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Professional Development Needs of Early Childhood Educators Teaching Children With Challenging Behaviors

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Walden University
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Abstract

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Latashia L. Kelly

M A, Pacific Oaks College, 2009

B A, California Baptist University, 2004

Project Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Walden University

March 2023

Abstract

Early childhood educators have struggled to teach children with challenging behaviors, which can lead to suspension and expulsion. Although early childhood educators have limited professional development training in challenging behaviors, they are often not equipped to teach children with challenging behaviors. There is little research on how early childhood educators perceive their current training regarding teaching children with challenging behaviors. Exploring early childhood educators' perceptions can determine what they need to teach children with challenging behaviors for a thriving classroom environment. The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to better understand educators' perceptions regarding the type of professional development training content needed for early childhood educators who teach children with challenging behaviors. Knowles's andragogical process model guided the study and the research question, which asked early childhood educators how they perceived their current professional development training content needs in terms of teaching children with challenging behaviors. This basic qualitative study engaged eight early childhood educators who taught in a classroom were selected as participants. Individualized semi structured interviews were conducted to gather thorough responses to answer the research question. Coding and thematic analysis resulted in three main themes: content needs, challenges, and support. Overall, the participants expressed the need for professional development training with content focused on positive behavior intervention support and social-emotional development. Based on the findings, a 3-day professional development in-service was created. The outcome of this study can potentially promote social change for educators by improving positive school-wide culture and reducing challenging behaviors.

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Dedication

This project study is dedicated to all early childhood educators; you always have a voice to express your needs. Keep loving children and doing what is best for them.

Acknowledgments

I want to thank God, who is always my number one, my husband for standing by me through this process, and my family, friends, and colleagues for their support. I also want to thank Dr. Thomas and Dr. Crosby for their patience, guidance, and professionalism.

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Section 1: The Problem

The Local Problem

Some children in early childhood programs exhibit challenging behaviors in the classroom. These children are often suspended and expelled from school (Stegelin, 2018). When teachers feel unprepared to address challenging behavioral issues, it often results in educators being unable to effectively teach young children with challenging behaviors (Carr & Boat, 2019). Thus there is a need to provide professional development training content for early childhood educators who teach children with challenging behaviors. More specifically, inpast years, there were no rules, regulations, or guidelines on suspension and expulsion for California's early childhood programs. The California State Legislature passed Assembly Bill 752 (2017), which states that a contracting agency should not expel or unenroll a child because of their behavior. However, researchershave indicated that early childhood educators feel unprepared and not supported in the area of addressing challenging behaviors (Carr & Boat, 2019; Miller et al., 2017; Muratori et al., 2017). Failure to provide professional development training to early childhood educators often results in negative teacher-child interactions, which contribute to continued challenging behaviors in the classroom (Conroy et al., 2018). Continued challenging behaviors could include defiance, inappropriate language, aggressiveness, and social-emotional skill deficiency (Miller, et al., 2017; Muratori et al., 2017).

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) has adopted 10 program standards. One of the 10 standards is 'relationships' and within that standard are six topic areas, including addressing challenging behaviors and promoting

self-regulation. According to the NAEYC (2018) addressing challenging behaviors includes "skills teachers need to protect children from harm, and the support teachers must provide to help children develop new and more adaptable ways to relate to peers and adults" (p. 15). The other topic area is promoting self-regulation which, "addresses the teacher's role in determining and providing necessary support for children to regulate their emotions and manage their own behavior" (NAEYC, 2018, p. 16). The NAEYC (2018) incorporated staff competencies, preparation, and supports, which is Standard 6. This standard is made up of four topic areas, including ongoing professional development. This topic area addresses staff opportunities for ongoing professional development training through intentional planning, provision of resources, and creations of learning opportunities in the workplace. Keeping within the NAEYC standards of promoting self-regulation, the Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP, 2018) showed that only 27% of children at the local child development site of interest were meeting expectations in self-regulation of feelings and behaviors.

The California Department of Education (CDE), Early Learning and Care Division (ELCD) have provided resources to train early childhood educators. CDE and ELCD fund the Child Development Training Consortium. According to their website (https://www.childdevelopment.org/cs/cdtc/print/htdocs/print/htdocs/services_cc.htm), this program is available to qualifying early childhood educators to fund and support their educational cost throughout California community colleges. However, despite the available resources, early childhood educators have continued to struggle to teach children with challenging behaviors (Türkoglu, 2019). Stormont and Young-Walker

(2017) revealed that 6% of early childhood educators reported they desired more available training opportunities focused on behavioral issues in children.

Rationale

Despite NAEYC standards, such as ongoing professional development training, addressing challenging behaviors, promoting self-regulation, and building the capacity of early childhood educators, providing professional development training has been challenging. According to the child development program's site supervisor participating in this study, in a series of personal communications about children with challenging behaviors, there has been a lack of training from 2015 to mid-2020 when the school was temporarily closed. Assembly Bill 752 requires that child development programs take several intervention measures before suspending, expelling, or unenrolling a child from the program. To follow California's requirements, the site supervisor of the child development program administered surveys of the needs of early childhood educators. These survey results revealed funding and educators feeling unsupported were unsatisfactory when teaching children with challenging behaviors in the classroom. Moreover, in agreement with Zinsser et al. (2017), the site supervisor found that most educators felt unsupported, stemming from inadequate planned professional development training for educators who teach children with challenging behaviors.

A barrier for early childhood educators is the absence of supports, services, and professional development needed (Miller et al., 2017). Stormont and Young-Walker (2017) found that early childhood educators need to be prepared to support children with challenging behaviors, and educators need to be provided with targeted support for their

professional development needs. Unsupported educators are associated with the inappropriate training and resources they receive (Zinsser et al., 2017). Early childhood educators receiving training targeted explicitly at teaching children who have challenging behaviors positively impacts children's healthy growth and development while also increasing positive teacher-child interactions (Egert et al., 2018). I conducted this study to better understand the lack of professional development training content being provided for early childhood educators who teach children with challenging behaviors.

An orientation and basic training are available for early childhood educators when they are hired at the research site; however, no formal training on children's behavior is available. According to the site supervisor of the program in which the participants of this study work, a 2018 survey revealed that 45% of early childhood educators indicated they lacked and needed professional development training content on how to effectively teach children who have challenging behaviors. Early childhood administrators who direct and supervise child development programs may have uncertainties about educators expelling and suspending children with challenging behaviors due to the inability to teach them, not only at the child development program in this study but also at other child development programs throughout districts (Giordano et al., 2021; Stegelin, 2018). There was no additional data to help the child development program's administrators understand the professional development needs of early childhood educators who teach children with challenging behaviors. The purpose of this study wasto better understand local childhood educators' perceptions regarding the types of professional development training content needed to teach children with challenging behaviors.

Definition of Terms

The following is a list of terms as defined in the study:

Challenging behaviors: Form of aggression, destruction, and noncompliance that interferes with learning (Fronapfel et al., 2018).

Child development programs: Programs for children birth to age 12. These programs offer early learning and after-school services to babies, toddlers, children in preschool, and children from kindergarten through sixth grade (CDE, n.d.).

Early childhood educators: Persons knowledgeable about child development and early childhood education who apply skills when making decisions (Essa & Burnham, 2019).

Professional development: In-service training opportunities for teachers who work in center-based childcare. These in-service programs do not contribute to attaining a formal credential or college degree (Egert et al., 2018).

Self-regulation: Refers to managing emotional, cognitive, and behavioral processes conducive to positive adjustment and social relations (K. Williams, 2018).

Significance of the Study

This study is significant because I sought to provide information regarding the factors that result in adequate training content that addresses how to teach children with challenging behaviors. I also provide information needed for early childhood educators to better understand and respond to children's challenging behaviors and understand early childhood educators' perceptions. In California, early childhood administrators have encountered struggles with helping early childhood educators teach children with

challenging behaviors, specifically providing them with targeted and appropriate professional development (Carr & Boat, 2019; Schachter et al., 2019). Child development program administrators have struggled to meet the professional development needs of early childhood educators and have resorted to directing them to outside sources to find on their own (Granja et al., 2018). The findings from this study may potentially assist child development program administrators in creating organizational change based on the perceptions of early childhood educators concerning the delivery of professional development training around challenging behaviors. Additionally, findings from this study may provide data needed to elevate the level of quality in early childhood education among local early childhood educators in the community. Early childhood educators may benefit because their professional development needs regarding content may be understood by early childhood administrators, allowing them to make changes to improve professional development training in the area of children with challenging behaviors. Through an enhanced understanding of educator perceptions regarding their professional development training and content needs, it may be possible for early childhood administrators and supervisors at local child development programs to understand how to improve professional development training for early childhood educators. Parents may also benefit from this study because the enhanced knowledge of early childhood educators and positive teacher-child interactions could lead to parent guidance on how they can work with their children at home with their children's challenging behaviors.

Guiding Research Question

Child development programs in California are encountering problems in teaching children with challenging behaviors (Granja et al., 2018; Stegelin, 2018). There is an increasing number of challenging behaviors in early childhood classrooms, which lead to stressed teachers and children getting suspended or expelled (Stegelin, 2018). The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to better understand educator perceptions regarding the type of professional development training content needed for early childhood educators who teach children with challenging behaviors.

The following research question (RQ) guided this basic qualitative study to examine the type of professional development training content needed for early childhood educators who teach children with challenging behaviors.

RQ: How do early childhood educators perceive their current professional development training content needs in terms of teaching children with challenging behaviors?

Review of the Literature

Conceptual Framework

I used Knowles's (1980) andragogical process model for this basic qualitative study to explore the understanding of the participant's own learning needs and designing learning plans regarding the professional development training content for early childhood educators. Knowles contributed to understanding self-directed learning within professional development training and other program development workshops. Knowles proposed that helping adults learn through a diagnosis of their needs could lead to deeper

learning and a motivation to learn. Knowles's framework has been used extensively in establishing a coordinated professional development program planning approach. The framework includes seven process elements: (a) climate setting, (b) planning, (c) diagnosis of learning needs, (d) setting of objectives, (e) designing learning plans, (f) learning activities, and (g) evaluating learning (Knowles, 1980).

Adult learners have a significant amount of knowledge and experiences that they have gained through the years, which becomes an excellent resource for learning for themselves and others (Knowles, 1980). When early childhood educators collaborate, engage, and reflect on their teaching practices, they build a deeper understanding of how to implement new teaching strategies (Page & Eadie, 2019). Professional development opportunities that include early childhood educators' thoughts and opinions lead to positive interactions with children (Page & Eadie, 2019).

Eadie et al. (2019) found that peer learning and peer support were crucial factors for implementing new teaching practices in professional learning programs. Furthermore,Johnson (2019) reported that a one-size-fits-all professional development program approach is not sufficient for early childhood educators. Professional learning should have a tailor-made approach that involves educators. Traditional early childhood professional development training focuses on building knowledge, which often leads to short-term and limited change (Schachter et al., 2019). Schachter et al. (2019) found that traditional early childhood professional development training "should be avoided as a primary method of PD because they are low-dosage models that do not provide

opportunities to engage in the critical processes that promote teacher development" (p. 396).

Schachter et al. (2019) proposed guidelines for high-quality professional development training, which focuses on the adult learners' interests, engagement, goals, skills, feedback, and self-reflection on the content needed to improve children's challenging behavior. According to Knowles (1980), adult learners become ready to learn new content that addresses a real-life problem. An example of adults ready to learn involves adults needing to act on their needs. Knowles' framework, which includes the seven process elements, captured early childhood educators' professional development needs and help them engage in their learning. The process elements led me to produce interview questions and gather data from early childhood educators to answer the key RQ about how early childhood educators perceive their current professional development needs in terms of teaching children with challenging behaviors.

Review of the Broader Problem

The scholarly literature reviewed in this study includes information and reviews from several sources. The literature in this study is related to early childhood suspension and expulsion, children's self-regulation, building the capacity of early childhood educators, and preparation for teaching children who exhibit challenging behaviors. Key search terms used in this review were early childhood educators, professional development, challenging behaviors, self-regulation, and child development programs. The search engines used were Thoreau, Microsoft Academic, ProQuest, and Google Scholar. I gave preference to literature that has been published between 2017 and 2021.

However, I also included works published before these dates because little research was available on early childhood suspension and expulsion.

Early Childhood Suspension and Expulsion

Suspension and expulsion are nothing new to California's educational system; however, no one expected these terms to be employed in early childhood education. Child development programs can serve children from birth to 12 years old. Children are provided with high-quality care and education in these programs while helping families work, go to school, or look for employment. Child development programs also prepare children for needed skills for kindergarten. Children being suspended and expelled causes families to lose their child's placement and miss the opportunity for their child to receive a high-quality early education (Stegelin, 2018). Early childhood suspension and expulsion have been an issue for 2 decades. Earlier research findings showed that early childhood expulsion rates were 13 times higher than the K-12 educational system, and the contributor is behavior (Gilliam & Reyes, 2018). These are alarming rates for child development programs serving children birth to 4 years old.

The Cause of Suspension and Expulsion.

