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**TEACHING TO CARE:
EMOTIONALLY INTELLIGENT TEACHERS SUPPORT
PRESCHOOL CHILDREN'S EMOTIONAL COMPETENCE**

**A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the
degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Psychology at Massey University,
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Maria Luisa Ulloa

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ABSTRACT

A considerable amount of research has demonstrated that successful teacher- child interactions in early childhood settings are critical predictors of mental health, social competence, and academic achievement. A few studies have been focused on the processes in which teachers support children's emotional competence and the influence of their own emotional competence on these processes. This thesis examined a variety of sources of influence for enhancing the capacity to develop emotional competence in preschool children. Its general purpose was on how teachers create classroom atmospheres that promote positive emotional development. Specifically, this research investigated the teachers' ability to implement strategies to facilitate children's emotional communications in order to generate synchronous relationships that allow emotional competence through language and other cognitive processes. Emotional interactions, strategies used by teachers for promoting emotional socialization, and emotional atmospheres of Early Childhood Education (ECE) classrooms are inter-linked, because the general emotional atmosphere allows teachers to be more mindful, less reactive, and more strategic in responding to children's emotions.

The first phase of the research involved a naturalistic observation study in three culturally diverse preschool settings over a 10-week period. Emotional interaction patterns and strategies that contributed to or obstructed the children's emotional understanding were identified. The study demonstrated that the observed Early Childhood Education centres which promoted interactions that considered children's emotions and that used more responsive strategies such as emotion coaching, encouraging of mastery, expressiveness of feelings and emotion talk, showed less frequency of aggressive, unresolved conflict compared with centres that used more reactive

and preventive strategies. The identified positive strategies implemented by teachers inspired the development of an emotion-focused intervention that constituted the second phase of this research.

The second phase consisted of a randomised controlled trial with 30 early childhood education teachers. Half of the participants—the experimental group—were taught strategies to enhance their own and the children’s emotional competence. The participants in the control group were provided standard information regarding children’s development. The training intervention included active strategies involving emotion coaching, emotional schemas, reflective practice, and mindfulness training. Teachers’ outcomes were assessed in situ during a pretend play session with small groups of preschool-aged children. The dependent variables were observed occurrences of different components of emotion competence in teachers. The study showed significant statistical effects across the three different emotional competence skills demonstrated by early childhood teachers during a game situation.

Both studies highlighted the processes through which teachers support emotional competence of young children, and the importance of the role of early childhood teachers on socialisation of children’s emotions. Most importantly, it gave evidence, based on the influence of emotion-focused teacher training, in supporting teachers’ emotional skills so they can optimally meet the emotional needs of children. This research has significant implications for preschoolers’ mental health, educational practice, and policies aiming to protect children from previous or future risk exposure. It also contributed to the integration of psychological and educational research on the role of teachers as agents of the emotion socialization in young children.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ANOVA: Analysis of variance

CD: Compact Disc

CHERUBS: Children's Environments: Research Unit for Behavioural Studies

DET: Differential Emotion Theory

ECE: Early Childhood Education

EE: Emotional Expression

EK: Emotional Knowledge

ER: Emotional Regulation

ESQ: Emotional Style Questionnaire

EFT: Emotion Focus Therapy

MEP: Meta- Emotion Philosophy

MESQ: Maternal Emotional Style Questionnaire

NZ: New Zealand

RCT: Randomised Control Trial

TESQ: Teacher Emotional Style Questionnaire

USA: United States of America

PREFACE

Thinking and writing about emotions is itself an emotional experience. Any person working in early childhood environments understands that the nature of this work is filled with powerful contradictions and ambiguities. Working with small children is not by any means an easy endeavour. It involves almost everything. At the same time it is rewarding as exhausting, exhilarating and arduous, refreshing and demanding, beautiful and wearing, satisfying and challenging.

My interest in the emotional factors that enter into the process of learning and teaching young children, has accompanied me for various decades. After finishing my undergraduate degree in psychology, I undertook a stimulating but demanding training in Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy Studies at the Tavistock Clinic in London. A fundamental part of this training consisted of undertaking two years of infant observation, which allowed me to explore, based on available evidence, emotional events between infant, parents, and other members of the family present during the observations. The aim of this longitudinal study was to explore and describe the development of the relationship between infant and others, including the observer, and try to understand the psychological aspects of underlying behaviour and patterns of communication. This is when my interest in the emotional and relational aspects of early learning started. After doing further training in child development and having worked as a lecturer for a few years, I took a long break from work to be a full time mother. This is when I began to take part in the British preschool movement, first on a voluntary basis and then, after I completed a PGDip in Early Childhood Education(ECE), as a full time teacher at the same preschool that my son attended. That is when my career had a turn around. I was fascinated and committed to the world of early childhood education, which I saw as an opportunity to learn and implement my previous

psychological knowledge to what we consider “normal development.” After completing a Master of Arts in Therapeutic Childcare, I wanted to continue investigating the emotional aspects of learning and the integration of therapeutic tools in early childhood environments, in order to support children’s development. This interest travelled with me across the globe and through all my PhD years. Soon after I moved to New Zealand, I joined Professor Ian Evans’ lab, (CHERUBS: Children's Environments. Research Unit for Behavioural Studies). This is where I first heard about the Te Āniwaniwa Project, the emotional atmosphere of classrooms research developed by Evans’ group and supported by a Marsden Grant. I became interested in integrating previous insights from my academic and practical experience to Ian’s line of research, wanting to bring the topic to the Early Childhood Education arena. The integration of these ideas is reflected through this thesis.

After spending a large amount of time as a teacher in ECE centres, I repeatedly observed many issues beyond the curricular and educational needs of the children that required attention. In New Zealand, a very comprehensive early childhood curriculum Te Whāriki (1996), explicitly mentions the importance of addressing emotions, however, the way in which children’s emotional competence can be supported and managed by teachers is not always part of the typical agenda for early childhood education.

I noticed that often teachers found themselves worried, weighted down, and overwhelmed by challenging moments, while at the same time, they were puzzled about their own perceptions and emotional reactions towards such children and/or events. In order to cope with these pressures, teachers attempted to find quick and sometimes forceful ways to manage these situations, as in many instances, they found it difficult to understand the nature of these situations. Because of the links between the challenging emotional aspects of an early childhood

teacher's job and the incredibly relevant role of people in the life of young children, this research was produced and developed.

New Zealand has a well-developed and comprehensive early childhood education and care service, guided by an inclusive ECE curriculum, Te Whāriki. This curriculum addresses the importance of positive emotions and the nature of the relationship between young children and adult teachers. One of the broad principles of Te Whāriki emphasises the importance of "responsive and reciprocal" relationships between adults and children (p.30). This principle is deeply interconnected with the first strand of the curriculum that states "the health and well being of the child are protected and nurtured" (p.15). The emotional well being of the child is an important goal in this strand from which different learning outcomes have been developed.

Nevertheless the importance of these principles is only partially supported by specific empirical research based on detailed classroom observations or experimental studies drawing on the psychology of emotional relationships. The evidence that does exist is described in a number of recent review documents. For example, particular attention has been paid to the early childhood care and education of infants and young children under two years of age. In a major review of the literature, Dalli et al. (2011) provided convincing evidence of the importance of relationship issues such as attachment, attuned care, and presence. These teacher-child relationship variables are thought by these authors to relate to quality pedagogy with under two-year-olds.

Many of the same concepts are described in a report produced by the New Zealand Education Review Office (2011) which evaluated "how effectively early childhood services helped children develop social and emotional competence" (p.10). A previous technical report by the longitudinal Competent Children, Competent Learners study scored highly those centres that

provided support, focused attention, physical proximity, and verbal encouragement to children and that were alert to signs of stress in children's behaviour, and who guided children in expressing their emotions. They gave low scores to centres where staff ignored children's requests, and were oblivious to their needs (Hodgen, 2007).

Thus, it is clear that these issues are considered very important in the context of New Zealand's early childhood and care services and are in alignment with the philosophy of Te Whāriki. However the ERO report is based on observations during ERO visits and is not derived from empirical research. Furthermore it has focused on specific pedagogical aspects that directly teach social and emotional skills. From a psychological perspective, there is increasing interest in the way emotional competence is enhanced as a result of the types of teacher-child interaction and strategies used by teachers. Among the positive strategies identified by ERO, helping children to understand their emotions, as well as those of others, played an important role in highly effective education and care centres. For example, the child development research conducted by Salmon (2009) and Van Bergen and Salmon (2010) on "emotion talk" has emphasised how adult labelling of emotions influences children's emotion knowledge. As another example, work conducted by Harvey and Evans (2012) in primary school classrooms has shown how teachers' personal skills in emotion regulation as well as their philosophies regarding the importance of emotion can influence emotional climate in the classroom. A third emphasis in psychology arises from the extensive research on synchronous, reciprocal and mutual interpersonal patterns of emotional communications between parent and child (Trevarthen, 1987), and the effects of these patterns on the development of the brain (Schoore, 2001; Siegal, 2001) that can be applied to teacher-child interactions (World Health Organization, 2004). Adult-child social encounters are coloured by "interactional synchrony," where young children are

equally active social partners (Dalli et al., 2011). Although synchronicity has been defined in relation to multiple concepts in child development literature (Cohn & Tronick, 1987; Harrist & Waugh, 2002; Isabella & Belsky, 1991), in the context of this thesis it is defined as the dynamic process during adult – child interactions in which both participants match each other’s affective states within intervals of seconds, jointly moderating the level of positive arousal (Delaherche et al., 2012).

My own impressions after visiting many ECE services was that teachers did experience occasional challenges when dealing with children’s behaviour and its emotional origins as described by such authors as Meyer and Evans (2006). They expressed uncertainty and puzzlement regarding their own perceptions and emotional reactions to some individual children and they often used coercive methods for managing situations whose emotional origins they did not fully comprehend. There sometimes appeared to be a lack of synchronicity in these relationships.

An important goal of the present research was to bring together these two important traditions—the pedagogy of early childhood education in New Zealand, as addressed in policy documents such as the national curriculum Te Whāriki, the recently published papers such as the literature review of Dalli et al. (2011), the ERO report (2011), the Gluckman report (2011) on the role of social and emotional competence during early childhood as important to the transition to adolescence, and the insights from the child development literature regarding the socialisation of emotions. These frameworks have in common the manner in which adult and child interpersonal interactions and intrapersonal skills facilitate children’s emotional competence and positive emotional development. In particular, the psychological literature has recently begun to address the nature of individual intrapersonal affect and its regulation through

such processes as emotional intelligence (EI), and more specifically, mindfulness. The connection of EI and mindfulness theory has been supported by research from neuroscience, self-awareness and self-regulation (Siegel, 2007), and further evidence has demonstrated that mindfulness improves the awareness of emotions, which is a fundamental condition of emotional intelligence and well-being. (Brown & Ryan, 2003; Ciarrochi & Blackledge, 2006; Waring, 2008). Mindfulness based programmes such as "the aware teacher" support educators to cultivate mindfulness, reflection, and insight based on the premise that "good teachers teach from inside out" (University of Massachusetts Medical School, 2012, Para. 2). All of these terms and constructs are defined later in the thesis when they are introduced.

Three aspects in particular guided me. Firstly the psychological research that indicates the importance of direct observation of verbal and nonverbal teacher-child communications convinced me that detailed observation and awareness of these interchanges in early childhood settings could provide information about the nature of these relationships and thus lead to a more constructive approach to them. Second, I thought that emotions have a particular relevance to the field of ECE, since teachers act as agents of emotion socialization and can provide a framework, which either assists or hinders the overall development of children. Finally, from the perspective of child-centred philosophies, I saw ECE as an opportunity for highlighting the importance that ECE services and teachers have in giving young children a further chance to form relationships of a kind that may provide a positive basis for their future.

Although this thesis was conducted as a piece of psychological research focusing in detail on emotional interactions, it was hoped that the findings would have relevance for teacher education and professional development. ECE teacher training in New Zealand places considerable emphasis on reflective practice and self-review. However, no amount of reflective

practice can influence a teacher's emotion competence if there is limited prior awareness of emotions and emotional expression. It is hoped that teacher educators could extract from my findings, principles and practices that would be of benefit in teacher education programmes.

Emotional issues are not only the province of specialists or clinicians. Teachers and early childhood services continue to care for children, sometimes facing challenging behaviour, and recognise the need to cultivate effective skills to promote education in its widest sense, in which inevitably, emotions play a major role. Teachers often understand that the imparting of knowledge and social skills is highly dependent on their own emotional awareness and skills, as well as it is from the nature of the relationships between teachers, children, families, communities and institutions as a whole. This research is illuminated by these core ideas.

CHAPTER 1: EMOTIONS AND EMOTIONAL COMPETENCE IN PRESCHOOL CHILDREN

Defining Emotions

An emotion is an event commonly described as a “subjective” experience, something that is felt inside. It is precisely because of its inner quality that emotions are easier to experience than to define. Although scholars who have tried to define the construct of emotion have agreed on the components and characteristics of emotions, there is not yet a consensual definition of the term itself. Due to the lack of consensus in finding a definition for the term of emotion through the literature, and for avoiding the ambiguities that it can bring, this thesis has considered the evolutionary principles of Differential Emotions Theory (DET) as a predominant theoretical framework (Izard, 1991). The emphasis of this approach is on the theoretical differentiation of basic emotions from emotion cognition interactions also called emotion schemas.

Izard (2007) primarily defined emotions as a “system of social communication” (p. 261) that consists of pieces of information that signal and motivate others and ourselves to action. In other words, the observable expression of emotions (smile, cry, anger) has evolved as a complex system of signals aiming to evoke a response from others. The experiential aspect of our emotions serve as a primary signal system, a mode of communication that incites mechanisms that make possible a rapid evaluation and action in response to danger or opportunities. Emotions are experienced to facilitate our survival. We are constantly receiving messages from the emotional part of our brain containing survival and health orientated information, often unavailable to more conscious cognitive brain (Greenberg, 2002). From this perspective, the emotion feeling itself is considered as a phase of neurobiological activity that is experienced as motivational and informational influencing thought, action tendency and felt cognition (Izard, 2009).

The critical properties of basic emotions include their unique capacities to regulate and motivate cognition and action. Basic emotion feelings help to organise and motivate quick actions, which are critical for adaptive responses that guarantee our survival or well-being. For instance, interest motivates exploration, fear is triggered when danger threatens motivating escape, and sadness happens when something precious is lost; anger bursts when an important goal is blocked and usually motivates attack. Negative emotions usually trigger aversive responses as a way to evade the anxiety responsible for activating the brain circuits involved in defensive responses as physical avoidance, submission, and attack.

Emotions are not only episodic and short-lived events; they may influence personality functioning continuously and permanently. Neuroscience research has shown that low intensity emotions, like interest and anxiety may establish background feelings (Damasio, 1994) that may not be observable in overt behaviour but that are traits that constantly influence thought, fantasy, and imagination.

Izard's definition of emotion comprehends all the ideas previously described: "An emotion is experienced as a feeling that motivates, organizes, and guides perception, thought, and action" (Izard, 1991, p. 14). From this approach, an emotion "recruits the cognitive system rapidly and automatically," thus establishing a bond between perception, feeling, and action. These emotional connections are also referred to by theorists as "internal working models" (Bowlby, 1979), "affective-cognitive structures" (Izard, 1991), "emotional interpretations" (Lewis & Douglas, 1998), and "emotional schemas or scripts" (Izard, 2007; Oatley, 1992).

Emotion Schemas

While basic emotion feelings help to organise, and simultaneously motivate rapid and nearly automatic actions that are critical in adaptation, survival, or well being, emotion schemas are the result of the continual dynamic interactions between neural systems and mental process involving feelings, perception and cognition (Izard, 2009). While pure cognitive schemas are representational in nature, and inform us of the truth of something in a conscious conceptual way, emotion schemas are also inner structural representations but with a dynamic quality that generate feeling –thought experiences, and behavioural tendencies. The latter can range from instant processes to trait- like phenomena, which can produce and activate multiple emotion-specific experience and action. Examples of these long lasting and well-established traits are the anger and sad schemas. They may have the same core feeling or state of mind, but different perceptual tendencies, thoughts and action plans. In other words, when people feel angry they think angry thoughts, and when people feel sad they have sad thoughts (Greenberg & Paivio, 1997).

Emotion schemas deeply influence experience, behaviour, and interaction. People have a variety of emotional schemas associated with relationships with significant others. Being with a particular person may evoke a schema of feeling anxious, dread, relaxed, or playful. People can also have schemas linked to particular situations or tasks activating a sense of effectiveness, inadequacy, or feeling undermined.

Emotion Schemas and Development

From infancy, the child experiences emotions and learns how to regulate them (Sroufe, 1996). From the start, infants have the capacity to self regulate their emotional experience. This ability, although rudimentary at first, enables them to signal distress and to evoke soothing

responses from others. The regulation of emotional experience is initially assisted by caregivers, but over the course of development, it becomes self regulated as a result of the maturational process occurring in the child's neurophysiology, cognition- language, and self understanding (Greenberg & Paivio, 1997). Over time, the processes involving neurochemical affective functioning, physiological arousal, and expressive motor skills become integrated into coherent patterns. These patterns being repetitively experienced by the infant, during interactions with others, are turned into feelings, and are finally symbolised in awareness that then produces an emotion.

Primary emotional systems in infants are involved in immediate evaluations of what is good and comforting or what is bad and unpleasant for them. As they experience feelings from the very beginning, they also are capable of building up emotion schemas of great complexity as well as creating an individual sense of self. This individual sense of self is organised and shaped around emotion schemas derived from attachment relationships.

In the transition from basic emotions to emotion schemas the infant uses gradually more sophisticated cognitive and emotion processing capacities in order to make connections between feelings, thought, memories, and anticipation of people, events, and situations.

In infancy, emotions can be sensed from the beginning and can be registered in phenomenal consciousness at low level of awareness, regardless of whether they are perceived or not. This happens long before they can be labelled or described. After language acquisition, emotion feelings can be potentially reported via symbolic processes. In prelingual infants and young children with a still limited emotion vocabulary, emotions can be displayed with the mediation of behaviour; e.g., facial and body movement (Izard et al, 2008). During preschool and early primary school years, a crucial developmental task for young children is to integrate the earlier developed modes of thinking and feeling, with the newly acquired ability to use

language as verbal mediation (Greenberg, 2007). This integration allows the child to become consciously aware of how she or he is feeling.

In view of the continuous changing effects of the developmental aspects of the emotional experience stated before, the creation of educational emotion focused environments that promote, support model feelings, and teach self-regulation of emotions is of great importance. These environments have to be capable of implementing repetitive practice of interactions and strategies that consciously support emotional related competencies as basic forms of prevention and promotion of children's well being and mental health.

The socialisation of children's emotional competence

Emotional competence is a crucial component of psychological wellbeing. An essential building block of emotion competence is that across the preschool years children come to refine their understanding of their own feelings as well as those of others (Denham, 1998). This knowledge is an important part of their emotional competence, and it is reflected in children's ability to use emotion- language, to infer emotions from expressions, to understand the causes of feelings, and to use strategies for managing and regulating emotion (Saarni, 1990; 1999). The importance for educational, clinical and preventative interventions is that children's emotional competence predicts their social competence and enjoyment of learning. Conversely, poor emotional competence in the preschool years can place children at risk of significant difficulties, including behavioural problems, aggression, withdrawal, estrangement, as well as psychopathology

Emotional competence is a fundamental part of children's social development and determines their ability to interact and form relationships with others (Denham & Burton, 2003; Saarni, 1990). Children's individual style of expressing emotions, the way they regulate

emotions, and the knowledge and understanding they have about emotions are key aspects of emotional competence (Eisenberg, Cumberland, & Spinrad., 1998; Saarni, 1997). A general definition of child emotional competence describes it as the adaptive emotional responses that help the child reach goals, cope with challenges, and engage effectively in social interactions (Saarni, 1990).

As a construct, emotional competence is relatively new so there are still some debates in relation to sharing characteristics with other concepts such as emotional literacy and emotional intelligence. A comprehensive definition that also includes elements of both emotional intelligence, and emotional literacy describes emotional competence as "the ability to understand, manage, and express the social and emotional aspects of one's life in ways that enable the successful management of life tasks such as learning, forming relationships, solving everyday problems, and adapting to the complex demands of growth and development" (Elias et al., 1997, p. 2). Children's ability to integrate in their life these three core aspects of emotional competence (regulation, expression, and understanding) determines in great measure their success during social interactions (Halberstadt, Denham, & Dunsmore, 2001).

Emotional regulation

Emotional regulation is the neural, cognitive, behavioural-action processes in which emotion arousal is sustained, amplified or soothed, concurrently with the associated feeling/motivation or action tendencies (Izard et al., 2011). Although this perspective implies the neural origin of emotional regulation, it occurs through the acquisition of culturally accepted ways of expressing emotions. It includes substituting one emotion for another, masking emotions, and minimising or maximising emotional expressiveness (Cole, 1985). Another definition of emotional regulation involves "the extrinsic and intrinsic processes responsible for

monitoring, evaluating, and modifying emotional reaction, especially their intensive and temporal features, to accomplish one's goals" (Thomson, 1994, p.27)

From most perspectives, emotional regulation is considered a dialectical construct involving both emotion as a behaviour regulator and emotion as a regulated phenomenon (Campos, Campos, & Barrett, 1989; Cole, Martin, & Dennis, 2004; Cole, Michel, & Teti, 1994). From this point of view, emotional regulation is not necessarily stopping or suppressing emotions (control), but may involve exaggerating emotional excitement and expression depending of the environmental contexts (Suveg, Southam-Gerow, Goodman, & Kendall, 2007). In this way, emotional dysregulation is not necessarily the lack of regulation but instead regulation that is "operating in a dysfunctional manner" (Cole et al., 1994, p. 80).

An important emotional task during preschool years is the transition from the caregiver-child regulation to self-regulation. At first caregivers have the total responsibility of keeping emotional arousal manageable, but over time, the child plays an active role in the regulating process, both responding to caregivers and seeking assistance when it is needed.

Correspondingly, in peer relationships, children are expected to regulate their emotions, since their ability to manage emotional arousal is indispensable to their capability to interact with others and to evaluate their social competence (Denham, 1998). This ability is particularly important during games and role play activities, when children have to negotiate and accept different roles and need to regulate their upset and disappointment in order to become desirable potential play partners in future play (Ashiabi, 2005).

Emotional Expression

During the preschool years, as the social world of the child begins to expand, emotional expression holds an important role in communicating the child's intentions to peers and others

(Halberstadt, Denham, & Dunsmore, 2001). This competence enables the child to express emotions during social interactions appropriately. The experience and the expression of the emotions not only influences the child's behaviour but provides information to peers about whether or not to initiate, engage or retreat for further interaction with the child. Children who use culturally accepted ways of expressing emotions in accordance with situations are more likely to become socially successful (Halberstadt et al., 2001).

Sharing positive emotions may facilitate the formation of friendships and make one more likeable (Denham et al., 2003). Conversely, children who express negative emotions are more likely to be more problematic to peers during social interactions (Denham & Couchoud, 1990).

Correspondingly, studies have found evidence that children, who express relatively more positive than negative emotions, are rated higher by teachers on dimensions like friendliness and assertiveness, and lower in aggressiveness or sadness. Children exhibit more prosocial behaviours and seem to be more liked by peers (Bower, 1985; Denham & Couchoud, 1990; Eisenberg, Fabes, & Murphy, 1996).

Emotional knowledge

The understanding of one's emotions is a central component of children's social and emotional competence. Emotion understanding has been referred to as "*the conscious knowledge*" about emotion processes and beliefs of how emotions work (Izard & Harris, 1995, p. 469). It consists of precise understanding of the expressions, feelings, and functions of discrete emotions (Izard et al., 2011). Children need to understand the emotions of others and make connections between the experience of their own feelings and the representation of how others may feel (Harris, 1989). This process is associated with general cognitive development, particularly with children's theory of mind (Bailey, 2002).

To be emotionally knowledgeable, children have to experience a variety of emotions. They have to construct inner scripts about emotions, to be able to reflect upon and make appraisals about their own emotions while extending this judgment to other people emotions. With the increasing complexity of their understanding of emotions and the situations that evoke emotions, children also develop strategies to identify and cope with challenging circumstances and every day stress (Denham, 1997; Fabes, Eisenberg, McCormick, & Wilson, 1988; Rossman, 1992).

Although emotional understanding has been continually associated with the child's general socio-emotional development (Denhan, 1998; Saarni, 1999), there have been limited studies linking the understanding of emotions with the process of regulation and self-regulation (Lemerise & Arsenio, 2000). The ability to utilise strategies aiming to modify emotion is an important mechanism to enhance the child's ability to self regulate in times of distress. A theoretical review on the topic of understanding and emotional regulation has suggested that most empirical studies in the field have usually examined the following domains of emotional knowledge: (a) recognition of emotion expression, (b) understanding of the causes and effects of emotion, (c) understanding of the cues of emotion in self and others, (d) understanding of the phenomenon of simulation of emotion, (e) understanding of emotion regulation and coping strategies (Southam-Gerow & Kendall, 2002). These domains have mostly covered the social and psychological aspects of emotional knowledge, however further research is needed to integrate the psycho-social and neurobiological processes that may also positively or negatively impact the development of emotional competence, particularly emotional regulation processes during preschool years (Izard et al., 2011). Emotional regulation occurs when children utilise their emotion knowledge to self-regulate the experiences and expressions of their feelings in

order to attain a desired goal (Izard, 2002; 2007). The benefits of adaptive emotional regulation are numerous, including improving the classroom climate and facilitating the learning process. (Trentacosta & Izard, 2007).

Emotion Utilisation

An emerging concept that seems to harmonise the three core components of emotional competence is the construct of emotion utilization (Izard, 2009). It has been defined by the Differential Emotion Theory as the adaptive cognition and action motivated by emotional experience (Izard, 2007). This conceptualisation implies the implementation of constructive and creative thought, and action originated from modulated emotional experiences. The main characteristic of emotion utilization is that it involves spontaneous, as well as planned, constructive actions and creative endeavour (Izard et al., 2008). This idea has extended previous approaches that explained the direct efforts to regulate emotions and emotion related behaviour (Eisenberg & Spinrad, 2004). From this point of view, the direct regulatory efforts may facilitate emotion utilisation but they are not indispensable for harnessing the inherently adaptive emotion motivation/feeling component in constructive affective- cognitive processes and actions.

Emotional utilisation related to, yet conceptually different from, emotional regulation. The process of emotional utilisation involves making use of the inherent energy and subsequent motivation associated with emotion arousal for constructive purposes. Constructive emotion utilization (especially the utilisation of the emotion of interest) is considered a key element for adaptive functioning (Izard et al., 2011). For instance, given adequate emotion knowledge within supportive social contexts, a young child can learn to utilize the energy and motivation that comes from anger arousal and turn it into positive self-assertion rather than for yelling or hitting.

As children learn to link cognitive regulation strategies with the emotion feeling components in emotion schemas, they are increasing their ability to learn constructive emotion–thought–action sequences that foster constructive emotion utilization, and the development of adaptive behavioural patterns (Izard et al., 2008).

From this point of view, emotional-cognition interactions play such an important role in all the processes that affect emotional regulation, emotional expression, emotional understanding, and emotional utilisation in young children. These theories have maintained that these interactions critically determine the effectiveness of the executive function. In other words, these interactions influence the way we solve everyday conflict and regular problems while effectively utilizing attention, emotional-cognitive and behavioural- action capacities (Izard et al., 2011)

All these processes are therefore interrelated. With the increase of emotion knowledge supported by repetitive emotion-cognition interactions, children can exercise a measure of control over emotional arousal (emotional regulation) and the subsequent motivated cognition and action. Regulation of emotion and regulation of emotional expression are constantly mediated by the emotion knowledge that comes from the continuous interplay between emotions and cognition. In preschoolers, language and other recently acquired cognitive skills are frequently used to face challenging social situations. However, the increase of emotion knowledge in children can often depend of how adults around them use their own knowledge to appreciate their own and others' emotions, to regulate and to anticipate motivations and intentions to maintain the positive aspects of everyday social interactions.

Teachers' role in the process of emotion socialisation

Parents play a leading role in the development of emotion competence. Halberstadt (1991) highlighted three main mechanisms of parents' socialisation of emotional competence: modelling, reactions to children's emotions, and teaching about emotions. For some children the opportunities to enact these mechanisms are limited, and in many cases, the atmosphere of their homes is adverse enough to impede them to practice emotion related competences. Repeated experiences that allow children to rehearse adaptive ways of regulating, expressing, and understanding emotions are specifically important for those children who are prone to impulsivity or withdrawn. Such experiences have equal importance for those who have insufficient positive modelling within their immediate environments, or have limited access to reflection on and processing of emotions; opportunities which usually lead to new solutions and help to modify emotional responses (Greenberg 2007).

Preschoolers have already a wealth of experiences behind them that colour their relationships with teachers, peers, and influence their engagement with learning. One of the opportunities that children have when attending early childhood settings, is that they may test their expectations against reality with other adults different from their parents or caregivers at home. If the teachers they encounter offer care, love, and are emotionally attuned to understand children's emotions, young children will be able to deal with the impact of such emotions and learn from these experiences. One example of the emotional availability of teachers may include the awareness of that being a "learner," in principle, involves powerful emotions and anxieties. (Salzberger-Wittenberg, Williams, & Osborne, 1999). These authors emphasised the role of adults in shaping children's emotional experiences by highlighting that the way in which children utilise and are helped to manage difficult feelings during infancy and early childhood

will deeply influence the manner in which they will deal with emotions later in life. Adult-child interactions in easily accessible early childhood programmes could provide significant additional emotion learning where teachers have a significant role.

Teachers, especially in early childhood classrooms, influence children's emotional competence and development, using very similar mechanisms of socialisation of emotions to those of parents. According to Kitzmann and Howard (2011), the diversity of teachers' processes influencing children's emotional competence has been outlined by psychological literature as follow:

- "1. Immediate responses to the child's emotions.
2. Modelling of emotion-relevant behaviour.
3. Discussion with the child about emotions (emotion talk/conversations).
4. The indirect effects of the adults' meta-emotion philosophy that includes beliefs and feelings about emotions" (Kitzmann & Howard, 2011, p.27).

Although some of these processes include direct teaching instruction of emotional competence via curricular activities and involve deliberate attempts of adults to foster emotional competence, many of them are implicitly transmitted during day-to-day interactions, without a conscious focus on shaping emotional competence (Denham et al., 2007).

Kitzmann and Howard (2011) have also described how adults' responses to children's emotional communication are coloured by a diverse range of reactions. These responses fluctuate from supportive to non-supportive and are commonly characterised by either "reinforcing or punishing expression of emotions" (Kitzmann & Howard, 2011, p.28). These authors elaborated this idea further by differentiating supportive from no supportive adults' responses to emotions. Supportive expressions of emotion are the ones that communicate the acceptance of having emotions, the genuine interest from the adults and the message that the child can cope with them

without feeling too overwhelmed. Supportive responses are influenced by strategies that help children address, cope with, and manage emotions (e.g., emotion coaching). On the other end of the spectrum, non-supportive responses to emotional communications are those that discourage children to experience and express emotions naturally and are considered "unhelpful in teaching the child to cope and manage emotions." The authors also suggested that these responses are usually followed by dismissing strategies including "being critical, punitive, becoming even more upset at the child or ignoring" (non-attending to) the emotion (Kitzmann & Howard, 2011, p.28).

Although studies in this area are limited, Kitzmann and Howard mentioned a "rare" example of a more constructive approach to children's emotions from a study conducted by Ahn (2005) that reported day care teachers' tendency to verbally reinforce children's expression of positive emotions.

Modelling is another process of emotional socialization explained in Kitzmann and Howard's model. The way that adults behave, react to and express children (Kitzmann & Howard, 2011) may imitate their own emotions. Adults' expressions of emotions, reactions to their own emotions, and ways of coping with emotions provide important emotional behaviour models that children can imitate. Children especially are likely to look to adults for emotional information, sometimes through emotional expression, during new or uncertain situations: a process called "social referencing" (Klennert, Campos, Sorce, Emde, & Svejda, 1983 p.57). A few pieces of research in the context of early childhood education have gathered evidence on teachers using modelling as a socialization strategy supporting emotional competence (Rhee, 2007). Social development orientated literature has also pointed out that those children who repetitively observe adults modelling empathy, generosity and frustration tolerance are more likely to develop these qualities themselves (Maccoby, 1980).

A third process of emotional socialization outlined by Kitzmann and Howard (2011) takes place in the context of conversations with children on emotion related topics. In many occasions and sometimes unintentionally, adults socialize children's emotional competence through ordinarily everyday situations (Kitzmann & Howard, 2011). Most of the research on the topic of emotion socialization has been conducted in the context of the psychology of family life (Dunn, Brown, & Beardsall, 1991; Salmon, Dadds, Allen & Hawes, 2009 ; Salmon & McGuigan, 2004). In New Zealand, increasing evidence has been drawn on this area through longitudinal studies on the contribution of early childhood education to young people (Silva & Stanton, 1996; Wylie & Hodgen, 2007).

One factor that has a significant influence in the emotion socialisation processes previously mentioned is the adult's "meta-emotion philosophy" (MEP), which is the adult's "*emotions about emotions.*" (Gottman, Katz, & Hooven, 1997). Teachers' "*emotional intrapersonal beliefs*" (Evans, Harvey, Buckley, & Yan, 2009) about acceptable ways to express and cope with emotions, the comfort they have with their own and others' emotions, and their goals for helping their children to acquire emotional competence, are all thought to influence emotional socialisation (Evans et al., 2009, p.143).

From the perspective of the meta-emotion model, Kitzmann and Howard also argued that "adults' beliefs about emotions do not affect the children directly but are translate into emotion socialization practices that can foster or hinder children's emotional competence" (p. 29). Adults' aversion to emotional expression can be communicated consciously or unconsciously via criticism, punishment, avoidance, or by modelling emotional suppression (Kitzmann & Howard, 2011). For instance, adults who are deeply averse to emotional experience and expression may convey this rejection through critical, punishable, or dismissing reactions to children's emotions. They may then model to the children emotional avoidance or teach them ways to restrain or

conceal feelings. Although the mentioned aspects of socialisation of emotions can be observed universally, these processes are usually enacted in different ways depending on the social and cultural context (Gottman, Katz, & Hooven, 1996).

Teachers interact with children in very different social and structural constraints from parents, responding, labelling children's feelings, modelling their own feelings are "emotional learning opportunities" that contribute significantly to the classroom climate created by teachers (Evans, Harvey, Buckley, & Yan, 2009, p. 132). Though the class' overall climate is influenced by other factors such as discipline strategies and teaching style, the emotional teacher- child relationship is a central concept of emotional climate in classrooms (Harvey & Evans, 2003). In spite of the importance of the teachers' role in influencing children's emotional development within the context of classroom emotional environments, and the amount of time that many children spend in early childhood settings, research on parents as agents of emotion socialization seems to dominate over the research on teachers in the same role (Kitzmann & Howard, 2011).

Young children and attachment relationships

Attachment refers to the profound emotional relationship that develops between a baby and one or more caregivers. According to Bowlby (1969, 1988), early attachment experiences serve not only as templates for a person's overall development, but are also the core which a person's life revolves around—from an infant and toddler throughout adolescence and the years of maturity. Bowlby's pioneering work on attachment in infancy has inspired large amounts of research, reporting findings on the formation of attachments and the long-term effects of early relationships (McMahon, 2001).

Preschool children of the ages considered in this study (3-5) have typically formed attachment relationships with one or more primary caregivers, and are able to hold internal

representations of those people in their minds even in their absence. Beyond children's immediate environment, teachers also become important attachment figures for young children. Although these relationships do not totally replicate the emotional bonds between parents and children, nevertheless have similar features and functions in early development and learning (Howes, 1999).

A person who has had the opportunity to spend time in early childhood centres usually notice that many children develop a clear desire to stay close to their favourite teachers, and appear to use them as a base from which they can explore the environment and rely on during challenging or distressing moments. One of the few studies on this topic, conducted in the USA, found that in terms of forming attachment relationships as many of 70% of 840 children failed to develop secure attachment to their teachers (Howes & Ritchie, 2002). These results suggested that many teacher-child interactions lack the sensitiveness and responsiveness necessary to promote positive emotional development in young children. This study supports previous research that found that only about a third of preschool teachers were observed to spend time talking about feelings (Hyson, Hirsh-Pasek, & Rescorla, 1990). Another larger scale study in childcare settings has found evidence of emotional insensitivity, detachment, and even harshness among preschool teachers (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development Early Childcare Research Network, 2000). These studies justify the need for further studies focused on close and secure teacher-child relationships for both children's emotional development and early childhood education.

