**THE EXPERIENCES OF TEACHERS OF CHILDREN WITH INTELLECTUAL AND DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES IN ACCRA, GHANA.**

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**Objective**: Inclusive education is the best form of education for all children including those with disabilities, children with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). In spite of advances in educational policy and practice, students around the world, particularly those in low- and middle-income counties such as Ghana continues to face challenges in implementing inclusive education for children with special education needs. Children with IDD in Ghana who are often educated in segregated settings or institutionalized. Compared to their counterparts with other forms of disabilities, children with IDD often present unique challenges in terms of behaviour, learning needs and required support. An understanding of teacher experiences with children with IDD in inclusive settings can inform strategies for more effective approaches to inclusion for children with IDD. This study sought to understand teachers’ experiences in delivering education to children with IDD in public school settings in Ghana.

**Method**: We utilized a qualitative descriptive design with 16 general and two special educators from 14 classrooms within four public schools in Accra, Ghana. We purposely selected participants based on gender, years of teaching experience in schools and grade level taught. We collected data using semi-structured interviews. In congruence with qualitative descriptive design, we analyzed data using Braun and Clarke’s (2006) thematic analysis to identify themes as they emerged.

**Results**: Three themes emerged through clustering of meanings: a) experiences with the individual child, b) experiences with parents of the individual child, and c) experiences with supportive resources and services. Teachers shared their positive and negative experiences as they relate to educating children with IDD in public schools. We found that the personal characteristics of children with IDD,(i.e. behavioural challenges), parental unresponsiveness and the lack of required resources and support within school and home environments negatively affected teacher experiences in delivering education to children with IDD. Teachers’ experiences suggest an overall stressful classroom environment that makes it challenging for them to respond to the additional needs of children with IDD.

**Discussion/Conclusion**: This study suggests that although teachers are keen on the concept of inclusion, individual teachers experience several challenges and pressures relating to its practical implementation with the specific children with IDD population. These experiences echo similar themes in the international literature. Reviewing policies to provide adequate resources and support may advance teacher efforts as they relate to implementing inclusive education with children with IDD. Further, supporting and encouraging teacher positive experiences may create more conducive spaces for accommodation of diversity and improvement of outcomes for children with IDD.