Studies on suspension and expulsion have indicated that the cause is children's behavioral challenges (Gilliam & Reyes, 2018; Miller et al., 2017; Zinsser et al., 2017). Behavioral challenges in early childhood can appear in different ways, such as physical aggression, verbal aggression, and indirect aggression, which are encountered during the majority of the day, including free play, outdoor play, meal times, and transition periods (Türkoglu, 2019). Although some behavioral issues are typical in early childhood,

preschool children 3 to 5 years old are developing self-regulation and social-emotional skills and need more instruction and supports to overcome these challenging behaviors (Stormont et al., 2017). Other behavioral issues that cause suspension and expulsion are trauma-related behaviors and experiences children may possess. Traumatic exposure in children 3 to 4 years old prevents children from a high-quality early education due to aggressive behaviors, which often leads to disciplinary actions such as suspension and expulsion (Loomis, 2018).

Giordano (2019) found that 36% of children were suspended or expelled due to a child hurting other children, and 16% were due to displaying challenging behaviors. Her study included children with special needs and found that 9.6% of those children were being suspended or expelled because educators were unable to effectively support children with special needs. Similar findings were reported by Stegelin (2018), who stated that the number of children who are most likely to be suspended or expelled includes children with disabilities or special needs. Stegelin (2018) commented on children with special needs and disabilities by explaining the impact of these children being suspended or expelled. Once children with special needs and disabilities are suspended or expelled due to challenging behaviors, parents often need assistance to understand possible mental health or medical conditions.

Contributing Factors of Children With Challenging Behaviors.

Turkoglu (2019) discussed important factors affecting behavioral issues and pointed out that "parental attitude" is a significant behavioral issue. According to Turkoglu, children are influenced by the people they are exposed to in their home

environment. Children will mimic aggressive behaviors if that is what they are being exposed to at home. Children will also take out their aggressive behavior on their peers and educators when their parents are consistently suppressed or disinterested in their child. Buldur and Omeroglu (2018) pointed out factors such as socioeconomic level, family structure, peers, and educators but mostly focused on the children's environment and relationships with early childhood educators. Zinsser et al. (2017) added to the list of factors by examining early childhood educators' inability to manage children's challenging behaviors.

Carr and Boat (2019) established a connection between children's challenging behaviors, children's environment in a child development program, and building relationships with early childhood educators. The goal for attaining desired behaviors from children is to create an environment that is positive, empathetic, and caring. Early childhood educators' responses to children, particularly children who exhibit challenging behaviors, must be proactive and intentional, which does not necessarily come naturally to early childhood educators. They must be trained on how to be intentional in their educational pedagogy; this way, children will be able to regulate their thoughts, feelings, and behaviors over time. Rosenbaum-Nordoft (2018) reported that early childhood educators must build trusting relationships and make intentional efforts in assuring children feel safe, secure, and loved to reduce challenging behaviors. However, early childhood educators must better understand these children's emotional needs to support and engage positively with each child.

Children's Self-Regulation.

Developing self-regulation refers to managing behaviors, feelings, and thoughts, which children in child development programs need to be able to participate in learning and interacting with others (NAEYC, 2018). A formative assessment called the DRDP was developed by the CDEto assess several developmental domains of children birth to kindergarten age (CDE, 2015). One of the eight developmental domains is approaches to learning and self-regulation. Self-regulation skills include seven measures, one being self-control of feelings and behavior. This measure is defined as "regulating feelings and behaviors and becoming less reliant on an adult's guidance over time" (CDE, 2015, p. 5). When discussing self-regulation in children, it is essential to understand that it develops at birth, and poor and underdeveloped self-regulation skills present challenges later on in life (Pahigiannis & Glos, 2020).

Early childhood self-regulation, amongst many other developmental factors, has long-term benefits that include managing behaviors (Pahigiannis & Glos, 2020). Li-Grining et al. (2020) examined self-regulation in early and middle childhood and found that higher self-regulation skills resulted in fewer behavior problems and better friendship quality. Similarly, Slot et al. (2017) focused on preschooler's cognitive and emotional self-regulation. They pointed out that self-regulation is a crucial skill young children must have for school readiness as well as social-emotional outcomes later in life. Notably, self-regulation facilitates healthy and positive interactions when this skill is promoted and taught by early childhood educators (Pahigiannis & Glos, 2020).

Fostering Children's Social-Emotional Development.

Early childhood educators are being encouraged to address social-emotional interventions when children exhibit challenging behaviors; however, at times, it becomes difficult when early childhood educators lack the skills to implement appropriate social-emotional skills to children (McClelland et al., 2017; McLeod et al., 2017) McLeod et al., (2017) commented on early childhood educators struggling with the implementation process of social-emotional supports. They explained that fostering social-emotional learning and improving challenging behaviors are not being implemented because early childhood educators are not equipped with the skills, knowledge, and support to deliver instruction designed to prevent social-emotional and challenging behavior deficits.

Young children in child development programs who demonstrate challenging behaviors are most likely lacking social-emotional development (McLeod et al., 2017). Developing healthy social-emotional competence early in life results in a successful academic future as well as healthy social-emotional well-being (Rakap et al., 2018). Several states have tried to build up supports for child development programs by supplying them with help for children with challenging behaviors (Granja et al., 2018). These supports include mental health consultants and professional development primarily focused on social-emotional development (Granja et al., 2018).

McClelland et al. (2017) examined the supports and interventions behind early childhood social-emotional learning (SEL) and found that SEL models made a significant improvement in children's behavior. They studied three effective strategies; the first was training and professional development for early childhood educators. The second was SEL instruction embedded in the curriculum, with daily activities provided for children to

help them practice SEL skills. The third was a family component that engaged children's

families, which allowed the children to work on SEL skills at home as well as school.

Most supports and models showed evidence that they overlap, suggesting that training

early childhood educators would target social-emotional and behavioral needs and create

an improved classroom setting (Mc Leod et al., 2017).

Five competencies are connected to the social and emotional early childhood

development continuum: (a) identity of self in relation to others, (b) social and emotional

understanding, (c) relationships and social interactions with familiar adults, (d)

relationships and social interactions with peers, and (e) symbolic and sociodramatic play

(DRDP, 2015). Schonert-Reichl (2017) stated that when teachers lack the ability to foster

and teach social-emotional competencies, children suffer in academics and behavior.

Relationship Building.

It is expected and in children's best interest for early childhood educators to build

relationships with individual children and their families (NAEYC, 2019). According to

NAEYC, 2019, building relationships consists of providing support, comfort, and

understanding when a child experiences sadness, fearfulness, hurt, and rage. It is essential

to add that early childhood educators cannot establish a relationship with their children

without building trust (Haslip et al., 2019). Lippard et al. (2018) defined relationships as

built-up "interactions between two individuals and are thereby shaped by the

characteristics, behaviors, expectations, and perceptive of each individual" (p. 3). Having

an awareness of children's backgrounds, strengths, triggers, coping mechanisms, and

areas of growth allows early childhood educators to seek the motivation behind children's

unwanted behaviors (Anyon et al., 2018). Such awareness about children gives early

childhood educators the ability to view challenging behaviors as an opportunity to teach

children skills to problem solve, express themselves, and manage their emotions (Anyon

et al., 2018; NAEYC, 2019). Several practices can be put in place for early childhood

educators to build relationships with children. Those practices may include positive

interactions, personal greetings as children enter the classroom, active listening, showing

respect and encouragement, creating a positive climate, and predictable care (Anyon et

al., 2018; NAEYC, 2019).

Apart from early childhood educators building relationships with children,

building a relationship with the family of these children is equally important. Families

need to feel that they can trust early childhood educators with their children. On the other

hand, early childhood educators need to be able to understand the family's backgrounds

to understand and help children's behaviors (NAEYC, 2019). Practices that can be put in

place for early childhood educators to build relationships with their children's families

can be positive interactions, positive phone calls home, daily communication, and

keeping them informed about their child's growth (Anyon et al., 2018; NAEYC, 2019).

Teacher Child Interactions.

Given the importance of relationship-building as it relates to children with

challenging behaviors, teacher-child interactions are equally important. There are a host

of characteristics like warmth and sensitivity that make up teacher-child interactions that

are associated with positive behavioral, academic, encouraging outcomes for young

children (Cash et al., 2018; Wolcott et al., 2019). Early childhood educators juggle many

interactions throughout the day, from engaging the children during lessons, encouraging and motivating children, complimenting appropriate behaviors, responding with warmth and understanding, and helping children manage their behavior with their peers (Bulotsky-Shearer et al., 2020). Studies have suggested the most important factor in high-quality early learning experiences is the relationship between the early childhood educators and the children (Broekhuizen et al., 2017; Haslip et al., 2019; Lippard et al., 2018).

Cash et al. (2019) researched the impact of high-quality teacher-child interactions. They found a significant difference between children who receive high-quality teacher interactions versus low-quality teacher-child interactions. In addition, they reported children who received high-quality teacher interactions maintained academic success. Broekhuizen et al. (2017) summarized in their study that classrooms that are behaviorally and emotionally supported improve children's social and emotional development. Moreover, early childhood educators who do not support their children emotionally and behaviorally miss the opportunity to grow children's social and emotional skills (Broekhuizen et al., 2017).

Building the Capacity of Early Childhood Educators.

Noguera and Noguera (2018) defined professional capacity building as giving educators support to meet their children's needs. These scholars reported that capacity building comes in all forms, from workshops to professional learning communities, to coaching. While early childhood educators focus on shared goals, they become more accountable for their professional learning needs (Noguera & Noguera, 2018). A recent

study revealed that targets of extended professional learning needs should include content knowledge and teacher feedback (Munoz et al., 2021). The goal of capacity building is to increase an early childhood educator's professional knowledge of children's challenging behaviors and support their integration practice (Munoz et al., 2021).

Professional Development.

In California, early childhood professionals must attend and complete 21 hours of professional development each year (Wiliford et al., 2017). Considering the small number of professional development hours each year and limited funding early childhood programs have, it is important to provide these educators with high-quality professional development training (Wiliford et al., 2017). Thus, early childhood professional development is an imperative component in the field, and early childhood educators are responsible for meeting children's needs and their own professional development needs (Baker, 2018).

Brunsek et al. (2020) expressed the view of professional development by stating that it is an essential element for improving child development program practices. In a study conducted by Authur-Kelly et al. (2017), early childhood educators reported that professional development was needed to build the knowledge, skills, and confidence in teaching children with challenging behaviors. According to most of the literature produced on professional development for early childhood educators, few studies on professional development opportunities are designed to help early childhood educators with children who have challenging behaviors (Conners-Burrow et al., 2017).

Frantz et al. (2020) discovered that early childhood educators identified behavior management and professional practices as top priority topics for training needs. Frantz et al. (2020) concluded that early childhood programs should "develop and implement more effective PD programs" (p. 12). A study by Baker (2018) concluded that to meet the professional development needs of early childhood educators, the "early childhood education field should adopt a perspective that views teachers as professionals who are active agents in their learning" (p. 239).

Early Childhood Educator Supports.

Early childhood educators teaching children with challenging behaviors must have supports along with professional development training to understand children's behaviors and support the children's learning (Murray, 2018). Ritblatt et al. (2017) reported that equipping early childhood educators with skills and support rather than focusing on the child's behaviors is a "prevention approach that targets children and their families before an intervention is needed" (p. 13). NAEYC (2018) established a standard on staff competencies, preparation, and support, including four topic areas. Topic area 6.A discusses a supportive work environment. A supportive work environment includes ongoing professional development, professional resources, books, materials, and computers (NAEYC, 2018).

Rentzou (2019) was more detailed and explicit in defining early childhood educators' support by pointing out the early childhood workforce initiative. This multi-sectoral approach focuses on frontline workers providing services to early childhood educators, children, and families (Rentzou, 2019). These professionals include those in

the field of a) health and nutrition, b) early childhood prevention, c) education and care, and d) social and child protection (Rentzou, 2019). Providing early childhood educators with these supports and professional development training will help bridge the gap between knowledge and skills to teach children with challenging behaviors (Rentzou, 2019).

Preparation for Teaching Children Who Have Challenging Behaviors

Early childhood administrators need to equip early childhood educators with tools and resources to support the quality of the child development program (Rentzou, 2019). Preparation for teaching children who have challenging behaviors also begins with building comprehensive and collaborative systems that connect early childhood educators, children, and their families to needed supports (Schilder et al., 2019). Page and Eadie (2019) indicated collaborative interdisciplinary coaching and professional colleagues with defined expertise, like behavioral specialists, could partner with early childhood educators to support teaching practices that support children's learning and behavior.

Ritblatt et al. (2017) reported that children's emotional and behavioral regulation is essential for healthy mental development. For this to occur, early childhood educators must be attuned to their interactions with children (Ritblatt et al., 2017). Eadie et al. (2019) concluded that a quality improvement program could significantly impact children's outcomes. A quality improvement program for early childhood educators would include professional learning that covers: (a) professional development training on discipline-specific knowledge, (b) high-quality, individualized coaching, specifically

targeting behavior management, (c) a multi-disciplinary team to develop an intervention

plan to target children's behavior and best teaching practices, and (d) implementation of

positive behavior intervention supports coupled with teacher-child interactions (Blewitt et

al., 2020; Eadie et al., 2019; Ritblatt et al., 2017).

