TURKISH PRESCHOOL TEACHERS' BELIEFS AND PRACTICES RELATED TO CHILD-CENTERED EDUCATION

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RAMAZAN SAK

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_____

Prof. Dr. Meliha Altunışık

Director

I certify that this thesis satisfies all the requirements as a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

_____

Prof. Dr. Jale Çakıroğlu

Head of Department

This is to certify that we have read this thesis and that in our opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

_____	_____
Prof. Dr. George S. Morrison	Assist. Prof. Dr. Feyza Tantekin Erden
Co-Supervisor	Supervisor

Examining Committee Members

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Yaşar Kondakçı	(METU, EDS)	_____
Assist. Prof. Dr. Feyza Tantekin Erden	(METU, ECE)	_____
Assoc. Prof. Dr. Gaye Teksöz	(METU, ELE)	_____
Assist. Prof. Dr. Çiğdem Haser	(METU, ELE)	_____
Assist. Prof. Dr. Elif Öztürk Yılmaztekin	(İzmir U., CD)	_____

I hereby declare that all information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work.

Name, Last name: Ramazan SAK

Signature :

ABSTRACT

TURKISH PRESCHOOL TEACHERS' BELIEFS AND PRACTICES RELATED TO CHILD-CENTERED EDUCATION

Sak, Ramazan

Ph.D., Department of Elementary Education

Supervisor: Assist. Prof. Dr. Feyza Tantekin Erden

Co-Supervisor: Prof. Dr. George S. Morrison

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The aim of this study was to describe preschool teachers' beliefs, self-reported and actual practices related to child-centered education in Turkey. In addition, the consistency of preschool teachers' beliefs and their practices about child-centered education was examined. In order to investigate this phenomenon, 20 preschool teachers working in public schools were interviewed related to their beliefs and self-reported practices about child-centered education. Also, 5 of these teachers were observed and their documents were reviewed in order to investigate their actual practices. A semi-structured interview protocol and an observation form were developed by the researcher to explore the preschool teachers' beliefs, self-reported and actual practices related to child-centered education.

For the qualitative data analysis, word-repetition technique was used. The findings of the study showed that preschool teachers had both appropriate and inappropriate beliefs, self-reported and actual practices related to main components of child-centered education such as the physical environment, instructional activities, relationship, behavior management, assessment and parent involvement. There were both consistency and inconsistency between teachers' beliefs, self-reported and actual practices. Teachers evaluated themselves as absolutely child-centered, usually child-centered, both teacher-centered and child-centered, or teacher-centered.

Teachers gave the reasons for them being unable to be child-centered as; heavy workloads, their educational background and lack of knowledge about child centeredness, expectations of parents and principals, and class size. Recommendations are made as how to remove these obstacles in order that Turkish preschool education can become more child-centered.

Keywords: Child-centered education, preschool teachers, teachers' beliefs, teachers' self-reported practices, teachers' actual practices,

ÖZ

TÜRK OKUL ÖNCESİ ÖĞRETMENLERİNİN ÇOCUK MERKEZLİ EĞİTİM HAKKINDAKİ İNANIŞ VE UYGULAMALARI

Sak, Ramazan
Doktora, İlköğretim Bölümü
Tez Yöneticisi: Yrd. Doç. Dr. Feyza Tantekin Erden
Ortak Tez Yöneticisi: Prof. Dr. George S. Morrison
Nisan, 2013, 271 sayfa

Bu çalışmanın amacı Türk okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin çocuk merkezli eğitim hakkındaki inanış, kendi söylemlerine dayanan uygulamaları ve gerçek uygulamalarını belirlemektir. Ayrıca, okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin çocuk merkezli eğitim hakkındaki inanış ve uygulamalarının tutarlılığı incelenmiştir. Bu olguyu araştırmak için araştırmacı devlet okullarında görev yapan 20 okul öncesi öğretmeniyle onların çocuk merkezli eğitim hakkındaki inanış ve kendi söylemlerine dayanan uygulamalarını öğrenmek için görüşmeler yapmıştır. Ayrıca, öğretmenlerin gerçek uygulamalarını araştırmak için bu öğretmenlerden 5 tanesi gözlemlenmiş ve belgeleri incelenmiştir. Okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin çocuk merkezli eğitim hakkındaki inanış, kendi söylemlerine dayanan uygulamaları ve gerçek uygulamalarını belirlemek için araştırmacı tarafından geliştirilen yarı yapılandırılmış bir görüşme formu ve bir gözlem formu kullanılmıştır.

Nitel verilerin analizi için, kelime tekrarı (word-repetition) tekniği kullanılmıştır. Çalışmanın bulguları göstermiştir ki okul öncesi öğretmenleri çocuk merkezli eğitimin ana boyutları olan fiziksel çevre, etkinlikler, ilişkiler, davranış yönetimi, değerlendirme, ve anne-baba katılımı hakkında hem çocuk merkezli eğitime uygun hem de uygun olmayan inanış, kendi söylemlerine dayanan uygulamalara ve gerçek uygulamalara sahiptirler. Ayrıca hem okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin inanış, kendi söylemlerine dayanan uygulamaları ve gerçek uygulamaları arasında hem tutarlılık hem de tutarsızlık olduğu bulunmuştur. Son

olarak, okul öncesi öğretmenleri kendilerini kesinlikle çocuk merkezli, genellikle çocuk merkezli, hem öğretmen hemde çocuk merkezli, ya da öğretmen merkezli olarak değerlendirdikleri belirlenmiştir. Okul öncesi öğretmenleri kendilerinin çocuk merkezli olmalarını engelleyen sebebler olarak iş yüklerinin çokluğunu, çocuk merkezlilik hakkında bilgi ve deneyimlerinin eksikliğini, anne-babaların ve okul müdürlerinin beklentilerini ve sınıf mevcutlarının çokluğunu sıralanmıştır. Türk okul öncesi eğitiminin daha fazla çocuk merkezli olması için bu sebeplerin nasıl ortadan kaldırılacağına ilişkin tavsiyelerde bulunulmuştur.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Çocuk merkezli eğitim, okul öncesi öğretmenleri, öğretmen inanışları, öğretmenlerin kendi söylemlerine dayanan uygulamaları, öğretmenlerin gerçek uyglamaları,

To My Father and My Son Agit Sak

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NAEYC	The National Association for the Education of Young Children
MoNE	Ministry of National Education
DAP	Developmentally Appropriate Practices
P	Participant
S	Page

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The idea that early childhood education should be child-centered is not new (Moyer, 1987). Originally, child-centered education was based on the work of Jean-Jacques Rousseau (Saracho & Spodek, 2009). Rousseau (1712-1778) believed that children should be educated naturally and education should be child-centered and consider child's needs (Rousseau, 1950; Rousseau, 2003). Educators from the past as well as the present acknowledge the significance of child-centered education. However, it is difficult to make a specific definition of child-centered education since there are various uses and meanings connected to the term. Initially, different phrases are used interchangeably such as learner-centered, student-centered and child-centered. While learner-centered is used for learners of all ages, student-centered is only used for students and child-centered is used for younger learners (Ellis, 2004). However, Harmelen (1998) emphasized that use of child-centered education and learner-centered education interchangeably was a misconception because these two terms were theoretically different from each other. Learner-centered education focuses on how learning occurs and knowledge is acquired by all learners whereas perception of childhood is the essential focus of child-centered education (Harmelen, 1998).

Chung and Walsh (2000) examined the literature pertaining to early childhood education and found more than 40 meanings of the term "child-centered education". For instance, some meanings focused on the participation of children in decisions about their learning whilst others stated different bases such as children's interests, developmental levels and development of individual potential. Mongolian preschool educators defined child-centered instruction as children being able to freely ask questions, explore new things, express their ideas, creatively think, try to do things in their own way, take the initiative, make choices and actively learn how to do things (Myagmar, 2010). Gürkan (2005) defined *child-centeredness* as the

teachers providing children with an educational environment which was created appropriately for the children's age, individual characteristics, differences, interests, needs, and the features of their immediate environment. According to Griebling (2009), practice, rooted in theory and research concerning how children learn, is the main focus of child-centered education. Further, children's individual needs, interests and respect for the differences between individual children are bases of child-centered education (Kwon, 2004).

The importance of a child-centered curriculum for specific ages and stages has been supported by research into the brain (Rushton & Juola-Rushton, 2008). According to Ugaste and Õun (2007), any educational program to be used should be parallel with the principles of child-centered education, in which the children's interests should be at the center of curriculum and their developmental needs should be the focus of the classroom environment and activities (Griebling, 2009). Moreover, child-centered programs should give more opportunities to increase children's prosocial behavior and more intrinsic motivation than exist in the basic skill programs (Reio, Maciolek & Weiss, 2002), improve the creativity and critical thinking skills of children and provide appropriate education linked to children's individual developmental levels and interests (Ugaste & Õun, 2007). In addition to the program, an appropriate environment for the children's interest, skill and personality features should be provided in child-centered education (Yavuzer, 2002). Also, the child-centered learning environment should have a democratic atmosphere that considers individual characteristics, cultural elements and the developmental needs of the children (Dever & Falconer, 2007). In agreement with Dever and Falconer (2007), Õun, Saar-ugaste and Niglas (2008) stated that individual development, cultural environment, nationality and the special needs of children were important in a child-centered classroom.

Early childhood teachers are other important components of child-centered education because they have an active role in the successful implementation of a child-centered curriculum (Bulut, 2008). An early childhood professional is defined by Morrison (2008) as "a person who works with, cares for, and teaches children from birth to age eight." (p.3), she works in cooperation with parents, other family

members and the community for high-quality education and also other services available to provide all children to reach their highest potential (Morrison, 2008). The role of teachers is crucial and central in child-centered education as a facilitator (Harmelen, 1998). Morrow and Dougherty (2011) stated that teachers should provide opportunities for children to learn through their own interest and curiosity based on the ideas of Rousseau and Pestalozzi. Also, they should provide and select educational instruments and activities based on their observations and interactions with children (Niland, 2009). This means that teachers should know their children very well and the children's needs, styles and attitudes should be considered when planning an activity (Kendrick & Labas, 2000). Also, the teachers can provide opportunities for children to engage in activities and interact with their peers (Klein, Hammrich, Bloom & Ragins, 2000). Teachers have to collaborate, support and guide the children they teach. It is due to these roles, that children can feel secure, happy and succeed in the learning process (Pang & Richey, 2007).

Őun, Saar-Ugaste and Niglas (2008) reported that although there was a transition from a collectivist teacher-centered education to child-centered education, many practices of preschool teachers are still teacher-centered. For example, Kwon (2004) examined preschool teachers' beliefs, practices and content of the child-centered Korean National Curriculum via documentary analysis, a questionnaire and observation. He found that although the Korean National Curriculum was child-centered, preschool teachers' beliefs and actual practices were significantly different from the child-centered philosophies. In spite of over thirty years of a child-centered curriculum in Ireland, the results of a nationwide survey of senior infant teachers indicated that most of them had been implementing a traditional, teacher centered education in their classrooms (Murphy, 2004; 2006). Maynard and Chicken (2010) stated that moving away from a subject-centered approach to child-centered approach may be enormously challenging for preschool teachers. Moreover, they confirmed the findings of Lee and Tseng's (2008) study which revealed that "the idea of making the child the center of education is common in all teachers' comments. However, when you go to into the classrooms to see what's happening in classrooms, you will see a different picture… in most classrooms, you can still see children being

asked to do drill and practice kinds of activities (memorizing Chinese characters and mathematical facts, etc)" (p. 192).

In the literature there are also different ideas about the role of teachers. For example, according to Montessori (1995), the teacher should be passive, wait patiently and almost withdraw herself from the scene to provide the child with an appropriate environment and the children should be free to choose their own occupations, such as play. Aral, Kandır, and Yaşar (2001) emphasize that early childhood teachers not only have to achieve the aims of early childhood education curriculum but also have to gain the respect of parents and an understanding of child education. Another idea is that teachers adopting child-centered principles are facilitators in the education process encouraging children's development by providing them with a secure and caring environment in which children can satisfy their needs and interests (Walsh, 1997).

Teachers do not always put their ideas about child-centered education into practice in the classroom and this is another focus in the literature. For example, Winsler and Carlton (2003) interviewed the teachers who identified their pedagogical philosophy as child-centered constructivists. The behaviors and interactions of children with other people were observed in these teachers' classrooms. The findings of this study showed that teachers' practices were not parallel with principles of child-centered education that they presented in the interviews.

Bandura (1986) stressed that beliefs were the best indicators of the decisions which people make during their lives and beliefs strongly affected their behaviors. In agreement with Bandura (1986), Kagan (1992) stated that beliefs lay at the heart of teaching and teachers' beliefs had an important role in the nature of classroom instruction and in the professional lives of teachers. Therefore, teacher' beliefs and practices are the two major domains of the teaching process (Clark & Peterson,1986) and, teachers' practices in the classroom are affected by their beliefs (Kowalski, Pretti-Frontczak & Johnson, 2001). In other words, there is a connection between teachers' beliefs and practices (Hart, 2002). Also, while explaining the importance of teachers' fundamental beliefs, McCombs and Whisler (1997) emphasized that "beliefs consciously and unconsciously shape how teachers see and relate to learners,

learning, and teaching" (p.27). Thus, understanding the structures of teachers' beliefs is essential to improve teachers' professional preparation and teaching practice (Pajares, 1992). Thus, preschool teachers' beliefs were foremost focus point of the current study.

Lastly, in current discussions about educational reform discussions about appropriate and best practices, it has been accepted that child-centeredness should be the main property of qualified programs (Lee & Tseng, 2008). Child-centeredness is a characteristic of many curricula all over the world including Turkey. In 2002 the Turkish early childhood education curriculum was initiated and applied for four years then revised in 2006. There are 18 characteristics of the 2006 early childhood curriculum and one of them is child-centeredness (Gürkan, 2006; MEB, 2006). In 2012, some changes were made in the Turkish early childhood curriculum and a pilot new curriculum has been begun to be used in some regions of Turkey. The data of this study was collected during the period in which the early childhood curriculum of 2006 was being applied.

1.1 Purpose statement

There is an increasing dissatisfaction about the child-centered curriculum since constructivism is interpreted in different ways. In other words, while teachers engage in activities with children actively and guide them during daily activities in some child-centered programs, other programs only give teachers the role of setting up an environment to support children's exploration, giving maximum freedom of choice to children, and not interfering with the children's activities unless required or necessary (Winsler & Carlton, 2003). Similarly, there is a fairly general definition and explanation of child-centeredness in the Turkish curriculum stating that the child's age, developmental features, interest, needs, individual characteristics, differences and near environment's features are taken into account to achieve the objectives, and to regulate activities and principles of assessment. However, each teacher may interpret this definition in a different way so there is no consistency between teachers' practices. Also, the same curriculum can be implemented in a different classroom based on the beliefs of a particular teacher (Munby, 1983).

Stephen (2010) claimed that it was not possible to agree on whether child-centeredness was crucial for success of children's learning because of the different interpretations which were considered as related to child-centeredness.

Having a common understanding and interpretation for child-centeredness is crucial to reach the goals and objectives of an educational program. In order to contribute to the field of early childhood education, the aim of this study is to describe preschool teachers' beliefs and practices related to child-centered education in Turkey. Therefore, this study has been designed to investigate the following research questions:

1. What are Turkish preschool teachers' beliefs about child-centered education?
2. What are Turkish preschool teachers' self-reported practices about child-centered education?
3. What are Turkish preschool teachers' actual practices in terms of child-centered education?
4. Are Turkish preschool teachers' beliefs consistent with their practices in terms of child-centered education?
   4.1 Is there a consistency between Turkish preschool teachers' beliefs and their self-reported practices?
   4.2 Is there a consistency between Turkish preschool teachers' beliefs, their self-reported practices and their actual practices?

1.2 Significance of the study

The significance of the study is based on the five topics given below:

1.2.1 Dealing with misconceptions of child-centered education

A child-centered approach has been conducted in the form of developmentally appropriate practice (DAP) for few decades (Tzuo, Yang & Wright, 2011) and understanding child-centeredness is at the heart of DAP (Dunn & Kontos, 1997). Developmentally appropriate practice "is not a curriculum; it is not a rigid set of standards that dictate practice. Rather, it is a framework, a philosophy, or an approach to working with young children" (Bredekamp & Rosegrant, 1992, p. 4).

DAP is defined as the best practice based on the knowledge of how children learn and develop. Individual differences of children such as age, developmental status and interest, social and cultural context are also the main focus of all teaching practices (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009). The DAP is suggested by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), which is accepted as one of the largest organizations in the world and works for children (About NAEYC, n. d.). Aims of the NAEYC are to enhance professional practice and working conditions, and to strengthen early childhood programs for a high quality system of young children's education (NAEYC Mission Statement, n. d.). NAEYC Accreditation in early childhood education is accepted as the mark of quality. Since 1985, national and voluntary accreditation system of NAEYC has been used to help families decide high quality programs for their children and identify professional standards for early childhood programs (Accredited Program Search, n.d.).

There are some misunderstandings related to DAP (Gestwicki, 2011) and the same misunderstandings can also be applied to child-centered education such as:

- There is only one right way to carry out child-centered education.
- Child-centered classrooms are unstructured.
- Teachers teach minimally or not at all in child-centered classrooms.
- Child-centered education does not include academic subjects which are generally interpreted to be the formal skills of learning reading, writing and arithmetic.
- Child-centered education has no goals or objectives.

It is assumed that many teachers, educators and administrator have some of these misunderstandings. Therefore, many children are educated by teacher-centered practices which do not allow children to be more creative, more enthusiastic and happier in the learning process thus they do not realize their full potential during their education. Also, understanding the bases of child-centered education in the teachers' mind makes understanding their classroom practices easier. It is important that teachers are given the opportunity to re-evaluate their knowledge and understanding of child-centeredness and their actual practice in the classroom with the children.

1.2.2 Theory and practices

The term *child-centered* is not new and there are various practices recognized as child-centered both in Turkey and elsewhere in the world. In particular, current early childhood programs try to follow developmentally appropriate approaches all over the world and child-centered practices are main focuses of these approaches (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009). Although emphasizing the importance of child-centeredness has been one of prominent movements in teacher education in last 20 years (Malone, 2008) and many preschool teachers have gained knowledge about child-centered education during their university education, it is not possible to say that teachers always can put their knowledge and beliefs into practices. For instance, Janas (1999) reported both consistency and inconsistency between teacher beliefs and behaviors. Thus, this study has an important role in defining the consistency between preschool teachers' beliefs and practices related to child-centered education.

1.2.3 Achieving the aims of the Turkish early childhood education system

In order to achieve aims of current Turkish early childhood education and program, preschool teachers have to understand child-centered education correctly and their practices should be based on child-centered principles.

Through child-centered education, cognitive, emotional, physical, and social development of children will be better developed (Perry & Weinstein, 2010) and the preschool teacher is a vital component of this process. Therefore, it is hoped that this study will develop teachers awareness of the extent to which their classroom practice is in keeping with their knowledge and professed ideas about child-centered education. Preschool teachers' beliefs and practices should be examined in order to improve the quality of the preschool education program (Wen, Elicker and McMullen, 2011). Therefore, the information contained within this study can contribute to the development of well-qualified early childhood education teachers and the better implementation of the program.

1.2.4 Improving knowledge base of child-centered education

The titles of many studies include the words of *child-centered* or *learner-centered* such as the studies of Baldwin, Adams and Kelly (2009), Xu (2007), Johnson, Bruhn, Winek, Krepps and Wiley (1999), and Turner (1999). However,

when examined in detail, few of them focus on the details of child-centered education and in particular teachers' beliefs and practices related to this topic. Furthermore, there are very few studies about child-centered education in Turkey. Thus, current study intends to fill this gap and make a valuable contribution to the literature about the beliefs and practices of teachers in terms of child-centered education. In some studies, researchers only focus on the teachers' beliefs. However, there are some studies in which it is suggested that early childhood educators' beliefs should be compared with their actual practices in further research (Han & Neuharth-Pricthett, 2010; Parker & Neuharth-Pritchett, 2006; Paro, Siepak & Scott-little, 2009; Õun, Ugaste, Tuul & Niglas, 2010; Wang, Elicker, McMullen & Mao 2008). Therefore, this study was not only focused on preschool teachers' beliefs but also considered teachers' practices and thus aim to contribute to the literature in this field.

1.2.5 Contribution to Turkish early childhood education field

This study is important in terms of its contribution to decreasing misunderstandings related to child-centered education, clarifying whether preschool teachers' beliefs and practices are child-centered, supporting the development of good quality early childhood education, and well qualified preschool teachers who have a highly developed knowledge of, and the ability to appropriately implement child-centered education. Another importance of this study is its contribution to literature related to preschool teachers' beliefs and practices about child-centered education in the Turkish context. Lastly, an accurate summary of preschool teachers' beliefs and practices about child-centered education is helpful to assess the effect of the current preschool teachers' training in relation to child-centered education.

1.3 Motivation for the study

My experiences in the field of early childhood education was initially as a preschool teacher and then as a lecturer and research assistant. I started my career as a preschool teacher at the beginning of second semester of the 2002-2003 school year. In my class, there was a child who needed special education. When I asked the students to get their activity books and sit on their chairs, I noticed that he did not have a book. Then, I learnt that his previous teacher thought he could not understand

and follow the directions related the concepts in the book. Therefore he did not have a book and he only waited in the corner of the classroom during the activity. This event affected me greatly because I believe that each child is unique and can do a lot of things based on his/her capacity. When I was a lecturer and a research assistant, I visited many early childhood classrooms to observe my pre-service students' practices and observed both child-centered and teacher-centered practices of teachers in early childhood institutions.

From my experience and observations of other teachers I began to wonder about preschool teachers' beliefs and practices related to child-centered education and whether they implemented their beliefs in their classrooms. Although one feature of Turkish preschool Program (2006) is child-centeredness and there are explanations about child-centeredness. I am not sure that all preschool teachers had the same understanding of child-centeredness in the curriculum. Also, I discovered that there was a gap in literature about child-centered education in Turkey. I found only one study (Kaya & Güngör Aytar, 2012) about preschool teachers' beliefs and practices related to child-centered education in a Turkish context. I believe that child-centered education is very important for the whole development of a young child's education and therefore, I hope to make a contribution to early childhood field concerning the correct understanding and practice of child-centered education.

1.4 Definition of the terms

Preschool Education (Early Childhood Education): Turkish Ministry of National Education made some changes related to compulsory schooling in 2012 (Ministry of National Education, 2012). According to these changes, 66 month-old children start elementary school. In other words, preschool education applies to 37-66 month-old children since September of 2012. However, the data of this study was collected before these changes thus the Turkish preschool education referred to in this study applies to 36-72 month-old children. In other words, children from 3 years old to 6 years old are educated in early childhood institutions in Turkey (Ministry of National Education, Regulations on Early Childhood, 2004).

Preschool teacher: In this study, preschool teacher refers to an educator who is responsible for the teaching of children from 3 to 6 years. Preschool teachers work in kindergartens and are responsible for applying specific activity plans on the basis of annual plans (Ministry of National Education, Regulations on Early Childhood, 2004).

Child-centered education: Child-centered education is a multi-faceted process including environment of the classroom, activities, relationships and behavior management in the classroom, and parent involvement in education. Children's individual differences (developmental level, age, culture, gender, learning styles, interests, preferences, ideas, socio-economic and cultural background of families) and individual needs (need for mastery, independence, generosity and need to belong) are the bases of the planning and implementing these facets (Morrison, 2011; Bendtro & Brokenleg, 2001; as cited in Griebling, 2009).

Teachers' Beliefs: Teachers' beliefs are the filters through which experience is screened for meaning which influences the classroom decision making and actions which in turn determine the classroom atmosphere experienced by students (Subramaniam, 2001).

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical background

2.1.1 The historical roots of child-centered education

Although many historians and academicians posit that Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712 -1778), was the pioneer of child centered education (Doddington & Hilton, 2007; Oktay, 2000; Saracho & Spodek, 2009), child-centeredness and its relevant values have been for so long topic and have deep roots in European and American cultures (Rugg & Shumaker, 1928).

After the restoration of the British monarchy in 1688, John Locke wrote two important texts: The Essay Concerning Human Understanding, 1690, and Some Thoughts Concerning Education, 1693. These two texts played an important role in the history of education from past to present. Locke was one of the most influential people who had a major role in the changes of perception in relation to children (Doddington & Hilton, 2007; Oktay, 2000). According to him, the children were not little adults. He stated that they were born as *blank tablets (tabula rasa)* and focused on the role of environment in the development of children (Locke, 1959). His principle of the connection between children's early sensations and ideas is still considered as the base of child-centered education (Doddington & Hilton, 2007; Oktay, 2000).

The idea of *child-centeredness* began to spread through Britain and Europe in the eighteenth century. The writers of the Renaissance period such as Erasmus, Bacon and Comenius stated that the interest and pleasure of children were necessary for their true education (Doddington & Hilton, 2007). According to Erasmus: "The teacher must never take his own mental interests and capacities as his guide either in discipline or instruction" (Locke, Yolton & Yolton, 1989, p.95). Bacon emphasized the importance of actual practice (Woodward, 1971) and pleasure of the mind via

imagination (Eiseley, 1962) while Comenius stated that children's interests had to be used in their education (Jardine, 1974) and said that the "desire of knowing and learning is to be stirred up in boys in every day" (Dobinson & UNESCO Institute for Education, 1970).

One of the milestones in the history of child-centered education is based on the 1798 book of *Practical Education,* written by Richard Lovell Edgeworth and his daughter Maria (Doddington & Hilton, 2007; Lascarides & Hinitz, 2000), This text can be considered to the most extensive child-centered educational work of 1790s. Locke's principles, such as freedom, active learning and respecting the developing intellect of the child, had an impact on the Edgeworths. According to them, sympathy should be used to stimulate children's attention, interest and understanding. Moreover, the Edgeworths often emphasized that mutual respect; reason and justice are the bases of adult-child relationship (Doddington & Hilton, 2007).

The opening sentence of Rousseau's famous book Emile (1950) stated that "God makes all things good; man meddles with them and they become evil" (p.5). Based on this belief, he emphasized that children had to be educated naturally, without undue inference or restrictions (Rousseau, 1950) because natural education included the qualities related to childhood such as happiness, spontaneity and the inquisitiveness which have to be promoted and supported (Rousseau, 1950; as cited in Morrison, 2008). Parents and others should not have a control over children's natural growth. This principle was accepted as *unfolding* which can be defined as the child developing as a result of maturation based on their innate developmental schedules. Therefore, children's growth should be observed and experiences should be provided at appropriate times (Morrison, 2011; Morrow & Dougherty, 2011) and understanding unfolding is important for understanding of developmentally appropriate practice (Brunson, 2004).

Although the ideas of Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi (1746-1827) are often discussed, they are valued in child-centered education. Pestalozzi, who was influenced by Rousseau, believed that children's natural development should be based on education and children's interests and needs have to be basis of education

(Green, 1914; 1969; Gutek, 1968; Morrow & Dougherty, 2011). According to him, all children are active learners, thus, the teachers' role is to stimulate children's self-activity through the training of their senses rather than direct instruction (Doddington & Hilton, 2007; Gutek, 1968; Heafford, 1967; Silber, 1973). Pestalozzi had said; *"Everything I am, everything I will, and everything I ought to do has its origin within myself"* (as cited in Silber, 1973, p. 133).

In the USA, although the term child-centeredness emerged in the late 1800s and Kliebard (1995) suggested that the origin of the child-centered term in the USA came from Froebel. However, over time, its original meaning has changed, been extended or lost according to the aim of the users of the term and it is difficult to reach a consensus about the use of the term child-centered especially in the context of early childhood education (Chung & Walsh, 2000).

In 1827, Friedrich Wilhelm Froebel (1782-1852), father of the kindergarten, first used the term child-centered in his book, *The Education of Man* (Chung & Walsh, 2000) writing that *"*in the period of childhood, man is placed in the center of all things, and all things are seen only in relation to himself, to his life*"* (Froebel, 1970, p.97). Froebel emphasized that play and children's interests were the bases of child-centered education (as cited in Morrison, 2011).

American Froebelians are important for the history of child-centered education in the USA and they can be divided into three groups; Transcendentalist, Hegelian, and Developmental (Chung & Walsh, 2000). Although the term of child-centeredness did not occur until 1886 in the USA, the Transcendentalist and Hegelian groups provide necessary historical base for the first use of it. For instance, Elizabeth Peabody was affected by the Developmental Froebelians and their construction of the meaning of child-centeredness in the 1880s. However, after the Developmentalists accepted the liberal position paper in 1903, they ceased describing themselves as Froebelian. In 1909, the ideas of Hall, Dewey and Thorndike that constituted the Americanization of the kindergarten and progressive education were developed in the 1920s and 1930s (Chung & Walsh, 2000). In 1926, Harold Rugg stated the need for a new curriculum based on children's interests and activities and referred to this curriculum as child-centered. Also, Rugg and Ann Shumaker (1928)

emphasized the importance of the child-sized environment, children's behavior and interests in the child-centered school (Rugg & Shumaker, 1928)

Chung and Walsh (2000, p. 221) claim that "the term child-centered is often attributed to Dewey however, he disavowed the term", but Rugg and Shumaker (1928) described the Dewey school at the University of Chicago, The Laboratory School at the University of Missouri and Francis Parker's Cook Country Normal School as the first child-centered schools. John Dewey's progressive education theory focused on children and their interests rather than the subject matter. He believed that education was a process of living rather than a preparation for future living and the source of activities should be daily life (Dewey, 1897). Therefore, Dewey's classroom designs are similar to the children's home (Morrison, 2008), in other words the school is accepted as a microcosm of the larger society (Mulcahy, 2007) and, children explore their interests and learn through purposeful play (Morrow & Dougherty, 2011).

According to the findings of the Plowden Report in the UK which sought free primary education in Britain based on teaching and learning principles of the time, in the 1960's child-centered education became popular since it was seen as an attractive alternative to mechanical learning (Harmelen, 1998). Although the current ideas and practices of child-centeredness in early childhood education were shaped and influenced by child development theories and various progressive educational philosophies, however, these theories and philosophies focused on child-centeredness in different ways (Tzuo, 2007).

2.1.2 Philosophical background of child-centered education

In terms of the philosophical background child-centered education that has been stated differently by different scholars. For example, although Brennen (1999) emphasized pragmatism, existentialism, humanism and progressivism as the bases of child-centered education, Henson (2003) explained that progressivism had an important effect on learner-centered education. Also, child centered education was defined as a constructivist pedagogy by Winsler and Carlton (2003) whereas Conti (2007) stressed that pragmatism, existentialism and reconstructionism, which

focused on the process of children's personal development, were accepted as learner-centered. Lastly, according to Sadker and Zittleman (2011), *Progressivism, Social Reconstructionism and Existentialism* are child-centered philosophies. Each of these philosophies is explained briefly below.

Progressivism: This has been defined by Sadker and Zittleman (2011) as the educational application of pragmatism which was refined and applied to education by John Dewey and became known as progressivism (Sadker & Zittleman, 2011). Comenius, Rousseau, Pestalozzi and Frobel, pioneers of early childhood education, were important figures in relation to progressivism (Darling & Nordenbo, 2003). Ozmon and Craver (2008) also stated that progressivism was greatly influenced by pragmatic philosophy but they stressed that there was no certain link between progressivism and pragmatism.

The characteristics of progressive classroom are similar to those of the child-centered classroom; such as children are working in small groups, moving and talking freely and each group being able to focus on different issues (Sadker & Zittleman, 2011). Children are involved in choosing activities for their own learning (Noddings, 2007) and the teachers walk around and are interested in children individually and in small groups, ask questions and make suggestions in a progressive classroom (Massouleh & Jooneghani, 2012). Furthermore, in a progressive classroom the teachers should arrange the learning environment and help the children locate knowledge and integrate it into their own experiences (Ozmon & Craver, 2008). Also, teachers should organize different interest centers with rich materials such as books, software which attracts children's interest on wide array of topics (Massouleh & Jooneghani, 2012). On one hand, the teacher is an advisor, a guide, a facilitator, and a motivator (Brennen, 1999; Ellis, 2004; Minor, Onwuegbuzie, Witcher and James, 2002). On the other hand, she seldom directs (Ellis, 2004).

A progressive curriculum is based on children's interests, experiences and abilities, and children are encouraged to work together cooperatively (Sadker & Sadker, 2003). Social interaction is important for progressivists and they suggest that

many group methods such as cooperative model-making, field-trips, role playing, and dramatizations should be used for children's education. Children's individual interests and abilities define their group (Sadker & Zittleman, 2011).

Social Reconstructionism: According to social reconstructionists, the reconstruction of society into a new and more just social order is the major aim of schools, teachers and students. Also, social reconstructionists agree with progressivists about that children's needs should be the main concentrate point of schools. However, the social reconstructionists separated from progressivists after 1920 because of slow pace of change in schools and society. According to social reconstructionists, social problems should be ameliorated in schools (Sadker & Sadker, 2003). Children's interests should be used to help them find solutions to social problems (Reed & Davis, 1999). The teachers' role was defined by social reconstructionists as exploring social problems, offering alternative perspectives and facilitating the child's analysis of these problems. As a facilitator, teachers should assist children in focusing on their questions, develop a strategy, help organize visits, and assist in helping the children find an objective perspective (Massouleh & Jooneghani, 2012). Educational objectives and social priorities must be selected by children in a democratic culture (Sadker & Zittleman, 2011). Therefore, the social reconstructionist teacher's role parallels of child-centered teacher.

Existentialism: From the perspective of this philosophy, children should make all the relevant educational decisions and evaluate these decisions. Children's perceptions, decisions and actions are very important (Massouleh & Jooneghani, 2012). Existentialism focuses on the individual rather than the existence of any source of objective and authoritative truth. Children should try to be free from influences of their parents, teachers, schools, religion and culture in order to be authentic individuals (Diehl, 2010). Children understand and appreciate themselves as unique individuals in an existentialist classroom. There is great latitude for children to choose their subject matter and activity (Brennen, 1999). Children's creativity and imagination are emphasized in existentialism. There are self-paced,

self-directed learning through individual contact with the teacher in existentialist classroom. There is a wide variety of educational options such as field trips and facilities such laboratory, woodworking shop, computer room, kitchen, art and several music rooms in existentialist schools. Each child must decide what to do in these places since that existentialists believe that authentic learning is based on children's initiation. The teacher is authentic, a mediator and enabler (Erkiliç, 2008). Existentialists accept that all children are creative and they can discover and nurture their individual talents (Sadker & Zittleman, 2011). It can be said that emphasizing of active children in existentialism is similar to children's active participation in child-centered education.

2.1.3 Theoretical framework of child-centered education

The important educators and philosophers of the last century such as Dewey (1938), Freire (2000), Piaget (1952) and Malaguzzi (1998), criticized the traditional, teacher centered education and the components of child-centered education. Their beliefs shaped a theoretical framework for child-centered education (Griebling, 2009).

According to constructivist theory, children's individual knowledge is constructed by their interactions with their environment (Piaget, 1954; Vygotsky, 1978). Although Piaget (1954) and Vygotsky (1978) agreed that the main component of development was the construction of knowledge by children (Kitchener, 1996) and there are differences between their ideas (Powell & Kalina, 2009). For example, Piaget (1954) accepted that children developed their own intelligence and language solitarily through the interaction with physical environment. However, Vygotsky (1978) focused on social interaction which supported and enhanced children's mental, language, and social development. According to Piaget, inner speech is not a prerequisite to thinking whereas Vygotsky saw inner speech as a part of the integral process of learning and thinking (Powell & Kalina, 2009). Contrary to Vygotsky's theory, Piaget's theory contains developmental stages such as the sensorimotor stage, the preoperational, the concrete operations and the formal operations. Vygotsky did

not consider children's developmental changes according to time and place (Garhart Mooney, 2000).

The framework of constructivism is based on specific components of child-centered education. These components are experience, democracy, continuity, and community (Griebling, 2009).

