

Exploring Thai Early Childhood Teachers' Experience and Concerns regarding Teaching Children with Disabilities in Inclusive Classrooms

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Abstract : In view of the Thailand government policy creating increasing awareness of opportunity for children with special needs, the number of children with disabilities enrolled in kindergartens in Thailand has increased. This study explores early childhood teachers' experiences and concerns of teaching children with disabilities in inclusive classrooms. The population of the study was private early childhood teachers who teach in inclusive classrooms in Thailand. Quantitative data obtained through a questionnaire were supplemented by early childhood teachers' interviews to identify key experiences and concerns of the teachers when teaching children with and without disabilities in the same classrooms. The results of this study indicated that many teachers face challenges including lack of professional development opportunities, difficulty identifying the needs of all children and how to use effective strategies to support inclusive practices in their classrooms. Teachers also expressed concern about parents' lack of willingness to accept children without disabilities studying together with those with disabilities in the same classrooms. Findings from this study can inform program support for parents and professional support needs of teachers in the provision of high-quality inclusive programs for all students.

Keywords : the concern, early childhood, experience, inclusive education, Thailand

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