Coaching for early childhood educators is defined as a professional learning and

development approach that is individualized and provides ongoing support (Elek & Page,

2019; Kraft et al., 2018). Elek and Page (2019) noted that coaching elements must be in

place for coaching to be effective. Over the years, coaching elements that have been cited

include collaborative goal-setting, observations, modeling, feedback, and reflection (Elek

& Page, 2019). Coaching allows early childhood educators to apply new skills, improve

and reflect on teaching practices, set self-directed goals, and improves student outcomes

(Elek & Page, 2019). Conners-Burrow et al. (2017) provided an explanation of coaching

elements by noting each importance. Coaches meet with the early childhood educator and

early childhood administrator to build a trusting relationship that is positive and non-

judgemental (Conner-Burrow et al., 2017). Action plans and goals are set collaboratively,

and the coach conducts classroom visits to observe, model, and provide feedback

(Conner-Burrow et al., 2017). By setting goals, observing, reflecting, and providing

observational feedback, early childhood educators become more mindful of the

magnitude of their teaching practices when it comes to their children's behaviors (Page &

Eadie, 2019).

Challenging behavior can have an extreme impact on early childhood settings,

and "emerging evidence shows that coaching with modeling and performance feedback

can enable teachers to implement evidence-based behavior management strategies" that are effective and provide positive child outcomes (Brock & Beaman-Diglia, 2018, p. 42). Brock and Beaman-Diglia (2018) arrived at the conclusion of their study that early childhood educators found value in coaching and felt that the strategies used were beneficial and would recommend the coaching model process to other early childhood educators (Brock & Beaman-Diglia, 2018).

Behavior Interventions

Early behavior interventions could prevent some children from having challenging behaviors in early elementary school (von Schulz et al., 2018). Noncontingent Reinforcement (NCR) and Differential Reinforcement of Alternative Behaviors (DRA) are two functions of interventions that have been researched to decrease problem behaviors and increase appropriate behaviors (von Schulz et al., 2018). According to von Schulz et al. (2018), DRA reinforces appropriate behavior, and NCR reduces challenging behaviors. Brock and Beaman (2018) found that evidence-based intervention strategies implemented in early childhood settings reduce challenging behavior and encourage children with these behaviors to focus, learn, and gain positive relationships with their friends and adults. Cunningham et al. (2020) examined the connection between positive behavior intervention support (PBIS) and the use of language support strategies. They found that PBIS, coupled with language support strategies, leads to decreased challenging behaviors and increased child engagement, limiting challenging behaviors (Cunningham et al., 2020).

PBIS

Carr and Boat (2019) defined PBIS as "an effective method for addressing the function of inappropriate behaviors in early childhood classrooms" (p. 172). School-wide PBIS (SWPBIS) and the pyramid model are multi-tiered systems that offer organized frameworks (Johnson, 2019). It is clear the topic of challenging behaviors has been necessary for professional development, focusing on a "continuum of strategies that promote child success" (Carr & Boat, 2019, p. 175). Carr and Boat (2019) concluded in their study that early childhood educators could help children with desirable behaviors by having caring contacts with children and by being empathetic.

For positive child outcomes in the early childhood setting, the implementation of PBIS must be considered when discussing professional development needs for early childhood educators (Johnson, 2019). Johnson (2017) pointed out that multi-tiered practices are a key recommendation that is needed to support all children, including those who have challenging behaviors, and enhance and develop training for early childhood educators. Johnson (2017) layout recommended multi-tiered systems of supports which include: (a) universal for all children emphasizing building supportive relationships and environments; (b) strategies that teach children social-emotional skills; and (c) "determine the meaning of severe and persistent challenging behaviors requiring individualized and intensive interventions" (p. 830). Early childhood educators who use evidence-based practices with fidelity have minimal challenges addressing children with challenging behaviors and building children's social-emotional skills (Brock et al., 2018).

Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS).

CLASS is designed for early childhood educators to focus on desirable teacher-child interactions (Sutherland et al., 2018). Early childhood educators who teach children with challenging behaviors lack skills that may negatively affect relationships (Sutherland et al., 2018). The CLASS domains are emotional and behavioral support (Bichay-Awadalla et al., 2021). Within the CLASS domains, some dimensions include behavior guidance and teacher sensitivity for toddlers and behavioral management, and teacher sensitivity for pre-kindergarten (Bichay-Awadalla et al., 2021). Early childhood educators play an essential role in determining the quality of teacher interactions and emotional richness in their classroom environment (Thorpe et al., 2020). Sutherland et al. (2018) found that early childhood educators who incorporate CLASS into their classrooms have reduced children's challenging behaviors.

Implications

The purpose of this basic qualitative study is to better understand teacher perceptions regarding the type of professional development training content needed for early childhood educators who teach children with challenging behaviors. The results of this study could inform the advancement of the early childhood field state-wide with a professional development workshop that could add value to high-quality early childhood education. Egert et al. (2018) confirmed in their study that professional development training and coaching enhance the quality of the classroom and student achievement. A professional development workshop that addresses early childhood educators' professional development needs for teaching children with challenging behaviors would benefit early childhood programs, educators, and children and families enrolled in these

programs. Expanded professional development training focusing on social-emotional development and positive behavior supports would enhance professional development efforts throughout California (Granja et al., 2018). The results of this study could also lead to a policy white paper that addresses the lack of appropriate professional development training for early childhood educators who teach children with challenging behaviors. Alternatively, the results could lead to a self-reflection tool for early childhood educators who work with children with challenging behaviors.

Summary

In this section, I focused on the problem of the lack of professional development training content being provided for early childhood educators who teach children with challenging behaviors. The fact that early childhood educators are not equipped to teach children with challenging behaviors makes this problem significant. Furthermore, early childhood educators resort to suspending and expelling young children from school instead of applying developmentally appropriate practices (Gilliam, 2016). The conceptual framework that guided this research was Malcolm Knowles' (1980) Andragogical process model who proposed a systematic process for helping adult learners identify and understand their learning/content needs.

The literature review for this study indicated diverse factors that may affect the lack of professional development training content, which includes unpreparedness, support, resource issues, and lack of capacity building (Carr & Boat, 2019; Miller et al., 2017; Muratori et al.; Rosenbaum-Nordoft, 2018). In summary, the researchers featured in the literature review examined how early childhood educators can teach children with

challenging behaviors and content needed to determine professional development

training. Section two of this study will detail the research design, participant selection,

data collection, and data analysis.

Section 2: The Methodology

The following section describes the research design and approach used in this study. This section will also include the criteria for selecting participants, description and justification for the data collection, how and when the data analysis occurred, including evidence of quality and credibility, limitations, and the data analysis results.

Research Design and Approach

There are three types of research designs: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Creswell and Creswell (2018) framed the designs as qualitative, using words, quantitative, using numbers, and mixed methods using both qualitative and quantitative designs. Qualitative research explores and understands the meaning of how an individual or group perceives and gives meaning to a social or human problem (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Qualitative research does not set up experiments, measure, or test theories; instead, it helps understand the experience and perspectives of others (Merriam & Tisdale, 2016).

Basic Qualitative Study

The design for this study was a basic qualitative research method to better understand local early childhood educator's perceptions regarding the types of professional development training content needed to teach children with challenging behaviors. This method was selected because I wanted to capture essential details of educators' perceptions of their current professional development training needs in teaching children with challenging behaviors, which helped understand the professional development needs of early childhood educators.

The most common type of qualitative research design is basic qualitative research, without pronouncing a specific type such as ethnography, phenomenological, grounded theory, or narrative analysis (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Ethnography researchers concentrate on shared behaviors, language, and cultural groups (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), phenomenological researchers are interested in experiences that others have lived. These researchers often capture individuals who have experienced the phenomenon (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Grounded theory research "derives a general, abstract theory of a process, action, or interaction grounded in the views of participants." (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 13). Narrative analysis researchers study people's lives and ask them to provide their life stories (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

In this basic qualitative study, I did not seek to provide an in-depth study of the topic, nor did I seek to collect detailed life stories, which is why narrative research nor case study was suitable. Ethnography was inappropriate for this study because the group of individuals did not represent a collective culture, set of experiences, or "patterns of a specific group of people" (see Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 29). Phenomenology wasnot appropriate for this study because it focuses on subjective aspects of individuals' lived experiences (see Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Basic qualitative research was best suited because it allows the researcher to grasp what attributes to the participant's experiences and explores their perceptions and opinions (see Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Participants

To meet the criteria to select participants, criterion-based sampling is needed, which allows the researcher to focus on the individuals who have the knowledge and experience needed to provide pertinent data (Ghaljaie et al., 2017). Sampling is defined as the "process of choosing a part of the population to represent the whole" (see Ghaljaie et al., 2017, p.1). After receiving approval from Walden University's Institutional Review Board (IRB), the predetermined criteria for selecting participants were early childhood educators employed at a licensed child development center. I chose these participants because they have experienced children with challenging behaviors in their classrooms and have had professional development training in the past. In addition, these participants were knowledgeable on the topic at hand, could provide rich information, and expressed and reflected effectively (see Moser et al., 2018).

Justification for the Number of Participants.

Qualitative sampling consists of deliberate participate samples that are small and produce in-depth descriptions (Moser et al., 2018). In this basic qualitative study, one-on-one interviews were conducted with eight participants who shared their perceptions of their experiences with children with challenging behaviors and professional development training. Larger sample sizes occur in content analysis and longitudinal qualitative studies (Moser et al., 2018).

Procedures for Gaining Access to Participants.

Xu et al. (2020) noted informed consent as a vital part of the ethics portion of the research. They continued and defined it as a document that informs participants of the

voluntary research and gives the participants an understanding of what the research will entail (Xu et al., 2020). When I received Walden University's IRB approval for the study, I contacted the site supervisor at the Kids R Us Child Development Center (a pseudonym) via email with a letter of cooperation seeking permission for their early childhood educators to participate in the study. In the letter, I addressed the purpose of this study and the criteria for the participant selection. In addition, I had the site supervisor forward the recruitment materials to individuals who meet the inclusion criteria. The recruitment materials included my contact information and flyer. I ensured the participants that they could withdraw from the study if they wished to do so and informed them that no personal information would be presented or shared.

The Role of the Researcher

The role of the researcher must be defined (Prasad, 2017). My role was to interview participants and gather data on their perceptions of the professional development training content needed for early childhood educators who teach children with challenging behaviors. Thomas (2017) pointed out that researchers must know what their position should be. My past professional role was as an early childhood educator at the licensed local child development center; however, the participants in question did not work with me at the same site. My current professional role is director of the school district's early childhood program. However, I did not supervise the potential participants in this study, and my current professional role did not affect any data collection.

According to Karagiozis (2018), qualitative interviews "are shaped by the interrelationship between the researcher and participant(s)" (p. 21). Karagiozis continued

to discuss biases, shortcomings, and an understanding of personal perspectives. To further address biases, shortcomings, and an understanding of personal perspectives, I was aware of any biases and shortcomings by keeping my own opinions out of the equation, focusing on the interview questions at hand, and focusing on the participants.

Prior to the data collection, the researcher must inform the participant of each other's roles (Prasad, 2017). Communication between the two is crucial. Communication allows the researcher to judge whether the participant understands the study, their role, and if they are willing to participate. In contrast, the participants will understand the nature of the research and be more inclined to participate (Xu et al., 2020). Once the recruitment materials were distributed and I had volunteer participants, I discussed the terms of the informed consent and asked the participants to sign the informed consent form. Before the one-on-one Zoom interviews occurred, I engaged in general conversation, re-read the informed consent, and made sure that participants understood their roles and my role as the researcher. I was familiar with the participants because of my role as a teacher in past years at the Kid's R Us Child Development Center, and I wasfamiliar with the participant's site supervisor.

Participant's Rights

Human rights should always be protected, and I ensured that participants were aware of their rights during the research study (see Mertens & Wilson, 2018). Protection of human and legal rights "should respect the dignity and interactions of participants and other stakeholders" (Mertens & Wilson, 2018, p. 26). The IRB gave approval before I engaged in the interview process and collecting data; participants were sought out

appropriately. I invited the participants to raise any questions or concerns before they signed the informed consent. I reviewed the informed consent to ensure the participants understood their rights and reminded them of confidentiality. It was also disclosed that any information containing personal information would be kept in a locked file cabinet that I am the only one with access to. When the research was over and the data were gathered, all personal information was shredded. I built trust, respect, professionalism, and made the participants feel comfortable.

Respect for participants requires that they choose what will or will not happen to them (Belmont Report, 1979). According to the Belmont Report, the consent process contains three foundations: information, comprehension, and voluntariness (Belmont Report, 1979). First is information. Ample information is given, which includes the research purpose, procedure, risks and benefits (if any), an opportunity to ask questions, and an opportunity to withdraw from the research (Belmont Report, 1979). The second is comprehension. Comprehension is important because the information must be presented in a comprehensible and organized manner so that participants will not get confused and are able to comprehend what will take place (Belmont Report, 1979). Lastly, voluntariness requires that informed consent is free from coercion, influence, authoritative pressures, and inappropriate rewards (Belmont Report, 1979).

Data Collection

Semi Structured Interviews

Semi structured interviews took place on Zoom at a time that best suited the participants. An interview in qualitative research is a one-on-one session where the

"researcher seeks to know more of an issue as opinionated by the individual being asked"
(see Adhabi & Anozie, 2017, p. 88). Furthermore, the interview process is interactive,
where the researcher asks multiple questions to gain specific information (Adhabi &
Anozie, 2017). Semi structured interviews have the flexibility for researchers to ask
additional questions depending on the participant's response (Adhabi & Anozie, 2017).
The source of data was researcher produced. I asked open-ended questions (Appendix B)
based on the review of literature while remaining neutral. I asked probing questions for
clarification purposes if needed. Researchers must be careful and limit probes to make it
not feel like an interrogation (Johnson et al., 2019). Each participant was asked if the
interview could be audio recorded, and they provided their verbal consent for recording
the interview.

