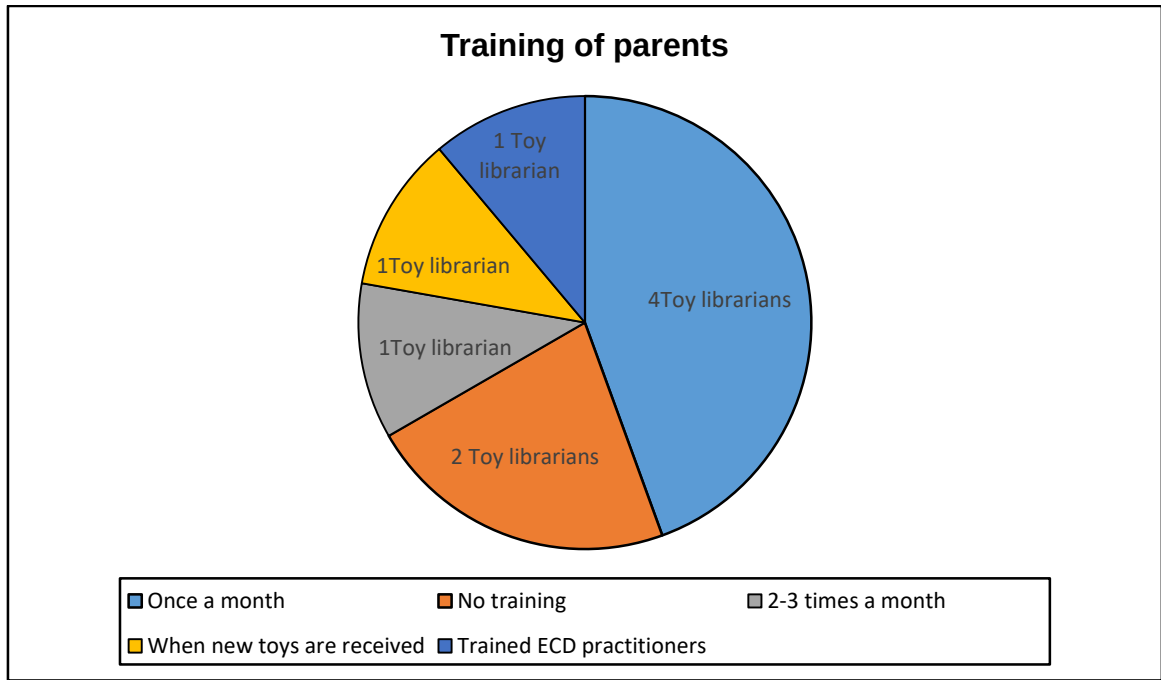


Figure 4 Training of parents

Four of the toy librarians indicated that they trained parents once a month on how to use the toys. However, two participants indicated that they did not train parents at all. One of the toy librarians trained parents two to three times a month. Another participant trained parents every time she received new toys. Yet one of the toy librarians indicated that she did not train parents, instead she trained ECD practitioners. The NIECDP (2015) highlighted that toy librarians should provide training to parents and other ECD workers. The following section represents toy librarian's practices they considered inclusive.

4.2.7 Toy librarians' practices that they considered to be inclusive

Furthermore, toy librarians provided practices they considered to be inclusive.

The following Table 7 represents the practices that toy librarians considered to be inclusive.

Participants	Practices considered to be inclusive
A	When I have a group of children with both abled and special needs children learning and playing together
B	My activities should be age appropriate and for the level of the child because they are special needs children
C	Knowing learners and understanding their challenges
D	Inclusive would include children of different ages, skills levels and also adults who are differently abled e.g. slow learners with intellectual challenges
E	The everyday activities that we do in the classroom
F	It is when you have toys that caters for everybody even the children and adult living with disability
G	Taking these learners with challenges from their classes helping teachers with them to improve with their work wherever they lack
H	Encouraging interaction, accommodating others, getting the families involved
I	As we do our programme to informal settlements

Table 7 Toy librarians' practices that they considered to be inclusive

Key:

	Responses linked to medical model
	Responses linked to the social model

I have categorised the responses that the toy librarians in this study gave to question 10, according to colour. The first category, which is coloured orange, represented responses that were closely linked to the medical model. The second category, which is coloured green, represented responses that were strongly

linked to the social model. Figure 5 represents the kind of toys and play materials toy librarians used in their toy libraries.

4.2.8 Kind of toys and play materials used in the toy library

Toy and play materials are the resources that toy librarians use to develop skills in young children. These can be bought or upcycled from waste resources. The following figure represents participants' responses in relation to toys and play materials.

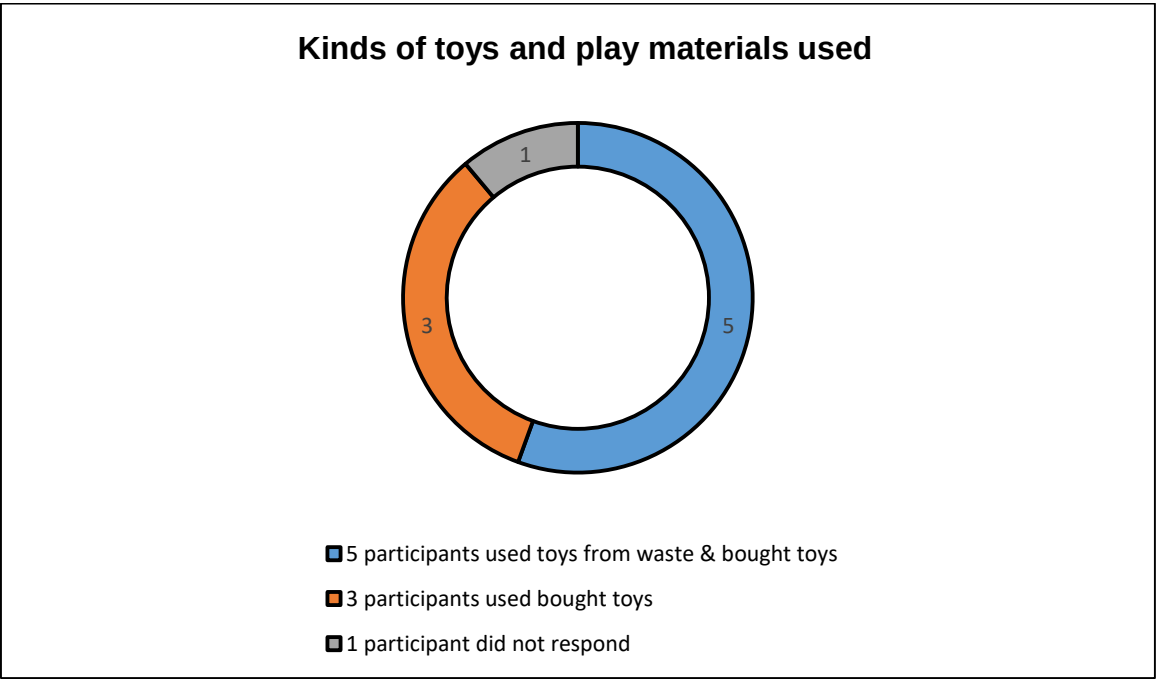


Figure 5 Kinds of toys and play materials used

Question 11 asked the toy librarians whether they used commercially made toys and play materials or if they included toys and play materials that they upcycled from waste. Five toy librarians who participated in the study indicated that they used toys that they bought as well as ones that they upcycled from waste. Three participants stated that they only used bought toys, while one participant did not respond. Figure 6 shows the adaptations that the participants made to the toys and the play environment.

4.2.9 Adaptations made to the toys and the play environment

Toy librarians may require adapting toys and the play environment to meet young children's needs. The following figure represents their responses to whether they adapted toys and the play environment.

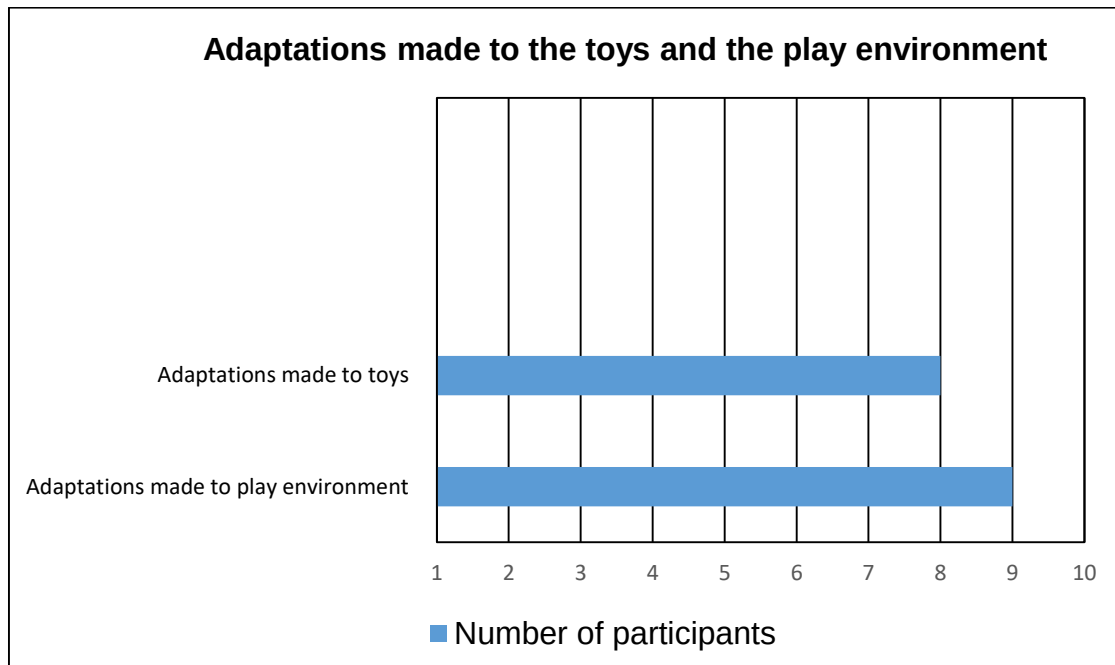


Figure 6 Adaptations made to the toys and the play environment

When the toy librarians were asked whether they adapted the toys they used to suit young children, eight indicated that they did. One toy librarian indicated that she did not do any adaptations. All the toy librarians indicated that they adapted the play environment. They made simple changes to the play environment to meet children's needs. In the following section indicates and discuss toy librarians' response to the question on challenges they face in implementing inclusive education.

4.2.10 Challenges in implementing inclusive education

The final question on the questionnaire asked the toy librarians if they encountered any challenges in implementing inclusive education, and the following figure presents their answers.

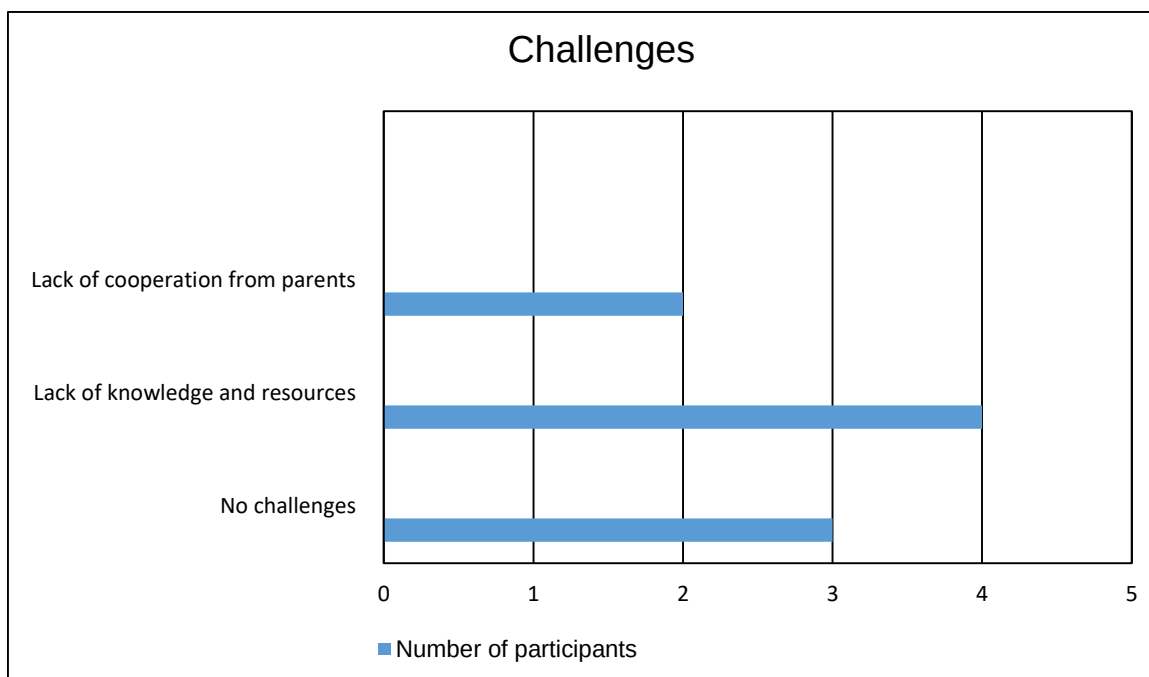


Figure 7 Challenges in implementing inclusive education

Participants A, B and C indicated that they had no challenges in implementing inclusive education in their toy libraries. These three participants work in a similar context, as they work in an organisation that caters for children with severe disabilities. Participant E and I stated that their greatest challenge in implementing inclusive education was the lack of cooperation from the parents. However, participant E added that her toy library was upstairs, which made it inaccessible for children who could not walk. Participants F and H indicated that a major challenge in implementing inclusive education was their own lack of knowledge and training in inclusive education. While participants D and G reported that there was a lack of specific resources for children with disabilities, participant I indicated that practitioners who did not allow children to play was her greatest challenge. In the following section the data obtained from the semi-structured interviews is presented.

4.3 Data Obtained from the Semi-structured Interviews

In this section, I present the data gathered from the semi-structured interviews, which had thirteen questions in them. I have drawn the categories from each of the questions, and the aims and objectives of the study guided how I selected these categories. There are eleven categories, because two questions had

similar responses, and I discuss each category in detail in this section. Table 8 outlines the main categories which guided the analysis and findings of this section on the toy librarians' interviews.

Interview question	Category	Participant								
		A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
1	Definition of inclusive education									
	a) including children with a disability and without a disability to learn together	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	
	b) No definition						x			x
2	Accommodating children of different race, gender, ability and socio-economic backgrounds									
	a) Language of instruction - English	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
	b) Language of instruction – Vernacular									x
	c) Children of different culture	x	x	x	x	x		x		x
3	Toy librarians' roles									
	a) Teach through play	x			x	x	x	x	x	x
	b) Stimulate children	x	x	x		x				
	c) Lend toys	x	x				x	x	x	x
	d) Train parents	x	x	x		x			x	x
	e) Train ECD practitioners						x			x
4	Creating a safe environment									
	a) Supervision	x		x		x		x	x	
	b) Gates are locked	x	x	x	x		x	x		x
	c) Toys are checked	x	x			x				
5	Planning									
	a) By using themes	x	x	x		x	x		x	x
	b) By using different skill levels	x	x	x	x					
	c) According to age				x					
	d) Using resources such as guides and the Internet	x	x							x

Interview question	Category	Participant								
		A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I
6	Conducting play with children with disabilities									
	Including children with disabilities	x	x	x	x	x			x	x
7	Differentiating play activities for young children									
	a) Age appropriate (chronological age)	x			x	x	x	x	x	x
	b) Skills levels (ability/developmental age)	x	x	x			x			
8	Assessment									
	a) Observation	x	x	x		x	x		x	x
	b) Checklist	x								
	c) No assessment				x					
9	How support is provided									
	a) Working one-on-one with the child	x					x		x	x
	b) Referrals to other professionals/OT/Remedial/ Psychologist Speech therapist/ Neurologist	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x
10	Promoting inclusive education									
	a) Yes	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
	b) No									
11	Impacting change									
	a) Yes	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
	b) No									

Table 8 Frequency of categories in the interviews

4.3.1 Main category: Defining inclusive education

Seven participants in this study defined inclusive education using the medical model definition. This was clear in the language they used which included terms such as "special needs", "disabled" and "disability". However, two participants did not define inclusive education. These two participants mentioned that they have never heard of inclusive education this is the reason why they could not define it.

