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EMPOWERING CHILDREN WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES: STRATEGY PERCEIVED BY PRIMARY CARE-GIVERS AND TEACHERS

By

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Research dissertation

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University of the Witwatersrand

In partial fulfilment of

The requirements for Masters of Arts in

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DECLARATION

I, Thomas Maluleke, hereby declare that this submission is my own original work and the assistance which I have received is detailed in the Acknowledgements of this report. To the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma at any other University or other institute of higher learning, except where due acknowledgement has been made in the text. I am responsible for the research study and the conclusions reached.

Signed: .....

Date: .....

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ABSTRACT

Education is a key component of empowerment and has a significant impact on the economic and social development in any country. People who have intellectual disabilities are usually marginalized because they are considered limited in their abilities to contribute to the enhancement of the social and economic development in a country.

The purpose of the research study was explore the perceptions of teachers and primary care-givers regarding strategies for empowering children with intellectual disabilities. The research design was qualitative in nature and a phenomenological methodology was adopted. Purposive sampling was used to recruit research participants from two primary schools for children with special needs in Katlehong on the East Rand. The sample size was twenty research participants; ten teachers and ten primary care-givers. The data gathered was analysed using Thematic Content Analysis.

Results indicated that both teachers and primary care-givers are experiencing challenges empowering these children. Teachers require support, equipment and training to develop skills needed to address the educational needs. Primary care-givers need to be educated regarding how to support the educational programmes presented to their children, and encouraged to become personally involved in the educational lives of their children.

The conclusion reached is that teachers' efforts to empower children with intellectual disabilities are being obstructed due to many factors. Their voices need to be heard by the Department of Education on what strategies they perceive as being effective to empower children with intellectual disabilities. The primary care-givers need to gain a better understanding of concept 'intellectual disability' so that they can stimulate and support efforts made by the school to empower them.

Key words: intellectual disability; empowerment; education; primary care-givers.

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