Managing and Keeping Track of Data

According to Lu and Ke (2021), data management involves a cycle of activities
that includes but is not limited to backing up, storing, analyzing, and preserving data.
Once the interview process was over, each interview was transcribed verbatim using
Otter and verified line-by-line by myself. Otter is a tool that turns voice recordings into
notes that can be shared with the participants. Phillippi and Lauderdale (2017) noted that
some formats of notes may include dictations, written notes, and sketches. Aside from the
individual interview questions, I had additional data for each interviewee with pertinent
information like gender, age, and the group of students the interviewee teach. When data
management systems are managed poorly, data can be accidentally misfiled, deletions
may occur, and de-identification (Antonio et al., 2020). The data collected are kept

confidential and stored electronically on my personal password-protected computer and will be destroyed in 5 years. Williams and Moser (2019) pointed out that if the "data collection and organization methods lack rigor, analysis can be impeded" (p. 45).

Data Analysis

After interviewing the participants, I reviewed the recording transcriptions, transcribed each interview, and started the member-checking process, which was part of the data analysis process. Member checking involves respondent validation and is used to enhance data analysis processes (Varpio et al., 2017). After the participants had agreed to the content, I started the coding process using Microsoft Excel. According to Ehrmin and Pierce (2020), identifying and categorizing comparable and non-comparable statements or demeanor can help the researcher understand the participants in their environment. Through member checking, participants were asked to verify transcription inaccuracies and other discrepancies. There were no discrepancies I had to address; all of the information was accurate.

The type of analysis I used was thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is a qualitative research "method for identifying, analyzing, organizing, and describing themes found within a data set" (Braun & Clark, 2006, p. 2) Braun and Clark (2006) presented a 6 phased method that was used in this study:

- Phase1: Familiarize myself with the data by documenting reflective thoughts and potential codes and themes. I read through the data and listened to the recordings. While doing so, notes were taken on what is noticed in the data for possible codes and themes.

- Phase 2: Generate initial codes. A list was created that entailed what was in the data and what was compelling. From the data, this process produced the initial codes.

- Phase 3: Search for themes by keeping detailed notes and making sense of the themes and connections. Codes were sorted into possible themes by using visuals. The visuals that were used were thematic mapping.

- Phase 4: Review themes and sub-themes.

- Phase 5: Define and name themes through a peer debriefing process.

- Phase 6: Produce the report. (Braun & Clark, 2006).

Limitations

According to Moser et al. (2018), qualitative sampling consists of deliberate participant samples that are small and produce in-depth descriptions. Eight participants were interviewed from one city in California. There was a possibility that early childhood educators from other cities in California could have different perceptions. Local resource and referral agencies may provide professional development trainings and support that may or may not be available to these participants.

There is much to be said about children with challenging behaviors in early education. This study is limited in scope; it was not possible to study the underlining issues of children's behaviors and trauma topics. Future studies could explore these topics in detail with a larger sample that would contribute to the literature review and have an impact on focusing on the whole child in the field of early childhood.

Data Analysis Results

This study aimed to better understand local early childhood educators'
perceptions regarding the types of professional development training content needed to
teach children with challenging behaviors. The following RQ guided this doctoral study:

RQ: How do early childhood educators perceive their current professional
development training content needs in terms of teaching children with challenging
behaviors?

A total of eight early childhood educators were interviewed for this basic
qualitative study. The coding process resulted in three main themes that emerged from
the one-on-one interviews: content needs, challenges, and support.

Theme 1: Content Needs

Content needs in the areas of PBIS, social-emotional development, and realistic
delivery (hands-on training) were recurring themes throughout the data analysis process.
When asked how often they received professional development training from 2018 to
2020 and if the content included strategies to teach children with challenging behaviors,
participants communicated they received some training, and some training included
information on behaviors. Still, the training was limited and did not focus much on how
to teach children with challenging behaviors. Participant #2 indicated that she received
monthly staff meetings, and sometimes there would be a topic on behavior presented by
another faculty member or visiting expert, but it was not realistic. She stated,

> We got meetings and trainings every month. The meetings that coincided
>
> with training were mostly informational. But show us real life. We have

trainings, and they have one child; realistically, we don't have one child.

We have a lot of kids.

Participant #3's response diverged from those of other participants by indicating she had professional development training up to four times a year. Still, the content mainly taught her about specific topics in early childhood and some help with behavior management. Participant #3 stated, "Probably at least two to four times a year. Some topics were more specific than others (math concepts, motor development, and classroom environment), but most professional development trainings included some type of assistance or education regarding behavioral children." Participant #4 was asked how much training they received, and Participant #4 answered, "We did not get enough training. We got repetitive information that had nothing to do with children and challenging behaviors." Participant #5 expressed that she did not receive enough training and would have liked to get more information on teaching children with challenging behaviors. She stated, "Not enough; I feel like we could have been given this little more." Participant #6 articulated that they received monthly trainings, but not all topics were strategies for teaching children with challenging behaviors. Participant #6 stated, "At least once a month. Training was not related to children with challenging behaviors, but some topics covered behaviors (getting children to eat, participate, and play with others)." Participant #7 voiced that they have had professional development trainings throughout the year; however, only one was in challenging behaviors. The training was about why children behave the way they do. Participant #7 shared, "Throughout the year, at least once a month, just one that was interesting."

When asked what the participant's current perception of their professional development training was, six participants indicated they were not receiving enough training. They mostly receive workplace trainings that do not include how to teach children with challenging behaviors. Participant # 2 said, "I haven't done much outside training. Just what my job has been providing. We have only informational meetings." Participant #3 stated, "My perception of our trainings is to give us tools and updated data. Regarding topics on challenging behaviors, we get random topics (children with disabilities, children who do not like to share, and children who have trauma)." Participant #4 stated, "My perception is that we don't get enough training. Some of it is repetitive. More education and help are needed for those behavior-problem students."

In connection with what professional development training content is needed, six participants referred to needing realistic trainings that are not scripted. Participants expressed they would also like training in social-emotional development related to challenging behaviors and PBIS to prevent challenging behaviors in the classroom. Participant #2 stated,

> In trainings, they show a teacher handling one child; realistically, we don't have one child. We have a lot of these kids with behavior issues. Show us real life. How can you use what is being taught in the classroom? I will save the information given, and that's fine and everything, but then, how do I use the information in the classroom successfully? How do you bring a child down once the behavior is at its peak? What could I have done before the child peaked their behavior?

Participant #3 was asked what professional development content they would like;

Participant #3 indicated,

> I would like in-class training on specific behaviors regarding the children and the
>
> causes of the behavior. It's different when you have a child that comes from a
>
> traumatic home versus a child that is just mimicking behaviors from home or if
>
> they want a specific type of attention.

Three other participants indicated they wanted realistic training incorporating social-

emotional development and PBIS. Participant #6 stated,

> I think the behaviors are changing, and I feel we need to keep up with the changes
>
> even though it's hard. There are behaviors due to traumas coming into the
>
> classroom. How are we incorporating PBIS correctly? Educators should be skilled
>
> in everything PBIS.

Participant #7 noted, "I want to see different ideas in real time. Seeing how PBIS works

and finding other interests is key to supporting that challenging behavior." Participant #8

said, "I want to know how to handle those children in my classroom with challenging

behaviors. We must explore children's emotions and how to help them regulate them. We

as educators need to be skilled in that aspect."

Theme 2: Challenges

Participants expressed challenges when teaching children with challenging

behaviors. Challenges included a lack of professional development training for aides.

Aides are not equipped to handle children with challenging behaviors; they have less

training than teachers, and parents cannot handle their children and do not know how to

parent in a manner that will help their children succeed. Participant #1 stated, "Staffing is the key to success with any student with behavior issues. If we do not have staff that knows how to handle behaviors, the teacher cannot teach because their focus is on the child's behavior. Participant #4 stated, "It becomes challenging and overwhelming when your aides do not have training with challenging behaviors. It becomes the teacher's issue." Participant #6 stated,

> My challenge is my aides not knowing how to handle the kids, then I have to step out of the front, and even if they're not ready, I have to tell them they have to be in charge at that point of the main class while I go and handle another child. It would be beneficial if the aides had training.

Five out of eight participants indicated that a lack of parental support was another challenge when discussing children with challenging behaviors. Participant #7 said, "Parent involvement and consistency is a challenge." Participant #8 said a challenge is not "having immediate support and parents who do not know what to do with their own child." Participant #1 stated, "It is challenging when parents do not support the teacher regarding their child's behavior. Parents expect the teacher to handle it because they do not want to be bothered with those challenging behaviors."

Theme 3: Supports

Overall, the participants believed that more support was needed to help them teach children with challenging behaviors. Six participants said they needed coach support, and five indicated they needed peer support. Participant #2 stated, "I like to hear other people's ideas, my peers. A coach to help with challenging behaviors would be nice

and to teach children PBIS expectations." Participant #3 stated, "I would like a hands-on coach to see the behaviors with a different eye." Participant #4 said, "Our program specialists are like coaches/mentors to the teachers, which is needed. Collaborating with other teachers is supportive. Implementing strategies from peers is a great support. I think that motivates each other." When Participant #7 was asked what support they needed to teach children with challenging behavior, Participant #7 said, "Sitting down with programs specialists, behaviorists, or coaches to lay out different systems. Also, checking in with other teachers."

Salient Data and Discrepant Cases

As the data analysis emerged, one discrepant case did not fit into the understanding of the data. Question 4 asked about educators' current perception of their professional development training. One response did not generate relevant information for the data analysis. One out of eight participants perceived their current training as having enough. This discrepant case made me reconsider whether this information was quality to the research. I decided this information would not add to the research; therefore, it was not included in the data analysis.

Evidence of Quality

To address the accuracy of the data, member checks were conducted. Member checking is a validity check that is considered to be the benchmark of qualitative research (Madill & Sullivan, 2018). The purpose of member checking is to "solicit feedback from one's participants or stakeholders about one's data or interpretation." (Motulsky, 2021, p. 398). Eight participants were informed of the member-checking process through the

informed consent form. The participants were reminded of the member-checking process before the interview began. I told the participants that their task was to read through their interview responses and validate the accuracy of the data analysis. Once the participant's interview was transcribed, I emailed each participant their portion of the transcription. In the email, I asked the participants to read it and to let me know if anything was misinterpreted or incorrect. I also stated that I could set up a meeting via Zoom to discuss the data. All eight participants indicated that everything was accurate and there was no need to meet to discuss the data.

Another method used for evidence of quality was peer debriefing. A peer reviewer in the field of early childhood education reviewed the data analysis to ensure accuracy. The peer reviewer stated that no biases were detected in the interview questions or the analysis.

Outcomes

The problem is that children in early childhood programs exhibit challenging behaviors in the classroom, and early childhood educators are not equipped to teach children with challenging behaviors. This basic qualitative research study was conducted to examine the type of professional development training content needed for early childhood educators who teach children with challenging behaviors. This section displayed a qualitative approach to answer the RQ completely.

The findings relate to the conceptual framework of Malcolm Knowles' (1980) Andragogical process model, a systematic process for helping adult learners identify and understand their learning and content needs. The participants described their needs for

training in specific content areas and additional support to teach children with challenging behaviors and gain strategies to prevent undesired behaviors. Although the participants had different perceptions of their current professional development training and content needs, the most common responses were the need for training in PBIS and social-emotional development that is realistic in its delivery. One participant described realistic in its delivery as unscripted. When trainers demonstrate a strategy, they often show a scripted video clip of one caregiver interacting with one child. In reality, there are no classrooms with one child and one caregiver. The findings from the educators at a local child development program allow for developing a three-day professional development in-service training focusing on teaching children with challenging behaviors.

In Section 3, the project will be described. The 3-day professional development in-service training will include effective workshops on PBIS and social-emotional development. The workshops will provide all educators, including aides and other support staff, with skills and strategies that are up-to-date and realistic in delivery, as the educators indicated in their responses which connect to the themes.

Conclusion

Section 2 presented the basic qualitative research design as the most suited methodology to address the local program and major research questions. I provided the sample selection criteria for participants. The participants for this study were employed at a local child development center and taught children with challenging behaviors. The

proposed sample consists of eight teachers. Furthermore, presented is a comprehensive

protocol plan for data collection and analysis.

Section 3: The Project

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to better understand local childhood educators' perceptions regarding the type of professional development training content needed to teach children with challenging behaviors. This study involved interviewing eight early childhood educators. I focused on their current training and their perception of their content needs. For this study, based on the early childhood educators' responses during the interview process, a 3-day professional development in-service training evolved as a final project. The goal of this proposed project is to provide training for early childhood educators, including aides, to address how to teach children with challenging behaviors.

Early childhood educators at a local child development center are the target audience of the full 3-day professional development in-service training. They will learn how to promote children's social-emotional development by applying PBIS strategies, hands-on intervention strategies, and engaging with peers to overcome challenging behaviors.