4.3.2 Main category: Accommodating children of different race and socio-economic backgrounds

All the toy librarians who participated in this study indicated that they accommodated children of different race, gender, ability and socio-economic backgrounds in their toy libraries. They indicated that language was very important in their environment. Regarding the language of teaching and learning, eight of the toy librarians indicated that they used English, while only one of the toy librarians mentioned that she used the vernacular. In all the participants' toy libraries, the children who attended the programme were from different cultures and socio-economic backgrounds.

4.3.3 Main category: Toy librarian's role

From the data generated from the interviews, the toy librarians indicated that their roles were the following: to teach; to train ECD practitioners; to train parents; to lend toys; to stimulate children; and, to teach them through play. Seven of the nine participants interviewed indicated that their role was to teach the children. Other toy librarians used words such as "stimulate"(Participant A, B, C, D & E) and "develop" (A, B, C, D, E, F, H & I) to describe their roles. These words are closely linked to teaching. Merriam-webster (2015) online dictionary define to stimulate as, "to excite to activity or greater activity." This suggests that when toy librarians use terms such as, "stimulate" young children, they activate young children to participate in activities. The same dictionary provides several definitions of develop, however the one that I have chosen defines "to develop" as follows "make active or promote the growth of". This meaning implied that when toy librarians developed young children they would be supporting their progress in all domains. In relation to their roles, two of the participants mentioned that they trained ECD practitioners. Seven participants mentioned that their role

is to teach through play, while six of the participants stressed that they train the parents.

4.3.4 Main category: Creating a safe environment

All toy librarians who participated in this study indicated that they created a safe environment for young children in the following ways: by creating enough space for young children to play, so that they would not be harmed; by checking toys and play materials for safety; by locking the gates and supervising the children. Two participants indicated that they created enough space, while three participants indicated that they checked the toys. Seven participants mentioned that they ensure that the gates were locked, and five participants indicated that they supervised the children.

4.3.5 Main category: Planning

The toy librarians who participated in this study indicated that they planned for the activities that they gave the young children. When asked how they planned for the children's activities, three participants indicated that they used themes only, while four of the participants mentioned that they planned according to themes and the children's skills level. Three participants used other resources, such as the Internet and their centres' guides.

4.3.6 Main category: Conducting play with children with disabilities

Eight of the toy librarians stated that they conducted play sessions with children who were living with disabilities. However, one participant indicated that she rarely conducted play activities with children who were living with disabilities.

4.3.7 Main category: Differentiating play activities for young children

The toy librarians in this study indicated that they differentiated their activities. When asked how, all of them claimed that they differentiated according to children's age and their developmental level. Five toy librarians stated that they differentiated activities according to age only. Two toy librarians mentioned that they differentiated activities according to both the children's level of skills and their age. Two participants indicated that they differentiated activities according to the children's level of skills only.

4.3.8 Main category: Assessment

Eight toy librarians who participated in this study claimed that they assessed the young children. When asked how, seven mentioned that they assessed through observation. One of the participants assessed the children by using a checklist, while another assessed them by using observation and a checklist. However, one of the participants mentioned that she did not assess the children at all.

4.3.9 Main category: Providing additional support

Regarding to additional support, five of the toy librarians indicated that they support young children by referring them to specialists and they also worked with the children on a one-on-one basis. Three toy librarians highlighted that they refer children who need additional help to specialists only. However, one of the participants stated that she did not provide any additional support to those children who required it.

4.3.10 Main category: Promoting inclusive education

All the toy librarians who participated in this study indicated that they promoted inclusive education. I have summarised their responses to question 12, which asked them how they saw their role as promoting inclusive education in Table 9:

Participant	Promoting inclusive education
A	Teaching children with and without disabilities together
B	Giving young children a chance
C	Understanding the children's needs
D	Engaging everyone including those in the community who are neglected
E	Integrating children with disabilities and without disabilities
F	Doing the same activities children do with specialists
G	Doing remedial work
H	Accommodating every child
I	Involving other people

Table 9 Promoting inclusive education

Key

Colour	Category code	Number of participants
	Medical model	4
	Social model	5

The toy librarians' responses as to how they saw their role in promoting inclusion was divided into two main categories: either they saw their role from a medical model (four participants) or the social model of disability (five participants).

4.3.11 Main category: Making an impact that leads to change

All the toy librarians who participated in this study indicated that they see their roles as making an impact that leads to change. I have summarised and tabulated their responses of how the toy librarians think they are making an impact that leads to change. Table 10 gives a summary of participants' responses in relation to the question of how they saw their role as making an impact that leads change.

Participant	Response
A	Assisting children to become more independent, including children with special needs
B	Getting parents and their children involved
C	Empowering children with life skills
D	Putting play on the top of the conversation in the ECD space and using toys to engage at social level
E	Children with disabilities are within the same space with the rest of the learners. Parents of children living with disabilities refer to other parents
F	Helping ECDs in the community with planning according to theme
G	By assisting children who struggle in classes, for them to perform better
H	Assisting other ECDs in the community by getting them involved
I	Encouraging toy librarians to make their own toys through recycling

Table 10 How toy librarians make an impact that leads to change

Key

Colour	Category	Number of participants
	Collaboration	5
	Medical model thinking	3
	Social model thinking	1

I have categorised responses that were closely linked, and came up with three categories: collaboration, medical model thinking and social model thinking. Five toy librarians felt that they were making a change, because they collaborated with either parents and/or other ECDs in the community. Three toy librarians saw themselves as having an impact, because they included and assisted young children who were living with disabilities. I have categorised the latter view as belonging to a medical model of thinking. This is because they viewed children

as having "deficient" and they needed to be "fixed". One toy librarian saw herself as making a change, because she empowered children with life skills. This showed that her views were more inclined to the social model of disability thinking. This is because the social model suggests that inclusive education prepares children with skills that they will require in life to equally participate as members of a society. In the next section, I shall give a synopsis of toy librarians who participated in this study.

4.4 Synopsis of Toy Librarians

4.4.1 Participant A

Participant A is a toy librarian who was passionate about working with young children. Her toy library was housed in a centre which catered for ECD children with diverse needs. She had been working as a toy librarian for one year. In her daily work, she went to ECD classrooms at her centre during scheduled times and conducted play sessions with young children. She also lent toys to children to use at a home, as she believed that lending toys to young children would assist with the bonding between the parent and the child. Participant A was an eloquent speaker who freely expressed her thoughts towards the work that she did. She viewed inclusive education as education that included children with disabilities and able-bodied children in the same learning environment. Participant A pointed out that while children with diverse needs were included in the same environment, the activities must be adapted to suit them in that setting. She strongly felt that young children should not be separated according to gender, race and ability, as this would be discriminatory. Participant A believes that all children were different, and they should be respected and loved as such. She also introduced technology to all children in her centre. Participant A strongly believed that young children should be supervised at all the times. She also expressed the view that activities for young children must be differentiated according to age and level of skills. Participant A maintained that she was promoting inclusive education when she watched young children grow and develop. She saw herself as contributing towards change by helping young children to become independent.



Figure 8 Participant A's toy library

4.4.2 Participant B

Participant B is an enthusiastic toy librarian who enjoyed working with young children. She worked at a centre that catered for children living with severe disabilities. Participant B has had more than four years' experience of working in the toy library. She conducted play session from Monday to Friday during her scheduled time, and she also lent toys to the children after each play session. Furthermore, she trained parents on how to use the toys and the importance of a toy library. Participant B defined inclusive education as education that included all children in all areas of play. She welcomed children from different cultures at the toy library. Although she used English as the language of learning and teaching, she also code-switched to accommodate all the children whose mother tongue was another language. Participant B was keen to learn and did not rely only on information provided by her centre, but she searched for information on the internet. She also tried new things that she learnt in a workshop or training. Participant B believed that young children should be treated equally. At her centre, children did not bring food from home. Instead, they ate the same food

that the centre provided, as this was a way of treating them all equally. She emphasised that the learning environment must be safe for all children, so she supervised children to ensure that they were safe. The activities she gave to the children were differentiated according to their stage of development. She assessed her children through observation, and she also did self-reflection to evaluate her own teaching. Participant B saw her role as stimulating and developing children by using toys. She saw herself as promoting inclusive education by giving an opportunity to young children and believed that they could do something. She saw herself as having made an impact that led to change, because she involved young children and their parents in the toy library.



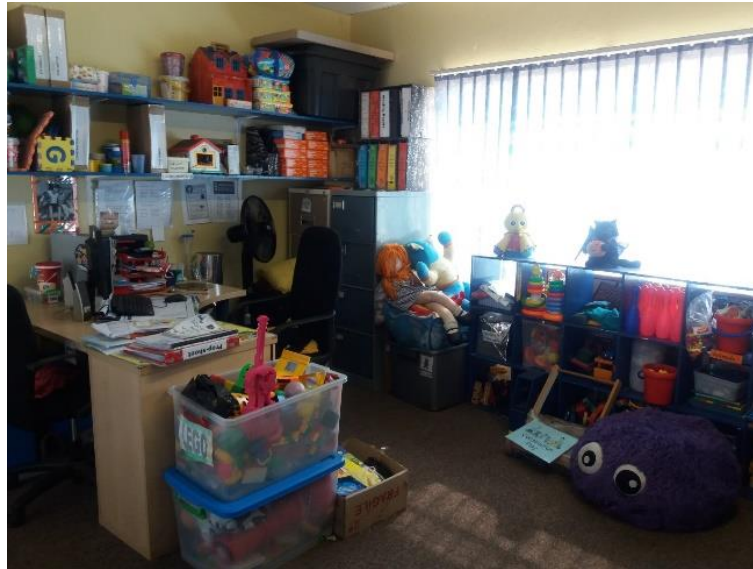


Figure 9 Participant B's toy library

4.4.3 Participant C

Participant C is a toy librarian at a centre that catered for young children with severe disabilities. She has been a toy librarian for over twelve years. Participant C conducted play sessions with young children four days a week during her scheduled toy library time. She defined inclusive education as education that included children living with disabilities and those without disabilities. Participant C used English as a medium of teaching and learning, but she stressed that she code switched if a child did not understand a language. She saw her role as teaching and stimulating the children using toys. Participant C said that it was important to give young children choices, enough space and to understand their needs. In her planning, Participant C used themes, and she differentiated the activities that she gave to young children according to their stage of development. She ensured that young children were always supervised. Her means of assessment was by observation. Participant C saw herself as promoting inclusive education by giving young children the opportunities to make their own choices. She felt that she made a difference, as she prepared young children for the skills that they might use later in life.



Figure 10 Participant C's toy library

4.4.4 Participant D

Participant D is a toy librarian at a toy library that catered for young children who attended different ECD centres in her community. She has been working as a toy librarian for more than four years. Each of the ECD centres visited the toy library once a week. In addition, children older than six visited the toy library. Participant D was passionate about making a change in her community. She defined inclusive education as education that included children of different age groups, different skills levels and different abilities when it came to learning. Participant D accommodated children of diverse needs in her toy library, especially those who were from poor communities that surrounded her toy library. English is used as a medium of communication. However, the toy library was open to all children, even if they could not speak English. Participant D saw her role as providing the children with access to play, because many children from her surrounding community did not have access to toys. She arranged for young children to be given food if they attended her sessions. Although the play sessions that she conducted with young children were planned, she did not assess young children

who visited the toy library. Participant D stressed that in her toy library she promoted young children's social, physical, intellectual, creative and emotional development. Toy library activities were differentiated according to age. She created an environment that was safe for all children by ensuring that the toy library premises were secure. Participant D believed that she was promoting inclusive education, by engaging everyone who was neglected in her community to participate in the toy library's activities. Furthermore, she emphasised that she made a change in her toy library and community by making play become at the top of the conversation in ECD, and she used toys to engage at social level.



Figure 11 Participant D's toy library

4.4.5 Participant E

Participant E is a toy librarian who was ardently absorbed in the toy library work. She has worked as a toy librarian for one year. Participant E conducted play sessions with young children from Mondays to Fridays. Her centre catered for children living with disabilities and mainstream children. These children attended ECD classes at her centre. She defined inclusive education as involvement of children with special needs in all activities that could be done with mainstream children. In her centre, English is used as the medium of teaching and learning, however, participant E code switched to accommodate children who did not understand English. She stressed that activities are supposed to suit all children, hence her activities are neither based on children's cultural nor on their language backgrounds. Participant E emphasised that she facilitated teaching differently from the classroom teacher, because she used toys which the children found more stimulating. Her method of teaching was play, and she differentiated play activities according to age. Participant E used observation to assess children. She assisted young children who faced challenges by working with them on a one-on-one basis. The children who she was unable to help were referred to an empowerment team in her centre. She saw her role as promoting inclusive education, because children with disabilities shared the same learning space as mainstream children. Participant E felt that she helped to make a change, because the parents who had children with disabilities referred other parents to her centre. To support her views, Participant E said: "Change may take a while, but a little bit at a time, definitely we will get there". Her challenge in implementing inclusive education was how to further assist young children who experienced developmental delays.



Figure 12 Participant E's toy library

4.4.6 Participant F

Participant F is a toy librarian who is passionate about her work, although she has worked as a toy librarian for only one year. She conducted play sessions with young children from Mondays to Fridays. These children attended ECD classes at her centre, and there were approximately twelve children per session. These children went to the toy library at scheduled times every day. In addition to conducting play session with young children, she trained ECD practitioners on how to use toys and to make toys from waste material. These practitioners were from five ECD centres, and her organisation was in partnership with them. Her centre accepted children who were living with moderate disabilities. She defined inclusive education as education that included children with disabilities by adapting toys to cater for them. Participant F included children from diverse cultures in her toy library. English is used as the medium of teaching and learning. However, code switching was used for children who struggled to understand English. In her planning she used themes and differentiated activities according to the children's age. Participant F used observation to assess children's progress. Children who faced a challenge during activities in her toy library were referred to an empowerment team. She joined the empowerment team when these children attended sessions, so that she may also learn from the

empowerment team and do the same activities with them in her toy library. Participant F saw her role as promoting inclusive education through the empowerment team. She believed that she was contributing to change, because she was reaching the broader community by training other ECD practitioners who were also working with young children.



