

Practices of Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) Teachers in Promoting Socio-Emotional Learning (SEL): Basis for a Sel Primer

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ABSTRACT

Socio-emotional learning (SEL) is increasingly recognized as essential in early childhood education; however, there remains a gap in contextualized, practice-based resources that reflect teachers' lived experiences in resource-limited settings. This study explored the practices, challenges, and coping mechanisms of thirteen Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) teachers in the Cervantes District as a basis for developing a teaching primer for SEL. Using a qualitative research design, data were gathered through in-depth interviews and analyzed thematically.

Findings revealed that teachers implement SEL through embedded practices such as emotional grounding routines, play-based interactions, teacher modeling, and environmental scaffolding. Despite challenges including diverse learner behaviors, limited resources, large class sizes, and insufficient training, teachers demonstrated resilience through adaptive strategies such as flexible instruction, improvisation, reflective practice, and collaboration. These findings highlight that effective SEL implementation is both teacher-driven and context-dependent.

Based on the findings, a contextualized teaching primer entitled *The Nurturing Compass* was developed, integrating research-based strategies aligned with established theories of emotional intelligence, sociocultural learning, psychosocial development, and social learning. The study underscores the importance of aligning classroom practices, teacher preparation, and institutional support to ensure meaningful and sustainable SEL implementation in early childhood education.

Keywords: Classroom Strategies, Contextualized Learning, Coping Mechanisms, Early Childhood Education, ECCD Teachers, Philippines, Qualitative Research, Socio-Emotional Learning,

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Study

Socio-emotional learning (SEL) in early childhood has been widely recognized as a critical foundation for holistic development, equipping children not only with academic readiness but also with the emotional and social competencies necessary for lifelong success. SEL has been defined as the process through which individuals acquire and apply the knowledge, attitudes, and skills needed to understand and manage emotions, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions (CASEL, 2025; Candeias, 2025). In the early years, these competencies have been shown to support the development of self-regulation, empathy, cooperation, and resilience, which are essential for school readiness and long-term adaptability (Mondi, Giovanelli, & Reynolds, 2021; Yoshida, 2024). Conversely, the absence of strong socio-emotional foundations has been associated with behavioral difficulties, academic underperformance, and social exclusion (Lee *et al.*, 2023).

Globally, many countries have integrated SEL into early childhood education frameworks. Evidence from multi-component interventions in countries such as Colombia and Uganda has demonstrated significant improvements

in children's empathy, cooperation, and classroom behavior, particularly in disadvantaged communities (Malhotra *et al.*, 2021; Díaz *et al.*, 2023). Cross-national studies have further highlighted that SEL programs have been most effective when adapted to local cultural contexts, as observed in Sri Lanka, Nepal, and other majority-world settings (Thapa *et al.*, 2022; Hayashi *et al.*, 2022). Moreover, international education agendas such as Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4.7 have emphasized the role of SEL in fostering inclusive, equitable, and holistic education, underscoring its global relevance (Yoshida, 2024).

Despite its recognized importance, the implementation of SEL has remained challenging across diverse educational contexts. Research conducted in countries including the United States, Australia, Canada, Indonesia, and Nepal has revealed that teachers have encountered barriers such as limited training, time constraints, insufficient instructional materials, and lack of institutional support (Blewitt *et al.*, 2021; Burany, 2024; Madden, 2025; Istanti *et al.*, 2025; Thapa *et al.*, 2022). In many cases, SEL has been most effective when embedded in daily classroom routines rather than treated as a separate subject; however, structural and contextual limitations have often hindered this integration (Blewitt *et al.*, 2021). Additionally, cultural norms surrounding emotional expression have influenced how SEL has been implemented, requiring teachers to adapt strategies to suit their specific contexts (Dalrymple, 2023; Thapa *et al.*, 2022).

In the Philippines, national policies such as the Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) Law (Republic Act No. 10410) and the Department of Education's MATATAG Curriculum have recognized socio-emotional development as a core learning domain. However, translating these policies into effective classroom practices has remained uneven. Studies have indicated that while Filipino ECCD and kindergarten teachers have acknowledged the importance of SEL, they have faced persistent challenges such as large class sizes, limited resources, and insufficient professional development opportunities tailored to socio-emotional pedagogy (De Guzman & Tan, 2022; Oracion, 2023). Although collaborative efforts between DepEd and partner organizations have initiated the development of SEL tools, many of these have remained in pilot stages, and there has been a lack of accessible, culturally relevant teaching guides that translate policy into practical classroom strategies.

Existing literature has highlighted that ECCD teachers have played a central role in fostering socio-emotional learning through classroom routines, modeling, and interaction. Teachers have employed strategies such as storytelling, role-playing, and guided play to support children's emotional expression, empathy, and social competence (Babar *et al.*, 2024; Idd, 2023; Premarathna, 2024). However, most studies have focused on program effectiveness and child outcomes, often overlooking the lived experiences of teachers who implement these practices. There has been limited research examining how teachers have navigated challenges, adapted strategies, and developed coping mechanisms in resource-constrained environments, particularly in low- and middle-income contexts (Byun & Jeon, 2023; Ma *et al.*, 2021; Zong *et al.*, 2024).

This gap has been particularly evident in the Philippine context, where socio-cultural diversity, varying levels of teacher preparation, and systemic limitations have significantly shaped classroom realities. While international studies have documented teacher challenges and adaptive strategies, there has been a lack of qualitative research that captures the lived experiences of Filipino ECCD teachers in promoting SEL. Understanding these experiences has been essential for developing contextually relevant and sustainable interventions that support both teachers and learners.

Thus, this study was conducted to explore the practices, challenges, and coping mechanisms of ECCD teachers in promoting socio-emotional learning among kindergarten learners. By documenting their lived experiences and adaptive strategies, the study aimed to generate evidence that could inform teacher education programs, guide policy development, and support the creation of culturally responsive and practical SEL frameworks in early childhood education in the Philippines. they cope with emotional, social, and practical challenges.

Framework of the Study

This study was anchored on several complementary theoretical perspectives that explain how socio-emotional learning (SEL) is developed and facilitated in early childhood settings. These theories provided a comprehensive lens for analyzing the practices of Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) teachers, the challenges they

encountered, and the strategies they employed in promoting socio-emotional learning among kindergarten learners.

The study was primarily grounded in Goleman's (1995) Theory of Emotional Intelligence, which emphasizes five core competencies: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. These competencies served as the foundation for examining how teachers supported children's socio-emotional development through structured activities, routines, and interactions. The framework guided the identification of teaching practices that foster emotional understanding and interpersonal skills among learners.

In addition, the study was anchored in Vygotsky's (1978) Sociocultural Theory, which highlights the role of social interaction and cultural context in learning. This theory posits that children develop higher-order skills through guided participation and interaction with more knowledgeable others. In the context of this study, ECCD teachers acted as facilitators who scaffolded children's socio-emotional development through meaningful classroom interactions, collaborative activities, and culturally relevant practices within the learners' Zone of Proximal Development.

The study also drew from Erikson's (1963) Psychosocial Development Theory, particularly the stage of Initiative versus Guilt, which characterizes children aged 3 to 6 years. At this stage, children develop a sense of purpose and confidence through active engagement in social experiences and supportive adult guidance. This perspective helped explain the importance of creating emotionally supportive classroom environments where children feel encouraged to express themselves, explore social roles, and develop positive self-concepts.

Furthermore, Bandura's (1977) Social Learning Theory informed the understanding of how children acquire socio-emotional behaviors through observation and imitation. Teachers served as role models whose actions, emotional responses, and communication styles influenced children's behavior. The study examined how teacher modeling of empathy, emotional regulation, and positive interaction contributed to the development of children's socio-emotional competencies.

These theoretical perspectives provided an integrated framework for understanding SEL as a multidimensional process shaped by emotional competence, social interaction, developmental readiness, and behavioral modeling. Goleman's theory explained what socio-emotional skills are developed, Vygotsky's theory explained how these skills are learned through interaction, Erikson's theory explained why these skills are developmentally significant, and Bandura's theory explained how these skills are reinforced through observation and imitation.

Guided by these theoretical foundations, the study analyzed the existing practices of ECCD teachers in promoting SEL, identified the challenges they encountered, and examined the coping mechanisms they employed in classroom settings. These insights served as the basis for developing a socio-emotional learning (SEL) teaching primer that integrates emotional intelligence competencies, interactive and collaborative strategies, developmentally appropriate practices, and modeling techniques. The primer was designed to provide ECCD teachers with a practical, culturally responsive, and contextually relevant resource for systematically integrating SEL into their daily classroom practices.

Research Paradigm

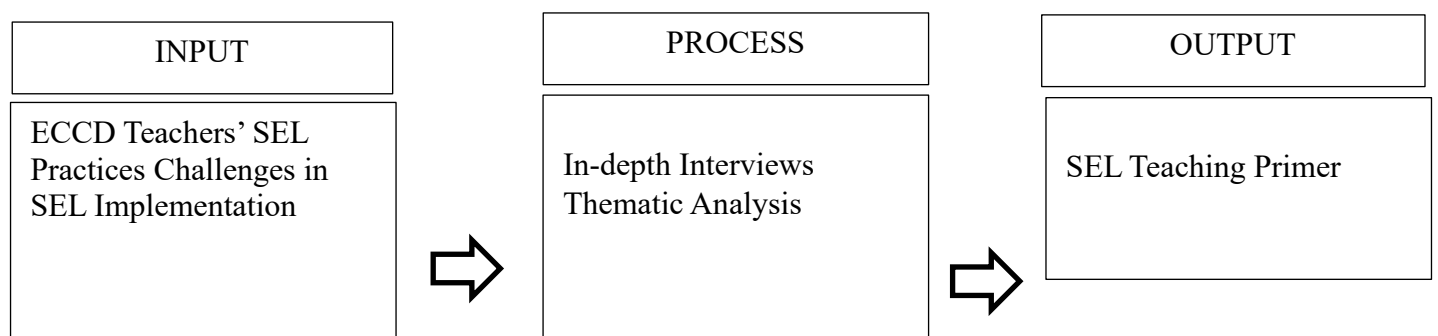


Figure 1. The Research Paradigm

Figure 1 presents the research paradigm of the study, which illustrates the Input–Process–Output (IPO) model used to guide the overall flow of the research. It shows how the identified practices and challenges of ECCD teachers served as the input, the qualitative procedures employed in data collection and analysis as the process, and the development of the socio-emotional learning (SEL) teaching primer as the output of the study.

This study was guided by an Input–Process–Output (IPO) model, which provided a systematic framework for organizing the flow of the research and ensuring alignment between the variables, methodology, and expected outcomes.

The input of the study consisted of the existing practices of Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) teachers in promoting socio-emotional learning (SEL) among kindergarten learners, as well as the challenges they encountered in implementing these practices. These inputs included teaching strategies, classroom routines, interaction patterns, and contextual factors such as limited resources, time constraints, and varying levels of teacher preparation. The input phase established the foundational elements necessary for understanding how SEL was implemented in real classroom settings.

The process involved the use of a qualitative research approach to explore the lived experiences of ECCD teachers. Data were collected through in-depth interviews and supported by field notes to capture both verbal and contextual information. The collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis, following a systematic process of coding, categorizing, and theme development. AI-assisted tools were utilized during the initial coding phase to support pattern recognition; however, all generated codes were carefully reviewed, validated, and refined by the researcher to ensure accuracy, credibility, and alignment with participants' intended meanings. This process enabled the identification of key themes related to teachers' practices, challenges, and coping mechanisms.

The output of the study was the development of a socio-emotional learning (SEL) teaching primer designed to support ECCD teachers in effectively integrating SEL into their daily classroom practices. The primer was grounded in the findings of the study and aligned with established theoretical frameworks, ensuring that it is developmentally appropriate, culturally responsive, and practically applicable in diverse classroom contexts.

The IPO model facilitated a clear and logical progression from the identification of real-world classroom practices and challenges to the development of a practical instructional resource. It ensured that the resulting teaching primer was directly informed by empirical data and reflective of the actual experiences of ECCD teachers.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This review of related literature examined existing studies relevant to the practices of Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) teachers in fostering socio-emotional learning (SEL), the challenges encountered in its implementation, and the development of a teaching primer to support effective SEL integration. The review was organized into three major themes aligned with the Statement of the Problem: (1) practices of teachers in fostering SEL, (2) challenges in implementing SEL practices, and (3) the development of teaching primers for SEL.

Practices of Teachers in Fostering Socio-Emotional Learning (SEL)

ECCD teachers have been consistently identified as central agents in promoting socio-emotional development through intentional classroom practices, emotionally supportive interactions, and structured learning experiences. Effective SEL implementation has been shown to depend on teachers' ability to create safe learning environments, model positive behaviors, and facilitate collaborative and meaningful activities that foster children's self-awareness, empathy, and social competence.

Studies across different contexts highlight diverse yet complementary pedagogical strategies. For instance, Babar *et al.* (2024), Idd (2023), and Kirui (2024) emphasized the effectiveness of play-based, interactive, and collaborative approaches such as storytelling, role-playing, guided play, songs, and peer interaction. These

strategies provide children with opportunities to express emotions, manage conflicts, and develop social relationships in natural and engaging contexts. Similarly, Premarathna (2024) and Kaur and Sharma (2021) underscored the importance of emotionally supportive classrooms, where structured group activities and intentional teaching of prosocial behaviors foster empathy, cooperation, and self-control.

Teacher competence and modeling have also been identified as critical factors in successful SEL implementation. Kotaman (2023) and Ma *et al.* (2021) found that teachers who demonstrate emotional regulation and reflective practices positively influence children's socio-emotional development. This is further supported by Byun and Jeon (2023), who emphasized that teachers' emotional responsiveness is closely linked to their ability to regulate their own emotions, highlighting the reciprocal relationship between teacher well-being and effective SEL practices.

Moreover, culturally responsive and inclusive practices have emerged as essential components of SEL. Thapa *et al.* (2022) and Boribayeva (2024) revealed that teachers often adapt strategies based on cultural norms and linguistic diversity, particularly in contexts where formal SEL training is limited. While these adaptations promote contextual relevance, they may also limit emotional expression when overly influenced by authority-based practices. In addition, Deeya (2024) highlighted the importance of teacher-parent collaboration in ensuring consistency in socio-emotional learning across home and school environments.

Instructional integration of SEL within academic activities has also been widely documented. Ng and Sun (2022) demonstrated that shared reading activities can enhance emotional understanding when teachers incorporate intentional questioning and emotional discussions. Similarly, Alamos and Williford (2020) emphasized the importance of teacher-child emotion talk in improving children's emotional knowledge and reducing behavioral problems.

Large-scale and meta-analytic studies further confirm the effectiveness of SEL practices. Murano *et al.* (2020), Cipriano *et al.* (2023), and Durlak *et al.* (2022) found that comprehensive and well-implemented SEL programs lead to improvements in social skills, behavior, academic performance, and school climate. Zhao and Sang (2025) also demonstrated that SEL interventions contribute to academic achievement across subject areas, reinforcing the interconnectedness of socio-emotional and cognitive development.

Despite these well-documented practices, significant gaps remain. Most studies have focused on program effectiveness and teacher behaviors without examining how teachers adapt these practices in real-world, resource-constrained environments. Furthermore, there is limited research on Filipino ECCD teachers' lived experiences, particularly regarding how they implement and modify SEL strategies in response to contextual challenges. This highlights the need for qualitative, context-specific investigations such as the present study.

Challenges Encountered in Implementing Socio-Emotional Learning (SEL)

While the importance of SEL is widely acknowledged, its implementation has been consistently challenged by multiple interconnected factors at the individual, institutional, and systemic levels. Teachers often navigate complex classroom realities that require balancing socio-emotional and academic demands.

One major challenge identified in the literature is the lack of training and professional development. Studies by Huynh *et al.* (2021), Kayne (2024), and Ulla and Poom-Valickis (2023) revealed that teachers frequently lack the necessary knowledge and skills to implement SEL effectively. Without adequate training, teachers struggle to design developmentally appropriate activities and integrate SEL into daily instruction.

Time constraints and competing academic priorities also present significant barriers. Dyson *et al.* (2023) and Simion (2023) found that rigid curricula and heavy teaching workloads limit opportunities for SEL integration. Teachers often perceive SEL as an additional responsibility rather than an integral component of teaching, especially in contexts where academic achievement is prioritized.

Resource limitations further complicate implementation. Fu *et al.* (2025) and Hunter *et al.* (2022) highlighted that large class sizes, insufficient materials, and lack of institutional support hinder effective SEL practices.

These constraints often force teachers to modify or simplify SEL strategies, which may affect program fidelity and outcomes.

Cultural and contextual factors also influence SEL implementation. Malhotra *et al.* (2021) and Thapa *et al.* (2022) demonstrated that cultural norms and gender expectations shape how emotional expression is encouraged or restricted in classrooms. Additionally, Yorke *et al.* (2021) and Bakar *et al.* (2024) noted that alternative learning environments, such as remote or distance learning, limit opportunities for meaningful emotional interaction.

Another critical challenge involves the complexity of socio-emotional processes themselves. Mondri *et al.* (2021) and Näykki *et al.* (2021) pointed out the difficulty of measuring SEL outcomes and scaffolding emotional expression, particularly in collaborative settings. Teachers must manage diverse emotional needs while facilitating group dynamics, which can be both cognitively and emotionally demanding.

The literature indicates that SEL implementation is influenced by a combination of structural constraints, teacher capacity, and contextual realities. However, there remains a lack of research focusing on how teachers adapt to these challenges through coping mechanisms and practical strategies, particularly in the Philippine context. This gap underscores the relevance of the present study.

Teaching Primer for Socio-Emotional Learning (SEL)

The development of a structured teaching primer has been identified as a critical strategy for supporting ECCD teachers in implementing SEL effectively and consistently. Research emphasizes that such resources must be practical, culturally responsive, and grounded in evidence-based practices.

Ramirez *et al.* (2021) highlighted the importance of equity-focused and culturally responsive SEL materials that promote inclusivity and belonging. Similarly, Freeze (2023) emphasized that SEL teaching resources should incorporate reflective and transformative practices that enhance both teacher and student development.

Several studies have identified key components of effective SEL primers. Kim-Ju *et al.* (2024) and Green *et al.* (2021) emphasized the inclusion of structured activities, empathy-building exercises, and mentorship programs. Philibert (2021) recommended practical strategies such as mindfulness activities, emotional check-ins, and social storytelling to support emotional literacy.

Teacher support has also been identified as essential. Flushman *et al.* (2021) and Shapiro *et al.* (2023) highlighted the importance of including teacher well-being, reflection, and collaborative learning opportunities in SEL resources. Walter and Wynard (2025) further emphasized the need for trauma-informed approaches to address diverse learner needs.

In addition, Llorent *et al.* (2022) advocated for integrating SEL into academic learning through cooperative and project-based approaches, making learning more meaningful and holistic. Lee *et al.* (2023) also stressed the importance of adapting SEL strategies to diverse cultural and socio-economic contexts.

The literature suggests that effective SEL primers should be comprehensive, inclusive, and adaptable to real classroom conditions. However, there remains a lack of context-specific teaching resources designed for Filipino ECCD teachers, particularly those working in resource-constrained environments. This highlights the importance of developing a teaching primer grounded in teachers' lived experiences and practical realities.