Rationale

The 3-day professional development in-service was chosen to build the capacity of early childhood educators in the area of challenging behaviors in early childhood. Bonczyk et al. (2022) clarified that early childhood educators are unresourced and need training to understand behavioral challenges. Early childhood educators who participate in this in-service will be provided with "resources to understand the root causes of challenging behaviors." (Bonczyk et al., 2022, p. 20). The data analysis revealed that

early childhood educators would like training in specific content areas and additional support to teach children with challenging behaviors and to gain strategies to prevent undesired behaviors. The data analysis revealed that seven out of eight participants perceived their current professional development training as limited and did not always cover topics on children with challenging behaviors. Three out of eight participants stated their professional development training was primarily informational, while four said their professional development training was on issues other than children's behaviors.

One hundred percent of the participants said they needed more training in teaching children with challenging behaviors. Participants mentioned that trainings that includes aides would be a great support and less of a hindrance or challenge in the classroom. A professional development in-service is the most appropriate genre to address the problem. The project addresses the problem by equipping early childhood educators with 21 hours of in-service training on children's challenging behaviors, which includes a hands-on component. Each in-service workshop will provide educators with beneficial tools and strategies to use in their classrooms.

Review of the Literature

The data gathered for this project study revealed the need to create professional development training. Participants expressed the need for more professional development training in specific content areas and additional support on how to teach children with challenging behaviors and gain strategies to prevent undesired behaviors. Thus, I have selected to create a professional development in-service as the project genre. A 3-day professional development in-service will also provide early childhood educators with

beneficial tools and strategies to use in their classroom with fidelity to reduce challenging behaviors and gain a positive classroom climate. The literature review focuses on the following themes: content needs, challenges, and supports. The professional development in-service is the most appropriate genre to address the problem because it provides early childhood educators with training designed to reflect the early childhood educators and "their self-identified need" (Bonczyk et al., 2022, p. 22). This 3-day professional development in-service is driven by what participants expressed as their needs. Instead of focusing on pedagogy which is content-centered, the main focus will be andragogy which is learner-centered (Birsanu, 2020). This project aligns with the conceptual framework of Knowles.

In this section, I address how the search for this literature review was conducted, including electronic search engines and search terms identifying peer-reviewed literature. Next, I address the importance and relevance of professional development training and content needs, which includes PBIS and social-emotional development as it relates to teaching children with challenging behaviors, which justifies the choice of the project through related literature. Additionally, through relevant literature, I address challenges early childhood educators encounter when teaching children with challenging behaviors and needed support to be successful in the classroom.

A search was conducted to develop a review of the literature. The search included Walden University's library, ERIC, EBSCO, SAGE, and Google Scholar. The search terms used in the study include *professional development, social-emotional development,*

positive behavior support, challenges, early childhood educators, and *early childhood*

supports.

Content Needs

Tantawy (2020) defined professional development training as an educational

experience to "learn and apply new skills and knowledge that would enhance professional

performance" (p. 182). Understanding the types of professional development content that

early childhood educators need to teach children with challenging behaviors is essential

to the training trainers. Additionally, professional development reflecting early childhood

educators' knowledge and needs is critical in making sustainable classroom changes

(Bonczyk et al., 2022). Overlooking the content needs of early childhood educators may

compromise their learning on how to teach children with challenging behaviors, and they

may not succeed in the classroom (Gumbo, 2020). Gumbo (2020) pointed out that

professional development training must be designed to align content to participants'

needs.

Early childhood educators "require practical content with suggestions for

classroom implementation" (Onalan & Gursoy, 2020, p. 383). Professional development

training is essential for educators to learn realistic, unscripted, and practical skills that can

be transferred to their classrooms (Onalan & Gursoy, 2020). The activities and content

should encourage active participation and collaboration with peers (Onalan & Gursoy,

2020). Onalan and Gursoy (2020) explored the subject of teachers' views and needs on

in-service training as part of professional development and found that the following in-

service trainings are not beneficial: (a) too lecture based, (b) repetitive content in nature

and (c) topics that are irrelevant with the teachers' needs (pp. 377-378). In addition,

Onalan and Gursoy pointed out teachers' views on what they wanted out of in-service

trainings: (a) to the point, (b) informative, (c) transferrable, (d) up-to-date, (e) content

relevant to teachers' needs, (f) innovative and practical, (g) concrete examples of how

theory can be put into practice, (h) interactive and fun, (i) small groups, (j) lots of

activities and materials, (k) experienced trainers, and (l) able to provide feedback (p.

379).

The participants in the study voiced their need to learn how to implement PBIS in

the classroom in order to address challenging behaviors. To address challenging

behaviors in the classroom, implementing PBIS with fidelity is needed for success (Macy

& Wheeler, 2021) PBIS is a research-based behavior management strategy used to

encourage and develop positive behaviors (Mitchell et al., 2018). PBIS provides a

framework for early childhood educators to help with challenging behaviors, intervention

strategies, and behavior prevention (Grasley-Boy et al., 2021. PBIS involves creating a

behavioral management system that includes behavior expectations and how to respond

to undesired behaviors (Grasley-Boy et al., 2021). Macy and Wheeler (2021) explored

factors that influence teacher buy-in, which is needed for PBIS to succeed. Macy and

Wheeler interviewed 19 professionals in a focus group and individually; professional

development was one of the emergent themes. The participants in that study noted that

professional development interests included knowledge of PBIS, how to implement

PBIS, and the initial and ongoing technical assistance (Macy & Wheeler, 2021).

The participants in the present study also expressed their need to learn how to promote social-emotional development as it relates to children's behaviors. Ferreira et al. (2021) commented on SEL in preschool. They explained that early childhood educators must create an emotionally peaceful classroom environment that promotes "the expression of feelings and emotions and the development of positive social-emotional skills and interpersonal relationships." (Ferreira et al., 2021, p. 53). Ferreira et al. discovered that early childhood educators found four competencies important to development in children's early ages. The four important competencies are self-awareness, self-control, social awareness, and relationship skills (Ferreira et al., 2021). Ferreira et al. identified and reported that early childhood educators need social-emotional training focusing on various competencies to enhance instructional strategies and knowledge. However, Nakamichi et al. (2021) voiced that "children need to develop various competencies throughout early childhood for their later academic, social success." (p. 159). According to Carr and Boat (2019), early childhood educators have a great influence on "children's development of self-regulation and appropriate classroom behavior." (p. 175). Moreover, Fettig et al. (2022) sampled 97 early childhood educators through teacher surveys, classroom observations, and teacher interviews. They found that professional development activities were useful and increased the educator's teaching effectiveness. In addition, Fettig et al. found that tailored and tiered professional development training is necessary to support the early childhood workforce. Hemmeter et al. (2021) expressed that professional development training focusing on social-emotional

development and behavioral management has been identified as a critical need for early

childhood educators.

While PBIS addresses inappropriate behaviors (Carr & Boat, 2019), the pyramid

model addresses social-emotional skills to prevent challenging behaviors (Hemmeter et

al., 2021). Previous research findings confirmed that educators who participated in the

pyramid model professional development showed that children's outcomes improve in

the classroom regarding social interactions and challenging behaviors (Hemmeter et al.,

2021; Kraft et al., 2018). Data collected through educators' interviews pointed out that

educators perceived the pyramid model to be successful in promoting social-emotional

skills to prevent challenging behaviors (Hemmeter et al., 2021). Recent research on

social-emotional development confirmedthe value of supporting children's social-

emotional skills and supporting early childhood educators in teaching children with

challenging behaviors (Johnston et al., 2021). Hemmeter et al. (2021) found that

implemented interventions, such as the pyramid model and PBIS, to address children's

social-emotional needs and their challenging behaviors linked to improved social skills,

instructional practices, and challenging behaviors. A study by Penney et al. (2019)

alsosuggested that the focus of professional development training needs to ensure

"explicit social-emotional learning outcomes, delivered by higher educated

professionals." (p. 57).

Challenges

There are challenges, such as classroom aides not having sufficient training in

helping to teach children with challenging behaviors and gaining parental support in

teaching their children with challenging behaviors. Classroom aides who work in an early childhood classroom setting assist early childhood educators in teaching and being able to take over the classroom if there is a need. The early childhood educator and the classroom aide are expected to lead the children based on the children's development needs (Sezgin, 2020). Professional development training will provide classroom aides with the same opportunities as the early childhood educator in hopes that both individuals learn together, engage their children, and learn how to teach children with challenging behaviors (Sezgin, 2020). Martin and Mulvihill (2020) reported that "it is impossible to teach people how to teach powerfully by asking them to imagine what they have never seen" (p. 240). Martin and Mulvihill clarified that it is crucial that classroom aides become part of the professional community by engaging them in professional development training to gain knowledge, learn strategies, and gain a deeper understanding of how to teach children with challenging behaviors. Furthermore, classroom aides can grow professionally (Tantawy, 2020).

Addressing the lack of support from parents can be exhausting; however, engaging families in the implementation of the pyramid model and PBIS by providing training can help early childhood educators in the classroom (Fox et al., 2021). Fox et al. (2021) put forth strategies for developing robust partnerships with children's families, including partnering to promote children's social-emotional development and how to support their children's challenging behaviors. Fox et al. investigated two demonstration sites to execute the pyramid model with fidelity and address behavior issues. The two early childhood demonstration sites received professional development training and

technical assistance to implement the pyramid model, focusing on social-emotional development and behavioral support for all children (Fox et al., 2021). One of the core features of this study was family engagement. The demonstration sites were to "implement strategies for developing strong partnerships with families that included working together to promote child skill development and providing activities and supports that respond to all families" (Fox et al., 2021, p. 314). The implementation strategies for families included posting expectations, sending home materials on how to utilize the expectations at home and in the community, and a family newsletter to focus attention on how families could foster social-emotional skills at home and in the community setting (Fox et al., 2021). In addition to the strategies provided to families, both demonstration sites had events where families learned more about the pyramid model and held an "8-week family training session related to parenting practices for promoting social-emotional skills and addressing challenging behavior" which over 60% of the families attended (Fox et al., 2021, p. 314). Fox et al. revealed that positive outcomes and growth could be achieved using the pyramid model to meet children's social-emotional and behavioral needs.

Supports

There is a need for support when teaching children with challenging behaviors. Several studies have found that providing coaches and peer support is essential for developing skills to focus on PBIS and social-emotional skills to address behavioral issues in children (Bonczyk et al., 2022; Johnston et al., 2021; Martin & Mulvihill, 2020; Wright & Steed, 2021). Taylor et al. (2022) clearly described coaching early childhood

educators. In their study, educators had the opportunity to share their perceptions of aspects of coaching necessary for early childhood educators to successfully teach children with challenging behaviors (Taylor et al., 2022). Earlier research suggested that coaching can be presented in a combination of ways, including side-by-side coaching, group coaching, and supervisory coaching together (Coogle et al., 2019; Elek & Page, 2019). Taylor et al. called these coaching methods, specialized coaching to meet the individual needs of early childhood educators. In their study, five early childhood educators participated in a focus group, and four participated in individual interviews (Taylor et al., 2022, p. 505). Their findings revealed, "Early childhood educators would like to have explicit modeling from coaches" (Taylor et al., 2022, p. 505).

Heilmann et al. (2022) conducted a study of 23 early childhood educators with the purpose of understanding their perception of lived coaching experiences. They concluded that coaching is best practice for early childhood educators where they can expand their knowledge and competency, affirming that "coaching can be a powerful force in the early childhood classroom" (Heilmann et al., 2022, p. 1235). Similarly, Edwards and Steed (2021) explored peer coaching in early childhood programs and educators' comfort level between peer coaches and administrative coaches. They found that educators were most comfortable with self-selected peer coaches rather than administrative selected coaches; most educators stated that they respected the opinions of their peer coach, and their peer coach was familiar with the classroom routines and children's behaviors (Edwards & Steed, 2021). All of the early childhood educators in Edward and Steed's study stated that having a peer coach was beneficial, and their knowledge base improved; however, a

concern was child distractibility. Edwards and Steed concluded that early childhood programs must engage in professional development involving peer and administrative coaching. Doing so "could result in increased use of recommended practices," less teacher stress, and positive outcomes for children (Edward & Steed, 2021, p. 340).

All of the studies mentioned in this literature review explained how professional development training supported and benefited early childhood educators who teach children with challenging behaviors. The authors in this literature review revealed early childhood educators lack the training, skills, support, and knowledge to handle children with challenging behaviors (Bonczyk et al., 2022; Carr & Boat, 2019; Hemmetter et al., 2021; Macy and Wheeler, 2021; Tantawy, 2020). In the rest of this section, the project description and the project implications will be described.

Project Description

The project was chosen to address early childhood educators' perceptions of their professional development training and content need. The professional development in-service will be presented to early childhood educators of a local child development program. The data analysis showed that the participants wanted more professional development training to gain knowledge on how to implement PBIS and social-emotional development when teaching children with challenging behaviors. The early childhood educators will benefit from attending this 3-day professional development in-service because they will be able to learn about different behaviors and how to implement PBIS and social-emotional development in their classrooms daily. The results from the one-on-one interviews and the themes of the data will be shared with the educators. The themes

that will be shared are content needs (PBIS and social-emotional development), challenges, and support. Because one of the themes is support, early childhood administrators and program specialists will also be invited to the 3-day professional development in-service. Another theme is challenges; therefore, aides will be invited to learn the same strategies as the educators to help the educators in the classroom with children with challenging behaviors. Another challenge is the lack of parental support. Parents will be invited to the last day of the professional development in-service to learn about PBIS and how to implement PBIS strategies at home and in their community. Professional development in-service strengthens early childhood educators' abilities.