Birch and Ladd (1997) have also pointed out that preschool children who have emotionally close relationships with teachers are more likely to adjust well to school, compared with those whose relationships are less close. Establishing a good attachment relationship is a fundamental aspect in which early childhood teachers can contribute to foster positive

relationships with young children in childcare environments (Ebbeck & Yim, 2009). Conversely, a correlational longitudinal study that followed teacher-child relationships from preschool to primary school years showed that children, who had a negative relationship with their preschool teachers, were more likely to experience social and academic difficulties in later years (Hamre & Pianta, 2001). Another causal study examined preschool children at academic risk of referral to special education due to low kindergarten screening scores. It showed that despite the fact that these children were high risk, they were not referred. The children showed a more positive relationship with their teachers than their high-risk peers who were retained or referred (Pianta, Steinberg, & Rollins, 1995).

In addition to the overall social benefit, children's attachment relationships with their teachers can compensate for some troubled family relationships. Howes and Ritchie (2002) have found that children who had insecure attachments with their parents were able to compensate and create secure relationships with their teachers, with positive consequences for their social, emotional, and cognitive development. Ebbeck and Yim (2009) have found that teachers recognised that spending quality time with young children by being emotionally available and responsive was the most important approach to foster a secure attachment in early childhood centres.

Some other studies have examined the conditions that promote the development of high quality of attachment relationships as a foundation for positive atmospheres in early childhood settings. Hyson, Hirsh-Pasek, and Rescorla (1990) observed the quality of teacher-child relationships whilst rating the emotional climate of the classroom along with other curriculum and teaching practices. They found that preschool classrooms with higher levels of adult direction, and that emphasized on approaches that are more didactic, were less likely to be characterised by teacher-child affection and warmth. Hyson's study was followed by a related

research project that included observations of teacher's acceptance, warmth, and classroom emotional climate. Results from the latter study demonstrated again that highly didactic approaches that emphasised individual success were associated with less teacher warmth and nurturance, as well as less attention to individual children's needs in comparison to more child-focused classrooms (Stipek, Daniels, Galluzzo, & Milburn, 1992). These findings have contributed towards evidence that fuels the investigation trying to differentiate teacher-directed practices from child-focused ones, and the connections between these practices and the quality of the teacher-child relationship in early childhood education.

Teacher-child relationship and emotional climate of classrooms

Modern day young children may spend a considerable amount of time outside their homes in early childhood settings where teachers play a fundamental role in supporting the acquisition and consolidation of emotional competence. Through the provision of positive relationships, and supportive class atmospheres, teachers help preschoolers to rehearse, as well as extend, their social and emotional competence. A better understanding of the nature of child-teacher interactions, and the processes involved in emotion socialization, are key elements in working towards more successful models of relationships, which simultaneously, enhance learning experiences and classrooms' ecological well-being (Evans, Harvey, Buckley, & Yan, 2009; Hargreaves, 1998). Current research has shown that classrooms with positive emotional climate, where teachers are engaged in higher quality emotional interactions, positively influence children's social competence and empathic behaviour (Evans et al., 2009). The Te Āniwaniwa project, a body of research conducted in New Zealand's primary school classrooms has examined five different components of classroom's emotional climate (Evans et al., 2009). The first key component identified by this model as being crucial to the emotional climate in

classroom settings, is the emotional relationship with the teacher (Hamre & Pianta, 2001; Harvey & Evans, 2003). Children who feel emotionally secure put more effort into their academic tasks and this effort increases when they have positive feelings for a teacher whom they like to please (Davis, 2003).

To promote a healthy emotional atmosphere in a preschool classroom, teachers have to establish an emotional relationship with children. This task is equally important for all children whether the goal is to strengthen children's early experiences or to compensate for insecure family relationships. Teachers' strategies aiming to build children's emotional skills can contribute to create emotionally secure environments that encourage young children to understand and manage their own feelings and those of others. For instance, "emotion talk," when engaged in by adults, predicts competent patterns of emotional regulation (Wareham & Salmon, 2006). The empirical studies conducted by Salmon and colleagues demonstrated that when parents are encouraged to engage in emotion related conversations with their preschoolers, both parents and children increase their references to emotion, and consequently children's understanding of emotion improves significantly. Children who have difficulties learning emotion language have a hard time making connections with their own feelings and those of others. This limitation places them at increased risk for emotion regulation problems (Cicchetti, Ganiban, & Barnett, 1991).

Teachers often intuitively make use of everyday conflicts as "teachable opportunities" to increase children's regulation skills and emotion knowledge (Bodine & Crawford, 1999, p.83). Adults who give children the opportunity to symbolise their experiences through appropriate activities, or who encourage children's feelings of efficacy and self-control, are sustaining and nurturing emotion focused emotional climates and curriculums. For instance, creative activities

like music, art, drama, and pretend play, typically provide not only emotional channels but also give children access to culturally appropriate ways of expression and utilisation of feelings.

Peer interactions are also important sources of emotion learning. Social exchanges with friends frequently help children to understand the necessary skills for influencing, regulating, and responding to others' emotional states. It is a good reason for considering friendship ties as important sources of learning from emotional experience. Fabes, Smith, Murphy, and Eisenberg (1996) found that children are better at regulating anger during quarrels with friends than with non-friends. By moderating their own emotions, children look to preserve friendships. Likewise, adults' mediation during peer interactions, commonly observed in early childhood environments, is a powerful influential tool for enhancing children's emotional skills. Repetitive adult involvement during peer conflicts support children at rehearsing and acquiring regulation and problem solving strategies.

The second component of emotional climate identified by Evans and colleagues in the Te Āniwaniwa model is the "emotional awareness of the teacher" (Evans et al., 2009). Teachers' capacity to differentiate between their own emotions and those of the children they work with will affect and influence their responses during classroom transactions. Teachers that are able to understand their own emotions can also manage their own emotional reactions as well as the feelings that children engender in them (Evans et al., 2009). The teachers' own emotional competence which includes the awareness of their own emotions as well as those of others is also known as mindfulness. Thera (1972) has described mindfulness as "the clear and single-minded awareness of what actually happens to us at the successive moments of perception" (p.4). A more recent definition of mindfulness described it as a "dispassionate, non-evaluative and sustained moment-to-moment awareness of perceptive mental states and processes, this includes

continuous, immediate awareness of physical sensations, perceptions, affective states, thoughts, and imagery” (Grossman, Niemann, Schmidt, & Walach, 2004, p.36)

The third aspect of emotional climate identified by Te Āniwaniwa model is the way teachers validate and respond to children’s spontaneous communication of feelings. The emphasis on the importance of understanding emotions and the way to handle them in a healthy way came from the parental literature of “emotion coaching” stated by Gottman and Declaire (1997). Parents who use emotion coaching are aware of their own emotions, can talk regarding these emotions in a differentiated manner, are aware of these emotions in their children, and are able to assist children with their own emotions (Gottman & Declaire 1997; Gottman, Katz, & Hooven, 1997). Parents, who practice emotion coaching, value negative expression of emotions as opportunities for intimacy, express empathy and help with problem solving (Denham, 1998; Gottman & Declaire, 1997; Gottman et al., 1997). Identical emotion coaching process and skills have been actively observed in primary school teachers (Evans et al., 2009) and early childhood teachers (Ulloa, Evans, & Parkes, 2010).

Another important component of the emotional climate of classrooms identified by Te Āniwaniwa research project also came from the parenting literature of socialization of emotion; this is the “parental meta-emotion philosophy.” Mentioned in a previous section of this thesis, PMEP is defined as parents’ organised set of feelings, thoughts, and beliefs about themselves as well as their children’s emotions (Gottman, Katz, & Hooven, 1997). In order to describe the range of values teachers have on emotions, Evans et al. (2009) had labeled teachers’ ideas on emotion as “*emotional intrapersonal beliefs.*”

The final component of the emotional climate of classrooms relates to the emotional boundaries that teachers set the children they work with. These boundaries include values such as fairness, respect, avoidance of over- involvement, enforcing discipline and developing

calming and structured routines. This has been named in the Āniwaniwa model as “*emotional interpersonal guidelines*.”

All the interpersonal aspects that guide the construction of positive emotional climate in classrooms seemed to be closely linked to the emotional competence of the teacher. Whether or not the emotional skills involved in the emotional competence of teachers occur naturally or can be trained, is a key question that guides the following sections of this chapter.

Emotional competence of teachers in early childhood centres

A better understanding of the nature and the processes involved in the emotional teacher-child interactions may help to create more successful classroom relationships, as well as contributing towards enhancing learning experiences and the overall ecological well-being of the classrooms. Through life, teaching and learning as socially situated practices are deeply embedded in emotional experiences (Hargreaves, 1998).

Traditionally research studies in education have been focused on the teacher-child relationship commonly used as a predictor of children’s emotional social and academic achievement (Kitzmann & Howard, 2011). A classic research on this topic conducted by Garner and Waajid (2008) showed that teacher-child closeness predicted preschooler’s emotion knowledge, which in turn, predicted children’ social and school competence in the classroom. Although a considerable amount of evidence has supported the idea that the teacher-child relationship is fundamental to a healthy development of young children (Hamre & Pianta, 2001), fewer studies have focused on delineating associations among the different emotional socialization processes leading to the emotional competence of children, and the teacher- child relationships that harness these processes. These relationships may be a direct focus of preventive interventions or may be viewed as an important factor in the successful

implementation of interventions aiming to enhance emotional competence in early childhood education.

Another important aspect to be highlighted is that most of the studies and interventions on this topic have focused on the child as a learner rather than on the teacher's own emotional skills, and the teachers' strategies for shaping children's emotional competence, as well as for promoting learning. For instance, there is not yet a system with which early childhood teachers can evaluate their own and other's responses to emotion, modelling, and emotion related discussions within the classrooms (Kitzmann & Howard, 2011).

Interpersonal and intrapersonal aspects of teacher's emotional competence

Adults hoping to achieve the universal goal of emotional competence in children frequently use processes of emotional socialization; they are passed on through specific practices that fit into a culture or particular work dynamics, influencing consequently the emotional atmospheres of individual settings. The complex transactions that motivate these mechanisms of emotional socialization are constantly intertwined within the context of teacher-child relationships.

As mentioned before, research on the interpersonal climate of primary school classrooms (Evans et al., 2009), has highlighted that the child- teacher emotional relationship was considered a central concept of the emotional climate in the primary school classrooms (Harvey & Evans, 2003). More intensely in early childhood classrooms, emotions are inextricably linked to teacher's lives, this is perhaps due to the developmental characteristic of preschoolers, that teachers find themselves constantly mediating and modulating the affective displays of the children. Research conducted in the USA has found evidence of a tendency toward more crying

episodes in day-care centres in which the caregiver mediated less (Frank, Stolarski, & Scher, 2006).

Teacher-child relationships have been reported to be particularly important for children who display early academic, behavioural, or emotional problems. Research conducted by Pianta, Hamre, and Stuhlman (2003) has shown that positive relationships with “at risk” students were associated with declines in aggressive behaviour in young children.

Forming strong and supportive relationships with teachers allows young children to feel secure in the settings, feel more competent, make positive connections with peers, and make greater academic achievements. In contrast, teacher’s failure to establish positive relationships with children under their care may have a negative impact on children’s future academic and social life. In a recently published review, Jennings and Greenberg (2009) highlighted the importance of teachers’ socio- emotional competence and well-being in the development and maintenance of supportive teacher–student relationships, effective classroom management, and successful social and emotional learning programme implementation. Early childhood teachers’ own emotional competence was essential in building successful and trusty emotional relationships, genuinely based in the individual understanding of the children's needs and feelings.

Teachers’ emotional competence allows them to be aware of their own emotions, to discriminate between their own feelings and those of others, but also to understand more accurately the causes of emotions in themselves and the children they work with. Once teachers understand their own emotional experience, their own reactions to emotional situations can be constructively regulated and managed.

Salzberger-Wittenberg, Williams, and Orborne (1999) have argued that a better understanding of the intrapersonal factors that transpire through the processes of learning and

teaching would help, both teacher and students, to work toward fruitful relationships. Using examples from the teachers attending seminars at the Tavistock Clinic, these authors analysed teachers' own emotional reactions in terms of transference onto themselves of early patterns of emotional experiences (feelings of love, fear, rejection) that they had experienced in relation to attachment and authority figures (Zembylas, 2004). The internal picture of the world and the model of relationships that a person has established (in the form of emotional schemas) are transferred into a new situation, and lead to assumptions about the external world. It influences the way people perceive, the way they interpret the situations and behave towards the emotional experience. Awareness of these processes may enable teachers to have some space to think about the nature of relationships, take a more objective view, and consequently respond and validate feelings more appropriate to the genuine needs of themselves and others (Ward & McMahon, 1998). Teachers reportedly did not experience the same emotion under the same external circumstances. For instance, an uncooperative child can trigger anger in one teacher and sadness in another.

In conclusion, emotionally competent teachers should be able to implement a range of positive strategies as emotion coaching, use self-awareness and mindfulness skills as well as understand and reflect on the emotional difficulties that normally underlie behaviour in children. Reflective practice focused on emotions, where teachers can discuss and reflect on relationships with individual children can be fundamental in understanding how teachers can help to shape children's emotional competence (Zeller, 2009). A lack of this understanding could be the cause of teachers having more negative attitudes toward children, feed on negative attributions about behaviour, and rely on harsher discipline strategies for classroom management. These aspects may result in adverse effects for both teachers and children impeding them to be positively

engaged with the environment and affecting in the long term their overall physical and psychological well-being.

In the context of this thesis, reflective practice is focused on emotions. Manning–Morton (2006) claimed that it is not sufficient to expand theoretical knowledge in early childhood education and other areas of child development "without practitioners having the opportunity to reflect on the links between their own experience, feelings, values, and beliefs and those of the children they worked with" (p. 42).

Emotion- focused interventions

Research on emotional socialization in early childhood education has implications for interventions in early childhood classroom settings designed to shape teachers' emotional socialization practices. Over the last few years, interventions targeting early childhood teachers have shown a significant impact on children's social and emotional competence. Most of these interventions have targeted primary and secondary classrooms and fewer have been implemented in early childhood settings. In New Zealand the Te Āniwaniwa research project based on Harvey and Evans (2003) model has implemented professional development workshops aiming to give primary school teachers insight into their teaching practice and interactional strategies that encourage the development of positive relations with students, improve classroom behaviour and enhance the whole emotional environment of classrooms. Other interventions have compared the effect of trained primary school teacher's strategies on relationship building, emotional understanding, and problem solving and showed a significant improvement in children's emotional competence in comparison with the group of children whose teachers did not receive the training (Denham, 1996). Another example of these interventions, applied to early childhood programmes, has been the implementation of the PATHS programme -Promoting Alternative

Thinking Strategies (Greenberg & Kusché, 2006). After evaluating multiple randomised trials implemented over a period of 20 years, this emotional education programme has demonstrated the increase of emotional knowledge and social competence as well as the decrease of internalised and externalised problems in preschool children. This programme also had a positive impact on participant preschool classrooms across the USA and in other countries (Domitrovich, Cortes & Greenberg, 2006; Durmusoglu, 2010; Greenberg & Kusche, 2006). A similar programme, Zippy's friends, (Clarke & Barry, 2010) has been internationally recognised for fostering social and emotional competence in preschool children around the world (Bale & Mishara, 2004). Research programmes such The Emotion Course developed within a Head Start population in USA (Izard et al., 2008), have confirmed that emotion knowledge can increase in children by using emotion talk, and by playing activities identifying and labelling emotions. Emotion regulation also has improved in participant children by the use of techniques like "Hold Tight" in which the teacher instructed the children to regulate their breathing and use words when facing anger or aggressive behaviour (Izard et al., 2008).

Teacher training was a critical component of all the interventions mentioned. In addition to formal training in the context of intervention programmes, another important area of applied focus would be the ongoing teacher training focused on practical skills for promoting children's emotional competence. Improving teacher's own emotional skills as well as offering to teachers strategies that can have direct effects on children emotions in early childhood settings have to be the soul of interventions. Teachable skills such as emotion coaching which aims to help children understand the different emotions they experience, why they occur and how to handle them, may benefit both teachers and children in those settings.

Along with training teachers with a new set of strategies to support and improve emotional competence in themselves, and the children they work with, the implementation of

reflection on emotion practice is also crucial to understand how teachers can help to shape and facilitate children's healthy development. Early childhood settings provide a rich natural environment for promoting emotion competence, and preventing the development of behavioural problems. They achieve this through a combination of appropriate emotional climates, emotionally sensitive interactions, and explicit emotion focused strategies for using everyday emotional situations as learning opportunities. These conditions will not emerge spontaneously if their focus is solely on discipline (behaviour management) and academic (curricular) concerns. This rationale highlights the relevance of training early childhood teachers in emotional competence.

Summary

This chapter has described some of the core concepts of the emotion theory mostly from the point of view of the Differential Emotions Theory that yield to the definition of the construct of emotional competence in young children. The three main components of emotion competence: emotional regulation, emotional expression, and emotional knowledge are important since they are related to children's social development and prevention of behavioural problems. While parents play a fundamental role in the development of children's emotional competence, teachers also play a key role in this task. Although their functions differ in principle from the parental role, teachers utilise similar emotional socialization processes to foster children's emotion competence in early childhood centres. Teachers in early childhood education often give children direct instruction on emotional skills via curricular activities, but also by building secure attachment relationships, modelling culturally appropriate emotional expressions, and using strategies for coping with feelings which include emotion talk, emotion coaching and other cognitive strategies during everyday interactions. Harvey and Evans (2003) have identified five

components of the emotional climate of primary school classrooms. Alongside other aspects of classroom climate such as discipline strategies and teaching style, the teacher- child relationship seems to be the foundation from which the overall classroom climate seems to build up.

Nevertheless, the focus of this thesis is on the emotional aspects of teacher – child relationships. Teachers own emotional competence and self-awareness play a key role in building up positive relationships with children. A process of reflective practice focused on emotions, where teachers can match their knowledge and skills with their own experiences, feelings and values to those of the children, is essential for developing effective relationships with young children.

Different programmes have targeted the enhancing of children’s emotional competence. These interventions tend to consider teacher training as a fundamental part for the success of these programmes. Although well considered through the studies on emotional climate of primary school classrooms in New Zealand, emotion focused teacher training tends to be neglected in early childhood education. The processes in which teachers shape the emotional experiences of children in early childhood education and build positive emotional climates as a result of these interactions, has been under-studied. This research project aimed to contribute to this important area of child development, childhood mental health, and education.

CHAPTER 2: A NATURALISTIC OBSERVATIONAL STUDY - STUDY 1

Introduction

The previous chapter described various aspects of both theory and research on emotions, introduced current constructs on emotion theory, and highlighted different aspects of the developmental literature on the socialization of children's emotional competence. It highlighted the importance of the role of the teacher-child relationship in fostering emotional competence and in creating positive early childhood classroom emotional climates. This chapter will describe an observational study focused on exploring the processes of how young children acquire emotional competences through their every day interactions with teachers in early childhood settings.

Gorman and Clayton (2005) defined observation studies as those that "involve the systematic recording of observable phenomena or behaviour in a natural setting" (p. 40). This approach encompasses the typical definitions of this method, which have in common the need to study and understand people within their natural environment and to be unobtrusive. This method suited the purpose of this study. The initial focus was on obtaining a deep understanding of the context, the diverse ECE cultures, populations and dynamics in which the research project was conducted. Familiarity and understanding of the variables involved in the interactional teacher- child dynamics was important at this point since it was valuable for the planned project to use a dual empirical strategy—naturalistic observation for Study 1 and experimental analysis in which specific variables were manipulated in Study 2. The use and integration of qualitative and quantitative methods are encouraged in ECE research, teacher training and analysis.

The underlying principle of this study was guided by the idea that, besides children's home environments and interactions with parents and caregivers, early childhood centres provide an optimal opportunity for teachers to foster emotional competence and mental health to preschoolers. From this perspective, every interaction with a child can be seen as an opportunity for supporting the development of emotional skills. Consequently, positive emotional exchanges allow children to experience success within the centre, and in other social and educational contexts. This success then will be extended to multiple aspects of their life including further academic achievement and general social competence.

As teachers interact with children, they coach and guide them towards culturally appropriate ways to respond to emotions, especially while mediating between peer interactions and during curricular activities. Teachers are constantly serving as role models of appropriate emotional expression and other emotional competences to children (Hyson, 2004).

Although psychological and educational literature has given importance to the fundamental role of the adults in enacting and supporting the processes of socialization of emotion in young children, there is limited evidence about what goes on emotionally in early childhood centres. In the face of this lack of research evidence on the emotional interactions and processes of emotional socialization in early childhood centres, some questions began to emerge. How do teachers and other influential adults in early childhood education settings help preschoolers to achieve these complex competences? If language and other cognitive emotion interactions are constantly mediating in the emotional socialization of children, is it possible to observe these processes through social interactions? How do teachers enact these processes while interacting with children? What strategies do teachers use to promote and support emotional competence? Is there a link between these interactions, the strategies used by teachers to manage

children's emotions and the emotional climate of early childhood classrooms? These questions guided the first study of this research project. By conducting some naturalistic observations, the following study aims to bring to light the role of early childhood education teachers in the socialization of children's emotional competence, and the influence of these processes on the emotional climates of early childhood education classrooms.

The Observational Study

The following observational study focused on understanding the processes mentioned in the above section, as well as other mechanisms involved in the way teachers, as agents of emotional socialization, create emotional climates through interactions that foster learning and enhance the emotional competence in young children. This research was particularly interested in the ability that teachers have to generate synchronous relationships with young children that allow emotional competence skills to develop through language and other cognitive processes. A synchronous adult-child relationship is characterised as a mutually responsive and interconnected interaction, which has been consistently linked to children's psychosocial adjustment in early childhood. Synchrony is a complex emergent process that reflects the degree to which interacting partners adapt to one another's behaviour in order to maintain a coherent and mutually rewarding interpersonal exchange (Barber, Bolitho, & Bertrand, 2001; Kirsh, Crnic, & Greenberg, 1995). Schore (2003) has described that it is in the synchrony of face-to-face interactions that the caregiver minimizes the child negative feelings and maximizes their positive affective states through generating joy, excitement and pleasure.

The intrinsic relationship between the quality of the synchronous child-teacher interactions, and the emotional climate of the settings was an important aspect examined throughout the observations. The premise sustaining this idea was that a positive emotional

classroom climate allows teachers to be more mindful, less reactive, and strategic in responding to children's emotions. This was the continuous theme nurturing the rationale for this study.

Since there is little evidence derived from empirical research addressing the process of emotional, socialization of children in early childhood education centres I thought the first step to take in this research was to conduct some structured observations. Early childhood education is delivered in different settings and programmes. In New Zealand, centre-based ECE services have a variety of different operating structures, philosophies and affiliations, and are known by many different names--play centres, early learning centres, Montessori, childcare centres, Kindergartens, crèches, Ngā Kohanga Reo, preschools, a'oga amata, Rudolf Steiner, etc. In this research, the reason behind the selection of a variety of settings was to be able to contrast and compare them.

The aim of this observational study was to explore and describe the details of everyday interactions in order to extract realistic examples of naturally occurring learning opportunities that can be taught to other teachers. It also aimed to identify the strategies used by teachers during these interactions; strategies that were commonly used in classroom management or that intend to reduce behavioural problems, but where their emotional component was less considered. The specific research objectives were to investigate:

- Detailed patterns of interaction that could be identified during everyday teacher-child interactions in early childhood settings;
- The interpersonal contexts and processes in which teachers help children to shape emotional competence;
- Strategies used by teachers to support children's emotional competence;

- Observable interconnections between teacher-child emotional interactions, children's emotional conflict - resolution processes, and, the possible influence of these factors on the emotional atmosphere of the preschool classrooms; and
- The role of the teachers as agents in the processes of socialization of emotions in young children.

Method

Participants and Settings

Participants were 60 pre-schoolers (ages three to five years old) and 12 early childhood teachers from three culturally different early childhood services in the Wellington region. Participant centres were recruited from three different demographic areas of one city. Children were not chosen according to any specific criteria other than being in a preschool age attending the setting in a regular basis. The number of adults attending each of the observed sessions oscillated from two to seven. Seventy per cent of these adults were qualified teachers and 30% student teachers or relievers.

The first centre to be recruited was a structured preschool environment licensed to have 24 children ages between three and five years, during two different sessions. Morning session ran from 9 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. while the afternoon session was conducted from 1:00 to 3:30 p.m. The second centre selected was a full time day care centre licensed for 40 children. The preschool classroom usually held up to 24 children. This centre ran one single session between 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. The third selected centre was a full time preschool licensed for 24 children. Sessions ran from 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

A description of each centre followed by examples of its overall environment is specified as follows:

Setting 1

This setting provided a structured preschool environment following a Montessori philosophy. The same teachers in the centre remained from week to week. The children's behaviour was observed to be orderly and cooperative. They were normally engaged in clearly defined, teacher led activities; and there was an overall sense of calmness. For example, as the children headed out to play, they put on their gumboots without direction from the teachers. They used the garden tools correctly and returned them to their proper place when they had finished. The garden offered much for the children to do. Animal habitats (guinea pigs, chickens, birds, mice) and a compost garden had been set up and the children helped in managing this.

“The teacher was sitting on the couch with a group of kids. Carol wanted to sit on the couch next to Anissa but there was a boy sitting in the space. She began to cry. The teacher rubbed her back, explaining to her that there was a space on the other side of the boy, next to her. The girl did not move and continued crying. The teacher changed her tactic and asked the boy if he could tell if his friend was upset, the boy nodded. The teacher suggested that to make her feel better he could move into the empty space so that Carol could sit next to Anissa. The boy was happy to move and Carol climbed onto the couch”

Setting 2

This setting provided childcare primarily for parents in employment. The children were usually engaged in free play and craft activities. Children's interactions occurred spontaneously during play and activities. These were usually led by the children, and supported by the adults, with the exception of established group routines (e.g., singing and storytelling) and meal times. They were rarely engaged in structured learning tasks. Usually, there were 4 to 5 staff members

present at any one time and a high turnover of different teachers (relievers or casual staff) was noticed during the observational period.

“There were approximately 10 children playing in a large playground area. Two teachers were around the swings area helping children to swing. Robby was holding a toy shovel and making a pile of sand. He shouted loudly to a girl nearby “this is your birthday cake Melanie.” Another boy tried to snatch the shovel from him. He protested loudly saying “leave it alone,” pushing the boy backwards, trying to keep the shovel. The teacher stopped what she was doing and came over to the boys. She asked them firmly “What’s going on?” Robby said “I got it first.” The teacher said “This is not the way that children that are nearly five are supposed to behave. Play nicely.” She then turned her gaze back towards the swings area, and Robby carried on shovelling on his own.”

Setting 3

This setting provided a preschool environment with a number of teachers and other adults present, but in which teachers and children interacted mostly during play and in the garden area. A few teachers led learning tasks, which were usually games within small groups and individual story reading. Meals and sleeping times were structured routines. Teachers were warm and welcoming; however, aggressive conflict on the part of the children was not uncommon. Teachers were observed offering physical contact to children (e.g., hugs). There was little turnover of teaching staff with the same teachers being present for most of the observational period.

“The children were playing inside a plastic pool with coloured balls. One of the teachers was close by, looking at the group of children jumping and coordinating the children’s turns to enter the pool. The children were coming in and out regardless of the teacher’s attempts to keep

order. Jason hit Tama, knocking him down on the floor. Tama cried and the teacher approached him and offered her hand to help him up. She asked him what part of his body was hurting. Tama pointed to his knee. The teacher rubbed his knee softly saying, "You're all right," patting him on his back, and encouraging him to come back to the pool. Tama went back inside and looked for Jason and started hitting him repeatedly. Jason protested loudly to Tama but said nothing to the teacher. The teacher spotted the conflict and called Tama back to her. She said "It was an accident, Jason did not mean to hurt you...go and apologise." Tama went back inside the pool without apologising and continued jumping."

Measures

A naturalistic observational study was conducted in three different preschool programmes that differed in style and atmosphere and which volunteered for the study. Naturalistic observation refers to the scientific study of the social interactions of children and adults within their native environment or within artificial situations designed to elicit specific behaviours that occur in natural and native environments (Eddy, 2008). In the context of this research, the chosen method for data collection was based on naturalistic observational approaches, derived from infant observation and research techniques that provided fresh and independent evidence of the emotional processes and experiences of the children (Rustin, 1995), aspects deeply linked to this investigation. The unobtrusive and impartial style of this ethological approach to participatory research has also been developed and advocated by Meyer et al. (1993) and Evans and Berryman, (1995). The data for Study 1 were collected through ten weeks of direct naturalistic observations. The recording was done through detailed narratives of all the events that took place that might be judged as emotional in tone or content. Streams of behaviour of these complex ecologies were divided into events. An event could be a child-child interaction or

a teacher-child interaction. Typically, events had initiating stimuli (something happens) some expression of emotion, and had some kind of ending of the event (such a full resolution of the disagreement).

Two observers were trained to write concurrently to the observational session, and to adopt a literal and factual method of presenting their observations, using everyday language closed to the immediate reality of the situations. Events were recorded with enough detail to capture the essence of what transpired, but with as little interpretation as possible. The two observers wrote a typical record of their observational report immediately after the observational visit was finished. Rustin (1995) referencing on applying naturalistic observational methodology within families and school contexts claims that "working at remembering and rendering accurately in words what have been seen, heard and felt, it is an important part of learning to observe, an integral part of the development of the observer herself as a sensitive recording instrument" (Rustin, 1995, p. 69). This method was initially created by Esther Bick (1964) and has been traditionally implemented as part of Psychodynamic Psychotherapy clinical training and infant observation at the Tavistock Clinic in London, and it is judged as a non intrusive method when the focus of the study is on emotions and interactions of feelings (Rustin, 1995).

The second observer was present in most observations, and thus narratives could be compared to confirm adequate reliability and reduce the potential for inaccurate recall. After 10 weeks of observations, all the assembled data were read thoroughly, and the observational reports of events were compared again for reliability purposes. Aspects such as content, sequences of interactions, beginning, and end of emotional events were examined and percentage of agreement was calculated by means of the formula number of agreements divided by total number of agreements and disagreements multiplied by 100. The percentage agreement was

85%, which indicated a high level of agreement between observers, with respect to content, similar sequences of interactions and behaviour, and the same endings. The observers' disagreements were examined in detail during several reliability meetings where the observational material was read through and consensus was reached through discussion.

Procedure

Ethical approval was sought and approved from Massey University Human Ethics Committee. Once the approval was granted, different early childhood education centres were contacted via email and telephone. Play centres were not considered since the target for this research were early childhood teachers and play centres are operated by groups of parents that meet regularly with their children to facilitate play. Four different ECE services from diverse areas of the Greater Wellington region were approached and invited to participate. The centres were chosen with the purpose of covering different demographic areas to balance their representativeness and in order to obtain a diverse selection of programmes. These were intended to be typical but not fully representative of all possible ECE services. The services were first contacted by an invitation letter and then followed up with a telephone call. Initially four settings showed interest in participating and were visited personally to explain the project further and to clarify its aims and the structure of the observations. One of the services withdrew their participation due to an unexpected illness of one of their teachers.

Once the head teacher, manager or supervisor of the centre agreed to participate, teachers and members of the staff were formally invited to participate. Written consent was obtained for the participant teachers willing to participate as well as for the children through their parents (See letters on Appendices A, B, C, D, E). The majority of the parents in the three selected centres gave consent for the children to be observed. One centre had a 100% response rate. The

children whose permission was granted were observed during this study. These children were given a distinctive sticker to be worn during the observation to distinguish them from those who did not have consent. Verbal continuing consent was sought from both children and adults at the beginning of each observation period by asking the children on the spot if they wanted to be observed on the day.

After an initial period of observation, teachers were shown examples of the events recorded and these were discussed with them in order to pilot the accuracy of the reports to the immediate reality of the teachers. Pseudonyms were used at all times to conceal the identity of individual participants, as well as the early childhood centres observed.

The observations were conducted during 10 weeks on a weekly basis for each ECE centre. The observation times were strictly one hour and regularity with the time of the day was kept throughout the observation period. All the observations took place at mid-mornings immediately after the children had finished their morning snack. The same day of the week was scheduled to observe each one of the centres. Thirty hours of observational time were recorded in total.

In a regular observation session, the two observers visited the centre and naturally blended among the teachers, children, and usual daily activities of the centre. The two observers did not take notes or record any behaviours (or events) during the time of the visit; instead this was done immediately after the visit was finished. Running records of events were taken. McMillan and Meade (1985) have defined a running record as one that provides a careful description of behaviour or events that also contains a good description of the environment. By recording everything that happened, the observers were able to see and follow a complex network of teacher-child interactions within the environment. The observational records of

several teacher- child interactions provided generalised data that allowed a comparison of how the teacher- child emotional interactions varied from centre to centre.

Data analysis

For the analysis of data, a thematic analysis was conducted. A thematic analysis is a process for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns organised as themes within the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

In order to organise and describe data in detail, all the observation reports and notes made by both observers were compiled, emotionally relevant content was highlighted in the text, and comments were made in the margins. Events that contained any emotionally relevant child-teacher interactions, and strategies used by teachers in the form of behaviours woven into the interactions, were highlighted and coded. examples of these observable behaviours, which were usually embedded within the teacher-child interaction include: physically or verbally prompting a child to be part of a group; physically or verbally assisting the child during conflict with another child; physically or verbally assisting a child to complete a task before moving on to another one; or taking a child away from a highly emotional moment or redirecting the child's attention to something or someone else (Evans & Harvey, 2012).

My assumption, based on the literature summarised in the introduction and my previous experience as described in the preface, was that the process of reflection provoked by the training intervention would help participants to integrate conceptual knowledge and apply it to their practice (McMahon, 2001; Schön, 1983)

Comparisons and contrasts between different incidents and between different centres were examined as a way of finding incipient themes. Overall the qualitative analysis was conducted following Hammersley et al.'s (2001) methodological perspective on analysing

qualitative data in educational research. Specifically when video or audio recording was not used, researchers may code using a schedule. The aim was to develop the incipient codes into a set of categories relevant to the focus of the study based on careful scrutiny of data. Once it was done, further examples found within the data were then collected and allocated into the categories. This produced a set of themes which can be illustrated by data extracts.

Broader themes began to emerge. Two distinctive types of data were identified and selected. They were judged either as "interactions" or as "strategies" arisen from these interactions. Portions of raw data were extracted from the observation reports as illuminative exemplars of the main themes. The primary analysis consisted of:

1. Highlighting salient features in relation to the emotional interactions observed.
2. Finding interconnections between emerging themes and making comparisons.
3. Identifying possible patterns of interactions.
4. Looking for key words and events for coding.

Most of the observational material was accommodated within the main themes. From these themes, a series of categories (types of the identified interactions and strategies) that came from the pool of concepts derived from psychological literature and early childhood education. Categories were submitted to the same level of analysis with the help of a diagram to make sense of the categories linking to the themes. Most of the exemplary types of interactions and strategies that fit into these categories were identified and encapsulated into these categories with examples tagged to them.

The categorisation process was guided by a range of theory of emotions placed at the core of ECE (Hyson, 2004). The theoretical line of the interactional research on parental socialisation of emotions had an important role in channelling, defining, and grouping the

observed interactions and strategies. The developmental work of Denham (1998, 2006; Denham et al., 2003), and Eisenberg (Eisenberg, Fabes, Carlo, & Karbon, 1992; Eisenberg, Fabes, & Murphy, 1996; Eisenberg, Cumberland, & Spinrad, 1998) highlights the importance of promoting nurturing and individualised adult-child relationships and interactions in order to promote the emotional well being of young children. Parenting research and related approaches were extrapolated to teacher-child relationships and mutual interactions in the context of the naturalistic observations. Like parents, when teachers interact with children they have opportunities to coach children's appropriate responses during peer interactions and classroom activities, and serve as role models of appropriate expression and regulation of emotions (Hyson, 2004).

Two main categories were found in classroom observations: emotional interactions and strategies used by teachers to respond to children's emotional communications. Subcategories that belonged to these two main themes were identified, and exemplars extracted from the observational material.

Subcategories of analysis were defined through the examples found in the observation material, and conceptualisation was suggested by the data.

Definitions

Relevant social contexts and settings where the emotional interactions occurred were described and defined. The use of nominal variables was necessary in order to guide the direction, organization, formulation, classification and categorisation of observational data. The following definitions were specified:

Interactions. Interactions were events that clearly involved both the teacher and the child in a joint emotional communication, exchange or activity involving reciprocal actions.

