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The Effect of Responsive Classroom on the Social Emotional Learning of Preschool Children: A Mixed Methods Study

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The Effect of Responsive Classroom on the Social Emotional Learning of Preschool Children: A Mixed Methods Study

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Effect of Responsive Classroom on the Social Emotional Learning of Preschool Children

Abstract

Approximately 2.4 million students enter kindergarten without the social-emotional skills needed. Preschool is when children should be engaged in learning how to interact with their peers and the skills to be successful in kindergarten (Curby et al., 2015).   Helping children develop the skills needed to interact with peers appropriately is essential in Early Childhood Education. Preschool plays an essential role in raising healthy children by fostering their cognitive development and their social and emotional development (Durlak et al., 2011). Schools need to address and meet the challenges that arise from student's inability to manage emotions and challenging behaviors that interfere with their ability to learn (Zins et al., 2004, Denham & Brown, 2010). Students who receive Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) programming are more likely to succeed academically, flourish socially, and have more significant health outcomes.

Responsive Classroom (RC) is an evidence-based curriculum designed to create classrooms responsive to children's physical, emotional, social, and intellectual needs through developmentally appropriate educational experiences in kindergarten through sixth grade (www.responsiveclassroom.org). The primary goal of this study was to determine the impact of RC on pre-kindergarten students.   A convergent, mixed-methods study was conducted to achieve this goal. This study's key finding was pre-kindergarten students who participated in RC lessons daily showed growth in all social competencies, especially in self-regulation. Secondly, kindergarten teachers perceived a difference in the social-emotional skills of students who had RC in pre-kindergarten as compared to students who have not. Finally, preschool students who received RC instruction had better developed social-emotional skills upon entry into kindergarten than their non-RC peers.

Keywords: Social-emotional learning, pre-kindergarten education, mixed-methods.

Effect of Responsive Classroom on the Social Emotional Learning of Preschool Children

Signature Page

Approved and recommended for acceptance as a dissertation in partial fulfillment of the requirement of Doctor of Education.

April 12, 2021

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Effect of Responsive Classroom on the Social Emotional Learning of Preschool Children

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Effect of Responsive Classroom on the Social Emotional Learning of Preschoolers

Chapter 1: Introduction

Background of the Study

Each year students enter kindergarten without the skills necessary to be successful socially. "The National Academy of Sciences reported that 60% of children enter school with the cognitive skills needed to be successful, but only 40% have the social-emotional skills needed to succeed in kindergarten" (Yates et al., 2008, para. 1). This number equates to approximately 2.4 million students enter kindergarten without the social-emotional skills needed. Preschool is a time when children should be engaged in a process where they are learning how to interact with their peers and learn the skills to be successful in kindergarten (Curby et al., 2015). Helping children develop the skills needed to interact with peers appropriately is essential in Early Childhood Education.

In 2005, the first-ever study on preschool expulsion, the permanent removal of a child from a program, was conducted (Gilliam, 2005). This study revealed that 6 out of 1000 students are expelled annually from school-based preschool settings in the United States. Nationally, children in state-funded preschools are expelled at a rate three times their K-12 peers (Gilliam, 2005). Adding to this body of knowledge, the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights released its 2013-2014 Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC) survey results. The CRDC's (2017) findings indicated that black preschool students were almost four times more likely to be suspended or expelled than their Latino or Caucasian peers and five times more likely than their Asian peers. Most recently, a 2016 survey conducted by the National Survey of Children's Health determined that 17,000 preschool children are expelled annually (US Department of Health and Human Services, 2017). This number is harrowing, considering we are talking about three and four-year-old children who are most impacted by the disruption and inconsistencies in

their schooling (Kaiser, 2007; Zulauf & Zinsser, 2019). A growing body of research exists on the benefits of preschool; academic growth, social development, and prosperous future (Barnett, 2014; Barnett et al., 2008; Denham, 2006; Denham & Brown, 2010); however, if students are not in preschool, how do we accomplish this?

Educators are becoming aware of the potential relationships between educational achievement, social-emotional competence, and social support in elementary schools (Durlak et al., 2011; Sklad et al., 2012; Weissberg et al., 2015). Schools play an essential role in helping to raise healthy children by fostering not only their cognitive development but also their social and emotional development (Durlak et al., 2011). A child's ability to self-regulate emotions can "facilitate or impede children's academic engagement, work ethic, commitment, and ultimate school success" (Durlak et al., 2011, p. 405).   This knowledge intensifies the need to ensure schools are addressing and programming to meet the challenges that arise from student's inability to manage emotions and challenging behaviors that interfere with their ability to learn (Denham & Brown, 2010; Zins et al., 2004; Zins & Elias, 2007).

Social-Emotional Learning

"Social and emotional learning (SEL) is the process through which children and adults understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions" (www.casel.org/what-is-sel/). Zins & Elias (2007) share that "SEL targets a combination of behaviors, cognitions and emotions" (p.1). According to the Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL), the overarching goal of SEL is to develop socially-emotionally competent students. Students who are socially-emotionally competent exhibit critical emotional, cognitive, and behavioral skills across different domains of home, school, and

the wider community (CASEL, 2016). The consensus among research experts in the field is that five core foundational skills comprise social and emotional competencies: self-awareness, social awareness, self-management, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making (Ashdowne & Bernard, 2012; Curby et al., 2015; Durlak et al., 2011; Goleman, 1996). Many children leave elementary school and enter secondary school lacking social-emotional competencies that allow them to connect positively in peer relations and succeed academically.

Academic Impact of SEL

The first key finding in a review of literature is the growing body of evidence on SEL's impact on the improved growth in academic performance. Researchers have found a link between student growth in positive social behaviors and student positive academic outcomes. Zins et al. (2004) argue that it is critical to address the social-emotional challenges that interfere with students connecting and performing in school. A study conducted by Catalano et al. (2004) suggests:

> A focus on how children are taught and teaching children social and emotional competence are critical to achieving academic success. Children must be taught content in ways that motivate, engage, and involve them in their learning so they enjoy learning and develop a stake in achievement. Doing this requires a focus on social and emotional competence as well as cognitive competence. (p. 259)

Several critical meta-analyses were conducted that shown significant increases in students' academic success when using SEL programming. Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, & Shellinger conducted a study on the effects of school-based SEL programming. Durlak et al. (2011) revealed, "compared to controls, SEL participants demonstrated significantly improved social and emotional skills, attitudes, behavior, and academic success" (p. 405). They reported an 11 percentile gain in academic performance as compared to their peers who did not have SEL programming. In a follow-up meta-analysis by

Taylor et al. (2017), researchers report long-term SEL programming benefits. Follow-up data showed that almost four years after receiving SEL programming, SEL students showed an average of 13 percentile points higher than their non-SEL peers (Taylor et al., 2017).

Behavior Impact of SEL

A second key finding in the literature regarding the benefits of SEL is a reduction in problem behaviors and an increase in prosocial behaviors (Durlak et al., 2011; Sklad et al., 2012; Taylor et al., 2017; Weissberg et al., 2015). A substantial body of research has shown the implementation of SEL practices that enhance the five essential core foundational skills (self-awareness, social awareness, self-management, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making) increase prosocial behavior and decreased conduct problems (Durlak et al., 2011; Sklad et al., 2012; Weissberg et al., 2015). Finding in Durlak et al. (2011) yielded significant positive effects in "enhanced students' behavioral adjustment in the form of increased prosocial behaviors and reduced conduct and internalizing problems" (p. 417). In a six-month follow-up assessment after the completion of the intervention, the results remained significant. In 2012, a meta-analytical review of over 70 published studies on the effectiveness of school-based SEL program showed significant effects in "prosocial behavior, reduction or prevention of antisocial behavior, mental problems and disorders" of SEL students as compared to a control group of non-SEL peers (Sklad et al., 2012, p. 905). In a 2013 publication in the Journal of Adolescent Health, researchers reported that students who were part of SEL programming saw 42% less physical aggression than peers in non-SEL programming (Espelage et al., 2013). Preschool children who participate in SEL programs are better prepared to manage their emotional responses and control aggression than their non-SEL peers (Catalano et al., 2004; Durlak et al., 2011; Taylor et al., 2017).

Economic Impact of SEL

A third key finding on the benefits of SEL is the economic impact of implementing SEL programs. In a review conducted by the Teachers College/ University of Columbia on the economic value of six SEL programs, Belfield et al. (2015) reported an average return of $11.00 on every $1.00 spent on SEL programming. Concerning potential future earnings, this study stated,

> using the weakest correlation between SE skills and earnings – would yield earnings gains of $23,000. In other words, if an intervention raised a child's SE skills at that age, this would be worth $23,000 in terms of gains in future productivity alone. (p. 12)

Building on these findings, Taylor et al. (2017) indicated that positive outcomes could often be translated into substantial monetary benefits for participants and society. "The estimated benefit in lifetime earnings for graduating from high school compared to dropping out is worth over $367,000 to each graduating student" (p. 9).

Future Wellness

Another key finding of the benefits of SEL is future wellness. Research has shown that students who receive SEL instruction as compared to their non-SEL peers have an increased future potential earning (Belfield et al., 2015; Jones et al., 2015) and a reduced risk of drug abuse, criminal activity, and mental health issue (Cohen et al., 2010; Sklad et al., 2012). Jones et al. (2015) reported that ECE SEL skills positively impact crucial young adult outcomes, including future education, employment, criminal activity, substance use, and mental health outcomes. Additionally, students who participated in SEL were less likely to engage in substance abuse than their non-SEL peers.

Responsive Classroom Social-Emotional Framework

Responsive Classroom (RC) is a school-based social and emotional framework with components designed to help the teacher establish and foster relationship development amongst students (www.responsiveclasroom.org).   CASEL (2013) has indicated that RC meets its developed criteria to be classified as an effective SEL program. RC is an "evidence-based approach to teaching and discipline that focuses on engaging academics, positive community, effective management, and developmental awareness" (www.responsiveclasroom.org). Rimm-Kaufman (2006) contends, "(t)his educational intervention uses developmentally appropriate practices along with many techniques to integrate social and academic learning in the classroom" (p. 2). RC consists of practices and strategies, such as modeling, intentional language, and non-punitive consequences, that helps to develop targeted SEL skills. Additionally, it provides opportunities for students to practice these skills (www.responsiveclasroom.org).

Independent research, conducted by the University of Virginia and funded by the U.S. Department of Education, on RC yielded results including higher academic achievement, improved student behavioral outcomes, increased prosocial behaviors amongst peer, and economic benefits to schools (Rimm-Kaufman et al., 2014) for students taught using RC. Additionally, Belfield et al. (2015) conducted a benefit-cost analysis (economic profitability of investment) of RC (and five other SEL programs). Findings of the study showed that in addition to improving academic performance and student's social skills and reducing problem behaviors (Rimm-Kaufman et al., 2014). RC had a 9:1 return on investment (Belfield et al., 2015).

Research Problem

The current literature on the benefits of using SEL programs with preschools demonstrates the need to utilize SEL with this population of students. Teaching social-emotional

competencies have been shown to help students engage with peers and adults in a productive manner. Additionally, numerous curricula were developed to support teachers in implementing lesson plans that will help students acquire the skills necessary to engage with their peers positively. The Cramer School District has recently adopted such a curriculum, RC. The Cramer School District has a preschool program that has used various social and emotional resources from the Center on Social and Emotional Foundations for Learning (CSEFEL) in the past to work with students on developing social competencies. The program has moved to utilize the Responsive Classroom framework to align itself with the school district's SEL program.

A problem that exists is that RC does not have a Pre-Kindergarten component. Although research exists on the use of SEL practices in Early Childhood Education (ECE), there is no research on the use of RC with preschoolers. Further research is needed to determine the benefits of utilizing RC with preschool students.   This research would serve as preliminary research on the benefits of RC with preschool children in a school-based program.

The effects of utilizing RC at the Pre-Kindergarten level are essential to support social-emotional growth using the same curriculum as the rest of the school district. Research is needed to ensure there is a positive impact of RC at the Pre-Kindergarten level and to determine if RC impacts the development of social-emotional learning in ECE and if teachers perceive an effect with its use.

Research Questions

1. How does the use of Responsive Classroom affect the social-emotional learning of pre-kindergarten students using the Ages & Stages Questionnaires®: Social-Emotional, Second Edition (ASQ®: SE-2)? What is the impact on behavior referrals for kindergarten students?

2. Do kindergarten teachers perceive a difference in the social-emotional skills of students who have had Responsive Classroom in pre-kindergarten and those who have not?

3. How does the use of Responsive Classroom impact the development of social-emotional learning in early childhood education?

Context of the Study

This study is grounded in Social-Emotional Theory and 21st Century Learning for Early Childhood Framework. In a review of literature on social-emotional learning, many themes emerged. These include the need for the teacher to assist students in developing relationships, establishing, and modeling behavioral expectations, coaching conflict resolution, and encouraging positive communication. These themes align with the 21st-century learning skills needed to be successful in academic and social environments and reflect the CASEL core foundational skills reflected in the and 21st Century Learning for Early Childhood Framework. The George Lucas Educational Foundation (2012) shares, "during the elementary school years, an introduction to 21st-century skills help children build a solid foundation for future success" (p. 3).

This pragmatic, mixed-method study will be developed with an Enhancement/Complementarity design. The purpose of this mixed-methods study is to gain a deeper understanding of RC and the benefits of its use in Pre-Kindergarten. Greene (2007) contends, "(a) mixed methods way of thinking, is thus generative and open, seeking richer, deeper, a better understanding of important facets of our infinitely complex social world" (p. 20). With this in mind, the researcher will conduct the study using the Pragmatic Paradigm. Using the pragmatic paradigm, research will produce something that will be both practical and useful

(Creamer, 2017). Feilzer (2010) shared that pragmatists use mixed-method research to help us understand the phenomenon.

Setting

The setting for this proposed study is a school district located in the suburbs in the Mid-Atlantic region of the United States. The school district serves approximately 5000 students who are predominantly white and English speaking. The school district's demographics are 84% white (non-Hispanic), 7 % Asian, 3% Hispanic, 4% African American and 2% multiracial. The study will take place in the elementary division of the school district. The five elementary schools combined serve 2200 students in Prekindergarten through Fifth grade. This district's school demographic is as follows: 80% white (non-Hispanic), 10 % Asian, 5% Hispanic, 5% African American. The demographics of the staff are 99% white and 1% black. Families of low income represent 15% of the population (determined by the percentage of the population receiving free or reduced meals).

Participants

The participant group for this study includes 15 kindergarten teachers throughout the school district. Teachers will be invited to participate in an open-ended survey questionnaire. Then a nested sample will be asked to participate in a face-to-face interview on their perception past SEL experiences had on their current students. The teacher survey questionnaire and interviews will be designed to explore the teacher's perception of the various questions in the Ages and Stages SEL tool. Meta Inferences will be made by combining and analyzing the data jointly based on SEL competency.

Rationale for and Significance of the Study

This study is of significance because there is no evidence of RC's ability to develop the SEL skills of preschool students.   The development of SEL skills is critical for academic and future life success (employment, health, etc.). This study is of significance because, in past years, the preschool program has begun to use school-based SEL programs. The researcher is interested in collecting data on the effects of RC used with pre-kindergarten students.

In researching RC, the researcher did not come across a specific preschool framework. The researcher read articles that discuss components of the framework utilized with Pre-Kindergarten. Additionally, the researcher wanted to collect data by interviewing staff to determine their beliefs and opinions on the benefits of the RC on entry-level kindergarten students compared to their peers who have not participated in classrooms utilizing RC.

Hypothesis and Limitations

Based on the independent research conducted on RC with elementary students, we hypothesized that the effect would be similar for preschool students. However, one main limitation of the study is that it is non-generalizable to other populations.

Conclusion

In summary, because we know that students who receive SEL programming are more likely to succeed academically, flourish socially, and have more significant health outcomes, the researcher conducted a mixed-methods study focusing on the impact of RC, a specific SEL curriculum, on Pre-kindergarten students. The use of RC is important as it is the SEL curriculum used in Cramer School District, and there is no research on RC's impact on Pre-Kindergarten Students.

This chapter outlines the background of the study, including a critical finding of social-emotional learning, specific research problems, and the context of the study. The following chapters provide an in-depth review of the literature of SEL and RC and the methodology of the proposed study.

Chapter 2

Each year students enter kindergarten without the skills necessary to be successful socially. "The National Academy of Sciences reported that 60% of children enter school with the cognitive skills needed to be successful, but only 40% have the social-emotional skills needed to succeed in kindergarten" (Yates et al., 2008, para. 1).   This percentage equates to approximately 2.4 million students entering kindergarten without the social-emotional skills needed. Preschool is a time when children should be engaged in a process where they are learning how to interact with their peers and learn the skills to be successful in kindergarten (Curby et al., 2015).   Helping children develop the skills needed to interact with peers appropriately is an essential part of Early Childhood Education (ECE).

The most severe consequence for unacceptable behavior is suspension or expulsion from school (Lamont et al., 2013). In 2005, the first-ever study on preschool expulsion, the permanent removal of a child from a program, was conducted (Gilliam, 2005). This study revealed that six out of 1000 students are expelled annually from school-based preschool settings in the United States. Nationally, children in state-funded preschools are expelled at a rate three times their K-12 peers (Gilliam, 2005). Adding to this body of knowledge, the U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights released its 2013-2014 Civil Rights Data Collection (CRDC) survey results. The CRDC's (2016) findings indicated that black preschool students were almost four times more likely to be suspended or expelled than their Latino or Caucasian peers and five times more likely than their Asian peers. Most recently, a 2016 survey conducted by the National Survey of Children's Health determined that 17,000 preschool children have expelled annually (National Survey of Children's Health, 2016).   This number is harrowing, considering we are talking about three and four-year-old children who are most (*2013-2014 Civil Rights Data*

Collection, 2016) impacted by the disruption and inconsistencies in their schooling (Kaiser, 2007; Zulauf & Zinsser, 2019). A growing body of research exists on the benefits of preschool; academic growth, social development, and prosperous future (Barnett, 2004, Barnett et al., 2008; Denham, 2006; Denham & Brown, 2010); however, if students are not in preschool, how do we accomplish this?

