

Training Needs Assessment among Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) Service Providers: A Basis for Professional Educational Program

Remelie R. Robles, Joel B. Faustino

College of Education, Bulacan State University

DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2025.908000286>

Received: 05 August 2025; Accepted: 11 August 2025; Published: 08 September 2025

ABSTRACT

Quality Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) lays the groundwork for lifelong learning, and ECCD providers usually face professional training and capacity-building issues. This research evaluated the competencies and determined the professional development needs of ECCD providers in Malolos, Bulacan, Philippines, and to inform the development of specific training programs. A convergent parallel mixed-methods design was implemented involving 53 female daycare workers and teachers. Quantitative data on planning, teaching, classroom management, and assessment were collected using a validated self-assessment questionnaire. Qualitative information was gathered through online Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) on providers' experiences, challenges, and professional development interests. Findings revealed moderate self-perceived competence in general, with relative strengths in classroom management and learner interaction, probably developed through experiential learning. However, there were wide gaps in formal assessment methods, lesson planning, and curriculum modification for young learners. Further, the study revealed the need for ECCD service providers to exhibit experiential strengths and need organized, competency-based professional development to meet national ECCD standards. Recommendations emphasize the need for training programs focusing on applied learning, collaboration, and targeted skill-building, specifically in assessment and inclusive curriculum design, to enhance service quality and child development outcomes.

Keywords: Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD), Service Providers, Needs Assessment, Young Children, Philippines

INTRODUCTION

Proper and high-quality education is essential for all of us. It imparts knowledge and nurtures an individual's capacity to its fullest potential. In one of his speeches, Mandela claimed, "Education is the most powerful weapon you can use to change the world" (Ellis, 2019). It can mean different things to different people. Formal training in the classroom can give knowledge and change an individual into something better. Others might see it as an avenue to meet the demands of the workforce, like chances for better career opportunities.

No matter how people define it, education is vital for an individual's development, especially in establishing the foundation of children's development (Alvarado, 2021). The first five years of life are critical for child development (UNICEF, 2023). It is the period when the young mind's absorptive capacity is at its sharpest (DepEd Order No. 47, s.2016). The role of significant others is vital to providing quality and appropriate education for young children.

The significant others during this time can help young children progress in all domains of development. As one of the significant others, teachers are responsible for creating a safe and secure environment, fostering independence, and nurturing children's confidence to explore and learn (Rojas & Abenavoli, 2021). However, volunteer teachers are often assigned to work with children in many Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) service providers, such as daycare centers. Unfortunately, according to The World Bank (2023), many volunteers lack formal education in early childhood care. They had been to college and finished a degree, but were not aligned with education. Consequently, they encounter challenges in providing meaningful learning

experiences for young learners. To address this, an educator needs theoretical knowledge and practical skills to teach more effectively. Continuous professional development is essential for equipping teachers with the necessary competencies (Gratz, 2024).

Skills for Effective Teaching

Teachers are uniquely positioned to inspire, guide, and empower young minds, especially in building up their character, and they significantly affect or influence children. Some qualities are innate, but many can be acquired through practice. This quality is the same in developing skills necessary for effective teaching. Effective teaching involves different skills performed simultaneously, which can be acquired through formal training (Germuth, 2018). In this study, four teaching skills have been organized: planning skills, teaching skills, classroom management skills, and assessment skills.

Planning is an essential skill that is beneficial for whatever career one chooses. In teaching, it is vital since planning provides organized activities to reach the goals of both the teacher and the children (Aada, 2020). Ewing et al. (2010) stated that underpinning every successful teacher is well-structured planning. Teachers' most common planning is planning their daily lessons, focusing on the goals, and selecting the best materials and activities to achieve the daily goals. They exert effort to anticipate challenges and what possible alternative activities can be done to cater to all the learning needs.

Kyriacou (2019), a professor who had spent more than 30 years teaching about and researching what constitutes 'effective' teaching, expressed that over the years, he has become more convinced that the key to being a successful teacher, in terms of the quality of learning, is to make sure one devotes enough time to planning. Unfortunately, he still comes across many teachers who do not devote enough time to planning and have not fully realized the massive benefits of good planning.

Every effective teacher requires the practical teaching skills necessary to have a good transfer of learning (Hajian, 2019). It includes effective speaking and strong presentation skills to provide experiences and activities that match the abilities of each student. According to van Dijk et al. (2020), teaching is the systematic presentation of content necessary to master a general knowledge area. The teachers manage, deliver, and evaluate instruction to the group of children, no matter their age and abilities. The teachers should be well-prepared for their lesson presentations, ensuring they carry all the visual materials to the class (Qasserras, 2024).

Teaching skills are the knowledge, abilities, and qualities that help teachers guide students in learning. Teaching skills in terms of complex or technical skills are measurable and relate directly to the subject area you teach, which teachers gain through formal education, training, and experience in the field (Mansur, 2020). Other important abilities in this category include technology skills. Technology nowadays can make teaching easier and more effective.

Another skill that teachers need to acquire is good classroom management skills to ensure children's good behavior (Şen, 2022). Classroom management, as defined by The Glossary of Education Reform (2014), refers to the various skills and techniques every teacher uses to maximize learning by making the students manage tasks by being organized, orderly, focused, attentive, on task, and academically productive during a class. It usually starts by establishing ground rules to give importance to the love of order in the classroom. It is not an easy task; therefore, anyone with direct contact with them exercises patience, kindness, and passion. Disciplining them could be easy if the teachers respond to the children, demonstrate sensitivity, and build good relationships. Moreover, setting a supportive and safe environment could contribute to their behavior in the classroom (Monteiro et al., 2021).