Figure 13 Participant F's toy library

4.4.7 Participant G

Participant G works as a toy librarian in a private school that caters for children from three years to Grade 3. She has worked as a toy librarian for seven years. Children came to the toy library during scheduled times, and she took about 10 children for each play session. In addition to conducting play sessions with young children, she lent toys to ECD practitioners and Grade 1 to Grade 3 teachers. Participant G planned for the sessions that she conducted with the young children, by using themes. However, she also provided young children with opportunities for free play, but these activities were unplanned. Children were provided with the opportunity to choose the toys that they wanted to play with. Participant G works with young children of different cultures, however, she used isiZulu as a medium of communication. Although she used one of the vernacular languages, she found it caused difficulties, because there are many children who spoke different languages, as they were from neighbouring countries. Her activities were differentiated according to age. She was happy when children were using the toys, however, she felt that she could not lend the toys to children as they might break them. Participant G supported children who struggled by doing a lot of sensory activities with them. In addition, she assisted some of the children who experienced challenges on a one-on-one basis. Participant G referred children who she could not help to professionals. She highlighted that when children came to the toy library, she made them work in pairs: children are paired so that they could assist one another. For instance, a child who is best at puzzles is paired with the one who struggles completing a puzzle. Her wish was for outdoor play equipment for children with physical disabilities, so that they could play like other children.



Figure 14 Participant G's toy library

4.4.8 Participant H

Participant H is a toy librarian who conducts play sessions with ECD children in a toy library, that caters specifically for them. Her organisation selects ECD centres from the community that do not have play resources that they support. The ECD centres bring their children to the toy library on scheduled days and times. She has worked as a toy librarian for one year. The children at her centre also attended the toy library during scheduled times, and she took these children in small groups. English is used as the medium of teaching and learning at her toy library, but she code switched if a child did not understand English. She

defined inclusive education as children who were living with disabilities who learned together with able-bodied children in the same school. In her centre, they included children with diverse needs. A mentor assisted children who were living with disabilities. She supported children who struggled with the activities on a one-on-one basis. However, children who needed additional help were referred to an empowerment team to assist them. The play sessions she conducted were planned according to themes. She always supervised children in the toy library, and assessed them through observation. Participant H differentiated activities according to the age of the children. She saw her role as promoting inclusive education, because many children were assisted from different cultures with diverse needs. Participant H also stressed that she was helping to make a change, because she improved the ECD centres in her community. These ECDs do not have resources and practitioners lack knowledge on how toys assist to develop young children



Figure 15 Participant H's toy library

4.4.9 Participant I

Participant I was a dedicated toy librarian who conducted play sessions with young children in her centre. She has worked as a toy librarian for four years, and the children attended her classes during scheduled toy library times. Participant I took children to the toy library on a one-on-one basis. She also conducted outreach programmes, which held play sessions with children in marginalised communities. In her toy library, English was used as the medium of teaching and learning, but some of the children struggled with English, because at home they spoke different languages. Her toy library sessions were planned according to

themes, and she differentiated her activities according to the children's age. When I interviewed her, she stated that she had never heard of inclusive education. However, later in the interview, she discovered that she was promoting inclusive education, because I explained to her that inclusive education goes beyond supporting children with disabilities. It also reached children who had no access to early learning programme and ensuring that all children participated in the toy library activities. Participant I mentioned that a major challenge to implementing inclusive education was a lack of cooperation from parents who brought their children to her centre.





Figure 16 Participant I's toy library

4.5 Conclusion

In this study, the researcher was interested in investigating the roles of toy librarians that were in line with an inclusive pedagogy that promoted inclusive education. This chapter discussed the findings which clearly revealed that there are many roles that toy librarians perform. Six major themes from the participants have emerged from the data presented in this chapter: having the knowledge and an understanding of inclusive education; using the medical model of disability; implementing an ECD curriculum through teaching through play, assessing and support; collaborating with parents and with other ECD centres; and, adapting the environment. These themes are analysed and discussed in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 5: DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

5.1 Introduction

This chapter analyses and discusses the findings of the categories that emerged from the interviews and questionnaires. This study was a qualitative research, which used interviews and questionnaires to collect the data from the toy librarians, which was presented in Chapter 4. Themes that were identified were matched to the principles of an inclusive pedagogy, as well as to the roles that toy librarians were expected to perform according to the NIECDP (2015). This study aimed at discovering the roles and responsibilities of toy librarians that promoted inclusive education. I begin this chapter by outlining how the main research question and sub-questions were answered by this study. Then, I analyse and discuss the main themes and their sub-themes simultaneously. Finally, I give my personal reflection on which roles of the toy librarians promoted inclusive education. Figure 17 gives a snapshot of the research findings from both interviews and questionnaires.

Figure 17 A snapshot of research findings

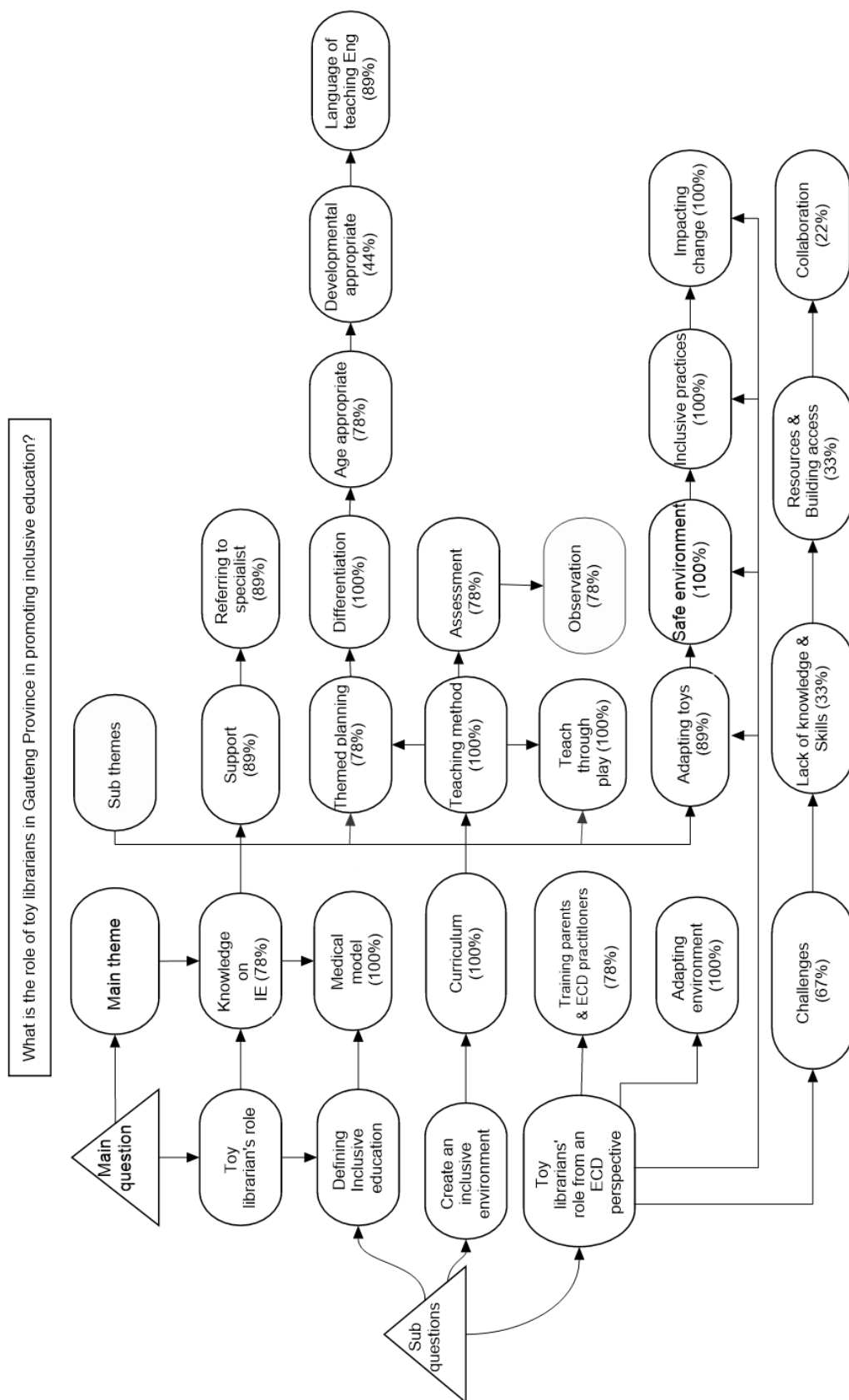


Figure 17: A snapshot of research findings

5.1.1 Answering the research questions

This chapter provides answers to the research questions. The main question guiding this study was: "What is the role of toy librarians in promoting inclusive education?" There were three sub-questions: "How do toy librarians define inclusive education?"; "How do toy librarians create an inclusive environment for learning?"; and, "How do toy librarians view their role in early childhood from an inclusive perspective?" The next section answers the main research question.

5.1.2 What is the role of toy librarians in promoting inclusive education?

This study sought to investigate the role of toy librarians in promoting inclusive education, and it aimed at identifying the roles of toy librarians that were in line with an inclusive pedagogy (Spraat & Florian, 2014). The role of toy librarians in promoting inclusive education moved from being a generic role to a more specific role: it targeted the removal of barriers to learning and helped the development of young children. Knowledge about inclusive education empowered toy librarians to identify barriers located within the individual child and within the socio-cultural environment.

Matanhire (2017, p. 104) argued that "knowledge of inclusive teaching and learning strategies could improve teacher confidence in using different inclusive strategies to teach all children". If toy librarians have an in-depth knowledge of what inclusive education is, then they will be in a position to facilitate access to participation and to remove barriers to learning for all young children who attend their programmes. The toy librarians who participated in this study worked with young children, so their mandate is to include all children in their early learning programme as stated in NIECDP (2015). Therefore, having knowledge of inclusive education will empower them in implementing inclusive education in their programmes. Dapudong (2014, p. 3) argued that "teachers' knowledge is essential to ensure the delivery of programmes that are appropriate for learners with diverse needs".

Since Vygotsky and Piaget's constructivist theories underpinned this study, the findings and their implications were situated within their theoretical frameworks.

As discussed earlier in Chapter 2, Vygotsky (1978) postulated that the socio-cultural context played a fundamental role in promoting children's learning. His theory suggested that learning happened in a socio-cultural context, where young children interacted with knowledgeable adults and peers. Florian and Rouse (2009, p. 599) argued that "sociocultural theory suggests ways in which we can address the difficulties encountered when educating children with diverse needs in different contexts". This implied that if Vygotsky's theory was to be applied by the toy librarians, then they could be in a position to identify the barriers located within the social environment. It would also help to develop an understanding of the barriers that impeded young children's learning and development. Once the toy librarians were aware of these barriers, then they might be able to implement strategies to address them. However, this was only possible if toy librarians had knowledge and an understanding of inclusive education. In addition, Vygotsky (1978) believed that adults played an important role in children's learning, because adults promoted children's learning by extending their learning in social contexts. Florian and Rouse (2009) argued that viewing learning as a dynamic process of social interactions also led to an inclusive pedagogy. Therefore, it is crucial for toy librarians to have knowledge and understanding of inclusive education in order for them to reflect on how their interactions affect young children's learning experiences. Furthermore, Florian and Rouse (2009, p. 599) argued that "classroom teachers must consider how the decisions they make effect pupils' learning experience". This idea also applied equally to toy librarians, because they needed to reflect on how their actions influenced young children's learning and development.

Piaget's theory of stages of cognitive development was significant to this study, as it helped toy librarians to identify barriers to learning located within a child. As discussed previously in Chapter 2, Piaget's theory introduced four stages of children's cognitive development. Piaget (1964) believed that all children pass through these biological stages. These stages reflected their intellectual ability to solve problems. Piaget's theory of development assisted toy librarians to identify biological barriers that impeded young children's learning and development. In

addition, Hamamrad (2016, p. 3) stated that "since children are different in their cognitive levels and competence, teachers should bear in mind these differences before working out the tasks for them". This suggested that Piaget's theory could inform toy librarians as to the level of difficulty they should pitch their play activities that must be neither too difficult nor too easy for young children. Instead, the activities must suit the children's developmental level. Furthermore, Piaget's (1964) theory was child-centred and it focused on teaching a child using techniques "that supports the child's interests and needs" (Bartolo 2010, p. 570). This meant that when toy librarians applied Piaget's theory to toy libraries, they would be in a position to consider young children's needs and interests. Therefore, toy librarians are required to understand that barriers to learning and development might be biological and located within a child, so that they would be able to identify inclusive strategies to address these barriers. When toy librarians apply Vygotsky and Piaget's theories to toy libraries, they would be in a better position to address barriers to learning in young children.

When toy librarians have fulfilled their role of having knowledge on inclusive education, they need to apply that knowledge in toy libraries. Their second role is to identify and remove barriers through providing support to young children. Toy librarians have a role to play with regards to supporting young children in their learning and development. White Paper 6 (2001, p. 24) highlighted that "in order to establish an inclusive education system, barriers to learning must be identified early and appropriate support provided". This suggested that toy librarians must provide support for all the young children who attended their programmes. According to Landsberg (2011, p. 21) "support is the cornerstone of successful inclusive education". All young children, at some point in their learning, need support to fully participate in learning activities. The provision of support is an inclusive practice, because children's diverse needs are catered for despite the barriers to learning they face. Furthermore, White Paper 6 (2001, p. 16) highlighted that "all children and youth can learn and that all need support". When children with diverse needs are supported, their participation is enhanced. Increasing children's participation makes the goal of inclusion a reality.

Reiterating Vygotsky's (1978) idea of the ZPD: when toy librarians support young children, then the toy librarians help to move the children into the zone that they could not have reached on their own. The ways toy librarians who participated in this study provided support is discussed in the next section.

5.1.2.1 Referring children to specialists

Toy librarians indicated that they supported young children with diverse needs. The data obtained in this study indicated that 88% of participants referred some of the young children to specialists for support. One participant said, "*so we would refer to other people*" (Participant A). This was reiterated by another participant who commented, "*we have therapy where we refer the children*" (Participant E). In South Africa, inclusive education aimed at teaching and supporting learners who had diverse needs within the same classroom. However, learners were separated in order to get support from specialists, as shown by research on inclusive education in South Africa (Hay, 2012; Geldenhuys & Wevers, 2013; Dreyer, Engelbrecht & Swart, 2013; Donohue & Bornman, 2014). According to this research, some of the teachers expressed a concern that they were unskilled in dealing with learners who required additional support. As a result, these teachers referred learners to specialists to get assistance. The same practice of separating learners to get support had been noted in this study. The only difference between these previous studies and this study was that the participants involved were toy librarians instead of teachers. In the following section, the researcher delved deeper in answering the main research question: What is the role of toy librarians in promoting inclusive education?

5.2 Knowledge and Understanding of Inclusive Education

One of the themes that emerged from the study is having knowledge and understanding of inclusive education. Although the data obtained from both the questionnaires and the interviews indicated that 78% of the participants had some knowledge about inclusive education, their knowledge was limited. The toy librarians' knowledge only partly aligned with the concept of inclusive education in South Africa. When the researcher asked participants whether they fully

understood inclusive education or partly understood it, only 44% of the participants indicated that they fully understood what inclusive education was, while 56% indicated that they partly understood the concept. The participants' understanding of inclusive education was limited to integrating children who were living with disabilities and those without disabilities in the same classroom. This was illustrated by responses such as, "*Abled children [are in the] same class with disabled or special needs children*" (Participant A). By integrating children into the mainstream of education, it did not mean that inclusive education was being implemented, instead this was just a step towards inclusive education. Inclusive education needed to go beyond social integration to ensure that toy librarians identified young children's diverse needs and that the toy librarians were able to meet these children's needs.