Experience: Dewey (1897) stated that the concept of experience was at the center of his educational philosophy. Experience provides an interpretation of what happens based on previous experiences and transforming how one interprets advanced experiences. Also, he stressed not only the importance of experiences but also the quality of the experiences which have to be interelated. While traditional teaching methods provide indirect experiences, direct experiences are provided in child-centered education. Exciting learning experiences constitute competence and desire for future learning of children (Dewey, 1938). Dewey and other modern constructivists emphasized that "education should entice the natural interest of students via authentic real-life experiences that are relevant to the child's life experiences" (Rushton & Juola-Rushton, 2008, p. 91).

Democracy: Malaguzzi (1998) believed that children's interests, needs and development should be considered in child-centered education. Children can actively contribute and co-construct the curriculum with their teachers. Both teachers and children should be free to learn in a democratic classroom. Moreover, children's rights are the key in this kind of classroom (Malaguzzi, 1998). According to Dewey, supporting the independence of children in the classroom does not exonerate teachers from responsibilities. Thus, he defines the role of teacher in a democratic classroom as being the leader rather than a dictator (Dewey, 1938; Gordon & Browne, 2007). For instance, in child-centered classrooms, children are encouraged to define their own projects and solutions by their teachers because teachers are not the authority. They support children to make their own decision on what action and how they carry it out (Bresler, 1994).

Continuity: This means that children can make connections between previous experiences and new knowledge. According to Dewey (1938), the quality of present experiences and curiosity of children are the main components of continuity. Thus,

children can attend to self-selected appropriate activities in an emergent curriculum and become active contributors to their own learning (Dewey, 1938).

When teachers plan the curriculum, they focus on children's knowledge and their previous experiences. Also, in the emergent curriculum, teachers see children as "rich in resources, strong and competent" (Rinaldi, 1998, p.114). Moreover, teachers formulate flexible and appropriate objectives for children's interests and needs (Rinaldi, 1998).

Community: Social interaction and dialogue is necessary while developing a curriculum and learning together (Dewey, 1938). Also, the social environment is the necessary scaffold or support system for children to move forward and continue to build new competencies (Vygotsky, 1978). Finally, Malaguzzi (1998) emphasized that the role of dialogue was very important for teacher and children to better understand each other in an open and democratic style.

The role of the social interaction in children's life was described by Bronfenbrenner (1979) as "*microsystem is the complex of relations between the developing person and environment in an immediate setting containing that person (e.g., home, school, workplace, etc.)"* (Bronfenbrenner, 1977, p.514). The people in this the microsystem directly affect children's development. Also, Vygotsky claimed that new capacities in the child were first developed during his/her relationship with adults or more competent peers (Vygotsky, 1978). When children's activities are scaffolded by adults and older peers, their development of self-regulation improves. This development may be a result of the encouragement to manage their own learning and attitude (Berk and Winsler, 2002).

Table 2.1 summarizes the contributions of philosophers to child-centered education.

Table 2.1 *The contributions of philosophers to child-centered education*

Persons	Concepts	Contributions to Child-Centered Education
John Locke (1632-1704)	Environmentalism	Rich environment for early sensations
Richard Lovell Edgeworth and his daughter Maria Edgeworth	Sympathy	Children's attention, interest and understanding as the result of the sympathy.
Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778)	Unfolding	Children's readiness concept as a factor in learning (Morrison, 2011; p.106)
Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi (1746-1827)	Self-activity	Teachers' role as stimulating children's self-activity through the training of their senses
Friedrich Wilhelm Frobel (1782-1852)	Unfolding, self-activity, Gifts (the sixteen learning activities)	Child-centered learning based on play and children's interests.

2.2 Research related to child-centered education

Child-centeredness is not a new concept in early childhood education (Lee & Tseng, 2008). Luther, Comenius, Pestalozzi, Froebel, Montessori, and Dewey stated that educators must provide child-centered education. These great educators and others commonly held the belief that children are essentially good therefore teachers have to provide an appropriate environment for the child's goodness to manifest itself (Morrison, 2008).

There have been some studies related to child-centered education, for example, the historical development of the term child-centered education was examined by Chung and Walsh (2000) in the context of past to current early childhood education in America. In this eclectic study, the authors determined that the meaning of child-centeredness was based on the following three elements; firstly, Frobel's idea that the child should be placed at the center of the world, secondly, from the perspective of the developmentalist construct that the child is the center of schooling, thirdly, from the progressive notion, that children should direct their own

activities. The researchers asserted that meanings had changed and been shared over time.

In relation to the impact of child-centered education on psychological well-being, a study carried out by Couglin (1996) indicated the importance of child-centered programs and their effects not only on the children but also on their parents and teachers. The researcher described the Step by Step child-centered program that was implemented in 19 different countries in Eastern and Central Europe, and in the former Soviet Union. The results showed that through this program, teachers improved their creativity and their ability to be a facilitator for their pupils, parents participated in the classroom environment and in their children's education, children showed positive behaviors, developed healthy habits and became ready for the transition to elementary school. After being enrolled in this program the children became more autonomous, since they were specifically encouraged to make their own choices, show responsible behaviors, and solve their own problems. Also, Reio, Maciolek & Weiss (2002) compared child-centered preschool and basic skills preschool programs based on children's anxiety levels and prosocial behaviors. The participants in the study were 20 children from a child-centered program and 20 children from a basic skills program. The researchers observed the children during free play and structured academic activities. They found that children in the child-centered program more often invited their friends to join the group and praised each other than the children enrolled in the basic skills program.

There are studies related to the impact of child-centered education on academic achievement. For example, an experimental study conducted by Turman and Blatt (1974) indicated that child-centered education programs have a positive effect on the child's attainment of academic skills. In the study the participants enrolled in a child centered program achieved higher scores in reading and mathematics. In addition, this type of program positively affected not only the social-emotional development and the intellectual abilities of the children but also that of teachers and parents (Turman & Blatt, 1974). Another study by Marcon (1992) found similar results to those of Turman and Blatt (1974) in terms of academic achievement. The researcher compared child-centered and teacher directed

classrooms in Columbia public schools. She compared the performances of 295 four-year-old disadvantaged children and found that the students in the child-centered classes performed significantly better in terms of their mastery of basic skills than students in the teacher directed classes. In addition, it was found that when the same students were observed in the first grade, they showed similar levels of academic achievement. Moreover, Marcon (1992) reported that students who were in child-centered classrooms had more developed social skills than their peers had.

Researchers also conducted comparative studies of teacher-centered and child-centered education and the related approaches. The effects of child-centered and didactic approaches in preschool and kindergarten programs were examined by Stipek and her colleagues (1995). The sample in this study consisted of 227 children (122 girls and 105 boys) from 32 different classes with an average age between 4 and 6 years old. The results of the study indicated that children in child-centered programs were more autonomous and motivated not only for academic issues but also in social environments. For instance, they found that children in child-centered programs selected more challenging mathematical tasks, studied more independently from adults, and liked school more. Furthermore, it was accepted that the children in this type of program had improved abilities and increased level of skills, and expected higher success on school-like tasks.

Õun, Ugaste, Tuul and Niglas (2010) compared the child-centered (Step by Step program) and traditional Estonian kindergarten teachers' activities and their evaluation related to their child-centered activities. The participants of this study were 150 teachers from the Step by Step kindergartens and 158 teachers from traditional kindergartens. The researchers found that child-centered approach was applied more frequently in daily schedule of the Step by Step kindergartens than in the traditional kindergartens. In the Step by Step kindergartens there was a more meaningful learning environment, greater parent involvement, and the teaching strategies, supporting children's independence and choices were more child-centered than in the traditional kindergartens. On the other hand, Klein, Hammrich, Bloom and Ragins (2000) examined the Head Start on Science and Communication program. They focused on teachers, classroom assistance and parents in 12 Head

Start classrooms for phase 1 and 8 classrooms in phase 2. The researchers concluded that it cannot be assumed that information acquired through child-centered methods is better than teacher directed or visa versa. The best method is the combination of these two methods which can help children to reach their true potential.

These findings are parallel to those found by Willson-Quayle (2001) in her examination of the effects of child-centered, teacher-directed and scaffolded instruction on low-income, Latino preschoolers' task performance, motivation and private speech. Sixty-one preschoolers were randomly assigned to different classes in which there were child-centered, teacher-directed and scaffolded teaching approaches. The results of pretest and posttest showed that one teaching approach was not clearly better than other in terms of increasing these preschooler's task performance, motivation, and private speech. Therefore, it is not possible to say that any one approach is the best, in other words, different teaching approaches may have a different impact on each individual child. Moreover, in her study, Schuh (2004) attempted to demonstrate how learner centered principles could be entwined in teacher-centered practices through student perceptions of their teacher and classroom practices. The researcher administered the questionnaire to the students and teachers then held interviews and observed the classroom practice. According to the findings of the study, the principles of a learner-centered can be embedded in a teacher-centered environment.

Some studies focused on teachers' perceptions, views and practices related to child-centeredness and child-centered education. Murphy (2004) examined the actual practice of Irish infant classrooms teachers related to the adoption of the new child-centered Irish primary school curriculum. The researcher observed 15 Irish senior infant classrooms (pupils between 5 and 6 years old). The findings of this study showed that despite the new curriculum the classroom practice remained teacher focused. The lack of suitable classroom equipment, class size and teacher training were considered to define the teacher focused approach furthermore, the teachers' beliefs and traditional classroom experiences influenced their instructional practices. Murphy (2004) suggested that teachers should re-construct their own understanding related to child-centered constructivist classroom practice during their professional

development programs in order to achieve the desired classroom instructional practices. In another study, Murphy (2006) examined the views, attitudes and methodological practices of Irish infant teachers about child-centered practice. The analysis of 186 questionnaires showed that instead of child-centered education; the most of the teachers were implementing traditional, teacher centered education in their classrooms. Teachers stated lack of availability of appropriate equipment, resources and high pupil-teacher ratio as the reasons for their practice.

Paris and Combs (2006) also conducted a study to explore the meaning of learner-centered from a teachers' perspective. The researchers collected data from interviews with teachers who defined themselves as learner-centered. According to the results of the study, the teachers' responses suggest that finite or static and unquestioned definitions cannot capture the meaning of learner-centeredness. Myagmar (2010) examined Mongolian preschool educators' perceptions of the child-centered approach (child-centered instruction, method, learning). The results from 262 surveys of typical kindergartens and special (Step by Step) program kindergartens showed that although preschool educators were interested in the child-centered approach; their understanding were one-sided and confused. On the one hand, these preschool educators demonstrated a tendency to stress the importance of the child's individuality; on the other hand they were less concerned about the teachers and their role. Also, there were some differences between the special program kindergartens and the ordinary kindergartens. The educators in the former saw that child-centered approach was very appropriate for today's kindergarten life; the educators in the ordinary kindergartens perceived that the child-centered approach is not so appropriate and that child-centered approach is not valued because of the time consumed in organizing an appropriate environment. Interestingly, the special kindergartens' educators commented that child-centered approach was undesirable in terms of the discipline and morale of a class and for collectivity. The ordinary kindergarten' educators emphasized that a child-centered approach is important in relation to knowledge construction, provision and acquisition.

Õun, Saar-ugaste and Niglas (2008) conducted research about the views of early childhood staff on educational objectives, aspects of the educational process

and the role of family in child rearing. There were 342 participants in the study and the researchers found that early childhood staff considered that the most important educational objectives are the child's individual characteristics. Although, the participants emphasized the importance of child-centered approach, they were not ready to accept parents as equal partners and share responsibility with them.

Lastly, other researchers focused on culture and child-centered education. Lee and Tseng (2008) conducted qualitative research to examine the cultural conflicts in the application of a child-centered approach in preschool education in Taiwan. They interviewed 3 preschool teachers and found that there was ambiguity in relation to the Western pedagogical notion implementing child-centeredness. The researchers asserted that child-centeredness has to be (re)conceptualized as a cultural construct. A learner-centered sites project was developed by Canedo and Woodard (2000). The aim was to design and implement a child-centered education program in Buffalo, New York, which has a diverse school population. In their project, they defined the main components of child-centered education program as: "1) Emphasis on the whole child: his or her physical, cognitive, social and emotional development, 2) Classroom environment, 3) Learning through active involvement and teamwork, 4) Center-based learning (eventually, for about one hour daily), 5) Balance among large-group, small-group, and individual instruction, 6) Individual instruction based on observed needs, 7) integrated learning, when relevant"(p. 290). Teacher's needs, concerns and goals were responded during the study. The slogan of Canedo and Woodard's learner centered sites project (2000) was "There is no one RIGHT way" (p. 290). They said that the success of the program was thanks to this flexible attitude. For instance, some teachers used center time in the morning while some preferred this to occur before lunch or end of the day. In Canedo and Woodard's learner centered sites project the teachers were supported concerning the components of child-centered education such as behavior management, child development translated into classroom practice, flexible grouping, and thematic planning (Canedo & Woodard, 2000).

Although within the ideas of philosophers, theorists and educators, there is a strong emphasis on the importance of child-centered education, and the existence of

studies that not only test the current philosophies, theories and practices but also show the positive effects of child-centered education, many research studies show that teachers engage in inappropriate practices within a child-centered curriculum. Winsler and Carlton (2003), investigated child-centered education in the context of the children's daily activities, social affiliation, and behavior in the class. The researchers interviewed teachers, who identified themselves as child-centered constructivists, about their pedagogical philosophy, interacted with different people and observed the behaviors of the children in teachers' classes. The sample of the study consisted of two head teachers and 28 preschool children. On completion of the study, the researcher found that teacher practices are less appropriate to developmentally appropriate practices than to the teachers' professed beliefs. Brading (2003) examined primary grade teacher's thoughts and classroom practices related to developmentally appropriate practice. The researcher observed and interviewed four primary teachers and their classroom schedules were examined. It was found that teacher' beliefs were consistent with the elements of the National Association for the Education of Young Children however; they were frustrated about the curriculum in their school. The participant teachers combined their personal beliefs and the expectations of their schools. Also, teachers reflected the difficulty of using a child-centered approach in public schools.

Moreover, there were studies which confirmed the consistency between theory and practice. For instance, Tzuo (2004) examined the interrelationship between theory and praxis to explicate the meanings of child-centeredness in Early Childhood Education. There was a consistency between teacher's beliefs and teaching practices and both were based on several theories. Also, flexibility was the main issue in the teacher's plans to meet children's needs. The researcher accepted her participant's practices as an example of Dewey's definition of the teacher and the independent mental tool of teaching. Another study focused on the effect of a yearlong mentoring program on the teachers' child-centered beliefs. Trepanier-Street, Adler and Taylor (2007) examined college students' beliefs about early childhood development and whether a yearlong mentoring program promoted their child-centered beliefs. There were 941 participants in their study who were part of

the Jumpstart program 2003-2004 which was a national intensive mentoring program across the United States. After the comparison of the college students' beliefs based on their pre and post surveys results, the college students' beliefs appeared to have strengthened during their 12 month experience and became more child-centered, constructivist and less skills-based.

In the Turkish context, there have been very limited studies focusing on child-centeredness in early childhood education. Kaya and Güngör Aytar (2012) examined how Turkish preschool teachers put the child-centered approach into practice. In this mixed design study, the researchers administered a scale for preschool teachers applying child-centered approach to 133 preschool teachers. Also, researchers observed two teachers in their classrooms, interviewed them and examined their daily plans. The researchers found that the majority of teachers achieved significantly high scores from the scale and their scores related to utilization of the principles of the child-centered approach were also high. Also, the preschool teachers' scores obtained from the scale were directly proportional to their practices. However, for the teacher with the highest score there was a difference between her practice and her ideas related to shaping her practices based on child-centered approach.

Isikoglu, Basturk and Karaca (2009) examined the beliefs about student-centered education of in-service teachers who taught from kindergarten to eighth grade. The researchers administered to 307 teachers an inventory covering four components of the educational curriculum including educational objectives, content, teaching strategies and instructional assessment. It was found that in-service teachers had positive beliefs about student-centered education furthermore, their level of schooling, teaching experience, educational background and teaching subject had statistically significant effects on their beliefs. For example, the early childhood teachers stressed more child-centered beliefs than Turkish, Math and Social Studies teachers in the teaching subjects and teaching strategies subscales.

Bulut (2008) examined the views of teachers on student centered practices in the new Turkish primary school curriculum. A new student centered primary school curriculum assessment scale was administered to 370 classroom teachers. The results

showed that there were significant differences in occupational seniority and class size. Teachers with higher occupational seniority had more positive views related to the educational environment than teachers who had less occupational seniority. Also, teachers with a low class size had more positive views related to educational environment than teachers who had high class size.

There were other studies which examined student/learner/child-centeredness for different levels, grade and subjects in Turkish context. For example, Yilmaz (2008) examined social studies teachers' views of learner-centered instruction. However, this research is not presented in this study because it is not directly related to child-centeredness in early childhood education. Also, researchers reviewed the literature such as, Gürşen Otacıoğlu (2008) who examined child-centered learning and music strategies in preschool classrooms. This study consisted of main topics such as child-based applications in music education, and the differences between child-based and teacher-based music class.

2.2.1 Learner-centered psychological principles

Learner-centered psychological principles are the bases of all learner/student/child-centered practices. Learner-centered practices (LCP) changed the focal point from the teacher and instruction to the student and learning. They were derived from 14 principles proposed by the Learner-Centered Principles Work Group of the American Psychological Association Board of Educational Affairs (BEA) in 1990 and revised in 1997. The main goal of learner-centered psychological principles is to contribute to educational reform and school redesign efforts. These principles are aimed to be applied to all learners, involved in America's educational system such as children, teachers, administrators, parents and community members (APA Work Group of the Board Educational Affairs, 1997). The principles are consistent with the research on teaching and learning conducted for over more than a century. The nature of learning and learners is emphasized by these principles as active and reflective (APA Work Group of the Board Educational Affairs, 1997). Appendix A of this study contains a summary of the Learner-Centered Psychological Principles from the APA Work Group of the Board Educational Affairs (McCombs, 2000).

McCombs and colleagues (McCombs, 2003; McCombs & Lauer, 1997; McCombs & Whisler, 1997) developed the Assessment of Learner-Centered Practice (ALCP) a set of surveys based on the Learner-Centered Psychological Principles. The ALCP was designed to be used by students, teachers, administrators and teacher educators (McCombs, 1997, 2001, 2003) thus, the ALCP can be used at all levels from kindergarten to college (McCombs, 2003). Teachers and their students can use it as a self-assessment tool since the intention of the ALCP it is to define the consistency between classroom practice and Learner-Centered Psychological Principles (McCombs, 2003). The validation study involved more than 5,000 teachers and more than 25.000 students. It was found that teachers who were more learner-centered were happier in their work and had an effective learning process. Moreover, it was reported that it was not be possible to say that a teacher was absolutely learner-centered or non-learner-centered (McCombs, 2003; McCombs & Lauer, 1997; McCombs & Whisler, 1997).

In a later study McCombs, Daniels and Perry (2008) aimed to assess the consistency between instructional practices and the principles created by the American Psychological Association. The sample of their study consisted of 2,100 K3 grade children and their teachers (n=124). The results of the study showed that the perceptions of children who had more learner-centered teachers predicted more positive perceptions of competence. Also, these children reported greater interest and pleasure in attending school and the academic subjects. Lastly, children's perceptions about the teachers' role in children's motivational outcomes were stronger than teachers' perceptions related to their own classroom practice.

In conclusion, McCombs (2000) emphasized that "Learner-centered is the perspective that couples a focus on individual learners-their heredity, experiences, perspectives, backgrounds, talents, interests, capacities and needs-with a focus on learning-the best available knowledge about learning and how it occurs and about teaching practices that are most effective in promoting the highest levels of motivation, learning, and achievement for all learners" (as cited in Lascarides & Hinitz, 2000; p. 5).

2.3 Child-centered early childhood programs

It was assumed that having an understanding the main properties of child-centered education and examining the well-known child-centered curricula models would be helpful for the analysis and interpretation of the participant teachers' beliefs and practices. Although the discussion of the appropriateness of the teachers' beliefs and practices related to child-centered education based on NAEYC's accreditation (2011), some characteristics of child-centered curricula were also considered. Therefore, the main properties of child-centered education and some well-known child-centered programs are presented below.

2.3.1 The main properties of child-centered education

2.3.1.1 What are the children's needs?

The needs of children should be used to develop sets of aims and objectives which are to guide educational practices (Harmelen, 1998). Maslow (1943), Erikson (1950) and Coopersmith (1967) tried to analyze and discuss children's developmental needs. Griebling (2009) also stated that children had biological needs such as food and shelter, and developmental needs such as self-worth and self-esteem. He also emphasized that a child-centered pedagogy aimed to fulfill the following four developmental needs:

1- The need for mastery (When children feel competent; their motivation for learning will increase. Children will try to master an understanding of their world).

2- The need for independence (A sense of autonomy and independence are important for children and they want to say what they learn and how they learn it).

3- The need for generosity (Children can feel that they have a very important role in their community thanks to the act of generosity. Children want to make a contribution to society).

4- The need to belong (Children need to belong to a community) (Bendtro & Brokenleg, 2001; as cited in Griebling, 2009).

2.3.1.2 *Which developmental domain needs to be most supported in child-centered education?*

Early childhood teachers have to teach and support each child at their growth and development pace across all the domains; physical, social and emotional and cognitive (Morrison, 2011). Thus, all the domains of development and learning are equally important and furthermore, they are also closely interrelated. In other words, children's development and learning in one domain both influence and are influenced by the activity in the other domains. Changes in one domain can facilitate or limit development in other areas. For example, when a child starts to walk, they have new possibilities for exploring the world and this affects their both cognitive development and sense of autonomy. Child-centered programs promote all the developmental domains (Brown, 2009; Meyer, 2001; Reio, Maciolek & Weiss, 2002).

2.3.1.3 What type of physical environment should there be in child-centered education?

a) Teacher-child ratio: The groups of children may consist of single age or multiple ages. NAEYC (2011) suggested 16-18-20 children to two adults in 4 to 5 year old preschool classrooms and 20-22-24 children to two adults for 6 year-old. Briefly, it can be said that as a general rule there can be approximately 20 children and 2 teachers in early childhood classrooms (Clapp, 1996).
b) Interest areas/Learning area: The classroom space should be divided into various areas to support children's play and learning. Child-centered classrooms should include a variety of interest/learning areas and materials. Also, washable and soft elements for conversations or comforting should not be neglected. These areas should be appropriate for small and large group activities. Semi-private areas should also be provided so that children can play or work alone or with a friend. Children and teachers should be able to use clear pathways to move from one area to another without disturbing other children's work and play (NAEYC, 2011).
c) Movement area/class size: There should be a minimum of 3.25150 square meters of usable space for each child in indoor activity areas (NAEYC, 2011).

d) Temperature/lighting/safety: All areas should be free from glass, trash, sharp or hazardous items and visible soil and should be in a clean condition. Also, all areas and equipment should be kept in good repair (NAEYC, 2011).
e) Materials: There should be a variety of age and developmentally appropriate materials and equipment such as dramatic play equipment, and sensory materials (sand, water, play dough, paint and blocks). Children should be able to use the materials throughout the day. The materials should support the curriculum goals and objectives in literacy, science, math, social studies and other content areas. Also, the gross-motor equipment should support psychomotor skill of children (NAEYC, 2011).
f) Decoration of walls: Children's work must be displayed on wall (NAEYC, 2011).

2.3.1.4 In child-centered education, what should be considered when choosing materials in the classroom?

The height of the chairs and tables should be child-sized. Children should be able to use them easily and their feet should be on the floor or ground. Also, there should be sufficient materials for all children to use and facilitate both individual play and play with peers. There should be multicultural materials which represent the cultural traditions, values, and beliefs of the children and their families (NAEYC, 2011).

2.3.1.5 What should be considered when arranging the classroom?

The appropriate implementation of a program's philosophy is based on the classroom arrangement and it should support child-centeredness and active learning. The design of materials and space should encourage children's discovering, searching, interest in books, and experimenting with sand and water. The children should be able to recreate their learning through blocks, clay, woodshop materials, artwork and dramatic play (Morrison, 2011).

There should be child-accessible shelves which are clearly labeled and filled with open-ended materials and tools. Learning centers should also be accessible to the children (Morrison, 2011). Materials should be organized and grouped on low, open shelves to encourage children to use them independently (NAEYC, 2011).

Moreover, there should be materials and space for hands-on activities. The furniture should be arranged in such a way that children can work and play together. Children should be able to work together side by side and across from one another on tables and workspaces (Morrison, 2011). Lastly, there should be places where children's work is displayed (NAEYC, 2011).

2.3.1.6 What should be considered when planning and implementing a child-centered activity?

Teachers should consider children's ideas, learning styles, preferences and interests when they plan the lessons (Morrison, 2011). There should be both indoor and outdoor experiences. The daily schedule should be predictable but flexible providing time and support for transitions. Also, the inclusion of play should be planned for each day (Meyer, 2001).

Teachers should provide children with materials and allow them time to select their own activities and the opportunity to participate in group projects and learn from the other children. The environment should be reorganized to encourage children to explore new concepts and topics. Teachers should use their knowledge of each individual child to modify strategies and materials when they want to enhance a child's learning. Teachers should observe, talk and listen to children during activities to learn about children's ideas and discern how they understand things (NAEYC, 2011). Teachers should use multiple sources to foster children's curiosity, extend their engagement, and support self-initiated learning. Teachers should support and challenge children's learning during teacher initiated and child initiated activities. Teachers should give children the opportunity to express their ideas and build meaningful experiences.

2.3.1.7 How should the timing of activities be managed in child-centered education?

The daily schedule should be predictable; however, it should also be flexible and responsive to the individual needs of the children. There should be both indoor and outdoor activities during the day these activities should provide the children with the opportunity to be active and to rest. Teachers should provide children with time each day to select their own activities. There should be time and support for transitions. Children should have time for play, creative expression, large-group,

small-group and child initiated activities (NAEYC, 2011). Children should be engaged in something else to do when they wait for materials or their turn. There should be time for rest, relaxation and pleasure (Morrison, 2011). Also, there should be ample time for children to think about, investigate and collaborate on their learning (DiNatale, Steele and Elliott, 2009).

2.3.1.8 What type of teacher-child relationship should there be in child-centered education?

Teachers should use frequent, regular, meaningful, and extended social interaction such as asking questions, and listening carefully, mutual laughter and affection to create a positive emotional climate. In particular, the teacher should smile; use physical affection, eye contact, and an appropriate tone of voice. Also, teachers should provide comfort, support and assistance when children have positive initiations, negative emotions and feelings of hurt and fear; in this way, children can feel secure. Teachers should build relationship with each child and encourage the child to express both positive and negative emotions appropriately and change their responses based on their individual needs. This means that teachers should consider the individual abilities, temperaments, activity levels and cognitive-social development. It is important that teachers should never use physical punishment, psychological abuse or coercion (NAEYC, 2011).

2.3.1.9 What is the role of the teacher in child-centered education?

Teachers should respect the children to foster their emotional well-being and they should also recognize and praise the children's work and accomplishments. The children's competent and self-reliant exploration and use of classroom materials should be supported. Teachers should help children talk about their own and others' emotions. Teachers should provide children with the opportunities to develop friendship and play together. When children tease or reject others, teachers should intervene and help children manage their behavior (NAEYC, 2011).

2.3.1.10 What is the role of children in child-centered education?

Children should participate in the decision making and implementing of classroom's rules, plans and activities (NAEYC, 2011).

2.3.1.11 How should classroom rules be established and communicated in child-centered education?

Classroom rules should be determined with children. Children who bully, isolate, or hurt other children should be guided in the understanding the classroom rules by their teacher (NAEYC, 2011).

2.3.1.12 What strategies should be used to prevent children's misbehaviors in child-centered education?

Teachers should attempt to prevent potential behavior problems by anticipating and taking preventative steps but they should never use threats or derogatory remarks. They also should facilitate positive peer interaction for children who are socially reserved or withdrawn and bullied or excluded. Children should be able to identify their feelings, describe their problems and try to find alternative solutions to resolve their conflicts with help of their teachers. Moreover, teachers, families and other professionals should work together to support children's inclusion and success when children have persistent, serious and challenging behaviors. Teachers should use environmental rearrangements and activity modifications to reduce challenging behavior. Lastly, teachers should guide and support children in using problem-solving techniques and play cooperatively with other children.

2.3.1.13 What are the functions of reward and punishment in child-centered education?

Rewarding is not appropriate for child-centered education and teachers should never use physical punishment (shaking, hitting) and psychological abuse or coercion (NAEYC, 2011).

2.3.1.14 How should children be assessed in child-centered education?

Teachers should consider the child's age and development stage. All developmental domains should be assessed and the assessment should be appropriate for the children's developmental status, experiences and individual differences. Assessment should be based on natural authentic situations (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009) and different methods of authentic assessment can be used such as observations, anecdotal records, running records, event sampling, time sampling,

rating scales, checklists, work samples, portfolios, and interviews, and rubrics (Morrison, 2011).

2.3.1.15 What is the importance of process in assessment?

Teachers should focus on the child's progress toward (individual) goals (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009). Assessment should be ongoing and over entire year. Children should be assessed continually throughout the year not just at a specific time (Morrison, 2011).

2.3.1.16 What is the role of parents in child-centered education?

Teachers should develop a strong reciprocal relationship with parents with family conferences or home visits used to increase this dialogue. Parents should be able to share their knowledge related to their children's interests, developmental needs, concerns and goals with the teachers. All family members whether from different socioeconomic status, race, religion, cultural backgrounds, gender and abilities should be included in all aspects of the program (NAEYC, 2011). There should be mutual trust and respect between teacher and parents (Jones, 2007). The parents' participation should be voluntary and based on their interests and skills (Hurless & Gittings, 2008). Teachers and parents should work together to plan events and during this planning, parents' schedules and availability should be considered. Parents should be able visit the school or classrooms whenever they want (NAEYC, 2011).

All over the world, there are many early childhood programs which are accepted as child-centered. For example, the *Step by Step (SbS*) early childhood program is used in over the 30 countries and is especially common in the central and east part of Europe (Stasz, Krop, Rastegar & Vuollo, 2008). The *Success For Life Thailand (SFLT)* is one of the child-centered programs in Thailand (Israsena, 2007). However, the most well-known accepted approaches to child centered education; Montessori Method, High Scope model, Reggio Emilia model and Project Approach are explained here. Montessori Method (Cossentiono, 2010; Morrison, 2011, Rajan, 2010; Rambusch, 1992), High Scope model (Davis, 2010; Morrison, 2011; Wolfgang & Wolfgang, 1999) and Reggio Emilia model (Bell, 2010; Inan, Trundle & Kantor, 2010; Morrison, 2011) were accepted as child-centered.

2.3.2 The Montessori Method

Maria Montessori originally based her educational method on the work of Edouard, who was an educator of mentally challenged children, and Freidrich Froebel (Spodek, 1973). Montessori emphasized the uniqueness of each child and the importance of independent learning and articulated that a child's interests and needs have to be considered when planning curriculum (Buell & Sutton, 2008). Her views have had a great effect in early childhood education such as the preparation of the environment, providing child-size furniture, promoting active learning and independence, and using multi- age grouping (Morrison, 2011).

Respect for the child, the absorbent mind, sensitive periods, prepared environment and auto-education are accepted as the five basic principles of the Montessori Method (Morrison, 2011). Teachers show respect for children during the learning process, guide and scaffold learning and the children do things and learn for themselves. Children must also have choices for effective learning, autonomy, and positive self-esteem (Pickering, 1992; Morrison, 2011). The absorbent mind means that young children's minds are receptive to and capable of learning (Morrison, 2011; O'Shea & O'Shea, 2011). Children are born to learn and they learn unconsciously by taking information from the environment. Therefore, children's learning depends on their teachers, experiences and environment (Polk-Lillard, 1996; Morrison, 2011). According to Montessori, there are sensitive or critical periods in which children can learn specific skills more easily. All children experience the same sensitive periods but the timing may vary for each child. Montessori stated that the best learning occurs in a prepared environment, with materials and experiences available for children to explore for themselves (Montessori, 2004) and the order and organization of materials is important (Kalinowski, 2010). Children have to be free within prepared environment so that they can explore the materials they have chosen on their own and they can freely absorb what they find there. Materials and activities are provided in three basic areas; (1) practical life or motor education, (2) sensory materials for training the senses and (3) academic materials for teaching writing, reading and mathematics. Montessori's materials are self-correcting; through these

materials children can determine their own errors and make corrections independently (Morrow & Dougherty, 2011). According to the last basic principles of Montessori, auto-education, children are capable of educating themselves (Lopata, Wallace & Finn, 2005; Morrison, 2011). Children can educate themselves when actively and freely involved in a prepared environment (Cooperstein & Kocevar-Weidinger, 2004). The teacher has the following roles in the Montessori model (Hatch, 2010; Watkins & Noble, 2011); (1) making children the center of learning, (2) encouraging them to learn, (3) observing them, (4) introducing the learning materials, (5) preparing the learning environment, (6) respecting each child (Morrison, 2011). Teachers should inspire a sense of curiosity, enthusiasm and interest among children during a normal school day (McCarthy, 2007).

2.3.3 High Scope: A constructivist model

Piaget's cognitive development theory and Vygotsky's social development theory are the basis of the High Scope educational model (Copple, 2003). This model is based on key developmental indicators (KDIs) which guide teachers in planning, assessing and interacting with children to support learning. The KDIs consist of five curriculum content areas; (1) approaches to learning, (2) language, literacy and communication, (3) social and emotional development, (4) physical development, health and well-being and (5) arts and sciences (Justice, Mashburn, Pence & Wiggins, 2008; Morrison, 2011).

Morrison (2011) also stated that there are three principles of the High Scope model; (1) children's active participation in choosing, organizing and evaluating learning activities, (2) regular daily plans grounded in developmentally based curriculum and careful observations of each child and (3) consideration of High Scope's key developmental indicators while defining developmental goals and materials for children. Materials, equipment and time are provided to the children by a plan-do-review sequence in order to design activities themselves. Also, clean-up, plan-do-review, small and whole group activities, and outdoor activities are part of the daily schedule of the High Scope (Günay Bilaloğlu, 2004).

The classroom arrangement is one of the important elements in High Scope (Bacon-Prince, 2010). There are five or more interest centers encouraging choice and there is an order related to placing of the materials. Children know which materials they can use. This classroom arrangement encourages development of self-direction and independence (Bacon-Prince, 2010; Morrison, 2011).

Another important element is assessment in which the key developmental indicators are used in note form, a portfolio of the child's work, and the observation records of each child are used by teachers to assess and better understand a the child's way of thinking and learning (Epstein, Schweinhart, DeBruin-Parecki & Robin, 2004; Morrison, 2011; Weikart & Schweinhart, 1997).

Teachers have a key role in the High Scope and the curriculum provides teachers with a framework to guide the children. The High Scope is different from direct instruction and teacher centered curricula in terms of teacher-student interaction in which teachers encourage children to set many of their own goals and actively participate in the problem solving process (Morrison, 2011). At the same time, teachers select developmentally appropriate and sequenced materials for children (Morrison, 2011; Weikart & Schweinhart, 1997).

2.3.4 Reggio Emilia approach

This approach originated in the town of Reggio Emilia in Italy (Inan, Trundle & Kantor, 2010). The theoretical background of the Reggio Emilia approach is based on constructivism and compatible with Piaget, Vygotsky, Dewey and Gardner's ideas (Morrison, 2011).

There are some key words and basic principles in Reggio Emilia. Firstly, each child is at the center of learning and their participation in their learning is at the heart of the Reggio Emilia approach (Wexler, 2004; Inan, Trundle & Kantor, 2010). Respect for children has an important in the method (Wexler, 2004) and relationships are also significant. The Reggio Emilia approach, based on the views of Vygotsky and Montessori, develops and maintains relationships with families, other children, teachers, the environment of the school, community and the wider society (Morrison, 2011; Rinaldi, 2006). In particular, the teachers and children are partners in a

continual process of research and learning. Teachers closely observe, listen to and engage in dialogues with the children about their plans and works (Bennett, 2001). Morrison (2011) stated that "the curriculum emerges in the process of each activity or project and is flexibly adjusted accordingly through this continuous dialogue among teachers and with children" (p. 167).