Regarding assessment skills, Chandler-Grevatt et al. (2021) said that teachers with good assessment literacy understand the appropriate uses of different assessment types and their applications, benefits, and limitations. Understanding the critical purpose of assessment is vital since teachers need to establish and understand the students' current level in their learning at the time of assessment. This usually means inferring what they know, understand, and do from observations of their performances and work. Moreover, Ferlazzo (2013) suggested that assessment should be integrated throughout the instructional process, using the data collected to establish initial

understanding, measure children's progress, provide reliable feedback to refine instruction, and prepare students for future performances. Indeed, assessment is an important skill that teachers should give importance to.

In the Philippines, enrolling young children in a daycare center is the first step toward education. The Republic Act 6972, known as the "Barangay-Level Total Development and Protection of Children Act," states that Filipino children deserve the best care and attention at the community level. With this, the government established a daycare center in every barangay with a total development and protection of children program. Section 3.e of the Republic Act 8980, also known as the Early Childhood Care and Development Act, stated one of the National ECCD System objectives: to enhance the capabilities and performance of service providers to comply with specific quality standards.

Republic Act 10410 (Early Years Act) mandates the Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) Council to support ECCD Service Providers nationwide continuously. Currently, they give training and seminars for the service providers to become fit for handling young children. They create programs to make the workers succeed in their volunteer work, besides their monthly meetings, and talk and share their personal classroom experiences. To maximize the capabilities of the volunteers and qualify them with specific quality standards, a professional educational program specially designed for them should be created. The HRD Program would like to establish a systematic professionalization of ECCD service providers through enrollment in site-based or distance academic programs, pre-service or in-service training, and continuing education programs (Sec 5.c). In line with this, the researcher would like to identify the needs of the ECCD service providers within nearby municipalities in Bulacan and design and create an educational program specially designed for them. As early childhood professionals, helping them achieve their personal goals and the ECCD Council's national goals can significantly contribute to education.

Statement of the Problem

The researchers aim to create a professional educational program suitable for ECCD service providers by identifying their training needs to enhance the quality of ECCD services.

Specifically, the researcher sought to answer the following questions:

1. How may the ECCD service providers be described and analyzed in terms of:
 - a. planning skills;
 - b. teaching skills;
 - c. classroom management skills; and
 - d. assessment skills?
2. What specific skills require attention that need to be addressed?
3. What educational program may be designed to address the identified specific skills?

METHODOLOGY

This research was intended to create a professional program and training strategy for Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) providers. A convergent parallel mixed-methods study design was utilized. This entails the simultaneous data collection and analysis of quantitative and qualitative data, enabling a proper understanding of the research issue. Following Creswell and Plano-Clark (2011), qualitative and quantitative parts were given the same weight, independently analyzed, and then compiled at the interpretation phase to produce strong results. The quantitative section entailed conducting a well-established, ordered questionnaire among study subjects. So that all of the participants were provided with this for clarity and understanding, the tool was rendered into the Filipino language. The validated survey consisted of three components: (1) Participant Consent, attesting to voluntary participation; (2) Demographic Profile, collecting data on gender, age,

educational attainment, duration of service, and reasons for working in ECCD centers; and (3) Skills Assessment, using Likert-type scales to assess participants' self-rated abilities in major competency areas such as planning skills, teaching skills, classroom management skills, and assessment skills. This quantitative data gave an overview of the wide parameters of the characteristics and competencies self-evaluated by participants.

On the other hand, qualitative research was conducted via online focus group discussions (FGDs). Participation in semi-structured discussions of greater depth, seeking participants' experiences, challenges, and views, was sought from them. This research component was used to give richness to contextual meaning and make it possible to triangulate the quantitative evidence. The FGDs were tape-recorded with the participants' consent, transcribed verbatim, and then analyzed thematically to establish emergent patterns and themes in the participants' answers. Data analysis went in two stages that aligned with the convergent design. Quantitative data were first descriptively analyzed using proper statistical software. Qualitative data were analyzed through thematic analysis to establish main themes and patterns. Second, quantitative and qualitative analysis results were systematically incorporated, comparing and contrasting findings to produce a complete picture of the ECCD service providers' competencies and professional development needs.

PARTICIPANTS

Fifty-three ECCD service providers from the City of Malolos, Bulacan, Philippines, participated in the study. All participants were female, aged 20-60, as shown in Table 1. According to the profile, the participants have college degrees in various fields besides education, while some have completed at least two years of college courses (Table 2). Further, Table 3 shows the years of service of the ECCED service providers, ranging from one year to 19 years or more.

Table 1: Age Range of Participants

Age Range	Percentage
20 – 29 years old	2%
30 – 39 years old	11%
40 – 49 years old	55%
50 – 59 years old	23%
60+ years old	9%

Note: n=53

Table 2: Participants' Educational Background

Age Range	Percentage
College Degree	19%
At least 2 years in college	81%

Note: n=53

Table 3: Length of Service as ECCD Provider

Age Range	Percentage
1 – 3 years	9.43%

4 – 6 years	7.55%
7 – 9 years	11.32%
10 – 12 years	13.21%
13 – 15 years	11.32%
16 – 18 years	15.09%
19 years and more	32.08%

Note: n=53

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Descriptions of the ECCD service providers' various skills

The dynamic society brings both excitement and challenges to teachers. The nature of teaching is constantly changing (American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education (AACTE) 2010). Hence, there is a need to identify and conduct an inventory of the various skills teachers need. The result of this inventory process can be a guide in determining the training needs, ensuring educators can adapt to the challenges of current society, and addressing the diverse needs of the learners.

In connection, the researchers collected data on the essential skills required for delivering quality early childhood education. These skills focused on 1) planning, 2) teaching, 3) classroom management, and 4) assessment. These skills are the basis for teachers to provide appropriate and effective education successfully.