The reviewed literature consistently demonstrates that ECCD teachers play a vital role in fostering socio-emotional learning through interactive, supportive, and culturally responsive practices. However, the implementation of these practices is often hindered by challenges related to training, resources, time constraints, and contextual factors.

While numerous studies have examined SEL program effectiveness, there remains a significant gap in understanding how teachers adapt these practices in real-world classroom settings. In particular, there is limited

qualitative research focusing on the lived experiences, coping mechanisms, and adaptive strategies of Filipino ECCD teachers.

Furthermore, existing SEL teaching resources often lack contextual relevance and practical applicability in resource-constrained environments. This study addresses these gaps by exploring teachers' experiences and developing a teaching primer that is grounded in empirical findings and tailored to the Philippine context.

Research Question

This study aimed to explore the practices of ECCD teachers in promoting socio-emotional learning among kindergarten learners as a basis for developing a teaching primer.

Specifically, it sought to answer the following questions:

1. What practices do ECCD teachers employ in fostering socio-emotional learning among kindergarten learners?
2. What challenges do ECCD teachers encounter in implementing these practices?
3. What teaching primer can be developed based on the findings of the study?

Importance of the Study

This study provides meaningful contributions to various stakeholders involved in early childhood education by offering contextually grounded insights into the promotion of socio-emotional learning (SEL) among kindergarten learners.

Ilocos Sur Polytechnic State College (ISPSC) and the Bachelor of Elementary Education (BEED) Program. The findings of this study provide evidence-based inputs that can support the enhancement of pre-service teacher education. Specifically, the findings may guide the integration of context-responsive SEL strategies into coursework, thereby strengthening the preparation of future educators in addressing learners' socio-emotional needs.

ECCD Teachers and School Administrators. The study offers practical insights into effective classroom practices, as well as strategies for addressing common challenges in implementing SEL. The developed teaching primer serves as a structured and accessible resource that can be utilized to improve classroom management, foster a positive emotional climate, and enhance learners' engagement and social competence.

Curriculum Planners and Instructional Developers. The study contributes to the development of more inclusive and responsive educational materials. The findings highlight the need to embed SEL components into curriculum design and instructional resources, ensuring that socio-emotional development is systematically integrated alongside cognitive learning.

Policymakers and Educational Leaders. The study underscores the importance of providing sustained institutional support for SEL implementation. The findings may inform policy decisions related to teacher training, resource allocation, and program development, particularly in strengthening early childhood education in rural and resource-constrained settings.

Future Researchers. This study serves as a foundational reference for further inquiry into socio-emotional learning in early childhood education. It opens opportunities for expanding research on teacher practices, coping mechanisms, and the effectiveness of SEL interventions across different contexts and populations.

Definition of Terms

Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) Teachers. This refers to kindergarten educators in the Cervantes District who are tasked with promoting the holistic development of young learners. This includes fostering their cognitive, physical, socio-emotional, and moral growth. In this study, the term specifically applies to teachers employed in public school and accredited early learning centers within the district.

Socio-Emotional Learning (SEL). This refers to the process by which kindergarten learners develop self-awareness, self-regulation, social skills, empathy, and responsible decision-making, as observed and supported through classroom strategies and activities implemented by ECCD teachers.

Practices. This denotes the strategies, routines, activities, and teaching approaches employed by ECCD teachers in the classroom to promote socio-emotional development among learners, as identified through interviews.

Challenges. These refer to the difficulties, barriers, or constraints ECCD teachers experience in implementing socio-emotional learning practices, including but not limited to lack of resources, training, time, or parental support.

Teaching Primer. This refers to structured, research-based instructional material developed as an output of this study. It aims to guide ECCD teachers in effectively integrating socio-emotional learning into their daily classroom routines.

Kindergarten Learners. This refers to children, typically aged 5 to 6 years old, who are enrolled in the kindergarten level of ECCD centers or schools within the Cervantes District. They are the primary beneficiaries of the socio-emotional learning interventions and practices examined in this study.

METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the research design and procedures employed in the study. It describes the methods used in selecting participants, the instruments utilized for data collection, and the processes involved in gathering and analyzing the data. It also outlines the ethical considerations observed to ensure the credibility, reliability, and integrity of the research findings.

Research Design

This study employed a basic qualitative research design to explore and understand the practices of Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) teachers in promoting socio-emotional learning (SEL) among kindergarten learners. This design was appropriate as the study aimed to capture the meanings, perspectives, and lived experiences of teachers within their natural classroom contexts.

Basic qualitative research focuses on how individuals interpret their experiences, construct meaning, and describe their realities (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). In this study, the design enabled an in-depth examination of how ECCD teachers implemented SEL practices, the challenges they encountered, and the coping mechanisms they developed in response to real-world classroom conditions. It also allowed the researcher to document context-specific insights that are often not captured through quantitative approaches.

The qualitative approach was particularly suitable because socio-emotional learning is a complex and context-dependent phenomenon that involves human interactions, emotional processes, and culturally embedded practices. By engaging directly with participants through in-depth interviews, the study was able to generate rich, descriptive data that reflected the realities of SEL implementation in early childhood education settings.

Furthermore, the study adopted an interpretive perspective, wherein the researcher sought to understand participants' experiences from their own viewpoints. This approach recognized that meaning is socially constructed and influenced by individual experiences, cultural context, and professional practice. Through this lens, the study examined not only what teachers do in promoting SEL, but also how and why they implement specific strategies in their classrooms.

The findings generated from this qualitative inquiry served as the basis for developing a socio-emotional learning (SEL) teaching primer. By grounding the development of the primer in the lived experiences of ECCD teachers, the study ensured that the resulting instructional material is practical, contextually relevant, and responsive to the actual needs and challenges of educators.

Selection and Study Site / Sources of Data

The study was conducted in the Cervantes District, which was purposively selected as the research site due to its diverse early childhood education settings and its representation of rural educational contexts in the Philippines. The district includes multiple elementary schools located across different barangays, each with unique socio-cultural and educational conditions. This diversity provided a rich context for examining how socio-emotional learning (SEL) is implemented in real classroom environments.

The sources of data for this study were thirteen (13) Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) teachers handling kindergarten learners. Participants were selected using purposive sampling, a technique commonly used in qualitative research to identify individuals who can provide rich and relevant information related to the research problem. The selection ensured representation from different schools within the district, allowing for a broader understanding of practices and challenges across varied contexts.

The inclusion criteria required that participants be: (1) licensed ECCD or kindergarten teachers, (2) currently teaching within the Cervantes District, (3) with at least one year of teaching experience in kindergarten, and (4) actively implementing socio-emotional learning strategies in their classrooms. These criteria ensured that participants possessed the necessary experience and contextual knowledge to provide meaningful insights into SEL practices.

Data saturation was achieved when responses became repetitive and no new themes emerged from the interviews. This indicated that the collected data were sufficient to represent the range of experiences and perspectives of ECCD teachers within the study area.

Research Instrument

The primary research instrument used in this study was a semi-structured interview guide designed to gather in-depth qualitative data on the practices, challenges, and coping mechanisms of ECCD teachers in promoting socio-emotional learning.

The semi-structured format allowed for flexibility in exploring participants' responses while ensuring that key topics aligned with the research objectives were consistently addressed. The interview guide consisted of open-ended questions organized into the following areas: (1) classroom practices and routines related to SEL, (2) strategies and interventions used in promoting socio-emotional development, (3) teachers' perceptions of learners' socio-emotional needs, (4) challenges encountered in implementing SEL, and (5) available and needed support systems.

The questions were carefully constructed using simple and clear language to facilitate understanding and encourage detailed responses. Interviews were conducted in either English or Filipino, depending on the participant's preference, to ensure comfort and authenticity of responses.

Prior to data collection, the interview guide underwent expert validation by professionals in early childhood education and qualitative research. Feedback from validators was used to refine the clarity, relevance, and alignment of the questions with the study objectives. This process enhanced the content validity and reliability of the instrument.

Data Collection Procedure

The data collection process followed a systematic and ethical approach. Prior to the conduct of the study, formal permission was secured from the appropriate authorities, including the Department of Education (DepEd) and the respective school heads within the Cervantes District.

Participants were informed of the purpose of the study and were provided with informed consent forms, which outlined their rights, including voluntary participation, confidentiality, and the option to withdraw at any time without penalty.

Data were collected through in-depth, face-to-face interviews, conducted in settings that were convenient and comfortable for the participants. Each interview lasted approximately 30 to 45 minutes, allowing sufficient time for participants to share detailed experiences and insights. In cases where face-to-face interaction was not feasible, alternative arrangements were made with the participants' consent.

With permission, interviews were audio-recorded to ensure accuracy in data capture. Field notes were also taken to document non-verbal cues, contextual observations, and emerging insights during the interviews.

After each interview, the recordings were transcribed verbatim. The transcripts were reviewed and organized systematically to prepare them for analysis. Throughout the data collection process, the researcher maintained professionalism and ensured minimal disruption to participants' teaching responsibilities.

Mode of Analysis

The data gathered in this study were analyzed using thematic analysis, following the framework proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006). This method was selected for its suitability in identifying, analyzing, and interpreting patterns within qualitative data.

The analysis process involved several stages. First, the researcher engaged in data familiarization by repeatedly reading the interview transcripts to gain a comprehensive understanding of the content. Second, initial codes were generated by identifying meaningful segments of data related to the study's focus on practices, challenges, and coping mechanisms.

To support the coding process, AI-assisted tools (ChatGPT and Gemini) were utilized for preliminary pattern recognition and organization of data. However, all AI-generated codes were treated as initial guides only. The researcher conducted a thorough manual review and validation of the codes to ensure accuracy, contextual appropriateness, and alignment with participants' intended meanings. This step ensured that the analysis remained grounded in human interpretation and qualitative rigor.

Third, the codes were grouped into broader categories to develop themes and sub-themes. These themes were carefully reviewed, refined, and defined to ensure that they accurately represented the data. Finally, the findings were presented in a narrative format, supported by verbatim excerpts from participants to preserve authenticity and provide evidence for each theme.

Ethical Considerations

This study adhered to established ethical principles to protect the rights, dignity, and well-being of all participants.

Prior to data collection, necessary permissions were obtained from relevant authorities, including the Department of Education (DepEd) and school administrators. Participants were provided with informed consent forms, which clearly explained the purpose of the study, the procedures involved, and their rights as participants.

Confidentiality and anonymity were strictly maintained throughout the study. Participants' identities were protected through the use of codes or pseudonyms, and no identifying information was disclosed in any part of the research report.

All data, including audio recordings and transcripts, were stored securely in password-protected files, accessible only to the researcher. Data were used solely for academic purposes and were not shared with unauthorized individuals.

Participants were also assured that their participation was entirely voluntary and that they could withdraw from the study at any point without any consequences. The researcher ensured that all interactions were conducted with respect, sensitivity, and professionalism, minimizing any potential discomfort or disruption to participants.

Finally, the study ensured ethical use of AI tools by limiting their role to data organization and preliminary coding. All interpretations and final analyses were conducted by the researcher to maintain academic integrity and uphold the principles of qualitative research.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the findings of the study based on the Statement of the Problem. Findings are organized into themes and supported by participants' responses, with discussions anchored on relevant literature to explain and validate the findings.

Practices of ECCD Teachers in Fostering Socio-Emotional Learning

The findings revealed that ECCD teachers actively integrate socio-emotional learning (SEL) into their daily classroom practices through intentional, structured, and context-responsive strategies. These practices are not treated as separate lessons but are embedded in routines, interactions, and classroom environments. Four major themes emerged: (1) Morning Emotional Grounding Rituals, (2) Play-Based Collaborative Activities, (3) Teacher Modeling Protocols, and (4) Environmental Scaffolding Systems.

Morning Emotional Grounding Rituals. The findings revealed that ECCD teachers consistently begin the day with structured routines that prioritize learners' emotional readiness. These routines function as foundational socio-emotional entry points, ensuring that children transition from home to school in a psychologically safe and supportive manner. This suggests that teachers view emotional stability not as secondary, but as a prerequisite to effective learning, aligning with the core principles of socio-emotional learning frameworks.

Under this theme, two interrelated codes emerged that highlight how teachers intentionally prepare learners emotionally at the beginning of the day. These include the "Balitaan" Protocol, which focuses on verbal sharing of experiences, and Emoji-Based Emotion Identification, which utilizes visual tools to support emotional expression. Together, these codes demonstrate how teachers establish a safe and structured environment that encourages learners to recognize, express, and regulate their emotions before engaging in academic tasks.

"Balitaan" Protocol. The Balitaan Protocol emerged as a central classroom practice where learners are given the opportunity to share personal experiences and emotions before formal instruction begins.

Agaramid kami ti 'news time'... ibagbagada dagiti na-experience da idiay balay bago ag-start ti klase.

(We have 'news time'... they share their experiences at home before the class starts.) (P2)

Isu daytoy ti ar-aramiden ko kada bigat... lalo na idi umuna nga aldaw ti klase.

(This is what I do every morning... especially on the first day of class.) (P8)

Tapno mariknada nga safe da... isu nga agaramid kami ti routine kada aldaw.

(So they feel safe... that's why we follow a routine every day.) (P4)

These responses collectively demonstrate that teachers intentionally establish emotion-focused routines that serve both expressive and diagnostic functions. On one hand, learners are provided with a safe platform to release emotions; on the other hand, teachers gain insight into the learners' emotional conditions before instruction begins.

More importantly, the emphasis on routine highlights the role of predictability in emotional security. Young children, particularly in early childhood settings, rely heavily on consistent structures to make sense of their environment. Thus, the Balitaan Protocol does not merely facilitate sharing; it anchors emotional stability.

From a theoretical standpoint, this practice aligns with Erikson's Psychosocial Theory, particularly the stage of initiative versus guilt, where children require supportive environments to confidently express themselves. Simultaneously, Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory underscores the importance of social interaction in constructing meaning, including emotional understanding.

Corroborating this, Eriksen (2025) found that emotionally safe classrooms significantly enhance children's willingness to participate and express themselves. Similarly, Kaur and Sharma (2021) emphasized that emotionally responsive environments strengthen social competence. Deeya (2024) further highlighted that consistent emotional routines across school and home environments contribute to more stable SEL outcomes.

Consequently, the Balitaan Protocol should be recognized as a core instructional practice rather than an optional activity. Schools are encouraged to institutionalize structured emotional check-ins, while teacher training programs should emphasize facilitation of reflective and emotionally responsive classroom discussions.

Emoji-Based Emotion Identification. Another significant practice under this theme is the use of visual tools to facilitate emotional awareness and expression.

Nagusar ak ti emojis kasla sadness, joy, anger... pilienda no anya mariknada.

(I used emojis like sadness, joy, anger... they choose what they feel.) (P2)

Adda emotion cards mi... makatulong kadagiti shy nga ubing nga ipakita ti feelings da.

(We have emotion cards... they help shy children express their feelings.) (P8)

"di ag-drawing da... idiay da ipakita ti mariknada.

(Through drawing... that's where they express their feelings.) (P10)

In contrast to purely verbal approaches, this strategy demonstrates how teachers utilize multimodal expression to accommodate diverse learners. The use of emojis and drawings transforms abstract emotional concepts into concrete and accessible representations, particularly beneficial for shy learners or those with limited verbal skills.

Furthermore, this approach reflects inclusivity. By offering multiple avenues for expression; visual, verbal, and creative, teachers ensure that no child is excluded from emotional participation.

This aligns with Goleman's Emotional Intelligence Theory, particularly in fostering self-awareness. Additionally, Vygotsky's concept of scaffolding is evident, as teachers provide tools that bridge learners' current abilities with desired competencies.

Supporting literature reinforces this finding. Boribayeva (2024) emphasized the importance of visual supports in enhancing emotional expression among diverse learners. Likewise, Idd (2023) found that play-based and visually supported approaches significantly improve socio-emotional competence.

Thus, integrating visual tools should be considered a best practice in early childhood SEL. Schools may invest in culturally relevant materials, while teachers should be encouraged to expand creative modalities such as drawing, storytelling, and symbolic representation.

Play-Based Collaborative Activities. Findings further revealed that teachers rely heavily on structured play as a medium for socio-emotional development. Rather than treating play as leisure, it is used as a deliberate pedagogical tool where children engage in real-life social interactions.

Within this theme, two key codes were identified, reflecting the use of play as a medium for socio-emotional development. These include the "Kulit-Shy" Partnership, which emphasizes intentional peer pairing to promote interaction, and the "Get Together" Challenges, which involve structured group activities that foster cooperation

and emotional engagement. Collectively, these codes illustrate how teachers utilize play not merely for recreation but as a purposeful strategy to develop social skills, empathy, and teamwork among learners.

“Kulit-Shy” Partnership. This code highlights the intentional use of peer pairing, where teachers deliberately match socially confident (“kulit”) learners with more reserved or shy learners to promote interaction, confidence-building, and socio-emotional development.

No adda kulit nga ubing, ipartner ko isuna iti shy nga ubing.

(If there is an energetic child, I pair them with a shy child.) (P9)

Agadalda iti tunggal maysa... nagbalin nga friends da.

(They learn from each other... they become friends.) (P2)

Agkakatulungan da tapno ma-achieve da ti goal da.

(They help each other achieve their goals.) (P6)

The responses clearly demonstrate that teachers intentionally structure peer interactions to maximize learning opportunities. Rather than allowing social interactions to occur randomly, teachers design purposeful pairings that capitalize on learners’ differing social dispositions. In doing so, they transform peer relationships into instructional tools for socio-emotional growth.

More specifically, shy learners benefit from exposure to socially confident peers, which gradually enhances their communication skills, participation, and self-confidence. At the same time, more expressive learners develop empathy, patience, and a sense of responsibility as they support their quieter peers. This reciprocal process highlights that socio-emotional learning is not unidirectional but mutually constructed through interaction.

Furthermore, the emergence of friendship, as indicated in the verbatim responses, suggests that this strategy goes beyond task completion. It fosters genuine social connections, which are essential for emotional security and belongingness in early childhood settings. The emphasis on helping one another achieve goals also reflects the development of cooperative behavior and shared responsibility, key components of SEL.

From a theoretical perspective, this practice strongly aligns with Vygotsky’s Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), where learning occurs through interaction with more capable peers. The more socially adept learner functions as a scaffold, enabling the shy learner to perform beyond their current level of independence. In parallel, Bandura’s Social Learning Theory explains how behaviors such as communication, empathy, and cooperation are acquired through observation and imitation.

In addition, this finding resonates with existing literature. Babar *et al.* (2024) emphasized that peer interaction plays a critical role in developing empathy and prosocial behavior. Similarly, Kirui (2024) found that collaborative learning environments significantly enhance social competence among young learners. Kaur and Sharma (2021) further noted that peer relationships contribute to emotional resilience and a sense of belonging, both of which are crucial in early childhood education.

Taken together, these findings suggest that intentional peer pairing is not merely a classroom management strategy but a powerful mechanism for socio-emotional development.

Given these insights, it is recommended that teachers be trained in intentional grouping and peer scaffolding strategies, ensuring that interactions are structured to maximize socio-emotional learning. Schools may also incorporate guidelines for balanced grouping, considering learners’ social characteristics. Moreover, teacher education programs should emphasize the importance of facilitated peer interaction as a core component of SEL rather than leaving it to chance.