Educators are becoming increasingly aware of the potential relationships between educational achievement, social-emotional competencies, and social support in elementary schools (Durlak et al., 2011; Sklad et al., 2012; Weissberg et al., 2015). Schools play an essential role in helping to raise healthy children by fostering not only their cognitive development but also their social and emotional development (Durlak et al., 2011). A child's ability to self-regulate emotions can "facilitate or impede children's academic engagement, work ethic, commitment, and ultimate school success" (Durlak et al., 2011, p. 405).   This knowledge intensifies the need to ensure schools are addressing and programming to meet the challenges that arise from student's inability to manage emotions and challenging behaviors that interfere with their ability to learn (Zins et al., 2004, Denham & Brown, 2010).

Social-Emotional Learning Theory

Zins & Elias (2007) define Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) as the "capacity to recognize and manage emotions, solve problems effectively, and establish positive relationships with others, competencies that clearly are essential for all students" (p.1). Additionally, "SEL targets a combination of behaviors, cognitions, and emotions" (p.1). Students learn and become proficient is using SEL skills in the same manner that they learn academic skills. They need to learn, practice, and apply these skills (Zins & Elias, 2007). Based on findings from Elias (2007) and CASEL (2003), Zins & Elias contend "initial skills that they (students) have learned become

enhanced, nuanced, and better integrated over time to address the increasing complex situations

children face in terms of academics, social relationships, citizenship, and health" (p.1)

SEL is not a new educational concept in education. Its origin dates back to 1900 (Jones

& Doolittle, 2017). "SEL goes by many other names. Common terms for this set of skills include

character education, personality, 21st-century skills, soft skills, and noncognitive skills, just to

name a few" (Jones & Doolittle, 2017, p. 3). Over time, this body of knowledge has continued to

grow and had seen significant expansion in the 1990s due to the sophistication of research

methods and the expansive collection of evidence of success (Osher et al., 2016).

SEL originated from researchers' work on emotional intelligence (Goleman, 1995;

McCombs, 2004) and multiple intelligences (Gardner, 1993). In 1994, Collaborative for

Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) and "the term' social and emotional

learning' emerged from a meeting… hosted by the Fetzer Institute" (www.casel.org). This group

of researchers, educators, and child advocates came together to address a concern about

ineffective and inconsistent school programming (www.casel.org).   In 1997, CASEL, in

conjunction with the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD,)

published *Promoting Social and Emotional Learning: Guidelines for Educators.* This book was

the first book to provide "practical strategies for educators to create comprehensive and

coordinated SEL programming from preschool through grade 12" (www.casel.org).

SEL programs are crucial for young children, especially when growing up in a culture

that promotes the display of emotions. SEL provides children with coping strategies to help

them cope with their stress in school and out (Zhau et al., 2010). Today numerous organizations

help guide and advance the work of SEL; however, this study will focus on SEL as defined by

CASEL. "Social and emotional learning (SEL) is the process through which children and adults understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions" (CASEL, 2019, para. 1). CASEL contends that:

> A systemic approach to SEL intentionally cultivates a caring, participatory, and equitable learning environment and evidence-based practices that actively involve all students in their social, emotional, and academic growth. This approach infuses social and emotional learning into every part of students' daily lives—across all of their classrooms, during all times of the school day, and when they are in their homes and communities. SEL is a deeply ingrained part of the way students and adults interact both in the classroom and out of it, and helps provide children with equitable, supportive, and welcoming learning environments (www.casel.org)
>
> According to the CASEL, the overarching goal of SEL is to develop socially-emotionally

competent students. Students who are socially-emotionally competent exhibit essential emotional, cognitive, and behavioral skills across different domains of home, school, and the wider community (CASEL, 2016). The consensus among research experts in the field is that there are five core foundational competencies that comprise social and emotional competencies; self-awareness, social awareness, self-management, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making (Ashdowne & Bernard, 2012; Curby et al., 2015; Durlak et al., 2011).

Social-Emotional Competencies

Just as SEL can be referred to by various names, as previously mentioned, the competencies among the different disciplines utilize a variation in terminology. In some cases,

> frameworks from different disciplines refer to the same skill or competency by different names, or use the same name to refer to two conceptually distinct skills. Frameworks also vary in the type of construct they aim to describe— from skills, behaviors, and attitudes to traits, strengths, and abilities. (Jones & Doolittle, 2017, p. 5)

The 2017 Aspen Institutes Consensus Statement of Evidence from the Council of Distinguished Scientists states that social and emotional skills linked to school and life success can are into three interconnected domains. They are:

(1) cognitive skills including executive functions such as working memory, attention control and flexibility, inhibition, and planning, as well as beliefs and attitudes that guide one's sense of self and approaches to learning and growth;

(2) emotional competencies that enable one to cope with frustration, recognize and manage emotions, and understand others' emotions and perspectives; and

(3) social and interpersonal skills that enable one to read social cues, navigate social situations, resolve interpersonal conflicts, cooperate with others, and work effectively in a team, and demonstrate compassion and empathy toward others. (p.5)

Social Emotional Framework

CASEL has created a framework that promotes SEL. The framework includes the development of intrapersonal, interpersonal, and cognitive competence. This framework is broken down further into five core foundational skills. They are self-awareness, social awareness, self-management, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making (Ashdowne & Bernard, 2012; Durlak et al., 2011). These skills are found to improve student performance, student behavior, provide immediate and future economic impact, and support future wellness (Elias, 2014; Jones & Kahn, 2017).

Children who grasp these social-emotional competencies are more prepared to manage their emotional responses and to control aggression; however, many children leave elementary school and enter secondary school lacking social-emotional skills that allow them to connect positively in peer relations and succeed academically (Catalano et al., 2004; Durlak et al., 2011;

Taylor et al., 2017). Through mastery of SEL competencies in ECE and elementary school,

children move from being controlled by external factors to responding to these stimuli by

"internalized beliefs and values, caring and concern for others, making good decisions, and

taking responsibility for their actions" (Durlak et al., 2011, p. 406)

Self-Awareness.

Self-awareness is the "ability to accurately recognize one's own emotions, thoughts, and

values and how they influence behavior. The ability to accurately assess one's strengths and

limitations, with a well-grounded sense of confidence, optimism, and a 'growth mindset'"

(www.casel.org). The skills associated with this SEL competency are "identifying emotions,

accurate self-perception, recognizing strengths, self-confidence, and self-efficacy"

(www.casel.org). As children move from preschool into kindergarten, "their feeling of self-

efficacy become even more important" (Denham & Brown, 2010, p. 656).

Social-Awareness.

Social awareness is the "ability to take the perspective of and empathize with others,

including those from diverse backgrounds and cultures. The ability to understand social and

ethical norms for behavior and to recognize family, school, and community resources and

supports" (www.casel.org). The skills associated with this SEL competency include

"perspective-taking, empathy, appreciating diversity, and respect for others" (www.casel.org).

Self-Management.

Self-management is defined as the "ability to successfully regulate one's emotions,

thoughts, and behaviors in different situations — effectively managing stress, controlling

impulses, and motivating oneself. The ability to set and work toward personal and academic

goals" (www.casel.org). The skills included in this SEL competency include "impulse control,

stress management, self-discipline, self-motivation, goal-setting, and organizational skills" (www.casel.org). Denham and Brown (2010) contend the non-emotional aspects of self-management are just as "paramount to success in the preschool to primary school years; these include some non-SEL skills (e.g., working memory, attention, and inhibitory control) to regulate one's social and academic behaviors" (p. 656).

Relationship Skills.

Relationship skills refer to the "ability to establish and maintain healthy and rewarding relationships with diverse individuals and groups. The ability to communicate clearly, listen well, cooperate with others, resist inappropriate social pressure, negotiate conflict constructively, and seek and offer help when needed" (www.casel.org). The skills included in this SEL competency include communication, social engagement, relationship-building, teamwork" (www.casel.org). "The goal in this aspect of SEL is to promote positive and effective exchanges with other and ultimately relationships that last over time" (Denham & Brown, 2010, p. 657).

Responsible Decision-Making.

As children's everyday social interactions with peers begin to increase and include complex situations, responsible decision-making becomes of great importance (Denham & Brown, 2010). Responsible decision-making is the "ability to make constructive choices about personal behavior and social interactions based on ethical standards, safety concerns, and social norms and the realistic evaluation of consequences of various actions, and a consideration of the well-being of oneself and others" (www.casel.org). The skills included in this competency include "identifying problems, analyzing situations, solving problems, evaluating, reflecting, and ethical responsibility" (www.casel.org).

Research has shown the development of social-emotional competence makes it more likely that young people will be "ready for college, succeed in their careers, have positive family and work relationships and better mental health, and become engaged citizens" (Greenberg et al., 2017, p. 15). Taylor et al. (2017) reported that students who participated in SEL had a 6% increase in high school graduation and an 11% increase in college graduation rates compared to their non-SEL peers.

Preschool SEL Learning Standards

Learning standards provide a framework for learning and foundational information for what children should be able to know and do at the different stages of education (Eklund et al., 2018; PA Keys Website, 2014). The goal behind creating SEL learning standards is to provide states with "a framework that sets expectations and guides decisions about what students should learn, and thus about what should be taught and assessed in schools" (Eklund et al., 2018, p. 318). In 2012, Pennsylvania adopted statewide SEL learning standards. CASEL social-emotional competencies described above are evident in the state SEL learning standards (PA Keys Website, 2014). Today, all states have adopted preschool SEL learning standards (www.casel.org).

The PA Learning Standards share students' social-emotional development are strengthened when provided learning experiences that "promote a sense of identity and belonging within an accepting and responsive environment" (PA Keys Website, 2014, p. 78). There are three main learning standards related to SEL. These are:

1. Self-awareness and self-management,
2. Establishing and Maintaining Relationships, and

3. Decision-Making and Responsible Behavior.

Self-awareness and Self-management

Self-awareness and self-management refer to developing a child's understanding of themselves and their ability to regulate behaviors and emotions (PA Keys Website, 2014). During preschool, students learn to manage emotions and behaviors, establish goals independently, recognize that everyone has personal traits that guide behavior and choices, recognize their influence on choices, recognize that everyone makes mistakes, and use positive coping skills to learn from the experience. (PA Keys Website, 2014).

The development of self-awareness and self-management requires children to recognize and understand social cues, interpret behaviors of others, and display behaviors that allow them to develop positive interactions with others (McClelland et al., 2017). Preschool teachers do this by helping students recognize, label, and express feelings verbally and modeling and explaining appropriate responses and strategies (PA Keys Website, 2014). Teachers can help students express their feelings and control negative responses by establishing clear behavioral expectations and modeling appropriate responses for each situation (PA Keys Website, 2014). Additionally, teachers provide children with opportunities to make decisions and choices, ask children about their decisions, encourage children to talk about mistakes, and develop solutions when mistakes occur (PA Keys Website, 2014).

Establishing and Maintaining Relationships

Learning standards share "early adult-child relationships, based on attachment and trust, set the stage for life-long expectations that impact children's ability to learn, respect adult authority, and express themselves. Positive peer interactions create collaborative learning

opportunities" (PA Keys Website, 2014, p. 81). During this time of development, children learn to collaborate and interact with peers and adults in a socially acceptable manner, begin to understand diversity (differences among self and others) and demonstrate respect for children's differences, including differences in thoughts and feelings (PA Keys Website, 2014). Additionally, children learn to engage in reciprocal communication with adults and peers and realize there are appropriate and inappropriate ways to deal with conflicts or disagreements (PA Keys Website, 2014)

Preschool teachers create environments that provide opportunities for children to work together to build relationships. This is done through play, dialogue, and encouraging participation in group activities. Preschool teachers "foster a positive environment where children can make mistakes without embarrassment or ridicule" (PA Keys Website, 2014, p. 80). During this process, teachers are enhancing the students' development of self-awareness and self-management. Research shows that children who develop a positive relationship with teachers and peers have an easier time communicating their emotions and feelings (Ashdowne & Bernard, 2012).

Decision-Making and Responsible Behavior

Decision-making and responsible behavior refer to children realizing their actions and behaviors, either positively or negatively, affect how they learn and get along with others (PA Keys Website, 2014). During preschool, children begin to develop decision-making skills, understand social norms, and respond empathetically toward others. The preschool teachers "provide opportunities for children to create rules and to discuss the reasons for having specific rules," "provide reminders of rules and consequences when a child tests the rules," and "use

natural consequences (e.g., falling due to running in the classroom) as opportunities to discuss consequences of behaviors" (PA Keys Website, 2014, p. 83).

21st Century Learning Skills for ECE

The 21st Century Learning for Early Childhood Framework (P21 ELF) was developed to help ECE educators provide a tool to integrate 21st-century skills into their learning practices and programs in both formal and informal settings ("Battelle for Kids," 2019). P21 ELF is not intended to replicate or replace state learning standards; however, it is intended to provide educators with "practical guidance, …, that includes specific examples of 21st-century skill and knowledge for early learners" (Battelle for Kids, 2019). The framework provides guidelines that work with state early childhood learning standards to meet desired 21st-century learning skills and outcomes in "The 4 C's" -creativity, communication, critical thinking, and collaboration ("Battelle for Kids," 2019).

"The Partnership for 21st Century Learning (P21) advocates for the integration of 21st-century skills (critical thinking, collaboration, communication, creativity, technology literacy, and social-emotional development) in early learning experiences for young children to build the skills they need not only when entering school but also in life" ("Battelle for Kids," 2019, p. 2). P21 ELF provides learning outcomes and guides how the framework integrates into the early learning environment. Additionally, it provides a continuum of skill and outcomes as children move through the developmental stages from toddler through kindergarten.

Benefits of SEL

In a review of the literature around SEL, many themes surrounding its benefits emerged. These include growth of academic performance (Catalano et al., 2004; Durlak et al., 2011; Taylor et al., 2017), change in student behaviors (Durlak et al., 2011; Espelage et al., 2013;

Sklad et al., 2012; Taylor et al., 2017; Weissberg et al., 2015), life-long economic impact

(Belfield et al., 2015) and future wellness.

Academic Performance

The first key finding regarding the benefits of SEL is improved growth in academic

performance. There is a growing body of evidence to support this.   An examination of four

meta-analyses and various individual studies show a "significant, positive connection between

participation in universal school-based SEL programs and student academics over the short and

long term" (Mahoney et al., 2018, p. 22). SEL instruction creates a sense of connectedness to the

school that is essential for student achievement. Catalano et al. (2004) suggests that

> A focus on how children are taught and teaching children social and emotional
> competence are critical to achieving academic success. Children must be taught content
> in ways that motivate, engage, and involve them in their learning so they enjoy learning
> and develop a stake in achievement. Doing this requires a focus on social and emotional
> competence as well as cognitive competence. (p. 259)

Catalano et al. investigated two longitudinal studies on students' connectedness to school.

Finding from these two studies included students who had a sense of school connectedness

correlated positively with the students' grade point average. Additionally, Catalano et al. (2004)

found that students connected to the school were less likely to repeat a grade or drop out of

school.

Large-scale meta-analyses have been conducted on the effects of school-based SEL

programming.   Four leading meta-analyses conducted show significant increases in students'

academic success both in the short and long term, when a social-emotional learning program is

utilized (Durlak et al., 2011; Sklad et al., 2012; Taylor et al., 2017; Weissberg et al., 2015). Two

of these meta-analyses reported an immediate impact of SEL, while the other two reported on

follow-up effects of the impact of SEL.

In 2011, Durlak et al. conducted a meta-analysis of 213 school-based SEL programs involving 270,000 students in kindergarten through 12th grade. Findings from this meta-analysis revealed that "compared to controls, SEL participants demonstrated significantly improved social and emotional skills, attitudes, behavior, and academic success" (p. 405). Most noteworthy was the finding related to academic growth. Durlak et al. (2011) reported an effect size of .27. This equates to an 11 percentile gain in academic performance as compared to their peers who did not have SEL programming.

In 2012, Sklad et al. conducted a meta-analysis of 75 studies of universal school-based SEL programs. Researchers reported beneficial effects on academic achievement in both immediate and follow-up outcomes. The immediate effect reported was a correlation between the SEL programs and an increase in academic achievement. Moreover, the follow-up outcomes showed a median improvement "equal to .12 standard deviation, which means the average student would outperform an additional 5% of the population as a result of the intervention" (Sklad et al., 2012, p. 903).

In 2016, Wigelsworth et al. conducted a meta-analysis of 89 studies effects in universal, school-based SEL programs. The finding of this study reported effect size (ES) of .28. This finding was consistent with Durlak et al. 's 2011 findings that had an ES of .27, which equated to an 11 percentile gain in academic achievement.