Planning Skills

Effective teaching requires good planning skills. Before entering the classroom, teachers must have a clear destination they want their learners to reach and various ideas on how they will get there. Further, good planning reminds teachers of their intended actions (Harmer 2007). Table 4 presents the results of ECCD service providers' planning skills. The high mean scores of 4.13 for items No. 4 and No. 8 in the ECCD service providers' planning skills reflect key competencies in early childhood education: "I can gather enough resources to support the teaching process" and "I can design lessons based on pupils' learning needs and interests." It shows that they can demonstrate resourcefulness in procuring and utilizing a variety of materials to enrich the learning environment. Moreover, it also shows that they somehow personalize education to meet pupils' diverse needs and interests.

Table 4: Results of ECCD service providers' planning skills

Planning Skills	Mean
1. I can develop clear, logical, sequential, and integrated plans.	3.81
2. I can plan instruction effectively for content mastery, pacing, and transitions.	3.79
3. I can decide on the selection of instructional materials to use.	4.04
4. I can gather enough resources to support the teaching process.	4.13
5. I can create a list of behavioral objectives that are aligned with curriculum standards.	3.98
6. I can align and connect lesson objectives to curriculum standards.	3.86

7. I can demonstrate a high level of subject matter expertise.	3.93
8. I can design lessons based on pupils' learning needs and interests.	4.13

Note: n=53

The lowest mean score for planning skills is 3.79, which was noted in item No. 2, "I can plan instruction effectively for content mastery, pacing, and transitions." This finding implies that there is a need for further professional development in lesson planning and execution, emphasizing strategies for transitions and pacing that align with students' cognitive levels and attention spans. This can lead to enhanced instructional planning skills and pupils' learning experiences.

Teaching Skills

After thoroughly planning experiences, teachers now implement the strategies in the classroom. Table 5 presents the results of ECCD providers' teaching skills. Based on the results, it is described that ECCD providers acquire the highest mean score of 4.21 in Item No. 8, "I can make learning fun for pupils." It suggests that ECCD providers feel confident and effective in creating engaging and enjoyable learning experiences for children. On the other hand, the ECCD service providers have the lowest mean of 3.79 in item No. 1, "I can communicate ideas fluently, both verbally and written." This indicates that ECCD service providers may perceive themselves as less proficient in communication skills than in other work areas. This could point to potential areas for improvement, such as professional development or training focused on enhancing verbal and written communication abilities. Fenech and Ribarovski (2020) emphasized that effective communication is vital in early childhood education for explicit instruction, building relationships with children and parents, and collaborating with colleagues.

Table 5: Results of the ECCD service providers' teaching skills

Teaching Skills	MEAN
1. I can communicate ideas fluently, both verbally and written.	3.79
2. I can integrate previous knowledge and experience to the new knowledge.	3.96
3. I can align the children's learning activities with the set objectives.	3.94
4. I can prepare well and effectively implement lesson plans.	4.08
5. I can keep children actively engaged by providing concrete materials.	4.13
6. I can try out new learning tools and apps that facilitate learning.	3.81
7. I can try innovative approaches and ideas in teaching using technology.	3.94
8. I can make learning fun for pupils.	4.21
I can maintain the attention of students until you have given clear instructions for the next activity.	4.15
10. I can demonstrate a broad knowledge of strategies in teaching.	4.13

Note: n=53

Classroom Management Skills

Effective classroom management makes teaching and learning successful. Table 6 shows the classroom

management skills of the ECCD service providers. The high mean score of 4.21 in Item No. 6, “I am generous with appreciative praise and reward for achievement and positive behavior,” suggests that ECCD providers effectively use positive reinforcement as a classroom management strategy. Moreover, it reflects that service providers understand the importance of acknowledging children’s efforts and successes, which is key to fostering a nurturing and motivating classroom atmosphere. It is supported by the study of Bayat (2011), which emphasized the effectiveness of using praise and positive reinforcements to reduce inappropriate behaviors, increase appropriate behaviors, and enhance specific cognitive and motor abilities related to academic or functional tasks.

The second-highest mean score of 4.15 for the item “I can arrange the classroom for maximum performance” indicates that ECCD providers feel confident in organizing and setting up the classroom to enhance learning and engagement. This suggests that providers are mindful of the physical environment’s impact on children’s ability to focus and participate in activities.

Table 6: Result of ECCD service providers’ classroom management skills

Classroom Management Skills	MEAN
1. I can set up an appropriate physical classroom layout free from disruptions.	3.91
2. I can manage the activity flow (preventing misbehavior, managing lesson movement, and maintaining group focus.	3.98
3. I can provide an atmosphere of comfort, safety, and order.	4.13
4. I can provide a flexible seating arrangement that promotes an interactive classroom.	4.06
5. I can demonstrate a broad knowledge of strategies in teaching.	4.04
6. I am generous with appreciative praise and reward for achievement and positive behavior.	4.21
7. I can set clear and simple rules that are stated positively.	4.11
8. I can establish classroom procedures and routines and consistently reinforce them.	4.04
9. I can arrange the classroom for maximum performance.	4.15

Note: n=53

On the other hand, Item No. 1, “I can set up an appropriate physical classroom layout free from disruptions,” gets the lowest mean of 3.91, and Item No. 2, “I can manage the activity flow, preventing misbehavior, managing lesson movement, maintaining group focus,” with the second lowest mean of 3.98. It suggests that ECCD providers may find these aspects of classroom management more challenging. It indicates a potential need for additional strategies or training to create an optimal physical layout and manage classroom activity dynamics to minimize disruptions and maintain focus. As was quoted by Rimm & Sandilos (2019), a well-organized physical environment, a consistent daily schedule, and communicated rules all contribute to a focused and orderly learning atmosphere, minimizing distractions and promoting skill development. Indeed, teachers with practical classroom management skills can implement lessons properly and, at the same time, manage learners’ behaviors.