Needed Resources

The resources needed for the 3-day professional development in-service include one large room, two smaller rooms for breakout sessions, tables, chairs, a computer, a projector, and copies of the PowerPoint. In the middle of each table, items needed are a pencil box with pens, markers, highlighters, and sticky notes just in case the educators are in need of these items during the in-service.

Existing Supports

The existing supports come from the child development program administrators. A multipurpose room is available to educators for general use, ongoing training, and peer and coach collaborations to discuss positive child outcomes and effective teaching. Funding can be provided by the child development program to bring in experienced early childhood trainers who specialize in children's behaviors, PBIS, and social-emotional development.

Potential Barriers

The early childhood education field is experiencing a teacher and substitute teacher shortage, which will present a potential barrier to finding substitute teachers to take over the classrooms while the educators are training and scheduling a 3-day in-service. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been a lack of substitute teachers. Education Week (2020) states that the substitute teacher shortage has increased since 2019. Classrooms are being left covered by administrators, program specialists, and counselors (Nguyen, Lam, & Bruno, 2022). Another potential obstacle would be that parents would not come to the last day of the training.

Potential Solutions

A possible solution to finding substitute teachers is to arrange for substitutes a month in advance using a childcare staffing firm to obtain substitute teachers and aides for the 3-day in-service. If this can be achieved, scheduling the 3-day in-service will not be an issue. If substitutes cannot be obtained, another solution would be to hold the 3-day in-service when children are not in school. This would have to be arranged with the CDE's Early Education Division before the calendar school year starts. Regarding parents attending the last day of the training, incentives can be offered to the parents who attend, and evening training can be offered for those who cannot participate during the day.

Proposal for Implementation

Early childhood educators will attend the professional development in-service before the start of the school year. This will allow educators to prepare their

implementation strategies for PBIS and social-emotional development. An email will be sent with the invitation as an attachment. The invitation will include the date, time, topic, and other pertinent information about the professional development in-service (e.g., expectations of the educators). On day one of the professional development in-service, data from the interviews, the learning outcomes, an introduction to children's behaviors, and PBIS will be presented. On day two of the professional development in-service, PBIS strategies and social-emotional development will be presented. On day three, educators will be able to collaborate, plan, and join the parent presentation, which will be a parent introductory training on PBIS, and strategies parents can use at home and in their community. Throughout the 3-day in-service, there will be discussion sessions, group activities, hands-on activities, and realistic videos that are not scripted.

Roles and Responsibilities

My role will be the facilitator. I will be in communication with the administrators about scheduling the 3-day professional development in-service, send out the invitation for the administrators to forward to the educators, keep the administrators informed about any changes that may occur, and facilitate the 3-day in-service. The early childhood educators' responsibilities include participating, being engaged, and being responsible for their learning. Each educator will complete a feedback survey at the end of the 3-day in-service. Once I receive them back, I will meet with the administrators to discuss the outcomes.

Project Evaluation

The project will be evaluated using a summative evaluation. A summative

evaluation is conducted after the adult learner has completed professional development

training (Bin, 2020). The early childhood educators expressed their need for professional

development training with content focused on PBIS and social-emotional development

with the opportunity to collaborate with peers to help prevent challenging behaviors in

the classroom. The project aims to equip early childhood educators with knowledge and

understanding of how to implement PBIS and social-emotional development, as well as

gain confidence and the desire for implementation and collaboration with peers. The

summative evaluation plan (Appendix C) is an appropriate evaluation choice, including a

questionnaire and open-ended questions after the 3-day professional development in-

service.

The stakeholders of the professional development in-service are early childhood

educators, administrators, support staff, and parents. Early childhood educators are the

key stakeholders because the project is created for their growth and development. The

administrators are also pertinent stakeholders because they can provide organizational

change by providing ongoing training and coaching regularly. The support staff are

stakeholders because they will provide classroom support to support early childhood

educators. Lastly, parents are stakeholders because they will support early childhood

educators by implementing PBIS at home and in their community.

Project Implications

This project has implications for positive social change in early childhood education. The professional development in-service will enhance early childhood educators' knowledge and understanding of children with challenging behaviors while equipping them with appropriate strategies and tools through lessons, discussion sessions, group activities, hands-on activities, and collaboration. With training, early childhood educators may improve relationships with children while managing challenging behaviors in positive ways. This 3-day professional development in-service may also encourage early childhood educators to continue collaborating with peers and coaches to be able to hone into implementing PBIS with fidelity so their children will develop social skills that will contribute to less challenging behaviors.

Local stakeholders, including early childhood educators and administrators in other districts and private early childhood settings, may benefit from this project study because it will assist administrators in creating organizational change. The organizational change would be based on early childhood educators' perceptions concerning the delivery of professional development training around challenging behaviors. Rather than suspensions and expulsions, educators can "focus on building the capacities of children, families, and early childhood programs" (see Bonczyk et al., 2022, p. 23).

Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to better understand local childhood educators' perceptions regarding the types of professional development training content needed to teach children challenging behaviors. Eight early childhood educators completed the one-on-one interviews. The data analyzed from the one-on-one interviews presented information to answer the RQ: How do early childhood educators perceive their current professional development training content needs in terms of teaching children with challenging behaviors? The themes that emerged from the one-on-one interviews were content needs, challenges, and supports. In Section 3, I explained the professional development project, the rationale, the literature review, the project description, and the project implications. In Section 4, I discuss the project's strengths and limitations, recommendations for alternative approaches, scholarship, project development, leadership and change, reflection on the importance of the work, implications, applications, directions for future research, and the conclusion.

Project Strengths and Limitations

Project Strengths

The data from the one-on-one interviews revealed that early childhood educators need more professional development training on how to teach children with challenging behaviors, including how to implement PBIS and social-emotional development when teaching children with challenging behaviors. The 3-day professional development in-service focuses on presenting the interviews' data, the training's purpose, and learning outcomes. The content focuses on PBIS and social-emotional development. The

professional development in-service also promotes collaboration, discussion sessions,

videos, and individual, group, and hands-on activities, amongst educators, administrators,

support staff, and parents. Providing a suitable professional development in-service for

the diverse needs of the attendees calls for implementing several strategies that will

enable an effective and positive outcome (Sezgin, 2020). Early childhood educators will

be able to gain new knowledge and collaborate with peers and have support from aides,

parents, and administrators for their new journey. The presentation of the data results

could potentially motivate administrators to provide ongoing training and coaching

regularly. This professional development in-service will be beneficial school wide as it

focuses on building relationships with children and teaching social skills to limit

challenging behaviors. Lastly, learning more about implementing PBIS, social skills,

resources, and strategies gained from the professional development in-service can

improve children's behaviors. Early childhood educators will be able to understand how

to meet the needs of their children to gain desired behaviors. If the child development

center implements PBIS with fidelity, it will ensure an improved student outcome and a

positive school-wide environment.

Project Limitations

A limitation of the project is the lack of teacher substitutes. There may not be

enough teacher substitutes to cover the classrooms while the early childhood educators

are at the 3-day professional development in-service. Another limitation of the project is

the commitment from the parents to attend the training. It may be a challenge for parents

to take off work to attend their portion of the training for the day. Additionally, the data

from the interviews do not represent the perceptions of the entire child development

program. Incorporating more early childhood educators may have provided other insights

that could have benefited the development of the professional development in-service.

<div align="center">**Recommendations for Alternative Approaches**</div>

Although a 3-day professional development in-service was the most appropriate

genre for this study, there are recommendations for other alternative approaches. One

alternative approach may be writing a curriculum plan. According to Schneiderhan et al.

(2019), a curriculum plan "should be seen as the 'what' of the educational experience,

such as the description of the intended learning outcomes" (p. 1). The early childhood

educators articulated the need to learn how to implement PBIS and social-emotional

development to teach children with challenging behaviors. The curriculum plan could

provide objectives, guidelines, activities, and other components to help early childhood

educators implement PBIS. Nevertheless, a curriculum plan may not reach early

childhood educators with insufficient knowledge of PBIS. Early childhood educators will

also not have the opportunity to learn from one another by collaborating with peers,

support staff, administrators, and parents.

Another alternative approach that may be beneficial is a position paper that

outlines recommendations related to early childhood educators and is connected to the

evidence. Writing a position paper from the standpoint of early childhood educators

would describe their content needs, challenges, support, and ongoing training that may be

presented to administrators where they would be able to make changes. The purpose of a

position paper is to produce and support an issue based on facts and include "sound, large

observational cohort studies" (Hojsak et al., 2021, p. 56). A benefit of the position paper is that early childhood educators would not have to attend a 3-day training which will free up time for the educators. Regardless, the position paper will not be able to provide the collaboration opportunities, discussions, activities, and hands-on experiences that the early childhood educators desired. According to the study's data results, providing the 3-day professional development in-service to address the early childhood educators' needs would be beneficial, which may promote a positive school-wide environment.

Scholarship, Project Development and Evaluation, and Leadership and Change

Through the stringent process of the research and development of the project, I have learned the concept of going slow to go fast. I learned to take a step back to understand and gain knowledge of the entire process before composing an action plan. I have a greater understanding of identifying evidence-based practices related to early childhood education, which helped me and guided me through the research process. When it comes to scholarship, academics are necessary to stay knowledgeable in early childhood research to advance "through well-informed inquiry and disseminated work" (Wadesango, 2022, p. 69). Through the development of this project study, I have learned how to remain neutral through the interview process, ask probing questions for clarification, and review data objectively. Although challenging, remaining objective was my priority.

The literature review process was also a learning experience. This process helped me to realize there will always be conflicting information in other studies, which helped me understand the importance of remaining neutral. Developing the professional

development in-service was the most exciting component of the study because it was created through the responses of the early childhood educator. I ensured that the professional development in-service included a range of learning modalities to fit the needs of the attendees. Attendee feedback is essential for ongoing training and best practices for future trainings. I am a lifelong learner who decided to continue my education to become an effective leader in early childhood education. Through this experience, I pushed through barriers, enhanced my critical thinking, and became an effective leader with the ability to lead through positive change confidently.

Reflection on Importance of the Work

According to Hemmeter and Conroy (2018), between 10% and 20% of young children have challenging behaviors. Early childhood educators have struggled to teach children with challenging behaviors. Within that time, early childhood educators had little to no feedback about the content they needed to teach children with challenging behaviors. Informal feedback expressed the lack of training and the desire for more training opportunities focused on behavioral issues. This study has helped me to learn that the voices of early childhood educators are a crucial component of what they need to teach children with challenging behaviors. I did not realize that early childhood educators needed targeted content to help teach children with challenging behaviors. Suspension and expulsion are no longer discipline practices for reducing undesired behaviors (seeNese et al., 2021). I was not aware that the implementation of PBIS and teaching social skills to children would be beneficial to help limit undesired behaviors. Implementing PBIS with fidelity has been proven to reduce and improve challenging

behaviors (Grasley-Boy et al., 2021). The information I gained from this study was an eye-opener for me and may also be an eye-opener for early childhood administrators. I hope this study can invigorate early childhood educators, administrators, and support staff to improve school-wide culture by implementing PBIS and teaching social skills to improve challenging behaviors.

Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research

This project study has the potential to impact positive social change because the early childhood educators expressed their perception of their current professional development training and their content needs. The targeted content needs guided the project study to determine the type of professional development training early childhood educators needed to teach children with challenging behaviors. The data analysis results presented to administrators, support staff, and parents provided attention to what early childhood educators needed to teach children with challenging behaviors that were lacking in previous years. Awareness of the results may result in improved positive school-wide culture and reduce challenging behaviors. The 3-day professional development in-service may impact social change by providing early childhood educators, administrators, and support staff with knowledge and understanding of children with challenging behaviors while equipping them with appropriate strategies and tools to reduce those challenging behaviors. According to Yang and Rao (2021), early childhood educators should be provided guidance and direct feedback from administrators, mentors, and peers. Children in early childhood classrooms will benefit from the project because early childhood educators will be able to implement PBIS with

fidelity and teach social skills to reduce challenging behaviors. Recent studies haverevealed that implementing PBIS with fidelity influences a positive school environment and help guide administrators' decision-making (Lawrence et al., 2022). Blewitt et al. (2021) identified and reported that SEL supports children's well-being and academic success and reduces challenging behaviors.

The project study allowed early childhood educators to express their perceptions about their current professional development training and content needs. The problem presented in this study is that children in early childhood programs exhibit challenging behaviors in the classroom, and early childhood educators are not equipped to teach children with challenging behaviors. The early childhood educators will be provided with a professional development in-service with content that focuses on PBIS and social-emotional development, as the early childhood educators expressed. Early childhood educators, support staff, and administrators will collaborate during the professional development in-service and decide the next steps for ongoing training. Potentially, other early childhood programs will learn the importance of early childhood educators' perceptions and needs for continued growth.

Future researchers may expand their studies by including the voices of support staff as participants who work in the classroom with the early childhood educators and gain their perception of their experience working with children with challenging behaviors and their needs. By doing so, it may tailor training to meet the needs of everyone involved. Yang and Rao (2021) put forth future research by stating researchers

can "evaluate the influence of PD on teachers' pedagogical practices and children outcomes" (p. 232).

