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Emotional Development Support for Kindergarteners

Miriam Elizabeth Abundis Hernandez

A Capstone Project for the Bachelor of Science in Human Development and Family Science

Introduction

The focus of my project is on helping kindergarten students with their emotional development. Emotional development includes learning what emotions are, recognising their own feelings and those of others, and developing effective ways to manage their emotions. Kindergarteners not being able to express their emotions or understand their emotions is a problem because they are not able to self regulate and get the help they need. This may lead to future conflicts with the children and their peers as they grow older. There is a need for lessons on identifying emotions and communicating one's emotions with others. Most children know the basic understanding of an emotion but not what can help regulate the emotion they are feeling. I plan on helping children identify their emotions and find ways to communicate with others by creating three lessons. One lesson will educate the children on how to express their emotions appropriately based on the emotion they are encountering. The second lesson will help children identify the cause of emotions in pictures and real life scenarios. Lastly, the third lesson will teach the children to seek support from a trusted adult to help them regulate their emotions. I plan to deliver the three sets of lessons on separate days to allow the children to focus on one topic at a time. I also plan to assess the children after each lesson to have a better understanding on what the children comprehend and what they continue to struggle with. The age group that I will be working with are five to six year olds in a diverse classroom. The classroom has a mix of different cultural backgrounds, immigration status, and family support. The school I chose to implement my lessons at is Northwood Elementary School located in San Jose, California.

Needs Statement

Kindergarten students are often thought of as students who are still learning how to adequately distinguish between emotions. Children should be taught how to identify their emotions at an early age to be able to self regulate later in childhood and adulthood Catala et al.,(2022). Most children between the ages of five and six years old are still learning what each emotion is and what they can do to self regulate. Some children learn quickly what an emotion is and what can cause that emotion, while others have a difficult time understanding what they are feeling. This can be due to many different reasons such as children not hearing explanations of emotions. Children also learn about emotions through interacting with others. In my capstone project I focused on helping children better understand the difference in emotions. I also focus on helping the children identify their emotions and a “trusted adult” in their lives.

Looking into a school’s curriculum, there will most likely be more academic learning than social-emotional learning. The lack of curriculum on social emotion and self regulation can affect children both externally and internally when talking about their social-emotional development. A child can exhibit their emotions through hitting, shouting, and being disruptive Macmillan & Tominey, (2022). Administrators will tend to see this as a behavioral issue rather than an absence of self-regulation. When a child internalizes their emotions they can be seen as unhappy and withdrawn Macmillan & Tominey, (2022). This can later cause severe problems as the child grows older because they will not be able to self regulate. This emphasizes the importance of educating children about their emotions and how to properly express themselves while they are young.

Topic: young children’s emotion challenges

Children often undergo emotions both at school and home without knowing what they are experiencing. The average person experiences about four hundred different emotions in only one day (Antonakis, 2018). This means that children experience so many emotions without knowing how to identify or label them. Children often get frustrated, angry, sad, happy, excited, nervous, and embarrassed without knowing what the emotions are. They also lack the ability to express themselves because they do not know what emotion they are feeling. There are different strategies that can be used to teach children how to appropriately express their feelings.

Benefits of developing emotional competence

Teaching children how to appropriately express themselves is beneficial for their adolescence and adulthood. When a child is not being taught to self regulate their emotions, they are most likely to experience low academic performance, school dropout, peer rejection, incarceration and unemployment later in life (Cumming et al.2023). It is crucial to teach children about emotional competence to be able to prevent any negative outcomes later in life. When children have a better understanding of their emotions, it reduces the behavioral issues a child can display both at school and at home. Children learning how to express their emotions and identifying them play an important role in their development. However, it is also equally important for children to be able to ask for help when they need support to regulate their emotions. When a child approaches a trusted adult to express their emotions, the adult should listen and make the child feel comfortable. Adults need to make sure to validate the child's emotions and not push their emotions to the side. This can help the children to have a better understanding of their emotions and whom they can reach out to for support.