Assessment Skills

Determining the progress of the learner is a very important responsibility for teachers. Teachers can identify learners’ strengths and areas requiring attention through effective assessment. Teachers must possess assessment skills that allow them to evaluate progress authentically and without bias. Table 7 presents the results of the ECCD providers’ assessment skills.

Table 7: Results of the ECCD service providers' assessment skills

Assessment Skills	Mean
1. I can apply appropriate assessment strategies at the end of each lesson.	3.91
2. I have the ability to determine pupils' strengths, needs, and interests.	4.06
3. I can implement a range of assessment tools.	4.06
4. I can report comprehensively to parents/guardians about the pupil's progress.	3.96
5. I can create an authentic assessment.	3.91
6. I can provide suitable seatwork appropriate for the pupil's cognitive level.	4.17
7. I can determine if the lesson was successful and goals were accomplished.	4.09

Note: n=53

Based on rating scale results, the assessment skills of the ECCD service providers may be described as high in Item No. 6, "I can provide suitable seatwork appropriate for the pupils' cognitive level, which has the highest mean score of 4.17. It was followed by Item No. 7, "I can determine if the lesson was successful and goals were accomplished," which has a mean score of 4.09. It indicates that they feel capable of designing activities that match the children's cognitive abilities and effectively evaluating the outcomes of their lessons. This suggests that providers are adept at creating engaging, developmentally appropriate challenges and are reflective practitioners who assess the impact of their teaching on children's learning.

On the other hand, it is essential to note that service providers have the lowest mean score of 3.91 in item 1, "I can apply appropriate assessment strategies at the end of each lesson." And No. 5, "I can create an authentic assessment." It reveals that ECCD service providers may find it challenging to design assessments that truly measure students' understanding and abilities practically and meaningfully. Authentic assessments are crucial as they provide insights into children's application of skills in real-life contexts rather than just their ability to recall information. This lower confidence in creating such assessments suggests a potential area for professional growth, where teachers could benefit from training or resources that offer guidance on developing authentic, engaging, and informative assessment methods.

Thematic Analysis

Eight themes emerged through focus group discussions and interviews, describing the essential skills necessary for delivering quality early childhood education. These themes revolve around 1) planning, 2) teaching, 3) classroom management, and 4) assessment skills that need to be enhanced. These skills serve as the foundation for teachers to provide effective and appropriate education. Before presenting these various skills, we inquired about service providers' motivations for volunteering and working directly with young children. The following eighteen statements led to the identification of the first theme, The Profound Joy of Nurturing Young Minds.

Theme 1: The Profound Joy of Nurturing Young Minds

The eighteen statements from the FGD revealed that the ECCD service providers derive profound joy from nurturing young minds. Collectively, they express a deep passion and enjoyment for teaching young children. They have said,

DCV 2: It's their first experience, and the foundational stage brings us joy.

DCV 3: I've grown to enjoy being in the daycare center because the kids are cooperative, and I've enjoyed it a lot.

DCV 4: I enjoy teaching children, and seeing them learn from me is fulfilling.

DCV 12: I really want to teach, and that's why we persevered even as volunteers. When I was young, I really wanted to teach.

DCV 13: I enjoy teaching. Even though we are only volunteers, we really enjoy this job, that is why we are still here."

DCV 14: I have a lot of experience of 31 years, but I really love teaching.

DCV 15: I have been teaching for 21 years now, and I enjoy teaching children.

Despite challenges such as volunteering, managing multiple daycare centers, long commutes, and modest salaries, these providers find great fulfillment in their work. The following service providers' statements reflect their unwavering determination to persevere, even when faced with obstacles.

DCV 9: I really want to teach, and that's why we persevered even as volunteers.

DCV 10: Because of our love for teaching and the children we teach, I'm going to try even though my house is far away from the Day Care Center, and I have to take three rides.

DCV 11: It's hard for me to teach at two daycare centers, but nothing is difficult if you really have it in your heart.

DCV 15: Now, I am not after a big salary anymore. I enjoy what I do, and even if it's small, I'm okay with our salary.

DCV 18: I didn't leave teaching in the daycare because I liked it and enjoyed it.

The joy of witnessing children learn, the satisfaction of imparting knowledge, and a longstanding love for the teaching profession emerge as recurring themes. These sentiments underscore the dedication and commitment of ECCD providers to their roles and the positive impact they believe they have on children's foundational learning experiences.

Theme 2: Empowering Educators in the High-Tech Era

The succeeding statements provided insights into the teaching skills of the ECCD providers with the theme Empowering Educators in the High-Tech Era. The statements emphasize that training opportunities are crucial for ECCD service providers. These opportunities allow them to enhance their skills, stay abreast of educational trends, and effectively address their challenges. While they value their teaching experience, they also recognize the importance of formal training to enhance their capabilities and remain up-to-date with modern teaching methods and technologies. Here are their statements:

DCV 2: We have been flexible and open to new learning. Because everything changes, like advanced technology, and this change requires us to be open to learning more.

DCV 4: With the help of the seminars that are given to us or training, somehow, we are able to adapt and understand how to handle or share with the children.

DCV 5: But if there is ever going to be a seminar you will provide, we are very willing to have it because it has been quite a while since our last seminars about teaching, especially about modern technologies. There are many materials that we need to have and learn because today, teaching is high-tech. We also need to be equipped to adapt to the current situation.

DCV 6: We don't know much about technology because our other teachers weren't exposed to cell phones back then.

DCV 7: We also need training and seminars to gain new knowledge that is applicable now.

DCV 8: I told you that we still want to improve; we still want you to increase if you have any training that can help us. Give it to us, we will not refuse that, that's why I said equipped but willing to learn

DCV 9: We want to increase what we already know.