Get Together” Challenges. This code refers to structured group activities designed by teachers to promote cooperation, interaction, and emotional engagement through shared tasks that may involve both collaboration and competition.

Agaramid da ti strategies tapno manalo da.

(They create strategies to win.) (P2)

No matalo da, adda mang-console kadakuada.

(When they lose, others comfort them.) (P3)

Agkakatulungan da... tapno ma-achieve da ti goal.

(They work together to achieve the goal.) (P4)

Unlike unstructured or free play, these “Get Together” challenges are intentionally designed to create authentic social and emotional experiences. Through these activities, learners are exposed to real-life situations such as winning, losing, negotiating, and collaborating—experiences that are essential for developing socio-emotional competence.

Notably, the act of creating strategies reflects the development of decision-making and problem-solving skills, while the experience of losing introduces children to emotional regulation and resilience. The presence of comforting behaviors among peers further indicates the development of empathy and emotional responsiveness, suggesting that learners are beginning to recognize and respond to others’ feelings.

Moreover, these activities provide a safe environment where children can experience complex emotions in a guided setting. Teachers play a crucial role in facilitating these experiences, ensuring that emotions are acknowledged and processed constructively rather than suppressed or ignored.

From a theoretical standpoint, this practice aligns with experiential learning theory, which posits that knowledge is constructed through direct experience. Children do not simply learn about emotions—they experience and reflect on them, leading to deeper understanding and internalization. Additionally, this reflects elements of social constructivism, where learning occurs through interaction and shared meaning-making.

Supporting literature reinforces these findings. Idd (2023) highlighted that guided play significantly enhances emotional understanding and social interaction among young learners. Similarly, Näykki *et al.* (2021) found that collaborative activities improve emotional regulation and group dynamics. Kaur and Sharma (2021) further emphasized that real-life social experiences, such as competition and cooperation, contribute to the development of resilience and empathy.

Importantly, these findings suggest that structured play serves as more than an instructional strategy — it becomes a context for authentic socio-emotional experiences, allowing learners to practice and internalize key competencies.

In light of these findings, it is recommended that teachers design intentional, structured play activities that incorporate both collaboration and reflection. Equally important is the inclusion of post-activity discussions, where learners can process their emotions and articulate their experiences. Schools should also support the integration of guided play frameworks, ensuring that play is purposeful and aligned with SEL objectives.

Teacher Modeling Protocols. The findings revealed that ECCD teachers play a central role as primary models of socio-emotional behavior, demonstrating that children learn not only through instruction but through observation of adult actions and interactions. Teachers consistently exhibited behaviors such as active listening, respectful communication, and emotional validation, which were mirrored by learners in their daily interactions. This indicates that socio-emotional learning is deeply embedded in the relational dynamics between teacher and learner, rather than being confined to structured activities alone.

Furthermore, the findings suggest that teacher behavior serves as a continuous and implicit curriculum, where everyday actions function as powerful teaching tools. This highlights the critical role of teachers' emotional competence in shaping the classroom climate and influencing children's socio-emotional development.

Under this theme, three interrelated codes emerged that collectively describe how teachers model socio-emotional competencies in classroom settings. These include the "Deng-denggek" (Active Listening) Protocol, which emphasizes attentive and respectful communication; the "Magic Words" System, which focuses on modeling polite language and social norms; and the "It's Okay" Affirmation, which highlights emotional validation and supportive responses. Together, these codes demonstrate that teachers intentionally and consistently model behaviors that learners are expected to internalize and practice.

"Deng-denggek" (Active Listening) Protocol. This code refers to the deliberate practice of teachers giving full attention to learners during communication, demonstrating patience, respect, and genuine interest in what the child expresses.

Masapul nga agpakita ka iti patience... ta makita da met laeng.

(You need to show patience... because they will also see it.) (P2)

Ti teacher ket agdengdenggek kadakuada... isu dayta ti importante.

(The teacher listens to them... that is what is important.) (P8)

Masapul nga adda relasyon yo... agistorya ka kadakuada ken kadagiti nagannak.

(You need to build a relationship... talk to them and even to their parents.) (P11)

The responses highlight that teachers consciously demonstrate attentive and respectful listening, recognizing that communication is foundational to socio-emotional development. By pausing, focusing, and responding appropriately, teachers communicate to learners that their thoughts and feelings are valued.

More importantly, this practice fosters a sense of psychological safety, encouraging children to express themselves freely without fear of dismissal or judgment. Over time, learners begin to internalize these behaviors, applying the same listening skills in their interactions with peers.

In addition, the emphasis on relationship-building suggests that active listening extends beyond classroom instruction. It reflects a broader commitment to relational teaching, where trust and connection are prioritized as essential elements of learning.

From a theoretical perspective, this aligns strongly with Bandura's Social Learning Theory, which posits that children learn behaviors through observation and imitation. When teachers model attentive listening, children replicate this behavior in their social interactions. Moreover, Goleman's Emotional Intelligence Theory highlights the importance of social skills, including effective communication and empathy, which are developed through such practices.

Supporting literature reinforces these findings. Kotaman (2023) emphasized that teachers' emotional responsiveness significantly influences children's socio-emotional competence. Similarly, Babar *et al.* (2024) found that teacher-child interactions characterized by attentiveness and respect promote positive classroom climates. Eriksen (2025) further noted that children are more likely to participate and engage when they feel heard and understood.

Given these findings, teacher training programs should emphasize active listening as a core pedagogical skill, not merely as a communication technique but as a foundational SEL practice. Schools may also encourage reflective teaching practices that enhance teacher awareness of their interactions with learners.

“Magic Words” System. This code refers to the consistent modeling of polite language, such as “please,” “thank you,” and “sorry,” as a means of teaching respect, accountability, and social norms.

Masapul nga ammo mo ti ag-sorry... tapno makita da ken aramiden da met.

(You should know how to say sorry... so they will see it and do it as well.) (P2)

I-practice mi dagiti ‘please,’ ‘thank you,’ ken ‘sorry.’

(We practice ‘please,’ ‘thank you,’ and ‘sorry.’) (P11)

Kada aldaw ket aramiden mi daytoy tapno masanay da.

(We do this every day so they get used to it.) (P4)

The responses indicate that teachers deliberately model socially appropriate language as part of daily classroom interaction. Rather than teaching these expressions in isolation, teachers embed them within real-life situations, allowing learners to observe and practice them naturally.

This consistent exposure leads to habit formation, where polite language becomes an automatic response rather than a forced behavior. Additionally, the act of modeling apology demonstrates accountability, teaching children that making mistakes is acceptable as long as responsibility is acknowledged.

Moreover, this practice reflects the development of prosocial behavior, including respect, gratitude, and empathy. By consistently reinforcing these behaviors, teachers contribute to the creation of a positive and respectful classroom culture.

Theoretically, this aligns with Bandura’s Social Learning Theory, as children imitate behaviors demonstrated by authority figures. It also connects with Goleman’s framework of social competence, particularly in fostering interpersonal skills.

Empirical studies support this finding. Kaur and Sharma (2021) emphasized that consistent modeling of respectful behavior promotes social harmony among learners. Similarly, Cipriano *et al.* (2023) found that explicit teaching and modeling of social norms significantly improve classroom behavior and peer relationships.

It is therefore recommended that teachers consistently model polite and respectful communication, ensuring that these behaviors are reinforced across all classroom interactions. Schools may also integrate social language development into SEL programs and classroom routines.

“It’s Okay” Affirmation. This code refers to the practice of acknowledging and validating learners’ emotions rather than dismissing or suppressing them.

Saan nga ibaga ‘stop crying’... no di ket ‘I’m here for you.

(Do not say ‘stop crying’... instead say ‘I’m here for you.’) (P9)

Ipakita tayo nga maawatan tayo dagiti mariknada.

(We should show that we understand what they feel.) (P4)

Kalpasan ti bassit nga oras... kumalma da met.

(After some time... they calm down.) (P8)

These responses reveal that teachers intentionally validate children’s emotions, recognizing that emotional expression is a natural and necessary part of development. Rather than suppressing emotions, teachers provide reassurance and support, allowing learners to process their feelings in a safe environment.

This approach promotes emotional regulation, as children learn to identify, express, and eventually manage their emotions. The gradual calming observed in learners suggests that validation is an effective strategy for de-escalating emotional distress.

Furthermore, this practice fosters trust and emotional security, strengthening the teacher-learner relationship. When children feel understood, they are more likely to engage positively in classroom activities and interactions.

Theoretically, this aligns with Goleman's Emotional Intelligence Theory, particularly in developing self-regulation and empathy. It also reflects principles of emotion coaching, where adults guide children in understanding and managing emotions.

Supporting literature confirms these findings. Kaur and Sharma (2021) emphasized that emotional validation enhances children's ability to regulate emotions. Similarly, Blewitt *et al.* (2021) found that responsive teaching practices significantly improve socio-emotional outcomes. Eriksen (2025) further highlighted that supportive teacher responses contribute to emotional resilience among young learners.

Teachers should be encouraged to adopt emotionally responsive practices, including validation and reassurance. Training programs may include modules on emotion coaching and trauma-informed approaches to better support diverse learner needs.

Environmental Scaffolding Systems. The findings revealed that ECCD teachers intentionally structure the classroom environment to support learners' socio-emotional development. Beyond interpersonal interactions, teachers utilize physical and procedural elements of the classroom — such as routines, visual aids, and designated spaces — to create a learning environment that promotes emotional security, predictability, and self-regulation.

Notably, the findings suggest that the environment is not treated as a passive setting but as an active component of instruction, functioning as a scaffold that guides learners' behavior and emotional responses. This indicates that teachers recognize the importance of environmental design in shaping learners' experiences, particularly in early childhood where children are highly sensitive to structure and routine.

Under this theme, two key codes emerged that highlight how environmental structures support socio-emotional learning. These include the Visual Schedule Predictability System, which emphasizes routine and consistency, and the Calming Corner ("Bear Hug") Protocol, which provides a safe space for emotional regulation. Together, these codes demonstrate how teachers create environments that reduce anxiety, support emotional expression, and facilitate self-regulation among learners.

Visual Schedule Predictability System. This code refers to the use of visual schedules and consistent routines to help learners anticipate daily activities, thereby promoting a sense of security and emotional stability.

Adda visual schedule mi tapno mariknada ti seguridad.

(We have a visual schedule so they feel secure.) (P4)

Kada aldaw ket agpapada ti routine... isu nga masanay da.

(Every day the routine is the same... so they get used to it.) (P2)

Masapul nga ag-adjust kami tapno ma-manage mi dagiti ubing.

(We need to make adjustments so we can manage the children.) (P6)

The responses indicate that teachers deliberately establish predictable classroom routines supported by visual cues to help learners navigate their daily activities. This predictability reduces uncertainty, which is a common source of anxiety among young children, particularly in structured environments such as schools.

Moreover, the use of visual schedules suggests an understanding that children in early childhood rely heavily on concrete representations to comprehend abstract concepts such as time and sequence. By making routines visible and consistent, teachers provide learners with a sense of control and orientation within the classroom environment.

In addition, the mention of adjustments highlights that while routines are consistent, they are also flexible and responsive to learners' needs. This balance between structure and adaptability reflects a nuanced approach to classroom management that prioritizes both organization and emotional responsiveness.

This practice aligns with Vygotsky's concept of scaffolding, where external supports are used to guide learners toward independent functioning. The visual schedule acts as a scaffold that gradually enables children to anticipate and regulate their behavior. Furthermore, Erikson's Psychosocial Theory underscores the importance of stable environments in fostering a sense of initiative and confidence among young learners.

Supporting literature reinforces these findings. Premarathna (2024) emphasized that structured routines enhance emotional security and reduce behavioral issues in early childhood classrooms. Similarly, Boribayeva (2024) highlighted that predictable environments support self-regulation and improve classroom engagement. Dyson *et al.* (2023) further noted that consistent routines help learners transition smoothly between activities, minimizing stress and confusion.

In light of these findings, it is recommended that teachers consistently implement visual schedules and structured routines as part of their daily classroom practices. Schools may support this by providing standardized visual materials and training teachers in designing predictable yet flexible learning environments. Additionally, incorporating culturally relevant and age-appropriate visuals may further enhance learners' engagement and understanding.

Calming Corner ("Bear Hug") Protocol. This code refers to the provision of a designated space within the classroom where learners can manage their emotions using comfort tools and self-regulation strategies.

Adda corner nga mabalin da paghugotan iti teddy bear no malagip da ti sadness.

(There is a corner where they can hug a teddy bear when they feel sad.) (P4)

Tapno saan da nga makasakit kadagiti kaklase da.

(So they would not hurt their classmates.) (P10)

Nag-cry isuna idia... kalpasan bassit nga oras ket kumalma met.

(She cried there... after some time, she calmed down.) (P4)

The responses demonstrate that teachers provide intentional spaces for emotional regulation, recognizing that children need safe outlets for processing emotions. The calming corner serves as a self-regulation zone, where learners can temporarily withdraw, reflect, and regain composure.

Importantly, this practice reflects a shift from punitive approaches to behavior management toward more supportive and restorative strategies. Instead of reprimanding emotional outbursts, teachers guide learners in managing their emotions constructively.

The use of comfort objects, such as a teddy bear, further illustrates how teachers integrate developmentally appropriate tools that resonate with young learners. These objects provide a sense of security and familiarity, helping children cope with emotional distress.

Additionally, the observed outcome where learners calm down after spending time in the space, indicates that this strategy is effective in promoting self-regulation and emotional recovery. It also prevents escalation of negative behaviors, contributing to a more positive classroom environment.

This aligns with self-regulation theory, which emphasizes the importance of providing strategies and supports that enable individuals to manage their emotions and behaviors. It also reflects principles of trauma-informed teaching, where safe spaces are created to support emotional well-being.

Empirical studies support this finding. Premarathna (2024) highlighted that calming spaces significantly reduce emotional outbursts and improve self-regulation among young learners. Similarly, Blewitt *et al.* (2021) found that supportive classroom environments enhance children's emotional competence. Boribayeva (2024) further emphasized that providing safe spaces promotes psychological well-being and positive social behavior.

Based on these findings, it is recommended that classrooms incorporate designated calming areas equipped with appropriate materials. Teachers should also be trained in guiding learners on how to use these spaces effectively, ensuring that they serve as tools for self-regulation rather than avoidance. Schools may further support this by integrating trauma-informed and SEL-based environmental practices into classroom design.

Challenges Encountered by ECCD Teachers in Implementing Socio-Emotional Learning

The findings revealed that ECCD teachers encounter multiple and interconnected challenges in implementing socio-emotional learning (SEL). These challenges are not isolated but are shaped by classroom realities, institutional limitations, and learner diversity. Despite recognizing the importance of SEL, teachers face constraints that affect the consistency, depth, and effectiveness of its implementation.

Notably, the findings indicate that challenges arise in three major areas: (1) classroom management and learner behavior, (2) resource and structural limitations, and (3) teacher preparedness and support systems. These findings suggest that while teachers demonstrate strong commitment to SEL, their practices are often influenced by contextual barriers beyond their control.

Classroom Management and Learner Behavior Challenges. Under this theme, two major codes emerged: Managing Diverse Learner Behaviors and Emotional Outbursts and Regulation Difficulties. These codes reflect the complexities teachers face in addressing varying emotional needs and behavioral responses within the classroom.

Managing Diverse Learner Behaviors. This code highlights the challenge of handling learners with varying personalities, behavioral tendencies, and levels of socio-emotional development.

Adda talaga ubing nga narigat i-manage... lalo dagiti agkakaiba ti ugali da.

(There are really children who are difficult to manage... especially those with different behaviors.)(P7)

Dadduma ket very active, dadduma ket quiet... saan da pareho.

(Some are very active, others are quiet... they are not the same.)(P4)

Masapul nga ag-adjust ka kada ubing.

(You need to adjust to every child.)(P3)

The responses indicate that teachers are confronted with heterogeneous classrooms, where learners exhibit diverse behavioral patterns and emotional needs. This diversity requires teachers to continuously adapt their strategies, making classroom management both complex and demanding.

Furthermore, the need to “adjust to every child” suggests that teachers are engaging in differentiated socio-emotional instruction, even without formal frameworks. However, this also increases cognitive and emotional demands on teachers, as they must simultaneously address multiple needs.

Theoretically, this aligns with Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory, which emphasizes individualized support based on learners' developmental levels. It also connects with Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, highlighting how individual differences are shaped by multiple environmental factors.

Supporting literature affirms this challenge. Mondri *et al.* (2021) emphasized that diverse emotional needs complicate SEL implementation. Similarly, Näykki *et al.* (2021) found that managing group dynamics in collaborative settings requires high levels of teacher skill and adaptability.

Teachers should be provided with training in differentiated SEL strategies, while schools must support manageable class sizes to allow individualized attention.

Emotional Outbursts and Regulation Difficulties. This code refers to the difficulty teachers experience in managing learners' emotional expressions, such as crying, aggression, or withdrawal, which often arise during classroom interactions.

Adda ubing nga agad-adadu ti iyegna nga emotions... ag-cry da.

(Some children bring many emotions... they cry.)(P1)

Dadduma ket agtaray, agsunbat, wenno ag-away.

(Others run, talk back, or fight.)(P5)

Narigat no saan da ammo ti control ti emotions da.

(It is difficult when they cannot control their emotions.)(P10)

The responses reveal that ECCD teachers frequently encounter heightened emotional expressions among learners, which manifest in various forms such as crying, aggression, withdrawal, and impulsive behaviors. These behaviors are indicative of children's ongoing struggle to understand and regulate their emotions, a developmental task that is particularly prominent during early childhood.

More significantly, the diversity of emotional responses ranging from internalized behaviors (e.g., crying) to externalized actions (e.g., fighting or talking back) suggests that emotional regulation is not uniform among learners. Teachers must therefore navigate a wide spectrum of emotional needs simultaneously, which adds complexity to classroom management.

Rather than viewing these behaviors solely as disciplinary concerns, the findings point to a deeper understanding that such reactions are manifestations of developing socio-emotional competencies. Children at this stage are still learning how to label, process, and control their emotions, and these outbursts represent moments of learning in progress rather than intentional misbehavior.

However, managing these situations requires teachers to strike a delicate balance between maintaining order and providing emotional support. This dual responsibility can be particularly challenging in classrooms with limited time and resources, as teachers must respond immediately while also guiding long-term emotional development.

Theoretically, this aligns with Goleman's Emotional Intelligence Theory, particularly the domain of self-regulation, which develops gradually through guided experiences. At the same time, Erikson's Psychosocial Development Theory explains that children in the initiative versus guilt stage are experimenting with emotional expression and social roles, often leading to heightened emotional responses when they encounter frustration or conflict.

Furthermore, from a Vygotskian perspective, emotional regulation can be seen as a skill that develops through social interaction and adult guidance. Without consistent scaffolding, children may struggle to internalize appropriate emotional responses.

Empirical studies strongly support these findings. Blewitt *et al.* (2021) identified emotional regulation as one of the most challenging aspects of SEL implementation, particularly in early childhood settings. Similarly, Kaur and Sharma (2021) emphasized that young learners require structured support and modeling to develop effective emotional control. Mondy *et al.* (2021) also noted that managing emotional diversity within the classroom is cognitively and emotionally demanding for teachers.