Finally, Taylor et al. (2017), conducted a follow-up meta-analysis (Durlak et al., 2011) of 82 school-based SEL interventions involving 97,000 students in kindergarten through 12th grade. Researchers reported students in school-based SEL interventions "continued to demonstrate significant, positive benefits in seven outcomes collected, up to 195 weeks" after the intervention (Taylor et al., 2017, p. 1164). Follow-up data related to academic gains showed that

SEL students continue to show an average of 11 percentile points higher than their non-SEL peers almost four years after receiving SEL instruction. In 2019, CASEL released an article entitled *The Practical Benefits of An SEL Program.* In this, CASEL stated that the "2017 meta-analysis shows that benefits in these areas are long-lasting, up to 18 years" (p. 2).

These four meta-analyses, along with various individual studies (Catalano et al., 2004, Elias, 2014), provide evidence to support the statement that SEL positively impacts student academic achievement. This achievement is seen immediately after the intervention, as is the case in Durlak et al. (2017) and Sklad et al. (2012) and long after the intervention has ceased, as is the case with Wiglesworth et al. (2016) and Taylor et al. (2017).

Change in Student Behaviors

A second key finding in the literature regarding the benefits of SEL is a change in student behaviors. First, there is substantial body research that shows the implementation of practices supporting the development of SEL competencies enhancing the five key core foundational skills (self-awareness, social awareness, self-management, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making) produce an increase in positive social behavior (Durlak et al., 2011; Sklad et al., 2012; Taylor et al., 2017; Weissberg et al., 2015). Positive social behaviors include "getting along with others, helping others, showing concern for others, empathy, prosocial problem solving, peace building and cooperation" (Mahoney et al., 2018, p. 21). Second, evidence that shows enhanced SEL competencies leads to a decrease in the number of conduct problems observed (Durlak et al., 2011; Sklad et al., 2012; Taylor et al., 2017; Weissberg et al., 2015). Conduct problems include "disruptive classroom behavior, fighting, hurting others, verbal aggression, bullying, discipline referrals and delinquent acts" (Mahoney et al., 2018, p. 21).

Durlak et al. (2011) yielded significant positive effects in both "enhanced students' behavioral adjustment in the form of increased prosocial behaviors (ES .24) and reduced conduct and internalizing problems (ES .22)" (p. 417) as compared to their non-SEL peer control group. Moreover, in a six-month follow-up assessment after completing the intervention, although the results dropped in magnitude, the results remained significant (Durlak et al., 2011). In a 2012 study conducted by Sklad et al., data collected seven months after the SEL program completed showed significant effects on prosocial behavior, reduction or prevention of antisocial behavior, mental problems, and disorders" (Sklad et al., 2012, p. 905).

It is worth noting that the above four meta-analyses provide us with an international comparison of the effects of SEL on students (Mahoney et al., 2018). Moreover, "the fact that independent research teams from the United States and Europe have replicated positive outcome findings from many experimental-control group evaluations involving several hundred thousand K-12 students offers strong support that well-implemented SEL programs are beneficial for children and adolescents" (Mahoney et al., 2018, p. 20).

Another important research finding that added to this body of literature on the impact of SEL on student behavior is a 2013 publication in the Journal of Adolescent Health, in which researchers reported that students in SEL programming saw 42% less physical aggression than peers in non-SEL programming (Espelage et al., 2013, p. 1).

Economic Impact

Another key finding on the benefits of SEL is the economic impact of the implementation of SEL programs. The economic impact of an intervention can be determined by conducting a benefit-cost analysis (BCA). "Benefit-cost analysis is a tool for evaluating the economic profitability of an investment" (Belfield et al., 2015). In conducting a BCA, the researcher

conducts a comparative analysis on the "monetary cost of an investment with the monetary value of its outcomes" (Klapp et al., 2017, p. 3).

In 2015, the Teachers College/University of Columbia conducted a benefit-cost analysis of the economic value of six SEL programs. An important finding was that all programs showed benefits that "exceed costs and that the average return is very high" (p. 5). Belfield et al. (2015) found an average return of $11.00 on every $1.00 spent on SEL programming. Researchers indicated limitations to identifying all the SEL benefits in this study, and the actual economic benefit may be higher. As Belfield and his colleagues noted, "if we were able to identify all the effects (of SEL) and convert them into monetary benefits" (p.6), this benefit could be higher. Some benefits include a reduction in substance abuse, juvenile crime, and teen pregnancy.

Building on these findings, Taylor et al. (2017) indicated that positive outcomes could often be translated into substantial monetary benefits for participants and society. "The estimated benefit in lifetime earnings for graduating from high school compared to dropping out is worth over $367,000 to each graduating student" (p. 9).

In 2017, Klapp et al. conducted a BCA of a longitudinal universal SEL implementation of 663 students in two schools (6th-12th) in Sweden. One area of focus of this study was SEL's impact on student drug use. Reported results showed a 14:1 benefit-cost ratio ($540 for costs and $7,510 for benefits) for a "net present value of $6,970" (p.7). This equated to a return of $14.00 for every $1.00 invested in SEL. These findings show that SEL is "relatively inexpensive per participant, it is highly effective on the population of substance users, and the economic burden per substance user is very large" (p. 7).

In the studies indicated above, the BCA's showed that universal SEL programs have a positive economic impact on schools and society. In Belfield et al. (2015), the researchers

reported that the external impact could not be measured. In Klapp et al. (2017), the researchers provided specific findings for one measure of the benefit of SEL, specifically SEL's impact on student drug use. The research above indicated that participation in SEL had various economic benefits, in both the long and short term.

Future Wellness

Another area of the benefits of SEL is future wellness. Follow-up studies (Hawkins et al., 2008: Jones et al., 2015) of students who received SEL in early childhood and elementary have found that in the long term, students are more prepared to attend college or enter into the workforce. Additionally, SEL has a positive impact on "family and work relationships and better mental health, and become engaged citizens" (Greenberg et al., 2017, p. 7). Students who receive SEL instruction as compared to their non-SEL peers have an increased future potential earning (Belfield et al., 2015; Jones et al., 2015), reduced risk of drug abuse, criminal activity, and mental health issue (Cohen et al., 2010; Sklad et al., 2012).

Jones et al. (2015) conducted a longitudinal study on kindergarten teachers' ratings of 753 student SEL skills at entry-level to predict future outcomes in adolescence and adulthood.   Initial data was collected when students were in kindergarten, and follow-up data collection took place 19 years later. Researchers found "statistically significant associations between measured social-emotional skills in kindergarten and key young adult outcomes across multiple domains of education, employment, criminal activity, substance use, and mental health" (Jones et al., 2015, p. 2283). In education and employment outcomes, Jones et al. (2015) reported participation in SEL led to an increase in on-time graduation from high school, completed a college degree, and obtain stable full-time employment in young adulthood; and a decrease in the number of years of participation in special education services and the retention in high

school. Jones et al. (2015) reported two significant findings on outcomes related to SEL and public assistance. The development of "early prosocial skills were negatively related to the likelihood of living in or being on a waiting list for public housing …and of receiving public assistance" (Jones et al., 2015, p. 2286).

Sklad et al. (2012) reported that participants who had SEL were less likely to engage in substance abuse, displayed less antisocial behaviors, and reported fewer mental health issues than the control group.   Hawkins et al. (2008), in a nonrandomized controlled trial of 15 public schools in high-crime neighborhoods in Seattle, Washington, reported on effects 15 years after the SEL intervention ended. Researchers found "intervention was associated with greater accomplishment and engagement in school, work and community and few mental health problems by ages 24 and 27 years" (Hawkins et al., 2008, p. 1139).

Another finding worth noting was related to potential future earnings. Belfield et al. (2015) reported, "using the weakest correlation between SE skills and earnings – would yield earnings gains of $23,000" (p. 12). This means that if SEL instruction raised a child's SE skills, "this (growth) would be worth $23,000 in terms of gains in future productivity alone" (p. 12). These studies illustrate some of the many future wellness benefits that are seen long after students receive SEL.

SEL Impact Linked to Student Outcomes

During the 2017-2018 school year, Panorama Education conducted independent research to determine which "SEL skills correlate most strongly with attendance, behavior, and course performance" (Moulton et al., 2019).   This was done by focusing on specific SEL topics to

promote specific outcomes (p.4). This study included a national sample consisting of 112,670 students, 192 schools, 26 school districts across 16 states. Three key findings were reported.

First, Each year approximately 8 million students miss three or more weeks of school (chang, 2018). "Attendance is one of the most critical issues facing schools today. Students often miss school for reasons outside of our control, but schools and districts *can* influence factors such as school climate and social-emotional learning that are linked to chronic absenteeism." (Moulton et al., 2019, p. 3). "Highly engaged students are 57% less likely to be chronically absent in school than students who report low engagement" (p. 3). Finding from this research reported that student absenteeism correlated with engagement, self-management, and self-efficacy (Moulton et al., 2019).

Second, previous research has indicated that participation in SEL leads to fewer conduct problems and better social skills (Durlak et al., 2011; Sklad et al., 2012; Weissberg et al., 2015). Finding from this research reported that student behavior correlated with self-management, social-awareness, and teacher-student relationships. "Students who report low Social Awareness are 2.5 times more likely to have one or more behavior incidents than students who reported high Social Awareness" (Moulton et al., 2019, p. 4).

Finally, research has shown that students who participate in SEL flourish academically (Durlak et al., 2011; Sklad et al., 2012; Weissberg et al., 2015). Moulton et al. (2019) reported a correlation between student academic success and self-management, self-efficacy, and engagement. "Students who report high Self-Management are 75% less likely to face failing grades than students who report low Self-Management" (p. 5).

Responsive Classroom

Responsive Classroom (RC) is a school-based social and emotional framework with components designed to help the teacher establish and foster relationship development amongst students (www.responsiveclasroom.org).   CASEL (2013) has indicated that RC meets its developed criteria to be classified as an effective SEL program. RC is an "evidence-based approach to teaching and discipline that focuses on engaging academics, positive community, effective management, and developmental awareness" (www.responsiveclasroom.org). "It is designed to create classrooms that are responsive to children's physical, emotional, social, and intellectual needs through developmentally appropriate educational experiences in kindergarten through sixth grade" (www.responsiveclassroom.org).

Rimm-Kaufman (2006) contends, "(t)his educational intervention uses developmentally appropriate practices along with many techniques to integrate social and academic learning in the classroom" (p. 2). RC consists of practices and strategies, such as modeling, intentional language, and non-punitive consequences, that helps to develop targeted SEL skills. The approach incorporates ten essential teaching practices and practical strategies, including morning meetings, rule creation, interactive modeling, positive teacher language, logical consequences, "guided academic discovery, academic choice, classroom organization, collaborative problem solving" (www.responsiveclassroom.org). Additionally, it provides opportunities for students to practice these skills and guidelines for working with parents. (www.responsiveclasroom.org).

Research on RC originated in the 1990s with a series of studies conducted by Dr. Stephen Elliott (Rimm-Kaufman, 2006). Elliott reported that students had higher levels of social skills and fewer conduct problems as compared to non-RC peers (Rimm-Kaufman, 2006). In 2001,

Rimm-Kauffman and colleagues began an independent three-year Social and Academic Learning Study on Responsive Classroom. The research reported a "link between the Responsive Classroom approach and improved student learning" (Rimm-Kaufman, 2006, p. 2). Reported findings included higher scores in math and reading test scores for students in RC schools than those in comparison schools (Rimm-Kaufman, 2006). Another finding reported by Rimm-Kauffman was an increase in prosocial skills.

Belfield et al. (2015) conducted a benefit-cost analysis (economic profitability of investment) of RC (and five other SEL programs). Findings of the study showed that in addition to improving academic performance and student's social skills and reducing problem behaviors (Rimm-Kaufman et al., 2014). RC had a 9:1 return on investment (Belfield et al., 2015).

Conclusion

The literature presented in this chapter summarizes previous research conducted on SEL, SEL, P21-ELF, SEL competencies, SEL standards, and the benefits of SEL. The literature shows that SEL continues to grow, and there is a need for continuous research of SEL and its short and long-term impact on participants. The literature shows that students who receive SEL programming are more likely to succeed academically, flourish socially, and have greater health outcomes. Because we know this and the fact that no studies on the use of RC with preschool students were found, the researcher conducted a mixed-methods study that focuses on the impact of RC, a specific SEL curriculum, on pre-kindergarten students.

This study adds to the literature on the benefits of SEL in preschool and provides initial research on the benefits of the use of Responsive Classroom with preschool students. The specific research questions that guided this study were:

1. How does the use of Responsive Classroom impact the development of social-emotional learning in early childhood education?

2. How does the use of Responsive Classroom affect the social-emotional learning of preschool students using the Ages and Stages Assessment? What is the impact on behavior referrals for kindergarten students?

3. Do kindergarten teachers perceive a difference in the social-emotional skills of students who have had Responsive Classroom in preschool?

These questions are answered by conducting document reviews, surveys, semi-structured interviews, and administering an SEL assessment tool.

Definition of Terms

Peer Relationships- Social interactions between those of the same age or grade.

Relationship skills: "The ability to establish and maintain healthy and rewarding relationships with diverse individuals and groups. The ability to communicate clearly, listen well, cooperate with others, resist inappropriate social pressure, negotiate conflict constructively, and seek and offer help when needed. Communication, social engagement, relationship-building, teamwork" (www.casel.org).

Responsible decision-making: "The ability to make constructive choices about personal behavior and social interactions based on ethical standards, safety concerns, and social norms. The realistic evaluation of consequences of various actions, and a consideration of the well-being of oneself and others. Identifying problems, analyzing situations, solving problems, evaluating, reflecting, and ethical responsibility" (www.casel.org).

Social-emotional learning- "Social and emotional learning (SEL) is the process through which children and adults understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions" (www.casel.org).

Self-awareness: "The ability to accurately recognize one's own emotions, thoughts, and values and how they influence behavior. The ability to accurately assess one's strengths and limitations, with a well-grounded sense of confidence, optimism, and a "growth mindset. Identifying emotions, accurate self-perception, recognizing strengths, self-confidence, and self-efficacy" (www.casel.org).

Self-management: "The ability to successfully regulate one's emotions, thoughts, and behaviors in different situations — effectively managing stress, controlling impulses, and motivating

oneself. The ability to set and work toward personal and academic goals. Impulse control, stress

management, self-discipline, self-motivation, goal-setting, and organizational skills"

(www.casel.org).

Social awareness: "The ability to take the perspective of and empathize with others, including

those from diverse backgrounds and cultures. The ability to understand social and ethical norms

for behavior and to recognize family, school, and community resources and supports.

Perspective-taking, empathy, appreciating diversity, and respect for others" (www.casel.org).

Social-emotional competencies- lifelong skills essential for everyone. ... The ability to manage

emotions, focus attention, respect self and others, make responsible choices, and engage with

communities prepares students for college, career, and life success.

Chapter 3-Research Design/Methodology

This chapter provides the research methodology for this mixed methods research study examining the use of Responsive Classroom (RC) with pre-kindergarten students to develop social-emotional skills.   This study aims to gain a deeper understanding of RC and its benefits in a school-based pre-kindergarten program. Developing social-emotional skills is essential for enhancing students' abilities academically, emotionally, and socially (Ashdown & Bernard, 2012; Gunter et al., 201; Durlak et al., 2011). This chapter includes research questions, research design, the role of the researcher, participant selection, and methods of data collection and data analysis.

Using a convergent design, the researcher simultaneously conducted the qualitative and quantitative strands of research to answer the respective research questions (Terrell, 2016). Upon answering these initial research questions, the researcher can merge and analyze "the two data sets in order to answer the mixed methods research question" (Terrell, 2016, p. 225). Using the convergent mixed method design allows the researcher to gain a deeper understanding of the benefits of RC in pre-kindergarten classrooms, provide an initial attempt to investigate the efficacy of the use of RC in the pre-kindergarten classroom, and attempt to fill the gap of literature on the use of RC with pre-kindergarten students.

Research Questions

The research questions guiding this study are:

1.How does the use of Responsive Classroom affect the social-emotional learning of pre-kindergarten students using the Ages & Stages Questionnaires®: Social-Emotional, Second Edition (ASQ®: SE-2)? What is the impact on behavior referrals for kindergarten students?

2. Do kindergarten teachers perceive a difference in the social-emotional skills of students who have had Responsive Classroom in pre-kindergarten and those who have not?

3. How does the use of Responsive Classroom impact the development of social-emotional learning in early childhood education?

Perspective of the Researcher

The primary purpose for conducting this research was for enhancement/complementary use of Responsive Classroom (RC) with pre-kindergarten students to develop social-emotional skills. The researcher "seeks to gain a more holistic picture by exploring different aspects of the same phenomenon" (Creamer, 2017, p. 31). By using a mixed-method design, the researcher was able to gain a "richer, deeper, better understanding" (Greene, 2007, p. 20) of the benefits and limitations of the use of the RC to develop SE skills in pre-kindergarten students to determine whether RC is beneficial with this population. Utilizing a mixed-methods design allowed the researcher to collect qualitative and quantitative data to conduct a more complete data analysis (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998).

This mixed-methods study utilized a convergent parallel design, "a design in which the researcher collects and analyses two separate databases—quantitative and qualitative—and then merges the two databases for the purpose of comparing or combining the results," with equal emphasis on both strands (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018, p. 99). By combining the quantitative and qualitative approaches, the researcher gained new knowledge of RC's benefits and limitations in pre-kindergarten classrooms that cannot be obtained from either method by itself (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). The advantage of using this design was the data collected on the students from the ASQ®: SE-2 and from kindergarten teacher questionnaires/interviews were

analyzed independently; and then collectively to answer the research questions (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

The research used the pragmatic paradigm to conduct research. The pragmatic paradigm is a framework that allows for a "variety of approaches to educational research with an emphasis on flexibility of choice of methods to match the purposes of the inquiry and, sometimes, to the needs of the setting where the research is conducted" (Creamer, 2017, p. 45). The researcher used quantitative and qualitative methods to best address the research questions (Creswell 2003). By utilizing the pragmatic paradigm, the researcher was able to use strategies where data were collected simultaneously, and in some cases, sequentially.