Theme 3: Tailored Approaches

The statements in this theme, Tailored Approaches, underscore the importance of a personalized and adaptive approach to teaching. Activities are intentionally designed to address each child's unique strengths and weaknesses. Teachers are dedicated to providing individualized support and fostering growth and improvement.

DCV 1: There are children who can't really cope. The teachers are considering what can be done to help them improve their weaknesses.

DCV 3: Sometimes, we use all the strategies, like magic, and say that one of our classmates will disappear. We really do everything.

DCV 4: We classify the age of the children, separating the 3- and 4-year-olds. The activities of 3-year-olds are different compared to 4-year-olds. It depends on the child's ability.

This approach ensures that educational activities align with weekly learning goals and cater to the developmental needs of each child. Indeed, adapting to individual needs is a fundamental aspect of effective Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD), ensuring that children receive tailored and supportive learning experiences.

Theme 4: Crafting Appropriate Learning Spaces for Little Explorers

Eight service providers' statements led to a theme of Crafting Appropriate Learning Spaces for Little Explorers. The statements here reflect the daycare workers' efforts to arrange centers according to the children's age, needs, and knowledge levels (DCV 1 and DCV 3) despite facing challenges with limited space and flooding issues (DCV 7 and DCV 8).

DCV 1: So, almost 100% of daycare workers in daycare centers are arranged according to their age and needs and to the extent of their knowledge.

DCV 3: Even though the daycare center is small, we are able to meet all the needs of the children in our daycare

DCV 7: In a daycare setting where the classroom is limited to a stage, there are additional difficulties, especially when dealing with flooding issues.

DCV 8: Even though the teacher tries to make the classroom beautiful and cozy for the children, the flooding problem persists."

They have been resourceful in creating a functional environment with designated areas for various activities and proper entry/exit points. However, they also recognize the need for additional support, such as seminars on optimizing the physical learning environment to enhance the daycare setting further.

Though DCV 1 revealed in her statement that the DSWD accredited them, "We have just finished being accredited by the DSWD region regarding classroom management as well as various complete and safe learning areas for children. So, almost 100% of the daycare workers' daycare centers are arranged according to their age and needs, and to the extent of their knowledge," there are still volunteers who have given their wishes. The daycare workers are deeply committed to creating safe and enriching learning environments for the little explorers. DCV5 directly asked, "Will you give us a seminar on the physical learning environment?" and the statement of DCV4, "We don't have many materials right now. We still have many shortages that we can use if we have face-to-face classes; we have many needs in the daycare center."

It implies that they crave information regarding the arrangement of the physical space. It also infers that they need to be equipped with knowledge on how the small center can be designed into an appropriate learning environment that caters to the various needs of the learners. As DCV 3 stated, “Even though the daycare center is small, we can meet all the needs of the children in our daycare.”

Theme 5: Adapting to the Ever-Evolving Behaviors of Children

The statements reflect that the ECCD providers are aware of the changing behavioral patterns in children, which are likely influenced by the prolonged home stay during the pandemic. DCV 2 said, “The child’s behavior today is also different.” DCV5 Children are more difficult to handle now because they were always at home during the pandemic. Most likely, they will experience separation anxiety.” DCV4 also seconds it by saying, “But nowadays, as time goes on, no matter what style of discipline we apply, it seems difficult.” ECCD service providers are considering focusing on understanding and managing these behavioral changes to enhance learning outcomes. Despite the difficulties in applying various disciplinary styles, they remain committed to comforting children and addressing tantrums appropriately. DCV 7 said, “We comfort those who show tantrums and tell them that it is wrong.” And allow parents to stay in the classroom for a week. DCV 6 mentioned that “Parents stay in the classroom for one week due to separation anxiety of children.”

Additionally, service providers are keenly interested in seminars that offer effective communication and collaboration strategies with parents, especially when addressing concerns or complaints. DCV8 expressed, “We are open and really love seminars on how to deal with parents, especially those who express concerns or complaints,” and DCV3, “Maybe the new strategies that fit the behavior of children today are what we should spend time on. We can’t say directly now what we will face, but maybe when we get to the point where we can handle it, that’s what we need to develop more so that we can enhance their learning.

Theme 6: Navigating the Seven Domains

In the qualitative data gathered it seems that the participants rely on the provided ECCD checklist and know how to utilize it. During the GFD, DCV 2 stated, “We already have a seminar on how to answer the ECCD checklist.” DCV1 added, “Upon enrollment, we assess each child. Then, after 3 months, the ECCD checklist is used if the listed domains have been met or achieved.” The statements describe a structured approach to assessing children’s development in ECCD. After three months, the ECCD checklist evaluates whether the children have met the developmental domains. Service providers receive training on proper checklist usage.

It reveals that daycare volunteers apply what they have learned to assess the progress of young children. Young children aged 3 years and 1 month to 5 years and 11 months are monitored according to seven domains: gross motor, fine motor, self-help, receptive language, expressive language, cognitive, and socio-emotional (DSWD, 2024). Moreover, included in the standard procedures is that the examiner can employ various methods to determine if the child exhibits specified behavior, including observation, direct elicitation of the behavior from the child, and interview of the parents(s) or caregiver(s).

Though they know the proper procedure for using the ECCD checklist in the daycare centers, other authentic assessment tools can be introduced since Item No. 5 under the assessment skills, “I can create an authentic assessment.” Received the lowest mean of 3.91. This means that the daycare volunteers will learn other assessment tools that can be applied in varied situations and can be a response to the other item which received the same lowest mean of 3.91, “I can apply appropriate assessment strategies at the end of each lesson.”

Knowing that daycare centers prioritize home visits and parent interviews during assessments is wonderful. Regular communication with parents is essential for understanding each child’s unique needs and creating a supportive learning environment. The Virtual Lab School (VLS) in 2023, which was designed to empower child and youth care and education professionals to build their knowledge and skills around research-based practices, revealed that by involving parents in school academic and non-academic activities, strong partnerships would be built that contribute to the child’s overall development.