White Paper 6 (2001) made a distinction between integration and inclusion. Integration is getting children to fit into "a present system, while inclusion is about identifying and valuing the differences among all children and building on the similarities" (White Paper 6, 2001, p.17). Therefore, inclusive education goes beyond integrating children living with disabilities within mainstream classrooms. It is also about ensuring the meaningful participation of all children. Another participant commented, "*[inclusive education is having] normal children and disability children [learning together]*" (Participant C). This shows that the participant lacked an understanding about inclusive education. She understood it as the integration of children living with disabilities in mainstream classrooms. These findings resonated with several studies that were conducted in South Africa on inclusive education by Eloff and Kgwete (2007); Ntombela (2011); Walton (2011); Meltz, Herman and Pillay (2014) which indicated that many teachers, lacked knowledge and understanding of what was meant by inclusive education. The only difference from previous studies is that in this study the participants were toy librarians and not teachers. However, toy librarians were not an exception, as it was clear from the data obtained that they lacked knowledge about inclusive education.

The White Paper 6, which dealt with inclusive education, was published in 2001. This made it surprising to find that there were people who worked in the early childhood space who had not heard of inclusive education, despite working with young children in early learning programmes. Twenty-two per cent of the participants indicated that they had never heard about inclusive education. This was evident in response such as, *"Um - honestly I just heard it for the first time – it was my first, first time to hear that word inclusive education, alright, I have no knowledge at all"* (Participant I). This response clearly illustrated that the toy librarian had no idea about what inclusive education was, although this participant had worked as a toy librarian for four years. Another participant stressed that, *"I have never heard of inclusive education"* (Participant B). This meant that I agree with Donahue and Bornman (2014, p. 11) that "the DoE must continue with the information and advocacy programme on inclusive education as indicated in White Paper 6 (2001)". This implied that the DoE has a mandate to inform everyone working with young children about inclusive education. Engelbrecht, Nel, Smith and van Deventer (2016, p. 532) expressed the same sentiment that, "the DoE must spread information about inclusive education". There is still a need to broadcast information about inclusive education to everyone who works, in the education sector, including the ECD space.

Toy librarians work in the ECD space. However, they (in a similar way to other ECD workers) were not actively involved in workshops and trainings on inclusive education, which were conducted by the DoE. Okwany and Ebrahim (2019, p. 1) acknowledged this problem of exclusion, because they stated that "ECD programmes have been marginalised." In South Africa, toy libraries are mostly run by NPOs. Although these organisations were recognised in the NIECDP (2015) policy, they were not included in workshops and trainings conducted by the DoE. While the DoE focused on training teachers who worked in schools, they ignored toy librarians, yet everyone had a crucial role to play in inclusive education. Toy librarians need to understand in depth about inclusive education. White Paper 6 (2001, p.18) highlighted the following: "[T]eachers will need to improve their skills, knowledge and develop new ones". By application, this

suggested that toy librarians also needed to develop their skills and knowledge about inclusive education, so that they were able to include young children with diverse needs in their toy library programme.

Toy librarians could play an important role to ensure the effective implementation of inclusive education in their early learning programme. If toy librarians had knowledge of inclusive teaching and learning strategies, then it would improve their confidence in using different forms of instructional methods that ensure that all young children were able to learn. Nel, Nel and Hugo (2016, p. 29) argued that "updating one's knowledge and skills can result in raised confidence when dealing with diversity of needs as well as the barriers to learning". This implied that toy librarians needed knowledge and skills about inclusive education, so that they could deal with young children with different needs who attended their programmes. Engelbrecht, Nel, Nel and Tlale (2015, p. 5) asserted that "understanding of inclusive education played a role in teachers' practices in their own classrooms". This view also applied to toy librarians, because their level of understanding about inclusive education affected what they did and their confidence in implementation. The toy librarians who participated in this study lacked knowledge and understanding of what inclusive education was and how to implement it. According to the constructivist theories of Piaget (1964) and Vygotsky (1978), it meant that by having knowledge about inclusion, the toy librarians would be able to identify barriers located within an individual child and outside the child that could hinder a child from learning and developing.

5.3 Medical Model: Definition of Inclusive Education

This research's sub-question was: 'How do toy librarians define inclusive education?' The toy librarians who participated in this study defined inclusive education using the medical model. Seventy-eight per cent of the participants defined inclusive education as education that included children with a disability and children who had special needs. One of the participants stressed that inclusive education was about "*including children with special needs in the and mainstream*" (Participant E). Another participant defined inclusive education as including "*children with disability and children who don't have disability*"

(Participant H). These responses illustrated that the medical model was prominent in their definitions of inclusive education. This is consistent with research findings on inclusive education by Geldenhuys and Wevers (2013) and Ntombela (2011) who discovered that teachers' definition of inclusion was strongly grounded in the medical model of thinking. The only difference was that these two studies focused on teachers while this study focused on toy librarians. White Paper 6 (2001, p. 53) proposed the use of the term "barriers to learning" instead of "disabled learners and learners with special needs" as the latter terms were outdated and rooted in the medical model.

Twenty-two percent of the participants were not clear about their definition of inclusive education. This was evident in responses, such as inclusive education is about "*children with challenges and normal children [learning together]*" (Participant B). Another participant emphasised that inclusive education "*includes children of different, skills, abilities, and age groups [in our education]*" (Participant D). The above responses showed that there was an ambiguity in the toy librarians' definitions, which might be caused by a lack of understanding about the meaning of inclusive education. Pather (2011, p. 1115) argued that "inclusion often holds contesting notions in the minds of teachers", and this was also evident in the toy librarians' responses. Some of the toy librarians perceived inclusive education as a replacement of special needs education, while others saw it as education for all children. The view of inclusive education as a replacement for special needs education was problematic, because special needs education separated "children on the basis of race which was extended to separation on the basis of disability" (White Paper 6, 2001, p. 9). Thus, this view of inclusive education as a replacement of special needs education might perpetuate the separation of children according to ability and disability. Furthermore, special needs education used the medical deficit model approach that used language in a way that promoted the labelling of children. Agbenyega (2003, p. 2) suggested that "labels influence our whole thinking to the context of the label". This suggestion means that when we label individuals, then we limit ourselves to not seeing beyond the label. Instead, we focus on the label's description rather than

on an individual's potential. This view may lead to young children being excluded in toy library programmes.

According to Nel, Nel and Hugo (2016, p. 15), "the medical model is no longer the accepted model", because the medical model separated children into categories. Although the medical model is no longer accepted, Nel, Nel and Hugo (2016) further stressed that medical information was required when assessing and supporting young children who experienced barriers to learning and development. The medical model was important in helping to understand whether there were biological barriers that were located within a child. As discussed earlier, the Piaget's (1964) constructivist theory was relevant when it came to identify the biological barriers within a child. However, if toy librarians used Piaget's theory in conjunction with Vygotsky's (1978) socio-cultural theory, then they might be in a better position to understand barriers within the social context that also hindered children's learning and development. Although defining inclusive education using the medical model definition is no longer accepted in South Africa, it is important to use the medical model when assessing and supporting some of the children who might have biological barriers. However, there is a need for toy librarians to use both theories, so that they are able to identify children's specific barriers and to plan to support all of them.

5.4 Implementation of the Curriculum

The response to the question of how toy librarians created an inclusive environment for learning mainly related to how they implemented the curriculum. As mentioned previously in Chapter 2, the curriculum was the vehicle for inclusion, although it could also be the vehicle for exclusion. The DBE (2013) highlighted that the curriculum was a major barrier to learning. This is because the content that is taught, how it is taught, how children are assessed and supported may be inflexible to meet young children's needs. The sub-themes from the data that emerged under the theme of the curriculum were teaching methods and assessment. Toy librarians had a role in creating an inclusive environment for learning through their teaching methods and assessment. Nel, Nel and Hugo (2016, p. 36) argued that "no classroom is homogenous", which

implied that there was learner diversity in any given classroom. By creating an inclusive environment for learning, toy librarians needed to acknowledge that young children had diverse needs. Furthermore, Nel, Nel and Hugo (2016) maintained that "all classrooms should function as inclusive spaces, where diversities are acknowledged and regarded as learning opportunities". When applied to the toy librarians, this meant that toy libraries should accommodate children with diverse needs. All toy librarians who participated in this study implemented a curriculum. In the following section, the sub-themes for implementing a curriculum, which are teaching and assessment are discussed.

5.4.1 Teaching method: Teaching through play

The data generated from the interviews indicated that the 77% of the toy librarians teach. This was evident in responses such as "*I am a teacher. I teach, I facilitate teaching differently from the classroom teacher, because I use toys*" (Participant E). Another participant mentioned that "*I am there to teach*" (Participant A). It was clear that the toy librarians saw themselves as teachers. Smith (2018, p. 3) defined teaching as "the practise of attending to children's needs, experiences, feelings and mediate so that they learn particular things and go beyond the given". This means that if toy librarians viewed themselves as teachers, they should fulfil a teacher's role. Furthermore, when toy librarians take on a teacher's role, then they should employ appropriate teaching methods that would cater for diverse children. Inclusive education calls for teaching methods that are responsive to the needs of all children. As discussed in Chapter 2, the toy librarian was expected to utilise appropriate teaching methods for young children by implementing a pedagogy based on play. Kostelnik, Soderman and Whiren (2007, p. 37) stated that "there is a strong consensus among researchers that play is central to childhood learning". When toy librarians teach through using play, then they are creating an inclusive environment for learning, because they are utilising an appropriate teaching method for young children. Play is viewed as the best way for children to learn as opposed to rote learning. As discussed previously in Chapter 2, Piaget (1964) and Vygotsky (1978) were advocates of teaching young children through play.

5.4.1.1 Planning according to themes

Furthermore, the data obtained from the interviews indicated that 77% of the toy librarians created an inclusive environment for learning when they planned according to themes. This was evident in responses such as, "*I normally go according to theme as well*" (Participant A). This view was emphasised by other participants who stated: "*I plan my lesson according to the theme*" (Participant E); "*I plan according to their themes, so that the kids don't get confused*" (Participant F). Kostelnik, Soderman and Whiren, (2007, p. 410) argued that "teaching using themes allows young children to gain access to a topic in ways that suit their individual needs". However, it was Dewey in Kostelnik, Soderman and Whiren, (2007), who first proposed that the curriculum be related to children's real-life experiences, because it promoted their uniqueness. Themes helped to link children's authentic experiences to learning. When young children participated in theme-related activities, then they were able to form connections among individual bits of information. These connections contributed towards children's development of concepts and they were the most important reason to use themes in a young children's programme (Kostelnik, Soderman & Whiren, 2007). Therefore, teaching young children using themes enabled them to have access to knowledge, to achieve meaningful participation and to be included in the educational process.

5.4.1.2 Differentiation

Inclusive education, as discussed in Chapter 2, is a complex and multifaceted concept. Although inclusive education is a complex concept, Walton (2016, p. 139) argued it meant that "children are taught together in the mainstream and not separated based on the need for additional support". This suggested that the teaching of children with diverse needs in the mainstream called for teaching methods that catered for all children within the same space. Differentiation is a method of achieving inclusion, because it welcomes all young children to participate and learn together in the same space, but at different levels. The data obtained from the study showed that toy librarians created an inclusive environment for learning by using differentiated activities for young children. In the next section, I discuss how toy librarians differentiated activities.

5.4.1.3 Age appropriate activities

The data obtained from the study indicated that 78% of toy librarians differentiated activities according to age. This was evident in responses such as, *"I don't give them the same thing, I choose according to age appropriate, what's according to age"* (Participant F). Another participant said that, *"I consider the age of the child ... it must be age appropriate"* (Participant I). This view was also stressed by another participant when she mentioned, *"when we have two-year-olds, I know that I am supposed to have activities that are age appropriate"* (Participant E). These responses clearly indicated that the toy librarians differentiated activities according to age. The NIECDP (2015, p. 67) highlighted that early childhood programmes should "be delivered in age and developmental stage appropriate combinations". This meant that when toy librarians differentiated activities according to age, then they were fulfilling their role as indicated in the NIECDP (2015). Although young children's abilities should not be completely measured by age, it could guide adults working with young children to be aware of "what is interesting, safe, achievable and challenging for children to do" (Kostelnik, Soderman & Whiren, 2007, p.14). This view suggested that age might provide a measure which toy librarian could start differentiating play activities.

Kostelnik, Soderman and Whiren (2007, p. 15) argued that "to be developmentally appropriate means that adults who work with young children must have knowledge on how young children develop and learn and each child's strength, needs and interests". This implied that toy librarians should be aware of the stages of development young children pass through, which is an assumption that has its roots in Piaget's theory of cognitive development. Piaget (1964) postulated that young children would only be able to solve problems that were appropriate for their age. In addition, Kostelnik, Soderman and Whiren (2007, p. 15) argued that "to be developmentally appropriate means that adults working with young children must have knowledge about the social and cultural contexts in which children live". This assumption has its roots in Vygotsky's (1978) socio-cultural theory, because he proposed that children learnt through interactions with adults in social contexts. However, the toy librarians in this study never mentioned

the environment in which the child lived when differentiating their activities. This implied that when they differentiated activities according to age, their practice was consistent with Piaget theory. However, they neglected the social context, which Vygotsky advocated as important in children's learning. This indicated that the toy librarians had limited knowledge about curriculum differentiation. Limited knowledge about differentiation might hamper the successful implementation of inclusive education. As a result, some children could be excluded from learning.

Knowing the age of the child might also hamper successful differentiation, as age cannot be used solely as the measure for differentiating activities. Walton (2016, p. 158) argued that "differentiation assumes that, children come to class with different levels of readiness, interests and learning profiles". This view of differentiation went beyond knowledge of a child's age. In addition, to achieve successful differentiation, toy librarians should know the process of how children learn, the content to be learnt and the effects of the environment where they learn. A study conducted by Dalton, McKenzie and Kahonde (2012) on the implementation of inclusive education in South Africa revealed that many teachers lacked the knowledge and skills of how to differentiate the curriculum for learners. These findings were consistent with the findings in this study, with the only difference that this study focused on toy librarians.

5.4.1.4 Developmental stage appropriate

The data gathered in this study from the interviews and questionnaires indicated that some toy librarians differentiated activities according to the children's developmental level, which was also referred to as the skills level. Forty-four per cent of the toy librarians considered the developmental stage of the child when differentiating activities. This was evident in response such as: *"It depends on development of the child ... level of the children"* (Participant B). Another participant mentioned *"so I differentiate according to the skills of the child"* (Participant C). This participant was also referring to a child's developmental level, which indicated what a child was capable of doing. According to Blake, Winsor, Burkett and Allen (2011, p. 35), "in early childhood the term developmental is common, consistent with the field's long history that emphasises the importance of understanding children's development first and

foremost". Young children are unique individuals: while they may be the same age, their pace of development can be different. When differentiating the curriculum according to developmental stage, toy librarians should provide activities within the children's limits. However, young children must neither be given activities that are too easy for them nor ones that are too difficult. This approach is consistent with Piaget's theory of the stages of development. When activities are differentiated according to the stages of development, then access to participation is promoted (Arendale, 2018). Inclusive education is about increasing access and participation for children with diverse needs.