Conclusion

The purpose of this project study was to better understand local childhood educators' perceptions regarding the types of professional development training content needed to teach children with challenging behaviors. After the one-on-one interviews with early childhood educators, three themes were developed from the codes. The participants expressed the need for content focused on PBIS and social-emotional development. Participants also expressed challenges, including insufficient classroom aide training and parental support. Lastly, participants expressed they needed support to help them teach children with challenging behaviors.

From the data analysis results, a 3-day professional development in-service was created. This in-service training provided discussion sessions, group activities, hands-on activities, unscripted videos, and beneficial tools and strategies to use in the classroom. To conclude, this doctoral journey has been a rigorous and lengthy process yet an excellent experience for my professional growth and development as a lifelong learner and researcher.

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Appendix A: The Project

The project for this basic qualitative study is a 3-day professional development in-service for early childhood educators, administrators, support staff, and parents (on day 3). The data analysis revealed that early childhood educators need more professional development training to learn how to implement Positive Behavior Intervention Support and social-emotional development when teaching children with challenging behaviors. The first goal for this professional development in-service is to present the findings to the early childhood educators, administrators, and support staff to understand early childhood educators' needs and how to move forward for ongoing professional development training and support when teaching children with challenging behaviors. The second goal is to equip early childhood educators, administrators, and support staff with knowledge and understanding of how to implement Positive Behavior Intervention Support and social-emotional development with fidelity. The third goal is to expand early childhood educators, administrators, and support staff's confidence and desire to implement Positive Behavior Intervention Support in the classroom, school, and program-wide. The fourth goal is to increase collaboration among early childhood educators, administrators, support staff, and parents. The final goal is to provide parents with guidance on Positive Behavior Intervention Support and strategies for home and in their community.

3-Day Professional Development In-Service: Understanding and

Implementing Positive Behavior Intervention Support and Social-Emotional

Development

Target Audience:

Early childhood educators, administrators, support staff, and on the last day, parents.

Purpose:

The purpose of the 3-day professional development in-service is to provide early childhood educators, administrators, and support staff with knowledge and understanding about Positive Behavior Intervention Support and social-emotional development to implement with fidelity to reduce challenging behaviors. The purpose of having parents attend on day 3 is to provide them with introductory training on Positive Behavior Intervention Support, and strategies parents can use at home and in their community. A study by Strickland et al. (2021) shows that early childhood educators who partner and collaborate with parents using PBIS support children's success.

Goals:

1. Present the findings to the early childhood educators, administrators, and support staff to understand early childhood educators' needs and how to move forward for ongoing professional development training and support when teaching children with challenging behaviors.

2. Equip early childhood educators, administrators, and support staff with knowledge and understanding of how to implement Positive Behavior Intervention Support and social-emotional development with fidelity.

3. Expand early childhood educators, administrators, and support staff's confidence and desire to implement Positive Behavior Intervention Support in the classroom, school, and program-wide.

4. Increase collaboration among early childhood educators, administrators, support staff, and parents.

5. Provide parents with guidance on Positive Behavior Intervention Support and strategies for home and in their community.

Learning Outcomes:

1. Administrators and support staff will understand the early childhood educator's needs, including the need for ongoing training and collaboration with peers and coaches.

2. Early childhood educators will understand and be aware of their own temperaments and their children's temperaments.

3. Early childhood educators, administrators, and support staff will gain an understanding of the foundational systems of Early Childhood PBIS

4. Early childhood educators, administrators, and support staff will understand what Early Childhood PBIS is all about and be introduced to PBIS/Pyramid tools.

5. Early childhood educators, administrators, and support staff will increase their knowledge of social-emotional development.

6. Early childhood educators, administrators, and support staff will learn best practices that will be beneficial in the classroom and support children.

7. Early childhood educators, administrators, and support staff will be able to plan for implementing PBIS in the classroom, and administrators can prepare for school/program-wide implementation.

8. Early childhood educators will increase their collaboration with peers and coaches to strengthen support for implementing PBIS with fidelity.

9. Parents will learn strategies on how to implement PBIS at home and in their community.

Timeline:

The professional development in-service may be presented before the start of the school year. I will be in communication with the administrators about scheduling the 3-day professional development in-service and keep the administrators informed about any changes that may occur. A meeting with the administrators will be scheduled after the 3-day training to discuss the outcome of the data and evaluation to move forward with ongoing professional development training and support.

Materials:

1. Snacks and drinks for 3-days

2. Pencil boxes, pens, markers, highlighters, and sticky notes

3. Computer

4. Projector

5. Lined paper for notetaking

6. Poster paper

7. Printed PowerPoint

8. PBIS publications

9. Printed tiers of the Pyramid Model

10. Printed temperament assessment scales and chart of temperament traits

11. Printed human bingo icebreaker

Day 1 (8:30 am – 4:30 pm)

8:30-9:30 – Check-in, welcome, introductions, ice breaker activity, and the purpose of the training.

Notes: Attendees will sign in and find a table. Each setting will have materials and lined paper for note-taking. In the middle of each table, there will be a pencil box filled with pens, highlighters, and sticky notes. Welcome attendees and have them introduce themselves to their table. After introductions, attendees will participate in an ice-breaker activity (Human Bingo). The first two people who fill out their bingo cards win a reward. At their tables, the attendees will discuss how they would feel if they were not accepted because of their behaviors listed on the bingo card. After the ice-breaker activity, the purpose of the training will be presented, which is to provide the attendees with knowledge and understanding about Positive Behavior Intervention Support (PBIS) and social-emotional development to implement with fidelity to reduce challenging behaviors. The purpose of having parents attend on day 3 is to provide them with introductory training on Positive Behavior Intervention Support and strategies parents can use at home and in their community.

9:30-10:00 – Presentation of the data analysis results, goals, and outcomes of the training (slides 1 – 3)

Notes: Present the three themes of the data analysis, which were content needs, challenges, and supports. Describe the goals of the 3-day professional development

in-service and the learning outcomes. Early childhood educators will understand and be aware of their own temperaments and their children's temperaments. The second learning outcome is that early childhood educators, administrators, and support staff will understand what Early Childhood PBIS is all about and be introduced to PBIS/Pyramid tools.

10:00-11:30 – Present working with temperaments and have the attendees complete an activity individually (slide 4)

Notes: Understanding a child's temperament and one's own temperament gives educators an insight into a child's behavior and an educator's reaction to that behavior. All children are different, and as educators, we should be meeting the needs of our children and building relationships with our children. Yassine et al. (2020) called attention to relationship-building by stating that building relationships with children reduces children's challenging behaviors. Attendees will take out their temperament assessment scale and complete it on their own. They will get out another temperament assessment scale, think about a child in their classroom who exhibits challenging behaviors and complete the assessment on their own. The attendees will then get out the chart of temperament traits and chart their answers on their own. They will be asked to reflect on their own and share the following questions with their group: 1) Can you see how temperament plays a part in a child's behavior? What can you do to handle it? 2) How can you help a feisty child in a distressing situation? 3) How can you help a child who is fearful in a distressing situation? 4)

How do you adapt your expectations and behaviors to fit your child's temperament?

Attendees will share out their thoughts about the temperament activity.

11:30-11:40 – Break

Notes: After the break, the attendees will enact a hands-on experience

11:40-12:30 – Hands-on experience

Notes: Six people will be chosen. Three will act like children with challenging behaviors, and the remaining three will act as teachers and try to adapt and handle the situation. This act will go on for 10 minutes while the other attendees watch and critique the teachers. After this experience, research-based interventions will be shared. Early childhood educators' developing positive teacher-child relationships improves classroom management, positive relationships, and student compliance (Yassine et al., 2020).

12:30-1:30 – Lunch break

1:30-3:00 – Early childhood PBIS and the Pyramid Model (slides 5-6)

Notes: Presentation on early childhood PBIS and an introduction to the Pyramid Model and its multi-tiered framework. Address why PBIS implementation is so important and what educators will experience in the classroom if PBIS is implemented with fidelity. The attendees will watch a 35-minute and 17-second video called Early Childhood & PBIS: Making it Work. After the video, attendees will get into a group of two at their tables and discuss the video. After the table groups, I will discuss what was seen in the video. I will also have the attendees share what was discussed in their groups.

3**:**00-4:00 – Social-emotional development (slides 7-8)

Notes: Explain to attendees how the Pyramid Model supports social-emotional competence in young children. Attendees will be introduced to the Center on the Social Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL). Attendees will be informed that they can find a wealth of information, resources, strategies, and tools on the website. Attendees will learn how to teach social skills using the following tools: 1) solution kit, 2) feelings chart, 3) breathing exercises, and 4) emotion faces.

4**:**00-4:30 – A group activity (slide 9)

Notes: Attendees will be given a Creating Effective Classroom Environments Plan template. The attendees will work together to create positive classroom expectations. Attendees' homework is to complete their effective environment plan.

<div align="center">Day 2 (8:30 am - 4:30 pm)</div>

8:30-10:00 – Check-in, welcome, introductions (if attendees are sitting at a different table), ice breaker activity, and the purpose of the day two training.

Notes: Attendees will sign in and find a table. Each setting will have materials and lined paper for note-taking. In the middle of each table, there will be a pencil box filled with pens, highlighters, and sticky notes. Welcome attendees and have them introduce themselves to their table if they sit at a different table. After introductions, attendees will participate in an enactment of a teacher teaching children social skills using a tool introduced on day 1. Three attendees will complete this task. After the ice-breaker activity, the purpose of the training will be presented, which is to increase

their knowledge of social-emotional development and gain an understanding of the foundational systems of early childhood PBIS.

10:00-11:00 – Social-emotional development and the foundational systems of early childhood PBIS (slides 10 & 11)

Notes: Attendees will read a publication called "You got it?" Teaching Social and Emotional Skills. They will read the article independently and use the highlighters provided to highlight anything that interests them. After reading the article, I will facilitate a discussion with the attendees and have them share their thoughts with their table, and then a few tables will be called upon to share their thoughts.

11:00-11:10 – Break

11:10-12:10 – Video

Notes: The attendees will watch a 60-minute called PBIS in Early Childhood: A District and State Example. This video will provide data and information about a district that is implementing early childhood PBIS with fidelity and identify resources for PBIS implementation. I will facilitate a research-based discussion about implementing PBIS with fidelity. A factor in the start of PBIS and improving challenging behaviors is for district and school leaders to commit to building systems to support the implementation of PBIS with fidelity (Kittlement et al., 2022).

12:10-1:10 – Lunch

1:10-1:30 – Discussion

Notes: Attendees will discuss the video with their table and answer questions:

1. What did you hear about PBIS implementation?

2. What do you like about implementing PBIS?

3. What are your next steps?

1:30-2:00 – Video

Notes: Attendees will see unscripted social-emotional supports and learn how to identify when children use social skills independently.

2:00-3:00 – Collaborate

Notes: Administrators, program specialists, and counselors will gather at a table and discuss the next steps in implementing PBIS with fidelity. The early childhood educators and aides will gather by classrooms and discuss the next steps in their classrooms.

3:00-4:30 – Resources and tools (slide 12)

Notes: Attendees will be introduced to PBIS.org and the National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations (NCPMI), where they will learn where they can find articles, practical strategies, and children's books that promote feelings, emotions, and problem-solving. The use of each tool mentioned will be given a description of how it is used. Attendees can search within these websites for items they may want to use for their classrooms.

Homework – Create classroom expectations

<div align="center">Day 3 (8:30 am - 4:30 pm)</div>

8:30-10:00 – Check-in, welcome, introductions (if attendees are sitting at a different table), ice breaker activity, and the purpose of the day three training.

Notes: Attendees will sign in and find a table. Each setting will have materials and lined paper for note-taking. In the middle of each table, there will be a pencil box filled with pens, highlighters, and sticky notes. Welcome attendees and have them introduce themselves to their table if they sit at a different table. After introductions, each group will post classroom expectations on the walls around the room. Everyone will walk around the rooms and read the classroom expectations. When they find components they like, each person will put a star next to it. Once this activity is over, the group will come to a consensus on which program-wide expectations they would like to use. After the ice-breaker activity, the purpose of the training will be presented, which is to learn best practices that will be beneficial in the classroom and support students, understand the early childhood educator's needs, including the need for ongoing training and collaboration with peers and coaches. Parents will learn strategies on how to implement PBIS at home and in their community.

10:00-12:00 – Parent arrival, parent introductory training on Positive Behavior Intervention Support, and strategies parents can use at home and in their community. Parent training builds parents' capacity to support their children's growth and development (Movahedazarhouligh, 2021).

Early childhood educators' collaboration. (slides 13 - 16)

Notes: Parents will start arriving to join the workshop, while the early childhood educators will go to another room to begin the collaboration process. Parents will be presented with the data analysis's three themes: content needs, challenges, and supports. Goals will be described for the 1-day parent training and the learning

outcomes. Understanding a child's temperament and one's own temperament gives parents an insight into their child's behavior and a parent's reaction to that behavior. All children are different, and as parents, we should meet our children's needs. Parent involvement provides families with knowledge of what is expected at school and rich information about children's needs and how to help early childhood educators in the classroom (Liu et al., 2020). Parents will take out their temperament assessment scale and complete it independently. They will get another temperament assessment scale, think about their child, and complete the assessment independently. The parents will then get out the chart of temperament traits and chart their answers on their own. They will be asked to reflect on their own. After the icebreaker, PBIS will be explained. During this time, early childhood educators, aides, and coaches will gather to collaborate on the next steps and start working on how they are going to implement PBIS with fidelity. The discussion will include ongoing training, peer collaborations, and coaching opportunities throughout the year.