Surprisingly, service providers collaborate actively with parents through a group chat where videos are shared

to monitor the children's progress. They also have some visits or interviews with parents to complement these assessments, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of each child's development. Parent involvement is indeed integral to the success of ECCD assessments. It provides a more holistic view of the child's development and ensures that assessments reflect the child's abilities across different settings. Engaged parents can also support and reinforce learning and developmental goals at home, creating a consistent and supportive environment for the child.

Theme 7: DIY Adventures for Little Learners

During the focused group discussions, it became evident that ECCD service providers exhibit resourcefulness and creativity when providing instructional materials for our young learners. The emerging theme is 'Do-It-Yourself (DIY) Adventures for Little Learners.' These providers explore various avenues to make learning enjoyable for children. For instance, DCV 3 mentioned, 'We create materials ourselves, often using Google for colorful pictures.' DCV 5 emphasized the need for resourcefulness and creativity. As educators, finding innovative solutions is inherent in our role. DCV 1 added, 'Resources come from various sources, including our own efforts.' Indeed, being a true educator involves seeking and creating opportunities through various means."

The Specific Skills that Need to be Addressed

In analyzing ECCD service providers' responses in quantitative and qualitative data, specific skills requiring attention and improvement have become evident. The identified skills that need addressing are as follows:

Planning skills – Based on the ECCD service providers' feedback, there is a clear need for additional training in planning effective instruction. Providers seek skills to create well-structured, logically sequenced, and integrated lesson plans. Furthermore, they aspire to demonstrate a high level of subject matter expertise. The findings underscore the importance of foundational teaching skills, particularly in the area of planning. Service providers require training that emphasizes sequential and effective lesson planning tailored to the needs of their young learners. Workshops and curricular design support can empower teachers to deliver responsive and meaningful classroom learning experiences.

Teaching skills – ECCD service providers recognize the need to improve their verbal and written communication skills. Papa-Gusho, et al. (2015) emphasize that clear instructions are essential for effective lesson planning, ensuring smooth transitions between activities. Providers aim to ensure learners understand instructions thoroughly to perform tasks accurately. Therefore, teachers must possess strong verbal and non-verbal communication skills.

During the pandemic, ECCD providers developed an interest in learning and acquiring skills related to new learning tools and applications that facilitate education. Even in face-to-face classrooms, these tools can enhance lesson implementation. Providers believe familiarity with these tools can make learning more exciting and engaging for young children.

Teachers strive to align planned learning experiences with stated learning objectives and explore innovative teaching approaches using technology. Additionally, they seek to integrate prior knowledge and experiences into new learning, allowing children to construct and produce new ideas. This approach aligns with the principles of constructivism, a cornerstone of present-day education for young learners."

Classroom Management Skills – A conducive learning environment significantly impacts learning outcomes; hence, teachers must prepare a well-planned learning environment. In the Philippines, classrooms for young children are typically small, limiting space for activities beyond lecture-based methods compared to other countries. ECCD service providers recognize the need to improve their skills in creating an appropriate physical classroom layout that minimizes disruptions. Additionally, they seek expertise in managing activity flow. Properly setting up the classroom can reduce misbehaviors and maximize learning opportunities for young children, fostering socialization and other essential skills.

Assessment Skills – The skill of ECCD service providers that needs to be addressed is the ability to apply appropriate assessment strategies at the end of each lesson. Not all assessment tools are suitable for determining

each learner's progress. Ideally, teachers should align assessment tools with the learning objectives. There is a clear need for ECCD providers to gain exposure to various authentic assessment tools and learn how to use them effectively. In this way, children's progress can be identified authentically through the use of portfolios, anecdotal records, and others. By doing so, children's progress can be authentically identified through tools like portfolios and anecdotal records. Additionally, this knowledge equips teachers to conduct parent-teacher conferences confidently, discussing children's progress with parents based on these reliable assessment methods.

Design of the Program Based on the Identified Needs

The table below shows a systematic professional development program to improve the skills of Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) service providers. It indicates the areas of focus, corresponding to the Bachelor of Early Childhood Education (BECED) subjects, goals, duration, individuals involved, and desired outputs per training module. The program is structured around four major skill areas: Instructional Design and Planning Skills, Teaching and Technological Skills, Classroom Management Skills and Physical Environment, and Assessment Skills. Each module is matched with particular BECED courses to provide holistic and hands-on training and prepare ECCD service providers with theoretical knowledge, practical skills, and technological equipment to support effective early childhood education practice.

Table 8: The Proposed Training Program Based on the Needs Analysis

Focus	Related Early Childhood Education Topic	Objective	Duration	Persons Involved	Expected Outcomes
Instructional Design and Planning Skills	Early Childhood Education Curriculum Models Infant and Toddler Programs	At the end of the training, the participants are expected to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design a clear and responsive instructional plan for young children. • Gain mastery of the content of the concepts to be taught to young children. • Familiarize themselves with the curriculum standards and how to align them with the instructional plan. 	5 Months/ 1 semester	Curriculum and Instruction Experts / ECE Teachers • ECCD Service Providers	1. Prototype instructional plans aligned to the curriculum standards. 2. Teachers who can create clear and responsive instructional plans for young children. 3. Demonstration teaching
Teaching and Technological Skills	Literacy Development Technology for Teaching and Learning 2 (Utilization of	At the end of the training, the participants are expected to: Develop basic skills in oral and written communication.	5 Months/ 1 semester	• ECE Teachers • ECCD Service Providers	1. Effective communicators 2. Instructional Materials using advanced technology