Although toy librarians mentioned that they differentiated their activities according to the children's developmental stage, this study was limited to interviews and questionnaires. As a result, this study provided little evidence for differentiation in practice, because toy librarians were not observed while differentiating activities with the children. The toy librarians revealed that they focused on the children's age and skills when differentiating their activities. However, they excluded the children's interests, needs, learning profile and the social context when differentiating their activities. This indicated that the toy librarians had limited knowledge about curriculum differentiation, which is problematic, as this might lead to some of the young children being excluded.

Furthermore, the differentiation of activities according to children's age and stage of development is a controversial issue. There have been heated arguments among theorists and educators in the field of early childhood about this issue in the past several decades. The differentiation of activities, according to children's age and developmental stage, is associated with Piaget's work. According to Blake et al. (2011, p. 35), "Piaget's research identified levels of thinking that evolved as children developed and in no way identified teaching practices or recommended systems of educational programmes". This suggested that an overreliance on Piaget's theory might be misleading, as Piaget did not propose a teaching methodology.

Another issue is that there has been almost no theorising about age and developmental stage appropriate activities for African children (Aubrey, 2017), as

little research has been conducted in Africa regarding this issue. Lee and Johnson (2007, p. 233) argued that "the field has maintained an allegiance to outdated and limited developmental theories that require updating and broadening". In addition, Pence (as cited in Aubrey, 2017, p. 2) emphasised that "this practice drew heavily on child development evidence from the United State of America [USA]". The problem is that what worked in the USA might not work in South Africa, because the contexts are so different. The term age and developmentally appropriate is also based on the assumption that there are activities that are appropriate to a specific age and stage. According to Hennig and Kirova (2012, p. 227), "this begs the question of who determines what is and what is not appropriate, and for whom". This implied that the idea of age and developmental stage was subjective, because it cannot be universally applied in other contexts. Furthermore, Lee and Johnson (2007, p. 233) argued that "child development theories of Piaget have not been attentive enough to the centrality of culture in children's development". This suggested that Piaget's theories neglected the socio-cultural influences on a child's development. Therefore, when toy librarians rely on differentiating curriculum according to age and stage of development, they might exclude some children, as they have neglected to take into account the impact of the socio-cultural context on children's learning and development. This suggests that Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory would help toy librarians to include more children when they consider ways to differentiate the curriculum.

5.4.1.5 Language of learning and teaching

Another theme that emerged is the choice of a language. Eighty-nine per cent of the toy librarians who participated in this study indicated that they use English as the language of learning and teaching (LoLT). Although they used English as the medium of teaching and learning, they indicated that they use code switching if the children did not understand English. This was shown in the responses as Participant F stated, "*we choose to use English because English caters for all ... but if a child comes and she doesn't understand English then that is where I change, I switch, I talk with her language*". Another participant stressed, "*our medium language of learning here is English*" (Participant H). These responses

were clear that English was the LoLT. However, one participant indicated that she used Zulu, because she said, *"Oh here its Zulu, yeah the medium of communication is Zulu ... it's Zulu though we also do English"* (Respondent G).

Language is an important tool that we use to communicate our thoughts, ideas and feelings (Jordaan, 2015). It has the potential to include and to marginalise individuals in schools and societies. The ability to understand and produce language through listening and speaking is crucial as it enables us to communicate with others. As noted in this study, eight out of the nine toy librarians used English to communicate with young children who attended their toy library programme. Canham (1972, p. 41) argued that "the mother tongue is a principal means of social control including communication". When a language other than the mother tongue was used, it hampered young children's communication capabilities. Among most researchers, there was a consensus that young children learn best in their mother tongue. Ozfidan (2017, p. 15) argued that "mother tongue is an inseparable element of a child's culture and that everyone has the right to learn his or her mother tongue". Therefore, toy librarians must give young children who attend their programmes opportunities to learn in their mother tongue. In South Africa, it could be claimed that language is a barrier to learning. According to Nel and Nel (2016, p. 93), "many children are wrongly labelled as slow learners because of their limited language proficiency in the language of learning and teaching". This suggested that teaching young children using a language that they were unfamiliar with might lead to exclusion.

According to Canham (1972, p. 37), "the language which was present with the child throughout the moments of his early life becomes closely attached to his very way of thinking". This meant that children's thoughts were closely linked to the language that they were most familiar with while growing up. In addition, Vygotsky's (1978) theory emphasised the role of language during children's acquisition of knowledge. According to Vygotsky (1978, p.131), "language plays a vital role in cognitive development". This suggested that through language young children acquired knowledge. Furthermore, Vygotsky (1978) argued that young children's acquisition of knowledge was through language mediated by

adults in social contexts. This implied that toy librarians had a role to play in young children's acquisition of language. According to a study on the language of instruction that was conducted in Tanzania and South Africa (LOITASA) from 2002 to 2012, children achieved better results when they learnt in their mother tongue rather than in a language where they lacked proficiency (Brocke-Utne, Desai, Qorro & Pitman, 2012). In addition, studies conducted by Cummins (2000) and Skutnabb-Kangas (2006) indicated that the use of mother tongue was important in improving academic achievement in children's early years.

Given that in 2016, 82% of young children between 0-6 years in Gauteng province were Black Africans (Statistics South Africa, 2018), it showed how crucial it was to teach young children in their mother tongue. López and Iribarren (2014, p. 109) stated that "to create a culturally responsive environment, teachers must incorporate instruction that gives linguistically and culturally diverse young children the kind of knowledge that can amend issues with access and power". By teaching young children in their mother tongue, it helped to address issues of inequality prevalent in the South African education system. If toy librarians used a mother tongue to teach young children, then it would ensure that they had access to participation in toy library programmes.

On the other hand, Gauteng as a province comprises people of many cultures. Considering the diverse languages that children who attend toy library programmes might speak, it would be appropriate for the toy librarians to use English as a medium of teaching and learning. However, this might be challenging for many of the young children. Davison (2017, p. 170) argued that "it is challenging for young children who speak a different language at home yet enter school where English is the primary language". The toy librarians in this study indicated that they used English as the language of instruction, but they also code switched when necessary. Therefore, it seemed that English as the LoLT was ideal in Gauteng, because the province comprised diverse cultural groups who spoke different languages. No one language would suit the whole of the Gauteng province, but the use of code switching, as indicated by the toy

librarians in this study, could ensure that all children understood instructions and were included in the education system.

5.4.2 Assessment of young children development and learning

Another way that toy librarians created an inclusive environment was by conducting assessments. Nel, Nel and Lebeloane (2016, p. 60) argued that "it is crucial to conduct assessment in order to determine young children's support needs". Seventy-eight per cent of toy librarians who participated in this study indicated that they assessed young children. They used observations and checklists to assess young children's development and learning. This was evident in responses such as, *"I use observation, just notes"* (Participant F) and another participant mentioned that *"I do process notes ... I just write what I have seen and observed"* (Participant B). These responses clearly revealed that the toy librarians assessed young children through observation, although other participants focused on the children's weaknesses. One of the toy librarians commented, *"when they are doing an activity, I start observing them, watching this child, and as a toy librarian, I pick [out] this child [who] cannot do one, two, three"* (Participant I). This toy librarian focused on what the child could not do instead of what the child could do, which is problematic as it might lead to young children being labelled. Messiou (2012, p. 11) maintained that "processes of marginalisation are closely linked to labelling". Therefore, those children who have been labelled were most likely to be placed on the margin or excluded. Instead, toy librarians should conduct assessments using appropriate means that ensured the inclusion of all children in the education system.

5.4.2.1 Assessing children's development and learning through observation

When the toy librarians observed children during their play sessions, then the toy librarians determined the children's progress in learning and development. Alford, Rollins, Padron & Waxman (2015, p. 625) argued that "classroom observation is a way of linking teachers' behaviour to children's outcomes, therefore creating a system more capable of producing developmental gains for young children". This implied that when the toy librarians observed young children during play sessions, they not only measured the young children's progress, but also how their own practices influenced the children's learning and development. Kostelnik,

Soderman and Whiren (2007, p. 172) argued that "observation produces immediate, reliable information that functions to improve interactional and instructional strategies with children". Therefore, toy librarians, who observed young children, gained immediate insights into how the children were progressing. This meant that the toy librarians were able to plan for additional activities to meet the children's needs.

The use of observational assessment was consistent with Piaget's (1964) theory, because he suggested that adults gained knowledge about children's development when they observed children during play. In addition, Kostelnik, Soderman and Whiren (2007) argued that observation assessment was conducted in natural settings. This suggested that the use of observation as an assessment was a pleasant way of obtaining information about children. In comparison to standardised assessment, observation assessment did not limit children by "focusing on their shortcomings or lack of skills but focuses on their strengths" (Kostelnik, Soderman & Whiren, 2007, p. 27). This meant that children's capabilities were identified when observation was used as a means of assessment. Although the use of observation as assessment was insufficient on its own to determine children's support needs, it provided some clues as to what they might require.

5.5 How Do Toy Librarians View Their Role from an Inclusive Perspective?

Four themes emerged in relation to how toy librarians viewed their role in ECD from an inclusive perspective: providing training to parents and ECD practitioners; adapting toy and play materials; adapting the environment; creating a safe physical environment; and, challenges in implementing inclusive education. A detailed discussion about the toy librarians' views about their role in relation to inclusive education is provided in this section.

5.5.1 Training parents and ECD practitioners

The data gathered from the questionnaires and interviews indicated that 78% of the toy librarians trained either parents and/or ECD practitioners. This was shown by responses such as, "*I train the teacher. Then the teacher they come with their children, [and] we play together*" (Participant F). This participant felt that she was

being inclusive when she trained the practitioners from other ECD centres in her community on how to teach young children through play. Another participant said, *"to manage the parents, I do the workshop for the parents"* (Participant B). These responses clearly indicated that the participants saw the importance of including other ECD practitioners and parents. Nel, Nel and Hugo (2016, p. 194) argued that "parents play an essential role in the development of their children during the pre-school years." This suggested that involving parents in the education of their children was crucial, because they needed to be part of their children's learning and development. By working together with the toy librarian, the parents could assist their children.

Parents were also helpful in providing information pertaining to barriers to learning that their children faced. It was important for toy librarians to collaborate with parents and caregivers of children who attended their programmes in order to gather this information. De Jager (2013) postulated that "parents and caregivers are a valuable source to provide information regarding children's abilities and they must be involved in any interventions". There was a need for parents to be equipped on how to assist their children at home. Some of the toy librarians, who had not trained any parents previously, indicated they were planning to include parents in future workshops. One of the participants said, *"We would like to start on a monthly workshop basis"* (Participant D). According to Vygotsky's (1978) socio-cultural theory, adults, in this case, the parents could play a vital role in their children's learning. When parents were involved in their children's learning, then the children's support network was expanded. This meant that not only the toy librarian provided assistance, but also the parents, so that all of these adults promoted the children's inclusion. The next section discusses how toy librarians adapted the physical environment.

5.5.2 Adapting the play environment

The data obtained from questionnaires indicated that the participants adapted the physical environment to suit young children's needs. One of the participants commented, *"we have kids' tables and chairs, [but for] those who can't sit in a chair, we have wheelchairs"* (Participant A). Another participant reiterated, *"for*

children in a wheelchair you can use trays to put toys so that the children will be able to play or do mobiles from the top of the roof if the children's condition is to lay on the back" (Participant F). These responses indicated that the participants were aware of adapting the physical environment, so that all children were included in the play activities. Barriers to learning might arise if the physical environment failed "to meet the diverse needs of all children "(White Paper 6, 2001).

5.5.2.1 Adapting toys and play materials

Resources, such as play materials and other equipment, might pose barriers to learning if they were not adapted to suit young children's needs (White Paper 6, 2001). In order to remove this barrier, toy librarians should adapt the play materials to suit young children's diverse needs. The information obtained from the questionnaires and interviews showed that 88% of the toy librarians adapted toys and play materials to suit young children's needs. This was noted in responses such as, *"the adaptation that I did is with the pencil grip [so that] the child holds the pencil in the right way"* (Participant G). This response clearly revealed how an adaptation was made to the play material. Guidelines for Inclusive Learning Programmes [DoE] (2005) highlighted the need to adapt learning materials, although it did not mention toys and play materials. Nonetheless, there was a need for toy librarians to adapt the toys and play materials, because they were used as young children's learning tools.

5.5.2.2 Creating a safe physical environment

Young children could be at risk of accidents and injuries because of an unsafe environment, so toy librarians aimed to create a physical safe environment. This was noted in responses such as, *"Ok, at my toy library the equipment that is not safe like the broken toys I throw them away or ... The place is so safe, you can go in at any time you will see"* (Participant B). The participant's response showed that she was aware of the importance of a physical safe environment for young children. Another participant said, *"I look at safety, and I make sure that whatever materials that they are going to play with, they are clean"* (Participant I), which emphasised the importance of safety. In addition, Kostelnik, Soderman and

Whiren, (2007, p. 108) argued that "safety is the first thing to think about related to the physical environment".

As discussed in Chapter 2, young children learn through play, therefore the physical environment where they play must be safe. White Paper 6 (2001, p. 6) stated that "barriers to learning may arise because of inaccessible and unsafe built environments". The data obtained in this study indicated that toy librarians were aware of the importance of a physical safe environment. Furthermore, the participants indicated that they always supervised the children to ensure that they were safe. This was evident in responses such as, *"supervision is always given, teachers and volunteers are outside. We all take turns"* (Participant A). Another respondent agreed with this view, as she said, *"you supervise them, you don't just leave them to be all over"* (Participant C). The American Academy of Paediatrics (2010, p.10) highlighted that "in ECD programmes, teachers should directly supervise children under the age of six by sight and sound at all times". This suggested that the toy librarians should be vigilant when working with young children. The participants in this study claimed that they watched children all the time. The following section discusses the practices that toy librarians considered to be inclusive.

5.5.2.3 Practices considered to be inclusive

In this study, the researcher noticed that toy librarians' practices were based on both the medical and social models of inclusion. Forty-four per cent of the participants' practices that they regarded as inclusive reflected the medical model thinking. This was evident in responses such as, *"when I have a group of children with both able and special needs children learning and playing together"* (Participant A). This participant's views were influenced by how she defined inclusive education, which she perceived as having able-bodied and special needs learners in the same space. Another participant stressed that, *"taking these learners with challenges from their classes helping teachers with them to improve with their work wherever they lack"* (Participant G). This participant's response reflected a medical model of thinking regarding inclusion, whereby

learners with challenges were withdrawn from the classes to get additional support. In addition, this response showed that learners were viewed as having deficiencies rather than barriers to learning. However, 66 % of the toy librarians viewed inclusive practices from a social model perspective. This was noted in responses such as, "*knowing learners and understanding their challenges*" (Participant C). Another toy librarian mentioned that, "*we do our programme in informal settlements*". Her response reflected an element of inclusive education, because children in these areas often did not have access to early learning.