In light of these findings, it is essential that teachers be equipped with emotion coaching strategies, including techniques for validating, guiding, and redirecting emotional responses. Additionally, schools should integrate structured SEL programs that explicitly teach emotional regulation skills. Professional development initiatives may also include training in behavior management approaches that are supportive rather than punitive, ensuring that emotional outbursts are addressed as opportunities for learning.

Resource and Structural Limitations. This theme encompasses challenges related to limited instructional materials and large class sizes, both of which significantly influence the implementation of socio-emotional learning. These constraints highlight systemic issues that affect teachers' ability to deliver consistent and effective SEL practices.

Limited Instructional Materials. The responses indicate that teachers frequently operate in resource-constrained environments, where the lack of dedicated SEL materials limits their ability to implement structured and consistent practices. As a result, teachers resort to improvisation, drawing on available resources and personal creativity to address learners' socio-emotional needs.

Awan ti sapat nga materials para iti SEL.

(There are not enough materials for SEL.)(P9)

Agtultuloy kami mang-improvise.

(We just improvise.)(P5)

Saan amin nga ubing ma-accommodate.

(Not all children are accommodated.)(P8)

While improvisation reflects teachers' adaptability and commitment, it also introduces variability in implementation. Without standardized materials or guides, SEL practices may become inconsistent, depending on the teacher's experience, confidence, and available time. Consequently, some learners may not receive the same level of support as others, as reflected in the concern that not all children are accommodated.

Moreover, the absence of materials suggests that SEL is not yet fully institutionalized within the curriculum but rather relies heavily on teacher initiative. This places additional burden on teachers, who must simultaneously design, implement, and evaluate SEL strategies without sufficient support.

From a theoretical lens, this can be understood through Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, where institutional and structural factors influence classroom practices. Limited resources at the macro and mesosystem levels directly impact the quality of learning experiences at the microsystem level.

Supporting literature reinforces these findings. Hunter *et al.* (2022) emphasized that inadequate instructional materials hinder the effective implementation of SEL programs. Similarly, Fu *et al.* (2025) found that resource limitations often lead to fragmented and inconsistent SEL practices. Blewitt *et al.* (2021) further noted that structured materials are essential in ensuring fidelity and sustainability of SEL interventions.

To address this challenge, schools and educational institutions should provide contextually relevant SEL materials and teaching guides. Additionally, the development of structured resources, such as the proposed teaching primer, can support teachers in implementing SEL more effectively. Policymakers should also consider allocating resources specifically for SEL integration in early childhood education.

Large Class Size. The findings highlight that large class sizes significantly constrain teachers' ability to provide individualized socio-emotional support. With many learners to attend to, teachers must divide their attention, often prioritizing immediate classroom management over deeper emotional engagement.

Adu ti ubing... narigat ti management.

(There are many children... it is hard to manage.)(P10)

Saan ko mabigyan ti attention amin.

(I cannot give attention to all.)(P3)

Limited ti time kada ubing.

(Time per child is limited.)(P1)

This limitation affects the quality of teacher-child interaction, which is critical in SEL. When time is insufficient, opportunities for meaningful conversations, emotional guidance, and personalized support are reduced. As a result, some learners particularly those who require more attention may not receive adequate support.

Additionally, large class sizes increase the likelihood of behavioral challenges, as teachers may struggle to monitor and respond to multiple situations simultaneously. This creates a cycle where limited attention leads to unmanaged behaviors, which in turn demand more time and energy from the teacher.

Theoretically, this aligns with Vygotsky's emphasis on individualized scaffolding, which becomes difficult to implement in overcrowded classrooms. It also connects with classroom ecology theories, where the number of learners directly affects interaction quality.

Research supports this finding. Dyson *et al.* (2023) noted that large class sizes reduce opportunities for individualized instruction and emotional support. Similarly, Istianti *et al.* (2025) found that overcrowded classrooms hinder effective SEL implementation and teacher responsiveness.

It is recommended that schools consider reducing class sizes or providing additional support personnel, such as teacher aides. Where this is not feasible, teachers may be trained in group-based SEL strategies that maximize engagement despite limited time.

Teacher Preparedness and Support. This theme captures the structural and professional challenges that influence teachers' readiness to implement socio-emotional learning (SEL). Specifically, it highlights gaps in formal training and institutional support systems, both of which shape teachers' confidence, consistency, and effectiveness in delivering SEL. The findings suggest that while teachers demonstrate initiative, the absence of systematic preparation and coordinated support limits the sustainability and quality of implementation.

Lack of Training in SEL. The responses clearly indicate that teachers operate without sufficient formal preparation in socio-emotional learning, relying instead on experience-based and intuitive practices. The statement that their approach is "trial and error" reflects a process of learning through practice rather than guided instruction, which, although adaptive, may lead to uneven and inconsistent implementation of SEL strategies.

Awan ti formal training mi iti SEL.

(We do not have formal training in SEL.)(P7)

Trial and error laeng ti approach.

(Our approach is trial and error.)(P6)

Masapul mi ti guidance.

(We need guidance.)(P2)

In essence, teachers are developing their own frameworks in the absence of structured guidance. While this demonstrates initiative and commitment, it also places a considerable cognitive and professional burden on teachers, who must independently determine what works in complex classroom situations. Consequently, this may result in fragmented practices, where strategies vary widely depending on individual teacher experience rather than shared standards or evidence-based approaches.

Moreover, the expressed need for guidance suggests a gap not only in knowledge but also in confidence and professional assurance. Without formal training, teachers may question the effectiveness of their strategies, potentially limiting their willingness to implement more complex or innovative SEL practices. This uncertainty can affect both the depth and consistency of SEL integration in the classroom.

From a theoretical standpoint, this finding aligns with professional competence theory, which posits that effective teaching requires a combination of knowledge, skills, and attitudes developed through formal education and continuous training. It also reflects aspects of Shulman's Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK), where teachers need not only content knowledge (what SEL is) but also pedagogical knowledge (how to teach it effectively). In the absence of training, this integration remains underdeveloped.

Furthermore, from a Vygotskian perspective, teachers themselves require scaffolding in order to effectively scaffold learners. Without structured support, teachers may struggle to facilitate higher-order socio-emotional skills among students.

Empirical studies strongly support these findings. Ulla and Poom-Valickis (2023) identified lack of training as a primary barrier to effective SEL implementation, noting that teachers often feel unprepared to address socio-emotional needs. Similarly, Huynh *et al.* (2021) emphasized that professional development significantly enhances teachers' ability to integrate SEL into classroom practices. Blewitt *et al.* (2021) further highlighted that well-trained teachers are more confident and consistent in implementing SEL programs.

These findings underscore the need to institutionalize SEL training within both pre-service and in-service teacher education. Teacher education programs should integrate SEL as a core component, ensuring that future educators are equipped with both theoretical understanding and practical strategies. Additionally, continuous professional development such as workshops, coaching, and mentoring should be provided to support in-service teachers.

Equally important is the development of structured teaching guides or primers, which can serve as practical references for teachers. These resources can bridge the gap between theory and practice, promoting consistency and confidence in SEL implementation.

Limited Institutional Support. The responses reveal that socio-emotional learning is often underprioritized at the institutional level, resulting in limited programs, insufficient resources, and a lack of coordinated support. As a consequence, teachers are left to implement SEL independently, without clear direction or systemic backing.

Saan unay nga priority ti SEL.

(SEL is not highly prioritized.)(P2)

Awan ti sapat nga programs.

(There are not enough programs.)(P9)

Masapul ti support ti administration.

(We need administrative support.)(P5)

This lack of institutional prioritization has significant implications. When SEL is not embedded in school policies or programs, it becomes an optional or secondary component of teaching rather than an integral part of the curriculum. Teachers may then struggle to allocate time and resources for SEL, especially in contexts where academic demands are emphasized.

Furthermore, the absence of structured programs leads to fragmented implementation, where practices vary across classrooms and schools. Without a unified framework, there is little opportunity for standardization, monitoring, or evaluation of SEL initiatives. This undermines the sustainability and long-term impact of SEL efforts.

The call for administrative support highlights the importance of leadership in shaping educational priorities. School leaders play a critical role in providing direction, resources, and encouragement for SEL implementation. Without this support, even the most committed teachers may face limitations in sustaining their efforts.

From a theoretical perspective, this finding aligns with Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, which emphasizes that teaching and learning are influenced by multiple environmental systems. Institutional policies and leadership (mesosystem and exosystem) directly affect classroom practices (microsystem). When institutional support is weak, the effectiveness of classroom-level interventions is compromised.

Additionally, this reflects principles of organizational theory, where alignment between policy, leadership, and practice is essential for program success.

Empirical literature reinforces these insights. Blewitt *et al.* (2021) emphasized that institutional support is a key determinant of successful SEL implementation. Similarly, Dyson *et al.* (2023) found that lack of administrative support limits teachers' ability to integrate SEL effectively. Thapa *et al.* (2022) further noted that whole-school approaches are necessary to ensure consistency and sustainability of SEL programs.

Given these findings, it is essential for schools to adopt a whole-school approach to SEL, integrating it into policies, curricula, and daily practices. Educational leaders should prioritize SEL by allocating resources, providing training opportunities, and establishing structured programs.

Moreover, coordination among stakeholders including administrators, teachers, and support staff is necessary to ensure alignment and consistency. Schools may also develop monitoring and evaluation systems to assess the effectiveness of SEL initiatives.

At a broader level, policymakers should consider incorporating SEL into national and institutional frameworks, ensuring that it is recognized as a core component of education rather than a supplementary initiative.

The findings under this theme highlight that teacher preparedness and institutional support are critical enabling factors in the successful implementation of socio-emotional learning. While teachers demonstrate strong commitment and adaptability, their efforts are constrained by gaps in training and systemic support.

This suggests that effective SEL implementation requires not only individual teacher competence but also institutional alignment and investment. Without these, SEL practices may remain inconsistent and unsustainable.

Coping Mechanisms of ECCD Teachers in Implementing Socio-Emotional Learning

The findings revealed that despite the challenges encountered in implementing socio-emotional learning (SEL), ECCD teachers actively employ various coping mechanisms to sustain and adapt their practices. These coping strategies are largely experience-driven, context-responsive, and reflective, demonstrating teachers' resilience and commitment to supporting learners' socio-emotional development.

Notably, the coping mechanisms identified revolve around three major areas: (1) adaptive classroom strategies, (2) emotional self-regulation and reflective practice, and (3) collaborative and support-seeking behaviors. These

findings suggest that teachers do not passively experience challenges but actively engage in problem-solving and adjustment, allowing them to continue implementing SEL despite existing constraints.

Adaptive Classroom Strategies. This theme highlights how teachers modify their teaching approaches and classroom practices to respond to learners' needs and situational challenges. Two key codes emerged: Flexibility in Teaching Strategies and Creative Improvisation of Materials.

Flexibility in Teaching Strategies. This code refers to teachers' ability to adjust their instructional approaches, classroom routines, and interaction styles in response to learners' behaviors and emotional needs.

Masapul nga ag-adjust ka talaga kada ubing.

(You really need to adjust to every child.)(P3)

No saan nga effective ti strategy, balbaliwan ko.

(If the strategy is not effective, I change it.)(P8)

Ag-depende ti approach ko iti situation ti klase.

(My approach depends on the classroom situation.)(P5)

The responses indicate that teachers adopt a flexible and responsive approach to teaching, recognizing that no single strategy is universally effective. Instead, they continuously assess classroom dynamics and modify their practices accordingly.

This adaptability reflects a high level of practical pedagogical competence, where teachers rely on observation, experience, and reflection to make real-time decisions. It also demonstrates an understanding that socio-emotional learning is context-dependent, requiring sensitivity to individual and group needs.

Moreover, flexibility allows teachers to respond appropriately to unexpected situations, such as emotional outbursts or behavioral challenges, without disrupting the overall learning environment. This highlights the role of teachers as adaptive facilitators, rather than rigid implementers of predetermined strategies.

Theoretically, this aligns with Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory, which emphasizes the importance of responsive scaffolding based on learners' needs. It also reflects principles of reflective practice, where teachers continuously evaluate and refine their approaches.

Supporting literature affirms this finding. Thapa *et al.* (2022) emphasized that effective SEL implementation requires adaptability to cultural and contextual factors. Similarly, Blewitt *et al.* (2021) noted that flexible teaching approaches enhance the effectiveness of SEL strategies in diverse classroom settings.

Teachers should be encouraged to develop adaptive teaching competencies, supported by training in reflective practice and responsive instruction. Schools may also provide opportunities for teachers to share adaptive strategies through professional learning communities.

Collaborative and Support-Seeking Behaviors

Peer Collaboration. The findings indicate that ECCD teachers actively engage in peer collaboration as a practical and immediate coping mechanism in addressing the complexities of socio-emotional learning (SEL) implementation. Through consultation, sharing of strategies, and informal discussions, teachers create a support network that allows them to navigate classroom challenges more effectively.

Important jay teacher-parent conference, you talk to their parents... make a good relationship with their parents... I don't post it in the group chat... I send a personal message... 'Sis, this is what happened with your

child...'

(That's why teacher-parent conferences are very important. You need to talk to the parents... make a good relationship with their parents... I don't post it in the group chat... I send a personal message...) (P4)

So tapno ngay ma kwaan datoy en, ma lapdan, tapno haan nga dumagdagsen pay nga problema kt always ngay kuma kt, always engagement from, engagement parents to teachers... during our... homeroom meeting... ikwak ngay knyada...

(So in order to address this and prevent the problem from becoming bigger, there should really be consistent engagement between parents and teachers... during our homeroom meetings... I explain to them...) (P3)

More significantly, collaboration serves as a space for collective knowledge construction, where teachers exchange experiences, reflect on practices, and co-develop solutions. This process enables teachers to access a wider range of perspectives, which is particularly valuable in addressing diverse learner needs and unpredictable classroom situations. In this sense, collaboration transforms individual experiences into shared professional knowledge, enhancing overall teaching effectiveness.

In addition, peer collaboration plays a crucial role in reducing professional isolation, a common issue in teaching, especially in rural or resource-limited contexts. By working together, teachers develop a sense of community and shared responsibility, which not only improves problem-solving but also contributes to emotional support and professional well-being. This collegial environment fosters confidence, as teachers realize that challenges are not unique to them but are collectively experienced and addressed.

Furthermore, collaboration encourages reflective dialogue, where teachers critically examine their practices and consider alternative approaches. This reflective process strengthens teachers' capacity for adaptive teaching, allowing them to refine their strategies based on both personal and shared experiences.

From a theoretical perspective, this finding aligns with Communities of Practice Theory (Lave & Wenger), which posits that learning occurs through participation in social groups where members share knowledge and experiences. In this context, teachers function as members of a professional community, continuously learning from one another through interaction. It also connects with social constructivist theory, where knowledge is co-constructed through collaboration and dialogue.

Empirical evidence strongly supports this interpretation. Vangrieken *et al.* (2015) emphasized that teacher collaboration leads to improved instructional practices and enhanced student outcomes. Similarly, Thapa *et al.* (2022) highlighted that collaborative environments are essential for effective SEL implementation, as they provide opportunities for shared learning and mutual support. Blewitt *et al.* (2021) further noted that collaboration strengthens consistency in SEL practices across classrooms.

These findings suggest that collaboration should not be left to informal interactions but should be institutionalized as a structured practice within schools. Establishing formal platforms such as Learning Action Cells (LAC sessions), peer mentoring, and professional learning communities can provide consistent opportunities for teachers to share strategies, reflect on experiences, and co-develop solutions.

Moreover, school leaders should foster a culture of collaborative professionalism, where openness, trust, and shared responsibility are encouraged. Providing time, space, and recognition for collaborative efforts can further enhance participation and effectiveness. Ultimately, strengthening peer collaboration contributes not only to improved SEL implementation but also to teachers' professional growth and well-being.

Seeking Administrative and External Support. The findings further reveal that teachers actively seek administrative and external support as a means of sustaining and enhancing their socio-emotional learning practices. Requests for training, guidance, and institutional assistance indicate that teachers recognize the limitations of individual effort and the necessity of system-level support.

Practical guide, practical guide for the kwa, ay wen ah of course practical guide, they should give us a practical guide...

(Practical guide, yes, of course, a practical guide---they should give us a practical guide...) (P5)

...coaching or mentoring opportunities to learn from experience educators or specialist in social emotoinal development.

(...coaching or mentoring opportunities to learn from experienced educators or specialists in social emotional development.) (P7)

More importantly, these responses highlight that SEL implementation is not solely a classroom-level responsibility but requires organizational alignment and leadership support. While teachers demonstrate initiative and adaptability, their efforts may not be fully effective or sustainable without structured programs, resources, and clear policy direction.

Additionally, the expressed need for guidance suggests that teachers value expert input and professional development opportunities. External support, such as training programs and workshops, provides access to updated knowledge, evidence-based strategies, and practical tools that can enhance teachers' competence and confidence in implementing SEL.

At the same time, administrative support plays a critical role in shaping priorities and allocating resources. When SEL is recognized and supported by school leadership, it becomes integrated into the school culture rather than remaining an isolated initiative. Conversely, the absence of such support may lead to fragmented and inconsistent practices.

From a theoretical standpoint, this finding aligns with Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, where institutional structures (exosystem) significantly influence classroom practices (microsystem). It also reflects principles of organizational leadership theory, which emphasizes the role of leadership in driving innovation and sustaining educational programs.

Empirical literature supports these observations. Blewitt *et al.* (2021) identified administrative support as a key factor in successful SEL implementation. Similarly, Dyson *et al.* (2023) found that leadership involvement enhances program sustainability and teacher engagement. Thapa *et al.* (2022) further emphasized that whole-school approaches, supported by leadership and policy, are essential for effective SEL integration.

In light of these findings, it is essential for educational leaders to adopt a systemic and proactive approach to SEL implementation. This includes integrating SEL into school policies, providing regular training and professional development opportunities, and ensuring access to appropriate resources.

Moreover, establishing clear guidelines and frameworks for SEL can promote consistency and alignment across classrooms. Collaboration between schools and external agencies may also be strengthened to provide additional support, expertise, and resources.

Fostering strong administrative and external support systems ensures that teachers' efforts are not isolated but are part of a coordinated and sustainable approach to socio-emotional learning.

The findings highlight that coping mechanisms related to collaboration and support-seeking are essential in sustaining SEL practices. While teachers demonstrate initiative and resilience, their effectiveness is significantly enhanced when supported by professional communities and institutional structures.

This suggests that successful SEL implementation requires a balance between individual teacher effort and systemic support, reinforcing the importance of both collaboration and leadership in achieving meaningful and sustainable outcomes.



THE NURTURING COMPASS

A Guide to Socio-Emotional Learning

For Early Childhood Care and Development Teachers

Developed by

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A WARM WELCOME

A LETTER TO FELLOW TEACHERS

Embracing the Heart of Early Childhood Education

Dear Fellow Teacher,

Welcome to The Nurturing Compass! This teaching primer was created especially for you the dedicated ECCD teachers who shape the hearts and minds of our youngest learners every single day.

This guide is the result of conversations with thirteen remarkable kindergarten teachers across the Cervantes District teachers just like you who shared their wisdom, challenges, and dreams for creating classrooms where every child feels safe, valued, and emotionally supported.