	<p>Instructional Technology in ECEd)</p> <p>Science in Early Childhood Education</p> <p>Numeracy Development</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply technology in preparing appropriate instructional materials for young children 			
Classroom Management Skills and Physical Environment	<p>Guiding Children's Behavior and Moral Development</p> <p>Play and Developmentally Appropriate Practices in Early Childhood Education</p>	<p>At the end of the training, the participants are expected to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop skills in managing young children in the classroom effectively. • Plan an appropriate classroom environment. • Design an inclusive classroom. 	5 Months/ 1 semester	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ECE Teachers/ Specialist • ECCD Service providers 	<p>1. Acquire effective classroom management skills.</p> <p>2. Comprehensive Floor plan design</p> <p>3. Inclusive classroom design</p>
Assessment Skills	<p>Assessment of Children's Development and Learning</p> <p>Family, School, and Community Partnership</p>	<p>At the end of the training, the participants are expected to:</p> <p>Identify various types of authentic assessment used for young children.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Familiarize themselves with various assessment strategies for young children. • Use authentic assessment in the classroom, like writing observations and anecdotal records. • Communicate the children's progress to parents using different assessment tools. 	5 Months/ 1 semester	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curriculum and Instruction Specialists/ ECE Teachers • ECCD Service Providers 	<p>1. Acquire skills in choosing the appropriate assessment strategies in identifying the progress of young children.</p> <p>2. Skills in using authentic assessment tools.</p> <p>3. Well-written observations, anecdotal records, and a comprehensive portfolio.</p>

CONCLUSIONS

The lowest mean score for planning skills is 3.79, which was noted in item No. 2, “I can plan instruction effectively for content mastery, pacing, and transitions.” This finding implies a need for further professional development in lesson planning and execution, emphasizing strategies for transitions and pacing that align with students’ cognitive levels and attention spans.

Under the teaching skills, the ECCD service providers have the lowest mean of 3.79 in item No. 1, “I can communicate ideas fluently, both verbally and in writing.” This indicates that ECCD service providers may perceive themselves as less proficient in communication skills than other work areas.

Item No. 1, “I can set up an appropriate physical classroom layout free from disruptions,” gets the lowest mean of 3.91, and Item No. 2, “I can manage the activity flow preventing misbehavior, managing lesson movement, maintaining group focus,” with the second lowest mean of 3.98. It suggests that ECCD providers may find these aspects of classroom management more challenging. It indicates a potential need for additional strategies or training to create an optimal physical layout and manage classroom activity dynamics to minimize disruptions and maintain focus.

The service providers have the lowest mean score of 3.91 in item No. 1, “I can apply appropriate assessment strategies at the end of each lesson.” And item No. 5, “I can create an authentic assessment.” It reveals that ECCD service providers may find it challenging to design assessments that truly measure students’ understanding and abilities practically and meaningfully.

In analyzing the responses of ECCD service providers in the quantitative and qualitative data, specific skills requiring attention and improvement have become evident. In the planning skills – Based on the ECCD service providers’ feedback, there is a clear need for additional training in planning effective instruction, seeking skills that enable them to create well-structured, logically sequenced, and integrated lesson plans. In teaching skills, ECCD service providers recognize the need to improve their verbal and written communication skills. Moreover, service providers believe familiarity with innovative teaching approaches using technology can make learning more exciting and engaging for young children. Classroom Management Skills – ECCD service providers recognize the need to improve their skills in creating an appropriate physical classroom layout that minimizes disruptions. Properly setting up the classroom can reduce misbehaviors and maximize learning opportunities for young children, fostering socialization and other essential skills. Assessment Skills – The skill of ECCD service providers that needs to be addressed is the ability to apply appropriate assessment strategies at the end of each lesson. Ideally, teachers should align assessment tools with the learning objectives. There is a clear need for ECCD providers to gain exposure to various authentic assessment tools and learn how to use them effectively.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the conclusions, the following recommendations were suggested:

Continuous skill updating ensures daycare volunteers stay informed about best practices, child development, and effective management techniques. Volunteers can provide high-quality care and contribute positively to young children’s growth and well-being by staying updated.

Conducting research with diverse research designs and participant groups and exploring various variables is essential for advancing our understanding of early childhood care and development.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

This research is under the research grant of Bulacan State University. The authors would like to thank the Research Management Office of Bulacan State University for the guidance and support.