Strategies. Specific approaches used by teachers to manage or handle emotional events with children.

Routines. Specific activities introduced each day, or the regular sequence for a set of everyday activities, such as washing hands before snack time, or going outside to plant seeds, or doing an art project, or putting away one's play materials before sitting in a circle to hear a story being read.

Aggressive conflict events. Incidents characterised as a disagreement between children during interactions that involved an overtly verbal or physical reaction coloured by hostility from the parts involved.

Non-aggressive conflict events. Incidents that involved disagreement between children during interactions but that did not escalate into verbal or physical reactions from the parts involved.

Teacher ratios. Number of adults presented in each setting per hour of observation and during the 10 weeks of observation.

Staff turnover. Rate of continuity or changes in teachers/ members of the staff during the observational period.

Guided by the main research objectives the data were analysed interactively, and the research objectives in turn were guided by conceptual clarification achieved through classifying the data and based on the developmental literature on the socialization of children's emotional competence.

Once the categorisation was completed, a group session for reliability purposes was conducted to examine the accuracy of the correspondence data. A panel of three raters from CHERUBS lab at Massey University, who were unaware as to the purpose of the study,

independently categorised each portion of observational material. Forty excerpts from 60 observational reports (30 per observer) were reviewed, and the percentage of agreement was calculated. $P_o = 0.80$ indicated a satisfactory level of agreement between the coders and the researcher initial assignation of categories. Thirty-four of the 40 observational exemplars assigned to main categories and subcategories were randomly selected from the material and compared by raters to ascertain whether they had assigned them to the same category as the observers, giving a level of agreement of 80%.

When the reliability process was completed and the final categorisation was produced, the data were processed to produce numerical results. A frequency analysis was conducted by counting identified emotional events, registering systematically the rate of occurrence of each identified category of interactions and strategies per hour of observation. Frequency of other variables such as number of aggressive and non-aggressive incidents between children, attempts of adults to support problem resolution and the ratio of teachers per observational hour were also counted; to be presented and compared between the three participant settings.

Results

Interactions

The categories of interactions were selected from the emerging themes found through the observational material, after a preliminary analysis. Two main categories found in classroom observations: emotional interactions and strategies used by teachers to respond to children's emotional communications during these interactions were formally assigned. Subcategories that belonged to these two main themes were identified, and exemplars extracted from the observational material were allocated.

Subcategories of analysis were defined through the examples found in the observation material and conceptualisation was suggested by these data.

The following paragraphs describe each identified sub-category of emotional interactions, as well as some examples extracted from the observational material selected from the observational data to illustrate these definitions.

Atunement

Interpersonal contact that demonstrated sensitivity, and identification with the other person sensations, needs, and feelings.

Includes the communication of that sensitivity to the other person, as well as the capacity to anticipate and observe the effects of his or her behaviour on others.

Example

Children were sitting in a circle. A boy who early on was unsure where to sit noticed that the girl sitting next to him had no shoes on. He got up and ran where the shoes were placed. The boy came back with a pair of shoes in his hand and started to put them on the girl, who allowed him to do it. The teacher who was busy resolving another matter between two other children, noticed the boys' action and openly praised him for being helpful and wonderful at sorting out the little girl's shoes, As a result the girl moved her body slightly inviting him to sit.

Non attentiveness

Ignoring or not listening to emotional communications, lack of special regard for feelings and expression of emotions.

Example

A girl accidentally bumped into one of her friends as she walked around the corner of the playground shed and began to cry. She looked at her classmates, but as before, the children around her looked indifferent to her sobs. The young girl scanned around with her eyes looking for her teacher. She laid eyes on the closest adult and ran over towards her coming close to her teacher's lower body. The teacher then hugged the girl looking out towards other children, without saying anything to her or the other child involved.

Mutual liking and emotional connectedness

A feeling of enjoying a shared interaction (verbal or not verbal) or activity. Mutual display of fondness.

Example

A girl came near the teacher looking down. The teacher looked directly into her eyes and gently said, "Are you feeling sad? It has not been a good day for you!" The girl snuggled into her teacher's chest and the teacher received this gesture with a compassionate look. Then she addressed her attention to me by saying "She has been a bit under the weather today." The girl remained in the same position for a few minutes until the teacher told her with soft voice and a smile, tapping her gently on her shoulder to stand up to go to group time. The girl separated herself from her teacher looking a bit reluctant. The teacher noticed her reaction and offered her hand to guide her to the other room.

Expressiveness

Verbal or non-verbal (gestural) open expression of emotions. Conveying feelings, emotion, or emotional state of mind.

Example

Some children were playing around a wooden house. Martha was looking shyly at them from the distance holding a plastic dinosaur toy in her hand. The teacher noticed her shyness and approached her making a gesture of understanding. She asked the girl if she would like to join the others. Martha responded with a smile. Then the teacher asked Martha if she would like to ask one of the children to move a little to the side to make room for her to sit. Martha said something inaudible to the teacher whilst looking at her dinosaur. The teacher interpreted what she wanted and added, " would you like your dinosaur to go upstairs?" Martha assented again in the same fashion as before and smiled subtly. The teacher instructed her to tell the other children what she wanted to do and Martha did what the teacher suggested. The other children seemed to understand her more by her gestures than from her unclear words. One of the children that created a place for Martha before asked the teacher if she could have her place back. The teacher encouraged the girl to talk directly to Martha, and the child followed the teacher instruction, causing the children to swap over places amicably.

Individuality

Acknowledgement of specific characteristics that distinguish one person from another, highlighting his or her uniqueness or individual differences.

Example

The children were watering the garden in a very well organised chain, so that the children could all stand in a line and pass the water along to get it to the planterstwo new comers arrived with the intention to join the game. The teacher gave them the option of joining in the group and passing water or doing another activity. They both told her that they wanted to

join the chain gang. Tania, the youngest girl in the setting was not lining up, so the teacher kneeled down to her level, and took her gently by the hand asked her if she would like to be her helper. Tania pulled her hand away and ran and stood by her big sister's side, who was lining waiting to pass on the water. The teacher did not persist and allowed her stand where she wanted following her with her gaze. The teacher told the rest of the children that she felt proud seeing them work hard despite it being quite a difficult task.

Emotionally relevant activities

Taking part in planned or spontaneous activities that encouraged children to write, talk, express, and play emotional related issues

Example

The teacher thanked George for bringing up the topic of the death of the rabbit. The teacher then started to talk about the death of Roger the rabbit. All the children looked at her attentively, some children pulled a sad face. She explained how yesterday Roger Rabbit died and the vet came to help him to die. He was very old she said, "quite old for a Rabbit", he came here since the school was funded like 8 years ago, even before any children or teachers were here, apart from A who has been here from the beginning." She then explained that he went sick, "he has an infection in his eyes and went blind," she added. A child mentioned that somebody else brought carrots for him yesterday," Yes, he loved carrots she answered and he had a very happy last day." She told the children that now they could ask as many question as they wanted. Children began to raise their arms; they asked questions about why he died. She answered their questions in a very calm and secure way. She explained repeatedly that he was old and sick but

nobody really knew why he got sick. A child said maybe he got poisoned. She said that she thought that was not the case of Roger rabbit since he was always very well looked after and they would not give him anything that would make him sick. Some children asked about if it was possible for him to come back to life or even to unbury him in order to see him again. The teacher patiently answers all the questions in the most candid way reassuring the children that once you are dead you cannot come back to life. She added to one point, "Everything that is alive dies one day." It was said in the most natural way. The children looked at her attentively. Some of them had their arms still up. She then said she would like to tell the children who still had question to remain in the carpet so they could discuss them after the rest had gone to do their daily activities

Emotional strategies

Three types of strategies were identified:

Preventive. These strategies aimed to be protective. These strategies are put in place as anticipatory responses in the face of possible emotional events. Examples of these strategies were:

- distraction and defusing: strategies diverting the child's interest to another person, object or task;
- transaction and negotiation in an attempt to reach an agreement between conflicting parts; and
- linking personal information to current experience which involved connecting past experience to anticipate and prepare for an imminent emotional event.

Responsive. Strategies that allowed teachers to be open and receptive in the face of emotionally charged events. Examples of these strategies were:

- attention and interest: implies genuine focus on the emotional communication and sustained attention that fosters interest;
- emotion coaching: helps and supports children to understand and manage emotional experiences;
- interpretation and emotion talk: facilitates the understanding of emotions using language and other cognitive processes;
- encouragement of mastery: support to achieve tasks or specific behaviours; and
- physical proximity for comfort: provide physical availability and aid to contain emotions.

Reactive. Strategies that have an automatic and rapid quality in response of emotional events. Examples of these strategies were:

- dismissing and minimizing the importance of emotionally related events: rejection or disregard of an emotional communication or event;
- emotional avoidance: using of evasive or elusive response to a emotional communication or event;
- emotional coercion: insisting on, or pressurising to achieve a desired behaviour or result;
- control by physical actions: management to achieve or influence behaviour or result by using physical movements. e.g., use of restraining and;
- control by direct commands: precise instructions and orders to achieve desired behaviour or result

Quantitative analysis

Interactions

Frequency of identified interactions

The results show differences in the frequency of teacher- child emotional interactions in each centre over 10 hours of observation. These frequencies are illustrated in the following figure:

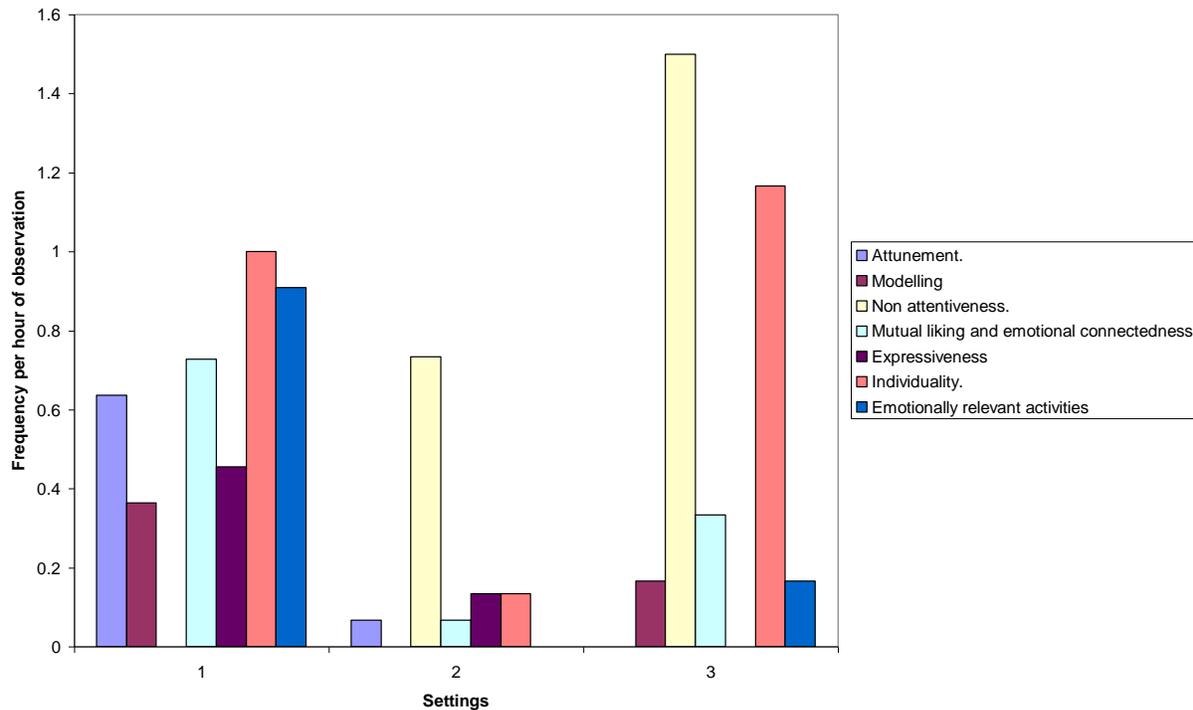


Figure 1. Frequencies of categories of child- teacher interaction for each of the three settings.

In Setting 1, the most frequent teacher -child interaction observed was individuality. In this setting, teachers were more attentive at acknowledging specific personality and cultural features in the children. They were also often engaged in interactions that encouraged modelling,

attunement, and expressiveness (individual style of emotional response). Emotionally relevant activities were also frequently observed in this setting.

In Setting 2, the most predominant teacher-child interaction was non-attentiveness. Children and teachers tended to pay less attention towards emotionally relevant episodes, and often overlooked their importance. Teachers and children were observed sporadically to be engaged in interactions that supported emotional competence, such as individuality, expressiveness, and emotional connectedness.

In Setting 3, the most common interaction observed was also non-attentiveness of emotional events or incidents; however, they frequently valued and honoured children's individuality, especially in relation to cultural differences and art products. In contrast to Setting 1, Setting 3 showed an absence of interactions that encourage emotional expressiveness and attunement, which describes the encouragement of affective awareness and receptivity to others.

Teachers' strategies

There were three broad types of identified strategies used by teachers during the observational period. Strategies used to prevent the outburst and escalation of potentially emotional incidents, strategies used in reaction to an emotional event, and responsive mindful strategies used in response to emotional or potential emotional conflict. The observed settings showed a diverse implementation of these strategies. Setting 1 used more responsive strategies such as attention, praise, emotion coaching, emotion talk, encouragement of mastery and physical proximity for comfort. Emotion coaching and encouragement of mastering were the most frequent strategies observed per hour of observation in this setting. Only one type of reactive strategy was observed in Setting 1, and it was controlled by direct commands. However, its frequency was very low. Preventive strategies such as transaction and negotiation,

anticipation of events, and feelings and linking personal information to current experience were also frequently observed in Setting 1, but to a lesser extent than responsive strategies.

Conversely, teachers in Setting 2 have shown high frequency of reactive strategies. They predominantly implemented control by direct commands and physical actions (e.g., physically removing the child or the object involved in emotional conflict). Distraction as a preventive strategy appeared highly frequently in this setting. It was often used to divert attention from an object or situation. There was less frequency of responsive strategies in Setting 2, and in contrast to Setting 1, non-occurrence of emotion coaching was displayed during the observational period.

In Setting 3, teachers relied mainly on responsive strategies, such as physical proximity to comfort children affected by emotional conflict. Preventive strategies such as distraction and anticipation of events and feelings were less frequently used strategies observed in Setting 3. The reactive strategy of control by direct commands was mostly used in this setting as a way of responding to emotional events and communications from children.

The following figure illustrate the observed frequency of strategies occurred per each hour observation in the three centres (see below Figures 2, 3, 4).

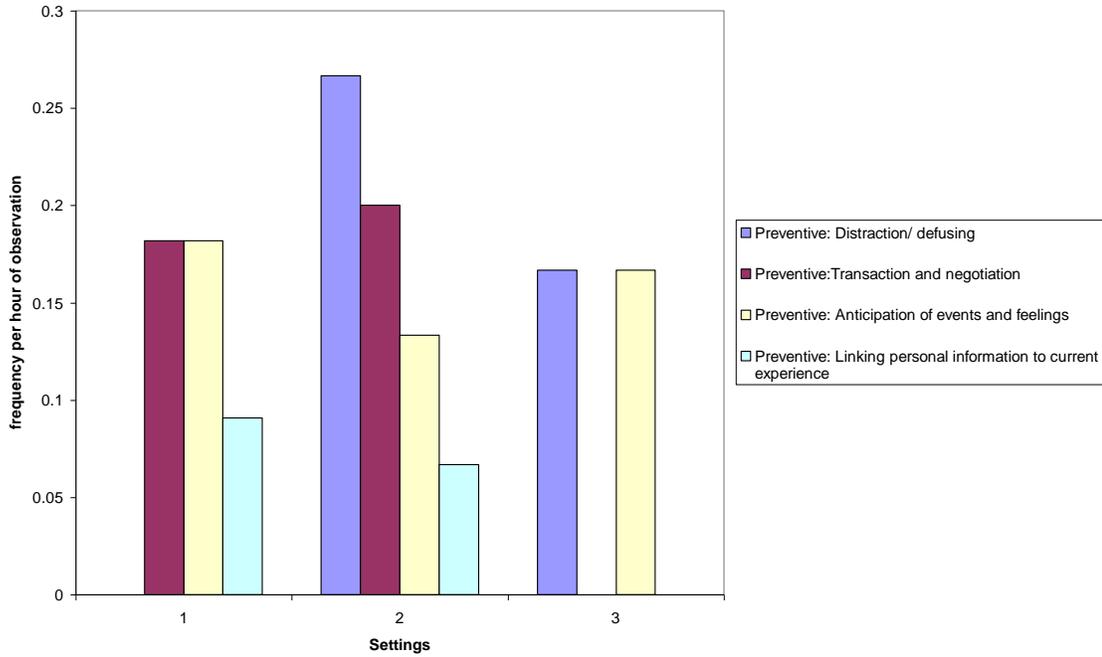


Figure 2. Preventive strategies identified in teachers in each of the three settings.

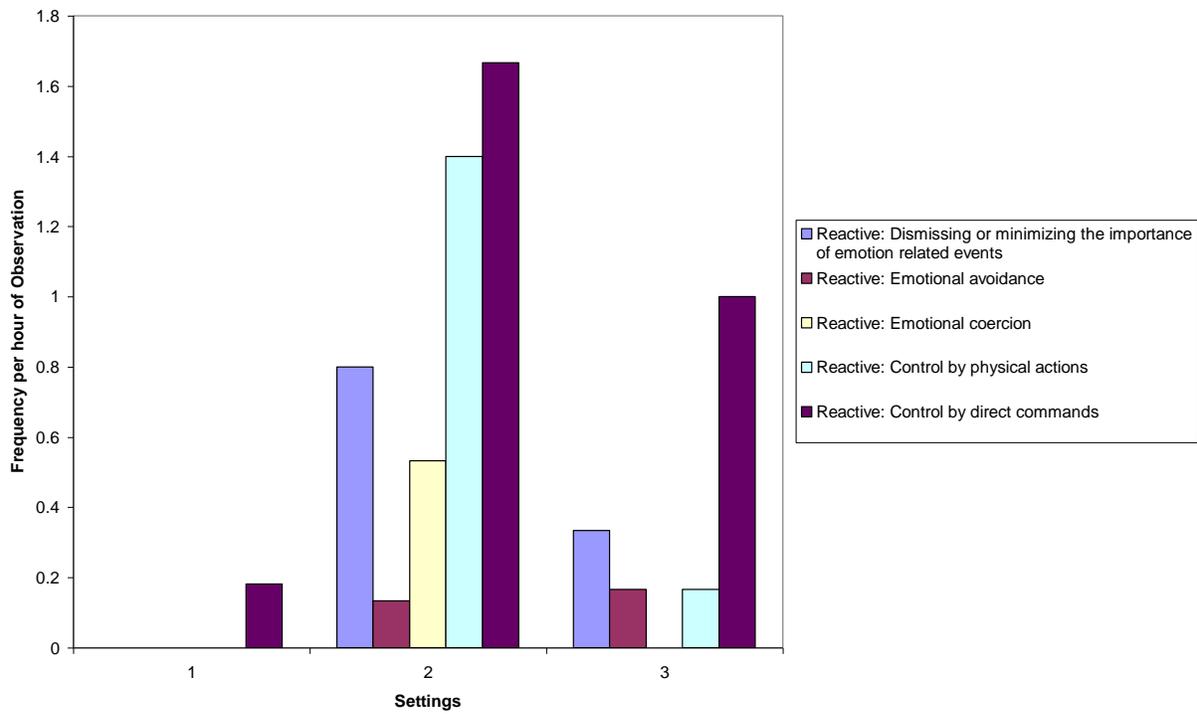


Figure 3. Reactive strategies identified in teachers in each setting.

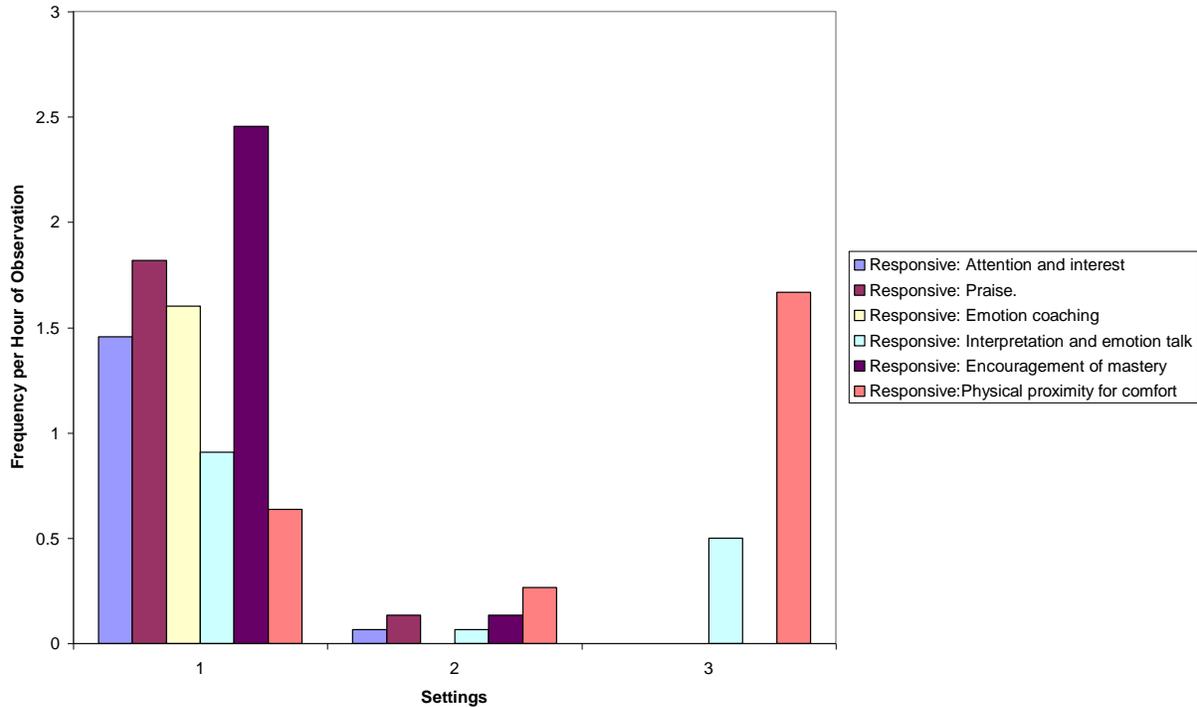


Figure 4. Responsive strategies identified in teachers in each setting.

Frequencies of other variables

Setting 1 presented a lower number of non-aggressive conflicts in comparison with Setting 2 and 3. There were no episodes of aggressive conflict, and there were no occurrences of unresolved incidents exhibited during the observational period. In Setting 2, aggressive and non-aggressive conflict was recorded at a higher rate of occurrences, most of them being left unresolved. Setting 3 also showed a high frequency of aggressive conflict compared with non-aggressive conflict. However, teachers showed some attempts to encourage resolution.

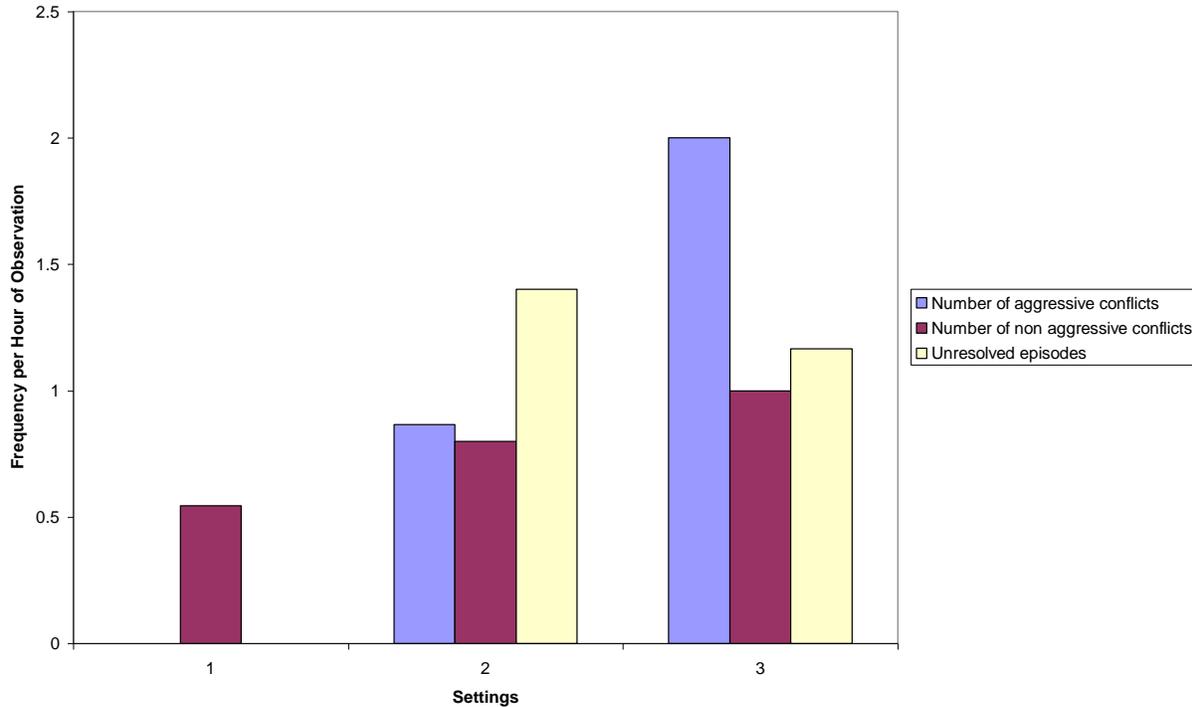


Figure 5. Frequency of aggressive and non-aggressive conflicts compared across the three settings.

Number of adults and staff turn-over

The average adult-child ratio in the three observed settings was another noticeable variable during the observation period. Setting 1 maintained the same number of teachers during the observation period (2 teachers), and no staff changes were observed. Setting 2 had the highest average of adults per children during the observation period (from 4 to 5 teachers present), and showed the highest turnover of staff members of the three settings. Setting 3 maintained a constant number of adults per children (3 teachers), and showed low numbers of staff changes during the observation (Figure 5).

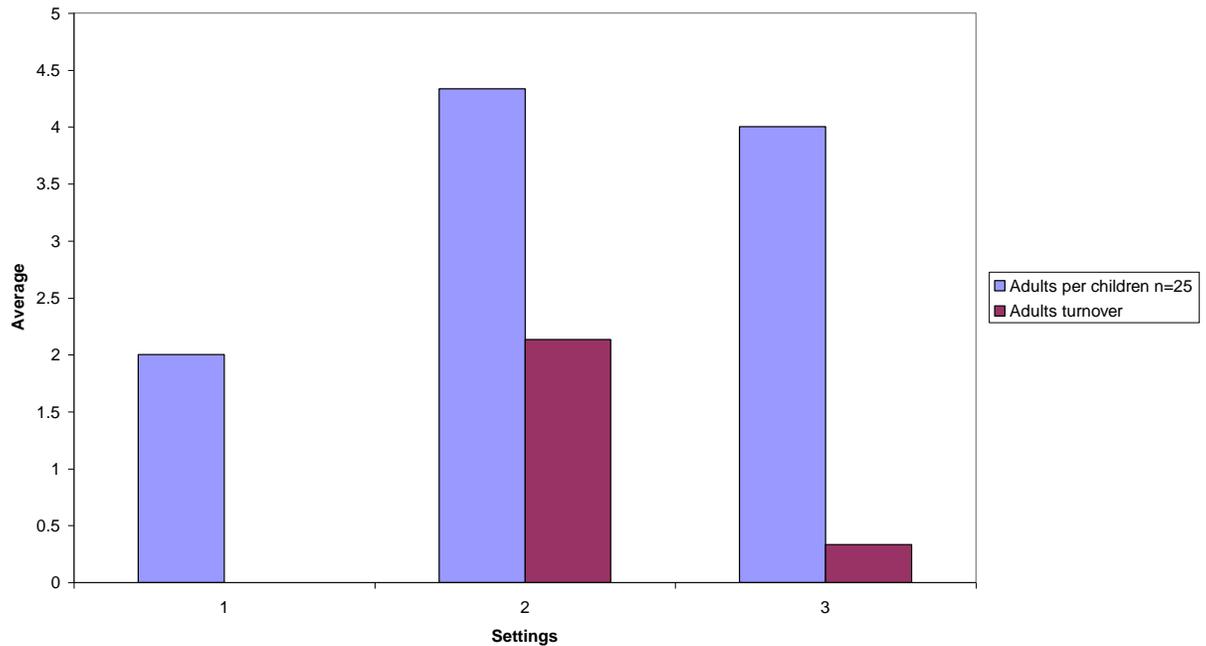


Figure 6. Other observed variables.

Discussion

This observational study has shown detailed patterns of teacher-child emotional interactions, which allows one to determine the interpersonal processes in which teachers support children's emotional communications and support emotional climates in early childhood classrooms. The study achieved its purpose of obtaining examples of emotional teacher- child interactions, as well as finding interconnections between these interactions, strategies used by teachers when dealing with children's emotions and the emotional climate in early childhood settings.

Close observation revealed various ways in which teachers respond to children's emotional situations. Synchronous teacher- child relationships, the use of emotion coaching and the self-awareness or mindfulness disposition were identified as effective ways in which teachers socialise children's emotional competence. These characteristics contribute to build up positive emotional climates where teachers are more positive, more emotionally reflective, and less reactive. These settings are characterised by having calmer environments with less challenging child behaviour. It is always possible that the "good behaviour" of individual children allowed them to have more constructive and positive emotional relationships with their teachers; however this fact alone does not explain all the observed interactions.

The interactions identified during this observation study, specifically those that used effective specific interactional principles, strategies and concepts such as emotion coaching, synchronicity, and mindfulness were then used as inspiration to create the training material used in the intervention for the second study of this research project.

Observable data suggested that Setting 1, which promoted interactions that considered children's emotion and which used more responsive strategies such as emotion coaching, encouraging of mastery, expressiveness of feelings and emotion talk, created more positive emotional climates and showed less frequency of aggressive conflict and, interestingly, had fewer adults involved in the teaching and care of the children. Although a causal relationship between these variables cannot be claimed too strongly, this study confirmed important links between the emotional climate of early childhood classrooms and children's behaviour and pro-social skills.

Centres adopting non-attention or infrequently use of emotions as a predominant form of interaction tended to have more aggressive conflicts without coming to a resolution. Teachers in

these centres were observed to rely on responsive strategies such as physical proximity to contain and manage children's emotions. They also showed most frequent use of reactive and preventive strategies to regulate children's emotions. The above results agree with the current emotion theory and research trends, which suggest that by increasing emotion knowledge through strategies such as emotion coaching, emotion talk and other emotion –cognition interactions, the emotional regulation in young children increases (Izard et al., 2010). Correspondingly, increased emotional knowledge (understanding) and increased emotional regulation (management of arousal and expression of emotions) mediated the positive effects of emotional-based interactions on the development of emotional and social competence (Izard et al., 2008).

Findings from this research are consistent with a range of existing emotional socialization literature. Previous research has indicated that young children need to receive and give affection in order to successfully develop socially and emotionally and to thrive across developmental periods (Howes, Hamilton, & Matheson, 1994; Hyson & Cone, 1989). Researchers have also shown that caregivers' expression of affection is linked to young children's appropriate displays of emotion (Hertenstein & Campos, 2004) compared with caregivers who infrequently express affection to individual children (Zanolli, Saudargas, & Twardosz, 1997). Positive affection in the child- teacher relationships and interactions within the context of ECE has been recurrently addressed by the literature. The relational and emotional aspects that build up early childhood education environments, together with the association between work environments and teachers' affectionate behaviour has been supported by research. In particular, Mill and Romano-White (1999) found a positive relationship between teachers' expression of affection and the quality of work environment as measured by a range of structural indicators such as physical environment, staff turnover, salary, and group size among others.

By identifying types of interactions and strategies used by teachers in order to shape the emotional competence in young children, this study focused on the processes or mechanisms by which adults' goals and practices influence child competences in emotional socialisation. These processes included a variation of adults' responses to emotions, modelling, teaching children emotional skills, and the influence of their own expression, perception, and beliefs about emotions.

There was a significant variation between the quality of child-adult interactions, and the strategies used by teachers across the three observed centres. Each emotional environment had distinct cultural traits that seemed enriched and influenced by the individual sensitivity of teachers and group dynamics. Although the goal of supporting children's emotional competence was observed in all three centres, the processes to achieve this goal were enacted differently through practices that suited each work culture. For instance, all the teachers acted as social and emotional models for children under their care, however what they modelled varied according to specific practices influenced by dynamics, philosophies and personal styles within each setting.

The small sample of this study does not allow for generalizations; however, exploratory relationships and comparisons between predominant interactions, strategies used by teachers to handle emotional communications, and salient children's behaviour presented across the observed centres were identified.

This study was not exempt of the limitations of observing subtle social mechanisms and behaviours. The observers' presence potentially may have influenced the behaviours and interactions being observed. However, the observers tried to minimize the impact of their presence by maintaining regularity, unobtrusiveness and by sustaining a friendly familiarity with the participants. Once habituated to the observer's presence, the participants felt comfortable and

acted naturally during their daily routines. The non-intrusive receptive observation and the fact that the main observer had previous training in infant observation focused on the emotional needs and experience of the children, contributed to the rapid habituation of the participants to the observers' presence.

Another limitation worthy to be reported was that all the participant services volunteered to take part of the study, which can have an effect on the representatives of the sample. However, the fact that the observed services were located in different and contrasting demographic areas of the city, counteracting the constraint of not utilising a random or representative sample but a convenience sample.

There are certain things that were impossible to observe. For instance, the influence of teacher's inner beliefs and own emotions about emotions (MEP) described by Evans et al., (2009) as *emotional intrapersonal beliefs* of teachers, an important component of the emotional climate of classrooms and emotion socialization, which cannot be identified through observation. These beliefs were explored in more depth during the second study of this project using different methodologies. Through the second phase of this research, teachers expressed some of the emotional- cognitive contents of these beliefs during an emotionally based intervention, aimed to enhance their own emotional awareness and competence.

A key aspect in which this study focused on was not so much the discipline issues that teachers encounter in everyday situations in early childhood centres, instead it focused on how certain emotional styles and skills of teachers help the children manage their own emotions and support their overall emotional competence.

The conclusion of this study raised the question of whether these emotional skills occur naturally in teachers, or whether they can be taught as a part of the teacher-training curriculum or

through professional development. This is the key research question for the next study. As long as the children in one setting were already emotionally competent and well regulated, it would be difficult to see if training could enhance early childhood education teachers' abilities to manage emotional situations. Therefore, a second study was designed as an intervention to examine the effects of training early childhood education teachers with an emotion focused intervention. A similar effort has been made by the Te Āniwaniwa research project through the professional development workshops "Warming the Classroom Emotional Environment" with mixed results. The types and quality of teacher-child emotional interactions observed provided a basis for the design of a professional development workshop for teachers to learn the basic emotional skills necessary to support young children's emotional competence.

Summary

Naturalistic observations helped to describe salient characteristics of teacher-child emotional interactions in the form of emotion socialization processes, designed to shape emotional competence in young children. Study 1 also captured some of the strategies used by teachers to enact practices that gave shape to, and coloured, a variety of emotional climates in early childhood education and care contexts. The study found that at least one of the observed preschools was significantly more successful than others at promoting synchronous interactions that considered children's emotions. Teachers at this centre used more frequently responsive strategies such as emotion coaching, modelling, encouraging of mastery, adaptive expressiveness of emotions and emotion talk together with other symbolic tools to support children's emotional competence. The results from Study 1 also showed that this particular setting did not show a single episode of unresolved aggressive conflict among the children and, interestingly, had fewer adults involved in the teaching, and care of the children in comparison with other observed

centres. As a consequence of the positive teacher –child interactions observed in this setting, its emotional climate was described by the observers as consistently calm and caring. An early impression of one of the observers was recorded in the following paragraph:

“...children did not run wild. Instead, kids asked permission to do things. For example, they asked to play in the garden. As the children headed out to play, they put on their gumboots without any direction from the teachers. They used the garden tools correctly. The children seemed to occupy themselves and they got on with each other. It seemed that there was little management going on. The children even made their own plate at morning tea.

CHAPTER 3: INTERVENTION STUDY PROCEDURE AND QUANTITATIVE FINDINGS STUDY 2

The observational study allowed for the refinement of the basic model of teacher emotional competence as it applies to young children. It revealed a number of processes that were used by teachers in their effective interactions with children and suggested some strategies that were much less effective.