As discussed in Chapter 2, inclusive education in South Africa has shifted from the medical model of disability to the social model, which viewed barriers to learning as arising from the social environment. This suggested that many young children had no formal access to early learning, so they faced a barrier to learning. However, the toy librarians who provided access to early learning for young children in areas which lacked formal access were promoting inclusive education. The Early Childhood Development Review (2017, p. 35) highlighted that "over a million children aged 3-5 years still do not have access to group learning programmes and most of these children are found in the poorest quintiles". This meant that when toy librarians took their programme to informal settlements, then they were promoting inclusive education.

5.5.2.4 Making an impact to encourage change

All the toy librarians indicated that they were making an impact, which encouraged change. They viewed their roles as having a positive impact when they collaborated, integrated children living with disabilities and understood children's needs. Five of the toy librarians who participated in this study believed that their role had made an impact, because they were collaborating either with parents or ECD programmes within their communities. This was evident in responses such as, "*Yeah I see to children and the parents, because I make them involved in the toy library*" (Participant B). This response revealed that the toy librarian viewed collaboration with parents as a role that helped to make a change. Three of the participants viewed their role as having an impact on

change, because *"children with disabilities are integrated into the mainstream of education"*. One participant commented, *"Children with disabilities are within the same space with the rest of the learners"* (Participant E). It is clear from this response that the toy librarian viewed her role as making a change, because children living with disabilities were learning in the same space as children who were without disabilities. Another participant viewed her role as having an impact, because she empowered young children with the skills they needed in life (Participant C).

5.6 Challenges in Implementing Inclusive Education

Studies on inclusive education, which were conducted internationally and locally, showed that there were challenges in the implementation of inclusive education. This study was not an exception, as the toy librarians indicated that they faced challenges in implementing inclusive education. The data gathered from both the questionnaire and the interviews revealed that 67% of the participants experienced challenges in implementing inclusive education. The three main challenges noted were: their own lack of knowledge and skills; few resources and the inaccessibility of the building housing the toy libraries; and, a lack of cooperation by the parents. In the next section, I provide a detailed discussion about each of the challenges.

5.6.1 Lack of knowledge and skills in implementing inclusive education

Thirty-three per cent of the toy librarians indicated that they lacked the knowledge and skills to implement inclusive education. This was shown in responses such as, *"I think that there is a lot more that we can learn especially when it comes to children with special needs, because those are very specialist disciplining skills that are required"* (Participant D). She felt that she needed to be trained and to learn more when it came to the managing of behaviour in her toy library. Another participant stressed that she had a *"lack of knowledge about inclusion"* (Participant F). These findings concerning the lack of knowledge about inclusive education were consistent with the findings from previous research in South Africa (Eloff & Gwete, 2007; Ntombela, 2011; Engelbrecht, Nel, Nel & Tlale, 2015). The only difference was that these studies focused on teachers, while this study focused on toy librarians. However, all of these studies implied that the lack

of knowledge by teachers and toy librarians was an obstacle to the implementation of inclusive education in South Africa.

5.6.2 Lack of resources and inaccessible buildings

In relation to the lack of resources, one of the participants mentioned "*my challenge is lack of specific toys that cater for children with disabilities*" (Participant G). It was clear in her response that she required toys that can be used with children living with disabilities. Another participant said, "*the fact that our toy library is upstairs and [there are] children who can't walk, we struggle getting them into the toy library*" (Participant E). This meant that the centre was inaccessible to children who used wheelchairs. As discussed earlier, this environment was a barrier to learning. Inclusive education aimed to remove physical barriers, so that all young children were able to participate. But the implementation of inclusive education in South Africa has been hindered by a lack of resources and inaccessible learning environments. Previous studies conducted in South Africa confirmed that teachers find the lack of resources a challenge when implementing inclusive education (Engelbrecht, 2006; Eloff & Kgwete, 2007; Mitchell, De Lange & Thuy, 2008; Du Toit & Forlin, 2009; Ntombela, 2009; Oswald & Swart, 2011; Weeks & Erradu, 2013; Nel, Tlale, Engelbrecht & Nel, 2016). In this case, this study's findings on toy librarians were consistent with the findings that focused on schools.

5.6.3 Parents collaboration

Toy librarians in this study also mentioned that they lacked the parents' cooperation. One of the participants commented, "*My challenge is with parents who do not want to get involved in their children's learning*" (Participant I). Another toy librarian expressed the same concern, because she said, "*the biggest challenge for us is giving the parents activities that they should help their special need children with ... at home*" (Participant E). In addition, she commented that she also faced challenges with parents who were overprotective. However, Nel, et al. (2016, p. 8) argued that the non-involvement of parents was "one of the challenges that teachers face in their efforts to provide learners who have barriers to learning". This was also noted in this study, as toy librarians faced the challenge of lack of cooperation from parents. This was evident in responses

such as, "*my challenge is lack of cooperation from parents*"(Participant E) As discussed earlier, parental involvement was important in providing information about barriers to learning that their children were encountering. Walton (2011, p. 243) asserted that "parents involvement has a positive impact on children's schooling and has an important role in the development of inclusive schools". This meant that parents' participation in children's education influenced their inclusion in education.

5.7 Conclusion

While efforts have been made to recognise inclusive education in South African schools (Pather, 2011), it was equally essential for the DoE to recognise ECD programmes such as toy libraries. The discussion of the themes that emerged from this study indicated that toy librarians should be regarded as critical implementers of inclusive education. This has led to the following conclusions: toy librarians should develop further knowledge and understanding of inclusive education, because they often defined inclusive education using medical terms; toy librarians needed additional information about inclusive strategies that would equip them to teach, assess and support ECD; toy librarians' roles should move from being generic to specific, so that they could target the removal of barriers to learning. Overall, these conclusions demonstrated that the success of toy librarians in implementing inclusive education depended on the development of their knowledge and skills by the DBE.

CHAPTER 6: OVERVIEW, RECOMMENDATIONS AND LIMITATIONS

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I summarised the main findings of this study. In Chapter 5, I discussed and analysed the main findings of this study in relation to the research question and sub-questions. I start by outlining the research's aim and how the main research question and sub-questions were answered by this study. Furthermore, I present recommendations for future study. Finally, I will discuss the limitations of this study.

6.2 Overview of Research

The main research objective of the study was to investigate the role of toy librarians in promoting inclusive education. This study's major findings in relation to its key aim were that toy librarians lacked an in-depth knowledge about inclusive education. Yet, they have the potential to play a major role in inclusive education, which means that they should have in-depth knowledge and understanding about it. It was also discovered that toy librarians who participated in this study defined inclusive education using the medical model of disability. In addition, toy librarians had a role to play in creating an inclusive environment while implementing the current curricula. Toy librarians in this study partly fulfilled their roles as envisaged by the NIECDP (2015). This was evident in activities such as conducting play sessions, lending toys to parents and children and training other ECD workers. However, there were exclusionary practices that they practised, which manifested in the way they implemented the curriculum, that is, how they taught, conducted assessments and supported children with diverse needs. Overall, the toy librarians who participated in this study lacked skills in implementing an inclusive curriculum. An additional role they played was collaborating with parents and other ECD centres. In this way, the toy librarians showed that they were promoting inclusive education through the training that they provided to parents and other ECD centres.

6.3 Summary of Each Chapter

Chapter 1 introduced the study. It detailed the background to the study, stated the rationale of the study and it highlighted the research aims and objectives. The delimitation of the study was briefly explained.

Chapter 2 provided a detailed literature survey of inclusive education and its related concepts, which were defined and discussed. In addition, the theoretical foundations of this study were detailed.

Chapter 3 provided a detailed description of the qualitative research methodology employed in this study. The data was collected through questionnaires and interviews from nine toy librarians. This chapter also discussed how the data was analysed. The elements that increased trustworthiness in the study, such as credibility, confirmability, transferability and dependability, were discussed.

Chapter 4 presented the findings of this study. Six themes emerged from the data: knowledge about inclusive education, the medical model's definition of inclusive education, how the curriculum was implemented, the training of parents and ECD practitioners, adapting the physical environment; and, challenges in implementing inclusive education. The data were presented in the form of tables and graphs. A synopsis of the toy librarians who participated in the study was presented, which included a photograph of each of the participants' toy libraries.

Chapter 5 provided an analysis and discussion of the findings from Chapter 4. The chapter focused on answering the research question by using the findings found in chapter 4.

This chapter concluded the report with a brief overview of the research. The next sections highlighted the recommendations and implications for future studies as well as the limitations of the study.

6.4 Recommendations

The successful implementation of inclusive education in South Africa depended upon the collaboration of all who work in the education sector to provide education to all children. This includes children who attended ECD programmes. Du Toit and Forlin (2009, p. 647) argued that "one of the key strategies or levers

for establishing an inclusive system, is the orientation of professionals staff to the inclusion model", and "the targeting of early identification of the range of the diverse learning needs and intervention in the foundation phase" (DoE, 2001, p. 8). Those who worked in ECD, such as toy librarians, needed to be orientated about the meaning of inclusive education. From the findings of this research, I recommend the following: The DBE to include everyone who works in the ECD space, for example toy librarians, in workshops and training. This will ensure that they understand what inclusive education is and be able to apply it in practice. Professionals in resources centres could be used to upskill toy librarians about inclusive strategies through skill development workshops. These professionals could conduct training on how the toy librarians could adapt the environment and toys so that they promoted inclusive education. White Paper 6 (2001, p. 33) highlighted that "the education department recognises that it is essential that links be established between community-based and other service providers and the education and training system". The department must ensure that the links with other stakeholders involved in education are strengthened. Knowledge-sharing platforms about inclusive education should be increased.

6.5 Implications for Future Study

This study attempted to investigate two very large conceptual issues, inclusive education and ECD with a focus on toy librarians. Combining these two conceptual issues in this way meant that I have scratched the surface on both of them, and more research is required to explore this topic in the South African context. Similar studies with a larger sample of toy librarians in other provinces in South Africa might confirm or reject their lack of knowledge about inclusive education and their definitions of inclusive education. Furthermore, comparative studies of the roles of toy librarians and other ECD workers, such as ECD practitioners, could provide better insights into their roles in promoting an inclusive pedagogy. This study was based on nine toy libraries in Gauteng province, hence the findings from this study cannot be generalised. However, the findings from this study could be used as the basis to conduct future large-scale research that could be generalised to a bigger population. Further research could also be done to investigate which inclusive strategies toy librarians would be able

to implement. Since this study was limited to toy librarians in Gauteng province and their role in promoting inclusive education, further research could be conducted about different topics. For example, to investigate how particular inclusive strategies, such as differentiation, are implemented in toy libraries.

6.6 Limitations of Study

It is necessary to acknowledge the limitations of this study. The major limitation related to the design of this study was that it was a qualitative research, so its findings would not be generalisable to other contexts. I have presented the data that I found from toy librarians in Gauteng, but due to the contextual nature of toy libraries, I cannot predict that these findings would be the similar across other toy libraries in South Africa. Another limitation was in the way the interviews and questionnaire were conducted. I discovered that all the toy librarians defined inclusive education using the medical model of disability, although they were unaware of it. I also had to explain to two of the participants what inclusive education was, which meant that these participants might have answered the questions in such a way that they sounded "inclusive". Another limitation was that the participants were not observed practising what they claimed they were doing. The result of using two data collection tools meant that the findings were limited to the information that the participants gave in the questionnaires and in the interviews.

6.7 Conclusion

Lack of knowledge about inclusive education and how toy librarians defined it was an indicator that there was much that needed to be done in the ECD space to equip toy librarians for inclusive education. They needed to be empowered so that they were skilled to teach children with diverse needs and to break the anxieties they associated with teaching these children. This could be achieved by developing their knowledge and skills, so that they are able to teach all the young children who attend their play sessions. There is need for the following: for toy librarians to be trained in inclusive education, based on current evidence-based inclusive teaching practices; for toy librarians to be trained on how to identify barriers to learning in young children. These needs are confirmed by the conclusion reached by de Clercq (2014, p. 326), where she stated, "that

educators require expert support to be well equipped to teach children with diverse needs". By soliciting support from colleagues who have expertise in dealing with children with diverse needs, Florian and Linklater (2010, p. 371) asserted that "the expertise of colleagues who specialise in learning difficulties, and those from related disciplines can be used to support teaching and learning in the mainstream classroom." Although they refer to schools, this support is also needed for toy librarians in toy libraries.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

1. Data collection instrument -semi structured interview

Research Title

The role of toy librarians in Gauteng Province promoting inclusive education: A case study.

Semi-structured interview questions

This will be a semi -structured interview and the following questions will be used as a guide.

1. What do you understand by inclusive education?
2. How do you accommodate children of different race, gender, ability and social economic backgrounds?
3. What do you think your role as a toy librarian is?
4. How do you create an environment that is safe for all children?
5. Do you plan for the activities that you do with young children?
6. How do you plan for the play sessions that you conduct with children?
7. How do you conduct play session with young children living with disabilities?
8. How do you differentiate play activities for young children?
9. How do you assess young children?
10. How do you deal with children who might need additional help?
11. How do you support learners with developmental delays?
12. How do you see your role as promoting inclusive education?
13. How do you see your role as impacting change?

Biographical questionnaire

Answer all the questions

Please tick the appropriate box

1. How many years of experience do you have, working as a toy librarian?

0-1	
2-3	
4-8	
9-12	
Over 12	

2. What is your gender?

Male	
Female	
Transgender	

3. Please mark the appropriate range for your age

20-30	
31-40	
41-50	
51-60	
Over 61	

4. Which racial group do you belong to?

African	
Asian	
White	
Coloured	
Other, please specify	

5. Have you ever heard of inclusive education?

Not at all	
Partly heard	
Fully heard	

6. Do you understand what inclusive education is?

Not at all	
Partly understand	
Fully understand	

7. What do you understand by inclusive education?

8. How often do you conduct play sessions with children?

Once every week	
2-3 times a week	
4-5 times a week	
Once a month	
2-3 times a month	
3-5 times a month	

9. How often do you train parents on how to use toys?

Once every week	
2-3 times a week	
4-5 times a week	
Once a month	

2-3 times a month	
3-5 times a month	

10. In your view which practices do you consider as inclusive?

11. What kind of toys and play materials do you use in your toy library?

12. What are the adaptations that you make to the toys to suits young children's needs?

13. What kind of adaptations do you make to the play environment to suit young children's needs?

14. From your own understanding of inclusive education, what may be the challenges for you to implement it.

Appendix B: Ethics clearance letter



WITS SCHOOL OF EDUCATION ETHICS COMMITTEE
CONSTITUTED UNDER THE UNIVERSITY HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (NON-MEDICAL)

CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

PROTOCOL NUMBER: 2019ECE012M

PROJECT TITLE

The role of toy librarians in Gauteng Province in promoting Inclusive Education

INVESTIGATOR

Ms Pauline Turusida

SCHOOL/DEPARTMENT OF INVESTIGATOR

Wits School of Education

DATE CONSIDERED

15 April 2019

DECISION OF THE COMMITTEE

Approved unconditionally

EXPIRY DATE

Date of submission of the project report

ISSUE DATE OF CERTIFICATE

29 April 2019

CHAIRPERSON: Dr Paul Goldschagg

cc: Supervisor: Dr Moeniera Moosa

DECLARATION OF INVESTIGATOR

To be completed in duplicate and **ONE COPY** returned to the Chairperson of the School/Department ethics committee.