Reggio Emilia has unique physical properties. The centers and schools are attractive and details related to the color of the walls, the shape of the furniture, and green plants are considered. There are mini-ateliers in each classroom for the children to carry out activities and projects. Also, each child has a small box with their name on it on the wall of hallway of the school. The children's work is displayed on the walls (Bennett, 2001). Moreover, Malaguzzi (1984) emphasized the term of 'the hundred languages of children' which means that the children have unique capabilities such as drawing, building, modeling, sculpturing, discussing, inventing, and discovering (Edwards, Gandini & Forman, 1993).

Documentation is important in the Reggio Emilia approach. This includes the record of the children's work, including art, samples of their work, projects, and drawings. The children's words and actions are documented by written transcriptions, photographs, audio recordings or videotapes during the activities (Donegan, Hong, Trepanier-Street & Finkelstein, 2005; Morrison, 2011). This meticulous documentation increases the teacher's knowledge in relation to children's learning styles, children' behaviors and this improves the teachers' relationship with the children (Turner & Wilson, 2010).

The teacher is collaborator, co-learner, guide, facilitator and researcher in Reggio Emilia schools (Edwards, 1993; Hewett, 2001). Collaboration is not only between teacher and children but also with colleagues and parents (Hewett, 2001). The teacher not only sit and observe children; but should also should play an active role related to providing motivation and tools which assist the child in achieving their goals. Teacher should observe and listen to the children in order to discover the children's interests and curiosity, and answer their questions. After these observations and listening, teacher facilitates children's learning (Edwards, 1993; Hewett, 2001). Parents are also important in Reggio Emilia they participate in

program in many ways such as day to day interaction, work in schools, special events and celebrations (Bennett, 2001).

2.3.5 Project approach

Although the project approach became popular with the first edition of *Engaging children's minds: The project approach* in 1989 by Katz and Chard, it is not a new way to teach children (Helm & Katz, 2011). One of the first publications related to the project approach was written by Professor William Heard Kilpatrick was The *Project Method* published in 1919 by Teachers College, Columbia University (Spodek & Saracho, 2003). Moreover, in the 1960s and 1970s, the project approach was used widely in British infant schools. It has also been an essential part of the progressive education movement (Smith, 1997).

A project was defined by Katz (1994, p.1) as "an in- depth investigation of a topic worth learning more about. The investigation is usually undertaken by a small group of children within a class, sometimes by a whole class, and occasionally by an individual child. The key feature of a project is that it is a research effort deliberately focused on finding answers to questions about a topic posed either by the children, the teacher, or the teacher working with the children."

Projects have three stages: beginning, developing and concluding. The length of projects can vary from several weeks to months (MacDonell, 2007). A key criterion for topic choice is areas in which the children are interested. If there is no child initiation, child decision-making and active participation of children, it will not be a project (Helm & Katz, 2011).

Some studies have documented the benefits of projects for children, teachers and parents. In relation to children and teachers, the project approach is more child friendly than traditional methods and it introduces new ways of teaching and learning (Brooks & Wangmo, 2011). Children have opportunities for deeper learning, understanding and application during projects (Buell & Sutton, 2008). The special developmental needs of children can be accommodated and met within the projects (Donegan, Hong, Trepanier-Street & Finkelstein, 2005). Experiences in projects are also more effective than teacher prepared experiences for children to become

intellectually involved to a greater degree. Moreover, projects allow children to experience the joy of self-motivated learning because children's curiosity can be expressed purposefully. Also, projects provide children to make decisions related to topic selection, investigation and how to end the project thus, the teacher at the onset will not know what features of the topic interest the children and neither will the teacher know the direction that the topic will take (Helm & Katz, 2011).

Children's curiosity, independent activity and engagement with the real world provide the basis of an open attitude towards the world which children can come to know in an active and interesting way. Also, teachers can see the visible results of their own work on the project (Grzegorzewska & Konieczna-Blicharz, 2011). The valuing children's interest and activities by adults and peers may increase children's sense of self-worth. Teachers who engage in these types of project need to be flexible and responsive in order to continually consider the children's interests and learning needs and the teachers' role is that of facilitating children to do their best (Katz & Chard, 2000). Lastly, through project work parents discover more about their children's abilities and learning techniques which allows the parents to fostering their children's learning in the home (Helm & Katz, 2011).

2.4 Preschool education program of Turkey

In 2009 a pilot study was started by the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) in 35 provinces of Turkey to provide compulsory early childhood education. However, preschool; education is still not compulsory nationwide. The preschool education program for children aged from 36 to72 months began to be applied in 2002. The program was analyzed and evaluated based on feedback from teachers and researchers and by considering practices in countries of the European Union. As a result of this analysis, after revision and updating in 2006 by a commission consisting of international experts, academicians from universities, preschool teachers, and authorities of head office, the program was considered to be appropriate to current approaches of program development and theories of psychology. A book was published to guide teachers' classroom practices, and daily and activity plans (MEB, 2006). Although some changes were made to the MoNE

program in 2012, the main features of 2006 program were retained and are given below summarized from Gürkan, (2006) and the MEB document (2006):

- It is oriented to children aged 36-72 months and it is child-centered.
- The goals and objectives are the bases.
- Aspects of development are organized under separate headings for different age groups.
- There are flexible the subjects in the curriculum and these subjects are tools not the goal.
- Teachers are given more freedom.
- Creativity is in the forefront.
- Teachers have to study as planned.
- It is important to provide an environment which enables to children to freely experience different experiences.
- Problem solving and play are main activities.
- It fosters daily educational experiences and facilities of the indoor/outdoor environment.
- Parent involvement has an important place.
- Assessment is holistic.
- Specific days and weeks are determined according to age groups' common properties.
- The curriculum is open to development.
- Additionally, the adaptation of the European Union and international norms were integrated to the new curriculum.

All of the above features are important; however, in this study the feature of child-centeredness is the main focus therefore, the information given above that focuses on the children centered aspects of the curriculum provides the background to this study. Although some studies about Turkish preschool curriculum as a whole exist, there are limited studies which focus on a certain principles of the curriculum. For example, Erden (2010) conducted a study to investigate the problems that Turkish preschool teachers face during the implementation of the new curriculum.

Quantitative data was collected from 223 preschool teachers using a questionnaire and qualitative data were collected from interviews with selected teachers. The results showed that the most frequently reported problems were related to assessment and physical facilities, planning science and math activities, organizing field trips, providing parent involvement and inclusion. Preschool teachers working in public kindergartens experienced more problems in terms of physical facilities than teachers working in private preschools. Moreover, the preschool teachers' years of experiences, level of education and the departments that they graduated from appeared to have no effect on their perceptions.

2.4.1 Child-centeredness in Turkey's preschool education program

This section gives an overview of the how child centeredness is presented in the new Turkish preschool curriculum.

The child's age, developmental features, interest, needs, individual features, differences and near environment's features are taken into account to achieve the objectivities, regulate activities, and principles of assessment. Every teacher has to consider his/her students' developmental features when making their teaching plan. Activities have to be prepared according to the children's developmental age not chronological. Teachers have to facilitate the process in a way of providing children with realizing their interests, enhancing and developing new skills. Moreover, teachers have to offer alternatives to children for different interests and motivations (MEB, 2006).

Teachers have to offer children opportunities for planning, doing, accommodation, reconnoitering, argumentation, and producing something. An appropriate environment and continuous orientation are important in child-centered education. Teachers have to consider child-centeredness in all parts of the education.

2.5 Beliefs

2.5.1 Characteristics of teacher beliefs

The investigation of teachers' beliefs is one of the important avenues of educational research (Pajares, 1992). In particular, beliefs have been one of the main focus points of teacher education and researchers have examined over the years how beliefs were acquired, maintained and altered (Han, 2012). For instance, Janas (1999) examined studies related to teacher beliefs and stressed the diversity of teachers' beliefs about teaching. Although there is limited research reporting both the nature of educational belief acquisition and the connection to student outcomes, researchers claim that there is a powerful relationship between teachers' beliefs and their instructional decisions, planning and classroom practices (Pajares, 1992). This means that as a major determinant, beliefs define teachers' classroom decisions and responses to questions (Vartuli, 2005; Fang, 1996). Moreover, personal experiences, education and values form the beliefs. For example, educational experiences of teachers during the pre-college education, in teacher education programs, and classroom teaching experience and in teacher education programs influence teachers' beliefs (Haser, 2006).

Researchers have mentioned some difficulties related to capturing teachers' beliefs (Kagan, 1992). Although several techniques such as stimulated recall interviews, questionnaires and checklists have been used in order to elicit teacher beliefs, research techniques have still been indirect and widely focused due to unobservable nature of beliefs (Kagan, 1992). However, beliefs can be inferred from what people say, intend and do (Pajares, 1992). Moreover, teachers can be asked questions related to their thought processes which influenced their behavior (Fang, 1996). It should be considered that beliefs cannot be direct source of a teacher's behavior because teacher can perform similar behaviors for different reasons (Kagan, 1992). Also, Muis (2004) emphasized that beliefs should be labeled carefully as availing and non-availing. "Availing beliefs are associated with better learning outcomes, and non-availing beliefs have no influence on learning outcomes or negatively influence learning outcomes" (Muis, 2004, p.323). As understood from this definition, labeling availing or non-availing beliefs are directly related to

learning behaviors or outcomes. For example, in current study, if the participant teachers' beliefs about child-centered education increased their child-centered practices, it can be said that these beliefs are availing. In contrast, if their beliefs did not increase their child-centered practices, it can be said that their beliefs are non-availing.

Pajares (1992) also stated that definitional problems, poor conceptualizations, and differing understandings of beliefs and belief structures were the main difficulties in studying teachers' beliefs. According to Pajares, it is especially difficult to define the term *beliefs* because using this term interchangeably with some concepts such as values, judgments, attitudes, practical knowledge and thought causes confusion. Therefore, belief should be defined operationally by the researchers (Janas, 1999). There has not been a specific working definition of beliefs in the educational research community (Pajares, 1992) although there are several definitions of beliefs based on particular issues or content areas (Han, 2012). Also, beliefs have been defined generally, as teachers' beliefs being "powerful cognitive filters through which decisions of teaching practices are informed, maintained and altered to some degree" (Clark & Peterson, 1986; Fang, 1996; Isenberg, 1990; Munby, 1983; Nespor, 1987; Pajares, 1992; Richardson, 1996; as cited in Han, 2012, p. 254). Paro, Siepak, and Scott-little (2009) stated that "beliefs are generally considered to be subjective mental interpretations based on perceptions, reasoning or communication" (p.22). Also, teachers' attitudes to education such as schooling, teaching, learning and students have been accepted as teachers' beliefs (Pajares, 1992). Pajares (1992) stated that knowledge is based on objective fact; however, belief is based on evaluation and judgment. Sigel (1980, as cited in Pajares, 1992) defined beliefs as "mental constructions of experience - often condensed and integrated into schemata or concepts" (p.351). Lastly, Subramaniam (2001) reviewed the literature and defined teachers' beliefs as "the filters through which experience is screened for meaning which influences classroom decision making and actions which in turn determine the classroom atmosphere experienced by students" (p.58). This definition was adopted for the current study because it is assumed that preschool teachers' beliefs are based on the experience gained from their own education and

their work with the children in their classrooms and it is these beliefs that determine teachers' decision making and actions and their classroom atmosphere. Also, this definition is used because it covers the classroom atmosphere as experienced by children. In this study, preschool teachers were observed in their classroom in order to discover their actual practices and classroom atmosphere.

2.5.2 Studies related to the beliefs of early childhood teachers

In the literature, several studies related to early childhood teachers' beliefs have been conducted focusing on the relationship and consistency between early childhood teachers' beliefs and practices, child-centeredness, developmentally appropriateness and inappropriateness, effects of some programs on beliefs and also other specific issues. Although there is an assumption related to beliefs (teaching and learning impacts classroom practices), there has not been any uniformly empirical evidence which supports a strong association between teachers' beliefs and their practices (Wen, Elicker and McMullen, 2011). Studies which explored the relationship between teachers' beliefs and their behavior showed mixed results. Researchers found both consistency and inconsistency between teacher beliefs and behaviors (Janas, 1999). In terms of the relationship between beliefs and practices, Stipek and Byler (1997) examined teachers' beliefs about educational issues such as how children learn, goals of early childhood education, policies related to school entry, testing and retention, satisfaction with current practices, pressure for changes and their actual practices. They interviewed 18 preschool, 26 kindergarten and 16 first grade teachers and observed them for two and half hours in their classroom. They found that there were significant associations between beliefs, goals, practices and some degree policy positions. Most of the teachers stated that they did not implement the program based on their beliefs and they recognized that their program was basic-skills oriented. Also, parents exerted the most frequent pressure on the teachers' implementations. In another study, McCarty, Abbott-Shim and Lambert (2010) examined Head Start teachers' self-reported beliefs and practices in high, average and low quality classrooms. Also, the researchers explored the relationship between self-reported beliefs and practices. The self-reported beliefs and practices of

190 Head Start teachers showed that there were no significant differences between appropriate beliefs and appropriate activities subscales in three quality groups. However, there were significant differences between inappropriate beliefs and inappropriate activities, teachers working in low quality classrooms tended to give more favorable ratings to inappropriate beliefs or activities. Wilcox-Herzog (2010) examined the link between early childhood teachers' beliefs and behaviors. Forty-seven early childhood teachers' beliefs and behaviors were assessed and no relationship was found between their beliefs and behaviors. Moreover, Gürşimşek and Göregenli (2004) examined the relationship between preschool teachers' normative-humanistic orientations attitudes and discipline beliefs. A Polarity Scale, Beliefs on Discipline Inventory and a general survey questionnaire were administered to 156 female preschool teachers in Turkey. A positive and significant relationship was found between low-high discipline beliefs and normative-humanistic attitudes of preschool teachers.

In terms of consistency between early childhood teachers' beliefs and practices, the consistency of Chinese preschool teachers' curriculum beliefs and self-reported practices was examined by Wang, Elicker, McMullen and Mao (2008). They also compared American and Chinese teachers' curriculum beliefs associated with their personal, professional and socio-cultural characteristics. The Teacher Beliefs Scale and the Teachers' Background Information Questionnaire were completed by 296 Chinese and 146 American teachers and the researchers interviewed 10 teachers. The result of this study was that there were moderate associations between Chinese teachers' curriculum beliefs and self-reported practices. The Chinese teachers' beliefs were significantly associated with their general education, professional training, location of school, and class size. However, only the general education level was related to American teachers' beliefs. Wen, Elicker and McMullen (2011) examined the consistency between early childhood teachers' self-reported curriculum beliefs and their actual practices in the classroom. Also, the researchers focused on teacher characteristics (education level, professional training, program support, and work experience) and the teacher-child ratio in order to determine whether there is an association between these factors and the teachers'

curriculum beliefs and classroom practices. Teacher Beliefs Scale (TBS) was administered to 58 early childhood teachers and each was observed for approximately 2 hours. It was found that the early childhood teachers have strongly child-initiated learning beliefs. However, the same teachers exhibited a high frequency of directive behaviors in their classrooms. The beliefs and classroom practices of teachers who had more training and experience were more consistent than teachers with less experience and less teacher training.

Child-centeredness is one of the focus topics of researchers who studied early childhood teachers' beliefs and practices. For example, Kagan and Smith (1988) investigated the relationship between kindergarten teachers' cognitive style and their implementation based on a child-centered versus a teacher-structured curriculum. Fifty-one kindergarten teachers completed self-reporting instruments and were observed in their classrooms. Based on an observation analysis, the kindergarten teachers were categorized as child-centered or teacher-structured. It was found that there was a high correlation between the teachers' self-reported beliefs and behaviors with teachers who believed in child-centered instruction actually performing child-centered behaviors. Lee (2006) also examined the thoughts and beliefs of preschool teachers about the appropriate goals and quality practices for 4 year-olds. Ten minute-video clips were shown to 18 teachers after which they were interviewed. The clips showed two different preschool classrooms; one was teacher-directed phonics instruction and the other was child-directed play and exploration. In the interviews, the preschool teachers emphasized that the child-centered approach (with the curricula based on children's interests and everyday lives and in which children can choose their activities and direct their own play) were more appropriate for quality education.

Studies related to early childhood teacher's beliefs and practices also included teachers' developmentally appropriate and inappropriate beliefs and practices (Charlesworth, Hart, Burts & Hernandez, 1991; Charlesworth, Hart, Burts, Thomasson, Mosley, & Fleege, 1993; Hayson, Hirsh-Pasek, & Rescorla, 1996). The Teacher Beliefs Scale (TBS) and the Instructional Activity Scale (IAS) are well-known and commonly used to measure early childhood teachers' beliefs and

practices in the United States. These instruments were developed by Charlesworth and colleagues (1991; 1993) based on the guidelines for developmentally appropriate practice of the National Association for the Young Children (NAEYC). In their study, Charlesworth, Hart, Burts, & Hernandez (1991) administered the TBS and the IAS to examine their beliefs and practices of 113 kindergarten teachers. It was found that kindergarten teachers with lower ratings on developmentally appropriate beliefs felt less in control of the planning and implementation of instruction than teachers with high ratings. Mcmullen, Elicker, Goetze, Huang, Lee, Mathers, Wen and Yang (2006) examined preschool teachers' beliefs and their actual teaching behaviors. Fifty-seven preschool teachers completed survey instruments which included the demographic information of teachers and their beliefs about developmentally appropriate practices. The researchers spent 2-4 hours observing each participant teacher's classroom and additionally they used document analysis technique. Based on the results of the study, it was reported that teachers self-reported beliefs were more developmentally appropriate during child-directed choice/play time, emergent literacy and language development activities. However, teachers emphasized more traditional or academic oriented beliefs when the classroom was organized, the curriculum was, and teacher-directed learning was the dominant behavior. Also, Han and Neuharth-Pritchett (2010) investigated 35 lead teachers and 27 teacher assistants. Researchers discovered differences between the beliefs of lead teachers and teacher assistants. For example, the lead teachers more strongly advocated developmentally appropriate practices than the teacher assistants. While there were significant differences between the two groups of teachers they both advocated developmentally appropriate practices. Han and Neuharth-Pricthett (2010) emphasized that only teachers' educational levels cannot be sufficient to understand teachers' beliefs and practices. Jordanian kindergarten teachers' beliefs about developmentally appropriate practices were examined by Abu-Jaber, Al-Shawareb and Gheith (2010), they developed and administered a survey to 285 kindergarten teachers. They found that the kindergarten teachers endorsed all the dimensions of developmentally appropriate practices without establishing a reciprocal relationship with families. Also, there were no significant differences between teachers' beliefs based on their educational

level, years of teaching experience or age. Parker and Neuharth-Pritchett (2006) examined 34 kindergarten teachers' beliefs about developmentally appropriate practices. Based on teachers' self characterization the researchers classified their participants into three groups;. Teacher-directed (n=9), a combination of teacher-directed and child-centered (n=16), and child-centered (n=9). It was emphasized that kindergarten teachers classified as teacher-directed stated that they felt less pressure from the 1st grade teachers than teachers who were accepted as more child-centered. Although teacher-directed teachers followed district policies and procedures, the child-centered teachers believed that they had control over the curriculum. The child-centered teachers stated that they used very few teacher-directed activities and they believed that teacher-directed instruction was not beneficial for the children.

Other researchers examined the effects of educational programs or school experiences on teachers' beliefs. For example, Haupt, Larsen, Robinson and Hart (1995) examined how in-service training about developmentally appropriate practices influenced teachers' beliefs. A Teacher Questionnaire was administered to 25 kindergarten teachers. It was found that almost all kindergarten teachers had high scores in relation to developmentally appropriate practices before attending in-service training. Although teachers' scores increased after in-service training, their self-reported beliefs' scores were much higher than their self-reported practices' scores. Paro, Siepak, and Scott-Little (2009) also examined and compared the beliefs of 63 pre-service early childhood teachers and the beliefs of 8 members of the teacher training faculty. The results showed that students at the beginning of their education had less similar beliefs with their faculty than students at the end of their education. Also, the researchers found that classroom teaching experience did not significantly alter the pre-service teachers' beliefs about children, discipline and teaching practices. In another study conducted by Vartuli and Rohs (2009), the impact of a teacher education program on early childhood prospective teachers' pedagogical beliefs and the resulting shifts in their beliefs over time were examined. The Teacher's belief Scale was administered to 16 participants and 10 of them were observed. Significant differences were found among beliefs reported at the beginning of a teacher education program, then at graduation and after one year of employment.

When prospective teachers were at the beginning of the teacher education program, their beliefs were less learner-centered than their beliefs at graduation and after one year of employment. Also, the researcher emphasized that participation in an early childhood teacher education program has an effect on changes of prospective teachers' beliefs. Moreover, Heisner and Lederberg (2011) examined the impact of Child Development Associate training on preschool teachers' beliefs and practices. After 76 preschool teachers received Child Development Associate training their beliefs and practices were compared with 50 preschool teachers who had not enrolled in the training. On completion of the study, Heisner and Lederberg (2011) determined that Child Development Associate training increases the developmentally appropriateness of preschool teachers' beliefs and self-reported practices.

Researchers also examined preschool teachers' beliefs and practices related to specific issues. Brown (2005) examined whether there was a relationship between; (1) early childhood teachers' self-efficacy, (2) their beliefs concerning early childhood mathematics and (3) their mathematics instructional practices. Ninety-four pre-kindergarten teachers completed Teachers' Sense of Efficacy Scale and The Teacher Beliefs in the Early Childhood Classroom Scale and 20 of these teachers were subsequently observed. It was found that the early childhood teachers rated their efficacy higher than their beliefs about mathematics. There were no statistically significant differences concerning teachers' self-efficacy, beliefs and their mathematics instructional practices. Moreover, Güven, Öztürk, Karataş, Arslan and Şahin (2012) examined preschool teachers' beliefs and practices about learning and teaching of mathematics by interviewing two preschool teachers and observing five mathematics activities in their classrooms. Although the participant teachers saw themselves as explanatory and they emphasized the active participation of the children, their practices were different from their beliefs. The children were not able to actively participate in the activities and the preschool teachers generally gave feedback such as *correct and wrong*. Duatepe Paksu (2008) compared teachers beliefs related to mathematics based on their branches and gender. A self-report questionnaire was administered to a total of 324 teachers (195 primary school teachers, 52 science teachers, 40 mathematics teachers and 37 preschool teachers).

Results showed that teachers tended towards traditional beliefs and in particular the mathematics teachers' beliefs were more traditional than teachers in other branches. There were no differences between teachers' beliefs based on their gender. Ihmeideh (2009) investigated preschool teachers' beliefs and practices about the use of computer technology in teaching reading and writing in Jordan context. Two scales were administered to 154 preschool teachers and the researcher also interviewed 12 of the teachers. The results of this study showed that although the mean scores of Teacher Belief Scale were almost higher than the mean of the Teachers' Practices Scale, in fact the teachers' beliefs and self-reported practices about using computer technology in teaching literacy were fairly moderate. Öztürk and Tantekin Erden (2011) examined 225 Turkish preschool teachers' beliefs about the integrated curriculum and integration of visual arts with other activities. Teachers' Beliefs about Integration of Visual Arts Questionnaire was used as an instrument. The results of the study indicated that although the preschool teachers had positive beliefs concerning the integrated curriculum, they tended not to integrate visual arts activities with subject. The preschool teachers used arts activities to reinforce other activities. Furthermore, teachers' seniority and educational background had a significant effect on their beliefs concerning the integration of art activities.

Lastly, the researchers emphasized that there are contrary ideas about changes in teacher beliefs. For example, according to Hall & Loucks, (1982) reading and applying the findings of educational research generally do not effect changes in teacher beliefs and a professional development model created by Brown (2005) indicated that teachers' beliefs are often resistant to change. On the other hand, Heisner and Lederberg (2011) emphasized that Child Development Associate training increases the developmental appropriateness of preschool teachers' beliefs and self-reported practices. Also, Caudle and Moran (2012) examined the beliefs of three early childhood teachers' beliefs over a period of 4 years; as pre-service, intern student teacher and in-service teacher. They found that pre-service teachers' beliefs were initially unstable and nascent. In their first year there was a change of a transactional nature between beliefs and practice, and this relational exchange provided an increase in deliberate action when they entered teaching service years.

2.6 Summary

Child-centeredness and its relevant values have been for so long topic (Rugg & Shumaker, 1928). A lot of well-known, educator and philosopher such as John Locke, Erasmus, Bacon, Comenius, Richard Lovell Edgeworth, Maria Edgeworth, Rousseau, Pestalozzi and Froebel contributed to child-centered education. Progressivism, Social Reconstructionism and Existentialism are accepted as child-centered philosophies (Sadker and Zittleman, 2011). Also, beliefs of Dewey, Freire, Piaget, Vygotsky and Malaguzzi shaped a theoretical framework for child-centered education (Griebling, 2009). Some of the early childhood programs are accepted as a child-centered such as Montessori, High Scope, Reggio Emilia, and Project Approach. Turkish preschool curriculum is also child-centered (MoNE, 2006). NAEYC's accreditation (2011) could be accepted as a guide of child-centered education.

There have been very limited studies related to child-centeredness in Turkish context. Especially, research related to preschool teachers' beliefs and practices about child-centeredness is very limited. Investigation of teachers' beliefs is one of the important avenues of educational research (Pajares, 1992). Based on above literature, it was aimed to investigate Turkish preschool teachers' beliefs and practices about child-centered education.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the overall research design and context of the study, data sources and data collection procedures, methods of data analysis, trustworthiness and the limitations of the study.

3.1 Restatement of the purpose and research questions

The main purpose of this study is to describe preschool teachers' beliefs and practices related to child-centered education in Turkey. Specifically, this study will attempt to answer following questions:

1. What are Turkish preschool teachers' beliefs about child-centered education?
2. What are Turkish preschool teachers' self-reported practices about child-centered education?
3. What are Turkish preschool teachers' actual practices in terms of child-centered education?
4. Are Turkish preschool teachers' beliefs consistent with their practices in terms of child-centered education?
    a. Is there consistency between Turkish preschool teachers' beliefs and their self-reported practices?
    b. Is there consistency between Turkish preschool teachers' beliefs, their self-reported practices and their actual practices?

3.2 Research design

Although Pajares (1992) stated that choosing a qualitative or quantitative approach is based on what researchers wanted to know and how they wished to reveal the information, Munby (1983) claimed that qualitative research methodology

was particularly appropriate for studies related to beliefs. The general outline of this study is shown in Figure 3.1 below:

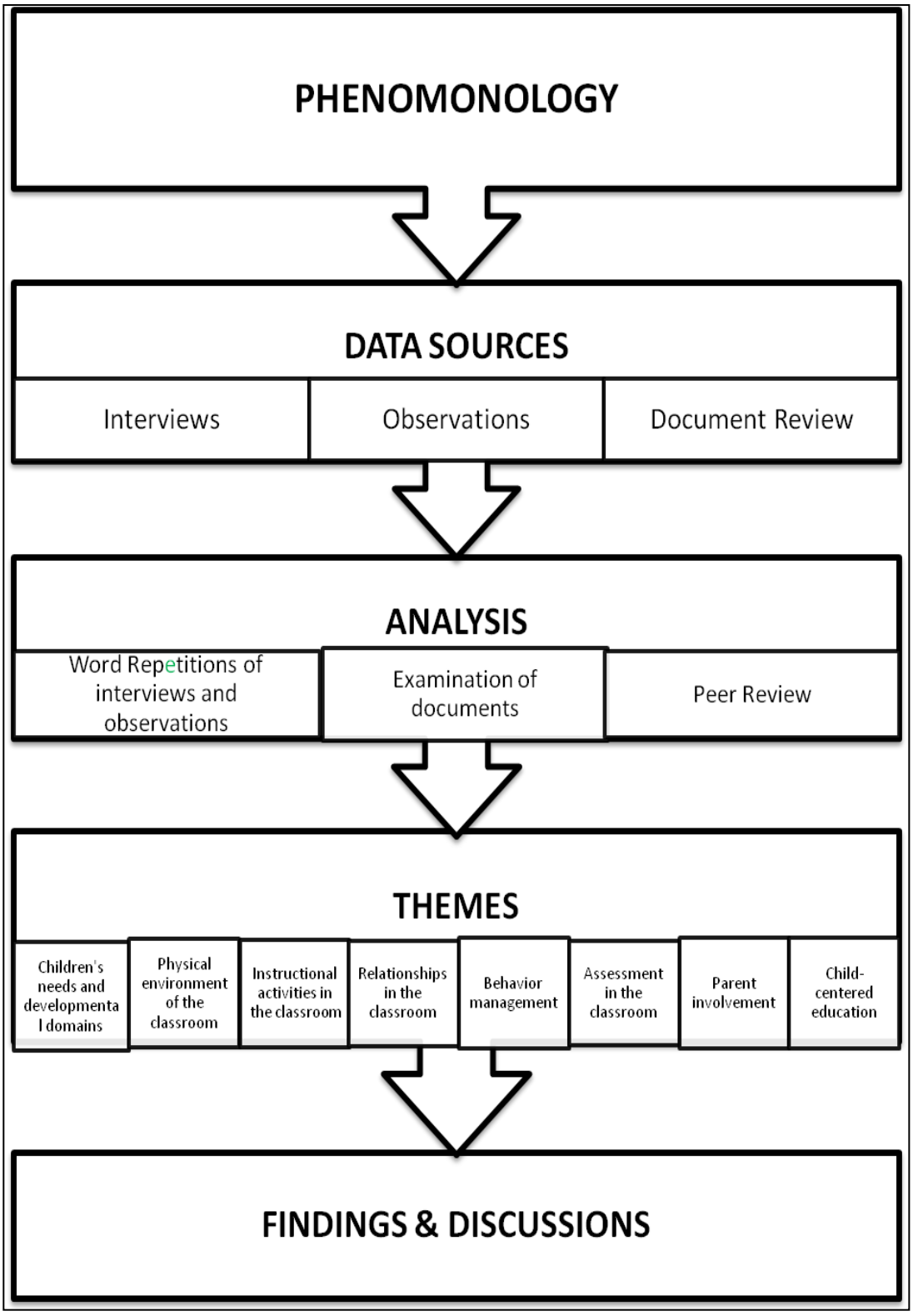

Figure 3.1 The outline of the study

A phenomenological approach was chosen to describe preschool teachers' beliefs and practices related to child-centered education in Turkey.

Phenomenological research attempts to reveal the participants' worldview by focusing on their lived experiences and how they understand their lived experiences (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). It also explores how the participants comprehend the meaning of their daily experiences, asks the question of what experience is like for them and, tries to reveal and interpret these meanings deeply (Van Manen, 1990). Thus, this method provides the researcher with the possibility of representing the meaning of preschool teachers' daily child-centered practices in their classroom and how their beliefs about child-centered practices influence their practices.

Also Patton (2002) stressed that the assumption that there was an essence to shared experiences was the basis of phenomenological research. After the experiences of different people are noted and analyzed, they are compared to explain the essences of a specific phenomenon (Patton, 2002). For instance in this study, the aim was to describe the essence of being a teacher using a child-centered curriculum.

3.3 Context of the study

This study investigated beliefs and their self-reported practices about child-centered education of 20 teachers; it also described the beliefs, self-reported practices and actual practices of five early childhood teachers about child-centered education. The context of the study is detailed below:

3.3.1 Turkish early childhood education context

The main focus of this study is Turkish preschool teachers. Therefore, describing basic characteristics of Turkish early childhood education and brief information about early childhood teachers would be useful to understand the study. Most parts of this study were conducted prior to the changes made to the Turkish early childhood education system in 2012; therefore, information about Turkish early childhood education given here does not include changes in 2012.

Although the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) has carried out pilot studies concerning the provision of compulsory early childhood education in Turkey, it is still optional. Early childhood education in Turkey covers schooling for children age 3 to 6 years old currently it is provided by different institutions such as

kindergartens, application classrooms, and nursery schools. These institutions under the responsibility of MoNE, offer full-day or half-day educational programs.

Table 3.1 Number of schools, students and teachers according to the institution

Type of school	*School*	*Number of students*	*Number of teachers*
Public Preschool	25 172	1 058 904	40 919
Private preschool	3 453	110 652	14 964
Total	28 625	1 169 556	55 883

(MoNE, 2012).

Although the Turkish early childhood education curriculum is implemented in both public and private schools, there are some differences in their implementations. Since most early childhood institutions are public preschools and teachers in these schools only implement the Turkish early childhood program and not in combination with another approach, only public preschools were included in this study. The Turkish early childhood education has four general objectives: (1) psychomotor, cognitive, and emotional development of children and good habit acquisition, (2) preparation for primary education, (3) ensuring equity among all children and (4) the proper and correct use of Turkish.

The teachers who teach all levels of pre-college education currently graduate from universities. Although there are still early childhood teachers who graduated from Vocational High Schools, Vocational Schools and Faculties of Open Education, currently early childhood teacher candidates must graduate from early childhood education or child development and education departments.

Teacher candidates attend four years of education and training including many courses related to child development and instruction techniques, there are also three semesters of teaching practice. After graduation, teachers are recruited on basis of the results of Public Personal Selection Exam (PPSE).

Although the number of children receiving schooling has increased, attendance is still not at the same level as in developed countries. In Turkey, in the 2011-2012 academic year 44.04% of 4-5 year old children attended school. For 4-year old children this was 65.69 % in the same period. According to statistics compiled by MoNE (2012), teacher child ratio is 20.92 and in one early childhood classroom it is 23.96. This information about the teacher child ratio should be considered as a factor in the analysis of the findings.

3.3.2 Participants and setting of the study

3.3.2.1 Participant schools

The study was conducted in five preschools in Ankara, capital of Turkey. The selection of preschool institutions was based on purposeful sampling strategy to be informed purposefully to understand the phenomenon in this study (Creswell, 2007). Thus, institutions from different districts in Ankara (Keçiören, Yenimahalle, Eryaman, Çankaya, Mamak) were selected. In addition, two of these schools had more than 300 students; two had between 100-200 students and one of them had less than 100 students. These school's physical characteristics also differed in terms of indoor and outdoor spaces. Pseudonyms were used for the schools. Below is a brief description of the schools in the different districts of Ankara:

Cihan Anaokulu: It is located in Çankaya near the city center. It was constructed in 2000. There are two floors; the first floor consisting of the administrators' room and preschool classrooms. There are two classrooms, a lecture room and a kitchen with dining room in the basement. The school has a large garden for outdoor activities. There are approximately 170 students and the average class size 20.

Ufuk Anaokulu: This school is in Yenimahalle and it was constructed in 1998. It has three floors; there is an art room and a large gym room on the basement floor. The first floor contains the administrators' room, four preschool classrooms, a kitchen and a dining room. There are computer, drama, library and learning workshop rooms on the first floor. On the second floor, there are ten classrooms. School has a large conference hall seating for 300 people and a large garden for outdoor activities. The average class size is 22 and serves approximately 300 students.

Atatürk Anaokulu: It is located in Eryaman. This school was constructed in 2006. It has three floors; on the first floor are the administrators' room, 3 preschool classrooms, a kitchen and a dining room. There are 4 classrooms on the second floor, a gym in the basement and a large garden for outdoor activities. The average class size is 20 and, there are approximately 130 students enrolled.

Sevgi Anaokulu: In Keçiören and was constructed 1998. This school has three floors. In the basement there is a gym and two art rooms. The administrators' room, 6 preschool classrooms and a science laboratory are located on the first floor. On the second floor, there are 8 classrooms and a kitchen with dining room. The average class size is 25 and there are approximately 400 students.

Çiçek Anaokulu: This school is in Mamak and most of the children live in poor quality houses (Gecekondu) and from very low income families. The school was constructed in 2005, it has one floor containing; two administrators' rooms, 4 preschool classroom, a lecture hall and a kitchen with a dining room. There is a large garden for outdoor activities. There are approximately 80 students and the average class size is 20.

3.3.2.2 Participant teachers

The selection of the preschool teachers participating in this study was based on purposeful sampling method because this gave the researcher the opportunity to select information-rich individuals (Patton, 2002). The criteria used to choose the participants: (1) all teachers willingly volunteer to participate in the study; (2) teachers would be employed in public preschools in Ankara under the supervision of the Turkish Ministry of National Education; (3) all teachers would have at least a bachelor's degree in early childhood education; and (4) all teachers would have 0-5 years teaching experience. The participants were selected from teachers who had fairly recently graduated and had been employed since 2006 in public preschools. This was because the most recent child-centered preschool curriculum was adopted in 2006 and these teachers would have been informed about this program during their undergraduate programs. Also, public preschools only implement this preschool curriculum not combined with other approaches or models thus, the participants were selected from these schools.