The processes observed in this setting denoted an example of the ideal practice of supporting children's emotional competence. The identification of these processes was helpful to guide the understanding of how teachers socialize children's emotions more effectively. Among the observed strategies implemented by these teachers was the use of emotional coaching through all the sequences of interactions. In fact, all the interactions were considered "teachable opportunities" (Evans et al., 2009). Along with the predominantly used strategy of emotion coaching, these teachers tended to model genuine appropriate emotions, honoured children's emotional style and autonomy, and used positive emotion in the service of learning. The interactions and strategies used by these teachers indicated effective processes of emotional socialisation, and provided further insights into building the interventional part of this research project. Based on these findings, it seemed important to determine if these skills could actually be taught to early childhood education teachers and evaluated, to some extent in a controlled research situation.

Study 2 of this research project therefore was a Randomized Control Trial (RCT) of the effects of training early childhood education teachers' ability to support young children's emotional communications when subjected to an aversive procedure. As a psychological

methodology, randomised control trials (RCT) are derived directly from medical and drug research. RCT is conceived as a type of scientific experiment designed to test the efficacy or validation of a particular intervention. After being assessed for eligibility, the participants (or groups of participants) are randomly allocated into different groups to receive one or other of the alternative interventions. Random allocations are intricate especially when recruiting participants in educational settings. It is not easy to ensure a similar balance in each group and make each group of teachers as similar as possible to rule out the effects of personal characteristics (Hammersley et al., 2001). It is especially difficult when clusters of teachers belonging to the same institution are allocated together, as this can increase susceptibility to methodological problems and bias (Hahn, Puffer, Torgerson, & Watson, 2005).

While in Study 1 the observations permitted identification of a variety of interactions and strategies used by ECE teachers when meeting children's emotional communication, Study 2 tried to demonstrate empirically that the inter and intra- relational skills used by teachers during these communications to support children's emotional competence could be enhanced by a carefully designed emotion-focused intervention. RCT is the ideal methodology to compare experimental and control groups, and randomization ensures that two or more groups formed are similar prior the intervention, however evaluation through RCT alone does not provide an understanding of the context in which the study is being conducted. For this reason it was relevant for this research project to combine, complement and integrate both methodologies of data generation and analysis.

The basic research question guiding this study was whether or not emotionally trained teachers were able to manage the children's emotions effectively. The intervention aimed to enhance teacher's emotional competence was based on both, the theoretical understanding of

emotional socialization of children, and the helpful child-teacher interactions and strategies identified during the observational study of this research.

The general objectives outlined for this study were:

1. To develop an evidenced based research intervention, aiming to enhance the emotional competence skills of early childhood teachers. It is expected that this intervention have a positive impact on how the teachers manage children's emotions during a contrived task containing an unexpected emotional situation.
2. Add empirical and theoretical knowledge to the emerging body of research on children's socialisation of emotions and contribute to the design of more effective targeted prevention and educational programmes.
3. Inform policies on (a) the role of preschool teachers in the acquisition of emotional competence in children, (b) their contribution to early prevention programmes (c) report on effective practical paths in which educational policies can support emotionally centred curriculums.

Method

Participants

Participants were 30 preschool teachers working in different ECE services in the Greater Wellington Region. After the approval from the Human Ethics committee, it was seen as advantageous that the ECE centres included in the project were from different demographic areas in wellington in order to ensure diversity of socio-economic backgrounds among the participants. The New Zealand Deprivation Index (2007) was consulted to determine the demographic characteristics of possible ECE centres. While the index showed there was socio-economic

difference in populations living in the physical locations of the services in the official early childhood education listing, it should be noted that New Zealand ECE services are not “zoned” so parents may elect to have their child attend any particular centre for its special character. Similarly, New Zealand ECE centre teachers did not necessarily live in the location of a centre. During the recruitment process, invitation letters and telephone calls were made to centres covering a range of service-types and geographical locations in purposive sampling, until the quota of a minimum 30 teachers was reached. During the recruitment process, invitation letters and telephone calls were made covering the range of services listed on this directory. After contacting interested ECE services via email and telephone calls and their expression of interest was confirmed, the prospective participants were visited in their own settings to be personally introduced to the project before they agreed to participate. The sample of ECE centre teachers consisted of 30 ECE teachers from six services. Teachers were assigned by service group, not individually, to either the intervention or control groups by a coin toss: a task undertaken by a confederate, blind to the type of group “heads” or “tails” represented; with the requirement that there be three groups in each condition at the end of the process.

Individual children consent was obtained through the teachers (See appendices, F, G, H, I, for information letters and consents). Inclusion criteria were for the teachers to work in ECE services with preschool children (aged 3-5). The ECE centres that agreed to participate were distributed in this proportion: two Kindergartens, 2 preschool programmes, and 2 day care centres. Each centre had an average of five participant teachers each, to give 30 participants.

Intervention sessions were arranged as part of the teachers’ professional development and took place in their own settings after work hours during times when staff meetings had minimised extra workload. All the teachers that were initially recruited for the training

completed all the sessions. All the participants were female teachers (ages between 23 to 52 years old) with different levels of experience. Eighty per cent of participants were qualified early childhood teachers and the other 20% were training to obtain the teaching qualification. In order to determine the level of experiences, participants were asked to report on their time of practice ($M = 4.8$ years). The participants who reported having more than 3 years of ECE practice were considered experienced. The ethnicity of the participant teachers was distributed as follow: Twenty-three participants were European New Zealanders, three participants were Māori, two Pasifika and two participants were Asian.

Measures

The following measures were utilised in the second phase of this research project:

Teachers Emotion Style Questionnaire

Emotion display photographs

Teachers Emotion Style Questionnaire

The TESQ was a version derived from the Maternal Emotional Style Questionnaire (MESQ) (Lagace-Seguin, 2005). Originally it assesses two different parental emotion styles a) EC (emotion- coaching) parent awareness of emotions within themselves and their children and the capacity to use this awareness on behalf of their children's emotion socialisation and b) ED (Emotion-dismissing) refers to the lack of awareness and reduced ability to deal with their children's emotions. These emotional style characteristics are behind the theoretical idea of parental meta-emotion (Gottman et al., 1996). The original version of this instrument was adapted to be used with teachers due to the analogies between teaching and caring for young children and parenting: 14 items were adapted from the original pool, and 7 factors corresponded to EC style and 7 factors to ED style. The MESQ items were scored on a 5-point Likert scale from *strongly*

disagree (1), to *strongly agree* (5). Participants received a total sum score on this scale. Sample items included: *When a child gets angry, I want to know what she is thinking*, and *when a child is sad, it is a time to problem-solve*. Teachers read the statements reflecting both, emotion coaching and emotion dismissing response styles to children's emotions and were asked to rate their level of agreement with the statement. For a sample of the TESQ questionnaire, see appendix J.

Scale psychometric properties were reported as being good in the original instrument based on parental responses (Legace–Seguin & Coplan, 2005). In the three studies they reported properties including stability, convergent validity, and construct validity for the 2-factor (seven items each). Cronbach's alpha for the first factor, emotion dismissing (ED) ranged from .78 to .92, and for the second factor, emotion coaching (EC), from .81 to .90.

The rationale behind the decision of adapting and using the TESQ as an initial measure was to ensure that the participants were approximately equal or similar at the start of the experiment in their emotional style. Re-testing the participants at the end of the intervention was not considered as a part of the initial design since the measure was only focused on the relevant components of emotional competence as established by literature

Emotion display photographs

During the first sessions of the intervention programme, a set of photographs of children exhibiting a variety of emotion displays were showed to participant teachers in the intervention group. The images conveyed a set of 8 emotions (happy, shy, puzzle, sad, love, angry, lonely and excited). The name of the emotion was both in English and in Māori and was located in the bottom corner of each photograph. Labels were concealed to give the teacher the opportunity to guess the emotion. This material, called He Mihi, was created by Amanda Jackson in 1997. This

visual stimulus was used with the intention of prompting and sensitising participant teachers to the upcoming topic. (See appendix K)

Materials

Two different sets of materials were designed and used during the intervention study: (a) the development of the training curriculum (see Appendix L); (b) the creation of the contrived assessment situation, the crocodile game (see photos in Appendix M).

The development of a training curriculum

The following description outlines the three sessions, their goals, and general content. For a more detailed description of both the intervention and control programme curricula see Appendix L and N).

For all the intervention sessions, the room was arranged in a circle with the chairs arranged for the exact number of participants to create an environment that facilitated group dynamics and participation. The video camera was set up in a corner of the room encompassing the entire group.

Session 1

This session aimed to present the group with the conceptual foundations of the training and exercise on the concepts of emotions and emotion schemas. This session also focused on emotion coaching as a fundamental construct in supporting emotional competence in ECE settings. Video and observational material showing teachers exercising different ways of emotion coaching were presented and discussed in the group.

General goals

- Introduction of the programme, outlining the structure and the content of the programme.
- Ice-breaker activity to encourage participants to be introduced to the facilitator and share something with the group in order to enhance the group cohesion and general mood.
- Group rules are established including confidentiality issues
- To complete the emotional style questionnaire.
- Participants acquire knowledge of the conceptual foundation of emotional competence.

Socialising children's emotions in ECE Settings

Content

- Emotional experience
- Emotional intelligence
- Emotional competence

Components of emotional competence

1. Emotional expressiveness (patterns of positive expression)
2. Emotional knowledge (identifying and responding to emotional expression of others)
3. Emotional regulation (ability to manage arousal)

Emotion coaching

1. Coaching emotions: Principles
2. The role of the teacher.

Observations to reflect on, identified, and analyse the observational and visual material by detecting how:

- Teacher created emotion in children
- Teacher guided and supported children to recognise, to be aware and to describe emotions in themselves and others.
- Teacher empathised, validated and accepted children's emotions in themselves and others
- Teacher was open to discuss situations that elicit emotions
- Teacher helped the children to problem solve and create strategies to cope with emotional events
- Teacher is aware of the impact of this experience on the children and the whole environment.

The benign cycle

Video clips.

Reflections and integration of concepts with the video clips and the observational material.

Session 2

This session aimed to consolidate some of the emotions theory concepts, specifically the concept of emotion schemas, and to integrate these ideas into a process of reflecting on emotions practice through an experiential exercise. The session was opened by showing the teachers a set of photographs of children displaying basic and complex emotions; this activity had the intention of stimulation of teachers' sensitivity to the coming experience.

General goals

- Summarise the ideas from the previous session and connect these concepts to the current session.
- To present a theoretical approach of the theory of emotions and emotion schemas.
- To introduce a self-reflection model of emotions practice in which the participant teachers can integrate and reflect on the links between their own and children's experiences, feelings and beliefs and integrate it with the theoretical ideas presented.

Content

Emotion Schemas

- Definition
- Responses
- Processes

Experiential exercise

- Reflective practice experiential exercise:
 1. "The child that concerns me greatly".
 2. Presentation
 3. Reflection practice process and group discussion.

Session 3

In order to promote and sustain the emotional communication of the children they work with, teachers were encouraged to enhance their self- awareness and awareness of others to

become more emotionally competent by using mindfulness strategies that they can incorporate in their practice.

General Goals

- Introduce the concepts of synchronicity and mindfulness in ECE practices
- Understand the effects of emotional attention and emotional mindfulness in the ECE practice.
- Introduce the concepts of Mindfulness and Synchronicity.
- Understand the strategies to promote a compassionate emotional communication with children
- Gather our final thoughts and complete the evaluation form.

Content

Definitions

Mindfulness is a fundamental component of the last session. A comprehensive definition has described mindfulness as “the awareness that emerges through paying attention on purpose, in the present moment, and no judgmentally to the unfolding of experiences moment by moment” (Kabat-Zinn, 1990, p. 145). This definition conveys different meanings, one is that mindfulness is an active process that involves attention, which leads to awareness, another part refers to the present rather than the past or the future and finally emphasises on the thought that attention is non judgmental and can accept the experience as it unfolds. It involves attending to the external environment such as sights, sounds, and smells, as well as to internal bodily sensations, thoughts, and feelings. In practicing mindfulness, the person becomes aware of the

current internal and external experiences, observes them carefully, accepts them, and allows them to let them go, in order to attend to another present moment experience.

Synchronicity is the dynamic coordination of emotional and behavioural expressions between adult and child also known as shared affect, mutual affect, and emotional reciprocity. Some behavioural indicators of synchronicity are shared eye contact, coordinated body movements, vocalisation, and facial and emotional expressions.

- Experiential activity through a role-play exercise called The Flat Face (Wood, 2008) and group discussion.
- Experiential activity using a savoury exercise (For both of these experiential activities see Appendix O).
- Mindfulness of thoughts and body (mindfulness guided meditation)
- Mindfulness compact disc (Williams, Teasdale, Segal, & Kabat-Zinn, 2007) given to teachers.

Plenary and evaluation (a copy of an evaluation forms and certificate of completion)

See Appendix O.

Control group training format

The control (non-intervention) group was presented with a single session of general child development theory. Following a similar format used in the intervention group, participants were encouraged to introduce themselves to the facilitator, but no icebreaker activity was introduced.

The sitting arrangement of the room was delegated to the participants.

Goals

- To complete the Teacher's Emotional Style Questionnaire
- To refresh their knowledge of general theories of child development.

Content

- The child in Western history
- Behaviourism (Skinner)
- Nativism (Chomsky)
- Constructivism (Piaget)
- Social Constructivism (Vygotsky)
- The genesis of thought : cognitive development
- Relationships: emotional development
- Temperament

The crocodile game

The game involved introducing to a small group of children a variety of toys and building blocks. Soon after, the teacher was encouraged to initiate a game or activity of their own choosing, using the toys available. A few minutes after, once the teacher and children were observed to be engaged playing, the researcher introduced an emotional arousing situation, presenting unexpectedly a crocodile puppet pretending "to eat the toys." The children and teachers were not warned at any stage of the time when the stimulus would appear. The introduction of the unexpected stimuli aimed to elicit some level of emotional arousal in

participant children, and allowed us to observe a variety of teacher-child interactions, as well as teachers' responses to children's emotions. This activity was comprised of two main parts:

1. Time- period before the presentation of the emotional stimulus (crocodile)
2. Time- period after the presentation of the stimulus.

This pretend game activity was previously used in research studies examining the experience of emotion in relation to high levels of arousal during pretend play games (Galyer & Evans, 2001; Golomb & Galasso, 1995). The unexpected entrance of the crocodile character was thought to meet the criteria for a significant event that elicits some level of emotional arousal (Kobak & Ferenz-Gillies, 1995). In Galyer and Evans' research, this particular game was used with the intention of exploring children's emotion regulation skills within the pretend play context. In the context of Galyer and Evans' study "it was expected that children who had responses that were successful in resolving conflict or keeping the game going despite the introduction of a negatively valenced event, would be rated as having higher emotion regulation in the wider context" (p. 96). This protocol involved an innovative way of arousing specific but harmless emotions in children and thus provided a controlled environment for observing teacher skills in managing different types and levels of feelings expressed by the children, especially for those children who were less able to regulate their own affect. The pretend nature of this game can also be seen as an ethical approach to provoking a mild emotional reaction in young children. The game was designed to assess the effects of the intervention training on teacher's ability to support and manage children's emotions in a controlled game situation. The first phase of the game assessed the interactional child-teacher dynamics before the introduction of the contrived stimulus (the crocodile).

The second phase assessed teachers' abilities to manage this emotional situation in children and demonstrate their recent acquired emotional competence skills. The overall emotional competence of teachers in both phases was also assessed throughout this game. The structure of the game and the teachers' emotional competences assessed with the game are described in the following figure:

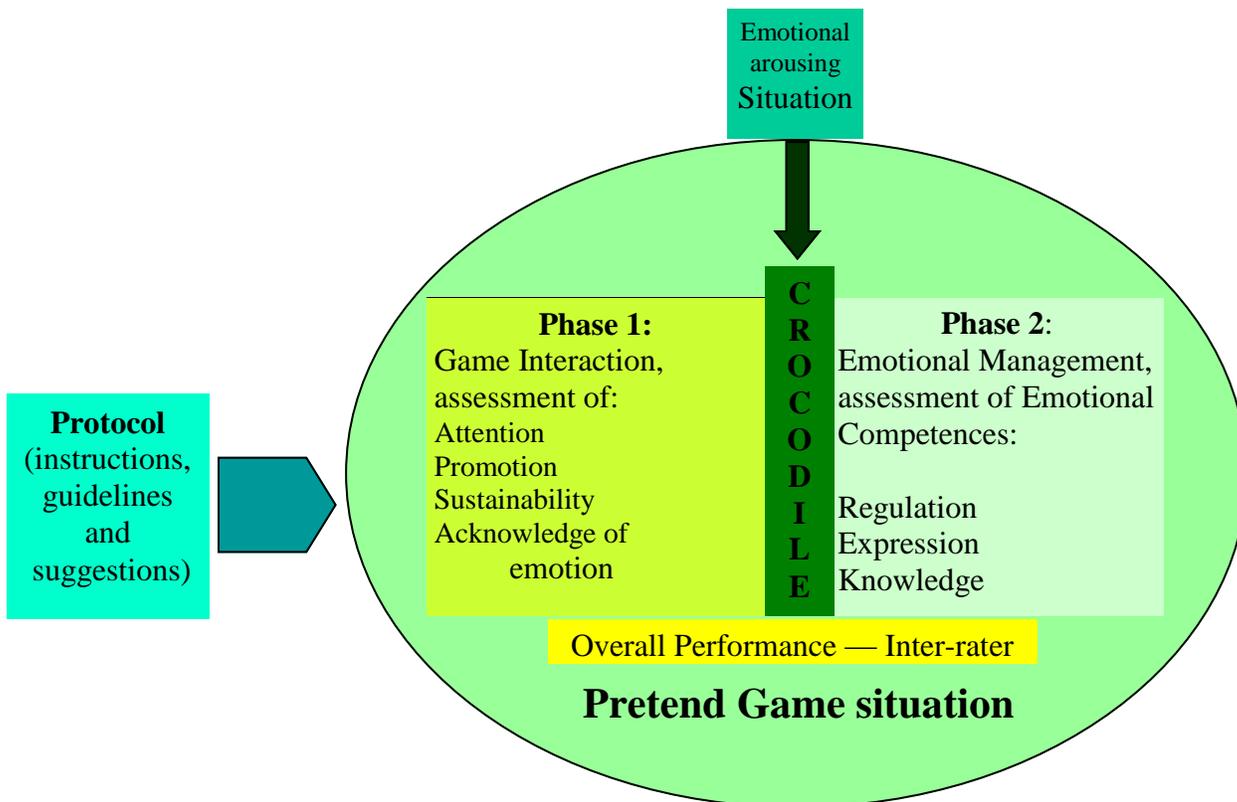


Figure 7. Illustration of the procedure for the contrived emotional task and crocodile game.

Design

The research design was the implementation of a randomised controlled trial (RCT) with 30 preschool teachers from 6 early childhood centres. Each centre was taken as an independent cohort and each group was composed of five teachers. This study used a factorial design 2

(between factors, experimental vs. control) X 2 (within factors high vs. low experience). Small groups were randomly assigned to one of two conditions (experimental and control) and by two levels of experience (low and high experience). All participants were unaware of which group they were assigned. The experimental group (N=15) were taught a variety of strategies aiming to enhance their emotional competence. The control group (N=15) were provided with standard information on basic child development theory.

The factorial analysis compared all the participants randomly assigned to the experimental (intervention training) condition with those assigned to the control group. The impact of the training on participant teachers (outcomes) was assessed in situ by observing the child- teacher interactions during a pretend game activity.

Procedure

Participant recruitment and initial arrangements

An even number of the types of early childhood programmes offered in New Zealand was preferred to balance their representation. Play centres were not included in the recruitment process because parents instead of teachers normally run them and this research aimed to focus only on teachers emotional skills. The intention of the recruitment process was to be inclusive, so it was expected that the settings selected to be part of this study reflected and represented the cultural and ethnic diversity of the population of New Zealand.

To conduct the allocation of participants to the experimental and control groups, a simple randomisation was conducted using a repeated fair coin toss. Random means that each individual has an equal probability of ending up in either group. The assignment of each participant was conducted by a research assistant located at CHERUBS Lab, and the main researcher was initially blind to this allocation. Cluster groups of participants were randomly selected to receive

(or not receive) the intervention curriculum. Those allocated as not receiving the intervention curriculum were offered a session of child development theory instruction prior to assessing their skills through the pretend game. However, once the process of assessment was finished, the full training was also offered to these groups of teachers to give them the opportunity to acquire the skills in the same way as the intervention participants. All the participants were unaware as to whether the workshop curriculum they received represented the experimental or the control procedure—it was described simply as professional development.

Research procedures for experimental and control groups were put in place. In accordance with the research design, a control group allows for the gathering of data to compare the effects of the independent variable (active intervention) with a similar experience that was considered neutral with respect to enhancing teachers' emotion knowledge and skills. In this study, potential intervention participants were assigned either to an experimental group (allocated to receive the emotional focused intervention) or to a control group (allocated to receive a traditional child development lesson). Deeper understandings of child development is usually an important part of ECE teacher's training and can enhance teachers' abilities to support young children's learning (Sheridan, Edwards, Marvin, & Knoche, 2009), however it was considered neutral in the present context. The training format for the control group was designed to provide a brief, non-sustained contact between the trainer (and researcher) and the group. The flow of information was more often one-directional in contrast with the experimental group. For the latter, their programme was designed to have an interactive, reflective and emotion focused orientation.

Once the protocols for control and experimental groups were established and the cultural consultation took place, consent from the Massey University Human Ethics Committee was applied for and granted. The groups then were randomly assigned to the experimental and

control condition. Written consent was obtained from teachers and children, the later through parental permission. The teachers approached parents in order to obtain signed consent. Issues of confidentiality and anonymity of teachers, children and settings were discussed with the groups before the workshops started. Participants were told of the workshop's general content needed for informed participation, but were unaware of the group they were allocated and the possible differences between the two types of professional development until after the end of the study.

Before the workshops started, the researcher organised the settings and personally organised the sitting arrangements and refreshments. The physical prearrangements of the settings were prepared with the intention of facilitating group dynamics leading to an open, trusting, and non-judgmental participation. Instructions and workshop's curricula were given to each group according to their allocation to the two conditions. The sessions were video recorded and the participants' verbatim material during the intervention was transcribed from the video footage.

All participant teachers were asked to complete a self assessment instrument, the Teacher Emotional Style Questionnaire (TESQ) designed to measure participants' emotional style before the training started. The purpose of this was to check that the random assignment process and not accidentally produced two groups of teachers who already differed significantly in terms of their general emotion style (knowledge competence).

Soon after the TESQ questionnaire was completed by the participants, the intervention curriculum sessions were delivered. For the experimental (intervention) group, three sessions of two hours each were given. The first session included basic theoretical constructs of emotions, emotion schemas and emotion coaching and discussion on videos showing examples of emotion coaching events. Observational material collected in Study 1 was also used in this session (see

Appendix L). The first part of the second session contained a revision of the role of emotion schemas in the emotional responses within the teacher–child relationship. The second part consisted of offering the participants the opportunity to reflect on their own emotions through an experiential exercise designed to link personal and emotional aspects of their relationship with children and the concepts and skills learned in the first session. In the third session, teachers were invited to practice their self-awareness skills by participating in two exercises that included the idea of synchronicity and mindfulness practice.

The control groups were run consecutively; the curriculum for these groups consisted of general information on child development and lasted one hour (see Appendix N). Although this session was delivered comprehensively in one hour, the participants in the control group were highly engaged and motivated with learning.

Once both groups took part on the sessions, the participants were invited to participate in the game situation. Each game session was independently organised with each individual, and written instructions of the game protocol were distributed among the participants (See Appendix P). The game sessions took place in the participants' own settings (ECE environment or what the teachers usually referred to as their classrooms). For this, a quiet room was allocated and the researcher arranged the setting for the game. Small but attractive toys were distributed on the floor and the camera was located to capture the children and teachers interacting. A small group of children (usually three or four), whose consent had previously been obtained, was invited to come to the room where their teacher was waiting. The researchers clarified with the children and the teacher their right to withdraw whenever they wished to do so. During the first phase of the game, children and teachers were usually engaged in an imaginative game using the toys available. The teachers facilitated or directed the game, but were encouraged to allow the

children to decide on what they would do with the toys, whether to work cooperatively with each other and whether to involve the teacher overtly in the activity. When children and teacher were observed to be completely absorbed in their game activities, the researcher unexpectedly brought up a crocodile puppet pretending to eat the toys (see Appendix M). The introduction of the crocodile into the game created an instance disturbance in the flow of the on going activities and elicited a wide range of reactions from the participating children. The game protocol allowed the exploration of a variety of teacher-child interactions. The game usually ended after the teachers were given the opportunity to respond to children's emotions. Then the children were invited by the teacher to collect all the toys and go back to their normal activities in the centre. Before the children were sent back to the rest of the Centre, I offered them a sticker as a "thank you" token for participating. After this gesture, the children left the room in a happy mood. The duration of the game was approximately 10 minutes. Teacher's implementation of their own emotional competence skills during those interactions were assessed by systematically observing the video-recorded play sessions. The emotional competence skills demonstrated by individual teachers during the game situation reflected the core components of the theoretical construct of emotional competence (Emotional Knowledge, Emotional Expression, and Emotional Regulation).

Data reduction and coding

For data processing, videos were scrutinised several times for the researcher to familiarise herself with the data. To evaluate the teachers' display of emotional competencies during the game, a categorisation was established. The categories of analysis were initially established by classifying observable events during the video-recorded game sessions, and by attaching these examples to each correspondent emotional competence definition. These innovative categories of analysis were based on sound theory and on the understanding of the

basic characteristics of social-emotional development from previous literature, and were used as criteria to evaluate teachers' emotional competence. I developed these to assess the emotional competences of participants during the contrived task and directly parallel the three components of emotional competence (regulation, expression and knowledge) defined by Denham (2003). Drawing on guidelines for assessing competence in its three core levels (regulation, expression and knowledge) the scoring system captures global aspects of interaction and support in Phase 1 and the three levels of emotional competence in Phase 2 of the game. This emphasises the meaning of behaviour, rather than focusing predominantly on content and specific behaviours or responses of the teachers. The scores on the coding procedure reflected the degree to which emotional skills were displayed by the participants. After its initial development the coding process was discussed between me and my supervision team in order to ensure a degree of consensus that the important features of teacher-child interactive emotional relationships were being captured with the codes selected, and the system was piloted several times before being applied as well as establishing the reliability of the codes.

For the first part of the game (Phase 1, before the appearance of the emotional event), this categorisation included observable events that demonstrated teachers overall interactional and emotional capacities such as attention (e.g., teacher focuses entirely on the game), sustainability (e.g., teacher maintains the flow and narrative of the game), initiative (teacher initiates and adds new input to the game), acknowledgment of emotions (e.g., teacher names emotional states in children), expression of emotion (teacher models appropriate emotional expression) and containment of emotions (e.g., teacher helps to regulate/reduce arousal of emotions through physical comfort). The data were scrutinized again taking into consideration the established coding, so the frequency in which the events occurred during the observation (the

number of times an emotional skill happened per minute of observation) was calculated to be considered for further statistical analysis. For a sample of the scoring sheet, see Appendix Q.

For the second part of the game (Phase 2, during and after the introduction of the emotional event), the categorisation implemented to evaluate the presence of emotional competence skills in participant teachers included examples of events that illustrated the main defined components of emotional competence such as: emotional regulation (e.g., efforts by the teacher to contain, and regulate expressions of emotion), emotional expression (e.g., efforts by the teacher to help children express emotions by modelling or using words), and emotional knowledge (e.g., efforts by the teacher to pick up emotion cues, and recognise emotion in herself and the children). For detailed information on this coding system, see Appendix R.

Both personal observation and research findings suggest that teacher skills differ according to their level of experience. For example, Day and Carroll (2004) found that years of experience correlated positively with overall emotional intelligence. Other research has found that length of teaching experience and current status add significant direct effects on predicting teachers' self efficacy, but do not moderate the relationship between emotional intelligence and teacher self efficacy (Penrose, Perry, & Ball, 2007). Because of the possible moderation effects of experience on teacher's performance of emotional competence, all participants were divided by median split into high and low experience (junior and experienced).

To determine if the natural competence of the participants, regardless of being trained, has a direct effect on the competences demonstrated by the teachers after the intrusion of an emotionally arousing event in the middle of the play activity, a measure of overall emotional competence was created. Global Impression (GI) scales are usually implemented in observational literature when phenomena are difficult to quantify. GI is based on the impressionistic and

subjective opinion of the coder. An independent coder was presented with a score book and left alone watching the recorded videos successively. She was instructed to score individual behaviours of all participants during the play activity, and then her scores were compared with the researcher's scores. The independent coder was instructed to focus on the general behaviour of each teacher when interacting with the young children.

Using a 4-point Likert scale, ranging from 0 (poor) to 3 (excellent), the independent observer was instructed to rate her overall impression of participants' competence guided by categories items such as: (a) sustaining attention throughout the game, e.g., teacher focuses her attention on the play activity and maintains good eye contact with the children; (b) expressing and promoting expression of emotion e.g., models own emotions and encourages children to express emotions; (c) perceiving emotional cues e.g., notices a child who is withdrawn; (d) understanding of children's individual differences e.g., accepts feelings and comforts a child who seems scared or withdrawn; (e) connecting their own feelings with those of children, e.g., shows adequate expression of own feelings in tune with the children's; (f) helping children with emotional arousal, e.g., uses physical contact for comfort; (g) facilitating problem solving e.g., helps the children through disagreement. (For a sample of this scale see Appendix S).

Teachers' videos were then scored by two observers (coders), the researcher and a psychology graduated research assistant. The latter was previously trained to follow the guidelines for scoring, and was unaware of the purpose of the study or the hypotheses. Eighty two percent inter-observer agreement was reached. Inter-agreement was calculated by dividing the number of observer agreements by the total number of agreements plus disagreements and multiplied by 100 (Richards, Taylor, Ramasamy, & Richards, 1999). Levels of agreement were

sufficiently high between the two coders, and discrepancies were resolved in discussion between the observers.

All the training sessions were recorded and transcribed and the data were used for the purpose of conducting a qualitative analysis. This analysis was based following the four different stages described through the training process. These stages were inspired by the intervention principles addressed by Greenberg and Paivio (1997) which guide the Emotionally Focus Therapy (EFT) approach. Although the intervention was focused on achieving changes on the participants' use of their emotional skills, it was not intended to be a therapeutic treatment.

In summary, Study 2 took the form of a professional development experience and had the aim to assess the effects of the emotional training intervention on the teachers' ability to manage and support children's emotions during a game that contained a mildly aversive emotional event. Additionally, it was also expected that teachers in the experimental group would acquire:

- Positive strategies of emotional competence to be used when facing children's emotions.
- The use of reflection on emotions practice as a tool for self-awareness supporting the integration of theory, practice, and personal experience.
- Changes in their self-awareness of their own feelings, beliefs, and values as well as those of the children.
- Practice concepts of synchronicity and mindfulness via experiential exercises that help the teachers to be more thoughtful and less reactive while interacting emotionally with children.
- A fresh view on emotional interactions as "teachable" opportunities, integrated along with curricular and disciplinary practices.

Results

Participants who received the training felt very satisfied by the acquired learning and with the overall training experience. During the training session, the participants displayed interest and had a positive approach to the process. Some of the teachers' opinions on the training were conveyed through the following comments:

- “The workshops have helped me to symbolise my own emotions and feelings...put them in words and try to make sense of them...also I feel more empathic towards children's different emotions, and how we have to respect and understand their feelings”
- “I have enjoyed your Korero talks...the workshops have been valuable to me as a reflective teacher wanting to improve my interaction with the children.....”
- “Group discussion helped with team building and created team awareness of our own feelings and reactions to the children.....”
- “The programme has impacted my practice. I feel I am more attentive to my own emotions.....not just a hug and you will be OK approach!”
- “I am seeing emotions more positively I see them as a chance to get close to the children and help them develop emotional competence.”
- “It is such an important topic for both children and teachers....Emotional awareness, especially in early childhood, should be in the front of your mind at all times. The ability to be aware of feelings in yourself and children, to act accordingly is of great value for emotional wellbeing development.”

During the play activity, the participant teachers were very enthusiastic and followed the guidelines of the game. The children were always willing to participate. The children's reactions

when mildly stressed by the unexpected appearance of the crocodile eating the toys were very diverse. Children showed diverse range of responses from the emotional arousal. Their reactions were mixed; some of them withdrew and psychically removed themselves from the situation or ran to another side of the room avoiding the crocodile. In some instances, they attacked, fed or attempted to hit the crocodile with a handy object or with their hands. A few children looked for immediate physical protection from the teacher.

To describe the results of the Study, I commence with a description of the analysis used for both the quantitative and qualitative data. The first task to proceed with the analysis was to develop a way of coding the teacher's ability to handle emotions in the children before and after the appearance of the crocodile in the game.

Frequency of occurrences: Phase 1 before the presentation of the emotional event

A frequency of occurrences per observational time of different emotional competence skills for the two compared groups (experimental and control) during the Phase 1 of the game (before the presentation of the crocodile) was calculated adjusted for the total number of minutes that the observation was recorded. Teachers in the experimental group demonstrated higher frequencies of occurrences of emotional skills per minute in comparison to the controls: focused and attention 3.89 to 2.17, Sustainability 7.89 to 5, Initiative 2.40 to 1.97, Acknowledgment of emotion 1.71 to 0.78, Modelling 1.93 to 1.02, and Reduce or contain emotion when needed it 0.74 to 0.07. The following figure illustrates the frequency of the categorised emotional skills recorded in experimental and control groups during the Phase 1 of the game:

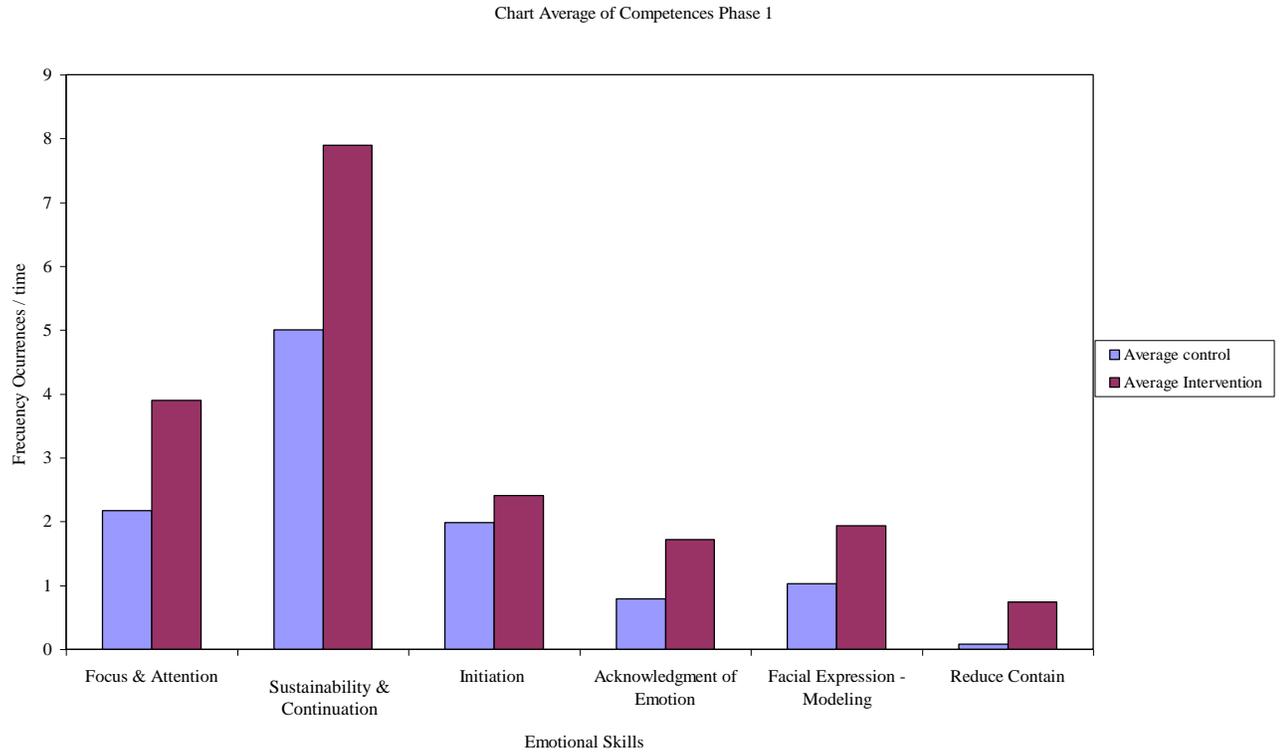


Figure 8. Frequency of occurrence of interacting skills during Phase 1

An independent samples *t*-test was conducted to see if there was a significant difference in the means of all six emotional skills scored during this phase of the game for experimental and control groups. Homogeneity of variance was calculated through Levene's Test for Equality of Variances to assess the assumption of equivalence between the two samples.