The title "Nurturing Compass" reflects the dual role of ECCD teachers: to nurture young children's socio-emotional development while providing direction and guidance through the complex landscape of early childhood education. Just as a compass helps travelers find their way, this primer aims to guide teachers in navigating the daily challenges and opportunities of fostering social-emotional competence in young learners.

Inside these pages, you will find practical strategies, ready-to-use activities with complete instructions and materials lists, and heartfelt advice for nurturing socio-emotional learning in your classroom. From morning rituals that set the tone for the day to play-based activities that build empathy and cooperation to tips for partnering with parents each section is designed to be your companion in this beautiful work of heart-centered teaching.

Remember: You are not just teaching letters and numbers. You are helping children discover who they are, how they feel, and how to connect with others. You are building the emotional foundation that will support these children throughout their lives.

Teaching SEL is not always easy. Some days will be challenging. Some children will need more support than others. But every small moment every gentle word, every patient response, every celebration of a child's emotional growth matters more than you know.

This primer is yours to use, adapt, and make your own. Highlight it. Add your notes. Try new things. Trust your instincts. And most importantly, take care of your own heart, too. Because when teachers are emotionally supported, they can better support their students. With gratitude and admiration for the important work you do,

Brinica L. Bo-oan

WITH GRATITUDE

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Honoring Those Who Made This Journey Possible

This teaching primer would not have been possible without the generous contributions of many wonderful people:

To the thirteen ECCD teachers who opened their hearts and classrooms to share their experiences your wisdom, creativity, and dedication inspired every page of this guide. Thank you for trusting me with your stories.

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To the children whose smiles, tears, and growth remind us why this work matters so deeply.

And to every teacher who picks up this primer and uses it to create a more loving, supportive classroom you are the true authors of this story.

\ "Agyamanak unay iti suportá ken pammati yu amin. \"

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

MEET THE RESEARCHER

The Story Behind The Nurturing Compass



Brinica L. Bo-oan is a graduating student of Bachelor of Elementary Education at Ilocos Sur Polytechnic State College (ISPSC) Cervantes Campus. Her passion for early childhood education and commitment to supporting fellow educators in the field of Socio-Emotional Learning inspired the development of this primer. Through her research and engagement with ECCD teachers in the Cervantes District, she has gained valuable insights into the practices and challenges of promoting SEL among kindergarten learners. This primer is a testament to her dedication to creating practical, culturally-responsive resources for teachers in her community.

OUR JOURNEY TOGETHER

YOUR GUIDE TO THIS PRIMER

Seven Pathways to Nurturing Young Hearts

This teaching primer is designed to help you:

1. Understand what socio-emotional learning (SEL) is and why it matters for young children
2. Create a classroom environment where every child feels emotionally safe and supported
3. Implement daily rituals and routines that build emotional awareness and regulation
4. Use play-based activities to develop empathy, cooperation, and social skills
5. Model healthy emotional behaviors for your students
6. Build strong partnerships with parents to support children's SEL at home
7. Access quick-reference tools and printable resources for your classroom

Remember: This primer is a starting point, not a rulebook. Adapt these ideas to fit your unique classroom, your students' needs, and your teaching style. You know your children best!

UNDERSTANDING SEL

FOUNDATIONS OF SOCIO-EMOTIONAL LEARNING

Building the Heart Skills for Lifelong Success

Understanding SEL

What is Socio-Emotional Learning?

Socio-emotional learning (SEL) is the process through which children develop the skills to understand and manage their emotions, build positive relationships, and make responsible decisions. Think of it as teaching children the "heart skills" they need to navigate life successfully.

Fun Fact: Did You Know? Research shows that children with strong SEL skills are more likely to succeed academically, have better mental health, and build lasting positive relationships throughout their lives!

The Five SEL Competencies

According to Daniel Goleman's framework, there are five key competencies that form the foundation of SEL:

Self-Awareness

Recognizing and understanding one's own emotions, strengths, and limitations. Children learn to identify what they are feeling and why.

Self-Regulation

Managing emotions, controlling impulses, and adapting to different situations. Children learn calming strategies and appropriate ways to express feelings.

Motivation

Setting goals, persisting through challenges, and maintaining a positive attitude. Children develop inner drive and resilience.

Empathy

Understanding and sharing the feelings of others. Children learn to see situations from different perspectives and respond with compassion.

Social Skills

Building relationships, communicating effectively, and working cooperatively. Children learn to navigate social situations and work with others.

Why SEL Matters in Early Childhood

The early years are a critical window for developing socio-emotional skills. During this time, children's brains are especially receptive to learning about emotions, relationships, and social behaviors. The skills they develop now will serve as the foundation for their future success in school and life.

Benefits of SEL in Early Childhood:

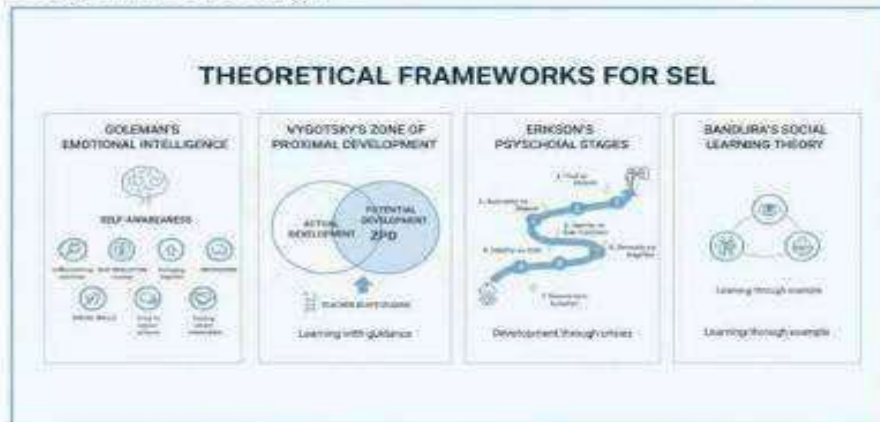
- ✓ Better academic performance and school readiness
- ✓ Improved ability to manage stress and anxiety
- ✓ Stronger friendships and peer relationships
- ✓ Reduced behavioral problems in the classroom
- ✓ Greater self-confidence and positive self-concept
- ✓ Foundation for lifelong emotional well-being

THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS

RESEARCH AND THEORY THAT GUIDE OUR PRACTICE

Grounding SEL in Proven Educational Frameworks

This primer is grounded in several complementary theoretical perspectives that inform our understanding of how socio-emotional learning develops and can be supported in early childhood settings.



1. Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory

Lev Vygotsky emphasized the role of social interaction in learning, particularly through the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). This theory supports practices like peer pairing (the Kullit-Shy Partnership) and collaborative activities, where children learn from more capable peers and adults who scaffold their development.

2. Goleman's Theory of Emotional Intelligence

Daniel Goleman's framework emphasizes five core competencies: self awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. In the ECCD classroom, these competencies translate into practices that help children recognize their emotions, manage their behavior, understand others' feelings, and interact effectively with peers.

3. Erikson's Psychosocial Development Theory

Erik Erikson's theory highlights the stage of Initiative versus Guilt (ages 3-6), where children develop confidence through guided social engagement. This underscores the importance of providing children with opportunities to take initiative in a supportive environment that balances freedom with appropriate boundaries.

4. Bandura's Social Learning Theory

Albert Bandura's theory emphasizes learning through observation and imitation. Teachers serve as powerful models for children, demonstrating emotional regulation, social skills, and positive communication. This theory supports the Teacher Modeling Protocols described in Module 3.

MODULE 1

MORNING EMOTIONAL GROUNDING RITUALS

Creating a Safe and Supportive Classroom Environment

SEL research and the lived experiences of teachers in Cervantes District consistently show that children learn best when they feel emotionally safe. This module presents two specific techniques used by ECCD teachers to establish emotional readiness at the start of every school day. Both techniques are grounded in Sub-Theme 1.1 of the study and are most effectively implemented during morning arrival and the first 15–20 minutes of class.

T1

Technique 1 Balitaan Protocol

The Balitaan Protocol is a dedicated 5–10 minute morning circle in which children are invited to share experiences from home. It serves as the emotional gateway to the school day, allowing teachers to gauge children's readiness for learning and to validate whatever emotion a child brings to school.



"We have blocks of time... about twenty minutes, something like 'news time.' In that area, specifically, I first manage the children's emotions. During that sharing time, they share their experiences what they did at home to set the tone before you start the class." — P2

"This is what I usually do, especially on the very first day of school and every morning before we start class." — P8

 Objective	To create emotional safety through structured sharing; to help teachers assess children's emotional readiness; to develop self-awareness and verbal expression.
 Best Timing	Every morning, before academic instruction begins. Ideal at 7:30–7:45 AM during arrival or the first 10–15 minutes of class.
 Materials	Circle seating arrangement (no tables), a 'talking object' (any small stuffed toy or stone), optional emotion chart posted on the wall.
 SEL Competencies	Self-Awareness, Emotional Expression, Social Skills

Step-by-Step Procedure

1	Arrange children in a circle on the floor or chairs. Use the same spot every day to build predictability.
2	Introduce or retrieve the 'talking object' – only the child holding it may speak. This teaches listening and turn-taking.
3	Begin with yourself: 'Good morning! I feel happy today because I saw a beautiful sunrise. Now, who wants to share?'
4	Pass the object around. Allow each child 30–60 seconds to share. Accept all responses – even 'I don't know' or silence.
5	Respond with validation: 'Thank you for sharing that. I hear you.' Avoid correcting or minimizing feelings.
6	Close the Balitaan by summarizing: 'I can see some of us feel happy, some feel tired – and that's okay. We are all here together.' Transition to the Emoji Check-in (T2) if needed.

Facilitation Notes for Different Grade Contexts

For lower kindergarten (ages 4–5): Keep sharing to 1–2 sentences. Use sentence starters: 'Today I feel ___ because ___.' Model first every time.

For transitioning between activities: Use a mini Balitaan (2–3 minutes) during transition periods – e.g., after recess. Ask: 'How do you feel right now? Ready to learn?'

⚠ Challenge	✓ Preventive / Adaptive Mechanism
Large class (30+ children): Sharing may take too long, causing restlessness and loss of attention.	Preventive Measure: Divide class into AM and PM sessions for the first grading period. Or use 'Rapid Round' – each child shows one emoji card instead of verbal sharing. Full verbal sharing can rotate by group (Group A on Monday, Group B on Tuesday, etc.).

Home Connection

Encourage parents to ask: 'What did you share at school today?' at dinner. Provide a simple weekly Home Journal with the prompt: 'Something that made me feel ___ today was ___.'

T2

Technique 2

Emoji-Based Emotion Identification

Teachers use visual emotion cards — including characters from *Inside Out 2* (Joy, Sadness, Anger, Fear, Disgust, Envy, Ennui, Embarrassment) — to help children, especially shy learners, identify and communicate their emotional state when verbal expression is difficult. This technique bridges the gap between feeling and language.



"I used emojis like sadness, joy, anger, those from Inside Out 2. They choose which one matched what they were feeling that day. Then they explain why they were feeling that way...we check their emotions first, and you really set the tone before moving to your actual lesson." — P2

"We have emotion cards...happy, sad, angry, excited...These cards help them show their emotions, especially those children who are shy." — P8

 Objective	To provide a non-verbal, visually-supported pathway for emotional identification; to develop emotional vocabulary; to ensure shy and non-verbal children can participate in SEL.
 Best Timing	Beginning of the school day (after Balitaan); during transitions between subjects; after recess or lunch when emotions may be heightened.
 Materials	Laminated emotion cards (at least 6–8 emotions), a pocket chart or display board, optional: printed 'Inside Out 2' character cards or hand-drawn emoji faces.
 SEL Competencies	Self-Awareness, Emotional Expression, Self-Regulation

Step-by-Step Procedure

1	Display emotion cards prominently at children's eye level. Before first use, name each emotion and model the facial expression: 'This is Joy — see how she smiles? Joy feels warm and light. Show me your Joy face!'
2	During morning check-in, invite each child to point to, hold up, or place a card in a pocket chart: 'Which emoji shows how you feel right now?'
3	For children who choose cards but cannot explain: 'That's okay. You can just show me your card.' Never force verbal explanation.
4	For children who are able: prompt with 'Can you tell me one reason you feel [emotion]?' Validate: 'Thank you for telling me. I understand.'
5	Record patterns you notice (e.g., a child consistently choosing 'Sad' on Mondays). Use this data for individual check-ins later.
6	Close: 'Whatever you're feeling today, you are welcome here. Let's take a deep breath together and start our day.'

Teacher-Made Emotion Cards (Low-Resource Alternative)

Print or draw simple faces on cardstock. Laminate with sticky tape and clear plastic covers. Attach magnets to display on any metal surface. Use inside-out cereal boxes as backing for a free display board.

⚠ Challenge	✓ Preventive / Adaptive Mechanism
Shy or non-verbal children may point randomly without genuine self-reflection, especially when feeling anxious.	Preventive Measure: Conduct individual check-ins privately (approach child quietly, show 2–3 cards, whisper, “Which one is closest to how you feel?”). Never call attention to a shy child during whole-group check-in. Use drawing as an alternative — “Can you draw your face right now?”

Home Connection

Send a small set of emotion cards home in a zip-lock envelope. Ask parents to do a daily emoji check-in at dinner: “Show me your emoji for today.” Provide a bilingual (Filipino/Ilokano) parent guide explaining each emotion.

MODULE 2

PLAY-BASED SEL INTEGRATION

Using Collaborative Activities to Build Social Competence

This module presents two play-based techniques that ECCD teachers use to scaffold social competence through intentional peer interaction. Drawn from Sub-Theme 1.2 of the study, these techniques leverage children's natural drive for play to develop decision-making, empathy, cooperation, and emotional regulation. The key distinction from generic 'group work' is the intentionality behind pairing, facilitation, and post-activity reflection.

T3

Technique 3

'Kulit-Shy' Partnership

The Kulit-Shy Partnership is a deliberate peer-pairing strategy in which socially confident or energetic children (kulit) are paired with quieter or shyer peers. This intentional pairing creates mutual scaffolding: the energetic child learns patience and leadership, while the shy child gains a safe social bridge for participation.



"If there is an energetic child, I pair him or her with someone who is still a bit shy. In that way, they are able to realize things about one another... friendship is developed." – P9

 Objective	To scaffold social interaction between children with different temperaments; to develop empathy, friendship, and cooperative problem-solving.
 Best Timing	During structured play periods, art activities, and any pair-work activity. Most effective after the first 2–3 weeks of school when the teacher knows each child's social temperament.
 Materials	No special materials — any pair-based classroom activity. Optional: Partner Cards (printed cards with two matching animals or shapes) for assigning pairs.
 SEL Competencies	Empathy, Social Skills, Self-Regulation, Motivation

How to Facilitate Kulit-Shy Partnership (Step-by-Step)

1	Observe children during the first weeks of school. Mentally (or physically) note which children are socially energetic and which are shy or hesitant.
2	Before a pair activity, pre-assign partners. Do not ask children to choose their own pairs — shy children often end up left out.
3	Assign the activity task clearly: 'Your job together is to [specific task]. You need each other to finish.' Make interdependence explicit.
4	Coach the energetic partner privately: 'Your partner might be quiet at first. Your job is to wait for them, not do everything yourself. Ask them what they think first.'

5

Monitor and narrate positively: 'Look at how [Name] waited for their partner! That's such a kind thing to do.'

6

After the activity, facilitate a brief reflection: 'What did you learn from your partner today? What was something your partner did that surprised you?'

Contextualizing for Kindergarten

For lower kindergarten (ages 4–5), pair activities should be concrete and short (5–10 minutes). Examples: sorting colored blocks together, building a tower, completing a simple puzzle, painting a shared canvas. The activity itself creates natural interaction — the teacher's role is to set up the task clearly and monitor, not to direct every moment.

For higher kindergarten (ages 5–6), pairs can take on more complex collaborative tasks such as creating a story together using picture cards, sorting community helpers by their role, or building a simple structure based on a shared plan. The teacher should prompt more extended dialogue: 'Ask your partner what they think before you decide.'

Challenge

The energetic child may dominate the activity, completing tasks without the shy partner's input.

Preventive / Adaptive Mechanism

Preventive Measure: Assign role cards — 'Decider' and 'Builder' or 'Speaker' and 'Keeper.' Switch roles halfway through. Debrief immediately after: 'Who made the first decision? Did both of you get a turn?'

Home Connection

Send a 'Partner Activity Card' home: 'Tonight, do one thing together with someone in your family — fold laundry, set the table, water a plant. Tell your partner one good thing about how they helped.'

T4

Technique 4

"Get Together" Challenges

Get Together Challenges are structured competitive group games in which winning requires genuine cooperation, strategic planning, and emotional regulation. Unlike free play, these activities are teacher-facilitated and include mandatory post-game reflection on teamwork, handling wins and losses, and building empathy.



"When I give activities where there's a winner, naturally they come together and create strategies so they can win. In that situation, they develop self-awareness. They practice decision-making because sometimes they win, sometimes they lose, and they learn how to handle their classmates... That's where they build empathy." — P2

"When they lose, there are children who comfort them, saying 'It's okay'... they approach and show care to their peers." — P3

🎯 Objective	To develop decision-making, emotional regulation, cooperative strategy-building, empathy, and resilience through structured competitive play.
🕒 Best Timing	During free play, PE integration, or dedicated group activity time. Most powerful during the middle of the school year when children know each other.
📦 Materials	Any group game materials (relay race materials, board game pieces, building blocks, simple card games). No commercial materials required.
💡 SEL Competencies	Decision-Making, Empathy, Self-Regulation, Social Skills, Motivation.

Step-by-Step Procedure

1	Choose or design a group game that requires cooperation to achieve a shared goal (e.g., relay race, block tower challenge, puzzle relay, 'cross the river' stepping stone game).
2	Before the game, set the SEL expectation explicitly: 'Today's challenge is not just to win – it's to win together. You need a strategy. Give your team 2 minutes to plan before we start.'
3	During the game, narrate SEL moments: 'I see your team is deciding together – that's great strategy!' 'I notice someone is feeling frustrated – let's help them.'
4	After the game, facilitate mandatory reflection (5 minutes): 'How did your team decide what to do? What happened when someone felt sad about losing? Who showed empathy?'
5	Name specific behaviors you observed: 'I saw [Name] comfort their friend when they felt sad. That's empathy.' Make the invisible visible.
6	Close with: 'Win or lose, what matters is how you treated each other. Who wants to say something kind to their team?'

Handling 'Sometimes They Win, Sometimes They Lose'

This is one of the most important SEL teaching moments. When a group loses, resist the urge to immediately comfort or minimize. Instead, validate and then redirect: 'I know losing feels hard. That feeling is real. Let's talk about it for a moment...' Give children language for processing loss: 'Next time, we can try a different strategy.' Teach specific phrases: 'Good game.' 'You played well.' 'Let's try again.'

⚠️ Challenge	✅ Preventive / Adaptive Mechanism
Losing triggers intense emotional reactions (crying, anger, withdrawal), disrupting the class and making follow-up instruction difficult.	Preventive Measure: Before any competitive activity, establish a class agreement: 'We are all friends first, competitors second.' Use the It's Okay Affirmation (T7) immediately. Have the Calming Corner (T9) available. Debrief as a whole group – normalize losing as part of learning.