Twenty female preschool teachers working in public schools were interviewed for this study. Most (n=17, 85%) had graduated from early childhood education departments of universities (n=15, 75%) or Faculty of the Open University (n=2, 10%). Also, some graduated from child development and education (n=3, 15%). The teachers' experiences varied from 1 to 5 years as shown in Table 3.2 and the average of their teaching experience was 3.35 years.

Table 3.2 Teaching experiences of teachers

Years	Number of teachers
1 year	1
2 years	4
3 years	6
4 years	5
5 years	4
Total	20

The distribution of the preschool teachers across the age groups is given in Table 3.3 and most of the teachers taught age 6 classes (n=9, 45%).

Table 3.3 Age groups taught by teachers

Age(s)	Number of teachers
6	9
5- 6	3
5	3
4-5	1
4	3
3	1
Total	20

The child population of the classrooms ranged between 16 and 25 (as shown in Table 3.4) and there were 20 or more children in most of classrooms (n=17, 85%).

Table 3.4 *Population of classrooms*

Number of Children	Number of classrooms
25	4
23	3
22	1
21	3
20	6
18	2
16	1
Total	20

Five of 20 preschool teachers were observed in their classrooms, and their written daily plans, schedules and work samples of children in their class were reviewed. One teacher was selected from each school. The criterion for the selection of these teachers was their willingness to be observed. Table 3.5 shows the demographic information of the selected teachers.

Table 3.5 *Demographic information of observed teachers*

Participants	Educational Background	Teaching experience	Age group taught	Number Of children
P1	Faculty of Education – Department of ECE	5 years	6 year-olds	20
P2	Faculty of Education – Department of ECE	3 years	5 year-olds	20
P3	Faculty of Education – Department of ECE	3 years	6 year-olds	21
P4	Faculty of Education – Department of ECE	5 years	6 year-olds	25
P5	Faculty of Education – Department of ECE	3 years	6 year-olds	25

(ECE: Early Childhood Education)

3.4 Data collection tools

The study data were collected through interviews, classroom observations, and document review. The following section presents the major data sources of the study.

3.4.1 Interview

A semi-structured interview protocol was developed by the researcher to explore the selected preschool teachers' self-reported beliefs and practices related to child-centered education in Turkey. Through the interview protocol, the researcher was able to obtain in- depth information related to the teachers' beliefs about child-centered education and their descriptions of their practices in the classroom.

The protocol was developed after several stages were undertaken. First, the researcher reviewed the Turkish preschool curriculum (Gürkan, 2006; Gürkan et al., 2005; MEB, 2006) and the literature related to child-centered education (Doddington & Hilton, 2007; Ellis, 2004; Entwistle, 1970; Gürşen-Otacioğlu, 2008; Morrison, 2008, 2011; Moyer, 1987; Myagmar, 2010; Oktay, 2000; Rugg & Shumaker, 1928). From the curriculum and the literature review, the components of child-centered education were determined. The following components were selected for this study: organization of physical environment, instruction, relationship, behavior management, parent involvement, and assessment in the classroom (Ellis, 2004; MEB, 2006). Finally, an interview protocol containing 34 questions was created. After the opinions of three experts in Early Childhood Education, Educational Sciences, and Qualitative Research were obtained concerning the protocol, some items of the schedule were combined and others were modified. The second draft of the interview protocol contained 24 questions and three field experts again reviewed the protocol. After the experts' approval, three pilot interviews were conducted. Next, some questions were combined or modified to increase the clarity for the interviewee. Some specific questions were rewritten to allow the teachers to express their ideas freely and in depth. For example, the questions, "Are there any learning areas in your classroom? How do you use them?" and "How do you choose the

materials in your classroom?" were rewritten as "What do you think about the physical environment of your classroom? Can you describe it?"

The final interview protocol contained 17 questions; six pertained to demographic items, while the remaining 11 open-ended questions aimed to investigate the self-reported beliefs and practices of preschool teachers related to child-centered education. After the final version of the protocol was piloted with three teachers, expert opinions were obtained again. Then, the final version of the semi- structured interview schedule was used for data collection purposes (Appendix B).

3.4.2 Observation

Naturalistic observation provided the researcher with information about the normal every day processes in the classroom and the interactions (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). In naturalistic observation, the researcher and second observer observed and noted what happened in the setting rather than manipulating variables or controlling the activities of individuals. This kind of observation is also particularly recommended for young children (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2003).

The observation form in this study was developed by the researcher based on the literature review (Appendix C). The form content was organized as parallel to the interview questions in order to determine preschool teachers' actual practices related to child-centered education. After the opinions of two experts from early childhood education and qualitative research were obtained to assess the form a pilot observation was conducted. Some of the items in the form were modified, and opinions of three experts from early childhood education, educational sciences, and qualitative research were obtained once more followed by another pilot with two teachers.

There was a second observer in classrooms who also took notes separately from the researcher. The second observer had a bachelor's degree from Child Development and Education department and two years of teaching experience. She is a graduate student in same department as the researcher. She was only present for the observation and was trained by the researcher in the use of the observation form. In

the training the researcher explained the four main topics in detail and gave specific examples related to each item. However, as all classroom activity was important in this study, the researcher avoided influencing the second observer and did not stress "child-centered education." In the afternoon, after the observer and the researcher had observed a classroom for three hours, they met to compare their notes.

3.4.3 Document review

Teachers' written daily plans and schedules, and the children's work samples were analyzed along with observations and interviews to establish the triangulation of the data collection methods (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2005). The documents were important for the researcher to catch unexpected clues about the teachers' classroom practices (Stake, 1995).

Research questions of the current study and the data sources which were used to investigate these research questions are in table 3.6 below.

Table 3.6 Research Questions and Data Sources

Research questions	Data sources
What are Turkish preschool teachers' beliefs about child-centered education?	Interview
What are Turkish preschool teachers' self-reported practices about child-centered education?	Interview
What are Turkish preschool teachers' actual practices in terms of child-centered education?	Observation Document review

3.5 Data collection procedure

At the beginning of the study, the researcher applied for permission and received approval from the Research Center for Applied Ethics and The Ministry of National Education to carry out the research. Then, he conducted the pilot interviews and observations. After all the forms were ratified, the researcher made appointments with the school principals. He explained the aim and detail of the study and presented

the approvals for the research. Then, the principals gave him permission to meet with the teachers. The researcher contacted 27 preschool teachers who had between 0-5 years of teaching experience from five schools. Twenty volunteered to participate in the interview part of study. Also, the five who volunteered for the processes of observation and document review were selected and the researcher explained the details of this process. Then, all the participants signed a consent form. The five teachers together with the researcher decided on the observation schedule. Observations were made before interviews to avoid influencing teachers' practices since the interview form included questions related to child-centered education and the term "child-centered" was used explicitly on the form.

The researcher and the second observer had spent two half-days in each classroom so the teacher and children could become familiar with them before they started the observations. Then, they started their observations and as non-participant observers, they took notes on four main topics: physical environment of the classroom, activities, relationships, and behavior management in the classroom. Each teacher was observed for 18 hours. The duration of the observation given in the literature for phenomenological studies varies but it is usually lower than 18 hours. For example, Wen, Elicker and McMullen (2011) examined the consistency between early childhood teachers' self-reported curriculum beliefs and their actual practices through 2-hour observation. In the current study, the observers noted the time at the end of each 15 minutes. Each teacher was observed over a period of eight days at different times of the day (morning and afternoon). During each observation session, the researchers were in the classroom for two hours and 15 minutes and then they took a break before conducting the second observation session with a different teacher. For instance, researchers observed Participant 1 (P1) in the morning and Participant 2 (P2) in the afternoon. They did not observe the same teacher twice in the same day. Changing the participants and schools would be useful to refresh their attention and concentration. The observation schedule is shown in Table 3.7.

Table 3.7 Observation schedule

	May 16, Mon	**May 17, Tu**	**May 18, Wed**	**May 19, Th**	**May 20, Fri**	**May 23, Mon**	**May 24, Tu**	**May 25, Wed**	**May 26, Th**	**May 27, Fri**
Morning	P1	P4	X	X	P2	P4	P1	X	P2	P5
Afternoon	P2	P3	P1	X	P3	P5	P2	P4	P3	P1
	May 30, Mon	**May 31, Tu**	**June 1, Wed**	**June 2 , Th**	**June 3, Fri**	**June 6, Mon**	**June 7, Tu**	**June 8, Wed**	**June 9, Th**	**June 10, Fri**
Morning	P2	P3	X	P5	P1	P3	P5	P3	P4	P3
Afternoon	P4	P5	P1	P3	P5	P2	P4	P2	P1	P4
	June 13, Mon	**June 14, Tu**	**June 15, Wed**							
Morning	P4	P1	P5							
Afternoon	P5	P2	X							

After the observations, the researcher interviewed teachers in one-to-one settings in appropriate rooms in the schools such as library or teachers' meeting room and at times such as the teachers' non-teaching times and children's nap time. Before the interview, the researcher explained that he wanted to audio record all interviews in order to include all the information and not to increase the duration of the interview because of the time taken to handwrite the teachers' responses (Yıldırım & Şimsek, 2005). All participants accepted that their responses would be recorded and the duration of interviews ranged between 35 min and 70 min.

For the document review, the teachers' daily plans and schedules were reviewed. Although the researcher obtained the teachers' daily schedules at the beginning of the study and the observations were planned according to them, he received the teachers' daily plan at the end of the observation day. The daily plans were collected at the end of the day because the researcher aimed to avoid impacting on the teachers' plans and forcing them to follow the plans rigidly. Children's work samples were also collected during observation period and because these samples were kept in their portfolios, random examples related to that day's activities were photographed by the researcher.

3.6 Analysis of the data

The researcher prepared transcripts from the interview recordings. Then, the researcher and a second coder read all transcriptions carefully several times and began coding them separately.

Their coding process mainly focused on the technique of word-repetition (Bernard & Ryan, 2010) which means that the coders listed all the unique words in the data. For instance, *individual difference* was a unique phrase related to child-centered education. The coders identified a term and then made a frequency count of the number of times the word or phrase was mentioned. These frequency counts were the clues that the coders used to determine the themes as the next step (Bernard & Ryan, 2010). After the researcher and second coder independently determined all codes, they compared them to determine if they were parallel or not and tried to reach agreement about differing codes. For instance, *rewards and punishment* were behavior management strategies and second coder placed it under the strategies category. However, the researcher stressed the importance of rewards and punishment in literature being related to child-centered education. Therefore, they separated strategies, rewards, and punishment from each other. The researcher and second coder reached over a 92% agreement in assigning the codes. They referred to literature when they disagreed however, when researchers were unable to convince each other about some codes, these controversial statements which constituted 3% of the total data were not presented as findings in this study. The following eight main themes were agreed upon for the interview phase of the study (As shown in Appendix D).

1. Children's needs and developmental domains
    a) Children's needs
    b) Developmental domains
2. Physical environment of the classroom
    a) Characteristics of physical environment
        i. Teacher-child ratio

ii. Learning areas
iii. Movement area/class size
iv. Security and shelter
v. Decoration of walls
vi. Materials and furniture

b) Arrangement of physical environment

3. Instructional activities in the classroom
   a) Planning the activity
   b) Implementing the activity
   c) Roles
      i. Roles of teachers
      ii. Roles of children
   d) Time management
4. Relationships in the classroom
5. Behavior management
   a) Rules
   b) Strategies
   c) Rewards
   d) Punishment
6. Assessment in the classroom
7. Parent involvement
8. Child-centered education
   a) Characteristics of child-centered education
   b) Factors that prevent teachers from being child-centered

These themes were important in explaining the data. Based on the themes, the researcher selected relevant direct quotes from the participants to give further detail and support.

Similar stages were followed for all observations and the document review. Finally, the researcher compared the findings obtained from the observation notes, interviews, and document review in order to reveal the teachers' beliefs, self-

reported, and actual practices in terms of child-centered education, the consistency between Turkish preschool teachers' beliefs and self-reported practices and the consistency between their beliefs, self-reported practices and actual practices.

3.7 The researcher's role

In a qualitative study, the researcher is an instrument who observes the environment, takes notes, asks questions, and makes interpretations from the answers. However, it is important that the researcher has full awareness of his role in the study during processes of data collection and analysis is important (Patton, 2002).

Teachers were not known by the researcher before the study. The researcher contacted all teachers via school principals. He explained his study to the principals and showed the approval of Ministry of National Education. Then, the principals directed the researcher to the teachers and expressed that only volunteer teachers could participate in the study after they had signed the consent form. The researcher met the teachers for the first time when he visited their classrooms to explain his aim. Some teachers only wished to be interviewed others agreed to the observation. This flexibility encouraged teachers to participate in the study. Also, after data collection, some of the teachers stated that the reputation of the researcher's university (Middle East Technical University) motivated them to be a participant in this study.

At the beginning of the study, the researcher stressed to teachers that his aim was only to learn their beliefs and practices so there were no correct answers to the questions because he wanted to learn about their perspectives and practices. Also, he explained that his four-year preschool teaching experience gave him some insight into the interpretations of the teachers related to their daily activities gave him the knowledge to ask questions that allowed the teachers to express their ideas comfortably and provide the researcher with more detailed information. However, they sometimes assumed that the researcher was familiar with some events in their classrooms so they summarized the case or did not explain the details. Thus, at the end of some questions, the researcher summarized what teachers said or what he understood from what they had said.

When the two observers entered the classrooms for the observations, three teachers introduced them to the children. They said; "These people are our visitors and they are teachers in a university. They will sometimes come to our classroom because their students want to know what happens in our classroom. Thus, they will look at our activities and they will explain their students what we are doing in our learning centers, art time, and music time." However, the other two teachers did not introduce the observers.

Both observers were nonparticipants and did not interfere with the activities but sometimes unexpected interactions occurred. For example, before or during observation, children sometimes asked the observers who they were or what they were writing. They answered these questions as, "We are teachers in a university. Our students want to know what happens in your classroom so we are looking at what you are doing in your activities. Then, we will explain these things to our students." After this explanation, children continued their activities. However, the same question was also asked by children whose teachers introduced the observers. One of the children asked one of the observers if he was a clown and the observer gave the same explanation for this question he had given other children. Moreover, there were a few children who asked the observers to help to tie their shoe laces and put on their coats. After the teachers' agreement, the observers helped them.

3.8 Trustworthiness

Validity and reliability are very important issues to consider when conducting research. Lincoln and Guba (1985) used the term trustworthiness in qualitative studies instead of validity and reliability. They explained that it can be accepted as an indicator related to the value of the research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Guba and Lincoln (1981) defined the following four main strategies related to trustworthiness in qualitative studies.

a) Credibility: This refers to internal validity (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). According to Merriam (2009), the focus of internal validity is how research findings correspond to reality. She stated that some strategies such as triangulation, member checks, adequate engagement in data collection, peer examination, participatory or

collaborative modes of research and researcher's biases can be used to ensure credibility. The validity of a qualitative study is also considered as "an attempt to assess the accuracy of the findings, as best described by the researcher and the participants" (Creswell, 2007, pp. 206-207). In this study, prolonged engagement, triangulation, and participant feedback were used as strategies to deal with the issue of validity:

Prolonged engagement was used in that the researcher and the second observer spent two half days in the classrooms before the observation to learn about the culture of the classroom and to build trust (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

The technique of *triangulation* is another way of promoting the validity of the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). There are several types of triangulation such as using multiple and different data collection methods, investigators, and theories (Denzin, 1978). In this study, triangulation of data collection methods and investigators were used. In terms of the *triangulation of data collection methods*, Webb, Campbell, Schwartz and Sechrest (1966) stressed that this technique was not easy but after an interpretation had been confirmed by two or more data collection methods, its uncertainty was mostly decreased. That is, a combination of more methods provided the researcher with better evidence (Johnson, 1997). Thus, the data of this study were collected through interview, observation, and document review. Also, *the triangulation of investigators* provides crosschecking of data to the researcher (Johnson, 1997) therefore, there were two observers in this study.

Participant feedback (Member-checking) is one of the most crucial techniques. The researcher sent the transcriptions of the interviews to the teachers via e-mail to give them the opportunity to confirm their responses or correcting information that could cause misinterpretations (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Although most of teachers stated that there was no problem related to their interview transcriptions, three added more detailed information related to some of their original responses but another three teachers did not reply to the e-mail.

b) Transferability: This refers to external validity, in other words, the generalization of the findings of the study. External validity is defined by Merriam (2009) as to the extent the findings of a study can be attached to other situations. It cannot be said

that nothing can be learned from a qualitative research because generalization (from a random sample to the population) cannot occur (Merriam, 2009). The context of the study should be determined in detail so the findings of the study can be compared with similar situations and transferred to similar settings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In this study, it is thought that detailed descriptions of participants, settings, and the research process can be used to address the issue of transferability. The reader should be able to implement and generalize the findings of this study due to description of the context of this study.

c) Dependability: This refers to reliability which was defined by Merriam (2009) as "… to the extent to which research findings can be replicated. In other words, if the study is repeated, will it yield the same results?" (p.220). In relation to dependability, Krefting (1991) summarized some criteria which were dependability audit, dense description of research methods, stepwise replication, triangulation, peer examination and code-recode procedure. In this study, inter-coder agreement was considered for the establishment of reliability (Creswell, 2007). There was a second coder in the study. She was a different person from the second observer and she was a PhD candidate in field of early childhood education with experience in qualitative data coding and analysis. The researcher and second coder first coded the data independently. Then, they discussed the codes that were different or missing and reached an agreement about all most all of these items.

d) Confirmability: This term refers to objectivity. Krefting (1991) stated that confirmability audit, triangulation and reflexivity are the criteria that can ensure confirmability. Data triangulation was used as the criterion to support confirmability in this study. The findings of the study were based on a compilation of the data of this study that were gathered from multiple sources including interview, observation and document review.

3.9 Researcher bias

One of the main concerns related to the validity of qualitative studies is researchers' subjectivity. One of critical questions in qualitative research is whether researcher saw what she/he wanted to see or observed really what happened. Also,

interpretations of the qualitative data can be affected by researchers' views and beliefs (Doğan, 2012). Therefore, it is relevant to explain my own views about early childhood education, child-centered education and teachers' practices and how I tried to eradicate my bias from the implementation of this study.

It is commonly accepted that early childhood education is the very crucial period for human development. The effects of this education can be seen in all development areas during the whole of a person's life. Therefore, early childhood education cannot be accidental it must be based on a carefully planned framework. Thus, a curriculum must be prepared and early childhood teachers have an important role on its implementation. The Turkish national early childhood curriculum has many good characteristics however this curriculum can be implemented by teachers differently. Therefore, the beliefs held by the early childhood teachers and their actual practices are crucial. I have some concerns about the quality of Turkish early childhood teachers; they have different educational backgrounds and in-service education. Therefore, their beliefs and practices are very different from each other.

One of main characteristics of Turkish early childhood curriculum is child-centeredness however; I have some reservations about how the Turkish early childhood teachers interpret this term. Furthermore, I do not believe that all these teachers have the same understanding of child-centered education. I also think that although some teachers' beliefs are appropriate to principles of child-centered education, their practices are not appropriate for child-centeredness. The contrary situation can also be true; their beliefs may not be appropriate for child-centered education, however, their practices may be child-centered. Thus, my conclusion is that there is an inconsistency concerning Turkish early childhood teachers' beliefs and practices.

I believe that child-centeredness is one of the main characteristics of developmentally appropriate education for young children and that early childhood teachers' beliefs and practices about child-centered education are an essential contribution to a child's education in this period. My views might unconsciously influence the data collection and data analysis processes might be influenced unconsciously. Therefore, I tried to present anti-bias findings to achieve a

trustworthy study. In particular, triangulation, second observer and a second coder were used in this study to eliminate the researchers' subjectivity.

3.10 Limitations of the study

The limitations of this study are presented below and should be considered on the interpretation of the findings of this study.

The first limitation concerns the number of participants. Only twenty early childhood teachers were interviewed and five teachers were observed in this study. Also, data were collected from five classrooms in five public early childhood schools. Data were collected only from public schools and private schools were not included in this study. As stated earlier, the curriculum can be implemented differently in private schools.

The participants of this study were relatively new early childhood teachers with 5 years or less teaching experience. Teachers with more experience were not included. All the early childhood teachers who were observed in their classroom were university graduates from early childhood education departments. Early childhood teachers graduated from vocational high schools, vocational schools or had graduate degrees were not observed. The question was not explored as to whether the educational background of the teachers influences their ideas about early childhood education and child-centeredness. Lastly, all participants of this study were female therefore; it was not possible to discuss the early childhood teachers' beliefs and practices based on gender.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

The main purpose of this study was to describe preschool teachers' beliefs and practices related to child-centered education in Turkey. The beliefs and practices of teachers were investigated by a semi-structured interview protocol, an observation process, and a review of documents. Research questions of the study were:

1. What are Turkish preschool teachers' beliefs about child-centered education?
2. What are Turkish preschool teachers' self-reported practices about child-centered education?
3. What are Turkish preschool teachers' actual practices in terms of child-centered education?
4. Are Turkish preschool teachers' beliefs consistent with their practices in terms of child-centered education?
    a. Is there consistency between Turkish preschool teachers' beliefs and their self-reported practices?
    b. Is there consistency between Turkish preschool teachers' beliefs, their self-reported practices and their actual practices?

Twenty female preschool teachers working in public schools were interviewed in this study. The teachers graduated from the departments of early childhood education (n=15, 75%), child development and education (n=3, 15%) and two teachers (10%) were graduates of the Open Education Faculty (n=2, 10%). The teachers' experiences varied from one to five years with an overall average of 3.35 years.

Five of the 20 preschool teachers were observed in their classrooms and their documents (teachers' plans and examples of children's work) were also reviewed. These five teachers had graduated from early childhood education departments and their teaching experience varied from three to five years.

In keeping with the necessary ethical considerations pseudonyms were used for the teachers and children in the text and direct quotes of their comments in this chapter. The order of the findings of the study is explained according to the research questions as shown in Figure 4.1

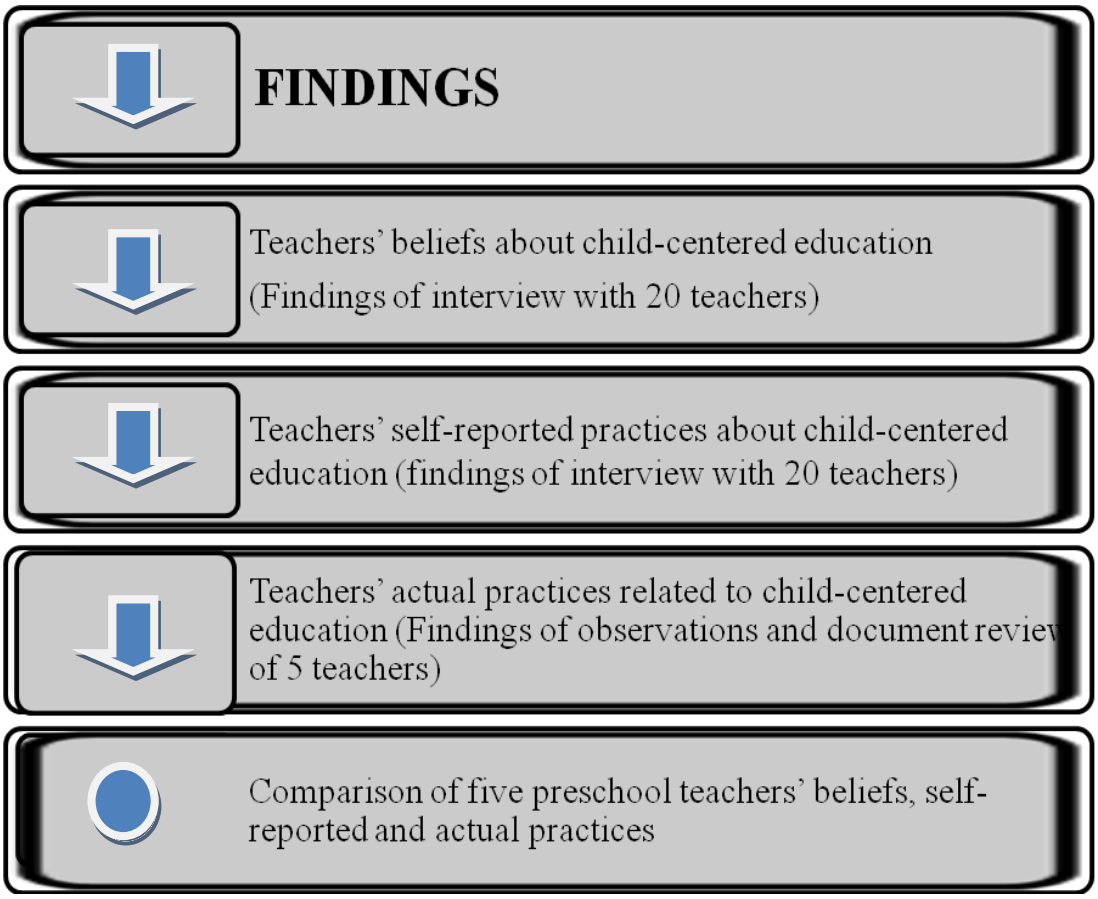

Figure 4.1 Order of findings

At the beginning of the interviews, to determine whether participant preschool teachers were aware of that Turkish preschool curriculum was child-centered, they were asked which characteristic(s) of the curriculum they remembered. Several participant teachers (n=8) said that they did not remember any of the characteristics. Teachers who remembered some characteristics of Turkish curriculum mentioned that the curriculum was child-centered (n=3). Also, that the instructional activities were organized by specific goals and objectives (n=2). Encouraging parent involvement (n=2), and creativity (n=1) were other responses. Lastly, one teacher said that the curriculum was appropriate for 36-72 month-old children and another teacher stated that assessment was holistic. However, some

preschool teachers could not exactly remember the characteristics of the curriculum but they commented some concepts which related to child-centeredness. For example, they said that Turkish preschool curriculum considered children's age (n=2), developmental characteristics (n=2), needs (n=2), interests (n=1), and supported the active participation of children (n=1).

4.1 Turkish preschool teachers' beliefs about child-centered education

The beliefs of the 20 Turkish preschool teachers were investigated by an interview protocol containing 17 questions. After data analysis, eight main themes related to teachers' beliefs were determined with their sub-themes as shown in Figure 4.2.

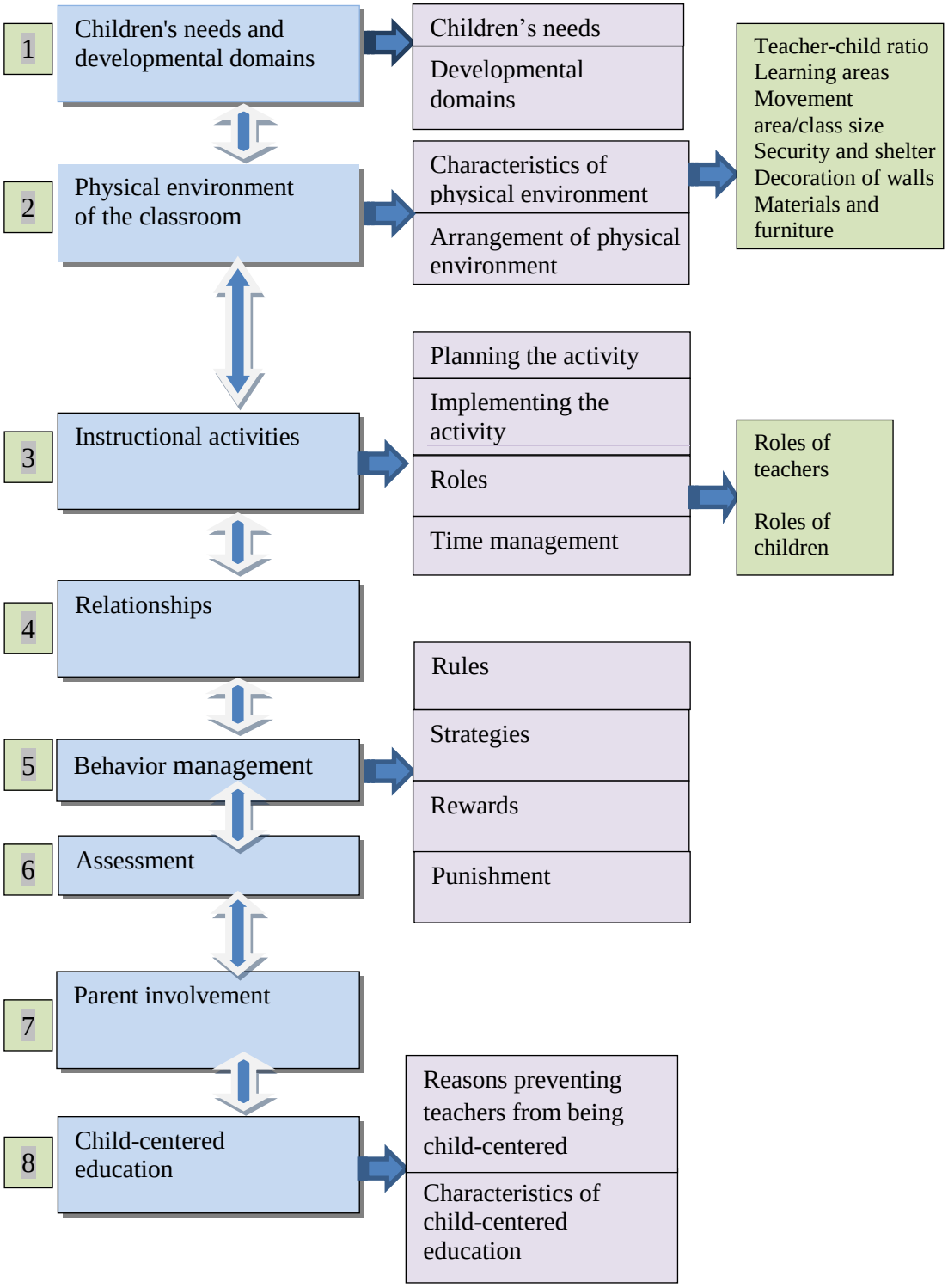

Figure 4.2 Eight main themes and sub-themes related to the preschool teachers' beliefs about child-centered education

4.1.1 Children's needs and developmental domains

When teachers were asked what they understood by the term *children's needs*, they focused on their developmental needs. Also, In terms of which *developmental domains* should generally be supported in child-centered education, they stressed various domains.

In terms of children's needs, most of the teachers (n=14) stated that children needed to be supported in their various developmental skills related to social/emotional and cognitive areas. Some teachers stressed that children's social (n=5) and self-care skills (n=3) should be developed. According to three teachers, children need to play. Furthermore, considering the individual differences of children were mentioned by some teachers (n=2) as developmental needs.

Most of the teachers (n=14) stated that the social-emotional domain should be mainly supported in a child-centered classroom and the children's social-emotional skills should be enhanced because many children lack confidence (n=6). Also, children need support in developing self-expression (n=5) and making friends (n=2). One teacher stated the importance of parents' expectations in supporting the development of social-emotional skills and added:

> *"Socialization, communication and establishing relationships are the base of other skills and domains. Therefore, social-emotional skills of children should be generally supported."* (P17-S1)

Another teacher stated:

> *"I have some children who do not know how to share, do not participate in activities, and never talk to other children. Thus, I must start from social-emotional domain."* (P18-S1)

Some teachers stated that the cognitive domain (n=8) should be enhanced because of the expectation of parent/society (n=2). One teacher said that supporting activities for cognitive skills of children was important for children, and another said that the cognitive domain was essential for the development of other domains. Another teacher explained her ideas as follows:

> *"According to me, cognitive domain should be at the end of the order but society expects to enhance children's cognitive skills. Thus, we have to meet*

the expectations of society. I mean cognitive skills of children should be generally supported because of society's expectations." (P9-S1)

Lastly, preschool teachers stated that psychomotor domain (n=3), language domain (n=3), and self-help skills (n=3) of children should be enhanced and four teachers emphasized that all domains should be supported.

4.1.2 Physical environment

When the preschool teachers' were asked about their beliefs regarding the physical classroom environment in child-centered education, the characteristics and arrangement of physical environment were considered to be the important items.

In relation to the characteristics of the physical environment, the teachers gave various responses; some referring to the teacher-child ratio, learning areas, and movement area/class size, and others to security and shelter, decoration of walls, and materials and furniture.

Teacher-child ratio. One to 15 was the ideal for some of preschool teachers (n=7). Some teachers stating there should be 10 children (n=4) or 16-19 children (n=3) with one adult in the classroom. Two teachers said there should be fewer than 10 children in a classroom however; one teacher commented that the teacher-child ratio should be 1 to 20. A teacher, who considered that the ideal ratio was 1 to 15 for a child-centered classroom, said:

"When my classroom is crowded, I cannot be successful. In a crowded classroom, when I am interested in one of the children, another child interrupts one of the other children." (P12-S2-S3)

Learning areas. Many teachers (n=11) believe that learning areas are necessary in a child-centered classroom although two of the teachers did not think these were necessary, one of them explained her ideas:

"Learning areas are not necessary because children cannot understand this separation. For example, if I tell the children that this is the puppet area. It means nothing to them. That is, the organization of [different learning] areas is not important for the children." (P3-S3)

Two teachers considered that the number of learning areas should be limited because too many different areas may distract the children. On the contrary, two other teachers stressed that there should be a large variety of learning areas and one stated:

> "A *learning area is not just limited materials on a table. The same areas and the same materials are not interesting for children. Therefore, there should be a large variety of learning areas and materials, and, if possible, they should be reorganized on a daily basis."* (P17-S3)

Supporting the use of learning areas, another two teachers stated that learning areas should be clearly separated.

Movement area/class size. Most of the preschool teachers felt that there should be sufficient movement area (n=15) in child-centered classrooms.

Security and shelter. Teachers stressed that a child-centered classroom should be safe (n=4), well-lit (n=2), and at an appropriate temperature (n=1).

Decoration of walls. Some teachers (n=6) stated that children's work should be exhibited in the classroom. With some teachers commenting that there should be visual materials on the walls (n=4), but it should not distract the children (n=3). Two teachers said that walls should be decorated with interesting materials and should be light in color. Only one teacher mentioned that materials and display boards on the walls should be at the children's eye level.

Materials and furniture. In terms of materials and furniture in a child-centered classroom, participant teachers referred to existing materials and others to the selection of materials. Some teachers focused on characteristics of existing materials and furniture and stated that materials and furniture should be child-sized (n=4), enough (n=3), and interesting for children (n=2) in a child-centered classroom. Also, it was considered that the materials should be appropriate for children's age (n=2) and multi-purpose (n=2). According to two teachers, children's independent use of the materials is necessary. Other teachers emphasized the materials and furniture that should be in a child-centered classroom and mentioned cushions (n=2), a rich library (n=1), a computer (n=1), a projector (n=1), wooden and high quality materials and furniture (n=1).

In terms of selection of the materials and furniture the preschool teachers gave the following characteristics; interesting (n=13), appropriate for children's age (n=7), multi-purpose (n=7), safe (n=5), appropriate for independent use of children (n=4), healthy (n=3), wooden (n=2), and durable (n=1). Some teachers said that materials that supported children's creativity (n=4) and meet their needs (n=2) and wishes (n=2) should be chosen. Although three teachers emphasized that materials and furniture should be selected together with the children one of them stated:

> *"Teachers and children cannot decide or select which materials and furniture they will use. For example, a few years ago our principal bought a lot of furniture and materials for the classrooms and we are still using them. I do not need some of the cupboards in my classroom but I cannot get rid of them."* (P3-S3)

Some preschool teachers stated that the physical environment of the classroom should be organized together with the children (n=5) and based on their individual differences (age, interest, ability, desire) (n=5). Also, some teachers stressed the appropriate separation of learning areas such as active-quiet (n=3). According to some teachers, the children's easy access to materials and areas (n=3), adequate movement area (n=1), frequency of use of material (n=1), appropriateness of an activity (individual, small group or large group activities) (n=1), and class size (n=1) should be considered when arranging classrooms.