Levene's test for equality of variances was not significant in any of the measured variables. Mean plots suggested normal distribution for all measures. Therefore, independent *t*-tests were conducted on the data with 95% confidence intervals (CI) for the mean difference. The confidence interval was not adjusted (for example by a Bonferonni correction) as six comparisons would not significantly affect the finding of chance significance.

There were significant differences in scores for the two groups in five of the six emotional skills. There was a significant difference in the mean scores on: Attention for the control group ($M = .006$, $SD = .002$), and the experimental group ($M = .010$, $SD = .004$); $t(20) = 3.40$, $p = .005$; Sustainability for the control group ($M = .013$, $SD = .005$), and the experimental group ($M = .021$, $SD = .013$); $t(18) = -2.10$, $p = .045$; Acknowledgement of emotion for the control group ($M = .002$, $SD = .002$), and the experimental group ($M = .0048$, $SD = .003$); $t(25) = -2.49$, $p = .019$; Modelling for the control group ($M = .002$, $SD = .002$), and the experimental ($M = .005$, $SD = .003$); $t(26) = -2.53$, $p = .017$.

Two variables failed to reach statistical significance. Initiative for the control group ($M = .005$, $SD = .003$), and for the experimental group ($M = .006$, $SD = .002$); $t(27) = -1.05$, $p = .302$ and Containment of emotions, when needed for the control group ($M = .0002$, $SD = .0008$), and for the experimental group ($M = .002$, $SD = .004$) $t(14) = -1.52$, $p = .138$.

These results suggested that the intervention did have an effect on the majority of the emotional skills tested during the Phase 1 of the game. Variables such as initiative and containment of emotions failed to reach statistical significance. This can indicate that at this stage of the game, teachers preferred to follow the initiative of the children without imposing their own, allowing the game to flow, as they needed little intervention in containing emotions since the mild aversive procedure, (crocodile) had yet to be introduced. It had been expected that prior to the introduction of the crocodile, the teachers would not show great differences in their behaviour, but that once the crocodile was involved the experimental group of teachers would manage children's emotions still more effectively.

Comparison of scores between experimental and control groups on emotional competence components (Phase 2 of the game)

For the final analysis a one way independent samples analysis of variance, ANOVA, was conducted in order to compare the effects of the intervention and the score differences between the 2 conditions (experimental and control) and the 2 levels of participant's experience (junior and experienced) in 3 different components of emotional competence (Emotional Regulation, Emotional Expression, and Emotional Knowledge) during the second phase of the game, after the presentation of the crocodile puppet. The results were:

There was a significant effect of the Intervention on three different components of emotional competence at the $p < .05$ level for all the conditions.

For Emotional Regulation, there were statistically significant differences between the two groups, $F(3, 26) = 9.96, p < .001$. These findings are represented in the following figure:

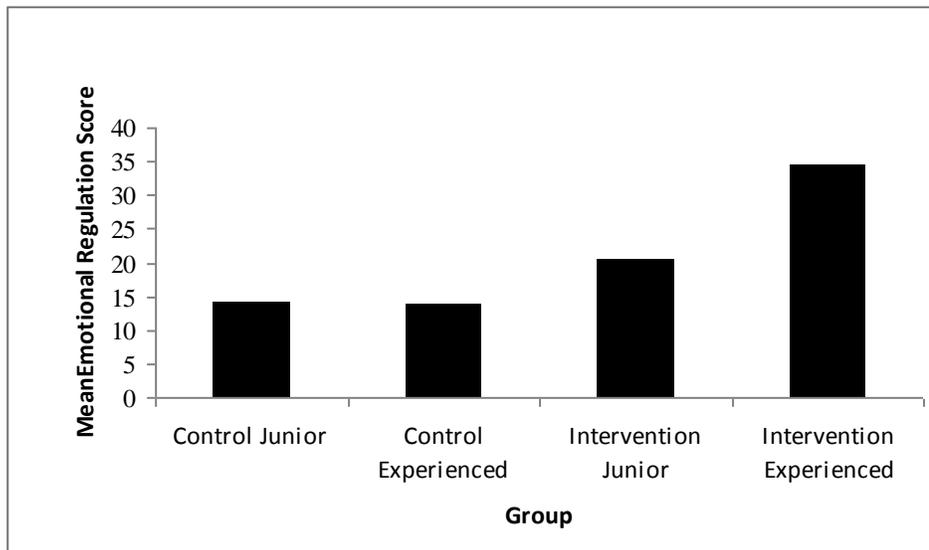


Figure 9. Group comparisons emotional regulation

The mean scores on Emotional Regulation for each compared group, Junior and Experienced in two conditions, control and experimental after the presentation of the crocodile are described in the following table:

Table 1. Compared Means of Two Levels of Experience for Dependent Variable Emotion-Regulation

Condition	Junior			Experienced		
	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD
Control	6	14.1	3.2	9	13.7	6.54
Experimental	6	20.4	9.7	9	34.5	12.3
Total	12	17.2	7.6	18	24.1	14.3

For Emotional Expression there were also statistically significant differences between the two groups, $F(3, 26) = 4.36, p < .013$. These findings are represented in Figure 11.

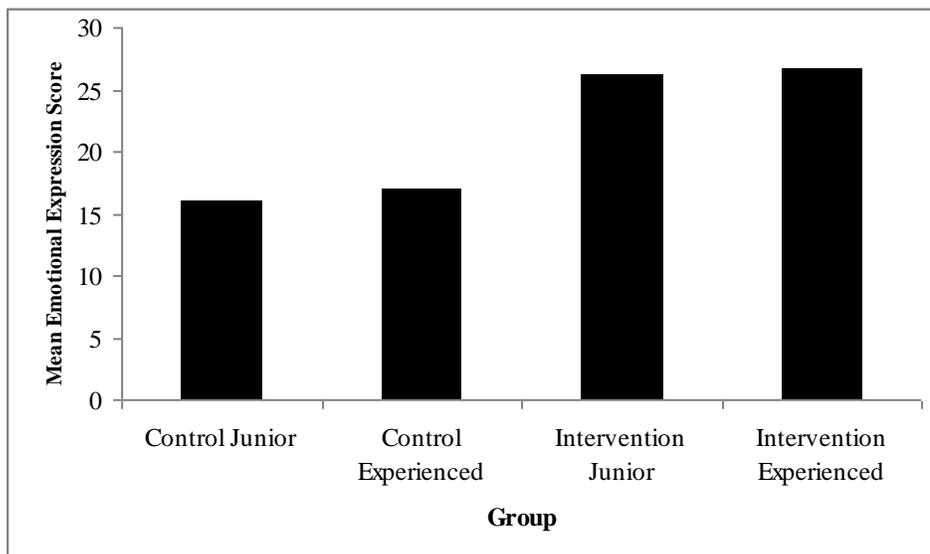


Figure 10. Group comparisons emotional expression

The mean scores on Emotional Expression for each compared group, Junior and Experienced in two conditions, control and experimental after the presentation of the crocodile are described in the following table:

Table 2. Compared Means of Two Levels of Experience for Dependent Variable: Emotion-Expression

Condition	Junior			Experienced		
	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD
Control	6	16.0	9.75	9	17.0	7.31
Intervention	6	26.2	4.92	9	26.7	7.42
Total	12	21.1	9.09	18	21.8	8.71

For Emotional Knowledge there were statistically significant differences between the two groups, $F(3, 26) = 4.71, p < .009$.

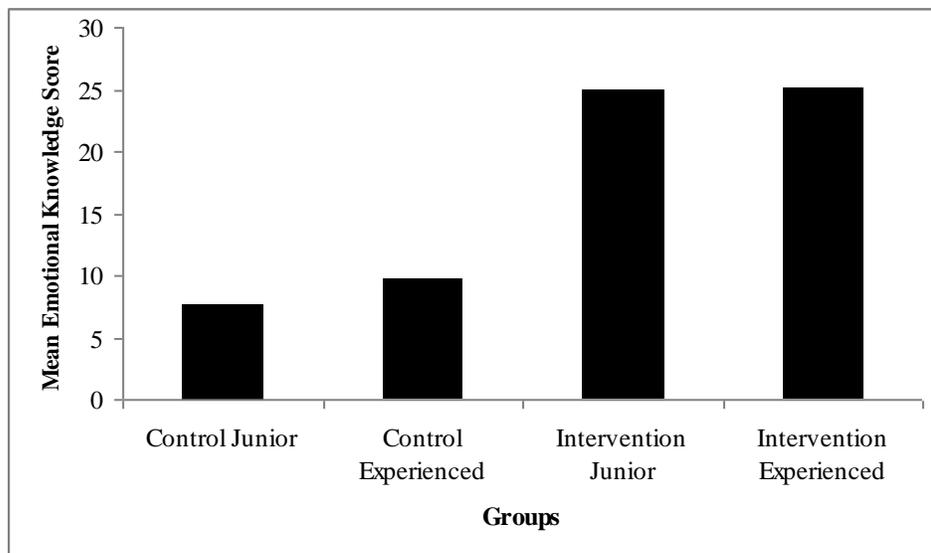


Figure 11. Group comparisons for emotional knowledge.

The mean scores on Emotional Knowledge for each compared group, Junior and Experienced in two conditions, control and experimental after the presentation of the crocodile are described in Table 3.

Table 3. Compare Means of two level of experience for Dependent Variable Emotion- Knowledge

Condition	Junior			Experienced		
	N	Mean	SD	N	Mean	SD
Control	6	7.56	6.04	9	9.64	4.53
Intervention	6	24.9	19.3	9	25.1	13.4
Total	12	16.2	16.3	18	17.3	12.5

Taken together these results suggest that the intervention had a consistent effect across all three domains of the emotional component composite (Emotional Regulation, Emotional Expression, Emotional Knowledge) tested in teachers. Teachers trained in emotional competence skills showed higher means of those emotional skills, especially during the Phase 2 of the game when children were mildly stressed by an unexpected emotional event, when compared with non-trained teachers. Trained teachers were specifically good at demonstrating these competences during the Phase 1 of the game but even better during Phase 2 when children's feelings were better managed. Experience was a mediator for their performance during the game; however, trained teachers who were more experienced demonstrated higher emotional competences than those who were less experienced. The intervention enhanced the experienced teachers further than the less experienced ones.

Global Measure of Overall Emotional Performance

To determine if the natural emotional competence of the participants due to their experience or their individual abilities, does have a direct effect on the competences demonstrated by the teachers during the game; a measure of overall impressionistic emotional competence performance was created. The impressionistic measure of overall performance in emotional competence was rated by two coders, who scored the performance of the teachers in the videos using a 4 point Likert scale. Descriptive results comparing scores between the two coders/observers are presented in the following table:

Table 4. Compared Paired of Means and P Values between Coders

	Coder 1		Coder 2		t- test
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	P
Sustain attention	2.4	0.67	2.5	0.62	0.32
Express promote expression	2.3	0.56	2.3	0.61	0.57
Perceive emotional cues	1.9	0.65	1.8	0.69	0.16
Understand individual differences	1.8	0.79	1.8	0.77	0.74
Awareness of feelings	2	0.69	2.1	0.71	0.71
Manage emotional arousal	2.1	0.71	2.1	0.73	0.57
Facilitate problem solving	1.8	0.83	1.6	0.66	0.96

A paired samples *t*- test was conducted to compare the global emotional competence scores given by Coder 1 and Coder 2 on the 7 indicators of overall competences. The results indicated that there were no significant differences for the scores given by Coder 1 and Coder 2 (the independent coder). There were no significant differences between the means of the two raters; in fact sometimes the means were the same for both of them. The means showed that the raters tend to agree and in their majority of scores the mean differences were near zero suggesting higher confidence intervals agreement.

Due to the confidence of this agreement the mean results produced by the independent Coder 2 for the global overall performance across the seven dimensions of emotional competences for both Experimental and Control groups are presented in the following figure:

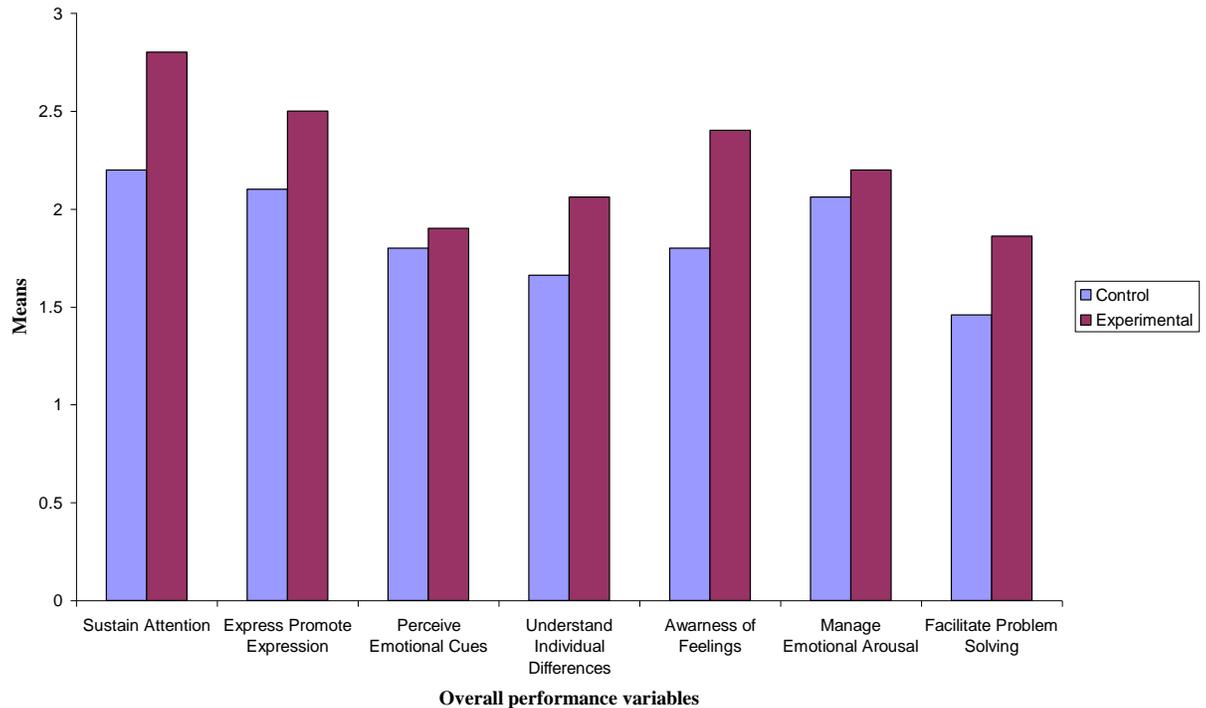


Figure 12. Global measure of overall performance scores by independent coder 2.

An independent samples *t*-test was conducted to compare for the independent coder, seven different overall emotional competences in both the experimental and control groups during the game.

There was a significant difference in the scores for experimental ($M= 2.8, SD= 0.41$); $t(35) = 28, p = .002$) and control ($M= 2.0, SD= .75$); $t(35) = 21.7, p = .001$) in the variable of *sustain attention* which received higher scores by the rater. There were no significant differences found in six of the remained variables scored by the independent coder. In *express and promote expression of emotion*, the scores for the experimental group were ($M = 2.5, SD = 0.51$); $t(1.8) = 26, p = .070$ and control group ($M= 2.1, SD = 0.63$); $t(1.8) = 26.8, p = 0.70$. In *perceive*

emotional cues, the scores for the experimental group ($M = 1.9$, $SD = 0.70$); $t(0.25) = 27.9$, $p = 0.80$ and for control group ($M = 1.8$, $SD = 0.74$); $t(0.25) = 28$, $p = 0.83$. In *understand individual differences*, the scores for experimental group were ($M = 2.0$, $SD = 0.88$); $t(0.38) = 27$, $p = 0.70$ and control group ($M = 1.9$, $SD = 1.03$); $t(0.38)$, $p = 0.7$. In *awareness of feelings*, the scores for the experimental group ($M = 2.4$, $SD = 0.82$); $t(0.52) = 24.7$, $p = 0.6$ and control group ($M = 2.2$, $SD = 1.2$); $t(0.52) = 28$, $p = 0.6$. In *manage emotional arousal* the scores for experimental group were ($M = 2.2$, $SD = 0.77$); $t(0.74) = 20.5$, $p = 0.46$ and for control group ($M = 2.5$, $SD = 1.5$); $t(0.74) = 28$, $p = 0.46$. In *facilitate problem solving*, the scores for the experimental group were ($M = 1.8$, $SD = 0.74$); $t(0.6) = 17.7$, $p = 0.55$ and control group ($M = 2.2$, $SD = 2.0$); $t(0.6) = 28$, $p = 0.55$.

With the exception of *sustain attention* during the game, that was higher in the experimental group, the natural overall emotional skills measured by this impressionistic scale were equally observed by the independent coder, regardless of the assignment of the groups. It demonstrated that natural abilities and experience did not moderate the impact of the training in the experimental group in the majority of the variables measured.

Emotional Style Questionnaire

The Emotional Style Questionnaire (ESQ) was applied to both groups (control/experimental) to determine the type of emotional style in teachers prior to any intervention. A version of the Maternal Emotional Style Questionnaire, MESQ (Lagace-Seguin, and Coplan, 2005) was adapted. An independent samples *t*-test was conducted to compare between both groups of participants' emotional styles. The mean Coaching score for the Control group was ($M = 21.6$, $SD = 4.17$) and for Experimental ($M = 21.6$, $SD = 5.17$); $t(28) = .00$, $p = .756$. There was not a significant statistical difference between Control and Experimental groups

in their Coaching style. The difference in means scores for Dismissing style also did not reach statistical significance. The mean Dismissing score for Control was ($M= 23.9, SD=4.14$) and for Experimental ($M=23.4, SD = 5.15$); $t(26.7) = .312, p = .960$. The results suggested that participants in both groups Control and Experimental had very similar emotional styles prior to the intervention, in fact, the magnitude of the difference in the means was very small (*eta square* = .000 and .003). The results confirmed that the participants' emotional styles were comparable before the study formally commenced.

CHAPTER 4: QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION. STUDY 2

The previous chapter reported the specific quantitative findings; however, there was a great deal of valuable parallel data obtained.

For the analysis of qualitative data, all the transcripts of recorded data produced during the training session were subjected to a thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Emergent themes usually captured relevant "data in relation to the research question and represent some level of pattern response or meaning within the data set" (p.10). As stated earlier, the organising theoretical framework that guided this qualitative analysis was inspired from an existing theoretical perspective that emphasises the principles of the EFT approach: Stabilization, Restructuring and Integration (Greenberg, 2002). Additional qualitative data were gathered, generated from comments the teachers made during the Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the game.

Data reduction

All the recorded data obtained during the training sessions were gathered together and transcribed verbatim. Transcripts and videos were compared to assure accuracy. Once the data transcription was completed, a similar process of thematic analysis used in the observational study of this project followed. I studied the data seeking clues to categories, patterns, key words and issues that led to the formation of codes, categories or concepts as suggested by (Hammersley, Gomm, Woods, Faulkner, Swann, & Baker, 2001). The prevalence of the initial themes guided by the different stages identified during the training and which transpired emotional contents was examined across the entire data set. I used this approach to determine the occurrence of emotional and cognitive processes during the delivery of the intervention. The main intention of this coding was to examine and analyse the different processes of emotional

self-awareness in participant teachers. The assumption was that the process of reflection provoked by the training would help to integrate the application of teachers' acquired conceptual knowledge with their practice and their personal experience. My assumption, based on the literature summarised in the introduction and my previous experience as described in the foreword, was that the process of reflection provoked by the training intervention would help participants to integrate conceptual knowledge and apply it to their practice (McMahon, 2001; Schön, 1983)

The main interest of this analysis relied on exploring participants' emotion philosophy, self-management, and difficulties with the children, as well as detecting qualitative changes in their emotional beliefs, and emotional schemas (inner scripts, narratives, and internal representation) during the training. Addressing emotional schemas has been a useful mechanism of change in therapeutic contexts. Combining reflection and expression together results in beneficial outcomes in therapeutic sessions facilitating emotional change (Greenberg, 2001). I predicted that the impact of these mechanisms experienced during the intervention process would be to enhance the participants' overall emotional skills; by shifting unhelpful emotional schemas, it would allow them to be more thoughtful and less reactive while interacting emotionally with children.

From the transcribed data, a series of case reports focused on the teacher's own experiences with children was developed. These reflective practice reports illustrate the teachers' individual approaches to children's emotional difficulties, their personal involvement with these difficulties, as well as their progress during the workshops. For more detailed exemplars of these case reports see the models presented in Appendix T.

The main intention of the programme was to enhance teachers' own emotional skills by offering them an emotion-focused intervention that aimed to facilitate the exploration and reflection on their emotional interactions with the children they work with. The programme had an experiential approach and consequently it was based on the teacher's own experience and practice. The anticipated impact of learning from emotional experience was derived from the integration of theory, self-reflection on emotions (which included the unveiling of emotional schemas), and the introduction of new emotion-cognition strategies. This integration of emotion-based knowledge was expected to be implemented by teachers when interacting with children. Teachers were expected to demonstrate this throughout the professional development sessions, as well as when formally presented with the contrived task.

Across the training sessions, there were indications that the participants did adopt the concepts and the intentions of the programme. They were able to establish a collaborative relationship with me, understand the main concepts (emotion coaching, emotional schemas, synchronicity, and mindfulness), explore, and reflect on their own emotional experiences. Most importantly, they showed movement away from the usual behavioural attributions used to explain different aspects of children behaviour towards a more dialectic, balanced, and holistic viewpoint for understanding children, families and child-teacher relationships within their daily practice. The evidence for this assertion comes from the thematic analysis of the recorded comments and discussions during the professional development training experience.

Thematic Analysis of the Training Stages

As explained, my emphasis was on facilitating a broader understanding of the interpersonal and emotional issues by the participants, as well as increasing awareness of the

importance of their role in children's emotion socialization processes. The next paragraphs describe the four stages followed throughout the training intervention.

Stage 1: Creating an environment of acceptance and validation of feelings.

After the initial stages of the training, my goal as facilitator was to establish a warm, emphatic, and collaborative environment in which the participant teachers felt understood and relaxed. Different aspects of the experience were considered. These ranged from the accommodation of the physical environment (inviting and containing) to the special attention paid to the internal emotional experiences of the participants (problems were mainly defined in feeling terms). Teachers in the experimental group were invited to openly express their reactions, to tell their story in a non-judgmental and emphatic way. Teachers were encouraged to self reflect about their own feelings, about their reactions towards their own emotions, and their beliefs about their emotional involvement when describing specific episodes with children in their daily practice. The teachers' comments about their own emotional experience during the first stage of the training reflected the creation of an environment of acceptance and validation of feelings:

Teacher 3: I knew that yesterday I was feeling a bit frustrated. There was aggression inside me while I was waiting for Tim to wash his hands, and I just felt "I am going to make you do it anyway" His parents were coming soon so it was a really bad time. Once you start doing it, you see it through. I was just standing there having a dilemma while he was there.....

Teacher 7: In general when I am sad, I don't particularly feel anything, but I can think of times when I have been incredibly sad and sort of feeling here [hand on chest] a sort of sinking feeling is how I would describe it.

Teachers 2: *I am feeling like... I am using “stop” a lot. And what happened?.....I sometimes don’t know, in those situations I find it hard to stay calm.....I prefer then not to meet craziness with angst and I really like the strategy of just going over there saying “you know after saying for like the million time ‘walking inside’ and I try and say it in that way-- “Please walk inside,” but I feel like I have not said much else to that child today except for “please remember to walk inside”*

Teacher 3: *... I am a bit like you. I find I get really worried when I find myself using the same terms over and over again because I am worried it is going to loose its meaning. I feel I use the word stop a lot. And I have noticed it before, my tone has gone up, I don’t like that because I know some teachers that talk loud and I think it does affect the children.*

Teacher 5: *Last Friday...I still was not feeling good about it; a child was shaking another child while she was eating. So I turned around and I yelled out “stop”, I pulled him off in a quite forceful way. I was not happy with the way I pulled him off. And I think even there like it happened so fast and you think about it ... “oh my gosh, she could choke” because she look like she would and all sort of stuff but I still felt really uncomfortable with the way I touched him.*

The above statements gave an account of the emotional openness that teachers had during the training. The initial environment was established with the facilitator’s genuine intentions to create a climate of understanding and exploration focused on the emotional experience. These

conditions aimed to mirror the type of emotional environment that, ideally, teachers can generate for the children they work with.

Stage 2: Offering conceptual – practical elements relating to emotion theory.

Since the training aimed to enhance the emotional competence of ECE teachers, one of its purposes was to create an interconnection between academic, professional, and personal learning among participants. Thus, Stage 2 of the training was focused on the theoretical base to enhance the conceptual understanding of emotional competence skills in participant teachers. The theoretical concepts of emotions, emotional experience, and emotional competence, emotion schemas, and emotion coaching were explained through this session. Particularly the concept of Emotion Coaching was illustrated through observational and video examples that allowed teachers to analyse the role and the responses of other teachers applying these principles to their interactions with children.

Teachers intervened and participated in this session by applying their recently acquired theoretical knowledge to the discussion on the observational material presented to them, some of the teachers comments during this stage of the training were:

Teacher 6: I like the way in that this teacher remained calm.....Sometimes you don't know what do in those situations. It is a real skill not to hype them up but to bring them up--and down when they are really excited.

Teacher 7: She also managed to empower the children by helping them to find a solution and did not put blame on the children

Teacher 4: *I guess in this example this person is not addressing the actual emotion. She is diffusing it by saying “I don’t want you to cry, I want you to stop so I might make you laugh, and might give you a treat” or so on*

Teacher 5: *..... Yeah but this morning I found J pulling an angry face; he is normally agrrrrrrh!!! (Used mimics). So I said to him, “This is a real angry face” and he looked surprised and so I said “I am going to make an angry face too”, So I brought a mirror and started to make all this exaggerated faces until he busted in laughter.*

Teacher 12: *This teacher got to have a very good relationship with individual children; I think you can let your emotions go if you are in the presence of people you trust.*

Teacher 9: *I was impressed by the sensitivity of the teacher on handling the situation, to be able to perceive what was wrong and help both children to move on”*

The above excerpts showed some of the comments made by the teachers during group discussions. The emphasis of this phase was to introduce to the teachers examples of optimal emotional competence, specifically applied through emotion coaching strategies. One important goal of this stage was to add up to the teachers' natural intuitive skills (which came mainly from their own personal experiences), a theoretical framework that contributed to improve and integrate teachers’ emotional skills through their educational practice.

Stage 3: Evoking and exploring the emotional experience within a reflective framework.

One important goal of this phase was to reach an understanding of what sort of emotion-cognition interactions (thinking and feeling) were involved in emotional child-teacher communications, and what else was transpiring while teachers were working with young children. This stage of the training also focused on promoting teachers' self awareness of their own emotions. Through a reflective exercise, participant teachers were encouraged to remember a vivid situation or a recent event that involved a child about whom they were concerned. The process that guided this reflective exercise emphasised thinking in terms of the inner world of the child, to offer a framework to comprehend complex feelings in which people working with young children usually operate. Simultaneously to the child's experience, this process also focused on the emotional impact of the participant teachers' internal experience. Through the transcripts, it was noticeable that at the beginning of the reflection on emotions exercise, teachers' narratives about the children for whom they were concerned were defined in terms of behaviour. Later on during the session, teachers were more focused on their own emotional experience as well as the experiences of the children for whom they were concerned. The following excerpts of the session show the dialogue between participant teachers and facilitator. These narratives described some of the teachers' comments on these experiences:

Teacher 3: *I'm just thinking about this afternoon; actually yesterday it happened too. ...Daniel has a close friend, a friend who he's got a good relationship with. And yesterday he was screaming his name like and then he started running over to him and started battering him and punching him and kicking him over and then I would grab him and he was spiralling around the place just throwing things and kicking things.*

Teacher 4: *Oh the screaming, do you know that at night all I can hear is his screaming in my head.*

Teacher 3: *And then I had a very good strategy that worked really well. I really wanted him to feel the consequences of his behaviour to acknowledge that it was unacceptable so we could change it. But what ended up happening when you put him in time out was he was there, he would say something really lovely.Or when the parents are there he spits and he will start trying to hurt you as well, trying to punch you and so I don't do that any more because what I actually thought was really my goal is not longer to put up with this kind of behaviour at all .I am not interested.*

Facilitator: So he behaves particularly worse with his parents?

Teacher 3: *On different occasions, I saw that mum would be screaming at him. She is yelling and screaming from the car all the way into the kitchen and then somebody got him and she left.*

Teacher 5: *Yes, I saw him in the kitchen and I went over to him and said "maybe go outside" so I just took him away and she was quite happy to go away.*

Teacher 3: *I don't think he articulates as well as others...especially for a child with an elder sibling. People might not have much patience for him at home*

Facilitator: Maybe he can't articulate because he is not being listened at home?

Teacher 3: *I think he reacts. I think there is not a lot of consistency*

Teacher 5: *Mum looks pretty on the edge, in a high profile job and I think it is a lot of pressure. She said to me the other day, she can't keep the house clean. She recently separated from her partner, his dad.*

Facilitator: It seems he is going through a lot. However, before we move on to his family, does everyone feel the same about him?

Teacher 4: *I think we like to stop his behaviour and sometimes we can redirect him into settling, but I feel stuck for a moment and then it is not something you can revisit later, It is too late..... He can also be very cuddling, but sometimes I think why the effort?*

Facilitator: Most of the time he seems to makes you feel frustrated. I wonder if he is also feeling frustrated all the time, not being able to express what he feels, only by acting out his anger?

Teacher 3: *I think other children feel the same. They blame him all the time, even when he is not around. He reacts with anger very easily to other children:*

Facilitator: He responds to provocation. I bet the others like to witness his reactions closely.

Teacher 3: *Yes. Once he is out of control, the others immediately calm down. He finds it very hard to move on from outside to inside, from one activity to another. I think he is very sensitive to changes.*

Facilitator: I wonder about this too. He has got asthma too hasn't he? You have mentioned before. An allergy; how interesting.

Teacher 4: *But sometimes he plays nicely indoors. Like the other day. We were playing with some babies and he was doing the shopping for the babies and we were putting the babies to bed and so on. But then the same day when he was in the table cutting play dough with others he threw at me a cutter and hit me so hard on the face, without any warning.*

Facilitator: How does it made you feel?

Teacher 4: *I felt the anger through my face. I had to go inside and try to cool myself down, I stayed there for a while and then I came back to try to talk to him. I asked him if he realised that what he did hurt me. He said he did not care, that he does it all the time... the same thing to his dad. That made me feel really bad... the fact that he didn't care. I had to go back inside and wait a little longer to feel better and come back to him.*

Facilitator: But you said that earlier on, you and he were playing quite intimately.....

Teacher 4: *Yes it was really nice. He was really happy.*

Facilitator: What happened in between, do you remember? How the game ended?

Teacher 4: *Well it was time to move on and I was called to do something else, so I left.*

Facilitator: He might have felt abandoned. All this intimacy, and then he was being left; enough to make him angry.

Teacher 4: *Yes, it is true. I didn't realise that. He finds changes really hard and I left unexpectedly too. I mean I didn't tell him I was going somewhere else.*

Facilitator: he seemed to keep that feeling for a long time, until he found the opportunity to let you know about his anger.

Teacher 2: *I think it is hard for him when his mum comes to pick him up. Last week for instance, she came all excited and told him he was going to his dad's that night. And he melted down immediately. I don't think his mum comprehended what happened. So I invited her to my office and told her that he was probably feeling overwhelmed by the news, especially knowing his dislike for changes. She took it very well, my observation I mean.*

Facilitator: that was really sensitive of you. It must be difficult for him to understand that the first thing his mum said to him was about him going somewhere else. He is not only passing through a very difficult time, the effects of his parents' separation, her mum and the rest of his family are also affected by this too, his fears of change and abandonment, his lack of skills to express his feelings.....the anger he feels and makes you feel. He communicates that very well.

Teacher 4. *Poor Daniel.... It must very hard. I really feel sorry for him. It is good to be able to understand better..... We really wanted to get to the bottom of this for long time.*

The example above showed some insights about the teachers' emotional schema in relation with the child whose behaviour they were concerned with. The way that the teachers talked about this particular child unveiled their emotional schema about him and influenced their responses towards his behaviour. Teachers' narratives also revealed a shift in the dynamics of relationship between the group of teachers and this particular child. They moved from a more attributional approach to explain the child's behaviour to a more interacting, dialectic and dynamic view focused on the inner world of the child and their own emotional experiences in

relation to this. Parental and family narratives have been useful to promote free expression of feelings about themselves and others in therapeutic settings (Butler & Bird, 2000). The teachers' honest accounts about the interactions with a particular child were valuable to understand the mechanisms of change that resulted from the implementation of reflective practice processes.

The process of reflecting on emotions was useful for teachers to explain not only the child's behaviour and feelings but also how his actions connected with his family and other relationships, including the teachers themselves. At the end of the session, the teachers' point of view of the challenging child was expanded towards a deeper understanding of his feelings of loss and subsequently increased their empathy towards him.

The emotion centred approach used during this part of the training was an attempt to focus on the ways teachers and children can be helped in their emotional needs in non-therapeutic settings. This process was equally replicated through all the participating groups having successful results in every case. See case studies Appendix S.

Teachers developed more personal and intuitive responses that were expected to be implemented during the contrived task at the end of the training, as well as in their everyday practice interactions with the children. To reflect and acknowledge the possible sources of children's distress and recognise their emotional needs can be very beneficial to the children's long-term interests (Ward & Mc Mahon, 1998).

Stage 4: Facilitate the mobilization of new schemas: Strategies for self awareness

The mobilization of mental resources through reflection on their own feelings and those of the children contributed the teachers creating new meanings. These new meanings may help the trained teachers to support and promote children's emotional competence through a more

dialectic, dynamic, more holistic view of the child and encouraged the use of an anti oppressive practice among teachers.

In order to consolidate the learning experience obtained in the previous stages, the last part of the training involved practical exercises based on the concepts of synchronicity and mindfulness. (For more detailed information about this part of the training curriculum, see appendix K)

In this part of the intervention, teachers took turns in the role of the inexpressive participant, experiencing the emotional consequences of emotional mismatches during interactions. Examples of these occurrences were registered through the dialogue between teachers and facilitator as follow:

Teacher 12: *It is hard when you look at me like that, I mean being absent. I felt hurt that you weren't paying attention to me, weren't listening, and weren't interested in me.*

Facilitator: I noticed that you tried to look and catch my gaze.

Teacher 12: *Yeah....because eye contact is very important when I'm communicating. It is almost like if they're looking at me then they're listening.*

Facilitator: So you made an effort to try to locate me somewhere?

Teacher 12: *Yes to get your attention.*

Facilitator: but at the same time you were feeling.....

Teacher 12: *Hurt.....confused, rejected. Like I'd done something to make you not to listen to me.*

The activity described above intended to convey to the teachers the effects of emotional availability for building up synchronous interactions with the children and understanding the benefits of offering a genuine presence and attention to young children.

Another fundamental part of this stage was to present the participant teachers with brief mindfulness training. It was congruent with the experiential approach used throughout the intervention. The mindfulness practice was provided through various exercises and teachers were provided with Mindfulness for Beginners Meditation CD developed by Kabat-Zinn (1990) as a part of a programme for stress reduction. By the time the experiential mindfulness practices were introduced to the teachers, the provision of an environment of emotional containing, collaboration, and trust was already consolidated among facilitator and participants.

The way teachers made use of these exercises was illustrated through this selection of comments:

Teacher 7: *I think that during stressful moments, it is hard to even make any contact with yourself, you almost need to have a detachment...here was a moment that I knew I was really off with the kids and the other teachers for the last couple of weeks but it is only now....(sigh)... I realised that my shoulders dropped, my shoulders must have been sitting around my ears, my forehead must have been creased and I must have been absolute hell to live with but at the time I did not recognise it.....You almost need to be able to pick yourself up and put yourself beside your body and look at yourself clinically.*

Teacher 6: *It feels different when you stop for a while and “smell the flowers.” I can taste it. As long as you are connected with, one part of your body and then your mind relaxes.*

Teacher 8: *You never have noticed a raisin like that.... you are too busy running around.... Why you should pay attention to a raisin?*

Teacher 10: *Just by recognising, by cunningly observing whatever is happening to you, observing your thoughts and body sensationsthat is a great thing. Analysing comes later and sometimes you do not need that.*

The above examples illustrate the last part of the training where teachers were invited to exercise the concepts of synchronicity and mindfulness using an experiential approach. These exercises aimed to consolidate the learning acquired in prior stages. The atmosphere of openness and acceptance of feelings and individual emotional experiences were maintained through the development of the training sessions. The following figure illustrates the four stages of the training model in the way it was built up through the training sessions.