LO 1

Children will be able to use their words and gestures to express their feelings such as sadness, fear, and anger. As children begin to interact with other children, they will encounter different emotions from both themselves and their peers. This is beneficial for the children because this will help them have a better understanding of what certain things cause a specific emotion. A possible intervention that can be done to support the children's knowledge on identifying emotions is practicing with real life scenarios. Instead of solving a problem for the child when they are experiencing an emotional conflict, walk them through the emotion. Most children are visual learners, especially at the age of five and six years old. Therefore, practicing with images and real life scenarios can give them a better understanding of what an emotion is and what they can do when they are feeling a specific emotion. Children understanding their emotions is important because it helps the children have a better understanding of others emotions as well (Darling-Churchill & Lippman 2016).

LO 2: Understanding causes of emotions

Children will be able to identify the cause of emotions in pictures and real-life scenarios. As children experience different emotions throughout the day, most children have a difficult time being able to properly express themselves to others. Some children use a different emotion to express themselves when in reality they are feeling a different emotion. This learning outcome is beneficial for the children because the children will be able to communicate what they are feeling and they will be able to fully understand their emotions. Using real life scenarios will allow the children to fully understand what feelings they would feel during a specific situation.

LO 3

Children tend to either share with an adult what they are feeling or not share anything at all. This can depend on how much the child trusts the adult and how comfortable the child feels communicating their emotions with others. There are children that do not know how to word their emotions, therefore they shut down when they are experiencing an emotion. It is important for a child to identify a trustworthy adult to be able to communicate their emotions to them. A lot of times, children will seek help from their teacher or parents. This all depends on how comfortable the child feels around the adult and how open they are to expressing themselves to others. A lot of the time it takes children quite a while to be able to fully open up to an adult, but when they do, it is best to give them the full attention they need.

Conclusion

Emotional competence is important for children to learn during their early developmental years. It supports their social and future development because they are able to understand their emotions. Children can have better relationships with others if they learn how to self regulate and be aware of others emotions. Teachers and parents can also help the children with developing better social skills (Denham et al.,2012). In order to help children with learning about their emotions, I implemented three lessons within a three day period. The first lesson focuses on helping children to use their words and gestures to express feelings such as sadness, fear, and anger. The second lesson focuses on identifying the cause of emotions in pictures and real life scenarios. The final lesson focuses on helping children identify a trusted adult for them to be able to approach them when they feel certain emotions. These lessons were done with children of ages five to six in a kindergarten classroom at Northwood Elementary School.

Theory

Albert Bandura was a psychologist who developed social learning theory. Bandura studied children in order to be able to understand how they learn from each other. His studies revealed that children observe others, imitate what they see, and then model it (Nabavi & Bijandi 2011). Bandura identified four stages of observational learning. The first stage is attention or observation. Attention is when a person is first paying attention to the behavior being modeled to them. The more different something is, the more likely it is to gain the attention of an individual (Malik & Marwaha, 2022). The second stage is retention, which is when the observer remembers the behavior that was observed to later rehearse what was being observed. The third stage is motor reproduction or otherwise known as modeling. In this stage, the observer is demonstrating the behavior that was modeled to them. This can be a problem with a learner who is not quite ready to fully replicate the action (Malik & Marwaha, 2022). The last stage is motivation, this stage is where the observer will see both the rewards and punishments that follow the learned behavior. In this stage, the observer will either continue to model the behavior because of the positive reinforcement or they will not imitate the behavior due to the negative reinforcement (Malik & Marwaha, 2022). The steps in Bandura's theory resonated with my capstone project.

In my project, I will be demonstrating what each emotion is and what one can do when feeling a specific emotion. Children will identify the emotion based on a real life scenario and through flashcards. Bandura's theory of observing and then modeling what was observed fits in my project because the children will be observing what they should do when experiencing an emotion. I will be modeling what is the correct thing to do when feeling anger or fear, while the children observe. Then the children will need to tell me what they need to do in order to help themselves calm down without acting out. I will have the children practice this by going over

scenarios that they can encounter in school or at home. By doing this, children will be practicing what they gained from the lessons and eventually adapt it to their day to day life.