One tenet of the pragmatic paradigm is the research is conducted to produce something that will be both practical and useful (Creamer, 2017). Although research has been conducted on the use of SEL practices in ECE, there was no research on RC's use with preschoolers. This means there was no evidence to support RC use to develop the growth in the SEL competencies of pre-kindergarten students, nor was there any evidence to support that kindergarten teachers perceive a benefit for students to have RC at the pre-kindergarten level.

This study used two-phase data collection and analysis of teacher-reported data from the ASQ®: SE-2 (quantitative data) and kindergarten teacher perceptions from the survey instrument (qualitative data). Data were collected concurrently with equal priority and timing on the study's quantitative and qualitative strands in both phases. This concurrent design method aimed to enhance the understanding of RC's six guiding principles and its benefits with Pre-Kindergarten students. In enhancement/complementarity design, the goal is to develop a "more holistic picture by exploring different aspects of the same phenomenon" (Creamer, 2017, p. 31).

As indicated above, the purpose of this mixed-methods study was to gain a more holistic understanding of RC's ability to help Pre-Kindergarten students develop social-emotional skills. "A mixed methods way of thinking, is thus generative and open, seeking richer, deeper, better understanding of important facets of our infinitely complex social world" (Greene, 2007, p. 20). The hypothesis was that upon completion of research, the use of RC would prove to be an effective tool for teaching SEL to pre-Kindergarten students.

Kindergarten teachers were asked via email to participate in a confidential survey on their perception of kindergarten students' social-emotional skills who received SEL via RC as pre-kindergarten students. The researcher invited a nested sample of these teachers to participate in a face-to-face semi-structured interview via email. The integration occurred at the sample level. Creamer (2017) shares integration at the sample level is one of the mixed-methods research features. Distinct sampling is a type of mixed methods sampling. A distinct sample is essential to gain a more holistic perspective of RC's impact on developing SEL competencies in ECE.

Context of the Study

The criteria for choosing the specific site included, (a) the site is a school district that has a pre-kindergarten program that is operated by the school district; (b) the school district used RC at its' elementary level as a school-wide tier-one SEL intervention; (c) the school allowed the researcher access to SEL data; (d) the school district allowed the researcher access to interview Kindergarten teachers. It is important to note that the researcher is an administrator at this school district. The study was one of convenience, with the researcher choosing a purposive sample from within to answer the research questions.

Role of the Researcher

The researcher has over 20 years of experience in the Early Childhood Education (ECE) field. The researcher has taught kindergarten, been a director of a child care facility, and is currently an administrator in a school district responsible for the preschool and child care programs. The researcher is responsible for maintaining and establishing high-quality preschool programming, including selecting and developing a curriculum and providing professional development for all staff. Additionally, the researchers' perspective is that SEL is very important for developing future productive and socially responsible adults. Without SEL, the chances of life success are limited or can be impacted by underlying social-emotional factors. The researcher believes that these experiences allow her to hold a certain level of bias in how adults approach teaching young children. The researcher believes all student behaviors need to be addressed; however, there does not need to be a punitive consequence. The researcher believes that teachers should help the child calm down, rejoin the group, and then later have a conversation about the incident if warranted.

A second experience the researcher had that may impact her bias is that she is trauma certified. The process of becoming certified has changed her views about how we treat young children who are struggling in both academic and social situations. We need to help students understand their feelings and appropriate responses to these feelings. Additionally, as educators, we need to be mindful of behaviors children may display by being trauma-impacted and how we can most effectively serve these children.

The researcher has developed assumptions about how children are taught or not taught social and emotional competencies from these life experiences. The researcher is knowledgeable about what core social and emotional competencies should be taught and has an opinion about

the best way they should be taught. To mitigate this bias, the researcher was a non-participant in administering and scoring the SEL assessment tool. Additionally, the researcher conducted member checks and triangulated multiple data points.

The researcher's desire to perform this study was because she was passionate about social and emotional growth. It is essential for all future growth and development. The inability of students to create relationships and regulate their emotions can harm their ability to learn. Ensuring that these competencies are adequately taught in pre-kindergarten helps students in their future academic and social development. Schools play an essential role in raising healthy children by fostering their cognitive development and social and emotional development (Durlak, Weissberg, Dymnicki, Taylor, & Shellinger, 2011; Taylor, Oberle, Durlak, & Weissberg, 2017).

Participants and Sampling

The participants of this study included kindergarten teachers. The group was chosen using purposive sampling selected from a convenience sample. A researcher uses purposive sampling because the site and/or participants "can purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem and central phenomenon of the study" (Creswell, 2013, p. 156).

As previously indicated, teacher participants were invited using purposive sampling. The criteria for participation in the study include, (a) participant must work in the selected school district; (b) the must be a Kindergarten teacher; (c) and the participant must have previous experience working with kindergarten students. An invitation to participate in the study was sent to 15 kindergarten teachers currently teaching students who participated in RC when they were in pre-kindergarten during the 19-20 school year (Appendix A). The invitation included study details, the participants' rights, and information on contacting the researcher. Those who agreed

to participate in the study received an electronic version of the teacher questionnaire, including a section obtaining signed consent (Appendix B).

A purposive nested sample of four kindergarten teachers, who participated in the questionnaire chosen by the researcher, was asked to participate in a semi-structured interview that focused on the SEL performance of students who did and did not have RC curricula in preschool. The researcher contacted the participants who agree to participate in the semi-structured interview via email to set up a virtual interview via Microsoft Teams. By purposefully selecting these participants, the researcher was aided in understanding the specific problem and research questions posed (Creswell, 2009).

Consent and Confidentiality

During the study, the researcher followed measures to ensure participants' protection. The researcher: (a) informed the participants that they have the right to participate and may withdraw from the study at any time, (b) provided details on the purpose of the study and explained data collection methods, (c) shared any known risks and potential benefit of the study, (d) shared the plan to protect the participants' confidentiality by changing all names for the final report, and (e) obtained informed consent prior to participation in the study (Creswell, 2009). Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval was obtained from Arcadia University prior to the researcher beginning the study.

Data Collection

There were several considerations for developing a mixed-methods study. These considerations included the priority and timing of the collection of research, data implementation, and integration (Creamer, 2017). In the current study, equal preference was given to the qualitative and quantitative strands. Qualitative and quantitative data were collected

concurrently (Creamer, 2017). The integration of data was done at the interpretation level (Terrell, 2016).   This section includes a description of the data collection instruments, data collection procedures, and administration procedures.

Data Collection Instruments

In this study, four data collection instruments were used: (1) teacher perception questionnaire (TPQ), (2) the ASQ®: SE-2, a social-emotional assessment questionnaire, (3) teacher perception semi-structured interviews (TPSI), and (4) document reviews.   Research question one was answered by collecting and reviewing behavioral referrals and administering the assessment tool. Question two was answered by conducting a questionnaire and a semi-structured interview of a nested sample of kindergarten teachers participating in the study. Research question three was answered by analyzing and merging the data collected from the quantitative and qualitative instruments.

Ages & Stages Questionnaires®: Social-Emotional, Second Edition (ASQ®: SE-2)

A quantitative data collection instrument was the Ages & Stages Questionnaires®: Social-Emotional, Second Edition (ASQ®: SE-2). A copy of this questionnaire can be found in Appendix E & F. This questionnaire is a social-emotional instrument developed by Brookes Publishing. The concurrent validity of this assessment instrument is 84%, and test-retest reliability is 89%. Internal consistency, measured by Cronbach's coefficient alpha, ranged from 71%–91%, indicating strong relationships between questionnaire total scores and individual items" (www.agesandstages.com).

The ASQ®: SE-2 includes 36 social-emotional questions. The areas screened are self-regulation, compliance, social-communication, adaptive functioning, autonomy, affect, and interaction with people. Example questions include, "Does your child destroy or damage things

on purpose?" and "Does your child like to play with other children?" Each question's responses

have three possible answers: most of the time, sometimes, or rarely never. The "questionnaire

takes 10–15 minutes to complete and 1–3 minutes to score" (www.agesandstages.com). Pre-

kindergarten teachers administered the ASQ®: SE-2 two times. The first was during the first

two weeks of school in October, and the second occurred during the last two weeks of school in

January 2021.

> *Teacher Perception Questionnaire (TPQ).*   The data collection instrument for the

qualitative phase was a teacher perception of students' SEL skills questionnaire. The TPQ was a

researcher-created questionnaire drawn from various questions on the ASQ®: SE-2 60 month/ 5-

year questionnaire published by Brookes Publishing and has a concurrent validity of this

assessment instrument is 84%, and test-retest reliability is 89%. Internal consistency, measured

by Cronbach's coefficient alpha, ranged from 71%–91%, indicating strong relationships between

questionnaire total scores and individual items" (www.agesandstages.com).

The questionnaire took 4-9 minutes to complete. The questionnaire consisted of 10

questions. Question categories included items related to the teachers' perception of students'

entry-level skills in self-regulation, compliance, social communication, adaptive functioning,

autonomy, affect, and interaction with adults and peers. A copy of this questionnaire can be

found in Appendix C. This was be administered via Qualtrics to their district email.

Teacher Perception Semi-Structured Interview. Using Appendix D, the researcher conducted confidential one-on-one interviews with Kindergarten teachers via Microsoft Teams. The interview consisted of questions about the teachers' perception of the current kindergarten cohorts' skills in self-regulation, compliance, communication, autonomy, affect, and interaction with adults and peers.   The semi-structured interview was conducted following the established interview protocol.

Included in the interview, the researcher provided the teacher with two lists of students. One group included students who participated in the district's child care program who received RC instruction in prekindergarten. The second included students who did not participate in the district's child care program. Interviews were recorded, transcribed, and stored on a locked password-protected computer. Transcripts were members checked for accuracy.

Behavior and Discipline Referrals. The researcher reviewed kindergarten students' behavioral referrals to determine if there is any difference in the quantity and type of behavioral referrals for students who received RC instruction compared to their non-RC peers. The researcher coded the behavior and discipline referrals based on SEL competencies: self-regulation, compliance, social-communication, adaptive functioning, autonomy, affect, and interaction with adults and peers. The researcher coded the behavior and discipline referrals by students who received RC in pre-kindergarten and those who did not receive RC in pre-kindergarten to allow the researcher to determine if there is a difference in students who received SEL through the RC curriculum and their peer who did not receive SEL instruction through RC curriculum.

Data Collection Procedures

Data collection was done using the convergent design. The researcher used "concurrent timing to implement the quantitative and qualitative strands during the same phase of the research process, prioritizes the methods equally, and keeps the strands independent during analysis and then mixes the results during the overall interpretation" (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018, p. 70).

Qualitative Data Collection Procedures.

The qualitative strand of data collection focused on obtaining teachers' overall perceptions of students' social-emotional skills. The method for collecting this data was through using a researcher-developed questionnaire that was reflective of the questions asked in the ASQ®: SE-2 (quantitative data collection instrument). After obtaining approval from the university's institutional review board (Terrell, 2016), the researcher invited 15 kindergarten teachers to participate in a survey on their perception of their current kindergarten students' social-emotional competencies. Kindergarten teachers were informed about the study and invited to participate in the study via email the week before the school year. Teachers consent to participate by answering the first question on the questionnaire. Teachers who did not provide consent were not allowed to proceed any further in the questionnaire. After analyzing the teacher questionnaires', the researcher emailed four teacher participants to participate in a semi-structured interview. After obtaining consent from the teacher participants, the researcher scheduled and conducted a semi-structured interview following the established interview protocol (see Appendix B). The researcher reviewed the interview protocol with the participant. The interviews were recorded, transcribed, and checked for accuracy by the researcher. All interviews were stored on a locked, password-protected device. Transcribed interviews were

members checked for accuracy.   Once data was collected from the Teacher Perception

Questionnaire (TPQ), and the Teacher Perception Semi-Structured Interviews (TPSI) were

merged, the data was used to answer research question two. Interview participants were

informed they could terminate their participation in the questionnaire or interview at any time

without penalty.

Confidentiality was adhered to by assigning a number to each returned survey. The

researcher created a master list of each teacher participant, along with the assigned number. This

master list was kept separate from the initial responses in a password-protected locked computer.

Additionally, the researcher shared that the researcher plans to share the results with the school

district and publish the findings.

Quantitative Data Collection Procedures.

The quantitative strand of data collection focused on obtaining baseline SEL data for the

incoming pre-kindergarten students enrolled in the school district's parent fee-funded program. It

is important to note that families who fell 200% below the Federal Poverty Income Guidelines

(FPIG) were eligible to receive subsidized child care funded by the county. Family copay could

be as low as $5.00 per week or falling below the district's weekly child care rates.

During the first two weeks of school in September, pre-kindergarten teachers

administered the ASQ®: SE-2 to the pre-kindergarten students to determine baseline data (pre-

test) on the students' social-emotional competencies before exposure to the Responsive

Classroom approach to teaching social-emotional competencies. Using Appendix A, teachers

answered 36 social-emotional questions. Sample questions include "Does your child destroy or

damage things on purpose?" and "Does your child like to play with other children?" The teacher

scores the questionnaire with one of three responses: most of the time, sometimes, or rarely

never.   There was also an additional box after each question to indicate if this is a concern for

the teacher. Each question has a letter next to it z, v, or x.   Using the scoring guidelines, the

teacher provided each question with a score. Boxes checked with z= 0 points, v=5 points, x=10

points. If the teacher indicates this is a concern, an additional 5 points were added. Students

were provided an overall score.

During the semester, the researcher conducted fidelity checks to ensure the preschool

teachers utilize RC with fidelity. During the last two weeks of school in January, the preschool

teachers re-administered and scored the ASQ®: SE-2 (post-test). This data was analyzed

compared to the pre-test data to determine student growth in each social-emotional competencies

after receiving SEL instruction through the RC curricula.

During the semester, the researcher reviewed kindergarten students' behavioral referrals

to determine if there was any difference in the quantity and type of behavioral referrals for

students who received RC instruction compared to their non-RC peers. The researcher coded the

behavior and discipline referrals based on SEL competencies: self-regulation, compliance,

social-communication, adaptive functioning, autonomy, affect, and interaction with adults and

peers. The researcher also coded the behavior and discipline referrals by students who received

RC in pre-kindergarten and those who did not receive RC in pre-kindergarten to allow the

researcher to determine if there was a difference in students who received SEL through the RC

curriculum and their peer who did not receive SEL instruction through RC curriculum.

Triangulation.

Triangulation is the process of combining several research methodologies in the study of

the same phenomenon (Denzin, 2015). In this study, two types of triangulation are present:

methods triangulation and data triangulation.

Methods Triangulation.

Methods triangulation involves using multiple methods to collect data, such as interviews, observations, questionnaires, and documents (Denzin, 2015). The researcher utilized various methods to collect data. These include reviewing documents and archival data, the TPQ, TPSI, and administration of the ASQ®: SE-2. Moreover, by utilizing the enhancement/complementarity design, methodological triangulation is an inherent feature. The enhancement/complementarity design "increases the interpretability, meaningfulness, and validity of constructs and inquiry results by both capitalizing on inherent methods strengths and counteracting inherent biases" (Greene et al., 1989).

Data Triangulation.

Data triangulation, which uses multiple data points to answer the research questions, is also utilized (Denzin, 2015). As seen in figure 3.1, the triangulation matrix, each research question is responded to using a minimum of two data sources.

Research Question	Data Source 1	Data Source 2	Data Source 3
How does the use of RC impact the development of social-emotional learning in early childhood education?	ASQ®: SE-2	Behavioral Referrals	Questionnaire Semi-Structured Interviews
How does the use of RC affect the social-emotional learning of pre-kindergarten students using the Ages & Stages Questionnaires®: Social-Emotional, Second Edition (ASQ®: SE-2)? What is the impact on behavior referrals for kindergarten students?	ASQ®: SE-2	Behavioral Referrals	
Do kindergarten teachers perceive a difference in the	Survey	Semi-Structured Interviews	

social-emotional skills of students who have had R in preschool?			

Figure 3.1 Triangulation Matrix

Data Analysis

During the analysis stage, the researcher reviewed and organized the data based on themes that emerge. Thematically organizing the data allowed the researcher to make comparisons and connections based on the patterns and trends from qualitative and quantitative data, allowing the researcher to develop meta inferences to answer the overarching research question (Creamer, 2017).

Research question one asked is how does the use of Responsive Classroom affect the social-emotional learning of pre-kindergarten students using the Ages & Stages Questionnaires®: Social-Emotional, Second Edition (ASQ®: SE-2)? What is the impact on behavior referrals for kindergarten students? The data was analyzed using the ASQ®: SE-2 User's Guide. The researcher reviewed the overall score of the October ASQ®: SE-2 pre-test and compared the results to the January ASQ®: SE-2 post-test overall score. The researcher then reviewed each social-emotional competency to determine changes in scores for each of these areas.

Research question two asked: Do kindergarten teachers perceive a difference in the social-emotional skills of students who have had Responsive Classroom in preschool? The data was analyzed by looking at the specific themes that emerged in the teacher questionnaire and interview responses. Responses were coded based on the theme.