I fully understand the conditions under which I am authorized to carry out the abovementioned research and I guarantee to ensure compliance with these conditions. Should any departure to be contemplated from the research procedure as approved I/we undertake to resubmit the protocol to the Committee.


Signature

2019/04/29
Date

Appendix C: Letters to participants

Appendix 1: Information Letter to the Manager

11 March 2019

Dear Manager

My name is Pauline Turusida and I am a Master's Degree student in the School of Education at the University of the Witwatersrand. As part of my Degree I am expected to complete a mini research project. I am doing research on the role of toy librarians who conduct play sessions in promoting inclusive education.

Your toy librarians are invited to participate in this specific study because they conduct play sessions with young children. Participation is entirely voluntary and there are no consequences for your toy librarians should they choose not to participate. I would therefore request your permission for your toy librarian to participate in this study and for me to use the information gathered from interviews and questionnaires in my research project.

I am currently working as a training facilitator at an Early Childhood Organisation and it is my passion to empower toy librarians on inclusive principles that they may adopt and employ in their work with young children. Few people in South Africa are aware of role of toy librarians in promoting inclusive education. We do not know enough of their roles in promoting inclusive education.

As part of my research I wish to investigate their individual roles as toy librarians in promoting inclusive practices. I would hereby like to invite your toy librarians to participate in my study. This will only be done after I have received a protocol number for the Wits School of Education ethics committee.

Participating in this research project would involve that I meet with your toy librarian twice in 2019. The first meeting would be dependent on ethics clearance. During the first meeting, I will explain what the research is all about,

and will give your toy librarian a questionnaire to complete. The questionnaire will take about 15-20 minutes to complete. The second meeting will also depend on ethics clearance. An interview will take place which will be audiotaped. The interview will be approximately 30-45 minutes.

The above mentioned questionnaires and interviews will be anonymous and there will be no identifying information appearing on any of the documents. The name and identity of the toy librarian will at all times kept confidential and will also not appear on any of the academic writing about the study. His or her individual privacy will be maintained in all published and written data resulting from the study such as journal articles, books, conference presentations. The interviews will, with permission, be audiotaped and transcribed to ensure accurate recording.

I will reassure the toy librarian that he/she can withdraw his/her permission to participate at any time during this project without any penalty. There are no foreseeable risks in participating and your toy librarian will not be paid for this study. If you would like a copy of the questions I will be asking, please do not hesitate to contact me using the details below.

All research data will be kept in a locked office and destroyed between 3-5 years after completion of the project.

Please let me know if you require any further information. I look forward to your response as soon as is convenient.

Yours sincerely,

Pauline Turusida

34 Melville Street,

304 Southdale Mews

Booyens

pauturusida@gmail.com

072 547 9603

Supervisor:

Dr. Moeniera Moosa

moeniera.Moosa@wits.ac.za

011 717 3085

Manager's Consent Form

Please fill in and return the reply slip below indicating your willingness to allow your toy librarian to participate in the research project called: The role of toy librarians in promoting inclusive education.

I, _____ the manager of

Circle one

Permission to be audiotaped

I agree that my toy librarian may be audiotaped during interview.

YES/NO

I know that the audiotapes will be used for this project only.

YES/NO

Permission to be interviewed

I agree that my toy librarian may be interviewed for this study.

YES/NO

I know that he/she can stop the interview at any time and doesn't have to

answer all the questions asked.

YES/NO

Permission for questionnaire

I agree that my toy librarian may fill in a question and answer sheet for this study.

YES/NO

I agree that a photograph of my toy library will be taken.

YES/NO

Informed Consent

I understand that:

- My toy librarian's name and information will be kept confidential and safe and that my name and the name of my organisation will not be revealed.
- he/she does not have to answer every question and can withdraw from the study at any time.
- he/she can ask not to be audiotaped, photographed and/or videotape
- all the data collected during this study will be destroyed within 3-5 years after completion of my project.

Sign_____

Date_____

Information sheet toy librarian

11March 2019

Dear Toy librarian

My name is Pauline Turusida and I am a Master's Degree student in the School of Education at the University of the Witwatersrand. As part of my Degree I am expected to complete a mini research project. I am doing research on the role of toy librarians who conduct play sessions in promoting inclusive education.

You are invited to participate in this specific study because you conduct play sessions with young children. Participation is entirely voluntary and there are no consequences for you as a toy librarian should you choose not to participate. I would therefore request your participation in this study and for me to use the information gathered from interviews and questionnaires in the write up of my project, conference presentations and articles.

I am currently working as a training facilitator at an Early Childhood Organisation and it is my passion to empower toy librarians to explore inclusive principles that they may adopt and employ in their work with young children. Few people in South Africa are aware of role of toy librarians in promoting inclusive education. We do not know enough the roles of toy librarians in promoting inclusive education.

As part of my research I wish to investigate their individual roles of toy librarians in promoting inclusive practices. I would hereby like to invite you to participate in my study.

Participating in this research project would involve that I meet with you twice in 2019. The first meeting would be dependent on ethics clearance. During the first meeting, I will explain what the research is all about, and will give you a questionnaire to complete. The questionnaire will take about 15-20 minutes to complete. The second meeting will also be dependent on ethics clearance. An

interview will take place which will be audiotaped. The interview will be approximately 30-45 minutes.

The above mentioned questionnaires and interviews will be anonymous and there will be no identifying information appearing on any of the documents. Your name and identity will at all times kept confidential and will also not appear on any of the academic writing about the study. Your individual privacy will be maintained in all published and written data resulting from the study such as journal articles, books, conference presentations. The interviews will, with your permission, be audiotaped and transcribed to ensure accurate recording.

I will reassure you that you may withdraw your permission to participate at any time during this project without any penalty. There are no foreseeable risks in participating and you will not be paid for this study. If you would like a copy of the questions I will be asking please do not hesitate to contact me using the details below.

All research data will be kept in a locked office and destroyed between 3-5 years after completion of the project.

Please let me know if you require any further information. I look forward to your response as soon as is convenient.

Yours sincerely,

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34 Melville Street,

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pauturusida@gmail.com

072 547 9603

Supervisor:

Dr. Moeniera Moosa

moeniera.moosa@wits.ac.za

011 717 3085

Appendix D: Sample transcript

[preliminaries not transcribed]

Interviewer: So thank you very much. So what do you understand for inclusive education?

Respondent: It includes children with special needs in a classroom with able bodied children. But adapting the activities and the things that you do to include them into that setting. Not make them feel that they're out, that they learn the same thing that everybody else does. Where we are, we do actually have in our two able bodied classes, at our centre – we have higher functioning, special needs children that are in the classrooms with the able bodied children and they learn with them. We just adapt it. If they're for example cutting with scissors it's not as easy and it is for the others, we'll use training scissors or we'll take a little bit longer, give them more time to get the idea, help them along the way, things like that. So we also adapt activities to suit their needs as well but in the same environment and they won't be held back by learning the same thing all the time but also getting, specially for those who are higher functioning, sometimes they don't include them in other places and then they'll get bored, and then you'll find the child is naughty or does things that it shouldn't do, or doesn't behave appropriately but it's because the child is actually bored. They're not getting stimulated enough. So we, we look at that as well and we include them if we find they are higher functioning then we do treat them in the able bodied classes as well. We don't put them there if they're going to struggle, that's just going to get frustrating for the child.

So we also look at that but they also get a say as well to make sure that, assessments also get carried out as well between the speech therapist, TO, and the teacher, get completed and looks at the child's development, every, it gets done continuously on a daily basis, the small little things that you might pick up that the child has achieved, goals. They have to work for goals. So we have a goal programme that we work for that individually based so it looks at the child as an individual and helps them – that's also what we do as well.

Interviewer: Thank you very much. How do you accommodate children of different race, gender, ability and social economic background?

Respondent: We - that's normally a tricky one.

Interviewer: Okay let me ask you this. Do you have children of different race?

Respondent: Yes we do.

Interviewer: Alright. Do we have children of different gender?

Respondent: Yes.

Interviewer: Do you have children of different ability?

Respondent: Yes.

Interviewer: And social economic background like those who are from poor families, those who are from – so maybe now, do you show – maybe in the class you check children, these are from an affluent family but then they sit on this table -

Respondent: No.

Interviewer: Or these are Zulus -

Respondent: No.

Interviewer: You separate them. How do you accommodate them?

Respondent: No, no. We – no we don't. That's obviously would be discriminating that would be discriminatory and a child shouldn't be discriminated on their gender, race or their background. We try to teach our children, with everything we do – we have a theme for the week, we discuss it, we talk about cultural differences – show them how, they might be different from – or you know how, we talk about all the languages we embrace in our country, we show them like where the different countries are, and flags, things like that. We try and teach them they shouldn't be critical, just because they come from a different background to you, a different kind of family to you. Families can be different. They might have two fathers, a mother and a father, they might have one. So we do my family and we also embrace it then as well and we talk to them about it and say – you're

going to meet people of different colours and race, different religions even. We do bring up that but only in a basic way that they'll understand that there are different things. So we try and show them that they should embrace all of it. not because they're different, also with the inclusion the special needs kids get excited, and that's what we try and do with our able bodied classes is to show them that if the child has something that's not working correctly they way see it, that doesn't mean you go and call them names and be rude to them because they do understand, they can hear you. They might not be able to tell you that but they do hear you and they do understand so you can't hurt their feelings. You have to be nice and we show them how to play with them and how to interact with them. That way as well so we also did it from that approach. So at least there won't be a few kids who stare at them and go mommy what's that. We show them that it's not so – it's not what they do. Let's put it that way. It's not something new and it's not something to be feared and it's not something to discriminate. We try and do it on a daily basis, as a teacher I won't tolerate some things. I know how I do it but no, it's not how I was raised and it's not how – or to separate them and put them on different tables and things like that. You'll find none of our teachers will do that.

Interviewer: Will do that. You embrace all the children; it doesn't matter where they are coming from – it doesn't matter their colour -

Respondent: No because all children are different and they should be respected as such and loved. Just the same. It shouldn't make a difference.

Interviewer: Thank you very much for that. So what do you think your role , what is, your role?

Respondent: Well actually the kids show me more than I probably know myself or notice it myself is when I walk into a classroom and the children all see me and they get up and smile and jump around say yay teacher's here and they love the things I do with them. We do different things. We do different activities. It's not the same even though the themes normally run for a month, we make sure we do

different stuff. Either make nature things, painting, play dough, we've done this, this term we've actually done different things. We've done sponge painting in the shape of fruit actually. We're doing healthy living and just to see the kids enjoy doing activity and actually partaking and actually having fun, having smiles on their faces, it's enough to show me that I'm already doing enough. I'm actually contributing to their quality of life.

Interviewer: So seeing yourself, seeing the children being happy is something that clearly - that should tell you that – alright -

Respondent: Yes, I'm there to teach -

Interviewer: What would you teach? What are you doing, you like to teach them, how do you teach them?

Respondent: Different activities, things like that, correspondence is a theme that they run, so I do corresponding activities, outside the teachers - painting or things like that. Teaching through art.

Interviewer: So you do teaching through art.

Respondent: Yes. The child can express themselves through art. You might not understand but for them it's – therapeutic and things like that. Lending toys – giving help -

Interviewer: Lending toys, it's also one of the things that you do. So you lend toys to children.

Respondent: Yes that they take home for a week. And that also helps with bonding time with the parents. Bond with their parents can sit down and read a book with them, playing with the toys, communicate with the children. For kids that don't have a lot, that's a lot that means a lot to them.

Interviewer: You do activities with them, that's one of the things. Activities. You do also computers?

Respondent: Yes we do basic computer skills and obviously playing games, we also teach them technology. Make them aware of technology and that includes the special needs children. They also come and do computers, learn how to switch it on and off. Where your buttons are, how the screen works, so we do that as well.

Interviewer: You also do things with children, with disabilities ne.

Respondent: Yes.

Interviewer: Thank you very much for that. How do you create environment that is safe for all children? How do you create environment that is safe for all children? They children when they come they feel they are safe. Do you lock the gates?

Respondent: Ja we've got two electrical gates, one for each site and then we've got the main gate. It used to have a sliding lock on it but now it actually has a lock and key on it so it can actually lock. The lock is always up. You always have to turn the key to open it so the kids can't get the gate open alone. It is high up enough and there's nothing higher standing next to it that they can get onto it. Even if somebody did leave the gate open, the main electrical gates are always closed. If the kids are in school and of them have arrived, those gates will be closed. I think there's also an electric fence – so it does have an electric fence in front of it. Obviously it's high up enough that the kids can't reach it. Supervision is always given, teachers and volunteers that are outside. They all take turns. They've got two breaks, when the one is on tea the other is outside doing duties, watching the kids, observing, walking around, checking the kids are safe. Even in the classrooms, normally a teacher and the volunteers in the class. Sometimes you'll find that we have students who come and do community service. You'll have a third person observing and looking after kids. So yes – we make it as safe as possible but – anything is possible.

Interviewer: You can say that again. So the security is safe, the environment is safe, you have gates that can be locked. What about the items that you are using, let's toys that you are using – how safe are they?

Respondent: We always check toys. With toys coming in or going out, they're always checked when they come back before they go out again to make sure if they're broken and obviously the toys we receive as donations, we always go through them. If something's not appropriate we don't take it, we send them to other centres or to schools. Our coordinator

she will take it, if they earmark it and say that's this not for me, I can't use it, it's not safe, we will give it to a school that can use that and donate it elsewhere. We always check toys and make sure - if something's broken it will either be given away or it's a puzzle that's missing a piece or something, we will try and use it in another way. Find other ways of using it. You can either use the pieces in art or things like that, so you always try and find another way but the toys always get checked and the – every so often, that goes into Step 1 and 2 for the amount, but using it for next time – so look at that as well. And if it's not edible, we always make sure even with the activities that we do, if we do them with a similar attitude that if they happen to put it in their mouth that it is safe enough. I won't use anything that is not safe enough. If for example it's something they shouldn't be eating. I like I know I've said it before, like airgel. I put it in a Ziploc bag and sellotape it and put it in another one. So if that tears there's another one underneath it and things like that and I think after every time does the child's play differ. Constantly checking -

Interviewer: Thank you. Right so do you have, how do you operate as a toy librarian. Do you have your own space -

Respondent: Yes I do. A classroom. I do have my own space and I have my own toys in it. But sometimes I'll go and run the activity. Sometimes there's more space and it also helps to have everybody else in a bigger space. It is a bit of a poor thing – so you can't wait for the kids specially with wheelchairs and things and how it can access a path. We normally do it, but if it's covered computers then they are – and we just -

Interviewer: Oh that's good. Alright you use the classroom because - so how do you plan for activities, things that you do with these young children.