Consideration of Diversity

The ethnicities that populate the city of San Jose, CA are very diverse. The statistics are: 38.1% Asian, 32% White, 30.8% Hispanic 12.4% identify as multiple races, 2.9% Black, 0.8% American Indian, 0.5% Native Hawaiian and/or Pacific Islander (*U.S. Census Bureau quickfacts: San Jose City, California 2023*). My capstone project focused on Kindergarteners in an afterschool program in the city of San Jose, California . The children that participated in my project all had an Asian background. There were three students that were a mix of ethnicities; Asian and Hispanic, Asian and Pacific Islander, and Asian and Hawaiian. My project is not geared towards a specific race or ethnicity but it is focused on grade level. After finding out that all the children had an Asian background, I tried to incorporate conversations that included their cultural background. This allowed me to have a better connection with the children, which resulted in more feedback from them. I made sure to allow the children to openly talk about their norms at home to be able to connect my project to their daily life.

Learning Outcomes

I created three 30 minute lesson plans across three days for kindergarten students in a classroom setting at Northwood Elementary School in San Jose, California. My three lessons were structured around the following learning outcomes:

1. Kindergarteners will be able to use words and gestures to express feelings such as sadness, fear, and anger.
2. Kindergarteners will be able to identify the causes of emotions in pictures and real-life scenarios.

3. Kindergarteners will be able to confidently identify a trusted adult to seek help from when they face a conflict that impacts their emotions.

Method

Location and Participants

My project on emotional development for kindergarteners took place at Northwood Elementary School, located in San Jose, California. I presented my project to six kindergarten students whom I was previously working with during service learning hours. I was able to recruit the six participants by connecting with the supervisor at the site and identifying the students that rarely miss school and program. Four of the children are at the age of five years old and the other two children are at the age of six years old. The participants were four females and two male students. All children have an Asian background. Three of the children were a combination of Asian and other ethnicity; Asian and Pacific Islander, Asian and Hispanic, and Asian and Hawaiian. All children spoke English and were able to both communicate and understand the language without any assistance.

Procedures and Materials Subsection

I developed three lessons on emotional development for kindergarteners that occurred on three different days. Each lesson was about 30 minutes. Prior to conducting the lessons, I had the opportunity to get to know the students and bond with them. My first lesson was developed around my first learning outcome, kindergarteners will be able to use words and gestures to express feelings such as sadness, fear, and anger. I first started the lesson by asking the children if they knew what emotions are and then proceeded by showing them a chart of emotions from the movie *Inside Out*. After going over the chart of emotions, we played a game with a paper dice that I brought to the class which consisted of the different characters from the movie *Inside*

Out. The children had to roll the dice and then describe what the emotion it landed on and what causes them to feel that emotion. I then proceeded to read specific pages from the books *The Spot of Anger* and *The Spot of Sadness* by Diane Alber. By reading the books, I was able to go over the emotions with the children again and they were able to have another visualization of the emotions. In order to know whether the children understood the lesson or not, I assessed them after the lesson. I assessed the children by giving them a picture survey of the different emotions.

My second lesson was developed around my second learning outcome, kindergarteners will be able to identify the causes of emotions in pictures and real-life scenarios. I started this lesson by doing a small review of what the previous lesson was about and then began to introduce the second lesson. I began by showing the children the flashcards that contained different face expressions and the children did their face expression that matched the flashcard. I then created scenarios for the children to identify the emotion of what a child can feel when a specific event occurs. One of the scenarios I presented to the children was, how would they feel if they were to get injured in the playground. The children also described why they would feel that way and what can help them feel better after feeling sad. After I completed the lesson, I assessed the children by saying different emotions and the children would pick out a flashcard that would best fit the emotion described. I also presented them with different scenarios and the children picked out a flashcard that would best describe how they would feel in the scenario.