Data analysis integration occurred through the interpretation of quantitative and qualitative data. A comparison was made through data analysis and synthesis of data. The

researcher analyzed the findings and determined if those findings enrich or contradict the findings. Meta-inferences were made by drawing conclusions between the qualitative and quantitative analyses (Creamer, 2017).

Validity/Reliability

Validity and reliability are two critical factors in assisting the researcher in decreasing the chances of obtaining flawed data measurements due to the instrument. Validity is a term used to describe if an instrument "measures what it is supposed to measure" (Terrell, 2016, p.86). On the other hand, reliability means that a "test must consistently measure what it's intended to measure" (Terrell, 2016, p. 82). The ASQ®: SE-2 is a social-emotional instrument developed by Brookes Publishing. The concurrent validity of this assessment instrument is 84%, and test-retest reliability is 89%. Internal consistency, measured by Cronbach's coefficient alpha, ranged from 71%–91%, indicating strong relationships between questionnaire total scores and individual items" (www.agesandstages.com).

 In order to address issues of validity, reliability, and trustworthiness**,** internal validity, peer debriefing, and member checking were used. Peer debriefing and member checks w utilized to address the validity, reliability, and trustworthiness of the researcher-created teacher perception tool and the semi-structured interviews.

Time Line

Spring 2020

January- April: Create a Dissertation Proposal

June: Defend Proposal

May: IRB process Arcadia/ Gain permission for entry into school

Summer 2020:

August: recruit teacher participants

Fall 2020:

September: E-mail teacher questionnaire

October: Collect pre-kindergarten teacher pre-test ASQ®: SE-2 data

November: Conduct Kindergarten Teacher Interviews

December: Revise Chapters 1 &3 Analyze Questionnaire and Interview data

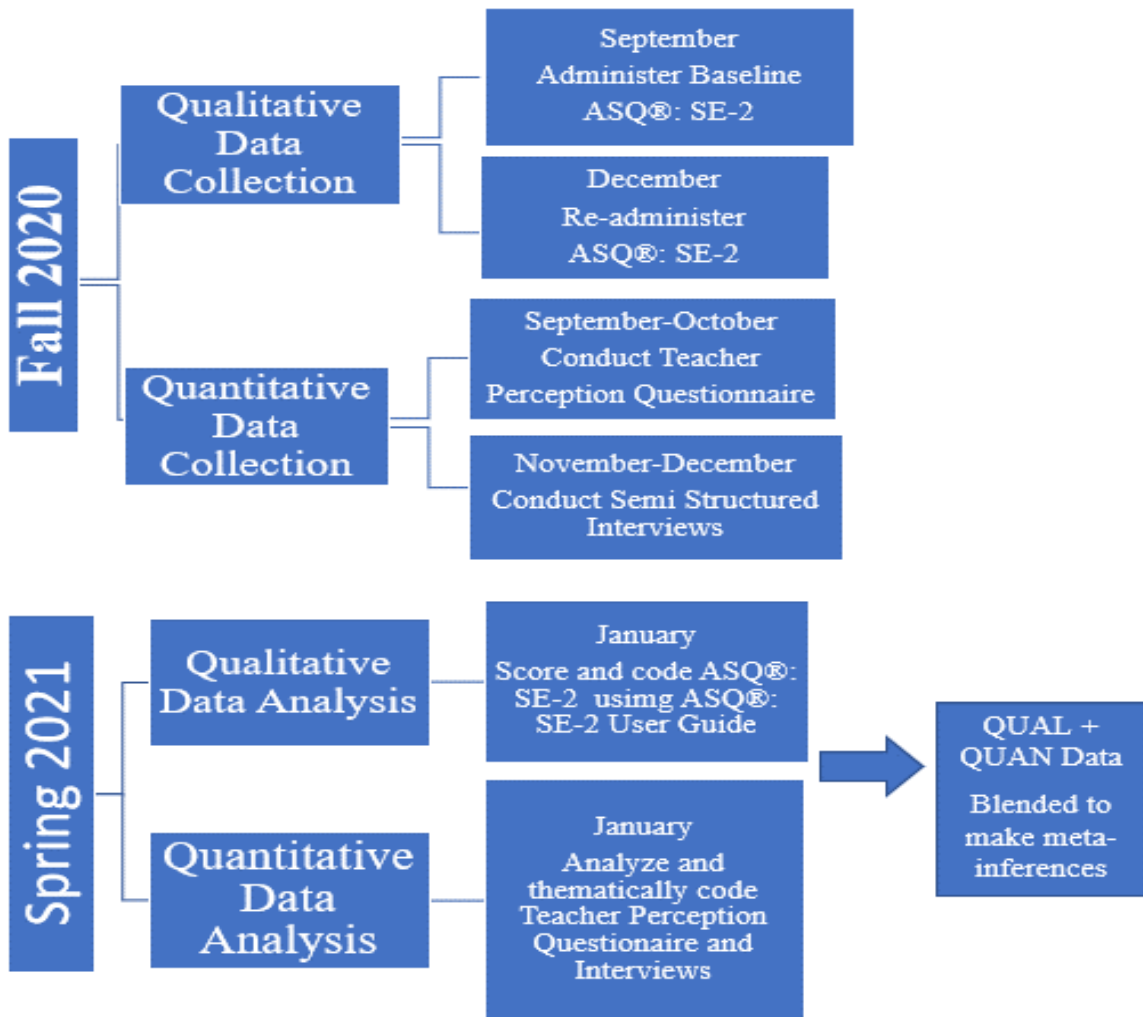September-December Document review of Behavior and Discipline Referral

Spring 2021:

January: Collect pre-kindergarten post-test ASQ®: SE-2 data: Behavioral Referral Data

February: Analyze ASQ®: SE-2 pre-test and post-test data

Early Spring 2021: Write Chapters 4 & 5

Late Spring 2021: Dissertation Defense

Research Stages

Fall 2020

- Qualitative Data Collection
  - September
    Administer Baseline
    ASQ®: SE-2
  - December
    Re-administer
    ASQ®: SE-2
- Quantitative Data Collection
  - September-October
    Conduct Teacher
    Perception Questionnaire
  - November-December
    Conduct Semi Structured
    Interviews

Spring 2021

- Qualitative Data Analysis
  - January
    Score and code ASQ®:
    SE-2 usimg ASQ®:
    SE-2 User Guide
- Quantitative Data Analysis
  - January
    Analyze and
    thematically code
    Teacher Perception
    Questionaire and
    Interviews

→ QUAL + QUAN Data

Blended to make meta-inferences

Chapter IV: Results

"Social and emotional learning (SEL) is the process through which children and adults understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions" (www.casel.org/what-is-sel/). An SEL curriculum is intended to help students develop social-emotional competence (CASEL, 2016).

As indicated in Chapter 2, students who receive SEL programming are more likely to succeed academically, flourish socially, and have greater health outcomes; however, no research focuses on RC's impact on pre-kindergarten students. The purpose of this mixed-methods study is to gain a deeper understanding of RC and the benefits of its use in Pre-Kindergarten and determine the perception of Kindergarten teachers of students who received RC in Pre-kindergarten.

This chapter contains the results of a mixed-methods study focusing on the impact of Responsive Classroom (RC), social-emotional learning (SEL) curriculum, on pre-kindergarten students to answer the following research questions:

RQ1: *How does the use of Responsive Classroom affect the social-emotional learning of pre-kindergarten students using the Ages & Stages Questionnaires®: Social-Emotional, Second Edition (ASQ®: SE-2)? What is the impact of RC behavior referrals for kindergarten students?*

RQ2: *Do kindergarten teachers perceive a difference in the social-emotional skills of students who have had Responsive Classroom in pre-kindergarten and those who have not?*

RQ3: *How does the use of Responsive Classroom impact the development of social-emotional learning in Pre-Kindergarten?*

Impact of RC on SEL

This section presents the findings for RQ1: *How does the use of Responsive Classroom affect the social-emotional learning of pre-kindergarten students using the Ages & Stages Questionnaires®: Social-Emotional, Second Edition (ASQ®: SE-2)?* And RQ 1a: *What is the impact on behavior referrals for kindergarten students?* RQ1, *How does the use of Responsive Classroom affect the social-emotional learning of pre-kindergarten students using the Ages & Stages Questionnaires®: Social-Emotional, Second Edition (ASQ®: SE-2)?,* was answered by analyzing the ASQ®: SE-2 quantitative data using the ASQ®: SE-2 User's Guide. The researcher looked at the overall baseline score of the ASQ®: SE-2 and compared the results to the January ASQ®: SE-2 overall score. The researcher analyzed each social-emotional competency to determine changes in scores for each social-emotional competency.

Ages & Stages Questionnaires®: Social-Emotional, Second Edition (ASQ®: SE-2)

During the first two weeks of school in October, Pre-Kindergarten teachers administered the ASQ®: SE-2 pre-test to 38 pre-kindergarten students to determine baseline data on the students' social-emotional competencies before exposure to the RC social-emotional curriculum. Using Appendix D, teachers answered 33 social-emotional questions. Questions were answered using the responses *most of the time*, *sometimes*, and *rarely or never.* Each response had a numerical value associated with it. The teacher calculated the students' total score. An *ASQ®: SE-2* empirically-derived cutoff score of 70 was used to assess the social-emotional behaviors. Students' scores who were 70 or greater were referred for further assessment. Students' scores who fell between the range of 0 to 65 are considered to be developmentally on track. Six students' scores were excluded from the results as the students did not participate in virtual instruction or did not return to the preschool program in January.

The results consist of 32 preschool students' baseline *ASQ®: SE-2* scores. The mean *ASQ®: SE-2* score was 35, with a low score of zero and a high score of 85. As seen in Figure 1, 38% (n=12) student scores fell between 0-25, 31% (n=10) student scores fell between 30-50, 25% (n=8) student scores fell between 55 and 65, and 6% (n=2) was above 70. Thirty of the student *ASQ®: SE-2* scores indicated that the students were developmentally on track with social-emotional skills development. Additionally, two students' scores surpassed the *ASQ®: SE-2* empirically-derived cutoff score of 70 and were provided resources and referred for further assessment. Both students receive services from the local Intermediate Unit.

Figure 1

Pre-Kindergarten Pre-Test ASQ®: SE-2 Scores
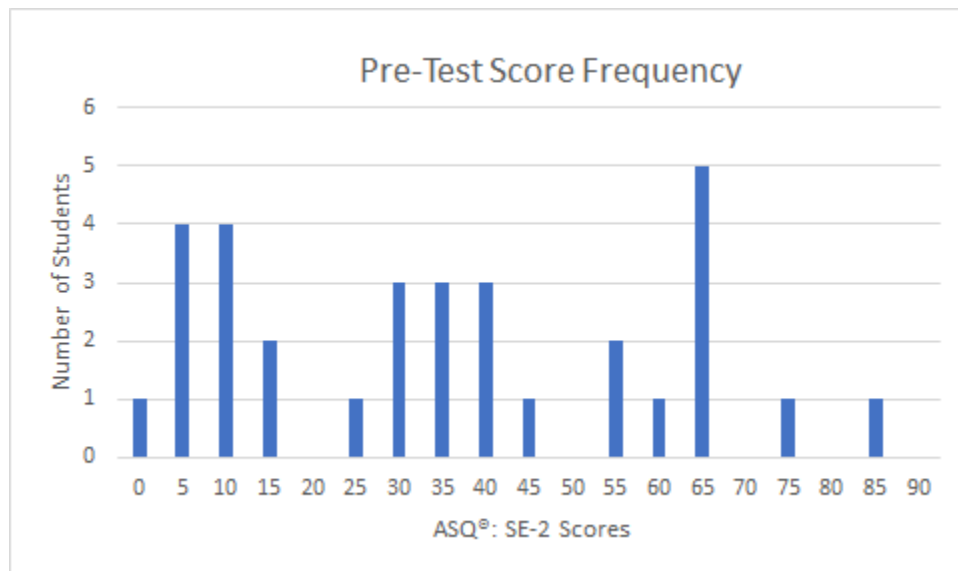
During the last two weeks of school in January, the pre-kindergarten teachers administered and scored the ASQ®: SE-2 post-test to the 32 students. The results consist of 32 preschool students' comparison *ASQ®: SE-2* scores. The mean score was 20, with a low score of zero and a high score of 65. As seen in Figure 2, 69% (n=22) student scores fell between 0-25,

25% (n=8) student scores fell between 30-50, 6% (n=2) student scores fell between 55 and 60, and 0% (n=0) was above 65.

Figure 2

*Pre-Kindergarten Pre- Test and Posy-Test Comparison ASQ®: SE-2 Scores*
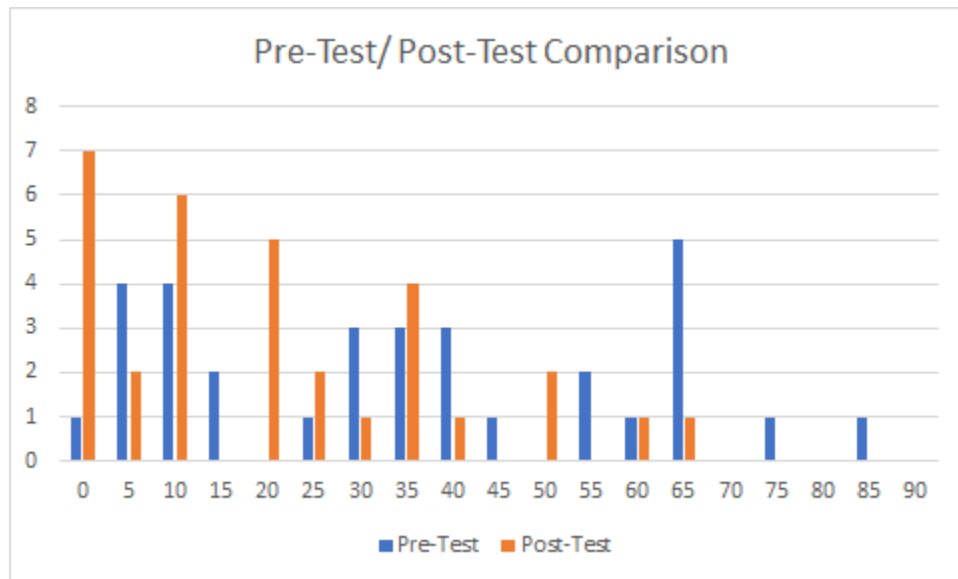
The pre-test and post-test data were analyzed to determine how students scored after receiving RC instruction for three months. As seen in Figure 2, all student scores indicated the students were developmentally on track with social-emotional skills development. The two students whose baseline scores surpassed the *ASQ®: SE-2* empirically-derived cutoff score of 70 showed SEL growth, and their post-test score fell below the cutoff score of 70. These two students continue to receive support services from the local Intermediate Unit.

The researcher then analyzed each student's pre-test and post-test to determine the impact the three months of RC had on individual student competencies. Figure 3 shows the individual gains students had based on each competency. The area of greatest overall student growth occurred in self-regulation. Fifty percent of the students showed a decrease in self-regulation

scores. Thirteen percent (n=5) of the students' self-regulation scores decreased by 5 points, 9%

(n=3) decreased by 15 points, 13% (n=4) decreased by 20 points, 9% (n=3) decreased by 25

points, and 6% (n=2) decreased by 30 points.

Figure 3

Individual Student Gains by SEL Competency
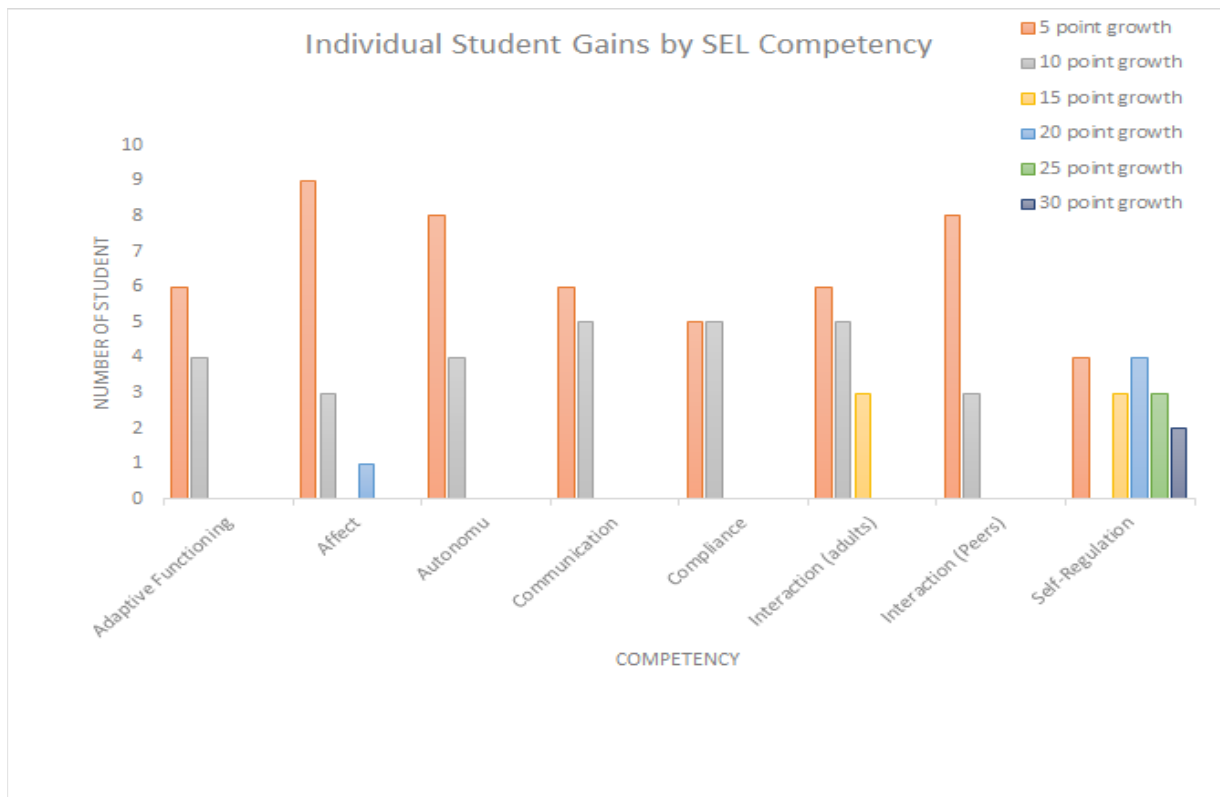
The next area of most significant student growth occurred in interaction with

adults. Forty-four percent of the students' scores increased in this competency. Nineteen (n=6)

of the students' interaction with adult scores decreased by 5 points, 16% (n=5) decreased by 10

points, and 9% (n=3) decreased by 15 points. Students also showed growth in the ability to

interact with peers. Thirty-four percent of students showed growth in this area, which was lower

than the growth seen in students' ability to interact with adults. Twenty-five percent (n=8) of the

students' interaction with peers' scores decreased by 5 points, and 9% (n=3) of the students had a

10 point decrease in scores. Overall communication scores increased for 34% of the students. Nineteen percent (n=6) of the students' communication scores improved by 5 points, and 15% (n=5) of the students' scores improved by 10 points.

