



Do Early Childhood Educators Have a Positive or Negative Perception on the Implementation of a Social-Emotional Curriculum?

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Abstract

This mixed-methods (i.e., quantitative and qualitative) study is aimed at exploring early childhood educators' perceptions and experiences with the social-emotional curriculum Rebound Recovery, focusing on preschool-aged children. Early childhood is a critical period for development that can help to build foundational skills that influence social and academic development. Early education teachers who implemented the social-emotional curriculum will complete several survey instruments related to managing challenging behavior as well as their self-efficacy and other perceptions of working with preschool age children. They will then be placed in groups of four to participate in a focus group interview. Data from the survey instruments and focus groups will be analyzed.



*Teacher implementing the rebound recovery curriculum

Introduction

- Early childhood is considered the most critical point of development for children because it creates a foundation for behavior and learning.
- Suspension of pre-school children are at an all-time high. About 300,000 preschoolers are expelled each year. (O'Grady 2021). The act of suspension is seen as a negative act and does not help the child correct the behavior.
- Children with special needs have a higher rate of suspension than most kids. Teachers tend to resort to suspension when the child disrupts the learning of others (Shire 2021).
- Children who are likely to be suspended can benefit greatly from quality preschool education that helps develop social-emotional learning (Egeran 2011).
- Providing teachers with the proper training and resources can reduce the rate of suspension and can help students develop the appropriate skills to manage behavior (Loomis 2022).
- The social-emotional curriculum helps students develop the skills necessary to understand and manage their emotions.
- The lessons primarily focus on the connection of emotions and actions and how to define each emotion.

Methods

Participants:

- 10-12 early childhood educators across the state of Florida .

Procedure:

- Mixed methods design where both quantitative and qualitative data will be analyzed.
- Early childhood educators will participate in a focus group and asked to respond to several questionnaires

Measures:

- Self- Efficacy will be measured using the Teacher's Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES; Tschannen-Moran, 2001). The teacher-student relationship consists of statements that the educator will need to reflect on from a scale of 1-5. There are also subscales that determine if there is conflict or closeness. A higher score indicates closeness or conflict.
- Stress is going to be measured using The Stress Inventory (Fimian & Fastenau, 1990). Where they will be asked about stressors and asked to rank from scale of 1-5.
- Teacher Priorities and Beliefs will use The Teacher Belief Q-Sort (TBQ) that assesses teacher priorities and beliefs about behavior management, teaching practices and children.

Research Questions:

What are the experiences, perceptions, and opinions of early childhood educators after implementing the Rebound and Recovery curriculum with preschool age children? What is the relationship between teacher (1) self-efficacy, (2) perceived relationships with students in their classrooms, (3) stress, and (4) priorities and beliefs about behavior, teaching practices and children, and their continued use of Rebound and Recovery?

Results

- Data collection is ongoing.
- It is anticipated the results of the study will help us better understand the features of a social-emotional curriculum that are most beneficial to early childhood educators, as well as areas of improvement. We also want to better understand the relationships between self-efficacy, perceived relationships with students, stress, and beliefs about behavior.
- Results from this study will help us continue to refine Rebound & Recovery to improve implementation by early childhood educators as well as possibly influence child level outcomes related to self-management and self-regulation
- These expected results within teachers were created along the basis of proposed research suggesting that: teachers report resorting to expulsion because of behaviors that disrupt the learning (e.g., cursing, tantrums), safety concerns for the child and others (e.g., peers, teachers), and/or teacher stress (Chow et al., 2021; Gilliam & Reyes, 2018) One recommendation to reduce these rates is to provide professional development to practitioners in these settings that include training and coaching supports (Chow et al., 2021; Loomis et al., 2022).

Semi-structured Interview Questions

1. Overall, how did you feel about the Rebound and Recovery curriculum?

Probes:

a) What were negative and positive aspects to the curriculum?

2. What are the effects of the program changes?

3. How has your approach to ECE changed because of the new curriculum?

4. Has your understanding of the role of the ECE teacher changed?

5. How has the new program affected your work with your colleagues?

6. How has the new program affected the experiences of the children?

7. Do you depart from the curriculum resources you are given, and if so, how and why? If not, why not?

8. If you depart from the curriculum resources you are given, what effect do you think the departures have on student learning? What evidence or concrete examples do you have to support your responses?

- This is an example of the questions that were asked to the participants

Conclusion

- A better understanding of the Rebound & Recovery curriculum implemented by early childhood educators will help allow for continued improvement of the curriculum to best meet the needs of all children
- A positive classroom environment may allow educators to be less stressed and as well as increase their self-efficacy around teaching preschool students in general and addressing challenging behaviors
- Due to these benefits, the educators will approve of the implementation of this Rebound Recovery Curriculum

References



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