Respondent: We have, I have a prep sheet, so like any teacher, I have a daily program that I have to follow, which is mainly the class programme that teachers have, so I have to follow their schedule. I have to look what they're doing and I find it's normally after breakfast. Every class after breakfast so that's the start from 9. As for 1 and 2, and intermediate 1

and 2, it's normally half an hour from 9 and until half past and then, so something the activity runs a little bit longer so you can also accommodate for that. So there's flexibility in that. And, it's an hour that they - because they – the majority of them are able bodied so we also take that into account. For the special needs kids that are in those classrooms, we also accommodate and make sure that if they do struggle with their concentration, that is okay acceptable, we make allowances for that. To make sure that they're happy and they're okay. So yes, so each, from Monday to Friday I have, I did go and have classes on Tuesday but for Monday, Wednesday, Thursday Friday I have classes, all the classes, all six classes have a turn to have days where I will go in and see what's up for that day – the Monday step one and two , Wednesday is intermediate one and two. So they split between 9 and 10 and then Thursdays is, and Fridays. I normally go to see, whatever they are doing in the classroom. If it's my family, I will do something based on that. [unclear] for things like that. Sooner or later. It doesn't really matter too much. But yes I do plan for those weeks, have my own spreadsheets that I fill out for that week. Ja. So that's part of – if she finds out that I've done work for her.

Interviewer: That's good that you don't get sucked into that.

Respondent: No.

Interviewer: You plan for it. [overtalking] the resources like -

Respondent: Sometimes with the toys specially if it's a one and two, it either gets two toys or playdough or I have just done a new thing where I've made, they have to squeeze it out of the bottle, and that we normally do on paper. Scrap paper, even if it's scrap paper, or any kind of paper. Ja, so we always make sure we've got the stuff on hand, there's a section for it that says our material and we lift the materials that we need for that paper, paint brushes, scissors. Nature things, we're going to do something with nature, or outdoors, I'll go and collect those, like the day before, make sure I've got everything. And obviously when we go to nature, we always but that's a common one. We're used to it and it's a reflex by now. We don't put it in

the wild because we know they're going to need it. But ja we always plan ahead and make sure that we've got the materials. If we don't we will earmark it and say go to the coordinator and say please can I go and get this. Go buy, maybe allocate money to go get something if you need it for that activity. Yes, which ja we do.

Interviewer: Thank you very much. So how do you plan for the play sessions that you conduct with the children?

Respondent: It's normally very – it's not this is what someone has said. We normally sing a song or I go around the kids and say good morning and let them see me, because if they see me then they know, they already know who I am and what I'm coming to do. And for them it's all about them seeing us, sharing our voices talking to them, communicating to them throughout the activity. Show them the object. If you're doing play dough for example, you'll show them the play dough saying we're going to play with play dough and you'll take their hand and you'll get them touching the play dough. Some of them will do this, don't like the play session so you'll get them used to the idea and you'll get them using it and playing with it, even if you just stick a finger in it just to get them used to the sensor stimulation, just to get them used to it but more fun and more not so formal – you can't get too formal with children, but it is a slight introduction and we'll say okay we're going to play with playdough now and then you start the activity and when I leave normally some teachers and say I'm leaving or it will be bye, or something like that and you'll touch the child and say bye bye I'm leaving now or you'll say goodbye – they always say bye teacher, it's so funny. It's always something like that, or sometimes – so that's - depending obviously on the day. Not every day is the same. With Intermediate 1 and 2, it's more involved. You get really more involved with kids. With them I normally have an example, I will do one, an example of what we're going to do, of the activity, to give them a visual picture of what we're going to do. I demonstrate what we're going to do and then I'll show the kids and say look this is what we're going to do. Intermediate 1, sometimes, how can I say. They won't really look too much at the picture, they don't take in sometimes a lot of information. They will take

it in, but you'll find that they forget and then it's like – Intermediate, they will take it in. Some of them will try and copy mine. I say to them don't worry about copying mine, mine's just there to show you what we're doing and some of the kids will stand up and actually come and look and see what I'm doing, what I'm putting on the table, paint and what we're doing. They will come and see; they will actually stand up and come and take a look. And I'll let them come and take a look. They are allowed to – it's going to be part of their activity and then we do a song the register to mark who's absent and present – so that the kids know who is present, who's absent and, who is there, who is not there, they also recognize their own names and then we do the same with intermediate 1 and 2 we do an instruction where I ask them what is their theme and I show them an example of what we're going to do. I explain it and say okay we're going to do painting today, we're going to paint fruits, what fruit is this and get them to respond, ask questions and ask things like that and then

Interviewer: Very nice.

Respondent: So that's how we do it.

Interviewer: That's interesting. So how do you conduct play session with young children, with disabilities. You're already working with them. You've touched on it so how do you conduct it with them – or you say you can be in it, be some part of you that they are just give them the training.

Respondent: Ja but you have to remember they're no training sessions, not just like training sessions. It's play. We make it –no instructions, there's no rules, there's no limits, there's free expressiveness. There's no right or wrong on how they participate in the activity. There's no limit set to that. So for them they can even make their tomato pink if they want to and I'm not going to - If they feel they want to make it pink, they can make it pink. If the teacher is like that's not correct or feels weird about it or doesn't want it then we will limit the colours we give them, then we will make it four colours, red, yellow, orange, green for example and we will give them the choices of four colours. But it's all based on them. There's no rules. It's more fun in a way. I

think that's why kids are so responsive to me when I walk in the classroom because they know I won't give them limitations on what they should do. I won't say you can't do that or anything like that. There's no rules. And also play if for example we're playing on our phone. there will just be maybe the basic rule of sharing, making sure that we share toys. Specially like the able bodied children who struggle sometimes with the concept of sharing. But that's all – so we will have a sharing session, say it's her turn to play with the car and you can play with the aeroplane or things like that. But it's mainly free. It's not – restriction on anything really. The more fun they have with anything, the better and even with the special needs children – you don't put any limitations on that. Yet you know what the child struggles to do and what they don't struggle to do, you are aware as you work with the child, you are aware of this. Even through play you know what their limitations are but you won't, say okay, oh no but you can't do that. We'll try and make them do something, for example, things like that.

Interviewer: So how do you differentiate play activities for young children?

Respondent: It depends on the child obviously, between the ages of 3 and 7 so you look at the age group that you're doing the play activity for. Or any activity for that matter. You'll look at the agents. I know we also have younger kids who are not quite three yet. So we'll look at it, we'll make sure that it's not that the activity or anything we do is achievable within their, within their limits and you'd probably push the boundaries, and try make it go a little bit further, say can you hold the paintbrush on your own. Things like that but it would be done in an encouraging way - They are trying to take off [unclear] and she had – she required – and I was like it's okay and because she didn't really want to take part in the activity so we'd say okay go and sit down for a little bit, calm down, just relax, it's okay, I won't take off my hat – and then we get somebody else, just to get her comfortable and realise that I won't actually – I think she was scared I would pour something on her head. Which I would never do, I don't know why she thought that, but she did. So in cases like, they could always you know

accommodate and things like that. But she thought that. Yes we do make sure we watch our kids, but we're very aware, I know where it is, so I would think carefully about the activities that I planned for those age groups. Obviously, preschool because they're between five and seven, they'll obviously be higher so we'd make it more involved. Put more objects for them to choose from or more choices. We'd make their choices more, give them extra things. You'd only give a few choices to lower otherwise they might get confused. So, things like that. Ja we try and have as much fun as possible.

Interviewer: That's good. So how do you assess these young children – do you do some kind of assessment?

Respondent: Yes we do, we have a check list that goes according to ages, so we have one to two, - you know one to two years, two to three, three to four, four and five. But we obviously have our own manual that we've written that I'll try and come up with which is our staff training manual which is based on children's development that goes through the stages, 0 – 3 months, 3 – 6 months, 6 – 9 months, it goes up like that and it goes through each stage of development. For the special needs, for the children, we would obviously look where the child is. They might think they're four years but they might still be working under a two year old's age group. Because they obviously progress slower than you – they progress slower, so we would check and then tick them according to the list that goes on. We won't check according to ages; we'll check according to stage and then we will check list them according to that. After they've achieved it they'll move onto the next. Obviously new goals, will get better, as I said earlier, those goals will go hand in hand, which we will set goals for that which they have to achieve. Which they are going to have to work on and yes there's something specific that I must help with for library or any specific activity she wants to do we will also communicate with each other, and we'll figure out, that's also appropriate for that.

Interviewer: So if I hear you well you are saying you check children according to the stages and not the age.

Respondent: Ja which is according to the manual, the staff manual, we have those on hand. Each teacher has them.

Interviewer: Let's say the child is six but the child is still, this is just an example, maybe I'm exaggerating – crawling -

Respondent: We'll stick on the level, according to – we will check them according to the – you can't list them according to the age because that will be an achievement, what you're trying to do is you're trying to give them a sense of achievement, pride a sense of self-esteem. So if you're going to check them according to their age, you're going to break them because it's going to be like no, no, and that's not right, that's not fair, that's not how it's supposed to be done. So we check them according to stage, so if the child is six, and they're still crawling we will put them there, we will actually put them there.

We do formal ones, if you're with them on a daily basis, you obviously note their progress. We do progress notes, to obviously note the progress of the child on a daily basis. The small little things that they achieve during the day but big check listing obviously also gets done once a month. Sometimes some do it once every three months. Obviously reports -

Interviewer: That's interesting. Our next question, how good are you with children who might need additional help?

Respondent: Additional help in -

Interviewer: Let's say yes you are the toy librarian but can you handle all the cases of children you come across. Maybe you see this is beyond what I can do what I can assist with?

Respondent: I haven't come across such – let's just put it that way. I have had children that maybe – not on the same level, the other children in the class. They might be a little bit slow but I can always accommodate for either working one on one with the child myself while everybody else carries on with the activity or I know some teachers and when I was, before I was the librarian, also give homework, to go home, but that's for the older group, not younger ones. If I'm in in the interviews myself, sometimes things will be asked for the parents to do with their children at home.

Certain activities. Like helping mommy wash the dishes or do the washing. Some of the kids love water and they love rubbing things together. Let the child help you with the washing or hanging up the washing. In those cases, we do look at those results but if it comes to for example, like I know – if it comes to speech – we do have students that come, speech students that are studying at Wits who have to do their practical. They will come in and do sessions with our kids. Therapy sessions with the kids who are earmarked for each therapy. Sometimes we'll encourage the parents to go too, they normally go, we know people, social workers, - very important faces and people that also help with therapy, also help our parents who can't afford such things. They also look into places that might be affordable for them to help other kids. Even they might do it, to help with therapy. The – like occupational therapists, we don't really have one at the moment. But we do, we did have in the past but I know that we had financial difficulties in certain areas and the majority of our kids do need so we would refer to other people, in other – services, so we will refer our parents to cases that -

Interviewer: You answered my question, when you meet you refer – you cannot help – [overtalking]

Respondent: That is where my limit goes, I can't do the Occupational Therapy. We normally do have students that come in but we don't carry on – if they are seeing somebody at the clinic or in the hospital we ask them to carry on with those sessions as well. The more they get the better it is to help them with speech therapy.

Interviewer: So how do you support learners with developmental delays. It seems like you have developmental delays there. They're supposed to be crawling, supposed to be walking but is still crawling.

Respondent: Then we take it to the next step, then obviously we have the things that will help for the next step. So we'll have [unclear] and we'll start but we won't [unclear] for half an hour and turn away. You start with five minutes, see how long the child does. From there is the five minutes we will push it up to ten or fifteen so eventually it stands for a

longer amount of time. Obviously it strengthens their muscles. Obviously if they are stable we will obviously test them with cruising to see how they move onto stuff and move around. We do have a little girl -she was crawling before she came to us because she wasn't standing on her legs and we've started doing exercises, walking by hand, hold on for her, sometimes teachers would also stand behind her and push her legs out and get her to stand while you're holding on, getting the idea and the movement of the legs. Also we've got walking bars outside – we put them on during play time, to get them going. We do – things like special – we've also got growth motor blocks that we can get on the tile, walking on it, standing on it like stairs. Specially for the kids who have to learn, to get the idea. Ja things like that. Even for instance we've got [unclear], we've got – that we don't actually have to like hold the [unclear] you can actually put them in the frame and then put the child in it and – that they don't force the toilet. [unclear] but not correct. They will also point it out, they [unclear] and [unclear] our therapists – specially the things, they will be – or give them to – for example, get the right fruit to help the – get them out to move in a certain way, things like that. So it's going hand in hand with the teacher.

Interviewer: So you, what you are saying is you had equipment, actually, that will help you support those children – how do you feel promoting inclusive education, your duties, how do you see this?

Respondent: It's already part of, like my daily life. My daily bread. Giving, the able bodied children used to interacting with children with disabilities, playing with them even writing with them, even when we do music, they're all outside, the able bodied as well as the special needs children and they're all dancing and holding the children's hands, smiling and laughing and interacting with them. That's already enough for me, but if we do have visitors then – and normally they ask questions, we'll answer, even if they ask me then I ask them, and I think it was something they did ask me back, and how do I feel, special needs children, I said I felt better about it. I think that there's a better way because then you don't get the [unclear] are

asking their mommies what's wrong and the mommy doesn't want to answer, they don't know, they don't want their kids to socialize, all of the system that comes with it. I do understand because my own life was like that. I'm visually impaired and I understand what society does or what they would be and say. For me it's to help our kids and visitors coming to the centre. It's okay for them to interact with each other, it's a better way – in a wheelchair and they're struggling. Actually go and help that person. Help grow up as better members of society and help them help other people specially those that have abilities and if they feel one day that they won't master them. This is enough for me, as it is. So people are – family members or things like that – I put it out there to say, my mom was even, but isn't that a little bit harsh. It shouldn't be done like that and I say actually it should be. They shouldn't be separated from the rest. They should be combined with the rest, but obviously check in a way, put this away and be taught with the rest. So also with their own pace and their own level. Not being put one side and -

Interviewer: So you are saying you feel promoting can I say diversity, because you have diverse children with disability and without disability so you see accommodating -

Respondent: I also understand because of my background. When I was born. Genetics from both my parents, but I have an understanding. I, ja.

Interviewer: How do you see your pattern change – how do you see your role, does it have an impact what you are doing?

Respondent: If you asked me that question a couple of years I would probably have said I'm not sure about that. But I actually have seen it. The earlier a child starts with, creche for example, let's put it there. The younger the child starts with creche and learns to socialize with each other, in early child development, the more we would help them grow, even [unclear] the earlier you start, the better quality of life you can give them, and for me I'm part of this, already as it is to – ja. Talking of the devil, to have [unclear] discussing the kids, they do – being able to answer. But for me it's just watching the kids grow and

their development that I've already seen a lot of change and helping that way for the change by being [unclear]

Interviewer: [unclear] is starting with the children earlier and you have this belief that if you start with them earlier, the better their quality of life will be in the future. You'll have removed the barriers that might have hindered the children for the rest of their lives -

Respondent: Ja or make it a bit better. You know make them actually independent, help towards their independence. It might not be complete independence, but it might be – which helps them talk and with special needs children sometimes you don't always pick up on it immediately but you do – once in a while when a child comes up and shows you something. It's like oh but I showed you that a month ago, and a child comes up and – you took that in a month ago and it's a little bit like that, but that shows you that actually are making a difference. Even if they don't start early enough you still help towards their development, do the best that you can for them towards their goals and their achievements. You help them achieve those. Even if they don't, you do the best you can but what I try and do, I try and do the best I can and help sure that you help them achieve their goals and make them more independent.

Interviewer: Thank you so much for your time and such a long conversation. Thank you so much for everything. I appreciate your participation. Thank you once again. I'm so glad to have spoken to you. It was also a learning experience for me. Not only about talking. So I'm happy that I've met