Forty percent of students' scores decreased in affect. Twenty-eight percent (n=9) of students decreased by 5 points, 9% (n=3) of students decreased by 10 points, and 3% (n=1) decreased by 20 points. Thirty-eight percent of students' scores decreased in autonomy. Twenty-five (n=8) of students' autonomy scores decreased by 5 points, and 13% (n=4) of student scores decreased by 10 points.

Finally, 32% of students' scores decreased in both compliance and adaptive functioning. Looking at compliance scores, 16% (n=5) of students decreased by 5 points, and 16% (n=5) of students decreased by 10 points. In adaptive functioning, 19% (n=6) of students' scores decreased by 5 points and 13% (n=4) of students' scores decreased by 10 points.

RQ1a, *What is the impact on behavior referrals for kindergarten students?,* was answered by conducting a line-by-line reading and thematic coding based on SEL competencies of kindergarten students' behavioral referrals to determine if there is any difference in the quantity and type of behavioral referrals.

Behavioral Referrals in Kindergarten

During the semester, the researcher reviewed kindergarten students' behavioral referrals to determine if there is any difference in the quantity and type of behavioral referrals for students who received RC instruction compared to their non-RC peers. The researcher coded the behavior and discipline referrals based on SEL competencies: self-regulation, compliance, social-communication, adaptive functioning, autonomy, affect, and interaction with adults and peers. The researcher coded the behavioral referrals to indicate whether the students received

RC in pre-kindergarten. This allowed the researcher to determine if there is a difference between students who received SEL through the RC curriculum and their peers who did not.

A line-by-line read of the behavioral referrals indicated the kindergarten students' referrals were all for mistakes in social-emotional behaviors. There was a total of five behavioral referrals. Three referrals were for attendance, omitted from the analysis, as kindergarten students do not have control over their attendance. Of the students, only one of the students with behavioral referrals participated in a preschool program that utilized the Responsive Classroom. This student began the school year with no concerns. Following a state-mandated closure to COVID-19, the student returned, exhibiting behavioral concerns related to self-regulation. The other student did not attend the preschool program and had been exhibiting behavioral concerns since the start of the school year in adaptive functioning, affect, autonomy, compliance, communication, and self-regulation.

Based on the behavior referrals analysis, results indicated no difference in the behavior of students who received RC and their non-RC peers. The data indicated 50% of the students receiving behavioral referrals participated in a program that utilized RC, and 50% of the students did not participate in a program that utilized RC. Due to the limited number of behavioral referrals (n=2), it is unclear whether RC has the potential to decrease behavioral referrals.

The data results from the Ages & Stages Questionnaires®: Social-Emotional, Second Edition (ASQ®: SE-2) suggest the use of Responsive Classroom affects the social-emotional learning of pre-kindergarten students by increasing the social-emotional learning competencies of pre-kindergarten students; however, due to the limited number of behavioral referrals (n=2), it is unclear whether RC has the potential to decrease behavioral referrals.

Teachers' Perception of Students with Previous RC Instruction

This section presents the findings for RQ2, *Do kindergarten teachers perceive a difference in the social-emotional skills of students who have had Responsive Classroom in pre-kindergarten and those who have not?* The results of this study suggest teachers perceive a difference in the skills of students who have had RC in kindergarten and those who have not. Kindergarten teachers reported students who participated in preschool with RC have better developed social-emotional skills than their peers who did not participate in a program using RC.

RQ2 was answered by analyzing quantitative data obtained from the Teacher Perception Questionnaire (TPQ), which provided teachers' perception of incoming students' social-emotional skills during the first month of school, and qualitative data obtained through the Teacher Perception Semi-Structured Interviews (TPSI), which provided teachers' perception of the impact of SEL on Kindergarten students and of their current students' skills in self-regulation, compliance, communication, autonomy, affect, and interaction with adults and peers.

Response Rate

Fifteen (15) teachers were invited to participate in the TPQ to determine the teachers' perception of the impact of SEL on Kindergarten students and of their current students' skills in self-regulation, compliance, communication, autonomy, affect, and interaction with adults and peers. Of the 15 teachers invited, ten (10) teachers began the study and provided consent to participate. This equates to a 66.67% response rate of teachers who consented to participate; however, only eight teachers answered the questions related to their perception of student SEL competencies during the first month of school for a final over-response rate of 53.33%. A nested sample of four participants was invited and participated in the TPSI to gain a deeper

understanding of the teachers' perception of current students' SEL skills and determine if there

was a perceived variation of skills in students who participated in RC non-RC peers.

Teachers Experience

Item one, (1) Do you currently teach Kindergarten, and item two, (2) Did you teach

Kindergarten the previous year, in the TPQ was asked to determine if the teacher met the

participation criteria. As indicated in Table 1, 100% of the teachers were currently teaching

Kindergarten during the 2020-2021 school year and taught Kindergarten in previous years.

Table 1

Yes/No Response Rate Items 1-2

QUESTION	YES RESPONSE		NO RESPONSE	
	N	%	N	%
1. Do you currently teach Kindergarten?	8	100	0	0
2. Did you teach Kindergarten the previous year	8	100	0	0

The four teachers who participated in the semi-structured interview ranged in experience

from 21 years to 27 years of overall teaching experience, ranging from 16 years to 27 years of

Kindergarten teaching experience. Holly stated, "I have worked with kindergarten students since

1993, so it is my 27th year working with kindergarten students" (Holly, personal communication,

December 17, 2020). Lily shared, "one of the reasons why I wanted to teach kindergarten was

because I had taught first grade for so long. I know what these kids know. I know what they need

to know for first grade" (Lily, personal communication, December 11, 2020).

All teachers who participated in the semi-structured interviews indicated that not all

students enter Kindergarten with the skills needed to be successful. Furthermore, previous

educational experience played a role in readiness. Rose shared,

all students do not enter with the social-emotional skills necessary to be successful.   At

the kindergarten grade level, many times, students come in from different areas. Some

have been to school, some have been to a daycare setting, some have been in a babysitter

setting, and some have been in a preschool. I think, depending on their previous

education, some of them come in with more taught skills and concrete skills than others

(Rose, personal communication, December 14, 2020).

Holly shared,

students who had preschool are better prepared socially and emotionally for learning in

Kindergarten. They have had that group dynamic-that experience of being with others.

They have the experience of working together, sharing, taking turns, caring for their

classmates. Not that other students could not, but it is different when you're at home with

a sibling versus in the classroom (Holly, personal communication, December 17, 2020).

Additionally, all teachers shared that students who participate in preschool come better

prepared. Two main themes emerged from this question. The first was that the type of

preschool they go to matters, and the second was age or developmental readiness. Lily shared,

"it just depends on where they have gone to preschool. What are the expectations of the children

from the preschool that they come from". Rose stated,

when students have preschool first, …, I find that they have had some curriculum around

social-emotional learning, they have learned about sharing, they have learned about

talking about their emotions. They have some language around social-emotional learning

that makes them more prepared for Kindergarten (Rose, personal communication,

December 14, 2020).

Holly shared,

> There are students who come to Kindergarten with the SEL skills needed for success, but
> I think there are more who need support (in) developing their skills-partly because of
> their age. It is when they begin to be more aware of their emotions. They are ready and
> open to learn(ing) about strategies that keep their emotions in check. It might be the first
> time they have set a goal and worked to achieve a goal. They become increasingly aware
> of one another, of others, and their relationship with other people. So they are starting to
> forge friendships, be involved in social interactions in a different way than when they are
> toddlers or probably even in preschool (Holly, personal communication, December 17,
> 2020).

Teacher Perception of Students' SEL Skills

As seen in Figure 1, 100% of the teachers reported variations in three SEL competencies-self-regulation, compliance, and communication. These responses indicated the teachers observed variations in students' ability to calm down after excitement, stay with activity, and move from one activity; students' ability to follow simple directions, follow the rules and routines, and follow teacher requests; and students' ability to use words to express their feelings or needs.

Figure 1

Teacher Perception of Student Variation in Competencies

Teacher Perception of Variations in Competency
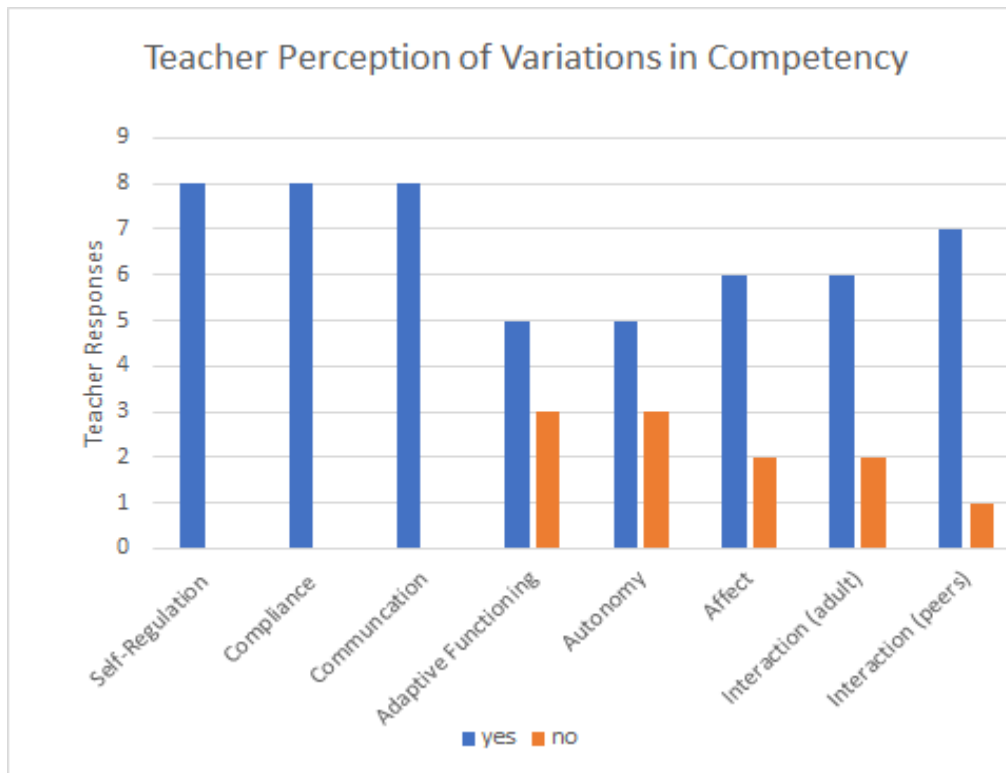
The results from the semi-structured interviews support these findings. Concerning self-regulation, Rose indicated that non-RC students "struggled with self-regulation and had a harder time focusing and attending to the lessons" (Rose, personal communication, December 14, 2020). Additionally, she shared that RC students, "especially in our virtual environment, are the students I most depend on to work independently and who are the most attending during lessons and have the stamina to sustain" (Rose, personal communication, December 14, 2020). Violet shared, "the (RC) students are a little bit better able to deal with changes in routine. When things are going to be a little bit different, they're a bit better at adjusting" as compared to non-RC (Violet, personal communication, December 17, 2020). Finally, Holly stated, "(RC)students have better self-regulation skills than the (non-RC) students" (Holly, personal communication, December 17, 2020).

Rose stated, "they (RC students) are the rule followers, their leader, their (the) students that I know I can point to and make examples…" (Rose, personal communication, December 14, 2020). Violet shared, "they (RC students) are much more verbal. They easily can and share their ideas, their feelings, and their answers. … They are my primary sharers in my classroom" (Violet, personal communication, December 17, 2020).

The teachers interviewed reported that the RC students were more compliant than the non-RC students. Rose added, "they are the rule followers, their leader, their (the) students that I know I can point to and make examples…" (Rose, personal communication, December 14, 2020). Lily shared, RC students were more compliant and better able to use their flexible thinking, while their non-RC peers needed more assistance (Lily, personal communication, December 11, 2020).

Two teachers reported the RC students were better able to engage in social communication than their non-RC peers. Violet stated, "RC students are much more verbal. They easily can and share their ideas, their feelings, and their answers. … They are my primary sharers in my classroom" (Violet, personal communication, December 17, 2020). Holly shared she had not observed a noticeable difference in the social communication between the two lists.

Five out of eight teachers reported variation in student adaptive functioning skills and autonomy. This response indicated 62.5% of teachers observed variations in students' ability to stay away from harm/self-harm, bathroom continence, and eat during mealtime, explore new places, activities, or things independently.

The findings of the semi-structured interviews triangulated these findings. Lily indicated that she had not observed a difference in the two groups' adaptive functioning skills.   She

provided that coming from virtual learning to in-person learning, the students all adapted well and could participate in the routine changes with no issues. Rose observed that the students who participated in RC instruction in preschool were more adaptable than their non-RC peers. She shared that RC students were "100 percent adaptable, and they switched from activity to activity very well" (Rose, personal communication, December 14, 2020). Violet provided "One-third of non-RC students (had adaptive functioning skills) and 100% of RC students (possessed adaptive functioning skills)" (Violet, personal communication, December 17, 2020). Holly shared that the students who participated in "RC we're definitely more flexible than the non-RC students" regarding adaptive functioning (Holly, personal communication, December 17, 2020).

All teachers reported differences in students' social-emotional readiness concerning autonomy between students who received RC instruction in pre-kindergarten and their non-RC peers. Three of the four teachers reported that they observed that RC's students were more autonomous than the non-RC students. Teachers reported RC students independently explored new places, activities, or things, whereas the non-RC students needed to be encouraged to try new things. Lily shared a concern that RC students were less likely to advocate for themselves (Lily, personal communication, December 11, 2020).

As seen in Figure 1, six out of eight teachers reported a variation in students' affect and interaction with adults. In contrast, two of the teachers reported that they did not see a variation. This response indicated that 75% of teachers observed variations in students' interest in things around them and their concern for others' feelings; observed variations in students' ability to enjoy time with the teacher, talk with adults, and friendliness with strangers. In comparison, 25% observed no variations during the first month of school.

Lily and Violet indicated they did not observe a difference in the students' interaction with adults. She indicated they were all very respectful to adults. The other two teachers both shared that RC students could better interact with adults than non-RC students. Violet shared, "RC students are much more comfortable interacting with adults and sharing ideas than all non-RC students" (Violet, personal communication, December 17, 2020).

As seen in Figure 1, seven of the eight teachers reported a variation in students' ability to interact with peers, whereas 12.5% of teachers reported that they did not see a variation in student compliance. This response indicated that 87.5% of teachers observed variations in students' ability to take turns sharing, playing with other children, and knowing friends' names. In comparison, 12.5% observed no variations during the first month of school.

Two of the four teachers indicated that students who participated in RC instruction in preschool had stronger interaction with their peers. Violet shared RC was "all-around more verbal and confident… They are my mover and shakers in my classroom" (Violet, personal communication, December 17, 2020). Finally, Holly had observed no noticeable difference in the interaction amongst peers between the two lists.

Teachers Perception of Impact on Academic Instruction

Interview Item five asked, "how do students' social-emotional skills impact academic instruction in the classroom?" All teachers shared that they believed that social-emotional skills impacted academic instruction. Lily shared,

> if a child has some of those social and emotional skills to instruct them, it is just so much easier. If children feel safe, if they feel secure, they are able to have some self-control and have some techniques to help them. (They) have ways to communicate how their feeling and their needs. There is a lot of independence (needed in Kindergarten).

When children have a lot of social and emotional skills, they can definitely be more

independent (Lily, personal communication, December 11, 2020).

Rose shared that students need to have their basic needs met. She stated,

for children to be successful academically, they need to have those base skills of being

fed, clothed, and feeling safe. The social-emotional skills of feeling safe, taking risks in

the classroom, and knowing emotionally if they make mistakes, they can soothe

themselves or find support. They need the behavior skills to be able to sit and listen and

follow directions. All of those pieces tie in directly to academics because if you can't

follow directions or if you're always scared to be in the room, there's no way that you can

access the academics (Rose, personal communication, December 14, 2020).