Home Connection

Share a parent note: 'Today your child learned how to win and lose gracefully. At home, play a simple game together (any card game, laro). Talk about: How did you feel when you won? When you lost? What would you do differently next time?'

MODULE 3

TEACHER MODELING PROTOCOLS

Teacher as the Primary SEL Model for Young Learners

Children learn SEL primarily by watching the adults around them. This module presents three protocols through which ECCD teachers consciously model the very competencies they seek to develop in children. These protocols emerged from Sub-Theme 1.3 and are most effective when practiced consistently — not as isolated lessons, but as the teacher's everyday relational posture.

T5

Technique 5

"Deng-dengkek" (Active Listening) Protocol

Deng-dengkek (the Ilokano word for attentive listening) is the practice of stopping all other activity and giving a child full, unhurried attention when they speak. This is not passive — it is a deliberate, visible act of respect that children observe, internalize, and replicate with their peers.



"Even if I'm doing something, like printing during this interview... if they're sharing something, you really need to listen to them. You need to show patience. Even if you're not interested in their story, you still need to listen. In that way, they see that you're showing kindness and patience." — P2

 Objective	To model active listening and respect, to build psychological safety, to teach children that their words matter, to develop social skills through observation.
 Best Timing	All day, every day — whenever a child initiates communication. Especially critical during Balitaan (T1), transition periods, and conflict moments.
 Materials	No materials required. The teacher's body is the tool: eye contact, physical orientation toward the child, an open facial expression.
 SEL Competencies	Social Skills, Empathy, Self-Regulation (for teacher)

How to Practice Deng-dengkek

1	When a child speaks to you, stop what you are doing. Put down papers or materials. Turn your body to face the child.
2	Lower yourself to the child's eye level whenever possible — kneel, crouch, or sit beside them. This communicates equality and respect.
3	Make eye contact (culturally appropriate; avoid prolonged staring for children who find it uncomfortable). Nod to show you are listening.
4	Do not finish their sentences, redirect them to a point, or immediately offer solutions. Let them complete their thought.
5	Reflect back: "So you're saying..." or "I hear that you feel..." Use their exact words when possible.

6

Thank them genuinely: 'Thank you for telling me that. It's important.'

Why This Is Especially Powerful in Large Classes

In classes of 30–40 children, individual attention is rare. When a teacher consistently practices Deng-denggek even for 30 seconds per child, those children experience being seen and valued. Research confirms that this micro-moment of attentive listening significantly reduces behavioral disruptions, as children do not need to act out to gain attention they already feel they have.

⚠ Challenge	✓ Preventive / Adaptive Mechanism
In a busy classroom, full stops for individual listening feel impossible when managing 30+ children.	Preventive Measure: Designate a 'Listening Signal' – when you give a child the Deng-denggek signal (hand on heart, or kneeling down), other children know to continue their quiet work. Practice this signal during the first week. Even 20–30 seconds of full attention is powerful.

Teacher Self-Reflection

Ask yourself daily: 'Did I stop and listen today – really listen – to at least five children individually?' 'Did any child try to get my attention in a challenging way? What were they really communicating?' Use a simple tally mark on a sticky note on your desk to build the habit.

T6

Technique 6

"Magic Words" System

The Magic Words System is the explicit, consistent use and modeling of 'please,' 'thank you,' and 'sorry' by the teacher – including in situations where the teacher has made a mistake. What makes this system powerful is not the words themselves, but the teacher's authentic demonstration that everyone – including adults – makes errors and can repair relationships.



"As a teacher, if you commit a mistake, know how to say sorry, so they can imitate you. You should also know how to say thank you... You also practice the magic words you're teaching—'please,' 'thank you,' and 'sorry.'" – P2

"Know how to say sorry, so they can imitate you." – P11

🎯 Objective	To teach social conventions through authentic demonstration; to model self-correction and relationship repair; to develop children's prosocial communication skills.
🕒 Best Timing	All day, every day – during class transitions, when giving instructions, when correcting children, and especially when the teacher has made a mistake.
📦 Materials	Optional: Magic Words visual poster (Please, Thank You, Sorry – with:

T7

Technique 7
"It's Okay" Affirmation

The It's Okay Affirmation is the teacher's deliberate choice to respond to children's distress with validation and presence rather than dismissal or immediate problem-solving. This technique directly counters the common but counterproductive instinct to say 'Don't cry' or 'It's nothing' — instead replacing these with language that honors the child's emotional reality.



"When children cry...it shouldn't be like we say, 'don't cry,' 'stop crying'...we should demonstrate understanding of their feelings...It's okay, I'm here for you... Why are you crying? I'm here to help you." — P9

"Eventually until she calmed down." — P8

 Objective	To validate children's emotional experiences; to build trust and psychological safety; to model healthy emotional processing; to teach children that all emotions are acceptable.
 Best Timing	Whenever a child is in distress — crying, frustrated, withdrawn, or experiencing conflict. Most critical during the first months of school when children are adjusting.
 Materials	No materials. Teacher presence, calm voice, and validating language are the tools.
 SEL Competencies	Self-Awareness, Empathy, Emotional Regulation, Self-Regulation

Validating Language Scripts

Use these phrases as models — adapt them to your natural speech and the child's language preference (Filipino/Ilokano):

- 'It's okay. I'm right here with you.'
- 'I see that you're feeling [sad/angry/scared]. That feeling is real.'
- 'You don't have to stop crying. I'll wait with you.'
- 'What happened? I want to understand.' (only after initial comfort)
- 'When you're ready, I'm here to help.'

Step-by-Step Procedure

1	Move toward the child calmly and quietly. Kneel or sit beside them — never stand above.
2	Wait silently for 15–30 seconds before speaking. Sometimes presence is enough.
3	Offer a gentle touch if culturally appropriate and if the child accepts it (hand on shoulder, soft pat on back).
4	Use validating language (see scripts above). Do NOT say: 'Stop crying,' 'It's nothing,' 'You're a big kid,' or 'Don't be a baby.'
5	After the child has calmed (even partially): 'Can you tell me what happened?' Listen using Deng-

MODULE 4

ENVIRONMENTAL SCAFFOLDING SYSTEMS

Structuring the Physical and Temporal Environment for Emotional Security

The physical and temporal organization of a classroom is itself an SEL intervention. This module presents two systems through which ECCD teachers in Cervantes District create predictable, secure, and emotionally supportive environments that reduce anxiety and promote self-regulation. Both techniques emerge from Sub-Theme 1.4 and are most effective when established in the first week of school and maintained consistently throughout the year.

T8

Technique 8

Visual Schedule Predictability System

The Visual Schedule Predictability System is the use of posted, picture-based daily schedules that children can see and reference throughout the school day. Rather than experiencing transitions as sudden or unpredictable, children develop a sense of time and anticipation that reduces anxiety and supports independent self-regulation.



"We also have visual schedules so they feel safe and secure... we do the same routine every day so they can get used to what they are going to do." — P4

"Every day it's the same so they can get used to it." — P2

 Objective	To reduce anxiety through predictability; to support children's developing sense of time; to prepare children for transitions; to build independence and self-regulation.
 Best Timing	Posted permanently and referenced throughout the entire school day. Especially important during transition periods between subjects or activities.
 Materials	Cardstock or Manila paper, illustrations or printed pictures representing each activity, laminating sheets (or clear tape), display area at children's eye level (ideally magnetic or Velcro-mounted for flexibility).
 SEL Competencies	Self-Regulation, Self-Awareness, Motivation

How to Create and Use a Visual Schedule

1	Draw or print simple pictures for each part of the day: Morning Circle, Reading, Math, Snack, Play, Rest, Dismissal. Label in Filipino, Ilokano, and English.
2	Post the schedule where ALL children can see it without having to ask (eye level, large enough for children 5 meters away to see the pictures).
3	Every morning, walk through the schedule together: "Let's look at our day. First we have Balitaan, then Math..." Let children predict what comes next.
4	Before each transition, give a 2-minute warning and point to the schedule: "We have two more

	minutes with this activity, then we move to...' (point to next picture).
5	When unexpected changes occur, show and acknowledge: 'Today our schedule changed a little – we have a visitor. Let me show you our new plan.' Model flexibility calmly.
6	At end of day, review together: 'Look at everything we did today! How did our day go?' This builds memory, self-reflection, and closure.

Challenge	Preventive / Adaptive Mechanism
Unexpected schedule changes (visitors, assemblies, weather) disrupt the predictability children rely on, causing anxiety and behavioral dysregulation.	Preventive Measure: Create a special 'Surprise Day' card to post when the schedule changes. Introduce it at the start of the year: 'Sometimes our schedule has a surprise. When you see this card, it means something special is happening – and that's okay! Practice with planned 'surprise' activities to normalize flexibility.

Home Connection

Help families create a simple Home Visual Schedule for after-school routines (snack, play, homework, dinner, bath, sleep). Provide a blank template. Children who experience schedule predictability at home and at school show greater self-regulation across both contexts.

T9

Technique 9:

Calming Corner ("Bear Hug") Protocol

The Calming Corner is a designated physical space in the classroom equipped with emotional regulation tools where children can go – independently or with teacher guidance – when experiencing intense emotions. The 'Bear Hug' Protocol refers to the practice of using a large stuffed bear or soft object as a safe receptacle for physical emotional release.



"We had a corner with a big teddy bear. Whenever they were angry or sad, they could hug that big bear or even hit it, so that they wouldn't hurt their classmates... There was a child crying. My mommy did not kiss me today... She went to the bear and cried there. After some time, she calmed down." -- P4

 Objective	To provide a safe, structured space for emotional self-regulation; to prevent physical aggression by offering an alternative outlet; to support children's growing capacity for self-management.
 Best Timing	Available all day, every day. Most accessed during: arrival (separation anxiety), after conflict, during or after intense activities, before transitions home.
 Materials	One large stuffed animal or soft object (any size), small pillow, 2–3 simple fidget items (homemade stress balls with balloons and rice), emotion cards posted in the corner, optional: small blanket.
 SEL Competencies	Self-Regulation, Emotional Regulation, Self-Awareness

TEACHER SELF-CARE AND REFLECTION

Research consistently shows that the most effective SEL implementation begins with the teacher's own emotional well-being. ECCD teachers who are emotionally regulated, self-aware, and reflective are better equipped to model, facilitate, and sustain the SEL practices described in this primer. This section provides self-reflection prompts and self-care reminders for the teacher.

Weekly Teacher Reflection Prompts

1. Which SEL technique did I implement consistently this week? What went well?
2. Which children seem to be struggling emotionally? What have I observed?
3. Did I practice Deng-denggek (active listening) for at least five individual children?
4. Did I use the Magic Words authentically – including when I made a mistake?
5. How did I take care of my own emotional needs this week?
6. What is one thing I want to do differently or improve next week?

Reminders for the SEL Teacher

- You cannot pour from an empty cup. Your emotional well-being directly affects your children.
- You do not need to be perfect. Authentic self-correction teaches children more than perfection.
- Progress is not always visible. Some SEL seeds take months or years to bloom.
- You are doing meaningful work. The nine techniques in this primer represent the wisdom of your colleagues – and now, your own practice.
- Ask for support when you need it. Consult your master teacher, school head, or fellow ECCD teachers.

CHALLENGES IN SEL IMPLEMENTATION AND PREVENTIVE MEASURES

This section presents the four major challenge categories identified by teachers in the study. For each challenge, the primer provides: (a) a description of the challenge, (b) verbatim teacher voices reflecting the lived experience, (c) adaptive mechanisms teachers have developed, and (d) preventive measures informed by existing research. As noted by the instructors in the primer validation, challenges should be discussed in this section and addressed through the practical mechanisms embedded in each module.

Challenge 1: Lack of Parental Involvement and Home-School Disconnect

Teachers consistently reported that SEL skills learned in the classroom were not reinforced at home, creating contradictory messages for children. Without family involvement, children may revert to behaviors inconsistent with classroom SEL expectations.



Challenge	Preventive / Adaptive Mechanism
Inconsistent Home Reinforcement: School-based SEL practices conflict with home rules, language, or expectations, causing confusion and diminishing children's SEL progress.	Preventive Mechanism: Use personalized anecdotal record cards sent home weekly. Provide sample conversation scripts in Ilokano and Filipino for parents. Offer monthly parent orientation sessions explaining the purpose and procedure of each SEL technique. Establish a class communication group (Messenger, SMS) with weekly positive updates.
Hard-to-Reach Families: Some parents have limited literacy, time, or cultural comfort with school-based communication.	Preventive Mechanism: Use picture-based parent communication (illustrated weekly notes). Conduct home visits when possible. Partner with barangay officials or community leaders to communicate SEL values in culturally familiar terms. Use older siblings or relatives as communication bridges.

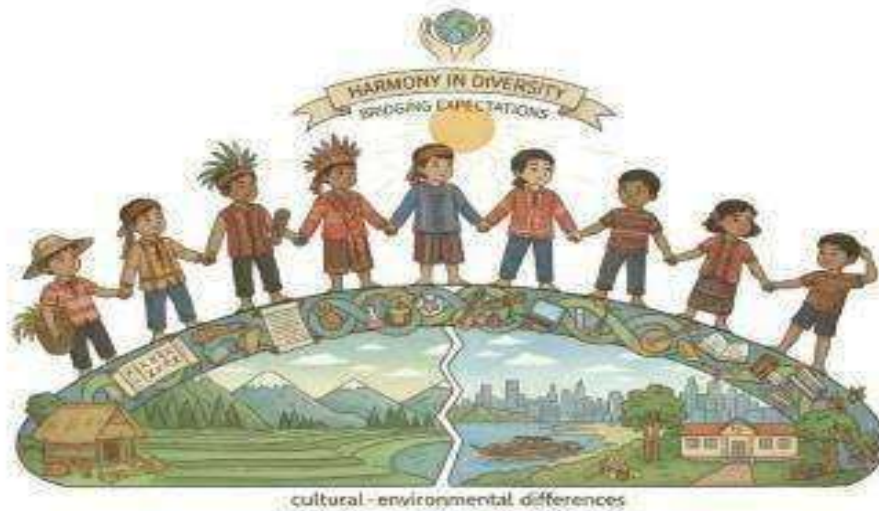
Challenge 2: Large Class Sizes and Limited Time

The majority of teachers reported classes of 30–45 children, making individual attention, emotion monitoring, and quiet reflection activities extremely difficult to implement.



Challenge	Preventive / Adaptive Mechanism
Large Class Size: With 30–45 children, individual emotional check-ins, one-on-one listening, and pair activities become logistically complex.	Preventive Mechanism — Class Division Strategy: Propose and advocate for AM/PM split sessions for the first grading period. Use the Rapid Round emoji check-in (all children simultaneously hold up their card) instead of verbal round-robin. Divide class into rotating small groups (4–5 children) for deeper SEL activities.
Limited Dedicated SEL Time: Curriculum demands leave little dedicated time for SEL activities.	Preventive Mechanism — Accidental Learning Integration: Embed SEL micro-moments within academic instruction. Examples: Math sorting activity 'n' practice taking turns and sharing. Reading lesson 'n' identify the character's emotion. Science observation 'n' model careful listening (Deng-denggek). Science experiment 'n' practice cooperation strategies. No additional time is required — SEL is woven into existing instruction.

Challenge 4: Cultural-Environmental Inconsistency and Diverse Home Backgrounds



Children come from diverse home environments with varying cultural norms around emotion expression, authority, and social behavior. These differences create inconsistency in children's SEL experiences.

Challenge	Preventive / Adaptive Mechanism
Cultural Differences in Emotion Expression: Some families discourage visible emotional expression ("Don't cry -- you're not a baby"), which conflicts with SEL validation approaches.	Preventive Mechanism -- Background Investigation: In the first weeks of school, conduct informal family background interviews (via home visit, parent conference, or intake form). Ask: "How does your child usually express feelings at home? What do you do when your child is upset?" Use this information to bridge rather than replace home practices. Avoid labeling any cultural practice as "wrong" -- instead build shared language.
Home-School Language Inconsistency: The language used for SEL at school (Filipino, English) may differ from the language used at home (Ilokano dialect).	Preventive Mechanism: Use trilingual materials throughout this primer (Filipino, Ilokano, English) when sharing resources with families. The Magic Words poster, emotion card labels, and parent communication templates are all designed to be provided in the home language. Invite parents who speak Ilokano to help translate key SEL vocabulary.

Figure 2. The Nurturing Compass: A Contextualized Teaching Primer for Socio-Emotional Learning in Early Childhood Education

Teaching Primer for Socio-Emotional Learning

The findings of the study culminated in the development of a contextualized teaching primer entitled “The Nurturing Compass: A Guide to Socio-Emotional Learning.” This output was systematically derived from the lived experiences, practices, challenges, and coping mechanisms of ECCD teachers, ensuring that it is both evidence-based and practice-oriented.

Notably, the primer is not merely a compilation of strategies but a translation of qualitative findings into structured pedagogical interventions. The emergent themes from the study safe emotional environments, play-based learning, teacher modeling, and environmental scaffolding served as the foundational framework for the four modules included in the primer. This demonstrates a strong alignment between research findings and instructional design.

Furthermore, the integration of verbatim responses within the primer preserves the authentic voices of teachers, reinforcing the credibility and contextual relevance of the output. This approach ensures that the primer reflects real classroom conditions rather than idealized or abstract models of socio-emotional learning (SEL).

The teaching primer directly reflects the core findings of the study, particularly the identified practices and adaptive strategies employed by teachers. Each module corresponds to a major theme, thereby establishing a clear research-to-practice linkage.

For instance, the Morning Emotional Grounding Rituals module emerged from teachers’ emphasis on emotional check-ins and routines, while the Structured Play-Based SEL Integration module reflects the importance of peer interaction and experiential learning. Similarly, the Teacher Modeling Protocols module is grounded in observed teacher behaviors, and the Environmental Scaffolding Systems module highlights the role of structured environments in promoting emotional security.

This alignment demonstrates that the primer is firmly anchored in the Basis of the Study (BOS), ensuring that the output is not detached from empirical evidence but is instead a direct extension of it.

The effectiveness of the teaching primer is further strengthened by its grounding in well-established theories. Specifically, the integration of Goleman’s Emotional Intelligence Theory, Vygotsky’s Sociocultural Theory, Erikson’s Psychosocial Theory, and Bandura’s Social Learning Theory provides a comprehensive framework for understanding and implementing SEL.

First, the primer operationalizes Goleman’s Emotional Intelligence Theory by embedding activities that develop self-awareness, self-regulation, empathy, and social skills. For example, the Balitaan Protocol and emotion identification activities directly support emotional awareness, while the Calming Corner facilitates emotional regulation.

Second, Vygotsky’s Sociocultural Theory is evident in the emphasis on social interaction and scaffolding. Techniques such as the Kulit-Shy Partnership demonstrate how peer interaction serves as a mechanism for learning, allowing more socially competent learners to support their peers within the Zone of Proximal Development.

Third, the primer aligns with Erikson’s Psychosocial Theory, particularly the stage of initiative versus guilt, where children develop confidence through guided social engagement. The structured activities in the primer provide opportunities for children to take initiative in a supportive environment, thereby fostering a sense of competence and purpose.

Finally, Bandura’s Social Learning Theory is reflected in the teacher modeling protocols, where children learn behaviors through observation and imitation. The Deng-denggek Protocol and Magic Words System exemplify how teachers serve as role models for socio-emotional behaviors.