REFERENCES

1. Aada, Khalid. 2020. “Insight on Planning and Assessing the Teaching-Learning Process.”

- International Journal on Social and Education Sciences 2 (2): 88-96.
<https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1263944.pdf>.
2. Alvarado, Jessica. 2021. "Why Is Early Childhood Education Important?" National University.
<https://www.nu.edu/resources/why-is-early-childhood-education-important/>.
3. American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education. 2010. "The American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education and P21 Release Paper on 21st Century Knowledge and Skills in Educator Preparation." American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education.
<https://aacte.org/2010/09/the-american-association-of-colleges-for-teacher-education-and-p21-release-paper-on-21st-century-knowledge-and-skills-in-educator-preparation/>.
4. Bayat, Mojdeh. 2010. "Clarifying Issues Regarding the Use of Praise With Young Children." Topics in Early Childhood Special Education 31 (2): 121-128. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0271121410389339>.
5. Chandler, Andy, David Read, Fraser Scott, Ian McDaid, Wendy Winnard, Robert Campbell, and Bridget Eburne. 2021. "6 ways to develop your assessment skills | Feature." RSC Education.
<https://edu.rsc.org/feature/6-ways-to-develop-your-assessment-skills/4013078.article>.
6. Creswell, John W., and Vicki L. Plano Clark. 2011. Designing and Conducting Mixed Methods Research. Edited by John W. Creswell and Vicki L. Plano Clark. N.p.: SAGE Publications.
7. "DO 47, s. 2016 – Omnibus Policy on Kindergarten Education | Department of Education." 2016. DepEd. <https://www.deped.gov.ph/2016/06/28/do-47-s-2016-omnibus-policy-on-kindergarten-education/>.
8. DSWD. 2024. "Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD) Checklist Technical and Administration Manual | DSWD Knowledge Management (KM) Portal." DSWD KM Portal.
https://kmportal.dswd.gov.ph/knowledge-products/how-guide/early-childhood-care-and-development-eccd-checklist-technical-and?utm_source=chatgpt.com.
9. Ellis, Paul. 2019. "Changing the world through education - how Nelson Mandela created the conditions for success." Cambridge International Blog.
<https://blog.cambridgeinternational.org/nelson-mandela/>.
10. Ewing, Robyn, Tom Lowrie, and Joy Higgs, eds. 2010. Teaching and Communicating: Rethinking Professional Experiences. N.p.: OUP Australia & New Zealand.
11. Fenech, Marianne, and Jennifer Ribarovski. 2020. Professional Communication for Early Childhood Educators: Interpersonal and Workplace Communication in Everyday Practice. N.p.: Oxford University Press.
12. Ferlazzo, Larry. 2013. "Response: "Ten Elements Of Effective Instruction" (Opinion)." Education Week. <https://www.edweek.org/teaching-learning/opinion-response-ten-elements-of-effective-instruction/2013/03>.
13. Germuth, Amy A. n.d. "Professional Development that Changes Teaching and Improves Learning." Journal of Interdisciplinary Teacher Leadership (JoITL) 2 (1): 77-90.
<https://doi.org/10.46767/kfp.2016-0025>.
14. The Glossary of Educational Reform. 2014. "Classroom Management Definition." The Glossary of Education Reform -. <https://www.edglossary.org/classroom-management/>.
15. Gratz, Rina. 2024. "Early Childhood Programs and Practices: Professional Development – Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence." Prichard Committee: Building a Groundswell for a Big Bold Future. <https://prichardcommittee.org/curated-early-childhood-programs-and-practices-professional-development/>.
16. Hajian, Shiva. 2019. "Transfer of Learning and Teaching: A Review of Transfer Theories and Effective Instructional Practices." IAFOR Journal of Education 7 (1): 93-111.
17. Harmer, Jeremy. 2007. The Practice of English Language Teaching. N.p.: Longman.
18. "IN EVERY BARANGAY, INSTITUTING THEREIN A TOTAL DEVELOPMENT AND PROTECTION OF CHILDREN PROGRAM, APPROPRIATING FUNDS THEREFORE, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES." 1990. ChanRobles Virtual law Library.
<https://www.chanrobles.com/republicacts/republicactno6972.html#.YK4R56gzblIW>.
19. Kyriacou, Chris. 2019. "Why is planning so important for effective teaching? - Oxford Education Blog." Oxford Education Blog. <https://educationblog.oup.com/secondary/english/why-is-planning-so-important-for-effective-teaching>.
20. Mansur, Xurramov. 2020. "Improving The Technical Skills of Modern Teachers and Increase their

- Preparedness for Teaching.” *European Journal of Research and Reflection in Educational Sciences* 8 (10): 30-33.
21. Montiero, Vera, Carolina Carvalho, and Natalie Nobrega Santos. 2021. “Creating a Supportive Classroom Environment Through Effective Feedback: Effects on Students’ School Identification and Behavioral Engagement.” *Frontier in Education* 6:1-14. <https://doi.org/10.3389/feduc.2021.661736>.
 22. Papa-Gusho, Leticja, and Process Rozeta Biçaku-Çekrezi. 2015. “Factors that Affect Effective Planning Skills of the Teacher in the Classrooms.” *Academic Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies* 4 (3): 560-564. DOI: 10.5901/ajis.2015.v4n3s1p560.
 23. Qasserras, Lhoussine. 2024. “The Role of Visual Learning Aids Across Diverse Learning Styles in High School Education.” *European Journal of Applied Linguistics Studies* 7 (2): 68-81. <http://dx.doi.org/10.46827/ejals.v7i2.550>.
 24. “REPUBLIC ACT NO. 10410 - AN ACT RECOGNIZING THE AGE FROM ZERO (0) TO EIGHT (8) YEARS AS THE FIRST CRUCIAL STAGE OF EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT AND STRENGTHENING THE EARLY CHILDHOOD CARE AND DEVELOPMENT ...” 2013. Supreme Court E-Library. <https://elibrary.judiciary.gov.ph/thebookshelf/showdocs/2/71109>.
 25. Rimm-Kaufman, Sara, and Lia Sandilos. 2019. “Improving students' relationships with teachers.” American Psychological Association. <https://www.apa.org/education-career/k12/relationships>.
 26. Rojas, Natalia M., and Rachel M. Abenavoli. n.d. “Preschool teacher-child relationships and children's expressive vocabulary skills: The potential mediating role of profiles of children's engagement in the classroom.” *Early Childhood Research Quarterly* 56:225-235. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ecresq.2021.04.005>.
 27. Şen, Burcu G. 2022. “Teachers' views on classroom rules in basic education.” *International Journal of Curriculum and Instruction* 14 (3): 1696-1715. <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1364301.pdf>.
 28. UNICEF. 2023. “Early Childhood Development - UNICEF Vision for Every Child.” UNICEF for Every Child. <https://www.unicef.org/reports/early-childhood-development-unicef-vision-every-child>.
 29. van Dijk, Esther E., Jan van Tartwijk, Marieke van der Schaaf, and Manon Kluijtmans. 2020. “What makes an expert university teacher? A systematic review and synthesis of frameworks for teacher expertise in higher education.” *Educational Research Review* 31:1-13. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.edurev.2020.100365>.
 30. The World Bank. 2023. “Strengthening Early Childhood Education in the Philippines.” WORLD BANK GROUP EDUCATION. www.worldbank.org.