4.1.3 Instructional activities

Regarding the preschool teachers' beliefs about instructional activities in the child-centered education, when planning and implementing the activity, the teacher's and child's role during the activity and time management were important items to consider.

Most of the teachers (n=15) stated that while planning an activity in child-centered education, the children's needs should be considered. Also according to some teachers, children's developmental level and characteristics (n=4), their interests and wishes (n=3), and chronological age (n=2) should be taken into account. However, one of the teachers mentioned that the activity should be planned according to the group characteristics. One teacher mentioned that interesting and

enjoyable activities should be planned for children (n=2) while another teacher emphasized the active participation of children in the activity planning process.

In relation to implementation, some teachers (n=7) said that children's needs should be considered when implementing an activity. Also, children should be free during the activities (n=2), and the activities should be open ended (n=1).

There were preschool teachers who stressed their beliefs related to the teacher's role during an activity in a child-centered classroom. Most (n=13) stated that teachers should act as guides during the activity and one said:

> *"A teacher should be a guide. She should guide the child to know what he wants and to express himself. Therefore, the child will decide and direct his activities."* (P9-S3)

Another teacher expressed her beliefs, thus:

> *The teacher should be a guide in child-centered education, but in Turkey we misunderstand this term and we tell all children what they should do. We do not guide them. We direct them. Therefore, they have no other option. I think it is not appropriate for child-centered education."* (P8-S3)

Some teachers (n=9) emphasized that the teacher should direct children with questions and directives according to the children's interests. Scaffolding (n=4), encouraging (n=3) and observing (n=2) children, and teaching (n=2) were mentioned as teachers' roles. Other teachers said that teachers should plan and implement instructional activities (n=3) and provide children with various opportunities to support their active participation (n=2). One teacher, who stated that teachers should demonstrate an activity, supported this by saying:

> *"When children make a mistake related to their activities, they feel sad. Therefore, I help them in their activities. I work on the activity more than children initially, then children start to trust themselves and make better."* (P1-S4)

When the preschool teachers expressed their beliefs about children's role in a child-centered activity, most (n=14) stated that children should be active. However, one teacher expressed the view:

"Of course, the children should be active. However, I think the adult's role is more important than the children's role because adults should open the doors that children will pass through." (P17-S3)

On the contrary other teachers (n=5) emphasized that activities should be decided, planned and directed by children as one commented:

"I believe that children have a good ability to make decisions. Although each child has different desires and interests, all the children can agree the common desires and interests for daily activities. I think the best thing in child-centered education is that one of the children suggests doing something and another one contributes her own ideas to his suggestions. At finally, they can find a common activity. In this way, children learn decision making and respecting each other." (P13-S3)

Learning (n=4), being free (n=2), and having fun (n=2) were mentioned as the children's role in child-centered education by some teachers.

Preschool teachers' answers related to instructional activities in child-centered education included their beliefs about time management. Many (n=11) said the duration of the activities should be connected to the children's characteristics such as attention span, interest, motivation, and developmental characteristics. Some teachers stated that the duration of the activities should be flexible (n=7), short and reasonable (n=3), and controlled by teachers (n=2). One of these teachers said:

"We cannot tell children that they have to make and complete certain activities in certain time. I think that time limitation cannot be appropriate for preschoolers." (P13-S4)

Another teacher, however, stressed that duration of the activity should be limited and said:

"I cannot give children unlimited time for their activities because I have to implement all activities in my plan during the day. I cannot wait for only one or two children who do not finish the activity."(P8-S3)

4.1.4 Relationship

When preschool teachers were asked about beliefs related to the relationships between teacher and child in child-centered education, some (n=8) stated that it should be based on mutual affection and respect. Other teachers (n=6) said children and teachers should have a friendly relationship, some stressed that teachers should

be a guide (n=4), warm (n=3), fair (n=2), flexible (n=2), and role models (n=2) in their relationship with their children. According to a few teachers (n=4), a comfortable atmosphere should be created to encourage children to express themselves. Two teachers mentioned that the teacher should be the authority in a child-centered classroom and one stating that:

> "*[a] child has to know the teacher's authority. If he does not, many problems will occur in the classroom. However, instead of declaring that she is the authority in the classroom, the teacher should do this inconspicuously."* (P17-S4)

4.1.5 Behavior management

Preschool teachers' beliefs about behavior management in child-centered education included explanation of rules, strategies, reward and punishment. The teachers mentioned reward and punishment as strategies to decrease or prevent misbehavior in the classroom. Since the use of reward and punishment is a critical issue in child-centered education we elicited more detail. Some preschool teachers (n=9) stated that in a child-centered classroom rules should be established together with the children. A few teachers (n=3) said that rules should be formed at the beginning of the year; however, according to two teachers, rules should be established based on the problems that occur or the needs of children (n=2). Two other teachers stated that rules should be short, clear, and positive.

In terms of behavior management, teachers offered various strategies to decrease or prevent misbehaviors in a child-centered classroom such as reward and punishment (n=2), communication with parents (n=1), ignoring misbehaviors (n=1), and investigation of the motivation for the misbehavior (n=1). Half of the teachers (n=10) stated that rewards should be used in a child-centered classroom and one of commented that reward should be used in conjunction with punishment:

> *"I think that sometimes both reward and punishment should be used because they are necessary for some children. We should consider that all children are not the same and they may need different strategies."* (P14-S3)

A few preschool teachers (n=4), however, emphasized that reward is not useful and not necessary. According to one teacher:

"There are both rewards and punishment in practice. I believe that they should not be used in child-centered education because they are not useful. However, I use. For example, giving stickers are very common in our school. I had not used them for first six months but my children started to bring some stickers and I had to use them." (P11-S5)

Punishment was emphasized as unnecessary and not useful by some teachers (n=8). One of them said:

"I think that no kind of punishment should exist in preschool education. Punishment is not child-centered. It has no positive and helpful effects on children. I believe that punishment increases misbehavior rather than stopping it." (P10-S5)

A few preschool teachers (n=3) said that punishment should be used in the classroom but should not be called *punishment*. Also, one of the teachers said punishment should be a preference for children and explained her beliefs:

"I believe that teacher should offer the punishment as a preference. At the beginning, you, as a teacher, should give the consequences of the behavior so the child has the opportunity to think about her behavior and the consequences. Therefore, when you penalize the child, she will perceive this as consequence as her preference not a punishment." (P13-S6)

4.1.6 Assessment

In response to this issue of assessment in child-centered education half the teachers (n=10) emphasized the importance of children's progress. One teacher commented:

"*A teacher should consider process rather than product while assessing the child because product is a part of the process."* (P20-S5)

Some preschool teachers stressed that assessment should be individual (n=6) and based on objectives (n=2). One of them expressed her beliefs that:

"Assessment should be individually. I mean that goals and objectives should be assessed for each child individually. Generalization should not be done." (P5-S7)

In relation to assessment techniques, a few teachers (n=3) stressed that assessment forms based on objectives and developmental reports are not appropriate to assess progress of children in child-centered education and a few (n=2) said that children should be assessed through observation. Also, according to one teacher, preschool teachers are not able to adequately assess their students:

> *"I believe that there is no assessment in early childhood education. We are lacking in knowledge. I think that assessment is very important but I cannot say that I can assess the children correctly. However, we should assess children correctly and share our findings with parents and elementary school teachers. Of course, we send our reports to parents and they use them as wrapping paper."* (P11-S6)

4.1.7 Parent involvement

Regarding preschool teachers' beliefs about parent involvement in child-centered education, half of the teachers (n=10) stated that parents' active involvement in education was very important and two said that parents' participations was necessary to develop empathy with teachers. One teacher explained her beliefs in this way:

> *"Participation of parents in classroom activities is very important, because thanks to this participation, they can see their children and encounter different situations in the classroom. They can also develop empathy with the teacher. Therefore, parents have more realistic expectations after active participation."* (P7-S7)

A few teachers also stated that children's success (n=2) and motivation (n=2) can be increased by parent involvement. Moreover, several teachers (n=6) emphasized the importance of parents' support and cooperation while a few (n=4) stressed that parents should be informed through forms, homework and notes. According to three teachers, there must be consistency between home and school in child-centered education. However, one teacher stated that parent involvement was not helpful saying:

> *"I think that parents should not have any role in the classroom. Do you know what the parents are like? They are terrible. I make it clear to the parents in the first meeting that I do not want them in the classroom. The principal told us that parents should be satisfied. It means that I have to increase the children's workload in order to satisfy parents."* (P17-S9)

4.1.8 Child-centered education

When asked to explain child-centered education, the teachers focused on two issues; the definition of child-centered education and reasons why teachers are prevented from being child-centered.

While defining child-centeredness, teachers stressed children's individual differences such as interest and abilities (n=6), needs (n=6), wishes (n=4), and developmental characteristics (n=1). One teacher stated:

> *"In child-centered education, children's wishes should be considered. However, we do not consider what children want. For instance, when I come to the classroom with boxes and a child does not want to work with them, I should be able to offer him some alternatives."* (P3-S9)

Some teachers said that children should be decision makers and directors (n=8), active (n=6), the center and aim of education (n=6) whereas teachers should be passive (n=6) and guides (n=6). According to a few teachers (n=3), children should be free and there should be no limitations and planning in child centered education. One teacher commented:

> *"Child-centered education means freedom. Both the teacher and children can be flexible. Also, the school should have a flexible atmosphere. In child-centered education, it is important that children learn from their experiences in this flexible environment rather than what is taught by teachers."* (P15-S8)

Some preschool teachers (n=5), however, emphasized that child-centered education does not mean that children could do whatever they want in the classroom and a teacher said:

> *"If I consider individual desires or interests of children, each child will want different things and dealing with all of them would be impossible. Therefore, children should know that wishes of the group are important and they should agree with these preferences. I ask the children who wants what, then count [the number of children that want which activity] and decide what we will do. In free play time they whatever they want, but for example in a class art activity all of them have to paint. If one of them does not want to paint, I do not offer another option. If each child behaves or works according to his interests or desires, it will not be child-centered education. I think it will be chaotic education."* (P9-S5-S6)

Another teacher said:

"Child-centeredness does not mean that children's desires should be agreed to. A teacher should have the ability to capture children's attention for the activity planned by her." (P9-S6)

Teachers stated that some of the reasons that prevented them from being child-centered were related to factors within and outside the classroom. The factors within the classroom, were the teacher's workload (n=6), background and lack of knowledge (n=4), and also the class size (n=4). One teacher emphasized that since she did not specifically understand the meaning and characteristics of child-centered education she could not implement it correctly. Another teacher said:

"I have 18 children [in the classroom]. I cannot meet each child's interests and needs at the same time. While one of them wants me to read a story book, another wants to dance or watch TV. I try to provide the children with opportunities in free play time to be able to do whatever they want. Therefore, firstly, class size should be decreased for child-centered education." (P16-S3)

Children's characteristics such as age, motivation, cultural and educational background are emphasized as obstacles by a few preschool teachers (n=3) for example one teacher commented:

"The age group of children is important for my [classroom] practice. For example, I am teaching 3 year- olds this year and they need my instructions. Last year, my children were 6 years old and most of them had school experience. Therefore, I used to be more child-centered last year. However, 3 year- old children are away from their family for the first time and they have to adapt to a new social group. Hence, they need more instructions and I cannot be child-centered." (P14-S4)

In terms of reasons related to factors outside the classroom, parents' expectations (n=8) and principals' expectations and limitations (n=7) prevented teachers from being child-centered (n=8). One of them said that the principal's attitude was very important. For instance, she stated that the principal told all teachers in her school that they had to participate in a festival. Thus, they were prepared for it and all children had to do the same thing in same way. Another teacher stated:

"I am not child-centered because I try to meet the principal's expectations. For example, he told us that we had to complete some projects. The idea of

making a project may seem child-centered, but I believe that the topic and steps of a project should be determined together with the children in child-centered education. However, the principal said that the topic of my group was bread. When children asked me why we did a bread project, I said that the principal had decided on this topic." (P17-S6)

According to some teachers (n=3), negative comments from colleagues prevented them from being child-centered such as this comment from one teacher:

"I try to be a child-centered teacher but my colleagues come and ask me, 'Did you do this activity in this way?' or 'You should not let children be so flexible'. Even, when my children were working in small groups freely, one of my colleagues came and shouted at my children to stop talking. Of course, I am influenced by my colleagues and I begin to behave like them." (P3-S10)

While two preschool teachers identified the physical conditions of schools as an obstacle, another teacher stated that goals of preschool education stopped her from being child centered. She said that teachers could not be child-centered because they had to prepare children academically for elementary school academically.

As a summary, the findings of the study showed that preschool teachers' beliefs about relationship, parent involvement, implementation of activities, teacher's role, child's role, time management, learning areas, decoration of walls, and arrangement of physical environment seemed appropriate to child-centered education. Also, their beliefs related to materials/furniture, behavior management, assessment, characteristics of child-centeredness and planning of activities could be interpreted as partially appropriate. However, participant teachers' beliefs concerning developmentally domains and teacher-child ratio seemed inappropriate to child-centered education. Also, their beliefs about movement area/class size were not clear enough to make a judgment about the appropriateness of their beliefs in relation to child-centeredness.

4.2 Turkish preschool teachers' self-reported practices related to child-centered education

An interview protocol containing 17 questions was used to investigate the self-reported practices of 20 Turkish preschool teachers. After the data analysis, eight main themes related to teachers' self-reported practices were determined as:

1. Developmental domains
2. Physical environment
3. Instructional activities
4. Relationship
5. Behavior management
6. Assessment
7. Parent involvement
8. Child-centered education

4.2.1 Developmental domains

When preschool teachers were asked about which developmental domain they generally supported, the majority of the preschool teachers (n=14) identified the social-emotional domain stating that they used stories and flash cards (n=3), drama (n=3), and play (n=1), and gave children responsibility in the classroom (n=1) to support their social-emotional skills.

Cognitive (n=3) and psychomotor domains (n=3) were mentioned by some teachers as the most important domains. One teacher said that art activities were important in enhancing children's psychomotor skills. A few teachers said that self-help (n=2) and language skills (n=1) were generally supported in their classrooms. Furthermore, four preschool teachers stressed that they tried to enhance all the developmental skills of children and one teacher emphasized that she used creative play to support various developmental skills.

4.2.2 Physical environment

When preschool teachers were asked about their practices related to the physical environment of classroom they stated that characteristics and arrangement of the physical environment were important.

Regarding the characteristics of the physical environment in their classrooms, teachers gave various responses. Some referred to the teacher-child ratio, learning areas, and movement area/class size, and others named security and shelter, decoration of walls, and materials.

Adult child ratio. Over half the preschool teachers (n=11) stated that there were between twenty-one and twenty-five children in their classes. There were twenty children in some classes (n=6) and from 16 to 19 in other classrooms (n=3). There was no other adult or assistant teacher in participant teachers' classrooms.

Learning areas. Some preschool teachers stated that there were learning areas in their classroom (n=3) and they were clearly separated from each other (n=2). Two teachers said that there was a large variety of learning areas in their classrooms and two more teachers stressed that those areas in their classrooms were limited (n=1) or inadequate (n=1). One teacher reported that there was no learning area in her classroom.

Movement area/class size. Many preschool teachers (n=12) stated that movement area in their classrooms were not large enough although two teachers said that these areas of their classrooms were adequate.

Security and shelter. One of the teachers emphasized that her classroom was safe for children. Another teacher said that her classroom was well-lit whereas another stated that lighting in her classroom was not sufficient or appropriate.

Decoration of walls. A few teachers (n=4) said that children's works were exhibited on the walls of their classrooms and a one teacher stated that there were some visual materials on the walls. Another teacher commented that display boards on the walls were not at children's eye level. One of the teachers explained that they could not use the walls:

> "*The principal does not allow us to use the walls [for display]. We have only two boards and they are too limited to exhibit children's works or other instructional materials. However, the principal said that he cannot paint the*

> *walls every year. Therefore, we cannot paste posters, photos or children's works to walls. I don't want painted and clean walls. I want to use them for my children."* (P17-S2)

Materials and furniture. Only a few teachers said that they had a wide variety of materials and furniture (n=1) and TV/CD (n=1) in their classroom. One of the teachers said that the furniture in her classroom was too heavy for the children to move. Other teachers stated that materials in her classroom were insufficient (n=1) that her library area did not have enough materials (n=1), and another teacher stressed that there were limited multi-purpose materials in her classroom.

Some of teachers (n=6) stated that they considered providing children with easy access to materials when arranging their classrooms and one teacher said:

> *"Children's easy access to materials is important. For example, I put interesting or new books on the floor so they can lie down and look at the books. Also, my aim is that the children feel as comfortable [in the classroom] as they do at home."* (P9-S2)

When arranging their classrooms, some teachers provided interesting materials for children (n=3) and creating appropriate separation of learning areas such as active-quiet (n=3) about which a teacher commented:

> *"I arranged learning areas based on appropriate separation of them. I considered that active and quiet areas were not near to each other. If I put the dramatic play area near to the book area, children working in the book area will be interrupted."* (P5-S3)

The amount and variety of materials and furniture (n=3), the movement area of the classroom (n=3), the daily schedule (n=2), taking advantage of daylight (n=1), safety of children (n=1) and the inclusive child (n=1) are considered by some teachers when arranging their classrooms. Three teachers said that arrangement of their classrooms was flexible.

A few preschool teachers (n=2) stated that they did not ask children when arranging their classrooms. One of them said that she never asked children how or where the materials and furniture should be placed because there were 20 children in her classroom and each child could suggest a different arrangement. However,

another preschool teacher mentioned that she arranged her classroom together with the children.

4.2.3 Instructional activities

When preschool teachers were asked about practices related to instructional activities in child-centered education, they stated that planning and implementing the activity, teachers' and children's roles during the activity and time management were important items to consider.

The preschool teachers stated that they planned instructional activities that provided children with active participation (n=4) and different options (n=2), supported all developmental domains (n=3), and creativity (n=2). Also, some teachers considered that activities should be interesting and fun for children (n=3) and appropriate for their individual differences (n=2). For example a teacher said:

> *"Each child is different and learns in a different way. Therefore, I try to plan various activities including different teaching methods. I sometimes describe something and support their active participation but sometimes I only explain the topic based on their characteristics."* (P16-S2)

Teachers stated that children's interests and wishes (n=5), needs (n=3), developmental characteristics (n=3), chronological age (n=2), and readiness (n=1) were important when planning their instructional activities. One of the teachers said that during the planning of an activity, her main question was whether the children would like this activity. Also, classroom materials (n=1) and the topic of the day (n=1) were considered by teachers. Four teachers said their plans were flexible and one of them explained:

> *"I prepare my daily plan but when I come to class, my children's expectation may be different. I remember that I changed my plans many times and I sometimes explained why I made the plan. However, sometimes I cannot make changes and I implement my plan because I am instructed by the principal."* (P12-S3)

Several teachers stated that they tried to provide children with active participation (n=5), and consider their individual differences such as their interests and wishes (n=3), developmental characteristics (n=1), and readiness (n=1) when

implementing their activities. Also, they emphasized that they created activities that provided children with opportunities to work individually, in small and large groups (n=2), supported their creativity (n=1), and involved them in the decision making process (n=1), and that gave the teacher the opportunity to use various teaching methods (n=1).

A few preschool teachers stated they implemented interesting and fun activities (n=2) and explained the details of the activities (n=2). One teacher said:

> *"The activity should be interesting and fun for children. I ask some questions to get the children's attention. Even, I sometimes use some materials to make it an interesting event for children."* (P4-S3)

The teachers identified the following as their role when implementing an activity; rewarding (n=6), guiding (n=4), motivating children (n=4), meeting their interest and needs (n=3), supporting their active participation (n=2), encouraging them (n=1), using different teaching methods (n=1), and planning and implementing instructional activities (n=1). One of the teachers explained her attitude to individuality:

> *"If a child does not want to do an activity, I cannot insist on it. I try to provide this child with different activities that include the same goals and objectives. As a teacher, I should consider children's individual differences."* (P8-S1)

Another teacher said:

> *"A teacher should persuade children to do something. For instance, I come to classroom with three stories. I asked them which one of them they wanted to listen. I voted their choices. After reading their story, I said that I read their story and I wanted to read my story now. I started to read the story in my daily plan. As I said, first a teacher has to convince children."*

Some teachers said that children were active (n=7), free (n=5) and investigators (n=2) during the activity in their classroom. According to a few of the teachers, the children decide, plan, and direct the activities (n=3), and take responsibility (n=1). One teacher said:

> *"My children often said "no" to me this year. Although many teachers do not like it because of discipline, I like it. It means that children can take responsibility; direct the process and say that they did not like and did not*

want to do my activity. For instance, children sometimes told me they wanted to use different materials. It is impossible that all children will do the same activity at the same time." (P20-S3)

One teacher also emphasized that children in her classroom were curious and asked questions about whatever they wanted to learn.

Half the teachers (n=10) stated that due to lack of time, they finished the children's incomplete work. Some teachers (n=9) said that they gave extra time for the children to complete their work, but sometimes children were not able not finish in time. Also, some of the teachers (n=4) expected the children to take incomplete activities to finish at home. One teacher mentioned that since time was limited, the children could not complete their work later.

Eight teachers emphasized that the duration of the activities were flexible while other teachers (n=8) expressed that the duration depended on children. Also, three teachers stated that they often warned children about the duration (n=3) for example one said:

"I warn my children before the duration finishes. For example, I say, "We have 5 minutes and try to complete your work or games." I remind them because if the child wants to add something to his activity and cannot manage it in time, he may be disappointed. It is a child-centered implementation. Therefore, before time is up, I should warn them about the time." (P7-S5)

4.2.4 Relationship

In terms of preschool teachers' practices in relation to their relationship with children in their classrooms, a few of the teachers (n=4) said that they communicated with children appropriately. A few stated that they were not strict (n=4) and established a mutual respect with children (n=4). One of these teachers said:

"Initially, I must say that I am not a strict teacher. My children behave in same way when I am in or not in the classroom. They are not afraid of me and they do not change their behavior but they respect me." (P19, S3)

Furthermore, teachers stated that they were friendly and funny (n=3), charitable (n=3), and reliable (n=2). One teacher explained that her relationship with the children changed:

"My role changes according to the situation. For example, when they have just woken up I am a mother but while explaining something, I am a teacher. Also, I am their peer while playing with them." (P18-S5)

A few teachers explain they let children express themselves freely (n=3) and had physical contact with children such as hugging and kissing (n=2). However, three teachers stated that they were rule-based. Therefore, children had to get permission to move in the classroom and had to follow teacher's instructions. One of them said:

"Children in my class have to ask me when they want to do something. I explain to them possible consequences of their wishes and then I say, "It's up to you!" Also, they ask me because they know that if they ask me and have a good relationship with me, there will not be any problems." (P2-S5)

4.2.5 Behavior management

The important items of the preschool teachers' practices related to behavior management in their classrooms involved rules, strategies, reward and punishment. Teachers mentioned reward and punishment as strategies to decrease or prevent misbehavior in the classroom.

Regarding establishing rules, most of the preschool teachers in this study (n=14) stated that they established rules with children; however, three teachers said that they formed the rules without children as explained by one of the teachers d:

"*Rules cannot be established together with the children in my classroom. I say, 'These are our rules. Is it OK?' They generally accept since they cannot say no."* (P6-S5)

Other teachers (n=5) also said that rationales and consequences of the rules were discussed with children in the classroom; eight teachers stressed that they established the rules based on children's problems or needs, three teachers stated that they formed the rules at the beginning of year, and seven teachers established a contract with children. In addition, three teachers stated they considered children's age when establishing rules.

In order to teach and implement the rules, teachers paste the contracts on the wall (n=7), punish or reward children (n=6), often remind children of the rules (n=5),

and talk about the rules with the children (n=2). Teachers also use pictures or stories (n=2) and drama or play (n=2) to teach the rules. One teacher said:

> *"After children learn and obey the first rule, I explain our second rule. I do not teach them 10 rules at the same time. Also, consequences of a behavior or not obeying the rule are appropriate for the child's age. I sometimes use different materials or games to teach rules. For example, at the beginning of the year, I show children a bell and say that it means it is time to collect toys. Then, I have no problems related to the collection of toys."* (P11-S4)

The preschool teachers described their practices related to strategies to decrease or prevent misbehaviors in their classrooms. They stated that they used strategies including; punishment such as time out (n=10), talking with children (n=6), talking with their parents (n=4), and giving a star or a thank you letter (n=4) to the children. Some teachers (n=6) emphasized that they used the misbehaving child's classmate as a strategy. For example, classmates warn (n=3), exclude (n=1), humiliate (n=1), or promise something to (n=1) other classmates who misbehave in the classroom. A few preschool teachers (n=4) said that their strategies changed according to children and the type of misbehavior. Three teachers ignore the children's misbehaviors (n=3) while two of them try to understand the reason for the behavior. A further three teachers stated that they provided children with opportunities to establish empathy with their teachers and classmates.

Most of the preschool teachers (n=15) stated they give children tangible rewards such as stickers, stars, medals, and smiley faces (n=12), thank you letters (n=1), extra play time (n=1), and allocate responsibilities such as being head of the class (n=1). Many teachers (n=11) gave emotional/verbal rewards such as thanking and congratulating (n=4), kissing (n=2), hugging (n=2), applauding (n=2) and smiling (n=1). While one teacher emphasized that she often used rewards, another stated she rarely rewarded children. One of the teachers said that she gave all children rewards and explained as below:

> *"I give smiley face to all the children. Even, I give one to the children who misbehave because I think they are very young. While giving smiley faces, I say to them that they behaved well today and they will be better tomorrow."* (P18-S7)

Time-out (n=11), sending children out of the classroom (n=1) and shouting at the children (n=1) were mentioned as punishments used by teachers. One teacher said:

> *"Of course, I do not hit children. However, I am human and I sometimes shout at the children when classroom is too noisy. It is a great punishment for them."* (P11-S5)

Some preschool teachers (n=3) did punish the children but used different terms such as warning or preference. One teacher said that she rarely used punishment another teachers said she only punished children who hurt their classmates; and one teacher uses it for children who are unwilling to participate in activities.

4.2.6 Assessment

Some teachers (n=5) stated that they assessed children individually and did not compare the children with each other. A few teachers (n=3) stated that they informed parents about children's progress. Also, one teacher considered children's characteristics of chronological ages and another focused on their general developmental characteristics while assessing them.

The teachers reported that they used their own observation notes (n=15), assessment forms based on objectives (n=14), developmental reports (n=10), children's portfolio/work samples (n=2), and parents' observation notes (n=2) for assessment. A few preschool teachers (n=3) emphasized at the end of the assessment, they informed parents about their progress and one of them said:

> *"I observe the child's behaviour and skills level at the beginning of the year and compare it with their current behaviour and abilities? I share this information with parents on a monthly basis. I talk about everything related to the children such as eating habits, relationships with peer, language development."* (P5-S6)

4.2.7 Parent involvement

When teachers commented on their practices related to parent involvement, most stated that parents participated in various activities in their classrooms such as art activities (n=13), story reading (n=9), play (n=3), cooking (n=3), science

experiments (n=3), job sharing (n=4), and providing materials for activities (n=1). One of these teachers said:

> *"Parent involvement is very important because the parents can see their children in the classroom and understand the effort that teachers' makes. I sit at the corner of the classroom and I say to parents that classroom is theirs. I am a guide to parents I want them to understand what happens in the classroom."*

While two teachers stressed parents could visit the classroom whenever they wanted, a few teachers (n=4) said that parents only participated in school meetings. Two teachers mentioned that parents sometimes came to their classroom to observe. However, five teachers stated that parents did not actively participate in classroom activities. Three teachers said that according to their school rules, parents could visit the classrooms only to undertake activities. Lastly, one of the teachers commented that there was no consistency between school practices and those of the parents.

4.2.8 Child-centered education

When preschool teachers' discussed their own practices related to child-centered education, two issues emerged; teachers' self-assessment and practices.

Preschool teachers assessed their own practices as child-centered or teacher-centered. Seven said that they were *usually* child-centered whereas six teachers defined themselves as *both* child-centered and teacher centered. One of them said:

> "*I usually try to be child-centered but I am also teacher-centered because child-centeredness is not sometimes clear for me. I cannot understand it exactly. I think I need more experience to better understand it."* (P15-S9)

A few teachers (n=3) assessed themselves as *absolutely* child-centered. They said that they preferred child-centered practices because it is more successful than teacher-centered education. Also, classroom management is more difficult in teacher-centered classrooms because activities are not planned based on children's needs and interests. The teachers reported that children learn actively and are happier in child-centered classrooms.

Teachers who assessed themselves as *usually* teacher centered (n=4) gave their reasons which included that child-centered teachers have to be more patient and

put in more effort than their teacher-centered colleagues. Therefore, child-centeredness decreases a teacher's performance. Children can do whatever they want. From this perspective of child-centered education, the teachers consider that if children can do whatever they want then there will be a chaos in the classroom and some discipline problems will occur as a teacher explains:

> *"I am not a child-centered teacher due to some of my practices. For instance, when a child cannot finish her/his art activity, I complete her/his work. Our program is child-centered and there are some clear explanations about children's developmental level and cognitive level. However, there are still some mistakes in practices. We do not focus on individual differences." (P8-S6)*

Another teacher asserted that she was teacher-centered;

> *Although I consider children's interests and needs while planning, I implement it in a teacher-centered way."* (P14-S4)

Teachers were asked why they assessed themselves and their practices as child-centered, some (n=5) said that their plans were flexible, others stated that they considered children's individual differences such as interests, needs, wishes, age, and readiness (n=4), motivated children in the instructional activities (n=3), and guided them during the activity (n=2). Teachers (n=2) who made planning decisions by vote of the class and used children's wishes as a reward for them (n=2) said that these were child-centered practices. Also, one of the teachers said that she was child-centered because she undertook many projects with the children in her classroom. Teachers who carried out the same activity with all children (n=1) and had children complete school readiness activities (n=1) also assessed themselves and their practices as child-centered.

As a summary, the findings of the study showed that preschool teachers' self-reported practices about relationship, learning areas, decoration of walls, planning of activities, implementation of activities, child's role seemed appropriate to child-centered education. Preschool teachers' self reported practices related to assessment, parent involvement, teacher's role, time management, behavior management, materials/furniture, arrangement of physical environment, characteristics of child-centeredness could be interpreted as partially appropriate whereas their self-reported

practices concerning developmentally domains, teacher-child ratio and movement area/class size seemed inappropriate to child-centered education.

4.3 Turkish preschool teachers' actual practices related to child-centered education

Data from actual practices were obtained from observations. Of the 20 preschool teachers in the study five were observed in their classrooms and their demographic information is given in Table 4.1. The observed teachers' documents were also reviewed.

Table 4.1 *Demographic information of observed teachers*

Participants	Educational Background	Teaching experience	Age group taught	Number of children in the class
Participant 1 (P1)	Faculty of Education – ECE Department	5 years	6 year-olds	20
Participant 2 (P2)	Faculty of Education – ECE Department	3 years	5 year-olds	20
Participant 3 (P3)	Faculty of Education – ECE Department	3 years	6 year-olds	21
Participant 4 (P4)	Faculty of Education – ECE Department	5 years	6 year-olds	25
Participant 5 (P5)	Faculty of Education – ECE Department	3 years	6 year-olds	25

(ECE: Early Childhood Education)

The beliefs, self-reported practices and actual practices of five participants are reported for developmental domains, physical environment, instructional activities, relationships, behavior management, assessment, role of parents, and child centered education. The characteristics of the physical environment in the observed teacher's classroom in relation to their beliefs, the self-reported and actual practice, will be examined under six topics: teacher-child ratio, learning areas, and movement area/class size, security and shelter, decoration of walls, and materials.

In terms of instructional activities, beliefs, self-reported and actual practice of teachers will be focused on five topics: planning and implementing the instructional activities, the roles of the teacher and children during the activity, and time

management. Regarding behavior management, beliefs, self-reported and actual practice will be reported in four areas: rules, strategies, rewards, and punishment.

4.3.1 Participant 1

Participant 1 (P1) has 5-years teaching experience and graduated from Muğla University, Faculty of Education, and Department of Early Childhood Education. She works in a public school and there were twenty 6-year-old children in her class. Photographs were not used for the presentation of participant 1's findings because the school principal did not allow taking photographs.

4.3.1.1 Developmental Domains

Since Participant 1 believed that children needed to develop their cognitive, social emotional domain and self-care skills and she stated that she reinforced the development of these skills in her classroom. In actual practice, the researcher observed that P1 supported these developmental domains of the children in her class. For instance, for the cognitive domain, she used reading and writing activities. She gave worksheets to children and read the instructions, which explained what children would do. For example, the teacher said *"Please, circle the soft materials"* and children circled. P1 encouraged children to share their ideas and feelings with her and their classmates to enhance their social-emotional skills. Also, she gave them many opportunities to engage in real conversations. For instance, one of the children talked about her pet bird and the teacher and other children asked some questions. In terms of the self-care skills the teacher checked the children's hands and shoes after outdoor activity. Also, she watched to see whether children washed their hands before breakfast and lunch.

4.3.1.2 Physical environment

P1 believed that teacher-child ratio should be maximum 10 children for one teacher. She stressed that, if classroom were large enough, there should be two teachers for 20 children. In terms of learning areas, P1 believed that there should be

science, music, dramatic play and block areas in a classroom. She emphasized that movement area should be large saying:

> *"The children can release their energy via playing, therefore classroom should be wide or instead of using only one classroom, different classrooms can be used for different activities."*

P1 stated that security was an important issue. Preschool classrooms should be a safe place for children. She also believed that children's work should be exhibited on the walls and the display boards should at the children's eye level and said:

> *"There has been an idea in my mind for a long time. Half of walls should be covered with paper and during the free play time children can draw whatever they want. This can be used to help the children relax."*

She believed that materials should be soft not to injure children and chairs should be child-sized and light, with radiators being covered to prevent children being injured.

In terms of self-reported practices, P1 said that there were twenty 6-year-old children and only one adult in her classroom. She mentioned science, music, dramatic play, and block areas as learning areas. She considered that the movement area of her classroom was not large enough for 20 children. In terms of security and shelter, she emphasized that there were some concerns related to safety. For example, the radiators and corners of the tables were a risk and chairs were too heavy for the children. She expressed that she used the walls to exhibit children's works, but the display boards were not on children's eye level. She said except for the music area that there were enough materials in her classroom and learning areas.

Regarding her actual practice, there were 15-18 children in P1's classroom during observation sessions. Although there was no specific separation between active and quiet areas, the classroom was divided into the following different learning areas; music, dramatic play, and block centers however, these areas were not labeled. Although, there were children's tables and chairs on one side of the classroom, the other side provided a large enough area to move in and play freely. In relation to security and shelter, the researcher observed that temperature, lighting and noise regulation of the classroom were appropriate and did not limit the learning

process and activities. However, some materials such as radiators and corners of the tables had sharp edges and were not safe for young children. There were no instructional materials on the walls, however children's art work was exhibited on two boards but these were higher than the children's eye level. Also, there was a hanger for each child outside the classroom as an appropriate height and some of the children's works were displayed in the corridor. The basic furniture such as tables, chairs and cupboards were sufficient and child-sized. There was a large variety of materials in the learning areas, but materials in the music area were limited in variety and number.

P1 believed that classroom should be arranged with children and it should be changed based on needs during the year. In the interview, P1 stated that she arranged her classroom with the children at the beginning of the year. However, she emphasized that she sometimes changed it based on children's use. In terms of actual practices of P1, the researcher observed that the physical environment of the arrangement was appropriate for children's easy access to materials. Although there were no labels on cupboards, they were tidy and not over full. Thus, children could use materials independently. However, no changes were made to the classroom layout during the observation sessions.

4.3.1.3 Instructional activities

P1 believed that children's developmental characteristics and readiness should be considered when planning and implementing activities. According to P1 teachers should be active, supportive and provide their children with freedom. She also stated that children should be active in both in the processes of decision making and implementing activities. Time should be defined based on children's wishes and interest.