Violet shared that students' social-emotional skills impact them

"immensely. If (students) don't have self-regulation, they can't calm themselves when

they become upset, have a worry, or if something is not going exactly the way they are

predicting it will go. If they can't self-regulate, they absolutely cannot focus or do any

of their work (Violet, personal communication, December 17, 2020).

Teachers' Perception of Impact on Play in the Classroom

Interview item six asked, "how do students' social-emotional skills impact students' play

in the classroom?". All teachers agreed that having social-emotional skills is vital to

Kindergarten play in the classroom. When students don't have these skills, it impacts their

ability to play and build friendships,

Lily shared that students with social-emotional skills can use their flexible thinking skills

and have language students can use in play, making it more enjoyable for all children. "They can

use their flexible thinking. They already have things that they know they say. They're calmer. Their playing, in my opinion, is so much, from what I can see, is so much more enjoyable to them, to their friends" (Lily, personal communication, December 11, 2020).

Rose shared, "when students are deficient in social-emotional learning, they have a hard time sharing. They have a hard time participating in a group. They often play by themselves and don't build friendships because they haven't built those social-emotional skills to interact effectively" (Rose, personal communication, December 14, 2020). In contrast, she stated, "students who have built social-emotional skills are much more adaptable to changes. They're very flexible in their thinking. They learn how to share. They know how to communicate, how they feel when they're frustrated or upset. And it makes playing together more successful" (Rose, personal communication, December 14, 2020).

Violet shared having social-emotional skills "determines how their year is going to go." She shared that self-regulation in play is very important. When students "can self-regulate" and "have impulse control," they are more successful in play. "If they don't have any of that in place, then they act out toward others, and harm others, and (other) children don't want to play with them" (Violet, personal communication, December 17, 2020).

Holly shared when students have social-emotional skills, they "make good decisions about where to play. If their (play center) choice is crowded or filled up, they can decide on another place to go or something else to do. They can wait, share, take turns, and play well together" (Holly, personal communication, December 17, 2020). Conversely, she shared that students with SEL deficits "have trouble turn-taking with others. They don't have the flexibility that they need to make different choices. If (a play center) already full or they don't get the thing

they wanted". Holly also shared, "students who have social-emotional skills are flexible in their

thinking; they're able to relate better with their peers even during play" (Holly, personal

communication, December 17, 2020)

Teachers' Perception of Impact on Unstructured Activities

Interview item seven asked, "how do students' social-emotional skills impact unstructured

activities?" All teachers share that having social-emotional skills significantly impacts the

unstructured activities similar to play in the classroom.

Lily discussed how, during center time, there are groups of students who frequently work

independently, as a group, without direct adult supervision. She said students with social-

emotional skills have "self-care skills." They know "what they're supposed to be doing, they

know if they need a drink, they can go get a drink and, if they have to go to the bathroom, they

can go to the bathroom" (Lily, personal communication, December 11, 2020).

Rose shares, "They're less likely to follow the rules, the school rules, or the classroom

rules. They're more likely to get into an altercation with someone or a disagreement with

someone because they haven't they don't have those tools to communicate how they feel

effectively" (Rose, personal communication, December 14, 2020).

Holly shares, "some students can't handle that lack of structure. Students with social-

emotional skills can figure out things to do or make good decisions during unstructured time.

They know how they get along with others" (Holly, personal communication, December 17,

2020).

Teacher Reflections

Lily shared that students needed social-emotional skills to grow and learn. Social-emotional learning is the root "of all academic learning, of all growth mindset learning." Additionally, she indicated that students who did not have social-emotional learning skills "have more problems and they're not going to be able to take the risks that they need, and they're not going to be able to have that productive struggle." Students without social-emotional skills have "issues that stem from not having them" (Lily, personal communication, December 11, 2020).

Rose indicated that Kindergarten teachers spend "30 to 40 minutes in the morning and another 15 to 20 minutes in the afternoon" focusing on developing social-emotional skills. She also shared she believed "if it's (teaching social-emotional skills) being done at the preschool level as well, I see that only building on what we're (kindergarten teacher) already doing and making my job easier" (Rose, personal communication, December 14, 2020).

Violet reflected on the use of Responsive Classroom in Kindergarten. She discussed that she kept "seeing the news, all the negative pieces about this time period and how children are suffering, …, but I feel that the at least those of using that this program (RC) have children who are so much more engaged with each other" and were going to be more adaptable. "I feel like they've just learned to be very adaptable and more self-sufficient" (Violet, personal communication, December 17, 2020).

Holly shared she loved that she worked in a school district that "allows us to have playtime for kindergarten." She added, "other districts were phasing that (play) out" to make additional time to focus on academics. "Playtime actually helps us (Kindergarteners) with our learning" (Holly, personal communication, December 17, 2020).

Results indicated that Kindergarten teacher participants perceived a difference in students' social-emotional skills who have had Responsive Classroom in pre-kindergarten and those who have not. Seventy-Five percent of the teachers interviewed indicated that the RC students had better developed social-emotional skills than non-RC students.

Impact of RC on Preschool Social-Emotional Learning

Research Question #3 asked, *"How does the use of Responsive Classroom impact the development of social-emotional learning in Pre-Kindergarten?"* Results suggest RC positively impacts the development of social-emotional learning in Pre-Kindergarten. Students who participate in RC in preschool showed growth in adaptive functioning, affect, autonomy, communication, compliance, interaction with peers and teachers, and self-regulation. These skills carry over into entry into kindergarten and allow students to be more successful in structured and unstructured academic activities and social play with peers.

RQ3 was answered by reviewing and analyzing all data sources. Comparisons and connections were made based on the patterns and trends from qualitative data (TPSI) and quantitative data (ASQ: SE2 and TPQ). Meta inferences were developed to answer the overarching research question.

Information obtained from the ASQ: SE2 showed students' scores increased in preschool students' SEL skills after receiving RC instruction for three months. The findings from the TPSI and the TPQ indicated that Kindergarten teachers perceived that students who had participated in preschool with RC had better developed social-emotional learning skills that were evident in all aspects of the day, including academic instruction, unstructured activities, and play in the classroom.

Summary of Results

In closing, based on the above-presented findings, Responsive Classroom's use positively impacts social-emotional learning development in Pre-Kindergarten. Using data from the administration of the Ages & Stages Questionnaires[®]: Social-Emotional, Second Edition (ASQ[®]: SE-2), RC has been found to affect pre-kindergarten students' social-emotional learning positively. Students who participated in RC lessons daily showed growth in SEL skills based on pre-test and post-test data. Additionally, in a class comparison of students who had RC in preschool and those who did not, kindergarten teachers reported a difference in students' social-emotional skills. Students who participated in preschool with RC have better developed social-emotional skills.

Chapter V- Discussion and Summary

Only 40% of children enter kindergarten having all the social-emotional skills needed (Yates et al., 2008). Social-emotional skills are taught during preschool; however, preschool students are expelled at a rate higher than their school-age peers. The reason for expulsion from preschool is often due to a lack of self-regulation skills, an increase in challenging behaviors, and the students' ability to comply (Gilliam, 2005).

The purpose of this pragmatic, mixed-methods study with an enhancement/complementarity design was to gain a deeper understanding of Responsive Classroom, its benefits in pre-kindergarten, and determine the perception of Kindergarten teachers whose students received RC in pre-kindergarten. To achieve this goal, the researcher reviewed kindergarten behavioral referrals and pre-test and post-test Ages & Stages Questionnaires®: Social-Emotional, Second Edition (ASQ®:SE-2) scores, administered a Teacher Perception Questionnaire (TPQ) to Kindergarten teachers (n=8) and conducted Teacher Perception Semi-Structured Interviews (TPSI) to a nested sample of Kindergarten teachers (n=4). Results from the mixed methods study indicate that RC's use positively impacts social-emotional learning development in Pre-Kindergarten.

"Responsive Classroom is a student-centered, social and emotional learning approach to teaching and discipline. It is comprised of a set of research and evidence-based practices" to develop students' social-emotional skill set (www.responsiveclassroom.org). RC is a K-8 approach where the **"**emphasis is on helping students develop their academic, social, and emotional skills in a learning environment that is developmentally responsive to their strengths and needs"; however, RC does not have a Pre-Kindergarten component

(www.responsiveclassroom.org). To date, the researcher is not aware of any research on the benefits of RC's use with preschoolers.

The effects of utilizing RC at the Pre-Kindergarten level are essential to support social-emotional growth using the same curriculum as the rest of the school district. The researcher hopes to validate RC's use to ensure that there is a positive impact on utilizing RC at the Pre-Kindergarten level. Using RC would allow the preschool program to align itself with the district and determine if RC impacts the development of social-emotional learning in pre-kindergarten and if teachers perceive an impact with its use.

This chapter will summarize results, interpret research findings, discuss limitations, and make recommendations for future practice and research based on the results of the following research questions:

RQ1: *How does the use of Responsive Classroom affect the social-emotional learning of pre-kindergarten students using the Ages & Stages Questionnaires®: Social-Emotional, Second Edition (ASQ®: SE-2)? What is the impact of RC behavior referrals for kindergarten students?*

RQ2: *Do kindergarten teachers perceive a difference in the social-emotional skills of students who have had Responsive Classroom in pre-kindergarten and those who have not?*

RQ3*: How does the use of Responsive Classroom impact the development of social-emotional learning in Pre-Kindergarten?*

Summary of Results

The finding indicated that students who participated in RC lessons daily showed growth in all social competencies, especially in self-regulation. Using data from the

Ages & Stages Questionnaires®: Social-Emotional, Second Edition (ASQ®: SE-2), RC has been found to affect pre-kindergarten students' social-emotional learning positively. Data indicated a 50% increase in students' self-regulation skills, 40% increase in affect and the ability to interact with adults, 38% increase in students' autonomy skills, 34% increase in communication skills and ability to interact with peers, and 32% increase in students' compliance and adaptive functioning skills.

Findings also showed kindergarten teachers perceived a difference in the social-emotional skills of students who had RC in pre-kindergarten as compared to students who have not. The data from the TPQ and the TPSI showed that students who participate in preschools have better social-emotional skills upon entry into kindergarten. Additionally, preschool students who received RC instruction had better developed social-emotional skills upon entry into kindergarten than their non-RC peers.

Finally, although there was limited data collected through discipline referrals, the ASQ®: SE-2 & teacher interview data collected on self-regulation, compliance, and communication indicated that all three competencies had been positively impacted by RC. This preliminary data collected on these three behavior competencies suggests that RC will positively reductive effective on discipline referrals.

Discussion Section

The data suggest that RC positively affected pre-kindergarten students' social-emotional learning. Students who had RC in preschool were better able to focus and attend to lessons, adapt to changes in routines, and follow the rules and directions.   Kindergarten teachers found that students who had RC in preschool were more compliant and possessed flexible thinking. These findings are similar to the finding in Catalano et al., 2004; Durlak et al., 2011;

Taylor et al., 2017, where they found that preschool children who participate in SEL programs were better developed social-emotional skills than their non-SEL peers.

There is a lack of (or no) existing research on the use of RC with preschool children. Although research exists on the Responsive Classroom Approach to teaching SEL and the impact of SEL on preschool students, the researcher could not find any literature on RC's use with preschool students. This study appears to be seminal research on the use of RC with preschool students. The findings of this study are similar to the finding of Rimm Kaufman et al. (2014) found that students who participated in RC yielded improved behavioral outcomes and increased prosocial behaviors amongst peers. Additionally, this research builds on the existing body of research on students' academic benefits and social development who receive SEL instruction (Barnett, 2014; Barnett et al., 2008; Denham, 2006; Denham & Brown, 2010).

Limitations of the Study

As with the majority of studies, the design of the current study is subject to limitations. This study has three main limitations: perceived conflict of interest, sample bias, and lack of previous research studies on this topic. The researcher is an employee of the school district, so a perceived conflict of interest may occur; however, the researcher is not the kindergarten teacher's supervisor. To eliminate any perceived conflict of interest, the researcher included a disclosure statement in the procedures indicating there was no foreseeable risk associated with this study. There was no conflict of interest as the researcher is not their supervisor.

The second limitation is sample size and bias. Because the researcher was interested in determining the effect a specific curriculum had on a specific population, the sample is one of

convenience. Due to this sample selection, the findings have limited-generalizable to other populations.

Recommendations for Future Research

Future research is needed to determine the feasibility of RC use with pre-kindergarten students. This study is the researchers' first known study of the use of RC with preschool students.   Based on this research, there are several recommendations for future researchers:

- Replication of the study during a non-pandemic time where there are no distancing restrictions with students to determine the impact on student's behavior and discipline when extreme measures are not in place.

- Conduct more extensive large-scale, randomized research on the use of RC with Preschool students on the impact on behavior, academic, and SEL skills acquisition.

- Conduct research to compare the difference in preschool programs that do and do not use RC.

- Investigate whether students who participate in RC are less likely to advocate for themselves.

Implications for Practice

Based on the findings from this study, the researcher has several recommendations for future practice:

- The district should provide RC training to all preschool employees and other support staff to ensure there is a common understanding of the SEL expectations and behavior for all students.

- School districts with preschool programs should use RC as their SEL curriculum.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the current research has shown that RC can impact the growth and acquisition of SEL skills of Preschool students. Teachers not only perceived a difference in the entry-level skills of prekindergarten students but that students who had RC in preschool displayed better SEL skills than those who did not have RC in preschool. Data collected on self-regulation, compliance, and communication suggest that RC will positively reductive effective on discipline referrals. This data would also suggest that RC would increase students' self-regulation, compliance, and communication skills, reducing behavioral challenges and behavioral referrals, thus decreasing expulsion from preschool.

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Appendix A

Dear Kindergarten Teachers,

My name is Jacqueline Barnhart and I am a doctoral candidate at Arcadia University in Education. I am hoping to conduct a research study titled "The Effect of Responsive Classroom on Preschool Children: A Mixed Methods Study". The focus of my research is to determine the impact of Responsive Classroom at the Pre-Kindergarten level. Identifying effective ways to build social and emotional development is important to the field of education and society at large. By conducting this research we will gain a deeper understanding the benefits of Responsive Classroom for Pre-Kindergarten Students.

Your participation in this study involves the completion of one questionnaire with ten questions concerning your current classes' social emotional skills over the last month. This questionnaire should take 5-10 minutes to complete in September.

You may choose to not participate, or stop participation at any time, without negatively affecting your relationship with school personnel, Arcadia University, or me. Please contact me at any time if you have questions. If you wish to withdraw your participation you can simply email me at jbarnhart@arcadia.edu. This information may be shared with others in the future such as future publications.

Thank you for considering participating in my study. If you are interested in participating in this study or have any questions or concerns, kindly contact me at 215-915-8529 or Jbarnhart@arcadia.edu.

Sincerely,

Jacqueline Barnhart
Jbarnhart@arcadia.edu

I, _____, give my consent for participation in the above-mentioned research activities conducted by Jacqueline Barnhart as part of a research project for a dissertation at Arcadia University. I understand I can withdraw at any time with no adverse consequences, simply by contacting the researcher. My signature below indicates my willingness to participate.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Appendix B

Teacher Perception Questionnaire

Do you currently teach Kindergarten?   Yes   No

Did you teach Kindergarten the previous year   Yes   No

During the 1st month of school have you notice a variation in students' ability to:

self-regulate?   Yes   No

(i.e. ability to calm down after excitement, stay with activity, move from one activity to the next)

Comply   Yes   No

(i.e. follow simple directions, follow rules and routines, follow to teacher requests)

Communicate   Yes   No

(i.e. use of words to express feelings or needs)

Adaptive Functioning   Yes   No

(i.e. stay away from harm/ self-harm, bathroom continence, eat during meal time)

Autonomy   Yes   No

(i.e. explores new places, activities, or things independently)

Affect   Yes   No

(i.e. shows concern for others, interest in people, toys, food around them)

Interaction with adults   Yes   No

(i.e. enjoys time with teacher, ability to talk with adult, friendliness with strangers)

Interaction with Peers   Yes   No

(i.e. take turns sharing, plays with other children, knows friends' names)

Appendix C:

Interview Protocol

Project: An investigation of the use of RC at the Pre-Kindergarten level and to determine if Responsive Classroom practices impacts the development of social-emotional learning in ECE and if teachers perceive an effect with its use.

Time of interview: Date:

Interviewer: Place:

Interviewee:

Interview procedure: You are being asked to participate in an interview in a research study investigating the use of Responsive Classroom Curriculum at the Pre-Kindergarten level and to determine if Responsive Classroom practices impact the development of social-emotional learning in ECE and if Kindergarten teachers perceive an effect with its use**.** During the interview, you will be asked to respond to several open-ended questions. You may choose not to answer any or all the questions. The procedure will involve audiotaping the interview and the recording will be transcribed verbatim. Your results will be confidential, and you will not be identified individually.

Informed consent: Please sign the informed consent form signaling your willingness to participate.

Questions:

1. How long have you worked for the school district?
2. How long have you worked with Kindergarten students?
3. Based on your experiences, do you believe that most students enter Kindergarten with the SEL skills needed to be successful? Explain.
4. Do you see that students who participate in Preschool are better prepared social and emotionally to participate in Kindergarten learning?
5. How do students social-emotional skills impact academic instruction in the classroom?
6. How do students social-emotional skills impact students play in the classroom?
7. How do students social-emotional skills impact unstructured activities?
8. What entry level skills are most lacking?
9. Looking at the two lists, can you describe any differences you see in the social-emotional readiness of your current kindergarten class
    a. Self-regulation?
    b. Compliance?

       c.   Social-communication?
       d.   Adaptive functioning?
       e.   Autonomy?
       f.   Affect?
       g.   Interaction with adult?
       h.   Interactions with and peers?