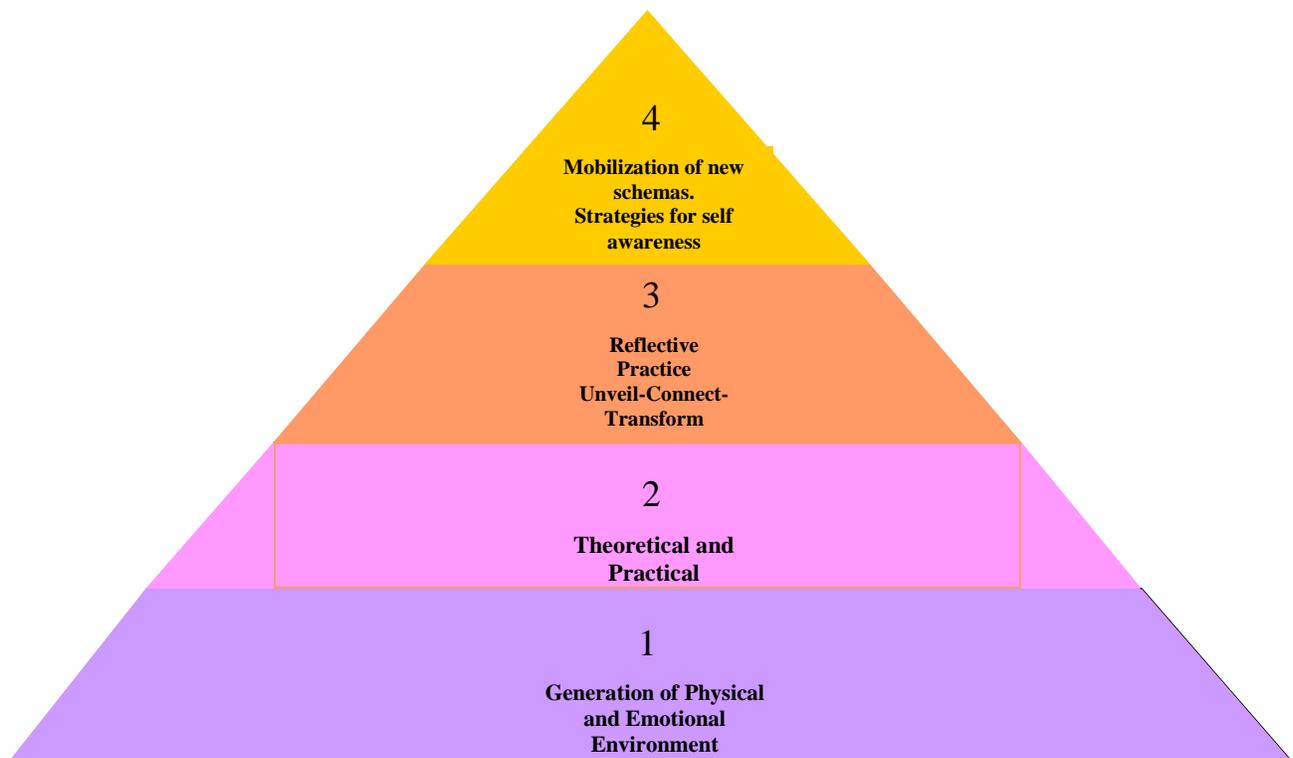


Figure 13. Training Model.

Examples of Teachers' Narratives during the Contrived Task

During the crocodile game, teachers also displayed a diversity of behaviours and comments that were registered during the observations, the following examples are taken only from the experimental group:

In the Phase 1 of the game before the appearance of the crocodile and when the children were not yet stressed, teachers in the experimental group were especially good at sustaining the game, usually by prompting questions and encouraging children to continue to be engaged and interested in the game. The following comments were not uncommon during Phase 1 of the game and were examples of how teachers motivated children to continue the play narrative:

Can we make a shelter together?

Quick it's going to rain let's built a house for the animals...

Don't you think these animals need to be in here too?

What about this tiny baby, we can put people inside the house too...

Is everybody safe under the trees?

So nice!!! A very warm house for everybody...

We put the babies where they are safe.....Where is the mummy? Maybe this tiny baby fits in

here.....I wonder if these little ducks would like to have a duck shed?

Noel, you are a builder! Do you think you can build a house?

On occasions, teachers acknowledged emotions or picked up emotion cues when perceiving a child who is withdrawn or excluded, occasionally using physical proximity to grab the child's attention. Some examples of these narratives were:

How we can make one? (To a child that appeared withdrawn.)

Would you like to get closer to play? (To a child who excluded himself from the circle.)

Are you OK sitting there?

Do you want to build this around? (Subtly touching a child who seemed withdrawn.)

Look! There is a baby next to you (Said to a child who appeared absent or worried as the teacher passed the baby to the child and holds him around the shoulder.)

Poor baby, isn't he Claire? (Looking compassionate)

Do you have one of those? What do you have here? (Getting closer to a child who seemed withdrawn).

What is the monkey doing up the tree? Does he have a friend?

Most of the comments and behaviours displayed by teachers during Phase 1 of the game had the intention to keep the children interested and participating in the play dynamic. During this phase, teachers needed very little intervention in order to contain or reduce emotions since the game flow was still not interrupted by the unexpected emotional event. However, in the rare occasions when teachers needed to contain emotions they tended to use physical proximity, for example grabbing, holding, or hugging the child.

During Phase 2 of the game, teachers' responses to the children reactions to the emotional event were very diverse. They used strategies to contain emotions and reduce the emotional arousal provoked by the event such as validating feelings, using emotion talk, or using strategies to calm down aroused children, thus helping the children to regulate emotions. Some examples of the teachers' comments during these moments were recorded as follows:

I really think this crocodile is not real; what do you think?

Are you OK? This is only a puppet (rubbing the child's leg)

It was really scary for a moment wasn't it?

Do you guys think that all the people in the village are all right?

Who is this crocodile daring to eat these people?

If he is still hungry we can feed him more toys.

Have a look at those teeth, they are not real, don't worry.

What did just happen? I think it was a scary crocodile, it has big teeth.

I think the people and animals are all right!

You had a bit of a fright didn't you? Are you all right?

It is everybody OK? The people and animals are fine and think this is just a great puppet.

Sorry darling, sure it scared you. I know he ate all the toys, but it was only pretending.

Are you going to be a crocodile now, that's a good idea.

Are you guys safe, away from the crocodile? (Opening her arms widely, signalling protection).

You have to be a good tooth fairy to get that tooth away.

Quickly everybody, get inside the house (pretending the toys ran to hide)

It is a toy, just a toy, I think is time for the crocodile to go to sleep.

I know you are worried but this one is a pretend one.

Teachers in the experimental group used comments and actions aiming to reduce anxiety and emotions of fears in children more often than teachers in the control group. In occasions, they used physical proximity to reassure the children and mixed it with comments accepting and validating feelings in order to contain emotional arousal.

During this phase, the teachers also expressed and promoted expression of emotions in children, sometimes by encouraging them to express what they were feeling and sometimes by

modelling for them the congruent emotion. Some examples of the teachers' reactions were recorded as follow:

Harriet, you are a bit scared aren't you? It's OK to be scared, that was a real surprise.

I noticed that you are worried (pulling a worried face,) but we will make this croc spit everything out.

Grrrr.... (A noise referring to the crocodile), don't scare me (pulling a scary face and putting her hand over her face)

Oh dear!!! What a surprise (mimics a surprised face)

I am going to eat this crocodile, grrrrrr..... (Pretending to bite the puppet)

What about reading a book about a crocodile? So we all have fun about it.

Oh no!!! Poor baby don't you think?

My lord!!!

Since the unexpected entrance of the crocodile, teachers displayed rapid reactions in which they recognised the children's emotions as well as their own; they were also efficient at picking up emotion cues and responses to body signals and subtle communication. Teachers also used problem-solving strategies to help the children resolve their feelings and move on from the emotional event. Some examples of these occurrences were:

I wasn't very scared, but you weren't too scared either right?

I was surprised but not scared, what about you guys? (Rubbing a child's back)

Don't worry Billy, it was a bit scary but it's OK, You are worried, come here.

I was only scared for a minutesorry to have scared you (pretending to be the crocodile)

Your look a bit scared, oh my goodness!

I got a fright too. But it is only a pretended one. Would you like to have a turn to be a crocodile?

Pass the crocodile gently to Ana so you don't scare her.

I think Noel is feeling a bit frightened, aren't you darling?

Since we know it is not real maybe we all can have a turn and have fun.

Gosh we all were surprised and had a bit of a fright, but I think now we all can have a chance to be Mr Crocodile; lets organise turns

The crocodile scared me a little, but it was fun; now I think it's going to sleep. Maria needs her toys back so other children can have a turn to play too.

Teachers displayed a variety of competencies when the emotional situation occurred. They often integrated responses that helped the children to regulate, express, and understand emotions, keeping their own individual style; teachers were able to combine the recently learned competencies. For instance, some teachers made themselves available to contain children's emotions utilising physical proximity, validating, recognising, and naming emotions, and problem solving strategies. These responses characterised the use of emotion coaching strategies even in the face of an unexpected situation.

In the context of the above comments, teachers were observed to remain calm and thoughtful during the task, especially during the unexpected event. However, more experienced teachers tended to have longer interventions coaching children's emotions that contained a combination of strategies (acceptance, recognition, talk, and problem solving) in comparison to less experienced teachers.

Discussion

Study 2 showed significant statistical effects of a randomised control trial on the emotional competence skills demonstrated by early childhood teachers during a contrived game situation. The participants in the experimental group (N=15) showed a clear enhancement on 3 components of emotional competence, in comparison with the participants (N=15) in the control group who did not receive the same training. More experienced participants (three or more years of practice) gained further enhancement of their abilities. However, less experienced participants in the experimental group also gained skills from the training in comparison to the junior participants who did not receive the same training. The level of experience of the participants was considered as a mediator in the teachers' enhancement and demonstration of their recently acquired emotional skills.

In order to evaluate teachers' learned skills, two phases of the game, before and after the presentation of a mildly stressful event, were examined. Before the appearance of the crocodile, participant teachers in the experimental group showed, on average, higher frequencies of occurrences indicating emotional competence. They were capable of sustaining and continuing the game, initiating new paths to playing, and contained the children emotionally when they needed it, more often than participants in the control group did. In the second phase, after the presentation of the crocodile, the impact of the training was measured through three different components of emotional competence (emotional regulation, emotional expression, and emotional knowledge). The variable of experience was also determined in order to examine its mediation effects. Emotionally trained teachers showed more frequent occurrences of emotional competence skills assessed during the game. With the exception of the variable emotional knowledge which showed no differences related to the degree of participants' prior experience,

teachers who had worked for three or more years in early childhood settings applied effectively skills related to emotional regulation and emotional expression more frequently after the introduction of the emotional event in comparison to less experienced ones. These findings are consistent with other studies that argued that increased of emotional regulation mediates the positive effects of emotion-intervention training on the development of social competencies (Izard et al., 2008).

The global measure of overall performance was also conducted by a second independent coder, unaware of the group membership of the participants or the hypotheses of the study. It revealed that teachers in the experimental group appeared to perform better in their general emotional skills than the control group teachers. These results supported the hypotheses outlined in the subsection of the research question derived from the literature review. It was predicted that the participants in the experimental group would do better at demonstrating their emotional skills during a game situation than the ones who did not receive the same training, but instead received an overall information course on child development. Teachers who had received professional development training on the importance and nature of children's emotional development were more conscious of implementing emotional coaching strategies than non-trained teachers. For instance, they showed more frequent use of emotion-talk and other cognitive processes for problem solving when facing emotional situations during the game than those who had received professional workshops only on general child development (the control group)..In terms of their emotional style, both groups of participants were homogenous in two typologies of emotional style (emotion coaching and emotion dismissing) before the intervention was introduced to the experimental group.

Teachers' awareness of their own and children's feelings could moderate the abilities shown during the game after training. This variable, together with the amount of experience teachers had before the intervention, was enhanced through emotion-based training.

Qualitative data analysed over the course of the training process supported the quantitative results. The training process was deliberately consistent with the teachers' emotional change and started with the creation of a holding environment where feelings were accepted and validated. Teachers' narratives reflected changes in their emotional schemas. As the programme progressed, they talked differently about the children and were more reflective about children's behaviour. The use of the process of reflective practice helped the teachers integrate different aspects of the child's life and the child's behaviour, in relation to themselves and the children's social contexts. They also used less negative attributions to describe problematic child behaviour. The use of teachers' ability for reflective practice was observed through their capacity to pick up minimal cues and subtle changes in the tone of voice, patterns of speech, and body language. Teachers focused their attention on ways through which children may communicate their emotional needs and showed their ability for processing and interpreting these communications by personally identifying with the child's feelings. The refinement of teacher's intuition during experiential activities, contributed to their conscious decision of how best to respond to the children in a way that both, teacher and child's inner world can connect. One positive aspect of implementing an experiential and reflective approach within the training process was the opportunity for teachers to form connections between their practice, their personal experience, and the theory they have learnt. The integration of these aspects was consistent with the "*matching principle*" described by Ward and McMahon 1998, in which the authors explained

that the training situation should mirror the teacher's everyday practice in their understanding of children's emotional communications.

Teachers in the experimental group reported significant and immediate changes in their practice, especially towards the children for whom they had current concerns. Previous interventions where teachers were trained on strategies to shape children's emotional competence have shown significant improvement in the social and emotional competence of children they worked with (Denham, et al., 1996, Greenberg, & Kusche, 2006). Although teachers' training appeared to be a critical component of these interventions, teachers' emotional competence skills had not been measured before. Previous studies have traditionally measured children's outcomes of socio-emotional competence; however in this research the effects of teacher's training on children's emotional competence were not measured.

CHAPTER 5: GENERAL DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Study 1 was successful in obtaining examples of patterns of emotional teacher-child interactions that revealed a diversity of strategies used by teachers in the processes of emotional socialisation of young children. The interactions and strategies contributed to the construction of emotional climates where teachers are more positive, more emotionally reflective, and less reactive when dealing with children's emotional communications. Observations conducted in Study 1 highlighted that in synchronous teacher-child relationships the use of emotion coaching strategies and self-emotional awareness (or mindfulness disposition of the teachers) was not uncommon. Effective strategies for managing emotions in children identified in Study 1 inspired the design and content of the intervention implemented in Study 2. This training study was innovative in the way that it allowed me to see if early childhood education teachers could enhance these subtle emotion skills in active practice. This study consisted of conducting an experimental intervention where teachers in the experimental group were trained on emotion coaching strategies; emotion focused reflective practice, synchronicity, and mindfulness. Teachers in the experimental group were capable of using the taught strategies more consistently than teachers in the control group during a contrived play activity with groups of children that contained an unexpected sudden emotional situation. Although the children's behaviour after the teachers intervened was not formally examined, impressionistic observations of the children suggested that when the teacher was able to use calming strategies they were themselves able to be calmer and make use of the teachers competencies to help them to regulate, express feelings, and understand the emotional event. The calmness of the teachers managing children's sudden outburst of emotion supported the findings of Study I, which had indicated the importance of these skills on the emotional atmosphere of early education and care contexts. Teachers also

reported changes in their relationship with individual children they talked about and reflected on during the training sessions themselves.

Research on emotion socialisation in early childhood education has a clear implication for theory, future interventions, policies, and practice. The teachers' and caregivers' roles in children's emotional development and the implications for the emotional climate of ECE services have been traditionally understudied. Most of the research in this area has been conducted by examining variables such as academic and school achievement (Blair 2002), early school adjustment (Birch & Ladd, 1997), and social competence (Denham et al., 2003; Eisenberg et al., 1998). There have been only a limited number of studies focused on the teacher's role on the different components of emotional competence of young children (e.g., Kitzmann & Howard, 2011). Even less research has been conducted on the influence of teachers' use of strategies, and the role of their own emotional competence as important mediators in children's emotional socialisation processes. In this sense, the present research has contributed to the current knowledge on how early childhood teachers socialise children emotions, how they can do it more effectively, and what new strategies can be implemented to support positive emotion development in early childhood settings. The findings of this research provide empirical evidence and support for issues that are widely raised in contemporary theoretical position statements and policy documents.

Current research on emotions has revealed specific links between emotional competence and adaptive behaviour. Preschool children's development of emotion knowledge, emotional regulation, and the ability to understand other's expression of emotions, helps them to meet the new environmental demands. The development of these competencies is closely linked to the individual child's home and the early childhood setting and emotional climate (Izard et al., 2011).

Particularly in the ECE environment, children learn from the way teachers' model emotion expression and emotion-rich talk and actions. Teachers' ability to support children's emotions has been demonstrated in this research. During the contrived game, teachers in the experimental group elicited emotions of interest more efficiently, and supported problem solving as well as managing other negative emotions such as fear and anger. All these behaviours have adaptive value in early development and have been addressed extensively by research.

A few decades ago, research on the process of emotion socialisation began to reveal that children look to others for emotional information especially during uncertain or ambiguous situations (Hyson & Cone, 1989; Campos, Campos, & Barrett, 1989). ECE teachers are potential sources of emotional information and their variations in their mental and emotional states reliably influence children's responses in everyday situations.

The findings of this research align closely with the principles of New Zealand's early childhood national curriculum: Te Whāriki. This curriculum also has the potential to shape children's emotional competence. Te Whāriki provides a foundation for ECE services to plan, implement, and evaluate their contribution for supporting children's developing social competence and emotional wellbeing. It describes experiences and indicative outcomes for infants, toddlers and young children, environment that nurtures "well-being and trust, belonging and purposeful activity, contributing and collaborating, communicating and representing, and exploring and guided participation" (Ministry of Education, 1996, p. 45). Emotional competence is embedded in responsive and reciprocal relationships with adults in whom "children experience an environment where their health is promoted; their emotional well being is nurtured; they are kept safe from harm". (p.46) is an important goal in the holistic approach of Te Whāriki.

The findings of this research are also congruent with the latest Educational Review Office's report (2011) that focused on children's emotional and social competence. Reviewers found significant variation between service types and the extent to which their curriculum supported children as competent and confident learners. Their review on how *effectively services' curriculum support children in developing their social and emotional competence* suggested that 45 percent of the services' educators used practices that were highly effective in assisting children to develop social and emotional competence, 38 percent of practices were mostly effective, 14 percent had somewhat effective practices and three percent were considered not effective (p. 10). The findings of my research are in agreement with ERO's impressionistic evaluation and particularly highlight the need for effective training focused on emotions in those services where practice is not considered optimal.

The observational part of this research (Study 1) has contributed to highlighting the importance of teacher-child interactions in shaping children's emotional competence, and their influence on the construction of early childhood classrooms' emotional climate. Most of the research on teacher- child relationships has been enclosed within the framework of attachment theory (Howes, 1999; Pianta, 1998), or has been focused on some of the aspects of the teacher's influence on the children's emotional competence, such as the use of emotional regulation strategies (Sutton, 2004). However, the present research project has focused on the ways that ECE teachers might influence children's emotional competence through both interactions and strategies. Some of the processes whereby teachers shape children's emotional competence are implicitly embedded during day-to-day interactions.

Using a naturalistic approach to examining teacher-child interactions and teachers' strategies proved to be an unobtrusive way to reveal and understand these processes. The

observed distinction of responses to emotion, interactions and strategies used by teachers as attempts to foster emotional competence, allowed the clarification of helpful strategies (e.g., the use of emotion coaching) that were then highlighted in the interventional component of my project research. The use of two different research methodologies that included qualitative and quantitative approaches contributed to the interpretation of the results. This methodological integration can also help to the development of evaluation and self-evaluation measures of early childhood teachers' strategies used for emotion socialisation.

This research also has implications for everyday practice with young children. First of all, a deeper understanding of the shaping of children's emotions in early childhood settings can contribute to teachers positively changing the ways they conduct their classrooms and support children's emotions overall. This understanding also has implications for emotion-focused interventions targeting young children and teachers that aim to promote emotional competence in ECE settings. As a methodological approach, observation is a common practice for ECE teachers that can inform interventions and support the permanent use and establishment of reflective practice in ECE settings.

The experiential component of reflection on emotions as a part of the training also has implications. Most of the research on teacher-child relationships has focused on how children's individual characteristics in behaviour, emotions, or academic performance affect the relationship with the teachers and their learning experience overall. Although the individual characteristics of children were relevant in the present research for influencing the way that interactions occur, it is important to consider that adults also bring experiences, beliefs, and characteristics that affect the quality of those relationships. Some teachers find it easier to relate to some children in preference to others, and some children are more challenging than others.

Repeated conflict with difficult children can lead teachers to feel emotionally exhausted, distressed, and with an overall sense of burnout.

These aspects added a fundamental reason to cultivate emotional self-awareness in early childhood settings. To provide time and space for teachers to discuss and reflect on their relationships with children can be very difficult, though this time for teachers to discuss the impact of their emotional experience on their practice is fundamental for the well-being of teachers, children, and emotional climates in general.

From this perspective, emotion-focused training that includes experiential and the promotion of emotional awareness approaches can prevent the engagement in negative cycles of interaction as well as supporting teachers in sustaining sensitive, emotionally positive classroom atmospheres. Teachers' self-awareness and understanding of their own emotions in relation to the children can also contribute to a better use of strategies leading to improved personal and classroom regulation and management. The increase of these competences has mediated the effects of emotion focused interventions on social competence (Izard et al., 2008).

The increase of emotional competence in early childhood education also has implications for the promotion of mental health and primary prevention of clinical psychopathology in young children. The promotion of emotion-focused teacher training is particularly crucial for vulnerable children. The Ministry of Social Development's Green Paper (2011), the latest government document launched to modify legislation that support child protection, has stated that children during early years are more vulnerable because "of their developing brain and their dependence on caring adults to provide their basic needs" (page. 5). This document calls for early prevention programmes in the quest to alter negative outcomes for young children. This research included

an evidence- based intervention that demonstrated its relevance to the current climate of social policies on child protection.

As a final point, it is important to mention the implications of this research for policy makers. Traditionally, research on emotions has not had a significant impact on programme developers, practitioners, and policy makers in early childhood education (Damon & Lerner, 2006). Most of the research on emotion came from fields different to education (e.g., psychology) and has been disseminated through specialised journals and publications, leaving a gap for practitioners and policy makers to integrate this knowledge into their public documents. Since the emphasis has been strongly focused on academic standards and testing, early childhood programmes have diminished rather than increased their attention to the emotional part of their curricula. Early education programmes have the potential to exert an even stronger positive influence on children's lives if they foster social-emotional learning as much as they promote early academic skills and adaptive family functioning (Raver, 2002). A similar argument with respect to primary education has been made very cogently by Evans and Harvey (2012).

Ethical Considerations

This research involved naturalistic observation, recording and coding of behaviour in early childhood settings, and controlled experimental studies in early childhood care and education services. In order to approve participation as a research site, consent from childhood centres, preschools and kindergartens must be provided by the managers or formal supervisors. Approvals were obtained from all the participants early childhood settings in the Wellington region for both studies (see all documents related to informed consent in the appendices).

The two studies in this research obtained ethical approval from the relevant committee: Massey University Human Ethics Committee-MUHEC, Southern B. Observation in early

childhood settings, particularly when recordings were to be made, required the consent of the parents or legal guardians of all the children on whom data would be gathered, as well as of teachers, volunteers and other adults present. Teachers whose emotional, interpersonal interactions with the children were observed were reassured that their overall professional competence was not being formally evaluated. During the development of Study 1 and 2, whilst observations and experimental situation were in place, the *consent* of parents and the *assent* of the children were obtained. Particularly for Study 2, when the children came into a contrived game (which was set up in a quiet room to avoid further distractions) they were asked again to confirm their wish to take part in the game and their verbal assent was obtained. Although no particular problems were presented during the studies, I was continually mindful of any signs of distress in the children. Māori, Pacific nation, and other cultural/ethnic groups were represented by the children in all of the centres; special attention was paid to ensuring the appropriateness of the research procedure through consultation with experienced researchers representative of or knowledgeable about these diverse cultures.

There were children of Māori, Pasifika, and other ethnicities in each of the centres, and as a result, I sought cultural advice from the school of psychology's cultural adviser to ensure that my ethics application to the Massey University Human Ethics Committee adhered to the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi. Throughout the research process, there was awareness by the researcher who has lived in several countries and has experience working with multiple cultures, of the potential for there to be covert bicultural and multicultural understanding embedded in early childhood context (Tharp, 1991). This was demonstrated in the present project by my openness to discussing cultural issues with ECE staff, as well as willingness to

actively seeking Māori contributions, by following Te Whāriki's principles of responsiveness and reciprocal relationships within the early childhood settings.

Debriefing for parents and the early childhood services included presentations to the staff summarising my findings. Presentations in conferences relevant to the field were also offered in a meaningful and culturally sensitive way as a part of the dissemination. The emotion focused intervention in Study 2 was proposed as part of professional development workshops for the experimental group. Prior to the introduction of the contrived task, the control group was offered a broad session on theories of child development and once the experimental task was done, the control groups received the complete emotion focused training similar to the experimental group. Another important ethical concern, particularly in Study 2, was the researcher's dual role in the process of data generation. Continual reflection and supervision were necessary to integrate my role and find a balance between facilitating the intervention and collecting, analysing and evaluating data. Activities that constituted research were distinguished from activities that constituted training. Research activities during data analysis that generated results we submitted to the evaluation of independent coders as a third party, not only for reliability purposes but also for maintaining objectivity in the process.

Limitations

Although this research was marked by numerous methodological strengths including the utilisation of observations and of a randomised intervention trial, this investigation has to be considered also in the context of its limitations.

During the observational phase, the observers' presence can potentially influence the everyday interactions being observed. Aspects like maintaining strict regularity of the visits, awareness of possible obtrusiveness by the observers, and forming a genuine rapport with the

observed participants helped to lessen this limitation. Factors that were difficult to unveil during observation, like teachers' emotion meta-philosophies as well as teacher's emotional schema, were included in the intervention part of the research via other experiential approaches as the use of reflective practice. Another limitation of the observational part of this research was related to the small number of observed centres. Although the three observed centres varied in their atmosphere, educational programmes, and even in the number of adults assisting the children, teachers' practices of children management of emotions are usually culture specific. Teachers, as well as other socialising agents, focus on practices that vary across cultural contexts, so observing these practices beyond the mainstream educational settings in New Zealand would be valuable. This includes systematic observations on Māori early childhood settings which reflect Tikanga practices, as well as Te Kōhanga Reo programmes, which were not included in this research.

Another limitation concerns with the participants' gender. The research sample, both for the observational study and for the intervention, consisted exclusively of female teachers. This limitation on the variety of the sample reflected the low rate of male teachers in early childhood education due possibly to cultural stereotypes that consider teaching in Early Childhood Education still a female vocation.

One aspect to be considered in the interventional study was the fact that teachers who volunteered to participate in the trial were highly motivated to change and interested in working with emotions. In this sense, further teacher training on the development of emotional competence in the most vulnerable children should be made available to early childhood centres. This concern has particular relevance in the light of recent reports in New Zealand suggesting

that approximately 6,000 children have significant behavioural problems before they even attend school (Ministry of Social Development, 2011).

When comparing treatment and control groups in an experimental design it is always important that the groups are as similar as possible on all factors except the intervention. Randomisation is the primary tool used to achieve this result, but while the process eliminates group differences on average, there could still be other differences between the treatment and control groups. One limitation could be that teachers in the experimental group were trained together in groups within the same centre. Training teachers in clusters was for logistical purposes, since teachers in the same school, working within identical schedules, can receive the training more conveniently together. This homogeneity of the centres can result in potential sampling problems since teachers from the same centre may be more like one another than they are like teachers from other centres. To mitigate the possible effects of this intraclass correlation issue, the number of groups and individuals within those groups assigned to both conditions were comparable. In addition, the nature of the early childhood centres recruited permitted the centres in the experimental group were demographically similar to the centres forming the control group. The training content was systematically delivered session by session in the same manner among the groups of teachers and it was reflected by the feedback received from the teachers, which confirmed their understanding of the goals and processes offered by the training.

Although blind randomisation contributed to minimise possible sample bias, the outcome differences may potentially be explained as a result of pre-existing differences between the groups. Unobservable characteristic like motivation, strong interest in the subject, individual preferences and characteristics of the group, and even the active encouragement of supervisors and head teachers can potentially contribute to behaviour change after the intervention. The dual

role of the researcher as facilitator can also be a potential source of bias, this is particularly important during the delivering of the control group programme when the attitudes or preferences of the researcher could be unintentionally filtered through the session.

In relation to the Emotional Style Questionnaire, which was used as an initial measure, a post-test were not conducted to assess any differential change in the emotional style of teachers after the intervention. However, the intention of using the ESQ before the introduction of the intervention was to determine if there were significant differences in the teachers' emotional styles prior the intervention that might mediate their emotional competence performance at the end of the training.

Another limitation for this research was that the children's emotional competence was not measured. The observational study considered children's emotions and behaviour only during interaction with their teachers. In the interventional part of this research, children's competencies were not measured during the game situation. However, the children's responses were reviewed in the videos and were taken into account in relation to the teachers' responses to their emotional communications. It would be also important for future research to determine if the intervention continued to have a positive effect over time on children, teachers, and early childhood environments as a whole.

Conclusion

My research programme highlighted the importance of teachers' emotions in the interactions and strategies they use during the process of emotion socialisation of young children. The Te Āniwaniwa project on the emotional atmosphere of primary school classrooms has already identified important components of the emotional climate. The emotional teacher- child relationship, teachers' emotional awareness, their own beliefs about emotions and the utilisation

of emotion coaching strategies have been described as important principles in the construction of positive emotional atmospheres. These principles have guided this research, highlighting the importance of considering classroom emotional climates in early childhood education.

Although a number of studies have implemented teacher training on emotional focused interventions (Webster-Stratton, Reinke, & Herman, 2011), this research included an experiential approach that facilitated the recognition, expression, and awareness of feelings and mobilized changes in participants' emotional schemas, with positive consequences for teacher- child relationships and emotional climate of ECE classrooms. This research has demonstrated that a brief intervention, focused on teachers' emotional experience can help early childhood teachers manage emotionally driven situations with young children. In an emotionally driven contrived play situation, I demonstrated that teachers trained on emotional competence skills can do better in thinking and responding rapidly and effectively to young children's emotional needs.

These findings have relevance for social policies. They highlight the important role of early childhood teachers as agents of emotion socialisation and more importantly the role of teachers' own emotional competence and self-awareness of emotions in responding adequately to children's emotional communications. This role is specifically essential for young children who are challenged by the multiple risks associated with life in disadvantaged communities.

My study has a potential impact for future application and research on the emotional socialisation in early childhood education. Emotion- focused training for teachers at the heart of the curriculum might complement and enhance the universal goal of socialisation of children's emotions as well as addressing their mental health needs. Teacher training with reflective practices that focuses on emotions, relationships, and the inner experience of the mind represents

a critical factor for promoting resilience, and for protecting all children from previous or future risk as well as for supporting the necessary skills to live an effective and engaged life.

POSTSCRIPT

This research has given me a greater understanding of the importance of the teacher-child emotional relationship in early childhood education. I found evidence of the essential role of the teacher in creating positive classroom climates that support young children's socialisation of emotions; this role can be further enhanced by introducing brief emotion-focused interventions. By being exposed to effective emotion-focused training, teachers can optimise the managing of children's emotions and needs. My work has demonstrated that it is possible to train teachers with the intention of increasing their emotional self-awareness, to extend their intra- and inter-personal skills, as well as to give them the theoretical knowledge to promote effective relationships with young children. Observing and training early childhood teachers has shown me that personal experience can become a powerful source of knowledge and that learning from the experience is a combination of feeling, thinking, and doing. Since the first time the training was provided, I have had several requests to continue delivering and promoting emotion-focused professional development for early childhood practitioners. I have delivered workshops following a similar approach but now targeting parents of the participant centres with fruitful results. These encounters have strengthened the teacher-parent partnership. Teachers continue to claim spaces where they can reflect on the emotional and personal aspects of their practice. As long as we persist in training teachers to be more emotionally prepared to meet the needs of young children, my hope is that this area of research will continue to impact significantly on positive early childhood education practice.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Information for Centres Study 1



Massey University

School of Psychology
Private Box 756
Wellington
Tel 64 4 8015799
Fax 64 4 8012692

Emotional Interactions between preschool children and their teachers: How they Influence classroom environments and learning experiences

Information for the School

April 2009

Dear _____

Thank you very much for taking time to read about my research project. This letter places my request in writing so that you can judge the suitability of my research project for your Centre and decide whether you wish your setting to participate.

My name is Maria Ulloa and I am doing my PhD in Psychology at Massey University. I am part of a research group called *CEBUS* – Children’s Environment’s: Research Unit for Behavioural Studies which is under the supervision of Professor Ian Evans, Massey University.

In my research project I am aiming to investigate how early childhood practitioner’s (teachers and educators) emotional interactions with children influence the overall classroom atmosphere and shape young children’s emotional experiences.

This research is an extension of the Te Aniwhaniwa, a programme developed by Professor Evans which includes research on the emotional atmosphere in primary classrooms. Its overall aim is to understand the basic mechanisms in which everyday teacher behaviour in the classroom influences emotional intelligence of their students.

The first study of my proposed research involves observing children and teachers during emotionally related interactions in ordinary preschool sessions. The purpose of these observations is to examine the ways in which early childhood educators shape children’s emotional understanding in everyday situations.

At this stage of the project data collection will be made by writing running records of observations. Naturalistic observation using field notes is the least intrusive method and interferes very little with normal dynamics in classrooms and settings.



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Private Box 756
Wellington
Tel 64 4 8015799
Fax 64 4 8012692

This research will improve our understanding of the subtle emotional dynamics underlying communications and patterns of behaviour between children and adults in educational settings. This project is also expected to have practical relevance for the design of high quality pre-school programmes and in promoting more emotionally healthy early childhood educational environments.

FOR CHILDREN: Every time that the observers visit the Centre, children will be informed in groups and individually that they are going to be observed. Children and teachers who consent participation, will be observed for a period of two hours. Different colours of stickers will be distributed among all the children in the classroom regardless of their participation in the study. A colour code system will be implemented to differentiate the children whose parents consented to be observed from the children whose consent has not been obtained. All records are completely confidential. We will ensure that each child is willing to participate and we will ask for each child consent on the spot. Each child will be told that he or she is free to withdraw at any time.

FOR PARENTS/CAREGIVER: Parents will be sent a consent form, in accordance with Massey University Policy, that will explain the study and ask their permission. Parents will be encouraged to go through the study information with their child and to make sure their child is willing to take part in this study. They will be asked to sign the consent form for their child's participation in the study and communicate the contents of the information letter and information leaflet to the child.

FOR THE SCHOOL/CENTRE AND THE TEACHERS:

Supervisors and managers will be asked to discuss the project with their teaching staff. Those teachers who agree to participate will be asked to distribute consent letters to children in class to take home to their parents. It would be expected that in the discussion with the teachers they would decide the most convenient and suitable time to have observational activity. Researchers will not be recording teaching moments that are instructional or which are focused on behaviour unless the latter is accompanied by an emotion related comment.

At the conclusion of the study I will prepare a summary of the findings for you and the teachers that discusses the implications that the findings may have for schools. I will prepare another version that can be sent to the parents of the children who participated.



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Wellington
Tel 64 4 8015799
Fax 64 4 8012692

Both children and teacher information will be kept confidential. Neither the school nor individual children and teachers' names will be revealed at any stage of the project.

This project is congruent with some of the core principles of Te Whāriki which describe that children learn through responsive and reciprocal relationships with people significant to them. It is also consistent with the Mana Atua strand where the health and well-being of the child are protected in an environment where their emotional wellbeing is nurtured.

Approval from Ethics Committee:

“This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, Application 09/16. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research, please contact Dr Karl Pajo, Chair, Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, telephone 04 801 5799 x 6929, email humanethicsouthb@massey.ac.nz.”