P1 reported that she considered children's developmental characteristics and readiness when planning instructional activities. Her activity plans were flexible and she could make changes to her plan based on children's interests and wishes during implementation of the activity. She stressed that she did not strictly follow her daily plan and considered the children's attention and motivation. For example, if children

did not want to do an art activity, she changed the activity or did not make them do it. In terms of the teacher's role in the instructional activity, she stated that it was to reduce activities to age level of the children and to reward them. She said that she did this and she gave the example of how she imitated the children and used baby talk in the classroom. If a child stated that he did not want to do an activity, P1 said she would reply, "I do not want to do things either, but I have to." She also emphasized that she gave stars to children to reward appropriate behavior. In terms of the children's role, she stated that children had to be active in her classroom during the activity. For example, she said that in language activities, she would start reading the story then stop and ask the children what happened next. So when the children were completing the story and expressing their ideas they were active. In terms of time management, P1 stated that it was important for children to finish their activities, so if necessary she would give the children extra time to complete their work. However, she said that she considered children's attention and motivation when determining the duration of the activity and, if the children became bored, she would end the activity. Sometimes, she gave the children the opportunity to finish their activities later.

In her actual practice, the researcher observed that the teacher did not have a written daily plan. Also, there was no schedule posted on the wall in the classroom. Although the time of some routines was determined such as breakfast, lunch and snacks, her schedule was flexible. For instance, when children wanted to complete their activity, she gave them extra time. In terms of the implementation of the instructional activities, the researcher observed that P1 informed children about the activities they were to do and used some smooth transitions between the activities such as songs and finger plays. Sometimes, she also offered options for the activity and the children could choose one of them. Sometimes, she gave the children a choice as a reward. For instance, she said "When you complete your worksheets, we can play hide and seek." She made some changes in some activities based on children's wishes; for example, she asked the children to be stars on the floor but children did not want to do this they wanted to dance. The teacher accepted and danced with them. Moreover, P1 participated in the activity and danced with

children. In terms of the teacher's role in the instructional activity, P1 observed children and chose the activities based on their attention span and motivation but she did have all children do the same activity at the same time. However, during free play she encouraged children to select their own activities individually or in small groups. In relation to the child's role in the activities, the researcher observed that children were not active in decision making. P1 usually decided on the activities and most of the activities in the classroom were teacher-initiated. For example, while children were playing hide and seek, she said "Let's use play dough." She did not ask them if they wanted to continue their activity. However, sometimes children insisted on continuing an activity and she accepted their wishes. In terms of time management, she sometimes extended the duration of the activities giving extra time to children who could not complete their activities. However, when they could not still finish, she told them to complete them later.

4.3.1.4 Relationship

P1 believed that teacher-child relationship should be warm. Physical contact should be used by teachers. Also, In terms of her classroom practices, she reported that she established physical contact with children such as hugging. She stressed that there was a mutual respect between her and the children. She also said that they had a warm relationship but the children knew their limits.

In P1's actual practice, the researcher observed that in the morning, she welcomed the children and asked them some questions about themselves. She had real conservations with children during free play and particularly during these conversations; P1 made eye contact, used an appropriate tone of voice, and smiled. She used some sympathetic words such as "dear" and "sweetheart." Also, she established physical contact with them. For example, she hugged and kissed them. However, some children did not consider their teacher's warnings. For example when;

"Mehmet sat on the top of cupboard. The teacher looked at him and tried to indicate nonverbally that he should get down. However, Mehmet continued sitting on the top of cupboard and finally she said that, *"Please get off the cupboard"* but

Mehmet ignored her, she repeated her request twice but Mehmet still ignored her. At the end, teacher went and picked up him." (Observation note, May 23, 2011).

4.3.1.5 Behavior management

P1 believed that rules should be established with the children at the beginning of the year. Then, rules can be changed based on the situations that occur in the classroom. To teach the rules reminding and warning can be used, furthermore, talking with the children and parents can be strategies to decrease or prevent misbehaviors. Lastly, the teacher said that rewards and punishment should be used when necessary.

Although P1 reported that she established rules with the children at the beginning of the year she emphasized that rules were flexible in her classroom and she might make some changes during the year. In terms of strategies to decrease or prevent misbehaviors in her classroom, she said that she often reminded the children of the rules and strictly monitored whether the children obeyed rules. Also, when misbehavior was repeated, she stated that she talked with children and their parents as a strategy. In terms of rewards and punishment, P1 stressed that she often used some tangible rewards such as stickers and stars she said:

> *"There is a star board in my classroom. Each child can get one star each day. At the end of the day, I give the children their star with explanation of why they have been awarded this star. For example, I say that I am giving a star to Ahmet because he collected toys, arranged the classroom and washed his hands with soap. We count their stars every Friday and we give a gift to a child who has collected five stars during the week."*

She explained that she sometimes used punishments such as time out and that she punished children who hurt their classmates and were unwilling to participate in activities.

In P1's actual practice, the researcher observed that rules were not posted in written format in the classroom. Her strategies to decrease or prevent misbehaviors included warning the children who did not obey the rules. For example, some children tried to climb on top of the cupboards and the teacher told them to stop. However, children continued to climb up. P1 took the children down, but one of the

children climbed up again so, she took his stars from the table. Also, she warned them to change their behavior. For instance,

> *"Ata! We came to the garden because you really wanted to. If you behave in this way, we will go back into classroom."*
>
> *"If you continue running, you will lose your stars."*
>
> *"I am sending Ali to the other classroom because he didn't obey the rules."*

Moreover, the teacher sometimes ignored some misbehavior but children did not have any opportunities to talk about their conflicts with each other. In terms of rewards and punishment, the researcher observed that the teacher often used rewards such as giving stickers to children who help with tidying up the classroom. Also, on the wall there was a stars table showing the names of the children and the number of stars. The researcher observed that P1 sometimes used punishment. For example, one of the children pushed a classmate in the line and the teacher sent the miscreant to the end of line. She also removed the stars of some children from the wall chart because of their misbehavior.

4.3.1.6 Assessment

When asked about assessment P1 said that *"This is a difficult question"* and did not talk about assessment. When she was asked about her practices she replied that she used observation notes, assessment forms based on objectives, and developmental reports to assess children. She further explained:

> *"There is a comparison among classrooms in our school. Therefore, teachers put more ticks for every child in assessment forms and show their classroom as more successful."*

In P1's actual practice, the researcher observed that she provided children with feedback related to their work, but she used none of the observation methods that she had reported.

4.3.1.7 Parent involvement

P1 believed that parents should be active in the education of their children and they should participate in activities in the classroom. She commented that some

parents were involved in her class work and that they participated in some experiments, competitions, and activities on special days. She also reported that parents could visit her classroom whenever they wanted.

In P1's actual practice, the researcher observed some short conversations between the teacher and parents during student arrival or departure times, but no parents were involved in the classroom activities during observation sessions.

4.3.1.8 Child-centered education

P1 stated that in child-centered education the children should be active however, when they needed support, they should be helped. Also, she believed that teachers have an important role in child-centered education however; the main role should belong to the children. P1 stressed that being both child-centered and teacher-centered was sometimes easier than being only child-centered or teacher-centered. She said:

> *"When a teacher only uses teacher-centered practices, children cannot do anything. They only follow the teacher's instructions. On the other hand, when teacher is child-centered, there is chaos in the classroom. Therefore, having both child-centered and teacher-centered practices was sometimes better."*

P1 reported that she due to her practice in the classroom she was usually child-centered. She explained that she considered the motivation of children for the activities but this was not always easier to do:

> *"I sometimes ask children about their choices related to activities but each child wants a different activity. Therefore, when making a decision about their preferences is very difficult, I decide what they will do."*

According to P1, the children's self-confidence was an important element in order to be child-centered. She said:

> *"For some children there is great parental pressure at home and they cannot explain their thoughts and desires. They are withdrawn and shy, and cannot actively participate in classroom works. Therefore, children's self-confidence is necessary for becoming child-centered."*

In her actual practice, the researcher observed that P1 used both child-centered and teacher-centered practices. She gave instructions about the activity or

worksheets and children followed them. For example, she said, “Put X on the wolf’s nose.” All of the children placed the “X” in the appropriate spot. Also, for play activities, she explained all the rules of the game in detail. However, sometimes she considered children’s wishes, for example when the teacher started to read a story, but the children did not want a story. The teacher stopped, reading and played with the children.

4.3.2 Participant 2

Participant 2 (P2) graduated from Gazi University, Faculty of Education, and Department of Early Childhood Education and has 3 years teaching experience. She works in a public school and there were twenty 6-year-old children in her classroom.

4.3.2.1 Developmental domains

Participant 2 believed that social-emotional domain should be supported in child-centered education and this is essential for the development of other domains. Children’s self-confidence and communication skills can be enhanced as a result of the support for the social-emotional domain.

P2 reported that she supported all the developmental domains of the children in her classroom but she particularly focused on the social-emotional skills. In her actual practice, the researcher observed that P2 supported generally the cognitive and social-emotional domains of the children. For the cognitive domain, she used some reading and writing activities. She gave worksheets to children and read instructions to explain what children should do. Chess was one of the most important activities for free play time. Also, when reading books, P2 asked many questions and especially focusing on in the cause of the events in the story. P2 encouraged children to share their ideas and feelings with her and their classmates to enhance their social-emotional skills. For instance, there was a child who went to the doctor and she wanted him to share his experiences with the other children.

4.3.2.2 Physical environment

P2 believed that the teacher-child ratio should be twenty 5-6 year old children to one teacher. However, she emphasized that if children were younger than 5 years old, then this ratio would not be appropriate. She said that the ideal number is 15 children to a teacher. In terms of learning areas, P2 believed that there should be different learning areas clearly separated from each other. Moreover, she emphasized that movement area should be wide. She did not mention anything about security and shelter. She believed that the children's work should be exhibited on the walls. She stressed that the materials should be appropriate to the children's interest and wishes and should be chosen based on majority of children' preferences.

P2 reported that in her class there were twenty 5-year-old children and she was the only adult. She stated there were some learning areas that in her classroom but they were not clearly separated from each other. She said that the movement area of her classroom was not large enough for twenty 5-year-old children. In terms of security and shelter, she emphasized that there were no concerns related to safety. Regarding wall decorations, she commented that there were some weather charts, seasons, numbers and shapes on the walls. Also, she displayed children's work on two boards in the classroom. However, materials and work were not placed at the children's eye level because there was a child with a disability in the classroom and she tore materials if they were placed at a lower level. P2 reported there were not enough materials and furniture in her classroom. She said that she could not clearly separate the learning areas due to the lack of materials and furniture.

During the observation it was noted that there were 15-18 children in P2's classroom. The classroom was clearly divided into the following learning areas; chess, blocks, puppets, library, science, and dramatic play and there were name labels in the areas as seen in Figure 4.3 below.

Figure 4.3 An example of a labeled learning area

The movement area of the classroom was large enough. Although there were children's tables and chairs on one side of the classroom, the other side was large enough to move in and play freely. In terms of security and shelter, the researcher observed that the temperature and noise regulation of the classroom were appropriate and did not limit learning and activities. Also, all the materials and furniture were safe for young children. However, the classroom did not have enough daylight and electric lighting was provided during day. There were some instructional materials on the walls and the children's work was exhibited on two display boards however, these boards were above the children's eye level. The basic materials and furniture such as tables, chairs, cupboards, and cushions were sufficient and child-sized, but there was a limited variety of materials in the learning areas.

P2 also believed that children's ideas should be obtained in relation to the arrangement of classroom and she stated that a teacher should ask the children questions such as; "Where do you think the dramatic play area should be located?" However, P2 stated that she arranged the classroom herself and did not ask for the children's ideas because asking 20 children about the organization of the classroom each would have different suggestions and the result would be chaos. In terms of her actual practice, the researcher observed that the physical environment of the arrangement was appropriate for the children to have easy access to materials and furniture was child-sized as shown in Figure 4.4 below.

Figure 4.4 Physical Arrangement of P2's Classroom

There were labels on cupboards; they were tidy and not overcrowded. Thus, children were able to use the materials independently.

4.3.2.3 Instructional activities

P2 believed that the children's developmental level, age, wishes, and interest should be considered when planning and implementing the activities. Also, she said that activities should be interesting for children. She said:

> *"My priority is not to teach the children. I want children to spend happy hours in school. When planning an activity, I do not focus on what children will learn from this activity. I focus on whether children will be interested in it and enjoy it."*

According to P2, a teacher should be a guide. She stated that children should have a leading role in child-centered education. Moreover, time and duration of the activities should be determined based on the children's mood each day, for example she commented;

> *"[s]ometimes children want to repeat an activity many times in a day; however, on another day, they do not want to do it."*

P2 reported that she considered children's chronological age, interests, wishes, developmental characteristics and readiness when planning instructional activities. She said that she tried to motivate children to engage in activities and rewarded them during implementation of an activity. She emphasized the teacher's

role in the instructional activities as reinforcing and rewarding children. In terms of the children's role, she said that children should be free to do whatever they want during the activity, but they should know their limits. For instance, they should be aware that they could use each part of the classroom and all materials during free play activities, but they could not leave the classroom without permission. In terms of time management, P2 stated that duration of the activities was flexible in her classroom and she said that determining the exact duration for specific activities was not appropriate for young children.

In P2's actual practice, the researcher observed that although there was no schedule posted on the wall in the classroom but the teacher did have a written plan on her table. She tried to follow her plans rigorously. However, reviews of her documents showed that P2 downloaded plans from the Internet. Therefore, her plans which included indoor and outdoor activities did not consider individual differences of children in her classroom or the characteristics of her classroom and the school. These plans contained only general activities appropriate for 5-year-old children. She used them without any modifications for her children and classroom situation thus the teacher decided the activities and children were not active in this process. In terms of P2's implementation of the instructional activities, the researcher observed that she used some smooth transitions between the activities such as songs, plays and finger plays. Particularly, in free play time, she encouraged children to select their own activities individually or in small groups. However, when implementing other activities, she used some instructions and explained in detail what they would do. In terms of teacher's role, she had all children do the same activity at the same time during the day, except during free play activities. She sometimes ignored children's attention and failed to notice their lack of motivation. For instance, although children said that they were bored, she had them complete their worksheets. However, during the activities, she tried to be interested in each child individually and encouraged them to share their ideas with their classmates. In terms of the child's role in activities, the researcher observed that the children were not active in decision making and implementation of activities. In P2's classroom most of the activities were teacher-initiated and the children usually followed her instructions. However,

she sometimes considered children's wishes when they insisted on continuing some game or activity. In terms of time management, because she strictly followed her daily plan, she did not usually extend the duration of the activities. She did not give the children extra time if they were unable to complete their activities and gave the uncompleted activity as homework.

4.3.2.4 Relationship

P2 believed that teacher-child relationship should be friendly. She stated that children should be able to talk about everything with their teacher. She emphasized that children could understand the teacher's affection and respect. Also, there should be physical contact between the child and the teacher.

P2 reported that she established physical contact with children such as hugging and kissing to show her affection. She stressed that she had a warm relationship with her children. In P2's actual practice, the researcher observed that in the morning, she welcomed the children and asked them some questions. She had real conservations with children and she knelt down to the child's eye level making eye contact, using an appropriate tone of voice and smiled. She used some sympathetic words such as "dear" and "sweetheart." She showed particular care for the child with a disability.

4.3.2.5 Behavior management

P2 believed that rules should be established with children at the beginning of the year with an explanation about the reasons for the rules. As strategies to decrease or prevent misbehaviors in the classroom, drama, stories or chatting to the child should be employed. She believed that rewards should be used in child-centered education; however punishment should not be used and stressed that instead it should be used as preference or choice of children.

P2 reported that she established rules with the children at the beginning of the year and they talked about the rationales for them. In terms of the strategies to decrease or prevent misbehaviors in her classroom, she said that she tried to exemplify some pro-social behaviors through drama, stories, and discussions. Also, she stated that she sometimes talked with a child on a one-to-one basis. In terms of

rewards and punishment, P2 stressed that she used rewards regularly. Moreover, she emphasized that she gave smiley faces to children or painted their faces as a reward. She said that she sometimes used punishment but presented it as a child's *preference* or *choice*. She mentioned that she explained the consequences of the behaviors at the beginning of the activity, therefore, when a child misbehaved, the consequences of the behavior or punishment became her preference or choice.

In terms of P2's actual practice, the researcher observed that rules were not posted in written format in the classroom. One of her strategies to decrease or prevent misbehaviors, was to alternate the seating; one girl and one boy and did not allow children of the same sex to sit together. When children did, she changed their places. Also, she warned them of the consequences for misbehavior. For instance, when they went to garden, she said:

> *"In order to start playing, you have to water the plants first and while playing, you have to stay within the garden. Anyone who does not obey the rules will go to the classroom and wait there alone."*

> *"Ali, if you do not sit at your table, I will give your cars to Ahmet!"*

Sometimes she ignored misbehaviors and sometimes warned the children. For example:

> *"Your hands must work instead of your mouth!"*

As a behavior management strategy, she sometimes compared children and selected the most hardworking group or children, the quietest group or children for encouraging other children. The researcher observed that P2 often used rewards. For example, the child who listened to her/his classmate's songs quietly and carefully was allowed to choose the book that the teacher would read. Also, applauding was used as another reward. The researcher observed that P2 used shaming and emotional violence as punishment. She punished children not only for misbehavior but also for academic issues. For instance, one of the children came to the board to sing a song but forgot the words. The teacher said that the child lost her appeal. In another case, P2 warned:

> *"When you talk and cannot finish your work, you have to take your incomplete work home. Therefore, your parents will be upset and will not be proud of you."*

4.3.2.6 Assessment

P2 believed that assessment should be individual, and as part of assessment the teachers should consider the child's individual characteristics. Also, she believed that progress was very important to assess children and that observation is the best assessment technique.

P2 stated that she used observation notes, assessment forms based on objectives, and developmental reports to assess children. She explained:

> *"I consider the children individually and I never compare one with another when assessing. I believe that each child is unique."*

In terms of P2's actual practice, the researcher observed that P2 provided children with feedback about their work, but she used none of the observation methods that she mentioned.

4.3.2.7 Parent involvement

P2 believed that parents should be active in educational process of children. She said that the person who knows the children best are their parents. Therefore, parents should come to classroom and share information related to their children. Also, parents should observe their children in the classroom.

P2 emphasized that parents were willing to participate in some parent involvement activities, but their real problem was lack of time. Thus, she organized individual or larger meetings with parents. In her actual practice, the researcher observed some small conversations between and parents during arrival or departure times, but no parents were involved in classroom activities during observation sessions.

4.3.2.8 Child-centered Education

P2 believed that children's needs and developmental characteristics should be considered in child-centered education. She said that play was very important for young children and should be used to teach them. Also, activities should be enjoyable for children in child centered education.

P2 stated that she was totally child-centered but this was only observed in some of her practices. She gave the examples of considering the individual needs of

the children when planning the activities and so she did not strictly follow her daily plan and schedule. In terms of her actual practice, the researcher observed that P2 used plans from the Internet and did not change them based on characteristics of her children and classroom. She did also follow her daily plan strictly and the children did not have an active role in decisions making or implementing activities in the classroom.

4.3.3 Participant 3

Participant 3 has 3 year teaching experience and graduated from Ankara University, Faculty of Education, and Department of Early Childhood Education. She has been working in a public school and there were twenty-one 6 year-old children in her classroom.

4.3.3.1 Developmental domains

P3 believed that the social-emotional domain and particularly children's communication skills should be supported in child-centered education.

P3 stated that she generally supported social-emotional development of children in her classroom. She stressed that her children had good cognitive skills but they needed help in developing their social-emotional skills. Thus, she said that she did at least one activity to enhance the children's social-emotional skills such as expressing themselves and waiting for their turn. In P3's actual practice, the researcher observed that P3 generally supported the social-emotional skills development of the children in her class. She engaged in real conversations with able-bodied and disabled children during free play. She encouraged children to share their ideas and feelings with her and their classmates. For instance, on day she brought a rabbit into the garden where the children were playing she asked some questions related to the rabbit and the children's feelings. Also, in another play activity involving the children driving car, the teacher asked them what they felt and if they had enjoyed the activity.

4.3.3.2 Physical environment

P3 believed that teacher-child ratio should be related to the age of the children in the class and one adult to 16/18 children seemed ideal for her. She said:

> *"A small class size or fewer children for each teacher is not appropriate since activities finish very early and each child's turn comes round very quickly. Therefore, children do not learn how to wait for their turn. I believe that activities are implemented better in busier classrooms."*

In terms of learning areas, P3 believed that if the of the classroom was appropriate, that there should be learning areas and the active and quiet areas should be separated. P3 also emphasized that movement area should be large enough.

P3 believed that Preschool classrooms should be safe places for children. She also believed that the walls should be used to exhibit children's works. However, she commented:

> *"School principals do not usually give permission to paste anything on the walls; however, children want to see their work on the walls. They are motivated when they see their work displayed. Putting children's work into a folder does not make sense for children."*

She believed that materials should be open-ended and be chosen based on children's age, individual differences, and group's characteristics. The materials should be child-size include soft materials like cushions and the children should be able to access them easily.

P3 reported that there were twenty-one 6-year-old children and only herself in her classroom. She stated that there were no learning areas and the movement area was not large enough for the number of children. In terms of security and shelter, she emphasized that there were no concerns related to safety. In terms of the use of the wall space, she stressed that there was only one board on which children's work could be exhibited. As stated above P3 considered that exhibiting children's work on the walls was more meaningful than putting them into the portfolio and it motivated children. In terms of materials and furniture, she said that there was some unnecessary furniture (cupboards) in her classroom, but she could not change or remove it. Also, she stated that wooden and open ended materials were inadequate in her classroom.

In terms of her actual practice, there were 15-19 children in P3's classroom during the observation sessions. Since there were cupboards on the walls, the classroom could not be divided into appropriate learning areas (as shown in Figure 4.5 below). There was only book area in the classroom.

Figure 4.5 P3's classroom and cupboards

The researcher observed that the movement area of the classroom was not large enough. There were children's tables and chairs on one side of the classroom, but children could not move around and play on the other side. In terms of security and shelter, the researcher observed that temperature and noise regulation of the classroom were appropriate and did not limit learning activities. Also, all materials and furniture were safe for young children. However, the classroom did not receive enough daylight (as shown in Figure 4.6). Therefore, artificial lighting had to be used during the day.

Figure 4.6 Lighting in P3's classroom

Although there were no instructional materials on the walls, children's work was displayed on only one board which was higher than the children's eye level. The basic furniture such as tables, chairs, and cupboards were sufficient and child-sized, but there were no cushions in the classroom.

In her interview, P3 believed that the arrangement of the classroom should be based on children's interest, children's characteristics, and active/quiet areas should be considered while arranging learning areas. P3 stated that she did not have the opportunity to change the physical environment of her classroom because there were cupboards that could not be moved. The researcher observed that the physical environment of the arrangement was not appropriate for children's easy access to materials (Figure 4.7).

Figure 4.7 P3's classroom arrangement

The children needed the teacher's help to reach some materials. Also, most of furniture was fixed so it could not be moved and rearranged. There was a camera in the classroom, but the researcher was not sure if it worked.

4.3.3.3 Instructional activities

P3 believed that children's age, developmental characteristics, individual differences and group characteristics should be considered when planning and implementing the activities. Also, she said that children should start and direct activities in the classroom. According to P3, teachers should be a guide and observer; however, intervention was sometimes necessary. She also emphasized that the most important role of teacher was to provide resources. In terms of the children, P3 stated that children should be active and natural in the classroom. She said:

"Children should be a child."

P3 stressed that use of time also should be flexible based on children's wishes and motivation and commented:

"A teacher should not say that it is time to finish the activity. The child should be allowed to complete the activity in his/her own time."

P3 reported that when planning instructional activities, she considered the chronological age, developmental characteristics, and individual differences of the children and the general characteristics of the group. She stated that she used smooth transitions between the activities such as songs, plays, and finger plays and she explained the activity in detail before starting. She emphasized that she encouraged the active participation of the children during the implementation of the activity. According to P3, the teacher's role in the instructional activities should consist of guiding, scaffolding, and rewarding children. In terms of children's role, she said that children should be natural and active in activities. In terms of time management, P3 stated that duration of the activities was flexible in her classroom. If children needed it, she would give them extra time to complete the activities.

In P3's actual practice, the researcher observed that the teacher used the plans from the internet, but she did not print them. Sometimes she asked children what they wanted to do, but she continued to implement her plan. There were outdoor and

indoor activities in her plans. In terms of implementation of the instructional activities, the researcher observed that P3 did not use any smooth transitions between the activities. In particular in free play and outdoor activity times, she encouraged children to select their own activities individually or in small groups. However, when implementing other activities, she used instructions and explained in detail what they would do. In terms of the teacher's role, she had all children do the same activity at the same time during the day, except for free play and outdoor activities. When children started to lose their attention and motivation, she tried to encourage them to complete their work. She often provided children with feedback and sometimes participated in their activities. During the activities, she tried to be interested in each child individually and encouraged them to share their ideas with their classmates. In terms of the child's role in activities, the researcher observed that children were not active in the decision making and implementing the activity. P3 usually decided the activities and most of the activities in the classroom were teacher-initiated. She generally ignored children's wishes. Regarding her time management, she gave extra time to children who could not complete their activities and gave them their incomplete assignments to complete at home.

4.3.3.4 Relationship

P3 believed that there should be affection between children and the teacher, and they should show their affection. She said that children should be able to kiss their teacher without permission but also children should know their limits.

P3 reported that although she did not establish physical contact with children such as hugging and kissing, and she did not have a warm relationship with the children, they knew that their teacher loved them. In her actual practice, the researcher observed that in the morning, P3 welcomed the children and asked them some questions. She engaged in real conservation with children and listened to them patiently. She did not establish physical contact but used some sympathetic words such as "my love," "dear" and "my friend." Although she was kind and apologized when she made a mistake, she nicknamed a child "*Big Stomach*." She was individually interested in the child with a disability.

4.3.3.5 Behavior management

P3 believed that rules should be established together with children at the beginning of the year. She said:

> *"Rules should not be established in one day by listing we should be done and what should not be done. If there is a problem, teacher should emphasize that there is a problem and establish a rule for it. The teacher should use positive words, for example; 'We have to ask permission to use a classmates' toy.' Also, when they encounter a problem on another day, teacher should stress that they will be another second rule."*

According to P3, time-out or not allowing children to use play materials should be used as strategies to decrease or prevent misbehaviors. She believed that rewards must be in child-centered education; however kinds of punishment should be considered. For instance, time-out is an appropriate punishment in child-centered education but not allowing a child to eat cannot be accepted.

P3 reported that she established rules with the children at the beginning of the year. However, new rules could be added based on the situation in classroom during the year. Also, she stressed that she used positive sentences when forming rules. In terms of strategies to decrease or prevent misbehaviors in her classroom, she said that she warned the child and sometimes talked with them one-to-one. P3 stressed that she regularly used rewards such as give the children stickers, smiley faces and praise. She said that she sometimes used time-out as punishment.

In terms of her actual practice, the researcher observed that rules were not posted in written format in the classroom. For strategies to decrease or prevent misbehaviors, she emphasized misbehaviors such as "*Don't run"* or "*Don't push your friend."* Also, she warned children of the consequences of misbehavior. For instance,

"If you don't want to sit with me here, you must play carefully!"

She sometimes ignored misbehaviors but sometimes told the children. For example,

"When I am talking with you, you must listen to me!"

As a strategy, she sometimes compared children and labeled them:

"Look at how Ali is playing. You can play like him, too!"

"Ece is the naughtiest child today!"

Regarding P3's use of rewards and punishment, the researcher observed that P3 often used rewards; especially; children's choices and wishes were used as rewards. For example;

"If you tidy up the classroom, we can go outside!"

Also, she gave stars to children or painted their hands as a reward. Although she used only time-out as punishment, sometimes she warned the children. For instance:

"If you continue talking, I will turn off the cartoon!"

4.3.3.6 Assessment

P3 believed that assessment should be individual and teachers should not compare one child with another. Process is important in assessment and when assessing, teacher should assess progress of children. Also, observation should be used as an assessment technique.

P3 reported that she used observation notes, assessment forms based on objectives, and developmental reports to assess children. Also, she explained:

> *"I consider children's individual differences and I never compare one with another. Also, I usually share my reports with the parents."*

In terms of her actual practice, the researcher observed that P3 provided children with feedback related to their work, but she used none of the observation methods that she mentioned.

4.3.3.7 Parent involvement

P3 believed that parents should be supportive of children in the educational process and should know what is happening in the child's school. Parents also should participate in activities in the classroom.

P3 emphasized that parents sometimes participated in parent involvement activities and they were especially willing to come and tell children about their jobs. Also, she said that she tried to give parents information about what happened in the classroom. In her actual practice, some family involvement activities were observed.

For example, some grandmothers and grandfathers came to the classroom to tell a story. The researcher also observed some short conversations between teachers and parents during the children's arrival or departure times.

4.3.3.8 Child-centered education

P3 believed that children's individual characteristics, interest and wishes should be considered by teachers in child-centered education. Children should be active participants in the classroom and the teacher should only be a guide. However, she emphasized that with 20 children in a classroom considering wishes of the group instead of children's individual wishes may be easier.

P3 reported that she was usually child-centered because of her classroom practices. For instance, she said that the choices and wishes of the group were more important than the individual's choices. Thus, the children in her class voted on the options to decide what they would do. P3 stressed that a child should know that wishes and preferences of the group were important and individuals should follow the group's choices. For instance, all children should make the same dog in art activity, but they could use whichever colors, crayons, and materials they chose. Also, she said that she had some teacher-centered practices because of school ceremonies, exhibitions, carnivals, and the expectations of the principal and the children's families. She said:

> *"Sometimes I am only a guide, I sit down with children and they can do whatever they want. However, sometimes I have to consider other issues. For instance, I want my children to create attractive art for a final exhibition. Also, the school principals sometimes want us to participate in a carnival and want all the children to make a butterfly. If I cannot do that, I am labeled as a bad teacher. Moreover, parents do not accept their children's differences. They ask me why their children's works a not beautiful and why I did not help them. Therefore, sometimes I cannot be child-centered."*

In terms of her actual practice, she informed the children about which activity they would do and explained it in detail. Although sometimes she asked children what they wanted to do, she ignored their suggestions. For example, children finished the *drivers and cars* play. The teacher asked them if they wanted to play this play again and change their roles but, when some children wanted to play again, teacher

said they had to rehearse their ceremony play. Also, she did allow them to vote on their suggestions. However, when the children became bored, sometimes she changed the activity. For example, during a game of Chinese whispers in which the children sat in a circle and one of them whispered a simple word in the ear of the child sitting next to her and this process continued around the circle until the last child said the word he/she heard. However, the children became bored and the teacher started to sing songs with the children.

4.3.4 Participant 4

Participant 4 (P4) has 5-year teaching experience and graduated from Hacettepe University, Faculty of Education, and Department of Early Childhood Education. She has been working in a public school and there were 25 six year-old children in her classroom. Photographs were not used for the presentation of participant 4's findings because the school principal did not allow taking photographs.

4.3.4.1 Developmental domains

P4 believed that social-emotional domain should generally be supported because children should express themselves effectively.

P4 reported that she generally supported social-emotional skills. She stated that:

> *"Instead of planning activities, I sometimes benefit from the opportunities to support children's social-emotional domain. For example, if we need something from outside the classroom, I ask a child to bring it. When children have a problem, I give them time to talk about their problems."*

In actual practice, the researcher observed that P4 supported generally the social-emotional domain of children. She encouraged children to share their ideas, emotions, and experiences with her and their classmates. She asked questions during various activities. For instance, the teacher visited tables and talked with children about their work during the art activity.

4.3.4.2 Physical environment

P4 believed that one adult with 20 children was appropriate in a preschool classroom. She emphasized that there should be various learning areas such as repair areas, puppet, hair salon, dramatic play, Lego and block areas and they should be separated from each other based on whether they were active and quiet. P4 also said that the movement area should be wide and safety should be considered in the classroom. Teachers should try to prevent dangerous situations. She believed that the walls should be used for displaying children's work, names, and concepts. According to P4, materials should be child-size and children should be able to use them without adult help. Also, easy access to materials should be considered when arranging them and children should be able to access areas and use materials easily and independently.

P4 reported that there were twenty-five 6-year-old children and herself in her classroom. She stated that in her classroom, there were some learning areas including books, puppets, drama, repair, hair salon, dramatic play, Lego and block areas. She said that the movement area of her classroom was large enough for twenty-five 6-year-old children to play in and move about freely. In terms of security and shelter, P4 emphasized that there were no concerns related to safety, temperature, and noise regulation but the location of the classroom meant that there was not enough daylight they had to use artificial light. Regarding wall decorations, she explained that there were some weather charts, seasons, numbers and shapes on the walls. She reported there were enough materials and furniture in her classroom. Also, P4 stated that she arranged her classroom together with the children. Also, she said that when arranging the physical environment, she considered the children's easy access to materials and independent use of them.

In terms of her actual practice, there were 20 to 24 children in P4's classroom during observation sessions. The classroom was divided into different learning areas including blocks, puppets, books, science, New Year, dramatic play, and there were name labels in the areas. The movement area of the classroom was not large enough for young children. Although there were children's tables and chairs, and the teacher's table on one side of the classroom, the children could not move and play

freely on the other side. In terms of security and shelter, the researcher observed that temperature and noise regulation of the classroom were appropriate and did not limit learning activities. However, there were some problems related to lighting and safety. The corners of children's tables were sharp and dangerous. Also, the classroom did not get enough daylight so artificial lighting was used. Although there were some instructional materials on the walls such as a weather chart, seasons, numbers and shapes, children's work was exhibited on one board. The board and instructional materials were too high for the children's eye level. The basic furniture such as tables, chairs, and cupboards were sufficient, but there were no soft materials such as cushions. Moreover, the researcher observed that the arrangement of the physical environment was not appropriate for children's easy access to materials and to use them independently because they were located in shelves and cupboards that were out of the children's reach. Also, the arrangement did not let the children move and play freely because most of the classroom areas included chairs, tables, shelves, and cupboards.

4.3.4.3 Instructional activities

P4 believed that supporting children's creativity should be considered when planning and implementing the activities. Also, she said that the activities should support children's development. Children should be active and the teacher should be only planners in the activity. She said:

> *"A teacher should be a planner; but she should plan the activity so well that children should not know that that it was a planned activity."*

P4 emphasized that children should be active in both planning and implementation of activities but they needed support of their teachers. She said:

> *"The children should plan their day based on their teachers' schedule and they should know that they have options. For example, children have to know that they can draw a picture, play in dramatic play area, or play with Lego during free time. They should plan their play and take responsibility for this area."*

According to P4, time should be flexible and determined based on children's individual differences. She commented:

"*Children should have ample time to complete their work by themselves, not with an adult or peer's help*."

Also, P4 emphasized that the teacher should warn children about time while teaching appropriate use of time.

P4 reported that she considered children's awareness of their own abilities and focused on supporting creativity and various skills when planning instructional activities. She said that she supported children's active participation and scaffolded them during implementation of the activity. She emphasized the teacher's role in instructional activities as planning activities for the children. In terms of the children's role, she said that children should construct their knowledge and play. They should be active in the decision making process and take responsibility. In terms of time management, P4 reported that the duration of the activities was flexible in her classroom and children could help their classmates to complete an activity. Also, children were usually aware of the duration of the activities. For instance, she said:

> *"I tell children that they will play with Lego for 20 minutes and then we will do an art activity. 3 minutes before the end of the Lego session I tell them they have 3 minutes left.*"

In her actual practice, the researcher observed that P4 did not have a written plan on her table but informed children about the daily schedule before beginning the activities. For instance, said the teacher explained to the children:

> *"Today first, we will wash our hands and have a breakfast. Then, we will use a worksheet for writing and reading activity or we will play. Next, we will make fruit salad and eat it. Lastly, we will draw our fruit salad. Is that a good plan?"*

In terms of implementing the activities, she used smooth transitions between activities with songs and finger plays. She considered children's wishes. For instance, when the children wanted to play with play dough and the teacher changed her schedule. She offered children options for their free play time. Therefore, the children had the opportunity to play together based on their choices. Related to the teacher's role, the researcher noted that P4 observed children during free play time. She visited children's tables and talked with them about their activities. However,

she had all children do the same activity at the same time during the day except for the free play activities. During the activities, she provided children with opportunities to share their ideas and feelings with their classmates and gave each child equal opportunity to participate in activities. In terms of the child's role in activities, children were free, especially in free play time. They had opportunities to choose individual and small group activities. Also, children could express their ideas and wishes related to the activities. Thus, the teacher and children were active. In terms of time management, the researcher observed that the duration of the activities was flexible. P4 usually extended the duration and gave extra time to children who could not complete their activities. Also, children helped each other to finish their work.