12:00-1:00 – Lunch

1:00-2:00 – Video

Notes: All attendees will meet in the same conference room to watch a video, Including Family Voice & Supporting Family Partnership. After the 40-minute video, I will facilitate a discussion on parental involvement, and the attendees will collaborate and share their thoughts on how PBIS will be beneficial at home. Parents will be given tools and strategies to take home and use. Parents' training is over at 2:00.

2:00-4:15 Continued collaboration

Notes: Early childhood educators, aides, and coaches will gather to collaborate on the

next steps and start working on how they are going to implement PBIS with fidelity.

Attendees will continue to discuss ongoing training, peer collaborations, and coaching

opportunities throughout the year. Educators will use this time to plan with their

coaches, aides, and administrators. (Slide 17)

4:15-4:30 – Evaluation

Notes: Attendees will complete the evaluation in the middle of the table. One

evaluation is for parents, and the other is for educators. (Slide 18)

UNDERSTANDING AND
IMPLEMENTING POSITIVE
BEHAVIOR INTERVENTION
SUPPORT AND SOCIAL -
EMOTIONAL

3-DAY PROFESSIONAL
DEVELOPMENT IN-SERVICE

DATA ANALYSIS RESULTS AND GOALS

Results: The data analysis showed that the participants wanted more professional development training to gain knowledge on how to implement Positive Behavior Intervention Support and social-emotional development when teaching children with challenging behaviors.

Goals:

1. Present the findings to the early childhood educators, administrators, and support staff to understand early childhood educators' needs and how to move forward for ongoing professional development training and support when teaching children with challenging behaviors.

2. Equip early childhood educators, administrators, and support staff with knowledge and understanding of how to implement Positive Behavior Intervention Support and social-emotional development with fidelity.

3. Expand early childhood educators, administrators, and support staff's confidence and desire to implement Positive Behavior Intervention Support in the classroom, school, and program-wide.

4. Increase collaboration among early childhood educators, administrators, support staff, and parents.

5. Provide parents with guidance on Positive Behavior Intervention Support and strategies for home and in their community.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

1. Administrators and support staff will understand the early childhood educator's needs, including the need for ongoing training and collaboration with peers and coaches.
2. Early childhood educators will understand and be aware of their own temperaments and their children's temperaments.
3. Early childhood educators, administrators, and support staff will gain an understanding of the foundational systems of Childhood PBIS
4. Early childhood educators, administrators, and support staff will understand what Early Childhood PBIS is all about and be introduced to PBIS/Pyramid tools.
5. Early childhood educators, administrators, and support staff will increase their knowledge of social/emotional development.
6. Early childhood educators, administrators, and support staff will learn best practices that will be beneficial in the classroom and support children.
7. Early childhood educators, administrators, and support staff will be able to plan for implementing PBIS in the classroom and administrators can prepare for school/programwide implementation.
8. Early childhood educators will increase their collaboration with peers and coaches to strengthen support for implementing PBIS with fidelity.
9. Parents will learn strategies on how to implement PBIS at home and in their community.

3

DAY 1 - WORKING WITH TEMPERAMENTS

Learning Outcomes for Day 1 - Early childhood educators will understand and be aware of their own temperaments and their children's temperaments. The second learning outcome is that early childhood educators, administrators, and support staff will understand what Early Childhood PBIS is all about and be introduced to PBIS/Pyramid tools.

Understanding a child's temperament and one's own temperament gives educators an insight into a child's behavior and an educator's reaction to that behavior. All children are different, and as educators, we should be meeting the needs of our children and building relationships with our children.

Activity: Temperament Assessment Scale and Chart of Temperament Traits

Reflection:

1) Can you see how temperament plays a part in a child's behavior? What can you do to handle it?
2) How can you help a feisty child in a distressing situation?
3) How can you help a child who is fearful in a distressing situation?
4) How do you adapt your expectations and behaviors to fit your child's temperament?

4

DAY 1 - EARLY CHILDHOOD PBIS AND THE PYRAMID MODEL

The Pyramid Model for Promoting Social Emotional Competence in Infants and Young Children

5

DAY 1 – EARLY CHILDHOOD & PBIS: MAKING IT WORK

❖ PBIS is a research-based behavior management strategy to encourage and develop positive behaviors (Michell et al., 2018). PBIS provides a framework for early childhood educators to help with challenging behaviors, intervention strategies, and behavior prevention (Gasley-Boy, 2021). PBIS involves creating a behavioral management system that includes behavior expectations and how to respond to undesired behaviors (Gasley-Boy, 2021).

❖ Video

6

DAY 1 - SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The Pyramid Model supports social -emotional competence in young children

- Resource - Center on the Social Emotional Foundations for Early Learning (CSEFEL)

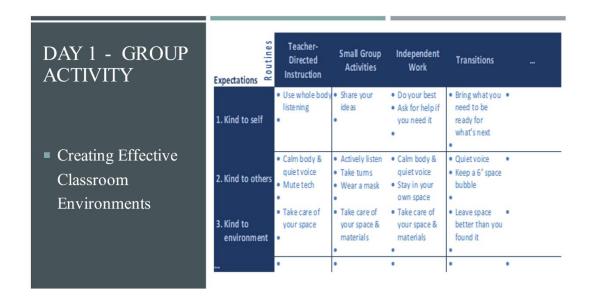Teach social skills using the following tools:

1) Solution kit
2) Feelings chart
3) Breathing exercises
4) Emotion faces.

7

DAY 1 - SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT TEACHING SOCIAL SKILLS

3 X 3 SOLUTION KIT CUE CARDS

8

DAY 1 - GROUP ACTIVITY

- Creating Effective Classroom Environments

Expectations	Routines	Teacher-Directed Instruction	Small Group Activities	Independent Work	Transitions	...
1. Kind to self		• Use whole body listening •	• Share your ideas •	• Do your best • Ask for help if you need it •	• Bring what you need to be ready for what's next •	•
2. Kind to others		• Calm body & quiet voice • Mute tech •	• Actively listen • Take turns • Wear a mask	• Calm body & quiet voice • Stay in your own space	• Quiet voice • Keep a 6' space bubble •	•
3. Kind to environment		• Take care of your space •	• Take care of your space & materials •	• Take care of your space & materials •	• Leave space better than you found it •	•
...		•	•	•	•	•

DAY 2 - "YOU GOT IT?" TEACHING SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL SKILLS.

Read the article independently and use the highlighters provided to highlight anything that interests you. After reading the article, please share your thoughts with your table, and be ready to share their thoughts to the large group.

DAY 2 - SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND THE FOUNDATIONAL SYSTEMS OF EARLY CHILDHOOD PBIS

Foundational Systems

Leadership Team (Team agrees that implementing PBIS with fidelity is crucial)

➤ Monitors school data

➤ Looks at strengths and needs of the program

➤ Evaluates effectiveness

Regular Meetings

➤ At least once a month

➤ Team members attend meetings at least 80% of the time

Data

➤ Review PBIS fidelity regularly

➤ Use of multiple data sources

Training and Coaching

➤ Professional development training

➤ Staff are involved with goals and processes (School expectations, teaching, social skills, using data for making decisions, acknowledging appropriate behaviors and responding appropriately to unwanted behaviors)

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DAY 2 - RESOURCES AND TOOLS

▪ **Positive Behavior Interventions & Supports (pbis.org)**

✓ Publications

✓ Practice guides

✓ Presentations

✓ Videos

✓ Materials

▪ **National Center for Pyramid Model Innovations– NCPMI (challengingbehavior.org)**

➤ The Pyramid Model

➤ Webinars

➤ Coaching

➤ Family resources and family engagement

➤ Children's book list

12

DAY 3 – WELCOME PARENTS!

Data Analysis Results(Three Themes):

Content Needs, Challenges, and Supports

Goals:

Provide guidance on PBIS and strategies for home

Increase collaboration among early childhood educators, administrators, support staff, and parents

Learning Outcomes:

Parents will learn strategies on how to implement PBIS at home and in the community

13

DAY 3 – POSITIVE BEHAVIOR INTERVENTION SUPPORT (PBIS)

What is PBIS?

PBIS supports children's behavioral, academic, social -emotional, and mental health. When it is implemented, children will improve their behavior and social -emotional skills.

PBIS is a research-based behavior management strategy to encourage and develop positive behaviors (Michell et al., 2018). PBIS provides a framework for early childhood educators to help with challenging behaviors, intervention strategies, and behavior prevention (Gasley-Boy, 2021). PBIS involves creating a behavioral management system that includes behavior expectations and how to respond to undesired behaviors (Gasley-Boy, 2021).

14

DAY 3 – YOUR CHILD'S TEMPERAMENT

Understanding a child's temperament and one's own temperament gives parents an insight into their child's behavior and a parent's reaction to that behavior. All children are different, and as parents, you should be meeting the needs of your children.

Activity: Temperament Assessment Scale and Chart of Temperament Traits

Take a minute to reflect on your chart

15

DAY 3 - STRATEGIES PARENTS CAN USE AT HOME AND IN THEIR COMMUNITY

- Family Plan for Positive Behavior at Home

	Mealtime	Bedtime	At the Store
Be Respectful	*Be kind to family members during a conversation *Put your dishes in the sink * *	*Be polite when reminded about bedtime * *	* * * *
Be Responsible	*Wash your hands before helping with meal preparation and/or eating * * *	*Go to bed on time * *	* * * *
Be Safe	*Keep your feet on the floor * * *	*Wash your hands before brushing your teeth * *	* * *

DAY 3 - INCLUDING FAMILY VOICE & SUPPORTING FAMILY PARTNERSHIP

- Video

- After the video collaborate with educators and administrator s

17

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!

Please complete the evaluation in the middle of your table. One evaluation is for parents, and the other is for educators.

18

Appendix B: Invitation to Participate Letter

Dear Invitee,

My name is Latashia Kelly. I am currently a doctoral student at Walden University. This letter is to invite you to participate in a research study titled: Professional Development Needs of Early Childhood Educators Teaching Children with Challenging Behaviors. The purpose of this basic qualitative study is to better understand local childhood educator perceptions regarding the types of professional development training content needed to teach children with challenging behaviors. You are eligible to participate if you work with children birth to five.

This study will involve participating in a one-on-one Zoom interview which includes ten questions. The interview will take approximately 45 minutes. I will record the interview and an added 15 minutes to review the interview for accuracy with your permission. Your participation is voluntary, and you may choose to withdraw at any time. In addition, the data that will be collected will be kept confidential and stored electronically on my personal password-protected computer and will be destroyed in five years. If you agree to participate in this study, please read the attached Informed Consent Form and return it to me by email within five business days. Please feel free to ask any questions you may have in regards to this research study.

Your participation in this study could potentially inform the advancement of the early childhood field state-wide with a potential professional development workshop that could add value to high-quality early childhood education.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Latashia Kelly, M.A.

Doctoral Student, Walden University

Appendix C: Interview Protocol

The one-on-one interview will take place on Zoom.

The timeframe is one hour.

Introduction

Introduction of the researcher and a review of the informed consent form.

The purpose of this study is to better understand local childhood educator perceptions

regarding the types of professional development training content needed to teach children

with challenging behaviors.

The audio recording will be played back after the interview, and the transcription will be

sent to the interviewees for accuracy.

The researcher asks interviewees if they have any questions.

Interview Questions

1. How long have you been an early childhood educator?

2. How long have you worked with children with challenging behaviors?

3. From 2018 to 2020, how often did you receive professional development training
    from your workplace? Did the content include strategies for teaching children
    with challenging behaviors?

4. What is your perception of your professional development training currently?

5. What professional development training content would you like to have to help
    you teach children with challenging behaviors?

6. What supports have you had to be able to work with children with challenging
    behaviors?

7. What supports do you need to implement effective teaching strategies to reduce challenging behaviors?

8. What challenges do you have when teaching children with challenging behaviors?

9. Would you like to add anything?

"This concludes the interview. Thank you for your time."

Appendix D: Summative Evaluation Plan (Educators)

Rate the effectiveness of each topic.

Topic	Not at all useful	Slightly useful	Moderately useful	Very useful	Extremely useful
The length of each day of the PD in-service					
Whole group discussion					
Small group discussion					
Individual work					
Collaboration with peers					
Videos					
Shared resources					
Hands-on experiences					
PowerPoint presentation					

Answer the following questions

1. Describe how the professional development in-service can be improved to support future attendees better.

   _____
   _____
   _____

2. Describe what could have been added that can help future attendees.

   _____
   _____
   _____

3. Is there anything else you would like to add about your professional development in-service?

   _____
   _____
   _____

Appendix D: Summative Evaluation Plan (Parents)

Rate the effectiveness of each topic.

Topic	Not at all useful	Slightly useful	Moderately useful	Very useful	Extremely useful
The length of the 1-day training					
Whole group discussion					
Small group discussion					
Individual work					
Collaboration with educators and other parents					
Videos					
Shared resources					
Hands-on experiences					
PowerPoint presentation					

Answer the following questions

1. Describe how the 1-day training can be improved to support future parents better.

   _____
   _____
   _____

2. Describe what could have been added that can help future parents.

   _____
   _____
   _____

3. Is there anything else you would like to add about your 1-day training?

   _____
   _____
   _____