My third lesson was created to meet my third learning outcome: kindergarteners will be able to confidently identify a trusted adult to seek help for when they face a conflict that impacts their emotions. I started this lesson by having the children sit on the carpet for circle time. I then reviewed what emotions are and asked them what causes them to feel a certain emotion. Then I engaged the children in a conversation regarding who they consider to be their most trusted

adult. I explained to the children what a “trusted adult” meant and I also gave them an example of who I considered to be my trusted adult. The children had a couple minutes to think about who their trusted adult is and then they began to share. After all the children shared who their trusted adult was, I asked them if they felt comfortable approaching this adult when they are feeling down and they all said yes. Then I continued the lesson by having the children color a coloring sheet of a bear holding a heart in the center. The children colored the coloring sheet and then wrote a couple of words around the bear describing the person they chose and thanking them. I ended the lesson by having all the children share what they wrote and their paper. The assessment for this lesson was different from the other assessments because they were verbally responding and they had already identified their trusting adult. However, I did have the students describe to me the adult they chose and they were also able to summarize what a trusted adult is.

Results

Learning outcome 1 was that kindergarteners will be able to use words and gestures to express feelings such as sadness, fear, and anger. To assess the children, I gave them an *Inside Out* picture survey of the different emotions by using a similar chart as the one I used to deliver the lesson. Knowing that most of the children know how to read, I made sure that the chart did not have any wording in it. I placed the chart on the whiteboard and gave each child the opportunity to answer three questions. I pointed at a face expression and they responded by telling me what emotion was related to the face expression. I calculated a passing score of the assessments as one point per child. For learning outcome 1, 6 out of the 6 (100%) children were able to distinguish between different emotions presented to them. All children were able to identify the different face expressions that I would point out for them. After the assessment was completed, it became clear that learning outcome 1 was fully met. Although my main focus was

for the children to express three emotions, they were able to express more than just the three emotions.

Learning outcome 2 was that kindergarteners will be able to identify the causes of emotions in pictures and real-life scenarios. To assess the children, I gave the children their own set of flashcards and then I began to tell them different scenarios. Then, they had to pick out a flashcard with the emotion/feeling that would best fit the scenario I would tell them. I also described different emotions and the children would go through their stack of flashcards and then pick out the emotion that I was describing. I calculated a passing score of the assessment as one point per correct response per child. For learning outcome 2, 6 out of the 6 (100%) children were able to correctly pick out a flashcard that resonated with the specific emotions I called out and the scenario presented to them. All children were able to correctly pick out a flashcard without any assistance or hesitation. After the assessment was completed, it became clear that learning outcome 2 was fully met. All children had an understanding of the lesson.

Learning outcome 3 was that kindergarteners will be able to confidently identify a trusted adult to seek help from when they face a conflict that impacts their emotions. To assess the children, I had the children engage in circle time, we talked about what a trusted adult is and they selected their trusted adult. I calculated a passing score of the assessment as one point when the children responded correctly on what a trusted adult is. For learning outcome 3, 6 out of the 6 (100%) children were able to correctly distinguish who their trusted adult is and why they are their trusted adult. All children were able to identify a trusted adult in their life and they were able to explain why they choose that adult as someone who they can trust. After the assessment was completed, it became clear that learning outcome 3 was fully met.

Discussion

The focus of my project is to help kindergarten students with their emotional development. Learning outcome 1, kindergarteners will be able to use words and gestures to express feelings such as sadness, fear, and anger, was fully met. All children were able to use their words to express each emotion and they were able to distinguish between the different emotions. Learning outcome 2, kindergarteners will be able to identify the causes of emotions in pictures and real-life scenarios, was also fully met. All children were able to correctly identify the flashcard that resonated with the emotion presented to them. Learning outcome 3, kindergarteners will be able to confidently identify a trusted adult to seek help for when they face a conflict that impacts their emotions, was fully met. All children were able to understand what a trusted adult is and they also were able to identify a trusted adult in their lives. Apart from the learning outcomes, this project was a success because the children were engaged throughout the lessons. It was helpful that the children were comfortable enough to have a conversation with me and ask questions when they needed to.