4.3.4.4 Relationship

P4 said she believed that teacher and children should be partners in child-centered education and they should take decisions together. Children should sometimes take responsibility to manage the activities and teachers should be a participant or observer in that process. Also, teacher should not be a person who only gives the rules.

P4 reported that she established physical contact such as hugging the children. She gave them the opportunity to express their ideas and views about all issues. In actual practice, the researcher observed that in the morning, P4 welcomed the children and asked them questions related to them such as why a child was absent the day before. She sometimes hugged children and used some sympathetic words such as "sweetheart." Children also expressed their affection to their teacher in a tangible way such as giving her a flower. She respected the children, engaged in real conversations and listened to them carefully. She made eye contact and used an appropriate tone of voice and smiled when talking to them.

4.3.4.5 Behavior management

P4 believed that rules should be established with children and they should be short, clear and understandable. She said that teachers should try to learn the main reason for the problem to decrease or prevent misbehaviors. If teacher does not

discover the main reason for the problem, then the children can repeat the same misbehavior. Also, P4 emphasized that ignoring the misbehavior strategy should sometimes be used. She believes that rewards and punishment must not be used in child-centered education.

P4 reported that she established rules with children at the beginning of the year. The teacher and children developed a list including short, clear, and understandable rules, and they signed it. She said that she often repeated the rules during the day. In terms of strategies to decrease or prevent misbehaviors in her classroom, she said that she was a guide who supported the children to find their own solution to the problems and solve their conflicts with their classmates. She helped children develop their empathy skills. In terms of rewards and punishment, P4 stressed that she sometimes used rewards to reinforce good behaviors and she never used punishment in her classroom.

In P4's actual practice, the researcher observed that short and clear rules were posted in written format in the classroom. Regarding her strategies to decrease or prevent misbehaviors, she changed children's places or gave an extra assignment for misbehaviors. For instance, two girls were talking while the teacher was reading a story. Therefore, the teacher asked them to sing a song for their classmates. She sometimes ignored misbehaviors and sometimes told the children:

"We must listen to each other!"

She also reminded the children of rules:

"Do you remember our rule? 'Raise your hand to talk!' You should raise your hand because I cannot hear when you talk together. I could hear only Ali because he raised his hand."

Regarding P4's use of rewards and punishment, the researcher observed that she sometimes used rewards. For example, she said that if children worked with play dough well until breakfast, she would give them stars. Also, applauding was used as another reward. The researcher observed that P4 sometimes used deprivation as punishment. She said:

"I have 20 knives to cut fruits when making fruit salad. However, there are 22 children in the class. So the children who talk too much will have to share a knife in pairs."

She sometimes told the children. For example:

"If you do not wait silently, we will not start."

4.3.4.6 Assessment

P4 believed that process should be the main point of assessment and she said:

"Result is a part of process."

P4 reported that she used observation notes and portfolios to assess children. Also, she said:

"I consider process to assess children because it is the best way to see their development."

In her actual practice, the researcher observed that P4 provided children with feedback related to their work, but she used none of the observation methods that she mentioned.

4.3.4.7 Parent involvement

P4 believed that parents should participate in their children's educational process and should be informed about all events in the classroom.

P4 emphasized that parents participated in some parent involvement activities, especially related to the parents' jobs. Also, she had meetings with parents individually or as a group and gave them some responsibilities to help children in some research. In her actual practice, the researcher observed some short conversations between P4 and the parents during arrival or departure times, but no parents were involved in classroom involvement activities during observation sessions.

4.3.4.8 Child-centered education

P4 believed that children's developmental characteristics and individual differences should be considered in child-centered education. The aim should be that children should gain scientific thinking skills, communication skills and learn how

they can acquire knowledge. According to P4, children should actively participate in the classroom.

P4 reported that she was usually child-centered because of some of her practices. For instance, she gave children the opportunity to express themselves. In her actual practice, she informed children about the general daily schedule and offered them several options for free play time. She usually used some instructions and explained in detail what they would do. For example, teacher said:

> "*Let's make a fruit salad. Firstly, we have to wash our hands. I will give you plastic knifes and plates. Then, I will give you fruits and you will cut them in small pieces. Then, we will add whipped cream and eat our fruit salad."*

Apart from in the free play time she had all the children do the same activity at the same time.

4.3.5 Participant 5

Participant 5 (P5) has 3-year teaching experiences and graduated from Gazi University, Faculty of Education, and Department of Early Childhood Education. She has been working in a public school and there were 25 6 year-old children in her classroom.

4.3.5.1Developmental domains

P5 believed that social-emotional domain should be supported however she also emphasized that needs of children in the classroom might determine the kind of activities that should be planned and implemented to improve the different domains. She said:

> *"In my opinion, if children know colors, shapes and numbers, then teachers should teach them more advanced things. However, teachers usually consider parents' expectations and do not focus on children's needs. Teachers should know the needs of their children [in the class]."*

P5 reported that she supported all the developmental domains of children in her classroom choosing goals and objectives from all developmental areas. In her actual practice, the researcher observed that P5 supported all the developmental domains of children and implemented various activities including objectives for

skills from all domains. For example, one day started with sports activities in sports hall, and then they came back to classroom. Then, the teacher (P5) read a story (My Friend Body), asked questions about the story and all children had to opportunity to answer and talk about the story. After children had breakfast and cleaned their teeth; children started art activity and cut and pasted materials for a dog. Then children played "wolf father" and completed on worksheet. Also, there were free play time and a music activity in the teachers' daily plan.

4.3.5.2 Physical environment

P5 believes that one adult with 16-19 children is appropriate in a preschool classroom. In terms of learning areas, P5 stated that there should be different areas in the classroom and they should be changed regularly based on various topics. She said:

> *"Learning areas should be changed based on different topics because if learning areas are stable and stay the same, it cannot be interesting for children. Children will not look at or use them."*

P5 emphasized that movement area should be large. She stated that children's security should be considered as one of priorities in the classroom. The displays of children's work on the walls should change. The teacher believed that there should be materials made by children and children's interests, age and wishes should be considered. She stated that furniture should be child-size and should not cover most of the movement area in the classroom.

P5 reported there were twenty-five 6-year-old children and only one adult in her classroom. She stated that in her classroom, there were a few learning areas including books, puppets, blocks, and dramatic play. According to P5, the movement area of her classroom was not large enough for 25 young children and the children could not easily move and play in the classroom. In terms of security and shelter, she emphasized there were no concerns related to safety, temperature, and noise regulation, but the classroom did not receive enough daylight therefore, they had to use artificial light. Regarding wall decorations, she explained that there were no instructional materials on the walls, but the children's art work was displayed on two boards. She said there was enough material and furniture in her classroom and she

thought that they were appropriate for the children's age and developmental characteristics and were interesting.

In her actual practice, there were 18-24 children in P5's classroom during observation sessions. The classroom was divided into different learning areas including blocks, puppets, books, and dramatic play, but there were no name labels in the areas. The movement area of the classroom was not large enough for the children to play and move freely. The space was taken up by the children's tables, chairs, and the big wooden play house (Figure 4.8).

Figure 4.8 Playhouse in P5's classroom

In terms of security and shelter, the researcher observed that temperature and noise regulation of the classroom were appropriate and did not limit learning activities. However, there were some problems related to safety and lighting. The corners of the computer table and wooden house were sharp. Also, a television being on top of a high cupboard was dangerous for young children. The classroom did not get enough daylight and lighting was provided by lamps during the day (Figure 4.9).

Figure 4.9 Level of natural light in P5's classroom

Instructional materials and children's work were exhibited on the boards in the classroom. Two boards included children's work other instructional materials including a seasons' chart, numbers and also children's star table were pasted on another board. All the boards were above the children's eye level. The basic furniture such as tables, chairs, and cupboards were not sufficient and so one of the children had to work on the floor. There were no soft materials such as cushions in the classroom. There was also a limited variety of materials in the learning areas and the lack of materials in book area is shown in Figure 4.10.

Figure 4.10 The sparse library in P5's classroom

P5 believed that arrangement of the classroom should be based on the inclusion child's needs and she stressed that providing wide movement area and ease of cleaning should be considered. Learning areas should be arranged divided

between active/quiet. Also, she said that there should be some changes in arrangement of the classroom based on daily plans. P5 stated that she arranged her classroom herself and considered as appropriate the separation of the learning areas into active and quiet. For instance, she explained that the music and dramatic play areas were near to each other with the book and science areas were placed away from these areas. Also, she said that she tried to provide children with a larger play area and she rearranged the learning areas based on daily activities. In P5's actual practices, the researcher observed that the arrangement of the physical environment was appropriate for the children's easy access to materials and the furniture was child-sized. However, the wooden playhouse limited the children's movement area. There was a camera in the classroom, but the researcher was not sure if it worked.

4.3.5.3 Instructional activities

P5 believed that teachers should consider children's wishes and interest. She said:

> *"Teacher should not strictly implement her daily plan. The teacher should be flexible and consider what the children want. The teacher should be open to the children's ideas and suggestions."*

P5 emphasized that teacher should be a guide in the classroom and children should be the decision makers. However, she believes that teachers should sometimes direct the children. She also said that children should respect each other. Moreover, time should be flexible and determined on the children's attention span. She stated that teachers should give extra time to children when they could not finish their work.

P5 reported that her activity plans were flexible and she changed her activities based on children's wishes. She stated that she tried to support the children's creativity during the implementation of an activity. For example, she gave the children one zip and told them they could use it however they want; one of the children used it to make a bag, another one used it to make a lizard. Also, she said she tried to identify activities with experiences in daily life. She emphasized the teacher's roles in the instructional activities as planning and implementing. She also

stressed that she motivated children to engage in activities. In terms of the children's role, she said that children participated in the decision making process. In terms of time management, P5 stated that they had to follow the general schedule of the school for common routines such as breakfast and lunch, but they could extend the duration of the classroom activities. She gave children extra time or sent their incomplete works to home with them to finish at home.

In P5's actual practice, the researcher observed that the teacher used plans from the Internet but she did not print them, she used them on the computer. Her plans did not consider individual differences of children in her classroom or the characteristics of her classroom and school. In terms of implementation of the instructional activities, the researcher observed that P5 used smooth transition activities. She implemented only indoor activities; for physical education activities the children went to the gym in the school twice. Particularly, in free play time the teacher encouraged children to select their own activities individually or in small groups. In other activities, all children did the same thing at the same time. For instance, the teacher told them to make a lamb for art activity. A lamb was already drawn on their paper then they chose from a variety of colors, crayons, and materials to complete the picture but the drawings were quite similar as shown in Figure 4.11.

Figure 4.11 Lambs created by the children in P5's class

In terms of the teacher's role, P5 observed children during the free play time. She visited children's tables and talked with them about their activities. She

encouraged them to share their ideas with their classmates and gave each child an equal opportunity to participate in activities. When children did not want to participate in the activity, the teacher did not insist and offered other options. Also, she gave some responsibility to children such as giving a worksheet to a classmate. In terms of child's role in activities, children usually followed their teacher's instructions. Even when they colored a dog in an art activity, they followed her instructions step by step. In terms of time management, she was flexible. She gave children enough time to complete their activities. Because she considered their wishes, they repeated some play more than once.

4.3.5.4 Relationship

P5 believed that children should accept teachers as authority; however, the teacher should be guide. There should be a mutual affection and respect between the teacher and the children.

P5 reported she was not a strict teacher. She said that she liked all the children and they respected her. Also, she stressed that she had not experienced any problems with them so far. In terms of her actual practice, the researcher observed that in the morning, she welcomed the children and had short conversations with them. For instance, she talked with one child about her new hairclips. She hugged them and encouraged them to express their views and preferences.

4.3.5.5 Behavior management

P5 believed that rules should be established with the children at the beginning of the year. Then, rules should be displayed on the board in the classroom. She also stressed that rewards should be used to increase children's positive behavior. According to P5, rewards must be used; however punishment is not necessary in child-centered education.

P5 reported that she established rules with her children at the beginning of the year. She said that she asked them which rules there should be and she noted their ideas. Then, she gave responsibility for a rule to a child. In terms of strategies to decrease or prevent misbehaviors in her classroom, she said that she pasted the rules

on the wall and reminded the children when one of them did not obey the rules. In terms of rewards and punishment, P5 stressed that she used rewards for the children's appropriate behavior. She said that they chose the star of the week based on children's behaviors at home and in school. Also, as a reward, a child was chosen as the head of the classroom. The teacher emphasized that she never used punishment.

In P5's actual practices, the researcher observed that rules were posted in written format in the classroom. As strategies to decrease or prevent misbehaviors, she used some play activities. For instance, all children became small robots and they did whatever their owner said. She sometimes gave instructions related to play such as "Heads up, heads down" and she sometimes directed them to prevent classroom misbehavior such as "Zip your mouth" or "Sit down."

She sometimes ignored misbehaviors and sometimes gave reasons for the children to do something. For example,

"This is a very noisy classroom and I had a terrible headache. Please, be quiet!"

She also reminded the children of some rules. For instance:

"You know that we should not run in the classroom!"

In terms of rewards and punishment, the researcher observed that she sometimes used rewards. For example, she gave stickers when the children finished their lunch. P5 sometimes used deprivation as punishment such as not giving children their toothbrushes because they did not wait silently.

She sometimes warned the children about the consequences of their behavior. For example:

"You will not get a sticker if you do not finish eating your pie."

4.3.5.6 Assessment

P5 believed that assessment should be based on objectives of the program. She also stressed that progress was very important and children's development should be shared with parents monthly. She did not believe that the formal forms used in preschool period of education are useful for assessment of children.

P5 reported she used her own and parents' observation notes and developmental reports to assess children. Also, she said:

> *"I assess all skills of children such as eating habits, relationships with peers, language development."*

In her actual practice, the researcher observed that P5 provided children with general feedback related to their work such as "good job!", but she used none of the observation methods that she mentioned.

4.3.5.7 Parent involvement

P5 believed that parents must observe their children in the classroom. Parents should share with teachers all new situations related to their children. Also, she stated that parents should be in collaboration with preschool teachers.

P5 emphasized that she had a participation list for parents. Each child had a week in which parents could do whatever activities they wanted with the children such as reading or art activities, cooking. She recorded parents' activities and provided them with feedback. She said that only one parent did not participate in these events. In her actual practice, the researcher observed that one of the parents came to the class and conducted an experiment with the children. The children were interested in the activity because it was related to breathing and the diaphragm. Also, some short conversations were observed between P5 and parents during arrival or departure time.

4.3.5.8 Child-centered education

P5 believed that child is the center of education and the teacher is a guide in child-centered education. She stressed that in a child-centered classroom, children should make the decisions and activities should not be structured. P5 reported that she was sometimes teacher-centered and sometimes child-centered and said:

> *"I am sometimes teacher-centered and sometimes child-centered. I was more teacher-centered in first year of my job. I was the leader and I had to control all the children. Nowadays, I try to be more child-centered."*

She also stressed that she considered children's wishes, but they were not active in planning process. She said:

> *"I make my plans and come to classroom. It means that children did not have any roles in the planning process. I think that it is not logical because children's attention and motivation may not be appropriate for my activities. However, I still try to implement my activities."*

She stressed that the expectations of principal and parents, high teacher-child ratio and inadequate school facilities were the main factors which prevented her from being child-centered. Also, she commented:

> *"I am not sure whether the camera in the classroom works. A person may be watching us from principal's office. I cannot move freely in my class. We may know many things but we cannot implement them due to some factors."*

In her actual practice, the researcher observed that P5 used plans from the Internet and the children did not have an active role in decision making and planning the activities. She did not change her plans and activities based on the characteristics and interests of the children. For example, P5 read a story about a dog. After the story, when she was talking about dogs, one of the children started to talk about her fish. The teacher said that they did not talk about fish; they were talking about dogs and continued talking about dogs. The researcher observed that teacher's activities were generally teacher initiated. However, the children sometimes expressed their wishes such as when the children asked their teacher if they could dance and the teacher let them dance.

4.4 Comparison of five preschool teachers' beliefs, self-reported and actual practices

The five preschool teachers' beliefs, self-reported and actual practices have been examined individually in this part, their beliefs, self-reported and actual practices are tabulated and then compared in order to determine commonalities and differences.

4.4.1 Developmental domains

There was a consistency among five preschool teachers' beliefs, self-reported practices and actual practices about developmental domains. All the teachers stated that they believed that the social-emotional domain of children should be supported and almost all the teachers (n=4) reported that they generally tried to enhance the social-emotional skills of the children in their classes. These four preschool teachers were observed to conduct activities that developed children's social-emotional domain.

Table 4.2 Developmental domains supported by preschool teachers

Beliefs	**Self-Reported Practices**	**Actual Practices**
Cognitive: P1	Cognitive: P1	Cognitive: P1, P2,
Social-emotional: P1, P2, P3, P4, P5	Social-emotional: P1, P2, P3, P4	Social-emotional: P1, P2, P3, P4
Self-care: P1	Self-care: P1	Self-care: P1
	All developmental domains: P2, P5	All developmental domains: P5

4.4.2 Physical environment

Preschool teachers' beliefs, self reported and actual practices related to physical environment were examined based on sub-themes including adult/child ratio, learning areas, movement area/class size, security and shelter, decoration of walls, materials and arrangement of physical environment. There were both consistency and inconsistency between their beliefs, self reported practices and actual practices related to these sub-themes.

Table 4.3 Teacher-child ratio

Beliefs	**Self-Reported Practices**	**Actual Practices**
1/10 P1	1/10	1/15-18 P1, P2
1/16-18 P3	1/20 P1, P2	1/15-19 P3
1/16-19 P5	1/21 P3	1/18-24 P5
1/20 P2, P4	1/25 P4, P5	1/20-24 P4

The Data analysis showed that there was no consistency between preschool teachers' beliefs, self-reported and actual practices about teacher-child ratio and they were quite different from each other. For instance, 1/20 (n=2), 1/16-19 (n=1), 1/16-18 (n=1) and 1/10 (n=1) were emphasized as ideal ratios by teachers. Similarly, there was a varying teacher-child ratio reported by teachers and observed by researchers (Table 4.3). However, it can be seen that preschool teachers believed that there should be lower teacher-child ratio than ratio reported in their self-reported practices and actual practices. Also, teacher-child ratio in their classrooms was lower than the ratio which they stated in their self-reported practices.

Table 4.4 Learning areas

Beliefs	**Self-Reported Practices**	**Actual Practices**
Should be: P1, P2, P3, P4, P5	Available: P1, P2, P4, P5	Available: P1, P2, P4, P5
	Not available: P3	Only book area: P3

As seen in Table 4.4, there is a consistency between preschool teachers' beliefs, self-reported and actual practices about learning areas in preschool classrooms. Five teachers believed that there should be learning areas and most of them (n=4) stated that there were learning areas in their classroom. Also, it was observed that learning areas were available in most of the classrooms (n=4).

Table 4.5 Movement area/class size

Beliefs	**Self-Reported Practices**	**Actual Practices**
Large/sufficient movement area: P1, P2, P3, P4, P5	Large/sufficient movement area: P4	Large/sufficient movement area: P1, P2
	Not large/ sufficient movement area: P1, P2, P3, P5	Not large/ sufficient movement area: P3, P4, P5

The analysis of the data showed that there was no consistency between preschool teachers' beliefs, self-reported practices and actual practices about

movement area/class size. All five teachers believed that the movement area should be large enough for children to move easily. However, according to teachers' self-reported practices, most classrooms (n=4) did not have sufficient movement area. Also, it was observed that two of the participant teachers' classrooms had wide movement area.

Table 4.6 Security and shelter

Beliefs	**Self-Reported Practices**	**Actual Practices**
Safe: P1, P3, P4, P5	Safe: P2, P3, P4, P5	Safe: P2, P3
No response: P2	Not safe: P1	Not safe: P1, P4, P5

As shown in Table 4.6, it can be said that there is a consistency between the teachers' beliefs and their self-reported practices in terms of security and shelter whereas findings related to actual practices are different. Most of the teachers (n=4) believed that a preschool classroom should be safe and also reported that this was true of their classrooms. In fact, it was observed that only two of their classrooms were safe.

Table 4.7 Decoration of walls

Beliefs	**Self-Reported Practices**	**Actual Practices**
Children's works on the walls: P1, P2, P3, P4, P5	Children's works on the walls: P1, P2, P3, P4, P5	Children's works on the walls: P1 P2, P3, P4, P5
On children's eye level: P1	Not on children's eye level: P1	Not children's eye level: P1, P2, P3, P4, P5

There is a consistency between preschool teachers' beliefs, self-reported practices and actual practices related to the decoration of walls. All of the preschool teachers believed that children's work should be displayed on the walls and also reported that there was children's work on the walls of their classrooms. In parallel with their beliefs and self-reported practices, it was observed that children's works

were exhibited in five teachers' classrooms. In terms of the height of boards and materials on the walls in preschool classrooms, one of the five teachers emphasized that boards and materials on the walls should be at the children's eye level but she reported that this was not the case in her classroom. Also, it was observed that in none of the five teachers' classrooms were materials on the wall exhibited at children's eye level.

Table 4.8 Materials

Beliefs	**Self-reported practices**	**Actual practices**
Child-sized: P3, P4, P5	Child-sized: P1, P5	Child-sized: P1, P2, P3
In sufficient number: P1	In sufficient number: P1, P4, P5 Not sufficient in number: P2	In sufficient number: P1, P2, P3, P4 Not in sufficient number: P5
Soft materials such as cushions: P1, P3	-	Soft materials such as cushions: P3, P4, P5
	Wooden materials: P3	Wooden materials: P3
Attractive: P2, P5	Attractive: P5	-
Appropriate to individual differences: P3	-	-
Appropriate to children's age: P3, P5	-	-
Appropriate to children's independent use: P3, P4	-	-
Appropriate to children's interest and wishes: P3	-	-
Appropriate to children's preferences: P2	-	-
Appropriate to group characteristics: P3	-	-
Open-ended: P3	-	-
-	Insufficient materials: P3	-

As seen in Table 4.8, preschool teachers' beliefs, self-reported and actual practices related to materials in the classroom were not consistent.

Table 4.9 Arrangement of physical environment

Beliefs	Self-reported practices	Actual practices
Arranged together with children: P1, P2, P4	Arranged together with children: P1, P4 Not arranging together with children: P2, P5	-
Arranged attractively: P3	-	-
Considering children's characteristics: P3	-	-
Arranged by the teacher: P3	Arranged by school administration: P3	-
Considering easy and independent use by the children: P4	Appropriate to easy and independent use by the children: P4	Appropriate to easy and independent use by the children: P1, P2, P5 Not appropriate to easy and independent use by the children: P3, P4
Considering inclusion child: P5	-	-

There seems to be no consistency between preschool teachers' beliefs, self-reported and actual practices in terms of arrangement of preschool classrooms' physical environment. Their beliefs and practices are summarized in Table 4.9.

4.4.3 Instructional activities

Preschool teachers' beliefs, self-reported and actual practices related to instructional activities were examined based on sub-themes including planning and implementing activities, teacher's role, child's role and time management in the instructional activities.

Table 4.10 Planning activities

Belief	Self-reported practices	Actual practices
Supporting children's creativity: P4	Supporting children's creativity: P4, P5	-
Supporting children's development: P4	-	-
Considering children's enjoyment: P2	-	-
Appropriate to individual differences of children: P3	Appropriate to individual differences of children: P3	-
Appropriate to developmental characteristics of children: P1, P2, P3	Appropriate to developmental characteristics of children: P1, P2, P3	-
Appropriate to children's interests and wishes: P2, P5	Appropriate to children's interests and wishes: P2, P5	-
Appropriate to children's readiness: P1	Appropriate to children's readiness: P1, P2	-
Appropriate to children's age: P2, P3	Appropriate to children's age: P2, P3	-
Appropriate to characteristics of the group: P3	Appropriate to characteristics of the group: P3	-
-	Flexible plans: P1, P5	-
-	-	A written plan: P2 No written plan: P1, P3, P4, P5
-	-	No schedule: P1, P2

In terms of planning activities, it can be said that their beliefs and self-reported practices were generally parallel with each other. However, their actual practices were quite different and it was observed that most of five teachers (n=4) did not have a written plan and two had no schedule.

Table 4.11 Implementing activities

Belief	**Self-reported practices**	**Actual practices**
Considering individual differences of children: P3	-	Not considering children's individual differences: P2
Considering children's readiness: P1	Considering children's readiness: P1	-
Considering developmental characteristics of children: P1, P3	Considering developmental characteristics of children: P1	-
Considering children's interests and wishes: P2, P5	Considering children's interests and wishes: P1	Considering children's wishes: P1, P4
Considering children's age: P2, P3	-	-
Considering characteristics of the group: P3	-	-
Supporting children's creativity: P4	-	-
-	Using transition activities: P3	Using transition activities: P1, P2, P4, P5 Not using transition activities: P2, P3
-	Motivating children: P2	Not considering children's attention and motivation: P2
-	Active participation of children: P3, P4	-
-	-	Following the plan strictly: P2, P3
-	-	Using children's choice as a reward: P1

As seen in Table 4.11, there is no apparent consistency between teachers' beliefs, self-reported and actual practices. They vary and quite different from each other.

Table 4.12 Teachers' role

Belief	**Self-reported practices**	**Actual practices**
Being active: P1	-	-
-	Rewarding P1, P2, P3	Rewarding P1, P2, P3
Guiding: P2, P3, P5	Guiding: P3	-
-	Reinforcing: P2	Reinforcing: P3
Planning: P4	Planning: P4, P5	Deciding activities: P2, P3
-	Motivating: P5	Considering children's attention and motivation: P1 Ignoring children's attention and motivation: P2
Being supporter: P1, P4	Scaffolding: P3	-
Being observer: P3	-	Being observer: P1, P2, P4
-	Modifying activities to suit children's age level: P1	-
-	-	Participating in activities: P1, P3, P5
Providing resources: P3	-	-
Providing freedom: P1	-	-
Directing: P5	-	-
-	Implementing activities: P5	-

Regarding teacher's role in an instructional activity, there was no consistency between preschool teachers' beliefs, self-reported and actual practices.

Table 4.13 Child's role

Belief	**Self-reported practices**	**Actual practices**
Active participation in decision making and implementation process: P1, P3, P4, P5	Active participation: P1, P3, P4, P5	Active participation: P4 Not active participation: P1, P3
-	Being free: P2	Being free: P4
Being leader: P2	-	-
-	Knowing her/his limits: P2	-
-	-	Following teachers' directives: P2, P5

In terms of the child's role in instructional activities, there is a consistency between teachers' beliefs and practices related to children's active participation in the activity process but it was observed in only one teacher's classroom (P4), there was children's active participation. However, in terms of other issues, there was no consistency between participant teachers' beliefs, self-reported and actual practices related to child's role in activities.

Table 4.14 Time management

Belief	**Self-reported practices**	**Actual practices**
Giving extra time: P5	Giving extra time: P1, P3, P5	Giving extra time: P1, P3, P4 Not giving extra time: P2
Being flexible: P3, P4,	Being flexible: P2, P3, P4	Being flexible: P4, P5
Considering individual differences: P4	-	-
Considering children's wishes and interests: P1	-	-
Considering children's daily mood: P2	Considering children's attention and motivation: P1	-
-	Sending child home with incomplete work: P5	-

There was an inconsistency between preschool teachers' beliefs, self-reported and actual practices related to their time management of activities as seen in Table 4.14. However, there was a consistency between teachers' self reported and actual practices about giving extra time with only one teacher believing that extra time should be given.

4.4.4 Relationship

Five preschool teachers' beliefs, self-reported practices and actual practices about relationships with the children are given below:

Table 4.15 Relationship

	Beliefs	**Self-reported Practices**	**Actual practices**
Physical contact	P1, P2, P3	Available: P2, P4 Not available: P3	Available:P1, P5 Not available: P3
Mutual affection and respect	P2, P3, P5	P1, P2, P5	P2, P3, P4, P5
A warm relationship between teacher and children	P1	P1, P2, P3	P1, P2
Friendly relationship between teacher and children	P2, P4	-	-
Teacher as a guide	P5	-	-
Teacher as an authority	P5	-	-
Ignoring teacher's warnings	-	-	P1
Child is aware of their own limits as a student	P3	-	-
Taking responsibility	P4	-	-

Although there were some commonalities, there was no consistency between teachers' beliefs, self-reported practices and actual practices about relationship. For example, three of five preschool teachers stressed the necessity of physical contact, mutual affection and respect. Also, three teachers emphasized that there was a mutual affection and respect, and a warm relationship between teacher and children in their classrooms. In parallel with their self-reported practices, it was observed that in most of the classrooms (n=4), there was mutual affection and respect between the teachers and children.

4.4.5 Behavior management

Preschool teachers' beliefs, self-reported practices and actual practices about behavior management were compared based on sub-themes including rules, strategies, rewards and punishment.

Table 4.16 Rules

Beliefs	Self-Reported Practices	Actual practices
Should be established with children: P1, P2, P3, P4, P5	Established with children: P1, P2, P3, P4, P5	-
Should be established at the beginning of the year: P1, P2, P3, P5	Established at the beginning of the year: P1, P2, P4, P5	-
New rules based on problems occurring should be added: P3	Added new rules based on problems that occurred: P3	-
Should be flexible: P1	Were flexible: P1	-
Should be exhibited on the board: P5	Were posted in written format: P5	Were posted in written format: P4, P5
Should be positive, short, clear and understandable: P3, P4	Short and clear: P4	Short and clear: P4, P5
Should remind and warn children about rules: P1	Reminded and warned children: P4	Reminded and warned children: P1, P3
Should be appropriate to classroom conditions: P1	-	-
Should be established with explanation about their rationales: P2	-	-

In terms of rules, five preschool teachers' beliefs and self-reported practices were consistent concerning the establishment of rules with the children. However, how rules were established in the classroom was not observed. Also, most of teachers (n=4) emphasized the establishment of rules at the beginning of the year as their beliefs and self-reported practices.

Table 4.17 Strategies for managing misbehavior

	Beliefs	Self-reported practices	Actual practices
Talking with children and parents	P1, P2	P1	-
Repeating the rules frequently	-	P1, P4, P5	-
Checking children obey the rules	-	P1	-
Using drama and stories to explain	P2	P2	P5
Talking with children one-to-one	-	P2, P3	-
Warning the children	-	P3	P1, P2, P4, P5
Time-out or deprivation	P3	-	-
Giving responsibility for a rule to a child	-	P5	-
Having a girl sitting next to a boy	-	-	P2
Guiding children to find their own solution for problems	-	P4	-
Ignoring misbehaviors	P4	-	P1, P2, P3, P4, P5

As seen table 4.17, there was no consistency between beliefs, self-reported and actual practices of preschool teachers. Although their beliefs, self-reported and actual practices were quite different from each other, it was observed that all the teachers ignored some misbehaviors in their classrooms.

Table 4.18 Rewards

Beliefs	**Self-reported practices**	**Actual practices**
Should be used if necessary: P1	Used rewards such as stickers and stars: P1, P2, P3, P4, P5	Used rewards: P1, P2, P3, P4, P5
Should be used: P2, P3, P5	-	-
Should not be used: P4	-	-

Although there was a consistency between preschool teachers' self-reported practices and actual practices, their beliefs related to use of rewards in preschool classrooms were different. Also, teachers' practices showed that all of them used rewards in their classrooms despite the fact that only three teachers believed in the necessity of using rewards in preschool classrooms.

Table 4.19 Punishment

Beliefs	**Self-reported practices**	**Actual practices**
Should be used if necessary: P1	Use time out: P1, P3	Use: P1, P2, P3, P4, P5
Should not be used: P3, P4, P5	Never use: P4, P5	-
Should be given as the child's preference or choice: P2, P3	Sometimes use: P2	-

It can be seen that there was no consistency between preschool teachers' beliefs, self-reported and actual practices related to use of punishment in preschool classrooms. Although teachers' beliefs and self-reported practices differed, their actual practices showed that all used punishment in their classrooms.

4.4.6 Assessment

There were some commonalities and differences between preschool teachers' beliefs, self-reported and actual practices related to assessment. For example, although teachers reported that they used observation notes (n=5), developmental reports (n=4) and some forms (n=3) to assess children in their classrooms, but these techniques were not included in their statements about their beliefs. In the observations none of the teachers were seen to use these techniques. However, all teachers were observed giving feedback about children's work (Table 4.20).

Table 4.20 Assessment

Elements & Aspects of assessment	**Beliefs**	**Self-reported practices**	**Actual practices**
Observation notes	-	P1, P2, P3, P4, P5	-
Developmental reports	-	P1, P2, P3, P5	-
Assessment forms	-	P1, P2, P3	-
Portfolios	-	P4	-
Feedback about children's work	-	-	P1, P2, P3, P4, P5
Individual assessment	P2, P3	-	-
Considering process	P2, P3, P4, P5	-	-
Not comparing children with each other	P3	-	-
Observation as is the best assessment technique	P2, P3	-	-
Assessment based on objectives	P5	-	-
Formal forms not useful	P5	-	-

4.4.7 Parent involvement

Preschool teachers' beliefs, self-reported practices and actual practices about parent involvement in preschool education are shown in Table 4.21.

Table 4.21 Parent involvement

	Beliefs	**Self-reported practices**	**Actual practices**
Parents were involved in classroom	P3, P4	P1, P3, P4, P5	P3, P5
Short conversation with parents but no parent involvement	-	-	P1, P2, P4
There should be collaboration between teachers and parents	P2, P4, P5	-	-
Parents should be active	P1, P2	-	-
Parents should observe their children in class	P1, P5	-	-
Meeting with parents	-	P2, P4	-
Parents should be supportive of their children's education	P3	-	-
Parent can come to class whenever they want	-	P1	-

Although preschool teachers' beliefs, self-reported and actual practices about parent involvement generally differed, there were some commonalities. For example, most of the teachers (n=4) stressed that parents were involved in activities in their classrooms. Also, it was observed that some participants teachers (n=3) had short conversations with parents.

4.4.8 Child-centered education

Preschool teachers' beliefs, self-reported practices and actual practices related to child-centeredness were showed below.

Table 4.22 Child-centered education

	Beliefs	**Self-reported practices**	**Actual practices**
Children's needs should be considered	P2	P2	
Children's developmental characteristics should be considered	P2, P3, P4		
Children's individual differences should be considered	P4	P2	
Children should be active	P1, P3, P4		
Children were not active in planning of activities		P5	
Flexibility is important in implementation of daily plan		P2	
Child should be the focus centered of their education	P5		
Teachers should be a guide	P3, P5		
Activities should be enjoyable	P2		
There should not be structured activities	P5		
Teacher should be less involved	P1		
Child was supported when she/he needed	P1		
I am child-centered		P1, P2, P3, P4	
I am sometimes child-centered and sometimes teacher-centered		P5	
Children's wishes should be considered	P3	P3, P5	P1
Considering children's motivation		P1	
Children do not have an active role in decision making or in implementing activities			P2, P5
Used plans from internet			P2, P5
Children's interests should be considered	P3		
Group's wishes are important	P3	P3	
Voting used to decide what the children would do		P3	
Children should know that wishes of group more important than individual wishes		P3	
Ignoring children' suggestions			P3
Voting children's suggestions			P3
Changing activities when children bored			P3
Children should have scientific thinking skills	P4		
Children should know how they can access knowledge	P4		
Children can express themselves		P4	
Children should be informed about daily schedule			P4
All children do the same activity at the same time			P4
Children should have various options in their free play time			P4

It can be seen that preschool teachers' beliefs, self-reported practices and actual practices varied.