10   Is there anything else you would like to share?

Closing: Thank you for participating in the study. I appreciate you taking the time to participate in the interview. Once again, your confidentiality will be honored. If you have any questions, feel free to contact me. If I have further questions, would it be Ok for me to reach out to you again?

Consent/Assent to Participate in the Research Study
By signing this document, you are agreeing to be in this study. Make sure you understand what the study is about before you sign. I/We will give you a copy of this document for your records and I/we will keep a copy with the study records. If you have any questions about the study after you sign this document, you can contact me.

I understand what the study is about and my questions so far have been answered. I agree to take part in this study.

Print Legal Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date of Signature (mm/dd/yyyy): _____

Appendix D

Ages & Stages Questionnaires®: Social-Emotional
A Parent-Completed, Child-Monitoring System for Social-Emotional Behaviors
By **Jane Squires, Diane Bricker, & Elizabeth Twombly**
with assistance from **Suzanne Yockelson, Maura Schoen Davis, & Younghee Kim**
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ASQ:SE™

48 Month/4 Year Questionnaire

(For children ages 42 through 53 months)

Important Points to Remember:

☑ Please return this questionnaire by _____ .

☑ If you have any questions or concerns about your child or about this questionnaire, please call: _____ .

☑ Thank you and please look forward to filling out another ASQ:SE questionnaire in _____ months.

ASQ:SE™

Ages & Stages Questionnaires®: Social-Emotional
A Parent-Completed, Child-Monitoring System for Social-Emotional Behaviors
By **Jane Squires, Diane Bricker, & Elizabeth Twombly**
with assistance from **Suzanne Yockelson, Maura Schoen Davis, & Younghee Kim**

48 Month/4 Year ASQ:SE Questionnaire

(For children ages 42 through 53 months)

Please provide the following information.

Child's name: _____

Child's date of birth: _____

Today's date: _____

Person filling out this questionnaire: _____

What is your relationship to the child? _____

Your telephone: _____

Your mailing address: _____

_____

City: _____

State: _____ ZIP code: _____

List people assisting in questionnaire completion: _____

_____

Administering program or provider: _____

ASQ:SE™

Please read each question carefully and
1. Check the box ❑ that best describes your child's behavior *and*
2. Check the circle ○ if this behavior is a concern

	MOST OF THE TIME	SOMETIMES	RARELY OR NEVER	CHECK IF THIS IS A CONCERN
1. Does your child look at you when you talk to him?	❑ z	❑ v	❑ x	○
2. Does your child cling to you more than you expect?	❑ x	❑ v	❑ z	○
3. Does your child talk and/or play with adults she knows well?	❑ z	❑ v	❑ x	○
4. When upset, can your child calm down within 15 minutes?	❑ z	❑ v	❑ x	○
5. Does your child like to be hugged or cuddled?	❑ z	❑ v	❑ x	○
6. Does your child seem too friendly with strangers?	❑ x	❑ v	❑ z	○
7. Can your child settle himself down after periods of exciting activity?	❑ z	❑ v	❑ x	○
8. Does your child cry, scream, or have tantrums for long periods of time?	❑ x	❑ v	❑ z	○
9. Is your child interested in things around her, such as people, toys, and foods?	❑ z	❑ v	❑ x	○

TOTAL POINTS ON PAGE ___

	MOST OF THE TIME	SOMETIMES	RARELY OR NEVER	CHECK IF THIS IS A CONCERN
10. Does your child stay dry during the day?	☐ z	☐ v	☐ x	○
11. Does your child have eating problems, such as stuffing foods, vomiting, eating nonfood items, or _____ ? (You may write in another problem.)	☐ x	☐ v	☐ z	○
12. Do you and your child enjoy mealtimes together?	☐ z	☐ v	☐ x	○
13. Does your child do what you ask her to do?	☐ z	☐ v	☐ x	○
14. Does your child seem happy?	☐ z	☐ v	☐ x	○
15. Does your child sleep at least 8 hours in a 24-hour period?	☐ z	☐ v	☐ x	○
16. Does your child seem more active than other children his age?	☐ x	☐ v	☐ z	○
17. Does your child use words to tell you what she wants or needs?	☐ z	☐ v	☐ x	○
18. Can your child stay with activities he enjoys for at least 10 minutes (not including watching television)?	☐ z	☐ v	☐ x	○

TOTAL POINTS ON PAGE ___

4

ASQ◆SE™   48 months/4 years

	MOST OF THE TIME	SOMETIMES	RARELY OR NEVER	CHECK IF THIS IS A CONCERN
19. Does your child use words to describe her feelings and the feelings of others, such as, "I'm happy," "I don't like that," or "She's sad"?	☐ z	☐ v	☐ x	◯
20. Can your child move from one activity to the next with little difficulty, such as from playtime to mealtime?	☐ z	☐ v	☐ x	◯
21. Does your child explore new places, such as a park or a friend's home?	☐ z	☐ v	☐ x	◯
22. Does your child do things over and over and can't seem to stop? Examples are rocking, hand flapping, spinning, or _____ . (You may write in something else.)	☐ x	☐ v	☐ z	◯
23. Does your child hurt himself on purpose?	☐ x	☐ v	☐ z	◯
24. Does your child follow rules (at home, at child care)?	☐ z	☐ v	☐ x	◯
25. Does your child destroy or damage things on purpose?	☐ x	☐ v	☐ z	◯
26. Does your child stay away from dangerous things, such as fire and moving cars?	☐ z	☐ v	☐ x	◯

TOTAL POINTS ON PAGE ___

	MOST OF THE TIME	SOMETIMES	RARELY OR NEVER	CHECK IF THIS IS A CONCERN
27. Can your child name a friend?	❏ z	❏ v	❏ x	○
28. Does your child show concern for other people's feelings? For example, does she look sad when someone is hurt?	❏ z	❏ v	❏ x	○
29. Do *other* children like to play with your child?	❏ z	❏ v	❏ x	○
30. Does *your child* like to play with other children?	❏ z	❏ v	❏ x	○
31. Does your child try to hurt other children, adults, or animals (for example, by kicking or biting)?	❏ x	❏ v	❏ z	○
32. Does your child show an interest or knowledge of adult sexual language and activity?	❏ x	❏ v	❏ z	○
33. Has anyone expressed concerns about your child's behaviors? If you checked "sometimes" or "most of the time," please explain:	❏ x	❏ v	❏ z	○

_____

_____

_____

_____

TOTAL POINTS ON PAGE ___

34. Do you have concerns about your child's eating, sleeping, or toileting habits? If so, please explain:

_____

_____

_____

_____

35. Is there anything that worries you about your child? If so, please explain:

_____

_____

_____

_____

36. What things do you enjoy most about your child?

_____

_____

_____

_____

48 Month/4 Year ASQ:SE Information Summary

Child's name: _____

Child's date of birth: _____

Person filling out the ASQ:SE: _____

Relationship to child: _____

Mailing address: _____

Telephone: _____

City: _____ State: _____ ZIP: _____

SCORING GUIDELINES

1. Make sure the parent has answered all questions and has checked the concern column as necessary. If all questions have been answered, go to Step 2. If not all questions have been answered, you should first try to contact the parent to obtain answers or, if necessary, calculate an average score (see pages 40 and 41 of *The ASQ:SE User's Guide*).

2. Review any parent comments. If there are no comments, go to Step 3. If a parent has written in a response, see the section titled "Parent Comments" on pages 40–42 of *The ASQ:SE User's Guide* to determine if the response indicates a behavior that may be of concern.

3. Using the following point system:

Z (for zero) next to the checked box	= 0 points
V (for Roman numeral V) next to the checked box	= 5 points
X (for Roman numeral X) next to the checked box	= 10 points
Checked concern	= 5 points

Add together:

Total points on page 3	= _____
Total points on page 4	= _____
Total points on page 5	= _____
Total points on page 6	= _____
Child's total score =	_____

SCORE INTERPRETATION

1. *Review questionnaires*

    Review the parent's answers to questions. Give special consideration to any individual questions that score 10 or 15 points and any written or verbal comments that the parent shares. Offer guidance, support, and information to families, and refer if necessary, as indicated by score and referral considerations.

2. *Transfer child's total score*

    In the table below, enter the child's total score (transfer total score from above).

Questionnaire interval	Cutoff score	Child's ASQ:SE score
48 months/4 years	70	

3. *Referral criteria*

    Compare the child's total score with the cutoff in the table above. If the child's score falls above the cutoff and the factors in Step 4 have been considered, refer the child for a mental health evaluation.

4. *Referral considerations*

    It is always important to look at assessment information in the context of other factors influencing a child's life. Consider the following variables prior to making referrals for a mental health evaluation. Refer to pages 45–50 in *The ASQ:SE User's Guide* for additional guidance related to these factors and for suggestions for follow-up.

    - Setting/time factors
      (e.g., Is the child's behavior the same at home as at school?, Have there been any stressful events in the child's life recently?)

    - Development factors
      (e.g., Is the child's behavior related to a developmental stage or a developmental delay?)

    - Health factors
      (e.g., Is the child's behavior related to health or biological factors?)

    - Family/cultural factors
      (e.g., Is the child's behavior acceptable given cultural or family context?)

3

ASQ:SE 48 months/4 years

Appendix E

Ages & Stages Questionnaires®: Social-Emotional
A Parent-Completed, Child-Monitoring System for Social-Emotional Behaviors
By **Jane Squires, Diane Bricker, & Elizabeth Twombly**
with assistance from **Suzanne Yockelson, Maura Schoen Davis, & Younghee Kim**

ASQ:SE™

60 Month/5 Year Questionnaire

(For children ages 54 through 65 months)

Important Points to Remember:

☑ Please return this questionnaire by _____ .

☑ If you have any questions or concerns about your child or about this questionnaire, please call: _____ .

☑ Thank you for your participation in this project.

ASQ:SE™

60 Month/5 Year ASQ:SE Questionnaire

(For children ages 54 through 65 months)

Please provide the following information.

Child's name: _____

Child's date of birth: _____

Today's date: _____

Person filling out this questionnaire: _____

What is your relationship to the child? _____

Your telephone: _____

Your mailing address: _____

_____

City: _____

State: _____ZIP code: _____

List people assisting in questionnaire completion: _____

_____

Administering program or provider: _____

ASQ：SE™

Please read each question carefully and
1. Check the box ❑ that best describes your child's behavior *and*
2. Check the circle ○ if this behavior is a concern

	MOST OF THE TIME	SOMETIMES	RARELY OR NEVER	CHECK IF THIS IS A CONCERN
1. Does your child look at you when you talk to her?	❑ z	❑ v	❑ x	○
2. Does your child cling to you more than you expect?	❑ x	❑ v	❑ z	○
3. Does your child like to be hugged or cuddled?	❑ z	❑ v	❑ x	○
4. Does your child talk and/or play with adults he knows well?	❑ z	❑ v	❑ x	○
5. When upset, can your child calm down within 15 minutes?	❑ z	❑ v	❑ x	○
6. Does your child seem too friendly with strangers?	❑ x	❑ v	❑ z	○
7. Can your child settle herself down after periods of exciting activity?	❑ z	❑ v	❑ x	○
8. Does your child seem happy?	❑ z	❑ v	❑ x	○
9. Does your child cry, scream, or have tantrums for long periods of time?	❑ x	❑ v	❑ z	○

TOTAL POINTS ON PAGE ___

3

ASQ:SE 60 months/5 years

	MOST OF THE TIME	SOMETIMES	RARELY OR NEVER	CHECK IF THIS IS A CONCERN
10. Is your child interested in things around him, such as people, toys, and foods?	❑ z	❑ v	❑ x	⭘
11. Does your child go to the bathroom by herself? (Reminders and help with wiping are okay.)	❑ z	❑ v	❑ x	⭘
12. Does your child have eating problems, such as stuffing foods, vomiting, eating nonfood items, or _____ ? (You may write in another problem.)	❑ x	❑ v	❑ z	⭘
13. Can your child stay with activities he enjoys for at least 15 minutes (not including watching television)?	❑ z	❑ v	❑ x	⭘
14. Do you and your child enjoy mealtimes together?	❑ z	❑ v	❑ x	⭘
15. Does your child do what you ask her to do?	❑ z	❑ v	❑ x	⭘
16. Does your child seem more active than other children his age?	❑ x	❑ v	❑ z	⭘
17. Does your child sleep at least 8 hours in a 24-hour period?	❑ z	❑ v	❑ x	⭘

TOTAL POINTS ON PAGE ___

4

ASQ:SE 60 months/5 years

	MOST OF THE TIME	SOMETIMES	RARELY OR NEVER	CHECK IF THIS IS A CONCERN
18. Does your child use words to tell you what she wants or needs?	☐ z	☐ v	☐ x	○
19. Does your child use words to describe his feelings and the feelings of others, such as, "I'm happy," "I don't like that," or "She's sad"?	☐ z	☐ v	☐ x	○
20. Does your child move from one activity to the next with little difficulty, such as from playtime to mealtime?	☐ z	☐ v	☐ x	○
21. Does your child explore new places, such as a park or a friend's home?	☐ z	☐ v	☐ x	○
22. Does your child do things over and over and can't seem to stop? Examples are rocking, hand flapping, spinning, or _____ . (You may write in something else.)	☐ x	☐ v	☐ z	○
23. Does your child hurt herself on purpose?	☐ x	☐ v	☐ z	○
24. Does your child follow rules (at home, at child care)?	☐ z	☐ v	☐ x	○
25. Does your child destroy or damage things on purpose?	☐ x	☐ v	☐ z	○

TOTAL POINTS ON PAGE ___

5

ASQ·SE **60 months/5 years**

	MOST OF THE TIME	SOMETIMES	RARELY OR NEVER	CHECK IF THIS IS A CONCERN
26. Does your child stay away from dangerous things, such as fire and moving cars?	☐ z	☐ v	☐ x	○
27. Does your child show concern for other people's feelings? For example, does he look sad when someone is hurt?	☐ z	☐ v	☐ x	○
28. Do *other* children like to play with your child?	☐ z	☐ v	☐ x	○
29. Does *your child* like to play with other children?	☐ z	☐ v	☐ x	○
30. Does your child try to hurt other children, adults, or animals (for example, by kicking or biting)?	☐ x	☐ v	☐ z	○
31. Does your child take turns and share when playing with other children?	☐ z	☐ v	☐ x	○
32. Does your child show an interest or knowledge of adult sexual language and activity?	☐ x	☐ v	☐ z	○
33. Has anyone expressed concerns about your child's behaviors? If you checked "sometimes" or "most of the time," please explain:	☐ x	☐ v	☐ z	○

_____

_____

_____

_____

TOTAL POINTS ON PAGE ___

34. Do you have concerns about your child's eating, sleeping, or toileting habits? If so, please explain:

_____

_____

_____

_____

35. Is there anything that worries you about your child? If so, please explain:

_____

_____

_____

_____

36. What things do you enjoy most about your child?

_____

_____

_____

_____

60 Month/5 Year ASQ:SE Information Summary

Child's name: _____

Child's date of birth: _____

Person filling out the ASQ:SE: _____ Relationship to child: _____

Mailing address: _____

Telephone: _____ City: _____ State: _____ ZIP:

SCORING GUIDELINES

1. Make sure the parent has answered all questions and has checked the concern column as necessary. If all questions have been answered, go to Step 2. If not all questions have been answered, you should first try to contact the parent to obtain answers or, if necessary, calculate an average score (see pages 40 and 41 of *The ASQ:SE User's Guide*).
2. Review any parent comments. If there are no comments, go to Step 3. If a parent has written in a response, see the section titled "Parent Comments" on pages 40–42 of *The ASQ:SE User's Guide* to determine if the response indicates a behavior that may be of concern.
3. Using the following point system:

Z (for zero) next to the checked box	= 0 points
V (for Roman numeral V) next to the checked box	= 5 points
X (for Roman numeral X) next to the checked box	= 10 points
Checked concern	= 5 points

Add together:

Total points on page 3	= _____
Total points on page 4	= _____
Total points on page 5	= _____
Total points on page 6	= _____
Child's total score =	_____

SCORE INTERPRETATION

1. *Review questionnaires*

   Review the parent's answers to questions. Give special consideration to any individual questions that score 10 or 15 points and any written or verbal comments that the parent shares. Offer guidance, support, and information to families, and refer if necessary, as indicated by score and referral considerations.

2. *Transfer child's total score*

   In the table below, enter the child's total score (transfer total score from above).

Questionnaire interval	Cutoff score	Child's ASQ:SE score
60 months/5 years	70	

3. *Referral criteria*

   Compare the child's total score with the cutoff in the table above. If the child's score falls above the cutoff and the factors in Step 4 have been considered, refer the child for a mental health evaluation.

4. *Referral considerations*

   It is always important to look at assessment information in the context of other factors influencing a child's life. Consider the following variables prior to making referrals for a mental health evaluation. Refer to pages 45–50 in *The ASQ:SE User's Guide* for additional guidance related to these factors and for suggestions for follow-up.

   - Setting/time factors
     (e.g., Is the child's behavior the same at home as at school?, Have there been any stressful events in the child's life recently?)
   - Development factors
     (e.g., Is the child's behavior related to a developmental stage or a developmental delay?)
   - Health factors
     (e.g., Is the child's behavior related to health or biological factors?)
   - Family/cultural factors
     (e.g., Is the child's behavior acceptable given cultural or family context?)

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ASQ:SE **60 months/5 years**