The integration of these theories ensures that the primer is not only practical but also conceptually robust, bridging theory and classroom application.

A significant strength of the teaching primer lies in its contextualization. Unlike generic SEL programs, this primer is rooted in the realities of ECCD classrooms in the Cervantes District, where teachers face challenges such as large class sizes, limited resources, and diverse learner needs.

The inclusion of challenge-responsive strategies demonstrates that the primer is adaptive and realistic. For example, strategies such as teacher-made materials and integration of SEL into daily routines address the constraints identified in the study. This reflects an understanding that effective SEL implementation requires flexibility and responsiveness to contextual factors.

From the perspective of Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, this contextualization is crucial, as children's development is influenced by multiple environmental systems, including school and home. By incorporating strategies that bridge these systems such as parent communication the primer supports a more holistic approach to development.

Moreover, the use of localized language and culturally relevant practices enhances the cultural responsiveness of the primer. This is consistent with the findings of Thapa *et al.* (2022), who emphasized that SEL programs are most effective when they are adapted to the cultural and contextual realities of learners.

The primer demonstrates high pedagogical value due to its structured yet flexible design. Each technique includes step-by-step procedures, materials, and reflection prompts, making it accessible and user-friendly for teachers.

Importantly, the primer promotes the integration of SEL into daily routines rather than treating it as a separate subject. This aligns with the concept of embedded learning, where socio-emotional skills are developed through everyday interactions and activities.

Research supports this approach. Blewitt *et al.* (2021) emphasized that integrated SEL practices are more effective than isolated interventions. Similarly, Cipriano *et al.* (2023) found that embedding SEL in daily classroom routines leads to improved social and emotional outcomes among learners.

Additionally, the inclusion of reflection prompts supports teacher professional growth, encouraging educators to continuously evaluate and refine their practices. This aligns with reflective practice theory, which highlights the importance of ongoing reflection in improving teaching effectiveness.

The development of this teaching primer has several important implications. First, it provides a practical resource for teachers, enabling them to implement SEL strategies effectively even in resource-constrained environments. This addresses the gap identified in the study regarding the lack of structured materials.

Second, the primer contributes to the professional development of teachers, particularly in enhancing their competence in socio-emotional learning. By combining theory and practice, it supports both knowledge acquisition and skill development.

Third, the primer has implications for educational policy and program development. Its contextualized approach suggests that SEL initiatives should be tailored to specific settings rather than adopting a one-size-fits-all model.

Finally, the primer underscores the importance of whole-school and community involvement in SEL implementation. The inclusion of home connection strategies highlights the role of parents and caregivers in supporting children's socio-emotional development.

The teaching primer represents a significant and meaningful output of the study, effectively translating qualitative findings into actionable strategies. Its strong alignment with research findings, theoretical grounding,

and contextual relevance make it a valuable tool for enhancing socio-emotional learning in early childhood education.

The primer demonstrates that effective SEL implementation is achievable through intentional, reflective, and context-responsive practices, even in the face of challenges. As such, it serves not only as a teaching resource but also as a model for bridging research and practice in education.

CONCLUSIONS

This study sought to examine the socio-emotional learning (SEL) practices of ECCD teachers, the challenges they encounter, the coping mechanisms they employ, and to develop a contextualized teaching primer based on these findings.

This study revealed that socio-emotional learning (SEL) in ECCD classrooms is effectively fostered through intentional, embedded, and relational practices, where teachers integrate emotional support, play-based interaction, modeling, and structured environments into daily routines. Despite challenges such as diverse learner needs, limited resources, and insufficient training, teachers demonstrate resilience through adaptive and reflective strategies that sustain SEL implementation.

The development of The Nurturing Compass teaching primer highlights that research-based and contextually grounded resources can bridge the gap between theory and practice. Overall, the study affirms that successful SEL implementation depends not only on teacher competence but also on institutional support, professional development, and contextual responsiveness, ensuring that learners' socio-emotional growth is meaningfully nurtured.

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DEDICATION

This research is wholeheartedly dedicated to my beloved

family whose unconditional love, selfless sacrifices,

and unwavering belief in my potential have

Been the steadfast foundation of my

perseverance and success.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are proposed:

Teachers are encouraged to sustain and strengthen integrated SEL practices through consistent routines, modeling, and reflective teaching.

School administrators should provide institutional support by prioritizing SEL in programs, resources, and collaborative platforms such as LAC sessions.

Teacher education institutions are urged to incorporate formal SEL training in both pre-service and in-service programs to enhance teacher competence.

Curriculum developers and policymakers should promote contextualized and system-wide SEL integration, ensuring alignment across classroom practices and school structures.

Future researchers may evaluate the effectiveness of the developed teaching primer and explore SEL implementation in varied contexts.

APRIL 2026

APPROVAL SHEET

This research titled “**PRACTICES OF EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND DEVELOPMENT (ECCD) TEACHERS IN PROMOTING SOCIO-EMOTIONAL LEARNING (SEL): BASIS FOR A SEL PRIMER**” conducted by **BRINICA L. BO-OAN** in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Bachelor of Elementary Education was examined and approved on March 2 2025 by the Oral Examination Committee (OrEC) composed of:

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Accepted and approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree, Bachelor of Elementary Education.

GEREMY G. SANCHEZ, EdD HEIDI JOY P. BAUTISTA, PhD Program Chair Campus Director

Date: _____

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Adviser: **CATHRINE L. TOMAS, PhD**

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Letter To Conduct The Study



Republic of the Philippines
ILOCOS SUR POLYTECHNIC STATE COLLEGE
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Communication (External)
Rev. 5 – 07-07-2025
ISPC-GAD-FG32n
Page 1 of 1

January 19, 2026

VISION
UIP 2030: A smart, globally competitive and responsible state university.

MISSION
UIP is committed to producing globally independent and virtuous human resources, generating advanced knowledge, and developing innovative technologies for the sustainable development of society.

CORE VALUES
Innovativeness
Motivation
Professionalism
Excellence
Transparency and Accountability
Unity and Teamwork
Sustainability

MOTTO
Sapientia et Virtus in Posterum (Wisdom and Virtue for the Future)

DEVELOPMENT GOALS
Onwards UIP
Optimize institutional quality and reputation.
Nurture excellence in academics and services.
Widen research, development, and innovation programs.
Attain a responsive extension services and vibrant external linkages.
Revitalize capacity for resource management and generation.
Develop capability and competence of human resources.
Sustain ethical leadership and good governance.
Underscore advocacies for sustainable development.
Intensify internationalization initiatives.
Promote modernization of physical and digital infrastructure.

DR. CHARISMA GRACE N. WAGGAY
Principal IV
Cervantes Central School
Concepcion, Cervantes, Ilocos Sur

Madame:

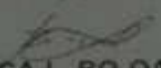
I am a fourth-year Bachelor of Elementary Education student at Ilocos Sur Polytechnic State College–Cervantes Campus, currently conducting a research study entitled **"Practices of Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) Teachers in Promoting Socio-Emotional Learning (SEL): Basis for a Teaching Primer."** This study is undertaken in partial fulfillment of the requirements in the research course.

In line with this, I respectfully request your permission to conduct the study in selected kindergarten classes under your supervision. The study aims to explore the existing practices and challenges faced by ECCD teachers in fostering socio-emotional learning among kindergarten learners, and to develop a relevant teaching primer that may serve as a practical resource for educators.

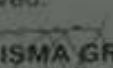
The participation of kindergarten teachers in this study will involve interviews and voluntary sharing of their insights and experiences. Rest assured that all information gathered will be treated with utmost confidentiality and will solely be used for academic purposes.

Hoping for your favorable response regarding this request. Thank you very much for your continued support of student research endeavors.

Respectfully yours,


BRINICA L. BO-OAN
Researcher

Email: brinicabooan@gmail.com
CP No. 09122015810

Approved:

CHARISMA GRACE N. WAGGAY, PhD
Principal IV

Noted:

CATHRINE L. TOMAS, PhD
Adviser



WURJ



Times Higher Education
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ISO 9001:2015
CERTIFIED QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Appendix B

Informed Consent Form



ILOCOS SUR POLYTECHNIC STATE COLLEGE
Cervantes Campus, Cervantes, Ilocos Sur
BACHELOR OF ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Title of the Study: *Practices of Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) Teachers in Promoting Socio-Emotional (SEL) Basis for a Teaching Primer*

Researcher: Brinica L. Bo-oan
Institution: Ilocos Sur Polytechnic State College - Cervantes Campus
Degree Program: Bachelor of Elementary Education

Dear Participant,

You are invited to take part in a research study being conducted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Bachelor of Elementary Education program. Before you decide, please read the information below carefully.

Purpose of the Study

The study aims to explore the current practices and challenges experienced by ECCD teachers in promoting socio-emotional learning (SEL) among kindergarten learners. The results will be used to develop a practical teaching primer.

Participation

Your participation is voluntary. If you choose to participate, you will be asked to take part in an interview lasting approximately 20–30 minutes. You may decline to answer any question and may withdraw at any time without penalty.

Confidentiality

All information gathered will be treated with strict confidentiality. Your identity will be kept anonymous in all reports and publications resulting from this research.

Risks and Benefits

There are no known risks in participating. Your insights may help improve SEL practices and contribute to the development of teaching materials for ECCD educators.

Contact Information

If you have any questions or concerns about this study, you may contact the researcher through:
Email: boanbrinica@gmail.com
Number: 09122015810

Consent

By signing this form, you confirm that:
You have read and understood the information above.
Your participation is voluntary.
You give your consent to be interviewed and for the information to be used for academic purposes.

Participant's Signature:  Date: Jan. 26, 2026

Researcher's Name: Brinica L. Bo-oan Signature: 

Appendix C

Sample Of Interview Guide



ILOCOS SUR POLYTECHNIC STATE COLLEGE
Cervantes Campus, Cervantes, Ilocos Sur
BACHELOR OF ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Title: Practices of Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) Teachers in Promoting Socio-Emotional Learning (SEL): Basis for a Teaching Primer

Interviewee: [Name or Code] _____ Date and Time: _____
Location: _____

I. Introduction
Good [morning/afternoon], thank you for taking the time to join this interview. I am conducting a study on the practices of ECCD teachers in promoting socio-emotional learning among kindergarten learners. The goal is to understand your experiences, strategies, and the challenges you face, and to develop a helpful teaching primer based on your insights.
This interview will take around 20-30 minutes. Everything you share will remain confidential and used only for academic purposes. You may skip any question or stop the interview at any time.
Do I have your permission to continue and record this interview for transcription purposes?

II. Warm-up Questions
Can you please tell me your name (optional), your teaching background, and how long you have been teaching in ECCD or kindergarten?
What do you enjoy most about teaching young children?

III. Core Interview Questions
a. Practices in Promoting Socio-Emotional Learning (SEL)
How do you help your learners recognize and manage their emotions in class?
What daily routines or activities do you use to promote positive social interaction among your learners?
Can you describe any classroom strategies or methods you use to build self-awareness, empathy, or responsible decision-making?
How do you model appropriate social and emotional behaviors for your learners?

b. Challenges in Implementing SEL Practices
What difficulties do you encounter when implementing socio-emotional learning in your classroom?
Are there specific factors—like classroom size, lack of materials, or parent involvement—that affect your ability to promote SEL?
How do you address these challenges, if at all?

c. Suggestions for a Teaching Primer
What kind of support or materials do you think would help you more effectively promote socio-emotional learning?
If a teaching guide or primer were to be developed, what content or features would be most useful to you?

IV. Closing
Is there anything else you'd like to share about your experience in teaching socio-emotional skills to young children?

Thank you very much for your valuable insights. Your responses will greatly contribute to improving socio-emotional learning in early childhood education.

Appendix D

Validation Result




ILOCOS SUR POLYTECHNIC STATE COLLEGE
 Cervantes Campus, Cervantes, Ilocos Sur
BACHELOR OF ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

VALIDATION INSTRUMENT

Name of student: Brinica L. Bo-oan	Program: Bachelor of Elementary Education
Date of validation:	Adviser: Cathrine L. Tomas, Ph.D.
Research title: Practices of Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) Teachers in Promoting Socio-Emotional Learning (SEL): Basis for a Teaching Primer	

Instructions: Please indicate your agreement or disagreement with the statements provided below by checking yes or no, which corresponds to your best judgment.

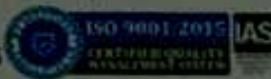
Criteria	YES	NO
1. The items in the instrument are relevant to answer the objectives of the study.	✓	
2. The items in the instrument can obtain depth to constructs being measured.	✓	
3. The instrument has an appropriate sample of items for the construct being measured.	✓	
4. The items and their alternatives are neither too narrow nor limited in its content.	✓	
5. The items in the instrument are stated clearly.	✓	
6. The items on the instrument can elicit responses that are stable, definite, consistent, and not conflicting.	✓	
7. The terms adapted in the scale are culturally appropriate.	✓	
8. The layout or format of the instrument is technically sound.		
9. The responses on the scale show a reasonable range of variation.		
10. The instrument is not too short or long enough that the participants will be able to answer it within a given time.	✓	
11. The instrument is interesting such that participants will be induced to respond to it and accomplish it fully.	✓	
12. The instrument as a whole could answer the basic purpose for which it is designed.	✓	
13. The instrument is culturally acceptable when administered in the local setting.	✓	

Comments/Suggestions:

1. You may want to include asking the teachers about the behaviors of the the pre-schoolers before asking them how they help the learners recognize and manage their emotions in class.

2. You may also consider simplifying your question. It's necessary using the phrase "Socio-emotional Learning" although you are referring to this. This will help the participant understand the question and can give specific details.







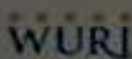
ILOCOS SUR POLYTECHNIC STATE COLLEGE
Cervantes Campus, Cervantes, Ilocos Sur
BACHELOR OF ELEMENTARY EDUCATION

DECISION:

- ☐ Major Revision
☐ Minor Revision

Raunel D. Ibarra

Name and Signature of Validator



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Appendix E

Sample Of Transcript Of Interviews

Sample of Transcription and Translation

Interviewer	How do you help your learners recognize and manage their emotions in class?
Interviewee	Actually we have daily routines niya, we have blocks of time actually in kindergarten, uh, we have different, uh, type ti subject, uh we have no subject ngay nga GMRC, English or anything, we have blocks of time nga sur-suroten mi. Ah nu kayat munto mabalin mo nga alaen ading. Ada ti blocks of time mi nga jay, adda ti..twenty minutes, kasla kasjay nga balitaan. Uh, in that area, specifically, uh, ma kwa mun ngay nga I-manage ti emotion ngay ti ubbing mun, kasi in that balitaan, they, idjay dan ngay nga ag-share, ag-share ti experience dan, nu anya inubra da jay balay da, to set up the tone ngay before ka nga ag-rugi iti klase. <i>(Actually, we have daily routines. In kindergarten, we use blocks of time. We don't really have separate subjects like GMRC, English, or anything like that. Instead, we follow scheduled blocks of time.</i> <i>One of our blocks of time is about twenty minutes, something like a "sharing time." In that area, specifically, I first manage the children's emotions. During that sharing time, they are able to share their experiences what they did at home. It helps set the tone before you start the class.)</i> What daily routines or activities do you use to promote positive social interaction among your learners?
Interviewer	<i>(During my first grading and second grading, I did something just to engage my pupils. I used emojis like sadness, joy, anger, and those from Inside Out 2. They would choose which one matched what they were feeling that day. Then they would explain why they were feeling that way.</i>
Interviewee	<i>So when we go to our sharing time, which is for about 20 minutes, that is actually our first subject every morning. It's part of our routine activities. We check their emotions first, and you really set the tone before moving on to your actual lesson. For me, that's something strategic as a teacher.)</i> Can you describe any classroom strategies or methods you use to build self-awareness, empathy, or responsible decision-making?

Interviewer Interviewee	Classroom strategies... Sometimes uh, jay kwa, we do partner activites, kasi, we have, uh, adda ti kwa mi manen ti subject mi nga playtime, isu ti kwa mi ti kindergarten we have playtime 35 minutes, kasla isu ti last subject mi before we go home, so in that area, in the specific nga bandaan en, uh, idjay min ag kwa, ag-ayayam, so they play, so in that area uh, they do partner activities like playing blocks, the toys, uh we have toys there, uh, playing blocks together, in that kwan, ammo da ngay ti ag share, day uh, sharing together, syempre ag -ayayam da they know how to share together, ngem nu adda activities ko nga kasla adda ti mangabak, syempre adda ti ikasta da nga ag get together, nga agaramid ti strategy for them to win diba, so idjayen ma kwakwa da jay self-awareness en addan ti, kasla ma kwa dan ti decision making da kasi mangabak da, maabak da eh ken nu kasatno da nga I-handle, jay classmate da, syempre they have different emotion, attitude, syempre “nalalaingak” kasta, kastoy, idjay ag build da ti emphaty, nu kasatnu da ag strategize, agtitinulong, kasla kasjay, get together nga kunada. Wen adda subject da actually, 35, uh part ti blocks of time da, 35 minutes indoor and outdoor play activities kunana diyay. <i>(For classroom strategies, sometimes we do partner activities. We also have another subject, which is playtime. In kindergarten, we have 35 minutes of playtime. It's usually our last subject before we go home.</i> <i>In that specific time, they play. They do partner activities like playing with blocks and other toys we have toys there. When they play blocks together, they learn how to share. Of course, while they're playing, they practice sharing with one another.</i> <i>But when I give activities where there's a winner, naturally they come together and create strategies so they can win, right? In that situation, they develop self-awareness. They practice decision-making because sometimes they win, sometimes they lose, and they learn how to handle their classmates. Of course, they have different emotions and attitudes sometimes they say things like, "I'm the smartest," or things like that.</i> <i>That's where they build empathy how they strategize, help one another, and work together, like what they call getting together as a group.</i> <i>Yes, they really do have that subject. The 35 minutes is part of their blocks of time 35 minutes for indoor and outdoor play activities.)</i> How do you model appropriate social and emotional behaviors for your learners? Oo, to be-, model, syempre teacher tayo diba, uh, we need to become a model nga agpayso, ket siyak how I interact with my pupils actually, syempre we are mo-, mo-, we are model, so what they see, isu ti tuladen da diba, isu ti aramiden, so if you interact with your student, uray for example what I am doing, I am printing while interview, diba habang ag in-interview kasla la kuma kastoy, nu busy ka, you need, nu adda ibag-baga da, for example they are sharing something yeah, you need to listen to them, how patience, uray ngay haan mo ngay nga, your'e not interested jay story da, diba ah, syempre ubbing, nagado ti ibabaga da, uray your not interested, you need to listen, ta in that way ngay ket ma, uh, ma kwa da ngay, makita da nga your showing kindness, your showing patience, in that situation already, syempre, ni teacher ammo dak nga denngen, kasla ma feel na nga ma fe-feel ko suna, mafefeel na nga irerespect ko suna, so in that area, syempre, minsan
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Interviewer Interviewee	ti ubing piman kt nu agsasao kt haan mo panpansinin, uray mt sino diba, nu agsasao haan mo panpansinin, kasla bale wala lang, syempre kasla ag self, uh, jay confidence da ag lay low, ag low, so in that area your building also their confidence nga, “nalaingak agsala ma’am kastoy-kastoy” ala syempre, ibuild up mo, “ala isu very good naglaing ka metten”, your, in that area may kunting respect, patience, kindness nga dag-dagos, in that area sunga day ti kwak, day talaga nga deng-denggek suda ngay, kn uray as a teacher mtlng I know to say sorry, sometimes, we do commit mistake also, as a teacher, if you commit mistake know how to say sorry, to for them to immitate, ta immitate da mt, know how to say thank you if they, nu adda ited nga food knyam, syempre recees time, ited da amin mamingsan ti food da, nu ag share da, know how to say thank you also, know, know how to use also the magic words youre teaching, the “say please, thank you, sorry.” <i>(Yes, to be a model of course, we’re teachers, right? We need to become a real model for them. The way I interact with my pupils is important because we are their models. What they see is what they imitate, right? That’s what they will do.</i> <i>For example, even during this interview, if I’m printing something while a child is talking, and I look busy, but they’re sharing something, you really need to listen to them. You need to show patience. Even if you’re not that interested in their story because they’re children, and they talk a lot you still need to listen. In that way, they see that you’re showing kindness and patience.</i> <i>In that situation, they feel that the teacher listens to them. They feel that I understand them, that I respect them. Sometimes, when a child is speaking and you don’t pay attention anyone would feel that way, right? If someone is talking and you ignore them, it’s like they don’t matter. Their confidence goes down.</i> <i>So in that area, you’re also building their confidence. When they say, “I’m good at speaking, Ma’am,” you build them up “Yes, very good, you did great.” You show respect, patience, and kindness immediately. That’s why I really make sure I listen to them.</i> <i>And even as a teacher, I know how to say sorry. Sometimes we commit mistakes too. If you make a mistake, you should know how to say sorry, so they can imitate that. Because they will imitate you. You should also know how to say thank you. For example, during recess time, sometimes they give you food because they want to share. You say thank you.</i> <i>You also practice the magic words you’re teaching them “please,” “thank you,” and “sorry.”.)</i> What difficulties do you encounter when implementing socio-emotional learning in your classroom? Actually, in my own experience talaga, uuuhhhhh, in my two years inya, barbaro nak palang, uh ado, uh day class size, jay nagado da, uhh, I have 18 pupils last year, today, now, I have 17, in that situation already it’s hard for me to manage them, I cannot interact with them one by one, kasi nagado da eh, kt they have different emotions, they have very different attitudes, so diyay ti maysa, that’s one, that I know that, for me ah, isu ti difficulties ko as a teacher ti young ones. <i>(Actually, in my own experience, in my two years of teaching I’m still new I’ve really encountered challenges. The class size is quite big. Last year, I had 18 pupils, and now I have 17.</i> <i>In that situation, it’s really hard for me to manage them. I can’t interact with them one by one because there are many of them. They all have different emotions and very different attitudes.</i>
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So that's one of my difficulties as a teacher of young learners.)