Researcher: Maria Ulloa .CHERUBS Lab, K1, School of Psychology, Massey University, PO Box 756, Wellington, can be contacted by phoning (04) 801 5799 extension 62324. Alternatively you can email me at: luisaulloa@hotmail.com

Supervisors: Professor Ian Evans, School of Psychology, Massey University, PO Box 756, Wellington, can be contacted by phoning (04) 8015799 extension 62125.

Dr Linda Jones, of Psychology, Massey University, PO Box 756 Wellington, can be contacted by phoning (04) 8015799 extension 6530

Thank you very much for considering our project. Your time and effort is appreciated.

Yours sincerely,
Maria Ulloa
CHERUBS
Children's Environments: Research Unit for Behavioural Studies

Appendix B: Parents Information Brochure study 1



WHAT IS THIS RESEARCH PROJECT ABOUT?

My name is Maria, I am currently doing my PhD in psychology at Massey University. I am interested in how children and their teachers interact emotionally in their everyday lives.

We are investigating how early years practitioners (teachers and educators) emotional interactions with children influence the classroom atmosphere and shape young children's learning experiences.

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Young children spend long periods of their time in Early Years Centres so it is important to enquire about the influence teachers have in determining emotional understanding of young children.

To give us an awareness of the ways in which children learn to manage their emotions while interacting with adults in early years educational settings.

To add knowledge to existing research on how emotional factors influence educational environments specifically about the relationship between classrooms atmosphere, young children emotional intelligence and children's learning experiences.

WHAT WILL YOUR CHILD DO?

Every time the observers visit the Centre, your child will be informed that he or she is going to be watched for a period of one hour while he or she is doing normal activities (e.g. playing with friends or in an activity task with teachers).

Different colours of stickers will be distributed among all the children in the classroom regardless of their participation in the study. A colour code system will be implemented to differentiate the children whose parents consented to be observed from the children whose consent has not been obtained.

The observers will become part of the classroom until the children get used to their presence and will remain as unobtrusive as possible. They will take only a few notes during the time they spend there.

At the end of the observations children will be informed that the observers have finished and Children will be reminded of the next visit.

The principal researcher will be accompanied by a research assistant. The research assistant will also take brief notes during the session to ensure a higher degree of accuracy during observations.



HOW MUCH TIME WILL BE INVOLVED?

Each observational session will take about one hour and will take place in the centre or playground during ordinarily opening hours. The researcher will follow the advice of supervisors and teachers where and when to observe in order to avoid disruptions of normal daily routines.

HOW YOU CAN HELP US?

Talk to your child and make sure he or she is willing to take part in the observations. If so, sign the consent form and in this way you can contribute in the process of obtaining information

WHAT CAN YOU EXPECT FROM THE RESEARCHER?

You and your child are under no obligation to accept this invitation, if you decide to participate, you have the right to:

- decline to answer any particular question;
- withdraw from the study at any time;
- ask any questions about the study at any time
 - during the participation
 - access to a summary of the project findings when it is concluded
 - provide information on the understanding that your name will not be used unless you give permission to the researcher.

-ask the observer to stop taking notes at any stage of the process.

These rights apply equally to your child.

If your child does not want to participate, it will not affect in anyway your relationship with the Centre or Massey University.

If you agree for your child take part please fill in the consent form after reading it to your child and return to your child's teacher. We will collect them from the teacher.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THE INFORMATION YOU PROVIDE?

Your child's observations will only be used for the purpose of this research project. Observational records will be kept confidential in a locked filing cabinet in the School of Psychology, Massey University. A code number will be used instead of your child's name to keep strict confidentiality.

The observations will be only read and seen by myself, the female research assistant who participates in the session, and sometimes by my supervisor, Professor Ian Evans.

You are welcome to receive a summary of the results. If you would like a copy of the results, please tick the request box for a brief outcome report to be sent to you. Please remember to fill in your contact details so I know who and where to send the information when the project is finished.



ABOUT THE RESEARCHER

My name is Maria Ulloa. I am a PhD student in the School of Psychology at Massey University.

I will be assisted by Lorna Franey a Research assistant in the School of Psychology at Massey University. Lorna has experience in conducting research in educational settings in the UK.

This research is supervised by Professor Ian Evans and Dr. Linda Jones in the School of Psychology, at Massey University.

“This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, Application 09/16. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research, please contact Dr Karl Pajo, Chair, Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, telephone 04 801 5799 x 6929, email humanethicssouthb@massey.ac.nz.”

ANY QUESTIONS?

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me at any time. I can be contacted by phone, on (04)8015799 extension 62324. If I am not available, please leave a message and I will get back to you. Alternatively you can write to me:

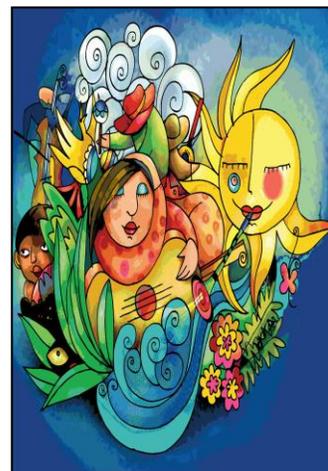
Maria Ulloa, PhD Student,
C/o School of Psychology,
Massey University,
Private Bag,
Wellington

My email address is
luisaulloa@hotmail.com

**Thank you for considering
our
project.**



*You are invited
to participate...*



**Emotional Interactions
between preschool children
and their teachers: How they
influence classrooms
environments and learning
experiences**

Appendix C: Teachers Information Letter Study 1



Massey University

School of Psychology
Private Box 756
Wellington
Tel 64 4 8015799
Fax 64 4 8012692

Emotional Interactions between preschool children and their teachers: How they influence classroom environments and learning experiences

Information for classroom teacher

Dear Teacher,

Your supervisor/manager has given me initial permission to approach you regarding carrying out a research project in your centre. My name is Maria Ulloa and this research project is part of my PhD thesis. I have 10 years prior experience working in Early Childhood Education and Therapeutic Child Care.

With this research I hope to understand how early years teachers' emotional interactions with children influence the classroom atmosphere and the shaping of young children's emotional intelligence (E. I.). E.I is the ability to understand and manage one's feelings as well as others.

Additionally this research will provide insight into the emotional factors that contribute to the quality of the emotional atmosphere in early childhood classrooms and emotional development within this context.

The first study will use naturalistic observation to unveil the ways in which early childhood educators contribute to that all important shaping of children's emotional understanding through everyday situations. Observations will only focus on significant emotional events within the setting and will attempt to capture the essence of an interaction using simple descriptions. While our presence is expected to cause only minimal disruption, where we sit or stand while observing will be entirely at your discretion. Two observers (myself and a postgraduate student with a Master's degree in educational psychology) will visit your room for about two hours a week during a period of four months. Observations are not focused on teaching methods or children's cognitive learning, and are in no way an evaluation teaching skills.

All the information will be kept strictly confidential within the research team and no names will be used in the observational records. Parents will have given permission for us to record the behaviour of any child in the observational study. You are under no obligation to accept the invitation to participate in this research project.



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School of Psychology
 Private Box 756
 Wellington
 Tel 64 4 8015799
 Fax 64 4 8012692

If you choose to take part in the observations please fill the consent form.

Please notice that if you decide to participate, you have the right to:

- 1 Decline to answer any particular question;
- 2 Withdraw from the study at any time;
- 3 Ask any questions about the study at any time during participation;
- 4 Provide information on the understanding that your name will not be used;
- 5 Be given access to a summary of the project findings when it is concluded.

I hope you are interested in participating in this study; if so, please fill in the attached consent form if you wish to participate. I will collect the form at your convenience.

Thanks for considering my project and please do not hesitate to ask me any questions at any stage of this research process. I look forward to meeting with you and discuss any queries you may have.

Approval from Ethics Committee:

“This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, Application 09/16. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research, please contact Dr Karl Pajo, Chair, Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, telephone 04 801 5799 x 6929, email humanethicsouthb@massey.ac.nz.”

Researcher: Maria Ulloa .CHERUBS, K1, School of Psychology, Massey University, PO Box 756, Wellington, can be contacted by phoning (04) 801 5799 extension 62324. Alternatively you can email me at: luisaulloa@hotmail.com

Supervisors: Professor Ian Evans, School of Psychology, Massey University, PO Box 756, Wellington, can be contacted by phoning (04) 8015799 extension 62125.

Dr Linda Jones, of Psychology, Massey University, PO Box 756 Wellington, can be contacted by phoning (04) 8015799 extension 6530

Thank you very much for considering our project. Your time and effort is appreciated.

Yours sincerely,

Maria Ulloa
 CHERUBS
 Children’s Environments: Research Unit for Behavioural Studies

Appendix D: Consent for Parents Study 1



Massey University

School of Psychology
Private Box 756
Wellington
Tel 64 4 8015799
Fax 64 4 8012692

CONSENT FORM

Name of research project:

Emotional interactions between preschool children and their teachers: How they influence classroom environments and learning experiences

I have read the Information Sheet and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I understand my right to withdraw my child from the study at any time

I agree for my child to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet.

Yes, I give permission for my child _____ (please print the name of your child here).

BOY/ GIRL (Tick appropriate box), to participate in this research project under the conditions set out in the information sheet.

Yes, I give permission for the researcher to observe my child during normal activities within the Early Childhood Centre

Signature _____

Date _____

Full name (printed) _____

Relationship to Child (e.g., mother, father, legal guardian) _____

What cultural/ethnic group (s) does your family identify with? _____

I would like a summary of the findings from this research project.

Please provide a postal address or an email address if you want a summary of the results.

Postal Address: _____

Email: _____

Please return this consent form after discussing this with your child to your child's classroom teacher as soon as convenient.

Appendix E: Teachers Consent Form Study 1



Massey University

School of Psychology
Private Box 756
Wellington
Tel 64 4 8015799
Fax 64 4 8012692

Emotional Interactions between preschool children and their teachers: How they Influence classroom environments and learning experiences

TEACHER CONSENT FORM

This consent form will be held for a period of five (5) years

Name of Centre: _____

I have read the Information Sheet and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I understand that my Centre supervisor has given a permission to carry out the above research project with children from the centre, dependant on each parent's consent.

I understand that the project is confidential, and that I will not be identified in any data.

I understand that I can withdraw at any time.

I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet.

Signed: _____

Name: _____

Appendix F: Information Letter for Centres Study 2



Massey University

School of Psychology

Private Box 756

Wellington

Tel 64 4 8015799

Fax

64 4 8012692

Teaching to care: Research study on emotional interactions between preschool children and their teachers Information for Centres

I am writing to ask you to distribute the enclosed letter of invitation to participate in a research project targeting teachers working in your early childhood setting. We are looking for teachers or practitioners willing to take part in a research project which aims to enhance their “emotional intelligence” so they can as a result gain an enhanced ability to influence children’s emotional development, learning experiences and environments.

Previous research has shown us that teachers who use positive emotion regulation skills and effective strategies to regulate and manage children’s emotions, have better interactions with children and create a more positive emotional climate in the classroom. These skills can benefit children’s learning experiences in all aspects of the curriculum and are fully in keeping with the goals of Te Whāriki.

The teachers will be invited to participate in two training sessions aimed to enhance their emotional competence, and they will have the opportunity to put in practice their acquired skills during a pretend play session, which also will be used as a tool for evaluation on the effectiveness of the training sessions. This pretend play session will be organised in one of our participating ECE centres.

If teachers working in your institutions agree to participate, they will do it in their own time, and the professional development sessions will take place at Massey University facilities. If this arrangement is not convenient for the participants or the setting, the researchers are willing to accommodate a venue according with the participants’ needs.

This research is part of my PhD in Psychology and Professor Ian Evans and Dr Linda Jones from the School of Psychology at Massey University are supervising it. If you have any questions about this project please contact me or my supervisor at CHERUBS Lab (Massey University) at 8015799 extension 62324

Thanking you in advance for your help,

Maria Ulloa

PhD candidate

Massey University

Wellington Campus

Approval from Ethics Committee:

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, Application10/22. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research, please contact Dr Karl Pajo, Chair, and Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, telephone 04 801 5799 x 6929, email

humanethicsouthb@massey.ac.nz

Researcher: Maria Ulloa .CHERUBS, K1, School of Psychology, Massey University, PO Box 756, Wellington, can be contacted by phoning (04) 801 5799 extension 62324. Alternatively you can email me at: luisaulloa@hotmail.com

Supervisors: Professor Ian Evans, School of Psychology, Massey University, PO Box 756, Wellington, can be contacted by phoning (04) 8015799 extension 62125.

Dr Linda Jones, of Psychology, Massey University, PO Box 756 Wellington, can be contacted by phoning (04) 8015799 extension 6530

Appendix G: Information Letter Participant Teachers



Massey University

School of Psychology
Private Box 756
Wellington
Tel 64 4 8015799
Fax 64 4 8012692

Teaching to care: Research study on emotional Interactions between preschool children and their teachers

Information for teachers

Your school supervisor has given me initial permission to approach you in regards to this study. You are invited to participate in this exciting research study, which is part of a research project aiming to understand how early childhood educators' emotional interactions with children can influence the emotional atmosphere of the classrooms, and the shaping of young children's emotional intelligence(EI), which is the ability to understand and manage one's feelings as well as those of others.

This study will run a short professional development programme consisting of two workshops for teachers, and early childhood practitioners to enhance and improve their own emotional intelligence skills. The acquisition of emotional competence has been seen to be beneficial for both children and practitioner teachers in ECE settings, and it is proven to be a valuable micro-skill when it comes to working with children.

The programme will involve a group of teachers attending two different workshop sessions on emotion related topics relevant to ECE practice. The first session will involve the completion of a short questionnaire on emotional styles, and the rest of the programme will consist in providing experiential and practical training on specific emotional competence skills that have been observed to be very effective in improving emotional child- teacher interactions and classroom environments.

For the two training sessions we are offering CHERUBS lab as a venue, a research lab dedicated to children and families at Massey University Wellington Campus. The lab is located at 24 King Street, Newtown. However, since we are inviting participants from the greater Wellington region, we will arrange flexible venues for the convenience of ECC teachers located in different areas. This includes the possibility for researchers to deliver the training sessions in the participants' work place. The sessions will last approximately four hours each and can be arranged in smaller kernels to meet the time schedules of the participants. The participants are expected to gain valuable skills to be put into practice during an organised pretend play session, which will take place in one of the participating ECE centres, or in their own work setting if it is more convenient. This play session will be observed by the researchers, who will use it to evaluate the effectiveness of the training, this observation will last approximately 20 minutes.

Participants will have the opportunity to give consent for these sessions to be videotaped by the researchers. All the data obtained during these sessions will be treated as confidential. Your competence as a teacher will not be evaluated in any way during the research process.

All information gathered from questionnaires and training sessions will be used only for the purpose of this research study. Your identity will not be revealed to anyone other than the researcher and her supervisors.

The information gathered in videotapes will later be destroyed. Written forms will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in our research lab for the period of five years, after which they will be destroyed too. You will receive a

copy of the summarised results of the study; if you are interested in receiving one, please tick the designated box in the consent form, and an outcome report will be sent to you after the study is finished.

You are under no obligation to accept this invitation. If it is your decision to participate please note that you have the right to:

- Decline to answer any particular question
- Withdraw from the study at any time
- Ask any questions about the study at any time during participation
- Provide information on the understanding that your name will not be used unless you have given permission to the researchers.
- Be given access to a summary of the project findings once the study has been concluded.

About the researcher

My name is Maria Ulloa and I am a PhD candidate in Psychology from Massey University and this study will be part of my research project. I have had over 10 years of experience working in Early Childhood Education and Therapeutic Communities with children in the UK.

I will be assisted by a fellow postgraduate psychology student, from the School of psychology at Massey University. Professor Ian Evans and Dr Linda Jones at the School of Psychology at Massey University. Wellington campus are supervising this research project.

If you have questions about this research, please contact me by phone:021806779

Approval from Ethics Committee:

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, Application10/12. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research, please contact Dr Karl Pajo, Chair, and Massey University Human Ethics Committee: Southern B, telephone 04 801 5799 x 6929, email humanethicsouthb@massey.ac.nz

Researcher: Maria Ulloa .CHERUBS, K1, School of Psychology, Massey University, PO Box 756, Wellington, can be contacted by phoning (04) 801 5799 extension 62324. Alternatively you can email me at: luisaulloa@hotmail.com

Supervisors: Professor Ian Evans, School of Psychology, Massey University, PO Box 756, Wellington, can be contacted by phoning (04) 8015799 extension 62125.

Dr Linda Jones, of Psychology, Massey University, PO Box 756 Wellington, can be contacted by phoning (04) 8015799 extension 6530

Thank you very much for considering our project. Your time and effort is appreciated.

Yours sincerely,

Maria Ulloa

Appendix H: Teachers Consent Form Study 2



Massey University

School of Psychology
Private Box 756
Wellington
Tel 64 4 8015799
Fax 64 4 8012692

Teaching to care: Research study on emotional Interactions between preschool children and their teachers

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

I have read the Information Sheet and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I understand that the sessions will be videotaped and I will give feedback to the video camera regularly

I understand that my participation in this study is confidential, and no material that can identify me, or the centre where I'm working will be used in any report on this study

I agree not to disclose any information shared during the training sessions

I understand that taking part of this study is voluntary and I may withdraw from the study at any time.

I am aware of whom to contact if I have further questions about this project

Yes, I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet.

Yes, I would like a summary of the findings from this research project.

Please provide a postal address or an email address if you want a summary of the results.

Postal Address: _____

Email: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Full Name – printed _____

Researcher
Maria Ulloa
Ph 021806779
Ph 8015799 ext 62324

Supervisor
Professor
Ian Evans

Appendix I: Consent for Parents Study 2



Massey University

School of Psychology

Private Box 756

Wellington

Tel 64 4 8015799

Fax 64 4 8012692

CONSENT FORM

Name of research project:

Emotional interactions between preschool children and their teachers: How they influence classroom environments and learning experiences

Consent for my child 's participation in a pretend game

This consent form will be held for a period of five(5) years

I have read the Information letter and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I understand my right to withdraw my child from the study at any time

I agree for my child to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet.

Yes, I give permission for my child _____ (please print the name of your child here).

BOY/ GIRL (Tick appropriate box), to participate in this research project under the conditions set out in the information sheet.

Yes, I give permission for the researcher to videotape my child during a pretend game at the preschool _____, where participant teachers and researchers will also take part.

Signature _____

Date _____

Full name (printed) _____

Relationship to child (e.g., mother, father, legal guardian) _____

What cultural/ethnic group (s) does your family identify with? _____

I would like a summary of the findings from this research project.

Please provide a postal address or an email address if you want a summary of the results.

Postal Address: _____

Email: _____

Please return this consent form after discussing this with your child to your child's classroom teacher as soon as convenient.

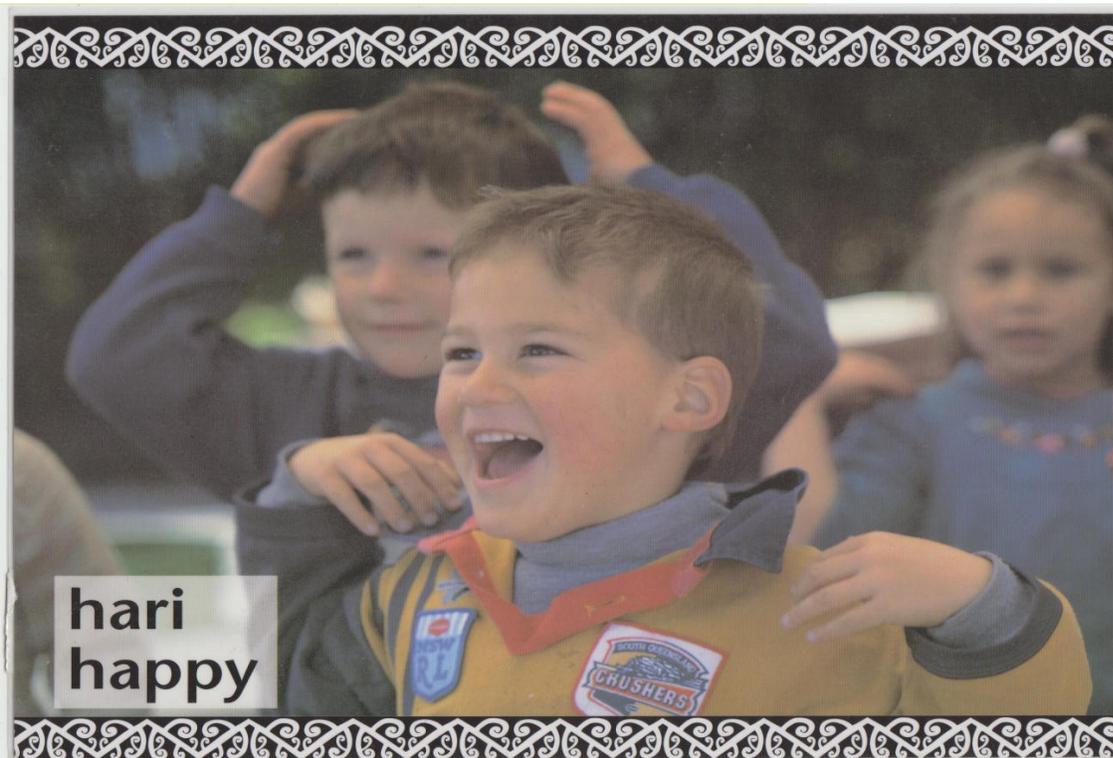
Appendix J: Teachers Emotional Style Questionnaire

Teachers Emotional Style Questionnaire

Strongly disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Undecided	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree	
					1. Sadness is something that one has to get over with, to ride out and not to dwell on
					2. I prefer a child to be happy rather than overly emotional
					3. I help a child get over sadness quickly so that he/she can move on
					4. I try to change a child's angry mood into a cheerful one
					5. Childhood is a happy –go –lucky time, not a time to feel sad or angry
					6. When a child is angry, my goal is to make him/her to stop
					7. When a child is sad, I am expected to fix the world and make it perfect
					8. When a child is angry it is an opportunity to getting close
					9. When a child is angry, I take some time to experience this feeling with him /her
					10. When a child is sad it is time to solve his/her problem
					11. When a child is angry, I want to know what he /she is thinking
					12. Anger is an emotion worth exploring
					13. When a child is angry , it is time to solve his/ her problem
					14. When a child is sad, it is time to get close

Teachers Emotional style Questionnaire adapted from “The maternal Emotional Style Questionnaire by Lagace-Seguin. Mount Saint Vincent University. 2005

Appendix K: Children's Emotions Recognition (Te Mihi)



Appendix L: Programme Curriculum

Session 1

Overview

- Regulating and coaching emotions in EC Settings.
- Definitions
- Emotion regulation
- Emotional competence
- Emotional intelligence
- Emotion coaching
- Role of the teacher
- The maturational process, the family, and other facilitating influences.
- Strategies used by children and adults to understand and manage emotional communications.
- Emotional experience
- Emotions are inherently connected to feelings of closeness and trust and are intimately involved in the ability to deal successfully with relationships. They tell people about the nature of relational bonds.
- What is an emotional experience?

It is a high level synthesis of affect, motivation, cognition, and behaviour

Emotion system: integrates cognitive-affective structures internal models (scripts or emotion schemes)

It is a combination of body feelings and thoughts

- Emotional intelligence

Awareness of emotion and the ability to enable emotion to inform reasoned action is what is necessary for Emotional intelligence.

- How to use emotional intelligence

Emotion is a signal to oneself

Emotion organizes one for action

Emotion monitors the state of one's relationship

Emotions evaluate whether things are going one's way.

Emotion signal to others

Expression is important but not always corrects what is wrong

Deciding on how to act on the signal is important

Thought put emotion in perspective and make sense of it.

Emotion enhance learning

- Emotional competence
- Research: during the preschool years successful and positive interactions with teachers and peers have shown to be a central predictor on ongoing mental health and school success.

(Denham 2001, 2006)

Components of emotional competence:

- Emotional expressiveness (patterns of positive expression)
- Emotional knowledge (identifying and responding to emotional expression of others)
- Emotional regulation (ability to manage arousal)

Questions

How do you think you help the children you work with to:

Regulate their emotions? (Arousal)

Express emotions? (Patterns)

Understand emotions? (Knowledge)

- Emotion coaching
- What do we need to do?
- Teachers need first to be aware of their own emotions. They need to have a positive view of emotions as resources, and see emotions as providing information and action tendencies.
- Teachers need to recognise that when children are experiencing emotion, these moments offer opportunities for intimacy and contact.
- Teachers need to be empathically attuned both to children's specific emotions, such as sadness, anger, and fear, and to the tempo, rhythm, intensity, and cadence of the children's emotional vitality as it changes moment by moment. They need to validate, accept, and respect children's emotional experience, and communicate their empathic understanding of children's feeling.

- Teachers need to help children, symbolize their feelings in words, and help them make sense of this experience.
- Teachers, having entered a child's emotional world, need to guide the child in dealing with his or her emotions, and offer strategies to help the child process emotion.

Principles

- Increasing awareness of emotion
- Enhancing emotion regulation
- Changing emotion with emotion

From the following observations notice the interactions that reflect the following skills

1. Teacher creates emotion in children
2. Teacher guides and supports the children to recognise, to be aware, and to describe emotions in themselves and others.
3. Teacher empathizes with, validates and accepts student's emotions in themselves and others
4. Teacher is open to discuss situations that elicit emotions
5. Teacher helps the children to problem solve and create strategies to cope with an emotional situation
4. Teacher is aware of the impact of this experience on the children and the school environment

Observation 1

The children were in the garden. We noticed that a Sophie was crying. The teacher looked from the distance and waited. Ginny and Jaden volunteered to see what was going on with the upset girl. The teacher did not move but followed the involved children with her eyes. Jaden came back to the teacher bringing the news about Sophie; they said that Anna upset her because she took her shovel. The teacher said: "Well Sophie must be very unhappy" Jaden said "yes she is" The teacher asked Jaden if he can help his friend Sophie a little over there. Jaden ran fast towards then. Sophie's crying escalated. The teacher then moved closer to the conflicting girls and kneeled down looking at the upset girl's eyes, The Teacher looking at the other girl asked both what happened. Anna said, "it was an accident". The teacher said, "I am sure you don't mean to make her cry, you were playing so nicely together". She asked Sophie softly to calm down while placing her hand on her shoulder" The girl stopped crying. The teacher asked both of the girls what they were doing before the incident. Sophie's friend explained that they were planting seeds. The teacher proposed Sophie and her friend to carry on doing that job and redistributed the tools in equal parts, showing the girls a good spot to star all over again.

Observation 2

In the middle of the garden, three boys were playing throwing pines against a paddle, making them splash. They seemed much exited and very soon their excitement escalated. Billy started to throw the pines hard splashing water all over the other boys. The teacher was not looking at the time. The rest of the children were filled with the same excitement. Then the teacher noticed this and approached them slowly. She said" I think you need to calm down guys" She kneeled down, looking at them she said: What do you think we can do to make this game more safe?" One child said, "Rolling" The teacher said. "That is right, very clever idea" She

showed the children how to do it and rolled a couple of pines against the paddles. The children continued rolling but soon they were driven away by excitement and started throwing pines harder again. The teacher went back to the children and without saying anything, she modelled again the ideal way to do it. The children followed this new way of play again”

Observation 3

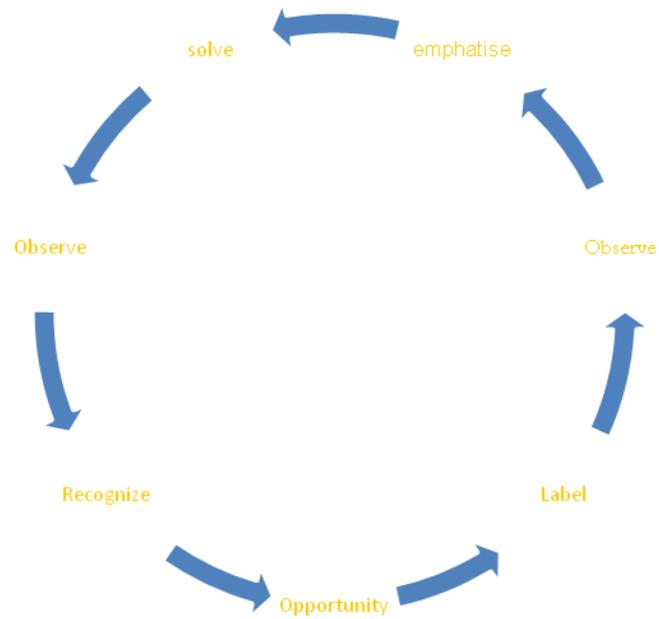
The teacher thanked Gregory for bringing up the topic of the dead of the rabbit. The teacher then started to talk about the dead of Roger the rabbit. All the children looked at her attentively, some children pulled a sad face. She explained that yesterday Roger Rabbit died and the vet came to help him to die. He was very old she said, “quite old for a Rabbit, he came here since the school was funded like 8 years ago, even before that any children or teachers were here , apart from A who is being here from the beginning” . She then explained that he went sick, “he has an infection in his eyes and went blind” she added. A child mentioned that somebody else brought carrots for him yesterday, the teacher said, “Yes he loved carrots and he had a very happy last day”. She told the children that now they could ask as many question they wanted. Children started to raise their arms; they asked questions about why did he die? She answered their questions in a very calmly and secure way. She explained repeatedly that he was old and sick but nobody really knew why he got sick. A child said: Maybe he was poisoned. She said that she thought that there is not the case of Roger rabbit since he was always very well looked after and they would not giving him anything that make him sick. Some children asked about if it was possible for him to come back to life or even to unbury him to see him again. The teacher patiently answered all the questions in the most candid way reassuring the children that once you are dead you cannot comeback to life. She added to one point, “Everything that is alive die one day”. It sounds being said in the most natural way. The children looked at her attentively.

Some of them had their arms still up. She then said she like to tell the children who still have question to remain in the carpet so they can discussed it after the rest are gone to their daily activities.

Observation 4

A girl was crying. D, one of the teachers, came to her and took her in her arms cuddling her. She asked the girl about what has happened but the girl seemed very upset to respond. She carries on consoling her but nothing seemed to work. R a senior teacher came over. She swapped places with D and began comforting the girl. The girl was crying loudly and R asked her with a very gently voice to tell her slowly what has happened. The girl seemed to respond to her soft voice and explained her happened. The girl seemed less unhappy but still has some tears. R called then a boy who was nearby. She kneeled down and said something very soft and inaudible to me. The boy had his eyes down as if he was ashamed. R then asked him to be more careful and encouraged him to talk to the crying girl asking her if she feels better. After he did so R gave the boy the task to clean up some boots (I think the misunderstanding was over the boy pouring water and mud over some items while cleaning the gum boots). The boy did so and I can see from the distance he was really engaged in the job. Roberta took the tearful little girl by her hand and softly took her to a nearby table where she took out some doll's cloths and a miniature washing line. Very slowly, she showed the girl how to line the laundry and eventually the girl was really immerse in the task looking happy again.

The benign cycle



Video clip

Session 2

Part 1

Emotion Schemes

Definitions

Internal models or inner scripts which provide a constant “read out” of a person current state and are crucial in determining perception and goal- directed action.

Internal organizations or programmes through which people react automatically (reflex-like) on the basis of their emotion systems, not only inherited cues but also learned cues perceived as dangerous or life enhancing. These reactions occur rapidly and without thought.

Emotional experience

Combination of body feelings and thoughts; symphony of bodily feelings, thought and images is emotion

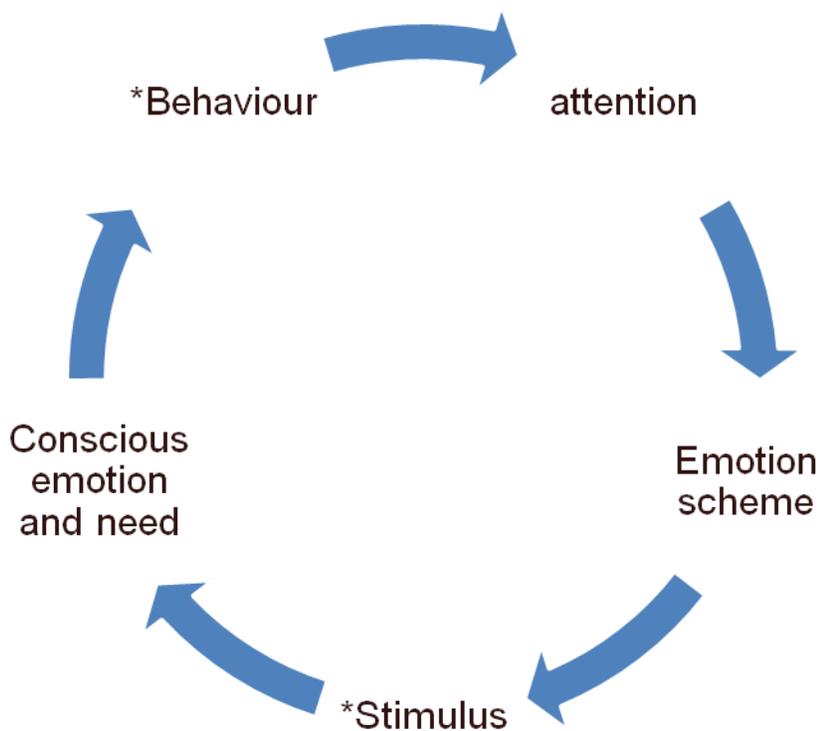
Response

Emotion, motivation, cognition occur in an integrated response package.

A type of programme or script that is activated automatically then runs a set of pre-programmed operations

Emotion and thought are highly integrated into conscious experience

Process



Part 2

The child that concerns me greatly”. Reflective on emotions practical exercise

Objective and Instructions

Objective: to enhance teacher’s awareness and develop their reflective capacities.

Learn in terms to overlap between personal and professional development.

This reflective process mirrors the model expected for teachers to work in their everyday work.

Instructions:

Give a brief presentation of a current difficulty with a child. There is not an expectation of completeness, but you may like to include some live interactional material.

There is not such a thing as a bad presentation!!!!

Format and timing

Presentation: 5 minutes

First imagine the routine day and than the child) spontaneously and without written preparation, starting with reason for this presentation and focusing on the core.

Observed discussion: 15 minutes. The presenter observes the group working on the material; ask each other questions, recalling details, puzzling out the problem.

The presenter not speak during this phase but he/she is not allow to feel persecuted

Reflection and analysis: 10 minutes .The presenter gives an assessment of the nature and quality of the group of the material and responds to issues that have arisen during the group discussion.

General discussion and review of the reflection process: 10 minutes. The whole group reflects on the work that has taken place.

Guide to the activity

- Think about the child who concern me
- Example of a recent episode
- What do you think about the child?
- What do you believe are the reasons for his behaviour?
- What feelings you identify in yourself as a result of his/ her behaviour

Session 3

Synchronicity and mindfulness

The soul of healthy emotional relationships and positive learning environments

Objectives

- Introduction to the concepts of synchronicity and mindfulness in ECE practices
- Understand the effects of emotional attention and emotional mindfulness,
- Introduction to the concepts of Attunement, mirroring and emotional containment

- Effective and compassionate emotional communication with children

Definitions

Synchronicity

The experience of two or more casually unrelated events that occur together in a meaningful manner. In terms of adult-child relationship, synchronicity can be accounted for in terms of experiences that trigger an unconscious return to the period where we were infants. Some events are so coincidental that reactivate early experiences especially during emotional interactions. Adult-child relationships (parents, caregivers and teachers) are characterised by dyadic synchrony, a mutually responsive and interconnected interaction style, have been consistently linked to children's psychosocial adjustment in early childhood. Synchrony is a complex emergent process that reflects the degree to which interacting partners adapt to one another's behaviour in order to maintain a coherent and mutually rewarding interpersonal exchange (Barber, Bolitho, & Bertrand, 2001; Kirsh, Crnic, & Greenberg, 1995).

Mindfulness

Described as a calm awareness of one's body functions, feelings, content of consciousness, or consciousness itself. Mindfulness applied to an emotional experience is not about thinking or talking about the emotion, but learning how to be fully present with the inner experience of the emotion

Experiential activity 1

The flat face: role play Participants are instructed to play a "flat face" role. Taking turns on the role of the inexpressive participant. Participants will be encouraged to look at the effects of the emotional mismatch.

Group discussion

How did you experience this exercise?

What kind of emotions, sensations, or lack of emotions/ sensations you experienced?

Can you describe it?

How participants felt in each role?

What parallel you can make in terms of communication with children (e.g. when you are busy or preoccupied while communicating with children)

What are the effects of not receiving full /genuine emotional attention?