My learning outcomes were fully met because the children were engaged and were able to explain what each lesson was. All children were able to use their words to express their feelings and to identify the difference between sadness, fear, and anger. After the lessons, the children were able to adequately identify each emotion and use the correct name of emotion based on what they were feeling. The children were also able to identify a “trusted adult” whom they feel comfortable talking to when they feel down. They were also able to express why they trust the adult and when they would approach the adult. Overall, the children were able to explain what they learned in each lesson.

Although the lessons and learning outcomes were a success, there were a couple of limitations due to the setting. I conducted my project at an afterschool program which meant that

their kindergarten class had about 18 students in the classroom. Therefore, it was difficult to find a space where I could deliver my lessons to only six out of the eighteen students. Due to their limited space, I was able to deliver my lessons when the rest of the students were engaging in other activities run by the afterschool program. Another limitation was that some children were not always present, therefore I made sure to deliver the lessons on a specific day. The site director suggested delivering the lessons on Mondays due to that being the day that most students show up to the program.

For future directions of this project, I would like to create lessons where the parents and family members can be included. This can help the children practice their emotional learning both at home and at school. I would also like to include more lessons with things that the children like such as characters from their favorite cartoons or movies. By doing this, I believe the children will continue to stay engaged in the lessons and they will look forward to conversing about it. I also would like to deliver these lessons to a larger group of children and see if any statistics change. In the future, I hope that children will use what they have learned in the lessons and have a better understanding of the different emotions.

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Appendix

 <p>Appendices A</p>	
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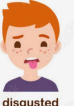
<div><p>JOY</p><p>JOYFUL INTERESTED PLAYFUL CONFIDENT LOVING SENSITIVE COURAGEOUS HOPEFUL</p></div>	<div><p>SADNESS</p><p>SAD BORED SLEEPY UNHAPPY IGNORED GUILTY LONELY ALONE</p></div>
<div><p>SURPRISED</p><p>STARTLED CONFUSED AMAZED EXCITED SHOCKED ASTONISHED EAGER DISMAYED</p></div>	<div><p>ANGER</p><p>MAD JEALOUS EMBARRASSED FURIOUS IRRITATED WITHDRAWN FRUSTRATED SKEPTICAL</p></div>
<div><p>DISGUST</p><p>AWFUL DISAPPOINTED HESITANT REVOLTED LOATHING JUDGEMENTAL</p></div>	<div><p>FEAR</p><p>HUMILIATED REJECTED WORTHLESS INSECURE ANXIOUS SCARED</p></div>

HOW ARE YOU FEELING TODAY?

Appendices B








Appendices C

 <p>content</p>	 <p>happy</p>	 <p>sad</p>	 <p>scared</p>	 <p>shy</p>
 <p>guilty</p>	 <p>angry</p>	 <p>annoyed</p>	 <p>relaxed</p>	 <p>confused</p>
 <p>surprised</p>	 <p>crying</p>	 <p>bored</p>	 <p>tired</p>	 <p>disgusted</p>