Are there specific factor like classroom size, lack of materials, or parent involvement that affect your ability to promote SEL?

And scecondly the parent involvement, actually there is a big difference in teaching kindergarten, there's a big difference of the parent involvement, uray as a teacher kuma, uray kasatnuk nga isuro ti ubbing ko in a good way, isuro ti nasayaat, or kasatnu da nga ikwa ti emotions da or anything, attitude, katipon mt diba jay attitude. Kt nu haan mtlng mt nga isu ti environment na, or jy parent nvolvement, the way the parents niya kt useless, kasla isu pay nga maysa nga problemam ngay, the conflict diba, there is conflict uh, the conflict of teacher to pupils, parent to their kids, different environment, maysa day nga uh, problema, nu kasatnum nga I-implement SEL magulwan da ngay, because of different environment.

(And secondly, parent involvement. Actually, there's a big difference when it comes to teaching kindergarten because parent involvement really matters.

Even if, as a teacher, I try my best to teach my pupils in a good way to teach them what is right, how to manage their emotions, their attitudes, because attitude is part of it if that's not the kind of environment they have at home, or if there's little parent involvement, then sometimes it feels useless.

That becomes another problem. There can be conflict the conflict between teacher and pupils, and also between parents and their children. They come from different environments.

That's one of the problems when implementing SEL. It becomes challenging because of those different environments.)

How do you address these challenges, if at all?

In that, in, Kanyak, jy expeirence kasi, class size eh, nagado da. What I did, is uh, I divide them. Ti dapat talaga nga division, madivide ti kindergarten dapat 25 pupils higher. Dapat I half mun kanu, adda ti memo na day, thats the rule of deped. Ngem siyak hanpay mabalin I-divide kasi 17 only, dapat one class, I said a while ago its hard for me to handle that one, so what I did kt I talked to my principal nga I, kayat ko nga idivide isuda for me to handle them kn maited ko ti dapat kunyada in early quarter, kasi, mamati ak nga ma build ko tuy SEL da, syempre it goes on tun in another quarter, it easily for them nga mahandle kun tun in the next quarter, so nga , what I did uh, I separate them , I divide them into two classes, morning and afternoon okay, and that, first grading and second grading only, third grading syempre nag mature dan, they develop already there socio-emotional learning, so pinaktipon ko ti third grading and fourth grading and the parents involvement, syempre nu agpameeting ka uh, syempre as a teacher adda ti maobserve mo iti annak da, that they didn't observe at home diba, haan da makit-kita jay balay da ngem makitkitak ditoy, kasla mtlng knyada vice versa, adda ti attitude jay annak da idjay nga haan ko makitkita, haan da makitkita, so in that, idjay ayan ti meeting agited ka jy ancdotal record. Kasi we have anectdotal record, dagijay emotions da nga unbearable, nga dagijay dapat I develop da, day ti ikaskastak en nga mangkwa-kwa ti parents ko mtlaengen nga mainform da iti attitudes ti annak da.

Interviewer

Interviewee

(In my experience, because the class size is big, what I did was divide them. Actually, kindergarten classes are supposed to be divided if they reach 25 pupils or higher. There's a DepEd memo about that that's the rule. But in my case, I only had 17 pupils, so technically it should just be one class.

But like I said earlier, it was really hard for me to handle them. So what I did was talk to my principal and told her that I wanted to divide them so I could handle them better and give them what they really need, especially in the early quarters. I believe that if I can build their SEL early on, then in the next quarter it will be easier for them to manage and regulate themselves.

So what I did was separate them into two groups morning and afternoon. I did that only during the first and second grading. By the third grading, they had already matured somehow and had developed their socio-emotional learning. So in the third and fourth grading, I combined them again into one class.

As for parent involvement, when we have meetings, of course as a teacher there are things I observe about their child that they may not see at home. There are behaviors I see in school that they don't notice, and vice versa there are attitudes at home that I don't see in school.

During meetings, I give anecdotal records. We have anecdotal records about their emotions especially those that are sometimes difficult or need development. That's how I inform the parents about their child's attitudes and areas that need improvement.)

What kind of support or materials do you think would help you more effectively promote socio-emotional learning?

Kwa ti primer diba, isuda ti mangaramid ditoy. Feeling ko ket jay kwa, They need to, they need to ta isuda met diba, what kind of support, so for me they need to. They need to align there lessons, kasi iti... ti panag suro gamn tatta they are giving already, the DLPs, they are already giving the powerpoint, wen povidet, inot-inot piman, main-inot da met piman nga idepdevelop ti education nga nu mabalbalin kt haan kami pman marigatan, uh, it's given already the lesson, the dlp white, addan bassiten naaramiden, powerpoint naramiden, ngem the problem laeng nga makitkita mi digitoy itited da its not aligned with their age, kasla ngay nga its not aligned, kasla haan ngay nga maka, kasla as kinder ngay kt kasla kurang palang, lack, lack of materials palang, kasla they just give pero, awan py materials nga inted da ngay, kasla kasjay day iti kwak met. Wen dapat align dagiti DLP, mamingsan dagijay itited da nga DLP, powerpoint align ngay jay age, jay appropriate age ngay jay ubbing, jay dadduma mt piman ket align haan ket met ketdi nga amin. Sunga as a teacher met nga mamingsan, syempre adda sursurutem eh, sursurutem jay inted da, kasi they are the one giving their exam, SDO uh, ti kindergarten tatta, ah, in the, in this year, this year only, they are the one giving our exam already with TOS already, yeah, diba, isunga we need to follow what they are giving to us diba, wen. Sunga dapat, diyay ti inted da kenyaami, so isuda ti agaramid nu haan mi nga tinungpal, kasla jay inted da kenyaami, syempre ma behind piman met piman jay ubbing mi, ta suda nangaramid, haan mi nga ammo, makita mi nalang onwards en, and nu, nu naited ket, uh, nu first quarter ited dan tu palang nu dandani ti exam sunga haan mi nga ammo nu matartarget mi, sunga, kaylangan min nga targeten jay week 1 to 10 nga inted da, but kasla ngay nga iremedyo min nga haan mi talagan nga as is nga tuladen, ibirok mi lang in the easiest way, kasi ti ubbing tattan adda ti lesson da piman nga anyong lupa, anyong tubig... sunga dapat aligned talaga day. Alignment, materials talaga nga dapat completo ti materials nga maited talaga.

(The primer, for example they're the ones who prepare that. I feel like they really need to take responsibility for it, because they're the ones producing these materials. For me, they need to align their lessons properly.

Interviewer

Interviewee

Right now, in teaching, they're already giving us the DLPs. They provide PowerPoints, they're developing the lessons little by little so that, hopefully, we won't have too much difficulty. The lesson is already given, the DLP is written, there's already something prepared, and the PowerPoint is made.

But the problem we see here is that sometimes what they give is not aligned with the children's age. It's not developmentally appropriate. For kindergarten, sometimes it feels lacking like there's a lack of materials. They just give the lesson, but there are no complete materials provided.

So yes, the DLPs should really be aligned. Sometimes the DLPs and PowerPoints they give are age-appropriate, but not all the time. That's why, as teachers, sometimes we still adjust what they give us. We follow it because they are the ones preparing the exams.

For kindergarten now this year only the SDO is already the one giving our exams, with a Table of Specifications (TOS). So we really need to follow what they give us. Because if we don't follow it, and we don't meet what they prepared, our pupils might fall behind. They're the ones who designed it, and sometimes we only see the full direction later on.

Sometimes they give the materials close to the exam period, so we're not sure if we're targeting the right competencies. We need to cover Week 1 to Week 10 as they indicated. But we don't always follow it as-is. We try to find the easiest and most appropriate way to teach it, especially for the children.

For example, they already have lessons like landforms and bodies of water. So it really needs to be aligned alignment is very important. And the materials should be complete. The materials that they give should really be complete and appropriate for kindergarten learners.)

If a teaching guide or primer were to be developed, what content or features would be most useful to you?

Content or feature.. Jay kunkunak tattay nga dapat ket kwa na catchy, haan ngay nga plain kasi, more creative nga kunada, kasi kasla kunak tattay uray lesson lang nga kunam nga its not align, mamingsan syempre isu gamn ngay jay pag breakdownan jay ubing, ma gets mo ma'am?, kasi nu nagrigat pman jay lesson nga haan aligned kenyanda nu super nagrigat isungay jy pagbreakdownan da jay low confidence da, syempre nag rigat, nu super naglaka ma boring da, it affects also their socio-, socio-emotional, nu jay kitkitaen da it's so plain, su dapat attractive, dapat catchy, interactive, dapat,interactive sunga, ngem its not, haan met ketdi nga problema, haan met nga problema day kenyada, haan, it's not problem to them kasi ti teacher, we teacher we must be resourceful, we know how to make their activites interactive, dayta ket, dayta ket inted da laeng nga guide, it's, adda met lang kenya tayo nga mang-apply, uray anya metlng kinapinpintas na data nu haan mo, as a teacher nu haan mo metlang mai-apply its useless. Diba, uray metlang nu creative dagiti kwam nu mamingsang, if you cannot...deliver haan mo maiyalis jay learning iti, kunada garud ket kwa to become a teacher dapat sika ket jay nalaka kayam pay nga palakaen, diba dapat haan nga narigat parigatem palang, diba, sunga dapat jay nalaka palakaem pay kasla kasjay, haan nga, han nga, amin ket masurot ti textbook, diba, it's not all textbook, mamingsan metlang kenya tayo nga mangi-strategize.

(In terms of content or features, what I'm saying is that it should be catchy. It shouldn't be plain. It should be more creative.

Because like I said earlier, when a lesson is not aligned, sometimes that's what breaks the child down. Do you get me, Ma'am? If the lesson is too difficult and not aligned with their level,

Interviewer	<i>especially if it's very hard, that's when their confidence goes down. But if it's too easy, they get bored. And that also affects their socio-emotional development.</i> <i>If what they see is very plain, then it's not engaging. So it should be attractive, catchy, interactive very interactive.</i>
Interviewee	<i>But it's not entirely their problem. It's not fully the fault of those who prepared it, because as teachers, we are expected to be resourceful. We know how to make activities interactive. What they give us is just a guide. It still depends on us how we apply it. No matter how beautiful or well-made the material is, if you as a teacher cannot apply or deliver it well, it's useless.</i> <i>Right? Even if the materials are creative, if you cannot deliver them properly, the learning will not happen. They say that to become a teacher, you should be able to make something easy even easier for the children. It shouldn't be that something is already hard and you make it even harder.</i> <i>So it shouldn't always be purely textbook-based. Not everything should just follow the textbook. Sometimes, it really depends on us as teachers to strategize.)</i>

APPENDIX F

CODEBOOK

Teachers' Practices in Fostering Socio-Emotional Learning

Theme	Code	Definition	Operational Description	Sample Verbatims
Morning Emotional Grounding Rituals	"Balitaan" Protocol	A structured morning sharing activity where learners express experiences and emotions before instruction.	Conducting daily sharing time where learners talk about personal experiences, facilitated through prompts, listening, and validation.	"We have 'news time'... they share their experiences before class." (P2) "This is what I do every morning..." (P8) "We follow the same routine so they feel safe." (P4)
	Emoji-Based Emotion Identification	A visual strategy using emotion cards or symbols to help learners express feelings.	Learners select emotion cards or emojis and explain their feelings through verbal or creative means.	"I used emojis like sadness, joy, anger..." (P2) "Emotion cards help shy children." (P8) "Through drawings, they express their feelings." (P13)
Play-Based Collaborative Activities	"Kulit-Shy" Partnership	A peer pairing strategy that combines confident and shy learners to promote interaction.	Teachers intentionally pair learners with different social traits to encourage cooperation and social learning.	"I pair energetic children with shy ones..." (P9) "They learn from each other." (P2) "They help each other achieve goals." (P6)

	“Get Together” Challenges	Structured group activities that promote cooperation, strategy, and emotional interaction.	Organizing team-based tasks requiring collaboration, competition, and reflection on social interactions.	“They create strategies to win.” (P2) “Others comfort them when they lose.” (P3) “They help one another.” (P4)
Teacher Modeling Protocols	“Deng-denggek” (Active Listening)	A teacher behavior of giving full attention to learners during communication.	Stopping tasks, maintaining eye contact, and actively listening to learners’ thoughts and feelings.	“You really need to listen... show patience.” (P2) “The teacher listens to them.” (P8) “Build good relationships.” (P11)
	“Magic Words” System	Modeling polite language such as “please,” “thank you,” and “sorry.”	Teachers consistently demonstrate and explain proper use of polite expressions and apology.	“Know how to say sorry...” (P2) “Use ‘please,’ ‘thank you,’ and ‘sorry.’” (P11) “They get used to it every day.” (P4)
	“It’s Okay” Affirmation	A response strategy that validates learners’ emotions.	Acknowledging emotions, providing reassurance, and allowing time for emotional processing.	“Don’t say ‘stop crying’... say ‘I’m here for you.’” (P9) “We show understanding.” (P4) “They calm down eventually.” (P8)
Environmental Scaffolding Systems	Visual Schedule Predictability System	A structured routine supported by visual schedules to promote security.	Using visual aids to show daily routines and transitions for consistency and predictability.	“We have visual schedules so they feel safe.” (P4) “Same routine every day.” (P2) “We adjust so we can manage.” (P6)
	Calming Corner (“Bear Hug”) Protocol	A designated space for emotional regulation using comfort tools.	Providing a safe area with materials (e.g., teddy bear) for learners to calm themselves.	“They hug the teddy bear when sad.” (P4) “So they won’t hurt others.” (P10) “She calmed down after.” (P4)

Challenges Encountered by ECCD Teachers in Implementing Socio-Emotional Learning

Theme	Code	Description of Challenge	Supporting Verbatim
Classroom Management and Learner Behavior	Managing Diverse Learner Behaviors	Teachers experience difficulty handling varied personalities, behaviors, and socio-emotional levels of learners.	“Adda talaga ubing nga narigat i-manage...” <i>(There are children who are difficult to manage.)</i>
	Emotional Outbursts and Regulation Difficulties	Learners display uncontrolled emotions such as crying, aggression, and withdrawal.	“Adda ubing nga agad-adadu ti iyegna nga emotions... ag-cry da.” <i>(Some children bring many emotions... they cry.)</i>

Resource and Structural Limitations	Limited Instructional Materials	Lack of SEL-specific materials leads teachers to rely on improvisation.	“Awan ti sapat nga materials para iti SEL.” <i>(There are not enough materials for SEL.)</i>
	Large Class Size	Overcrowded classrooms limit individualized attention and emotional support.	“Adu ti ubing... narigat ti management.” <i>(There are many children... it is hard to manage.)</i>
Teacher Preparedness and Support	Lack of Training in SEL	Teachers lack formal training, resulting in trial-and-error approaches.	“Trial and error laeng ti approach.” <i>(Our approach is trial and error.)</i>
	Limited Institutional Support	SEL is not prioritized institutionally, leading to insufficient programs and support.	“Saan unay nga priority ti SEL.” <i>(SEL is not highly prioritized.)</i>

Coping Mechanisms of ECCD Teachers in Implementing Socio-Emotional Learning

Theme	Code	Description of Coping Mechanism	Supporting Verbatim
Adaptive Classroom Strategies	Flexibility in Teaching Strategies	Teachers adjust methods based on learners’ needs and classroom situations.	“Masapul nga ag-adjust ka kada ubing.” <i>(You need to adjust to every child.)</i>
	Creative Improvisation of Materials	Teachers create or modify materials using available resources.	“Mang-improvise kami kadagiti materials nga adda.” <i>(We improvise using available materials.)</i>
Emotional Self-Regulation and Reflective Practice	Teacher Emotional Regulation	Teachers consciously manage their own emotions to influence classroom climate positively.	“Masapul nga calm ka tapno calm met da.” <i>(You need to stay calm so they will also be calm.)</i>
	Reflective Teaching Practice	Teachers reflect on experiences to improve strategies and approaches.	“Ag-reflect ka no anya ti nag-work ken saan.” <i>(You reflect on what worked and what did not.)</i>
Collaborative and Support-Seeking Behaviors	Peer Collaboration	Teachers consult and share strategies with colleagues to solve challenges.	“Ag-share kami kadagiti strategies.” <i>(We share strategies.)</i>
	Seeking Administrative and External Support	Teachers seek guidance, training, and institutional assistance.	“Masapul ti support ti administration.” <i>(We need administrative support.)</i>

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