Experiential activity 2

Mindfulness of thoughts and body (mindfulness guided meditation)

Quick body scan and savouring exercise

Breathing awareness, emotional awareness

A useful mindfulness of body exercise that help participants get a sense of our internal landscape and the physical and emotional sensations going on in this moment is the known as the body scan. This exercise is used as a way to take pause and get back in touch with myself in the present

Where are your feet? Then feel deeply into my feet, feeling the sensations and or numbness that is there, hot/cold, tingly, etc. Just notice whatever is going on there. What are they in contact with? Is it the floor? Am I sitting cross-legged? What is that like? You may find that it is difficult to be in your feet for more than a few seconds...just notice this and return to the feet.

Plenary and evaluation

Evaluation form and final comments

Appendix M: Crocodile Photo



Appendix N: Child Development session for control group

A brief encounter with child development

What is a child?

Ideas about children and childhood.

Activity: Write down (without thinking for more than a minute) three things that occur to you regarding children and childhood.

Group discussion:

Different beliefs about children affect child-rearing practices and education

Cross cultural perspective of child rearing practices.

Child as a blank slate upon which experience leaves its mark (Locke)

The natural child. (Rousseau). The role of inborn capacities in development.

Both thought as the child essentially passive. And both views continue to influence developmental theories

Development and types of development

The study of development is essentially the study of change and growth over time which occurs in all areas: Intellectual, physical and social.

A question about any aspect of development is whether it is a continuous process or a series of sudden changes.

Continuity versus discontinuity

Quantitative (a change in the amount of something) versus qualitative (a change to something different in kind).

Nature and nurture debate. Empiricist and behaviourist models (emphasize the importance of environment).

Interactional models (child is active or constructive in its own development) e.g. constructivism, social constructivism.

FAQ in child development

What develops?

How does development occur?

Evolution and development are in some ways parallel process

Evolution is the process of change over time in which living things have diversified.

Characteristics are the identifiable aspects of the individual. Psychological characteristics are more difficult to identify.

Genetic determination and developmental plasticity. Genes switched on and off and influence the activities of each other according from feedback from internal and external world

Individuality

Individual differences: developmental psychology is concerned with both the pattern of normal development and with the individual differences in development.

Temperament: Biologically rooted individual differences in behavioural style that are present in early life and relatively stable across situations and time.

Effect of temperament in development

Effect of temperament in socialisers

Indirect effect via “goodness of fit”

Indirect effect via susceptibility to psychosocial adversity (resilience)

Indirect effect on range of experiences

Relationships

Many developmental psychologists argue that infants' abilities are pre-tuned for social interactions. Mother- infant dyad.

Social interactions can be seen as providing the basis for psychological development. Conversations, turn taking, baby talk (special form of speech), imitation, scaffolding, containing.

Dealing with distress: important part in baby's development. Babies form representations (internalize) of other people and their relationships with them.

Mother and baby's behaviour affect each other. Each person plays a part in determining how the other behaves and hence what happens between them.

Research has focused on early relationships between young children and caregivers.

Appendix O: Experiential exercise for synchronicity and mindfulness

Transcript: The Raisin Exercise

I'm going to go around the class and give you each a few objects. Now what I would like you to do is focus on one of the objects and just imagine that you have never seen anything like it before. Imagine you have just dropped in from Mars this moment and you have never seen anything like it before in your life.

Note. There is at least a 10-second pause between phrases, and the instructions are delivered in a matter-of-fact way, at a slow but deliberate pace, asking the class to do the following:

Taking one of these objects and holding it in the palm of your hand, or between your finger and thumb. (*Pause*)

Paying attention to seeing it. (*Pause*)

Looking at it carefully, as if you had never seen such a thing before. (*Pause*)

Turning it over between your fingers, (*Pause*)

Exploring its texture between your fingers. (*Pause*)

Examining the highlights where the light shines ... the darker hollows and folds. (*Pause*)

Letting your eyes explore every part of it, as if you had never seen such a thing before. (*Pause*)

And if, while you are doing this any thoughts come to mind about “what a strange thing we are doing” or “what is the point of this” or “I don't like these,” then just noting them as thoughts and bringing your awareness back to the object. (*Pause*)

And now smelling the object, taking it and holding it beneath your nose, and with each in-breath, carefully noticing the smell of it. (*Pause*)

And now taking another look at it (*Pause*)

And now slowly taking the object to your mouth, maybe noticing how your hand and arm know exactly where to put it, perhaps noticing your mouth watering as it comes up. (*Pause*)

And then gently placing the object in the mouth, noticing how it is “received” without biting it, just exploring the sensations of having it in your mouth. (*Pause*)

And when you are ready, very consciously taking a bite into it and noticing the tastes that it releases. (*Pause*)

Slowly chewing it ... noticing the saliva in the mouth, ... the change in consistency of the object. (*Pause*)

Then, when you feel ready to swallow, seeing if you can first detect the intention to swallow as it comes up, so that even this is experienced consciously before you actually swallow it. (*Pause*)

Finally, seeing if you can follow the sensations of swallowing it, sensing it moving down to your stomach, and also realizing that your body is now exactly one raisin heavier. (Based on Kabat-Zinn. From Segal, Z. V., Williams, J. M. G., & Teasdale, J. D. (2002). *Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy for Depression*. NY: Guilford).

Appendix P: Pretend Play Session Protocol

Game protocol for participating teachers.

Thank you for participating in this fabulous game. This is the final part of our research project on Emotional Competence.

It is a 15 minutes length pretended play activity used previously in research (Golomb and Galasso, 1995). The activity first involves introducing to a small group of children a variety of toys and building blocks. Soon after, the teacher initiates a pretend play activity using the toys available. During the play, the researcher introduces an emotional arousing situation, presenting unexpectedly a crocodile puppet pretending “to eat the toys”. The children cannot be warned at any stage.

This situation aims to elicit some level of emotional arousal in participant children and allow us to explore a variety of teacher-child interactions as well as teachers’ responses to children emotions.

This pretend play situation will provide you with the opportunity to utilize and apply some of the emotional competence skills learned during the professional development workshops you have attend.

The activity contains three stages:

1. After setting up the imaginative scenario provided by the researcher, the teacher will start telling a story to the small group of children sitting around the toys.
The suggested story tells about a village in which people and animals live together. The teacher then announces that it is about to rain and a big storm is expected, so the children are instructed to build a shelter for the people in order to protect them from the rain and the nearby growing river.
2. After 5 minutes of playing and the children are truly involved, the researcher introduces the sudden appearance of a crocodile puppet that pretends to eat all the toys away.
3. The researcher will leave the puppet with the teacher so he/she can finish the game. A few minutes later the teacher will put the game away with the help of the children and then read a short story to the small group.

The teacher and the group of children will be video tape through the event.

Thanks you for being such a great sport and for taking part of this lovely research project. Your contribution is truly appreciated.

Appendix Q: Coding Categories Game Assessment Sheet Phase 1

Crocodile Assessment Sheet (Phase 1)

Never	Rarely	Frequently (2+)	Always
1	2	3	4

Centre :

Teacher :

Experience:

Observation date:

Total time of observation:

Type	Category	Y #	N #	Observations /comments
	Focus her/his attention in the game. Is aware of the plot and interested eye to eye contact)			
	.Encourages children to sustain the attention and promote continuation by using prompts and questions			
	Initiates or prompt the children when it is needed. Example: observe a child being withdrawn or excluded.			
	Indicates the acknowledgment of emotion by picking cues			
	Teacher uses facial expression to convey and model emotional states.			
	Teacher tries to reduce /contain emotional communication when it is needed during phase 1 of the game.			

Appendix R: Coding Categories Game Assessment Sheet Phase 2

Scale for Observation of Teacher Competences after Crocodile (Phase 2)

Never	Rarely	Frequently (2+)	Always
1	2	3	4

Centre :

Teacher :

Experience:

Total time of observation:

Observation date:

Type	Category	Y #	N #	Observations /comments
ER	Intervenes trying to reduce or contain emotions			
ER	Validates children's emotions by helping children to talk about them.			
ER	Uses strategies to calm to help children to deal with emotions			
E.E	Helps the children to express emotions by modelling, using words, labelling and tell stories, use the toy to help with adaptation.			
E. E	Notices emotion expression in children: like sadness, worry, anxiety, grin.			
E.E	Signals emotion expression that seeks to produce an emotional response from children.			
E.K	Recognises emotion on himself/herself and help the children to recognise emotions in themselves and others.			
EK	Picks up emotion cues: respond to children's movements that indicate or signal emotional states. Withdrawn, pulling hair, nail biting.			

Appendix S: Overall Performance Score Sheet

Emotional Competence: Overall performance for teachers

Teacher:

Group:

3	2	1	0
Excellent	Very Good	Average	Poor
True all the time	True most of the time	Somehow true	Not true at all

To demonstrate emotional competence the teacher should show:

- Sustain attention during the game all the time
- Express and promote expression of emotions in accordance with the play context. (Modelling, asking child who is seen withdrawn).
- Teacher perceives emotional communications of children. (Communicative intent) understand subjectivity, meaning and context.
- Teacher seems to understand individual differences in emotional expressiveness
- Teacher makes connections between her own feelings and what/how the children may feel.
- Teacher helps the children to keep emotional arousal manageable (e.g. comforting gestures/words) and children seem to look for her assistance if they are afraid.
- Teacher helps to negotiate turns and play roles. Facilitates problem solving.

Appendix T: Certificate of Completion

CERTIFICATE OF ATTENDANCE

This certificate is awarded to

Attended to 12 hours of “teaching to care”
Professional development workshop in emotional competence

CHERUBS LAB
(CHILDREN’S ENVIRONMENT RESEARCH UNIT FOR BEHAVIORAL STUDIES)



Signature

June 28 -2011

Appendix U: Reflective Practice Case Reports

To further illustrate the qualitative information of this research, a series of case reports were written. They were produced while participant teachers were using reflective practice as a mean of unveiling their own emotional schemas, and reflecting on the individual children they were concern for. Some aspects of the case materials have been disguised so that neither the subjects nor the centres can be identified. Specific characteristics and details of participants and situations have been omitted or altered to maintain their privacy, especially when they were not essential to the phenomenon described.

Sahara (Report A1)

Sahara was a three and a half year old girl, who joined the ECE centre as a younger sister of one of the children already there. Teachers reported she had difficulties to settle at the centre, and found it hard to integrate with both teachers and other children. Teachers also concurred that she had denied their “warmth advances” by turning away every time they approached her. At the beginning of the reflective session, teachers illustrated her behaviour by describing an incident during story time that was turned into “a battle”. During group time, teacher noticed that Sahara was having problems finding a space to sit among the children since there were not more chairs available. When one of the teachers came to her assistance, Sahara became quite physical, did not want to come near the teacher, bashed her out of the way, and ran over to another part of the room. The teacher went over to her, in an attempt to explain her situation. The teacher noticed that she wanted to sit next to her bother rather than listen to the story and communicated this so, however after this episode, Sahara became increasingly fearful of being approached by her teachers, especially when she was in the company of her mother at the end of the session. The

teachers felt that she had not been able to build any trust in her in spite of her having been at the centre for a few months.

During the reflective sessions, teachers were encouraged by the facilitator to think further about the reason for Sahara's behaviour. Teachers connected her unwillingness to get close to the fact that her mum was away looking after her sick newborn baby. They also thought that maybe she had adopted her older brother as a substitute caregiver role, which her brother was reluctant to have.

A teacher described another episode when she had to change her because she was wet and during this time she did not make any eye contact. They added that it was the same when they offered her food; she would usually turn her head away abruptly and refuse to accept it. "She avoids eye contact with every one," they reported. When the facilitator prompted the teachers to describe how they felt about her behaviour they described it as having uncomfortable feelings of frustration, sadness and rejection.

At this point, a teacher remembered a previous episode when she noticed that Sahara's only wish seemed to be close to her brother, so the teachers tried to get close to her by trying to be humorous with both children. When the teacher tried to tickle her, and her brother started shouting in excitement "eat her, eat her" in a way that it was losing its playful manner. The teacher then realised that her brother was not very fond of having her close either, since he was not getting a break from having her "literally following him around".

The facilitator then encouraged the teachers to reflect on the feelings they reported on themselves in relation to the child's experience. Teachers initially considered her behaviour as a "cultural thing" but then they compared her with her brother, who did not have difficulties making eye contact with anyone as well as the behaviour of other people from her community

that also did not show this trait. They also noticed that her grandmother (who was her current caregiver whilst her parents are away) did not look overly affectionate either. They had observed the grandmother pushing her way when she looked for comfort. The facilitator then prompted the teachers to reflect on the feelings of rejection Sahara was experiencing, feelings that that may have been transferred to the teachers' experience. The teachers reflected further on their own feelings of inadequacy. They felt "useless" after trying all sort of strategies than had worked with "thousands of other kids" but not with Sahara. The facilitator empathised with the teachers' frustration of not been able to "reach her" emotionally, but highlighted the idea that her avoidance could be a way to cope with painful separation anxiety and feelings of rejection from her family. Teachers then connected this idea with the memory of when she came to the centre for the first time accompanied by her mum. They perceived her more responsive at the time, however, teachers added that watching the child and mother together, and mother being pregnant, gave them the perception that there were very little boundaries. Sahara was "fighting her mum and hitting her on the stomach when she tried to take her away."

Another teacher remember her during her first visit as a "smiling girl" so she thought she was going to be sweet and easy". Then her grandmother told one of the teachers that "she wasn't easy at all." "Not like her brother." "That is how she is seen by her family." Other teachers commented about how they could tell she did not have any boundaries at home and that she could see her mum just following her around picking up after her and waiting for her.

Another teacher recalled that her brother was also pleased to have her at the centre at the beginning, and was really looking after her, but his behaviour changed and now doesn't want her here at all". One of the teachers added: "I saw him pushing her sister really hard and she was upset but went back next to him."

Teachers then agreed that they could not keep putting the “role model” pressure on him because he had enough. They added that maybe it was something “that’s worn off with him,” because of the big expectation to have to be a caregiver all the time.

One of the teachers then realised that she started at the centre the week after her parents had gone. She recognised how hard it must have been for a young girl to deal with the sudden departure of her parents, to whom she was clearly over dependent, and that she would probably not have known that there was something wrong with the baby, just felt she was being left in a different place with different people. “Both children have lost their parents for no reason that they can comprehend and she is aggressive and strong, probably as strong as I am, so it is a huge battle.”

Another teacher then added that she has a little cousin in the centre too that doesn’t want to be close to her either. “I wonder if she is rubbing them all up in the wrong way.” The facilitator then prompted the group to think about Sahara provoking all the rejection around her.

The teachers responded saying that it had to be her neediness. “People that are so needed provoke the desire to back off, which is awful because I know that that’s the way they are trying to reach out and get that attention.”

“She is provoking lots of rejection at home,” they concurred.

The facilitator then interpreted the child’s behaviour in terms of her emotional experience and connected the events of losing the mother, not just because of her sudden absence, but because of the birth of the baby “who took her away” and all the powerful feelings of anger and guiltiness she found hard to make sense of.

Teachers responded empathically that she had lost trust in others and they wondered how they could help to restore that trust in her. One of the teachers stated that she has had more success in “getting close” when she does parallel painting with her. She also thought that it may work if, slowly, they can interest her in activities without inviting her directly and not interfering with her personal space.

Teachers agreed that Sahara would benefit from having some boundaries. It worked well with her brother to give him a couple of options... “He thrives on that because it is one of the few boundaries we put....” ...”He knows that we follow through.” One of the teachers then added, “To feel safe, I always thought, you need clear boundaries from a group of adults, so they know what to expect.” The facilitator then linked these ideas saying that the lack of boundaries can be a form of abandonment too.

The teachers then reflected on the experiences that the family had to endure in life coming from a country in war. “There must be some painful memories that we have to take into account.”

The session concluded by the facilitator summarising the acknowledged emotions in Sahara and the teachers. Especially the feelings of helplessness they have, that prompted them with the need for “rescuing” her, and instead they thought she needed to feel connected with the building and the equipment before she could start having a trustful relationship with them. Teachers agreed to monitor their own feelings as well as being aware of Sahara’s. They also agreed to go slowly, with patience, recognising that this family is going through major losses and even though they seem to have a good support network, they have not really acknowledged how the children may be feeling.

One of the teachers linked this statement by remembering that she felt like that when she grew up. She felt her family was collapsing and no one talked about that. She felt sympathetic with Sahara's experience.

Billy (Report A2)

Billy was a three-year-old boy in full time day care. He has been at the centre since he was 18 months old, but previously he was in another childcare facility from the age of three months. Teachers were concerned about Billy's increasing uncooperative and oppositional behaviour. He refused to do what he was being told and rarely took part in-group activities.

Teachers recalled a recent episode when he refused to wash his hands before lunch. They commented that "he is not giving an inch" even when there were three or four teachers there at different points of the day. "He just refused it." Teachers described Billy as a really "confrontational boy" that likes to do "his own thing" and he doesn't join in any group time or even lunch and when teachers tried to invite him over he would shout "NO!!! Running off. "He did not listen" teachers added.

The facilitator then prompted the inclusion of emotions by asking how they would describe his face, or if he shows anger. The teachers described him as "very shout-y and he does often have an angry face. He also "acts out and tries to hit". If other children make him angry, he shouts at them more and he hits them.

The facilitator then asked the group of teachers how they feel when they are trying to make him to do something and he does not cooperate. One of the teachers reported she feels "frustrated" that she tried to give it time and back off. Sometimes she says, "Well, I am going to wait until you do it" and then "after ten minutes of him refusing, and trying to get passed me, I just ended up saying "no."

Other teachers added that the same thing happened to three of them in the same day. One of the teachers said that she was just standing there "just kind of ignoring him." She noticed that

he wasn't upset; he was just standing there... "It went for ages, him standing there, me standing there, Just hanging out"

The teachers concurred that it was difficult for them to understand why he did not want to be part of the group. This fact made them feel sad because "it is a great group" so it is hard him being "anti-group" and they ask themselves if it is because he doesn't like authority, or because he doesn't like the group at all.

One teacher added that occasionally he would join the group. "Only when he chooses, if he is not in the mood it is very difficult to encourage him to do something"

Another teacher defined Billy as "really rowdy," and recalled one time when she was changing his nappy, he was in a bad mood so he started shouting so loud that every one in the centre could hear his screams. "It was like I was doing something horrible to him"

Teachers mentioned that there is always a "worry" about his nutrition because he has a lot of allergies. He can't have nuts, dairy and he does not eat fruit and vegetables either. Teachers also commented that sometimes he refused to eat things and he would be arguing that he can't have them.

Teachers also describe him as "being very good at showing his anger." If a teacher had told him to move away for instance, he would shout back "don't you say that to me".

The facilitator asked the teachers if they knew about his family. Teachers explained that he lives at home with mum and dad. Mum has a child from a previous relationship and dad has a child too. The mother seemed to have lots of anxiety due to his allergies. Most of the time that she is with the teachers she talks about this. The impression they have is that Billy "is in control of quite a lot of what happens at home."

The facilitator then prompted the teachers to think about how his mother feels that he is at risk all the time due to his allergies, she said that he becomes a “little dictator” to combat his mum’s anxiety. Teachers responded by saying, “he senses fear around him”

At this point of the process, the facilitator connected his sense of fear and his reluctance to eat and join activities with his attention seeking behaviour. Teachers agreed that it is how he can get some control of his emotions.

One of the teachers mentioned that she always has this “sense that his mother is constantly watching over her every time she is at the centre” She described her as a very hard working woman, very driven to succeed, so that is the reason why Billy has been in child care since he was a baby.

Another teacher recalled an incident when he accidentally ate a peanut biscuit at lunch. She remembered his reaction was quite mild for somebody with a serious allergy. After that the mother came to the centre to discuss the food policy, however on the day when we called her she simply advised us to give him a tablet ... “in her mind it was a big event. However, when it happened she did not come to see him. It was only after the end of the session that she became tense. ”

The facilitator suggested that Billy’s mother’s feelings of guilt for bringing the child full time into the centre, and her sense of inadequacy because of this, has been transferred to the teachers...They concluded that that is why they feel she is always thinking “we are not doing as good job as she does”.

The facilitator then suggested that this mother focuses so much on this aspect of the child’s life that it has become her whole focus. She is possibly afraid that something may happen

to him, he is also possibly sensing that constant fear. This can be connected to his reluctance to change routines.

Teachers agreed that washing hands has been a recently established routine for him at the centre. And in these moments it is when they feel like “Am I good enough?” The facilitator then said that the feelings of not being good enough could be compared with the way that the mother feels.

The teachers recalled one incident when the child was being changed, and he got a little splashed by water and he had a terrible fright. In connection with this narrative, the facilitator addressed Billy’s skin sensitivity and propensity to allergies. A teacher then remarked that every time he gets angry his skin gets redder and itchier too.

The facilitator addressed the fact that Billy’s powerful emotion of fear has been unattended as well as his hypersensitivity to changes and that he could benefit from the teachers addressing his emotions as well as his behaviour.

Teachers then proposed strategies with which they could recognise his emotions at the same time that they address his behaviour in a positive way. For instance by acknowledging the positive things he does, and not only focusing on the reluctant behaviour. “We can talk to him more positively, since he can hear it in the tone of your voice,” they added.

At the end of the session teachers mentioned that they hear his name all the time. “Children complained about him even when he was not around.” Other children picked on him also. ‘We have to give him a break’ “even when he doesn’t do things he’ll get the blame for it.”

The teachers also recognised that when they were waiting for him to do something, they are giving him the attention he is seeking so he has a captive audience. They agreed that by being in contact with their own feelings, they would be able to modify them and he may respond to this

positively. A teacher added that when she feels frustrated by him she felt like: "I am going to make you, any way." The facilitator ended the session by saying that it is good to be fully aware of this frustration so we do not reinforce him negatively.

Teachers left the session commenting that it was great to have the space to "get to the bottom of Billy's case", for a long time they did not know what else to do.

Samuel (Report A3)

Samuel was a four year old all in full time day care. The teacher described Samuel as "the child who seemed to take a dislike to me". She recalled that every time she was engaged with other children, reading or doing other activities, Samuel would come into that area saying rude things to her like "I hate you... I hate you". The teachers guessed he was a very troubled little boy with some emotional problems, but as teachers, they had not addressed his difficulties properly.

The teacher also remembered episodes when Samuel made her feel like "she didn't have control of the situation" especially when he kicked her really hard without any provocation. "It took a lot of strength for me not to feel anger towards a child," she added. "Other teachers thought at the time that I should "redirect" him but I felt I wasn't in control of the situation. I felt powerless."

The teacher also added that her own grandson also attended the same class but she felt she spent an equal amount of time with all the children. The facilitator asked the teacher if she could describe Samuel's behaviour. The teacher said that she had observed him interacting with other children and he was always "on the fringe of the activities." "He would get wild and start pushing children and somebody would always have to remove him or redirect him or remind him

of what he has to be doing.” The teachers also described him as “hyperactive and he certainly did not have a lot of emotional control”. The teacher added; “he let all his feelings just hang out and he acted on them, impulsively. I had a real concern about him and I want to get it right with him”

The facilitator prompted the teacher to think about what he might be feeling, for example could the fact that she had her little grandson in the same centre be a cause of some of his behaviour, perhaps displaying jealousy. The teacher said she saw that as a possible connection, that probably he did not have the same amount of connection with his own family. “He knew I was Pauli’s grandmother”

The facilitator then connected the attacks as a possible reaction to jealousy or envy of her relationship with her grandson and other children. Then the facilitator asked the teacher how it made her feel. The teacher responded by saying that ‘The interesting thing is that you feel it personally even when you know that child doesn’t mean it personally”

Another teacher said that Samuel often shows the same pattern. “When you are working with a group of children, he will come and watch for a few minutes and after a few moments he will start with some negative thing, so you have to remove him. The facilitator emphasized that this pattern seemed to contain a powerful feeling of envy. Therefore, he reacts to it in a negative way. He destroys his and other’s attempts at creativity.

Another teacher asked; “when he breaks the creativity or the relationship breaks down, is it because he is not expecting it to last, so he will cause it to break down before it happens for him?” The facilitator agreed with the teacher and added that envy is felt when you feel you lack something, or the feeling of not been nourished.

Another teacher said: “if I can’t have it, neither can anyone else,” A state of emotional poverty, the facilitator added.

The teacher then realised that perhaps the day he went to hit her, he was expecting that she would deal with his feelings differently. “I could not get that little boy vision out of my head” she added.

The teachers argued that they know very little about the child, as teachers they felt they had a lot of background into this little boy. However, in reality they did not. One of the teachers noticed that Samuel’s mum dealt with him with detachment “I don’t see any eye contact, just go and get your bag and we’ll go. Another teacher then added, “negative attention is better than nothing.”

The teachers reflected that perhaps his mum saw Samuel as a hindrance, a big problem in life, rather than a joy. They agreed that they got to do something to support Samuel.

One of the teachers suggested that they could start by putting words to his anger. To give him language, to help to describe his feelings and let him know that you understand his anger. “That is different from rejection,” another teacher suggested.

At the end of the session, the facilitator suggested that the teacher should talk a bit more with his mother, so they can find out what it is like for him at home. That cooperation with his family is vital for change.

The teacher that brought Samuel’s case said, “That boy probably would pick up a lot if we give him the opportunity to open up, to communicate. It would be such a good start I think.”

Appendix S: Reflective Practice Case Reports

To further illustrate the qualitative information of this research, a series of case reports were written. They were produced while participant teachers were using reflective practice as a mean of unveiling their own emotional schemas, and reflecting on the individual children they were concern for. Some aspects of the case materials have been disguised so that neither the subjects nor the centres can be identified. Specific characteristics and details of participants and situations have been omitted or altered to maintain their privacy, especially when they were not essential to the phenomenon described.

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Another teacher remember her during her first visit as a "smiling girl" so she thought she was going to be sweet and easy". Then her grandmother told one of the teachers that "she wasn't easy at all." "Not like her brother." "That is how she is seen by her family." Other teachers commented about how they could tell she did not have any boundaries at home and that she could see her mum just following her around picking up after her and waiting for her.

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“She is provoking lots of rejection at home,” they concurred.

The facilitator then interpreted the child’s behaviour in terms of her emotional experience and connected the events of losing the mother, not just because of her sudden absence, but because of the birth of the baby “who took her away” and all the powerful feelings of anger and guiltiness she found hard to make sense of.

Teachers responded empathically that she had lost trust in others and they wondered how they could help to restore that trust in her. One of the teachers stated that she has had more success in “getting close” when she does parallel painting with her. She also thought that it may work if, slowly, they can interest her in activities without inviting her directly and not interfering with her personal space.

Teachers agreed that Sahara would benefit from having some boundaries. It worked well with her brother to give him a couple of options... “He thrives on that because it is one of the few boundaries we put....” ...”He knows that we follow through.” One of the teachers then added, “To feel safe, I always thought, you need clear boundaries from a group of adults, so they know what to expect.” The facilitator then linked these ideas saying that the lack of boundaries can be a form of abandonment too.

The teachers then reflected on the experiences that the family had to endure in life coming from a country in war. “There must be some painful memories that we have to take into account.”

The session concluded by the facilitator summarising the acknowledged emotions in Sahara and the teachers. Especially the feelings of helplessness they have, that prompted them with the need for “rescuing” her, and instead they thought she needed to feel connected with the building and the equipment before she could start having a trustful relationship with them. Teachers agreed to monitor their own feelings as well as being aware of Sahara’s. They also agreed to go slowly, with patience, recognising that this family is going through major losses and even though they seem to have a good support network, they have not really acknowledged how the children may be feeling.

One of the teachers linked this statement by remembering that she felt like that when she grew up. She felt her family was collapsing and no one talked about that. She felt sympathetic with Sahara's experience.

Billy (Report A2)

Billy was a three-year-old boy in full time day care. He has been at the centre since he was 18 months old, but previously he was in another childcare facility from the age of three months. Teachers were concerned about Billy's increasing uncooperative and oppositional behaviour. He refused to do what he was being told and rarely took part in-group activities.

Teachers recalled a recent episode when he refused to wash his hands before lunch. They commented that "he is not giving an inch" even when there were three or four teachers there at different points of the day. "He just refused it." Teachers described Billy as a really "confrontational boy" that likes to do "his own thing" and he doesn't join in any group time or even lunch and when teachers tried to invite him over he would shout "NO!!! Running off. "He did not listen" teachers added.

The facilitator then prompted the inclusion of emotions by asking how they would describe his face, or if he shows anger. The teachers described him as "very shout-y and he does often have an angry face. He also "acts out and tries to hit". If other children make him angry, he shouts at them more and he hits them.

The facilitator then asked the group of teachers how they feel when they are trying to make him to do something and he does not cooperate. One of the teachers reported she feels "frustrated" that she tried to give it time and back off. Sometimes she says, "Well, I am going to wait until you do it" and then "after ten minutes of him refusing, and trying to get passed me, I just ended up saying "no."

Other teachers added that the same thing happened to three of them in the same day. One of the teachers said that she was just standing there "just kind of ignoring him." She noticed that

he wasn't upset; he was just standing there... "It went for ages, him standing there, me standing there, Just hanging out"

The teachers concurred that it was difficult for them to understand why he did not want to be part of the group. This fact made them feel sad because "it is a great group" so it is hard him being "anti-group" and they ask themselves if it is because he doesn't like authority, or because he doesn't like the group at all.

One teacher added that occasionally he would join the group. "Only when he chooses, if he is not in the mood it is very difficult to encourage him to do something"

Another teacher defined Billy as "really rowdy," and recalled one time when she was changing his nappy, he was in a bad mood so he started shouting so loud that every one in the centre could hear his screams. "It was like I was doing something horrible to him"

Teachers mentioned that there is always a "worry" about his nutrition because he has a lot of allergies. He can't have nuts, dairy and he does not eat fruit and vegetables either. Teachers also commented that sometimes he refused to eat things and he would be arguing that he can't have them.

Teachers also describe him as "being very good at showing his anger." If a teacher had told him to move away for instance, he would shout back "don't you say that to me".

The facilitator asked the teachers if they knew about his family. Teachers explained that he lives at home with mum and dad. Mum has a child from a previous relationship and dad also has a child too. The mother seemed to have lots of anxiety due to his allergies. Most of the time that she is with the teachers she talks about this. The impression they have is that Billy "is in control of quite a lot of what happens at home."

The facilitator then prompted the teachers to think about how his mother feels that he is at risk all the time due to his allergies, she said that he becomes a “little dictator” to combat his mum’s anxiety. Teachers responded by saying, “he senses fear around him”

At this point of the process, the facilitator connected his sense of fear and his reluctance to eat and join activities with his attention seeking behaviour. Teachers agreed that it is how he can get some control of his emotions.

One of the teachers mentioned that she always has this “sense that his mother is constantly watching over her every time she is at the centre” She described her as a very hard working woman, very driven to succeed, so that is the reason why Billy has been in child care since he was a baby.

Another teacher recalled an incident when he accidentally ate a peanut biscuit at lunch. She remembered his reaction was quite mild for somebody with a serious allergy. After that the mother came to the centre to discuss the food policy, however on the day when we called her she simply advised us to give him a tablet ... “in her mind it was a big event. However, when it happened she did not come to see him. It was only after the end of the session that she became tense. ”

The facilitator suggested that Billy’s mother’s feelings of guilt for bringing the child full time into the centre, and her sense of inadequacy because of this, has been transferred to the teachers...They concluded that that is why they feel she is always thinking “we are not doing as good job as she does”.

The facilitator then suggested that this mother focuses so much on this aspect of the child’s life that it has become her whole focus. She is possibly afraid that something may happen

to him, he is also possibly sensing that constant fear. This can be connected to his reluctance to change routines.

Teachers agreed that washing hands has been a recently established routine for him at the centre. And in these moments it is when they feel like “Am I good enough?” The facilitator then said that the feelings of not being good enough could be compared with the way that the mother feels.

The teachers recalled one incident when the child was being changed, and he got a little splashed by water and he had a terrible fright. In connection with this narrative, the facilitator addressed Billy’s skin sensitivity and propensity to allergies. A teacher then remarked that every time he gets angry his skin gets redder and itchier too.

The facilitator addressed the fact that Billy’s powerful emotion of fear has been unattended as well as his hypersensitivity to changes and that he could benefit from the teachers addressing his emotions as well as his behaviour.

Teachers then proposed strategies with which they could recognise his emotions at the same time that they address his behaviour in a positive way. For instance by acknowledging the positive things he does, and not only focusing on the reluctant behaviour. “We can talk to him more positively, since he can hear it in the tone of your voice,” they added.

At the end of the session teachers mentioned that they hear his name all the time. “Children complained about him even when he was not around.” Other children picked on him also. ‘We have to give him a break’ “even when he doesn’t do things he’ll get the blame for it.”

The teachers also recognised that when they were waiting for him to do something, they are giving him the attention he is seeking so he has got a captive audience. They agreed that by being in contact with their own feelings, they would be able to modify them and he may respond

to this positively. A teacher added that when she feels frustrated by him she felt like: “I am going to make you, any way.” The facilitator ended the session by saying that it is good to be fully aware of this frustration so we do not reinforce him negatively.

Teachers left the session commenting that it was great to have the space to get to the bottom of Billy’s case, for a long time they did not know what else to do.

Samuel (Report A3)

Samuel was a four year old all in full time day care. The teacher described Samuel as “the child who seemed to take a dislike to me”. She recalled that every time she was engaged with other children, reading or doing other activities, Samuel would come into that area saying rude things to her like “I hate you... I hate you”. The teachers guessed he was a very troubled little boy with some emotional problems, but as teachers, they had not addressed his difficulties properly.

The teacher also remembered episodes when Samuel made her feel like “she didn’t have control of the situation” especially when he kicked her really hard without any provocation. “It took a lot of strength for me not to feel anger towards a child,” she added. “Other teachers thought at the time that I should “redirect” him but I felt I wasn’t in control of the situation. I felt powerless.”

The teacher also added that her own grandson also attended the same class but she felt she spent an equal amount of time with all the children. The facilitator asked the teacher if she could describe Samuel’s behaviour. The teacher said that she had observed him interacting with other children and he was always “on the fringe of the activities.” “He would get wild and start pushing children and somebody would always have to remove him or redirect him or remind him

of what he has to be doing.” The teachers also described him as “hyperactive and he certainly did not have a lot of emotional control”. The teacher added; “he let all his feelings just hang out and he acted on them, impulsively. I had a real concern about him and I want to get it right with him”

The facilitator prompted the teacher to think about what he might be feeling, for example could the fact that she had her little grandson in the same centre be a cause of some of his behaviour, perhaps displaying jealousy. The teacher said she saw that as a possible connection, that probably he did not have the same amount of connection with his own family. “He knew I was Pauli’s grandmother”

The facilitator then connected the attacks as a possible reaction to jealousy or envy of her relationship with her grandson and other children. Then the facilitator asked the teacher how it made her feel. The teacher responded by saying that ‘The interesting thing is that you feel it personally even when you know that child doesn’t mean it personally”

Another teacher said that Samuel often shows the same pattern. “When you are working with a group of children, he will come and watch for a few minutes and after a few moments he will start with some negative thing, so you have to remove him. The facilitator emphasized that this pattern seemed to contain a powerful feeling of envy. Therefore, he reacts to it in a negative way. He destroys his and other’s attempts at creativity.

Another teacher asked; “when he breaks the creativity or the relationship breaks down, is it because he is not expecting it to last, so he will cause it to break down before it happens for him?” The facilitator agreed with the teacher and added that envy is felt when you feel you lack something, or the feeling of not been nourished.

Another teacher said: “if I can’t have it, neither can anyone else,” A state of emotional poverty, the facilitator added.

The teacher then realised that perhaps the day he went to hit her, he was expecting that she would deal with his feelings differently. “I could not get that little boy vision out of my head” she added.

The teachers argued that they know very little about the child, as teachers they felt they had a lot of background into this little boy. However, in reality they did not. One of the teachers noticed that Samuel’s mum dealt with him with detachment “I don’t see any eye contact, just go and get your bag and we’ll go. Another teacher then added, “Negative attention is better than nothing.”

The teachers reflected that perhaps his mum saw Samuel as a hindrance, a big problem in life, rather than a joy. They agreed that they have to do something to support Samuel.

One of the teachers suggested that they could start by putting words to his anger. To give him language, to help to describe his feelings and let him know that you understand his anger. “That is different from rejection,” another teacher suggested.

At the end of the session, the facilitator suggested that the teacher should talk a bit more with his mother, so they can find out what it is like for him at home. That cooperation with his family is vital for change.

The teacher that brought Samuel’s case said, “That boy probably would pick up a lot if we give him the opportunity to open up, to communicate. It would be such a good start I think.”