Appendices D

<p>Emotional Development Support for Kindergarteners</p> <p>Miriam Elizabeth Abundis Hernandez Human Development & Family Science</p> <p>Hello Everyone!</p> 	<p>Appendices E</p>
<p>Introduction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Been with the YMCA for 6 years AA in Child Development This topic is important to me because I currently work with kindergarten children and some have a difficult time expressing themselves. 	<p>Appendices F</p>
<p>Needs Statement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most kindergarten children have a difficult time self-regulating their emotions and identifying the emotions they are feeling. Social emotional development is not one of the priorities for school and a lot of the times it is not included in their curriculum. Due to this problem, there is a need for more lessons on identifying emotions, self regulation, and communication skills. 	<p>Appendices G</p>
<p>Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bandura's studies revealed that people observe others, imitate what they see, and then model it. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Modeling Observation Imitation Most children tend to learn through observation and then imitate what they observed. 	<p>Appendices H</p>
<p>Social Learning Theory</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> My participants followed the first three steps to Bandura's theory. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> They observed what I was doing They imitated the face expressions Then modeled what a face expression depending on the emotion was being mentioned. 	<p>Appendices I</p>
<p>Learning Outcomes</p> <p>I created three 30 minute lessons across three days for Kindergarten students. The project had three learning outcomes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Kindergarteners will be able to use words and gestures to express feelings such as sadness, fear, and anger. Kindergarteners will be able to identify the causes of emotions in pictures and real-life scenarios. Kindergarteners will be able to confidently identify a trusted adult to seek help for when they face a conflict that impacts their emotions. 	<p>Appendices J</p>

<p>Location and Participants</p> <hr/> <p>Location</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Northwood Elementary School in San Jose, California. The children ranged from ages 5 to 6 year olds in a kindergarten classroom. They are all part of an afterschool program called YMCA.  <p>Demographics</p> <p>Students: 6</p> <p>Gender: 4 girls/2 boys</p> <p>Ethnicity: 3 Asian, 1 Asian & Hispanic, 1 Asian & Pacific Islander, 1 Asian & Hawaiian</p>	<p>Appendices K</p>
<p>Procedures & Materials</p> <hr/> <p>Day 1:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Showed a chart of emotions (Inside Out) Rollled an emotion dice and talked about what can cause that emotion. Read certain pages from the Spot of Anger and Sadness. <p>Day 2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Showed flashcards of different face expression to identify the emotion. Created scenarios for the children to respond to. <p>Day 3:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Circle time with the children to talk about how they feel. Identified a person whom they feel comfortable talking to. My person activity 	<p>Appendices L</p>
<p>Assessment Results: LO 1</p> <hr/> <p>Kindergarteners will be able to use words and gestures to express feelings such as sadness, fear, and anger.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The children were able to identify the emotions and give examples of what causes them to feel the emotion. I was able to assess them by giving them a picture survey. Successful: 6/6 children understood the emotions presented to them. 	<p>Appendices M</p>
<p>Assessment Results: LO 2</p> <hr/> <p>Kindergarteners will be able to identify the causes of emotions in pictures and real-life scenarios.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Children were able to correctly pick out a flashcard that resonated with the specific emotion I called out. To further assess the children, I gave the children images of different emotions. Then I had the children pick out a flashcard on how they would feel based on a scenario. Successful: 6/6 correctly picked out an emotion and explained why they picked out the card 	<p>Appendices N</p>
<p>Assessment Results: LO 3</p> <hr/> <p>Kindergarteners will be able to confidently identify a trusted adult to seek help for when they face a conflict that impacts their emotions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I had the children engage in circle time and we talked about what they think a trusted adult is. Created a heart activity to identify a trusted adult. Fully met: 6/6 children were able to identify a trusted adult. 	<p>Appendices O</p>

<div><h3>Discussion: Successes</h3><ul style="list-style-type: none">- Helped that I have worked with the children.- Easy to communicate with them and get their attention.- Children were engaged and interested in the Inside Out activity.- All Learning Outcomes were fully met</div>	Appendices P
<div><h3>Discussion: Challenges</h3><ul style="list-style-type: none">- Attendance- Finding a space for me to work with only a specific amount of children.</div>	Appendices Q
<div><h3>Future Direction</h3><ul style="list-style-type: none">- Include family members- Look into more activities that are related to their interests.- Include more children to have more feedback and more interactions</div>	Appendices R
<div><h1>Thank you</h1><p>Any questions?</p></div>	Appendices S