As a summary, the findings of the study showed that five preschool teachers' beliefs, self-reported practices and actual practices about developmental domains, learning areas, and decoration of walls seemed consistent. Also, their beliefs, self-reported practices and actual practices related to teacher-child ratio, security/shelter, planning of activities and behavior management could be interpreted as partially consistent. However, beliefs, self-reported practices and actual practices of five teachers related to movement area/class size, materials/furniture, arrangement of classroom, implementation of activities, teacher's role, child's role, time management, relationship, assessment, parent involvement, and child-centered education seemed inconsistent.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the discussion of the findings, implications derived from the study, and recommendations for practice and further studies. The findings are discussed mainly in two parts. Firstly, beliefs, self-reported practices of twenty Turkish preschool teachers and consistency between these beliefs and self-reported practices are discussed as shown in Figure 5.1.

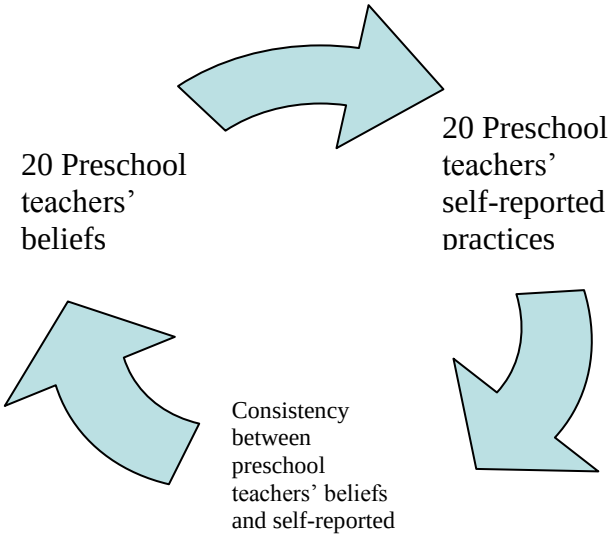

Figure 5.1. The order of first part of discussion

Then, discussion of the consistency between five preschool teachers' beliefs, self-reported practices and actual practices are presented as shown in Figure 5.2.

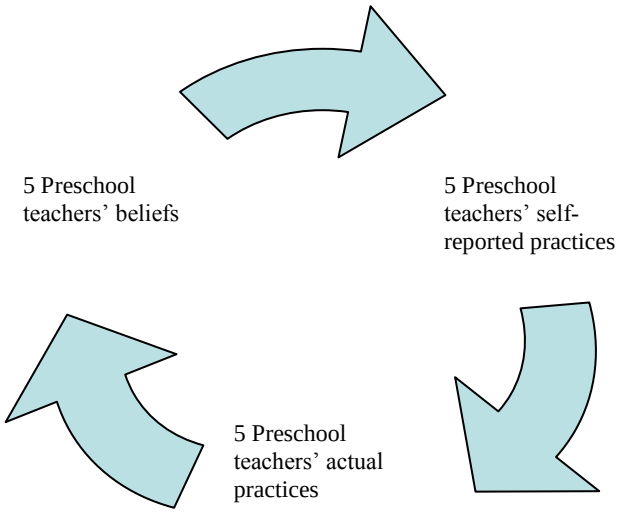

Figure 5.2. The order of second part of discussion

All the findings presented based on eight themes below:

1. Developmental domains
2. Physical environment of the classroom
3. Instructional activities
4. Relationships
5. Behavior management
6. Assessment
7. Parent involvement
8. Child-centered education

While discussing teachers' beliefs and self-reported practices according to appropriateness to child-centered education, accreditation criteria of NAEYC (NAEYC, 2011) were the main resource to evaluate child-centeredness of preschool teachers' beliefs and practices. Also, several sources from the literature related to child-centered education were regarded.

5.1 Preschool teachers' beliefs, self-reported practices and consistency between these beliefs and self-reported practices

5.1.1 Developmental domains

Child-centered programs aim to promote all the developmental skills of the children attending the preschool (Brown, 2009; Canedo & Woodard, 2000; Reio, Maciolek & Weiss, 2002). The effect of the whole development of a child not only lays the foundation for academic success and career development, but also on the long-term independence of the child thus all developmental skills of children should be supported in child-centered education (Kochhar-Bryant & Heishman, 2010). Also, Morrison (2011) emphasized that in a child-centered classroom, the teachers' daily interactions with the children should be based on the question: "Am I teaching and supporting all children in their growth and development across all domains—social, emotional, physical, linguistic, and intellectual?" (p. 120). In the current study, the preschool teachers' beliefs and self-reported practices related to the *developmental domains* may be inappropriate for child-centered education. The participant teachers generally stressed supporting one domain such as social-emotional or cognitive or psychomotor domains and this finding is parallel with the studies of Kowalski, Pretti-Frontczak and Johnson, (2001) and Lee (2006). For example, Lee (2006) found that the priority of many preschool teachers was enhancement of the social and physical development of children in their classrooms. Since peer interaction and social skills gained in the early childhood period will influence a child's over their whole life, the importance of conducting appropriate activities and supporting social development of children cannot be ignored (Gülay, 2009). However, all domains are interrelated and the development of one domain is influenced by what happens in the other domains (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009). In this study, teachers' particular focus on the social development of the children may result from parents' expectation. This is supported by Şahin, Sak and Şahin (2013) reported that parents expected a preschool institution to support social skills' development of their children. They especially emphasized that a school should help young children socialize with their peers, learn to share, express themselves effectively, develop self-confidence and establish effective communication skills (Şahin, Sak & Şahin, 2013). Furthermore, Einarsdottir (2010),

Özen (2008) and Sevinç (2006) also mentioned that parents expected children's social skills to be enhanced in preschools. It can be said that preschool teachers considered parents' expectations while making decisions about which developmental domain should be supported. In the current study comparing preschool teachers' beliefs and self-reported practices about *developmental domains* shows that there is a consistency between them. For instance, most of the participant teachers stressed that mostly the social-emotional domain of children should be supported and they stressed that they generally attempted to improve the social-emotional domain. Finding a consistency between beliefs and self-reported practices of teachers may be thought as a positive issue but the importance of enhancing all developmental skills of children should not be ignored in a child-centered classroom.

5.1.2 Physical environment of the classroom

The discussion about preschool teachers' beliefs, self-reported practices about the physical environment and the consistency between these beliefs and self-reported practices are based on sub-themes below:

Teacher-child ratio

Learning areas

Movement area/class size

Decoration of walls

Materials and furniture

Arrangement of physical environment

Some of these sub-themes such as movement area/class size, materials and furniture are not directly related to teachers' practices but they are discussed to create a consistent discussion between the teachers' beliefs and self-reported practices.

In relation to *physical environment*, NAEYC (2011) suggests that the ideal teacher-child ratio in a child-centered classroom is approximately two adults to 20 children and 3.25150 square meters usable area for each child in the room. Also, the classroom space should be divided into various learning areas to support children's play and learning. These areas should include a variety of materials and available for

conducting small and large group activities (NAEYC, 2011). In addition, the accreditation report of NAEYC (2011) emphasizes that all areas should be clean and, free from glass, trash, sharp or hazardous items and visible soil. All areas and equipment should be kept in good condition and the children's work has to be displayed on the walls (NAEYC, 2011). In relation to the arrangement of physical environment in child-centered classrooms, Morrison (2011) emphasized that design of materials and arrangement of classrooms should encourage children discovery and searching skills and learning by doing. Easy access to learning materials and their independent use by the children should be considered when arranging the area (Morrison, 2011; NAEYC, 2011). Moreover, the furniture should be child-sized and arranged in a way that the children can work and play together (Morrison, 2011).

Preschool teachers' beliefs and self-reported practices about *teacher-child ratio* did not seem appropriate to child-centered education. This may be due to the fact that there are rarely two teachers or fewer children than 25 in Turkish public school classrooms (Gol-Guven, 2009; Temel, Akın, Acar Vaizoğlu, Kara, Kara, Halas et al., 2006) therefore, it is unlikely that the teachers would have experienced different teacher-child ratios. Furthermore, teachers may ignore children's imagination, interests and initiatives in high child-teacher ratio classrooms (Pang & Richey, 2007). There are some differences between preschool teachers' beliefs and self-reported practices related to the teacher-child ratio. The beliefs of participant teachers related to the adult-child ratio varied between 10 children to one adult and 20 children to one adult. However, this ratio was 1/20-25 in most of preschool teachers' classrooms. This inconsistency may result from that the teacher-child ratio for each classroom is determined by the principal of preschool institutions in Turkey and preschool teachers have no input to this decision. Moreover, the lack of consistency may be related to the education policy of Turkish government. In the 9th Development Plan, the aim was to increase schooling rate from 19.9% to 50% for preschool education from the 2005-2006 to the 2012-2013 academic years (Official Gazette of the Republic of Turkey, 2006). However, since number of preschool institutions and classrooms were not sufficient to achieve the 50% schooling rate, 20-25 children to one adult in public schools were commonly seen.

Preschool teachers' beliefs and self-reported practices about learning areas and decoration of walls may be thought to be parallel with child-centered education. This may result from that teachers with 1 to 5 years teaching experience are aware of the importance of establishing learning areas for active participation of young children (İmer, 2001) and decorating walls with age appropriate materials and children's work to help them to feel the classroom belongs to them (Engel, 2003). It should not be ignored the necessity of exhibiting children's work in the classroom to develop their intrinsic motivation (Yıldırım & Dönmez, 2008). The existence of learning areas in preschool classrooms is emphasized in Turkish preschool program and it is stressed that learning areas such as dramatic play, blocks, music, science, books, manipulative play and art areas should be organized based on the children's age, developmental level, skills and interests (MEB, 2006). The preschool teachers' beliefs and self-reported practices related to the learning areas and decoration of walls seem to be consistent with each other. While most participant teachers believed in the necessity of learning areas in child-centered classroom, only some stated that there were learning areas in their classrooms. Thus, the teachers' may be aware that ideal classrooms should be divided into several separated learning areas connected by ample walkways (Trussell, 2008). Also, these areas are important to prevent dissatisfaction, aggression and inattentiveness (Doyle, 1986). In relation to the decoration of walls, some preschool teachers believed that children's work and learning materials should be exhibited on the school walls and they also exhibited children's work in their classrooms. Therefore, there is a consistency between teachers' beliefs and self-reported practices about it.

It is difficult to evaluate the participant teachers' beliefs about the *movement area* of classroom as appropriate or inappropriate. The NAEYC (2011) suggests 3.25150 square meters as the usable area for each child, none of the participant teachers in this study mentioned a specific size related to *movement area* of children in the classroom. They only stated that there should be wide and sufficient movement area. However, this description of the area is not clear enough to make a judgment about the appropriateness of their beliefs in relation to child-centeredness. There are differences between the participant teachers' beliefs and self-reported practices

related to movement area/class size. Participant teachers believed that classroom should be large enough for young children to move easily but most teachers said that the movement area of their classroom was small. As mentioned above, this may result from teachers not having any influence on their classroom and class size. The principals decide the allocation of classrooms and direct teachers to small or large classroom with low or high population of children.

The participant teachers' beliefs about *materials and furniture* can be evaluated as partially appropriate because none of them gave comments or ideas that were in accord with the NAEYC accreditation (2011). This accreditation states that there should be a variety of age and developmentally appropriate materials and equipment such as dramatic play equipment, and sensory materials (Sand, water, play dough, paint and blocks) in child centered classroom. Many of the participant teachers believed that the materials and furniture should be child-sized, multi-purpose and appropriate to the children's interest and age. Also, there should be sufficient materials for all children in the classroom. However, their self-reported practices showed that some teachers had a wide variety of materials and furniture in their classroom whereas others mentioned negative situations such as insufficient materials, limited multi-purpose materials and furniture that was too heavy for children. The participant teachers' beliefs and self-reported practices related to materials and furniture appear to be partially consistent. However, it should be considered that materials and furniture are not directly related to participant teachers because again school principals usually make the decisions about materials and furniture and the teachers may not have any input on these decisions. Therefore, this consistency may not be related to teachers.

In terms of the *arrangement of physical environment*, some participant teachers reported child-centered practices such as easy access to materials, interesting materials for children, appropriate separation of learning areas, variety of materials and furniture, and the movement area of classroom (NAEYC, 2011). Also, teachers stated that they did not ask the children's opinion while arranging the classroom. The participant teachers' beliefs and self-reported practices related to arrangement of physical environment seem to be partially consistent. The preschool

teachers appear to have some concerns related to asking the children about their ideas for the arrangement of the classroom. One participant of this study commented that there were twenty children in her classroom and if she asked them about arrangement of the environment, each child would say different things, therefore, she made the decision without consultation. As reported by Kahyaoğlu and Yangın (2007) Turkish teachers usually thought themselves not very competent in arranging the physical environment of their classrooms. Although in the current study the participant teachers did not comment on their competency, it was assumed that they saw themselves as the only decision maker concerning the arrangement of the physical environment.

In relation to the physical environment, it should be emphasized that, in particular, the amount of materials and the teacher-child ratio are important for teachers' practices. Wang, Elicker, McMullen and Mao (2008) emphasized in a study of Chinese teachers, limited materials and high teacher-child ratio may cause inconsistency between their beliefs and practices.

5.1.3 Instructional activities

In terms of *instructional activities* in preschool classrooms, Morrison (2011) stated that these should be planned and implemented based on children's ideas, preferences, learning styles and interests. He also emphasized that children's individual differences and uniqueness of gender, age, culture, temperament and learning style should be taken into account and the child should be an active participant in educational process in a child-centered classroom (Morrison, 2011). Children's active involvement was stressed as one of the main components of child-centered education by Canedo and Woodard (2000).

Although the beliefs of participant teachers about planning instructional activities generally seem to be child-centered, some important aspects of child-centered instructional activities were not mentioned by teachers. For example, NAEYC (2011) suggests that there should be indoor and outdoor activities during the day. However, none of the preschool teachers in this study mentioned outdoor activities during the day. As reported in the literature, indoor activities have been

implemented in all Turkish preschool institutions but playgrounds can provide young children with limited types of activities (Olgan & Kahriman-Öztürk, 2011). Also, Gol-Guven (2009) stated that although the daily plans of the teachers included outdoor activities, they allow the children to go to the playground. This may be the result of Turkish preschool teachers thinking outdoor activities only refer to free play activities and are not aware of the instructional activities that can be planned and conducted in playgrounds. Many preschool teachers emphasized that when planning activities in their classrooms, they considered children's interests, desires, age, needs and developmental characteristics. When it is considered that instructional activities should be planned based on children's ideas, attitudes preferences, learning styles, strengths, needs and interests in child-centered classrooms (Coughlin, 1996; Kendrick & Labas, 2000; Morrison, 2011), this planning process may seem appropriate for child-centeredness. Also, these teachers' practices were parallel with Turkish preschool program (MEB, 2006) because in the program it is emphasized that teachers should consider children's developmental levels, needs and interests when making their annual and daily plans. Moreover, it should be mentioned that appropriate activities for children's age and interests provide children with greater motivation for and longer concentration on learning activities or experiences (Vartuli & Rohs, 2008). Thus, the participant teachers' self-reported practices may motivate children and increase their concentration on activities. Also, the preschool teachers' beliefs and self-reported practices related to the planning of activities seem consistent. It should be considered that since the planning process is directly related with teachers and there may not any effects of extrinsic factors on this process. Therefore, it could be easy to determine that there is a consistency between beliefs and practices related to planning instructional activities.

An inconsistency may exist between teachers' beliefs and self-reported practices related to implementation of activities. It was emphasized by some participant teachers that children's needs should be considered while implementing an activity. Also, they believed the importance of children's freedom. In relation to their self-reported practices, some preschool teachers focused on supporting active participation and considering the individual differences of the children. It can be said

that freedom and the active participation of children can be related but considering individual differences is an important distinction between their beliefs and self-reported practices. Although individual differences are a key factor in child-centered education, there is no explanation as to why the teachers did not emphasize it in their beliefs.

Regarding the *teacher's role* in classroom activities, NAEYC (2011) emphasizes that teachers should have respect for the children to foster their emotional well-being and support the children's competent and self-reliant exploration, and independent use of classroom materials. Also, according to the accreditation criteria of NAEYC (2011), teachers should provide children with opportunities to develop friendships and play together, and help them manage their own behavior. In this study, most of the preschool teachers stated that in terms of the teacher's role they should be a guide in the classroom. Therefore, the teachers' beliefs seem appropriate to child-centered education. It should be considered that although being guide in an activity is a very general and unclear term, and the participant teachers did not clarify what the guidance in an activity referred to. This may result from two perspectives: they were not aware of meaning of the term or considered that being a guide includes all teachers' practices during tan activity from planning to behavior management. In relation to participant teachers' self-reported practices, teachers said that their role was rewarding, guiding and motivating children and meeting their interest and needs during the activity. Although most of these elements seem appropriate for child-centered education, rewarding them may not be (NAEYC, 2011). Therefore, the participant teachers' responses regarding this issue should be interpreted cautiously. It is important for teachers to be aware of their practices; for instance, does guiding mean only reading or giving the instructions of an activity or does it refer to planning activities towards the teacher's goals but shaped by children? Does motivating consist of transition activities such as finger play, rhymes or riddles before the activity or does it refer to recognizing children's natural curiosity and planning interesting and engaging activities based on their curiosity? (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009). Also, the arrangement of the environment is accepted as an important role of the teacher (Kwon, 2002) however, none of the

teachers in this study emphasized this. There was usually a consistency between teachers' beliefs and self-reported practices related to teachers' role however, in comparison to their beliefs; the preschool teachers mentioned rewarding as one of teachers' roles in their self-reported practices. This issue may be the result of a misunderstanding of teachers because rewarding is not a role for them. Thus, it can be said that apart from the rewarding element this consistency between beliefs and practices is appropriate to child-centered education.

In relation to *role of children*, NAEYC (2011) reports that children should participate in the process of decision making, planning and implementing of activities and establishing rules. In parallel with the NAEYC criteria, the participant teachers emphasized the importance of the active participation of children in the whole educational process. Their beliefs can be related to their educational background. Since the participants' teaching experiences varied from 1 to 5 years and in their undergraduate education they received training in child-centered education and Turkish preschool program which began to be implementation in 2006. Thus, they may be familiar with the term 'active participant' and recognize the importance of active learning for children. Some participant teachers emphasized that children were active, free and were investigators in their classrooms. Also, some preschool teachers said that children decide, plan and direct the activities with them. Considering that children's active involvement is stressed as one of the main components of child-centered education (Canedo & Woodard, 2000), the consistency between teachers' beliefs and self-reported practices related to child's role is parallel with child-centeredness.

Lastly, in terms of *time management*, it is stated by NAEYC (2011) that the daily schedule should be predictable; however, it should also be flexible and responsive to the individual needs of children. Children should have time for play, creative expression, large-group, small-group and child initiated activities and smooth transitions should be planned between activities. In parallel with child-centeredness many participant teachers emphasized that the duration of activities should be flexible and dependent on children's attention span, interest, motivation, and developmental characteristics. It should be considered that the appropriateness of

teachers' beliefs to child-centeredness is important because determining the duration of an activity based on children's characteristic may give preschool teachers the opportunity to recognize children's differences and the factors that spark curiosity and stimulate motivation. However, although smooth transitions between activities are important to help young children feel secure in school (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009), the necessity of smooth transitions was not mentioned by the teachers in this study. This may result from Turkish preschool teachers focusing on the main activities rather than transitions. The inconsistency between teachers' beliefs and self-reported practices may be a result of teachers' concerns related to implementation of all the activities in their daily plans. This can be seen in the responses of some participant teachers who said they gave children extra time to complete their work and other teachers who finished children's incomplete work. When teachers focus on completing the contents of their schedule, they may be ignoring individual differences of children.

5.1.4 Relationships

According to accreditation of NAEYC (2011), teachers should use physical affection, eye contact, appropriate tone of voice and smile to establishing positive relationship with the children in their class. Also, they should provide comfort, support and assistance when children have positive initiations, negative emotions and feelings of hurt and fear. Besides, NAEYC (2011) emphasizes that teachers should build an individual relationship with each child, encourage them to express both positive and negative emotions appropriately and change their responses based on the individual needs of the child. Teachers should use frequent, regular, meaningful, and extended social conversations with children such as asking questions, listening to each child carefully, engaging in joint laughter and expressing affection to create a positive emotional climate (NAEYC, 2011).

In this study, the participant teachers usually stated that they believed that the relationship between the teacher and the children in the class should be based on mutual affection and respect in a comfortable atmosphere. Teachers' showing affection towards young children is important in preschool classrooms and this is

parallel with the finding the study of Özsoy, Özsoy, Özkara & Memiş (2010) that emphasized an affectionate relationship with children was one of the most important factors influencing teachers' choice to work with young children (Özsoy, Özsoy, Özkara & Memiş, 2010). Also, some participant teachers emphasized that children and teachers should have a friendly relationship. Since the word 'friendly' is not used in NAEYC's accreditation (2011) but could be considered as a synonym for 'affectionate' there school teachers' beliefs about relationship in classroom could be accepted as appropriate to child-centered education.

Many participant teachers stated that they were not strict teachers and, they communicated with children appropriately and established mutual respect in a friendly atmosphere. This kind of relationship may be appropriate to child-centered education and may result from the idea that in Turkey the most important prerequisite of being a preschool teacher and the main responsibility is to love and to get along well with young children. However, a few teachers said that children had to get permission to move in the classroom and this is considered inappropriate in terms of a child-centered approach. The possible reason for this is that Turkish preschool teachers do not want to lose their authority in the classroom (Şahin, Erden & Sak, 2011) and giving or withholding permission to children may be an important indicator of authority and control. However, the teachers emphasized their belief in the importance of mutual love, respect and friendly relationship with children, they put it into practice in the classrooms. Overall it seems that participant teachers' beliefs and self-reported practices about their relationship with the children are consistent. Given that the average of the teachers' teaching experience in this study was 3.35 years, it can be said that this consistency is related to their teaching experience. It cannot be ignored that establishing a friendly relationship with children is easier for younger teachers and this is supported by the comment of the youngest participant of Lee and Tseng's study (2008; p.192) said that "I see myself as an equal learning partner with my children. This is not a comfortable role for older teachers in my school".

5.1.5Behavior management

NAEYC (2011) stresses that classroom rules should be determined with children and teachers should attempt to prevent potential behavior problems through anticipating and taking prevention steps. They also should facilitate positive peer interaction for children who are socially reserved or withdrawn or are being bullied or excluded by their peers. Children should be able to identify their feelings, describe their problems and try to find alternative solutions for conflicts through help of their teachers. Teachers should never use physical punishment (shaking, hitting) psychological abuse or coercion and threats or derogatory remarks (NAEYC, 2011).

The teachers' beliefs about behavior management seem partially appropriate to child-centered education. Although teachers' beliefs about establishing rules with children may be appropriate to child-centered education, their beliefs related to use of rewards and punishment may not seem appropriate to child-centeredness. According to the teachers, rules should be established together with the children. This viewpoint may result from the young preschool teachers regarding the development of self-regulation and self-control skills of children in that the opportunity of participating in rule-setting allows them to increase their capacity for self-regulation (Bodrova & Leong, 2008). Most of the participant teachers stated that they established rules with children and some said that they established rules based on the children's problems or needsthis finding is parallel with studies of Pala (2005) and Akar, Tantekin-Erden, Tor and Şahin (2010). The participant teachers emphasized that punishment should be used but it should be called with different names such as 'warning' or 'preference'. Teachers stressed that they used both tangible rewards (stickers, stars, medals) and emotional/verbal rewards (thanking, kissing, hugging) and punishment such as time out. These practices of the teachers related to punishment and reward may not be seen as appropriate to child-centered education. However, it should be emphasized that participant teachers used time-out as a punishment but they did not report shaking, hitting, psychological abuse or coercion as their practices. Participant teachers' practices related to rewards may be due to the fact that either they did not understand the meaning of the term 'individual differences' or they were unable to put this into practice because in particular

tangible rewards may not be meaningful and valuable to an individual child. If the reward does not match the parental or cultural environment of the child then it will not be effective for the child in may even have negative consequences (Hyson & Christiansen, 1997). Also, the participant teachers may not be aware of the extent of the harm that punishment can cause. It is reported that the anxiety of being punished causes inhibition in children's learning (Gartrell, 1987; as cited in Hyson & Christiansen, 1997) and these findings parallel those of Kök, Küçükoğlu, Tuğluk and Koçyiğit (2007), Akar, Tantekin-Erden, Tor and Şahin (2010), and Uysal, Akbaba-Altun and Akgün (2010).

There appears to be a partial consistency between the teachers' beliefs and self-reported practices regarding behavior management. In terms of establishing rules and rewarding children, teachers' beliefs and practices seem consistent but their beliefs and practices are not parallel concerning punishment. Consistency between teachers' beliefs and self-reported practices related to establishing rules with the children is important because of its appropriateness to child-centeredness. Considering the necessity of active participation of children in education process, it may be thought that the participant teachers were aware that setting classroom rules with children create an important opportunity for their active involvement in this process. In relation to rewarding children, this consistency should be interpreted cautiously. Since this, especially the use of tangible rewards may result from teachers having a traditional attitude in thinking that all young children like stars, smiling faces or candies and are motivated by them to behave in a certain way or undertake more difficult activities. However, from the child-centered perspective have a role model can be a more effective motivator for children than rewarding them. Swanson (1995) reported that young children tend to do their best when they observed adults because they needed a role model for appropriate behaviors not rewards. On the other hand, there seems to be an inconsistency between preschool teachers' beliefs and self-reported practices in that some teachers believed that punishment was unnecessary and not of any use whereas others stated that punishment should be used in the classroom. In this study it was found that time-out was used as punishment technique but teachers tended to use a different term such as warning or preference.

This inconsistency is parallel with the findings of Akar, Tantekin-Erden, Tor and Şahin (2010). They (Akar, Tantekin-Erden, Tor & Şahin, 2010) reported that although their participant preschool teachers emphasized that punishment was unnecessary, time-out was the most common punishment technique.

5.1.6 Assessment

Regarding *assessment*, Copple and Bredekamp (2009) stated that teachers should consider the children's individual differences such as age, developmental status and experience, and assess all their developmental domains. It is stressed that children's progress toward goals should be the focus of assessment rather than the outcomes (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009; Tugrul, 2002). Therefore, children should be assessed continually throughout the school year, not just at the specific time (Morrison, 2011). Also, assessment should be based on natural authentic situations (Copple & Bredekamp, 2009) and appropriate methods of authentic assessment such as observations, anecdotal records, running records, event sampling, time sampling, rating scales, check lists, work samples, portfolios, rubrics and interviews should be used (Morrison, 2011).

The participant teachers in the current study believed that assessment should be individual and that progress is a very important element. The teachers said that they used their own observation notes, assessment forms based on objectives and developmental reports. Also, some of the preschool teachers stated that they assessed children individually and did not compare one child with another. Whereas assessing children individually seems an appropriate for child-centered education, several types of assessment techniques should be used as given above. Observation notes, anecdotal records, developmental checklists and standardized tests, developmental reports and portfolios are emphasized as assessment techniques of young children in Turkish preschool program (MEB, 2006). Since preschool teachers are familiar with observation and they have to complete official developmental checklists and reports, and send them to parents thus, teachers will probably be familiar with these assessment tools. However, according to Eren (2007) Turkish teachers' lack of knowledge about portfolio, and difficulties related to time management, documenting

systematically and involving parents and children through the semester may prevent them from using portfolio.

In relation to *assessment*, the participant teachers' beliefs and self-reported practices seem partially consistent. For instance, they were consistent in relation to individual assessment and using observation as an assessment technique. The preschool teachers believed that assessment forms based on objectives and developmental reports were not appropriate assessment techniques for child-centered education since they did not focus on the child's progress, however, it was common practice for them to use assessment forms and developmental reports. This inconsistency possibly results the program requirements prepared by the Ministry of National Education (MEB, 2006).

5.1.7 Parent involvement

In relation to parent involvement, Jones (2007) pointed out that there should be mutual trust and respect between the teacher and parents. The NAEYC (2011) states that parents from different socioeconomic status, race, religion, cultural backgrounds, gender and abilities should be included in all aspects of the program and families should be able to share with their child's teacher(s) their knowledge of their children's interests, developmental needs, and their concerns and goals for their child. Also, parents' participation should be voluntary and based on their interests/skills (Hurless & Gittings, 2008), and parents availability should be considered while working together with teachers to plan events (NAEYC, 2011).

The participant teachers of this study emphasized the importance of parents' active involvement in education and some stressed the necessity of support from and cooperation with parents. It seems that these beliefs of teachers are appropriate to child-centered education in keeping with the NAEYC criteria given above. Also, the importance of parents in child-centered education was emphasized in the study of Kaya and Güngör Aytar (2012).

Most of the preschool teachers in current study stated that the parents of their children participated in various activities in their classrooms such as art, story reading, play, cooking, science experiments and job sharing. However, some teachers

stated that parents did not actively participate in classroom activities and one teacher said that parents could only visit her classrooms to do activities. However, in a child-centered classroom, parents should be able to visit the school and the classroom whenever they want (NAEYC, 2011). Parents' participation in various activities seems appropriate to child-centered education; however, limiting this involvement should not be considered appropriate for child-centeredness. This finding is also parallel with a study by Õun, Saar-ugaste and Niglas (2008) in Estonia. The researchers found that although the cooperation between kindergarten and parents was not a new idea for child-centered education, the kindergarten staff did not share their responsibility with parents and did not see them as their equal partners. It may be said that there is a transfer from teacher-centered practices to child-centeredness in both early childhood education of Turkey and Estonia, but preschool teachers may not yet be ready to see parents as equal partners. The preschool teachers' beliefs and self-reported practices seem consistent because the teachers believed that parents' active involvement in education was very important and supported parent involvement in their classrooms. This consistency may result from that Turkish preschool teachers being aware of the importance of a strong relation between teacher and parents in achieving quality in early childhood education (Mbugua, 2009).

5.1.8 Child-centered education

Children's individual differences (developmental level, age, culture, gender, socio-economic and cultural backgrounds of families) and individual needs (need for mastery, independence, generosity and need to belong) were the bases while planning and implementing facets of child-centered education consisting of environment of the classroom, activities, relationships and behavior management in the classroom, and parent involvement in education (Bendtro & Brokenleg, 2001; as cited in Griebling, 2009; Morrison, 2011). Also, children can freely ask questions, explore new things, express their ideas, creatively think, try to do by their ways, take an initiative, make choice, and actively learn how to do things in a child-centered classroom (Myagmar, 2010). When these definitions are considered, it can be said

that some beliefs of the participant teachers about characteristics of child-centered education may be suitable for child-centeredness. For instance, they believed that children should be active, decision makers, directors, the center and aim of child-centered education. The belief that a child should be active in a child-centered classroom was parallel with Mongolian preschool teachers who considered that "child is the center of educational instruction" in child-centered education (Myagmar, 2010; p. 70). However, some beliefs of the participant teachers cannot be considered as appropriate for child-centered education. For example, they stated that teachers should be passive in a child-centered classroom but an active child does not mean that the teachers should be the opposite. In child-centered classrooms, the teacher and children should work collaboratively to achieve educational goals (McCombs & Whisler, 1997).

In the current study the participant teachers assessed themselves as child-centered or not rather than emphasizing their practices. When they considered the *characteristics of child-centered education*, teachers evaluated themselves as absolutely child-centered, usually child-centered, both teacher-centered and child-centered, or teacher-centered. Teachers who defined themselves as absolutely child-centered said that they preferred being a child-centered teacher because of certain positive aspects of child-centeredness. For instance, they think that child-centered education is more successful than teacher-centered education. Also, children are happier and learn by doing in a child-centered classroom. These characteristics of child-centered education mentioned by participant teachers are parallel to the related literature. For example, children who were enrolled in a child-centered (Step by Step) program were encouraged to make their own choices, to perform responsible behaviors and to solve their own problems. A parent whose child was enrolled in this program indicated that these practices made children happier (Cougling, 1996). Moreover, children were more autonomous and motivated for both academic and social issues in child-centered programs (Stipek, Feiler, Daniels & Milbum, 1995) while their independence and choices were supported more in these schools than traditional kindergartens (Õun, Ugaste, Tuul & Niglas, 2010). Child-centered programs also had positive effects not only on children's social-emotional

development and intellectual abilities but also on teachers and parents (Turman & Blatt, 1974). Therefore, child-centered approach is important to increase the quality of education (Lee, 2006).

Some preschool teachers stated that their practices were usually child-centered because their plans are flexible and they considered children's individual differences such as interests, needs, desires, age and readiness, and decided on some activities by allowing the children to vote. It can be said that teachers' self-reported practices about child-centered education seem appropriate to child-centered education (NAEYC, 2011). Some participant teachers defined themselves as both teacher-centered and child-centered. This is similar to response of one participant teacher in another study who said "I am child-centered however I have teacher-centered practices due to principal's expectations or school's work load such as meeting" (Kaya and Güngör Aytar 2012 p. 66). It may be said that teachers sometimes have dilemma related to child-centeredness and teacher-centeredness. Thus, it is possible that there is a conflict created by the system in a school which prevents the teacher from considering themselves to be wholly child-centered.

Some participant teachers assessed themselves as teacher-centered and gave their reasons such as; child-centeredness decreasing teachers' performance because the teacher should be more patient, pay attention and spend more effort on each child in child-centered classroom. Also, they said that if children could do whatever they wanted and there was a chaos and discipline problems in a child-centered classroom. Participant teachers defined some factors related to the classroom such as workload, background and lack of knowledge, and class size which prevented them from being child-centered. Also, some teachers stressed that parent's expectations, principals' expectations and limitations prevented them from being child-centered. The preschool teachers' reasons which prevented them from being child-centered are parallel with results of some studies. For example, Güven (2008) stated that class size had an important role on application of curriculum and emphasized that large class size was a big obstacle in implementing a curriculum. Participant teachers in Brading's (2003) study reflect the difficulty of using a child-centered curriculum in public schools. In Murphy's study (2004), large class size and, the lack of classroom

equipment and teacher training were emphasized by teachers as the reasons for their teacher-centered practices.

Some preschool teachers emphasized children's individual differences such as interest, abilities, needs, desires and developmental characteristics as being related to characteristics of child-centered education. Also, some preschool teachers assessed their own practices as usually child-centered since they considered children's individual differences such as interests, needs, desires, age and readiness. Also, they said that they made decisions based on the children votes and their plans were flexible. Although there is a consistency between some of the preschool teachers' beliefs and self-reported practices in this context, for other teachers' there is a lack of consistency. For example, some preschool teachers believed that child-centered education did not mean that children could do whatever they wanted in the classroom. However, some preschool teachers who assessed themselves as teacher-centered said that they were teacher-centered because children could do whatever they wanted and there was a chaos and discipline problems in child-centered classrooms. Thus, the teachers have certain misunderstandings concerning the actual meaning of child-centered education. Also, some preschool teachers assessed themselves as teacher-centered related to chaos and discipline. The responses of the teachers in the current study were parallel to the findings of Myagmar (2010) who reported that a child-centered approach was considered undesirable by kindergarten teachers because of the lack of discipline and morale of a class. Although the Turkish preschool curriculum is child-centered some preschool teachers' practices are still teacher-centered. This is similar to the Ireland where the curriculum is child-centered, but as reported by Murphy (2004) the teachers have more teacher-centered practices.

A summary of the participant teachers' beliefs (Table 5.1), self-reported practices (Table 5.2) and consistency between them (Table 5.3) are displayed in Tables 5.1 to 5.3.

Table 5.1 Appropriateness of Turkish preschool teachers' beliefs for child-centered education

Appropriate	**Partially Appropriate**	**Inappropriate**	**Not Clear Issues**
Relationship	*Materials & furniture*	Developmental domains	*Movement area/class size*
Parent involvement	Behavior management	*Teacher-child ratio*	
Implementation of activities	Assessment		
Teacher's role	Characteristics of child-centeredness		
Child's role	*Planning of activities*		
Time management			
Learning areas			
Decoration of walls			
Arrangement of physical environment			

Table 5.2 Appropriateness of Turkish preschool teachers' self-reported practices for child-centered education

Appropriate	**Partially Appropriate**	**Inappropriate**
Relationship	Assessment	Developmental domains
Learning areas	Parent involvement	*Teacher-child ratio*
Decoration of walls	*Teacher's role*	*Movement area/class size*
Planning of activities	*Time management*	
Implementation of activities	Behavior management	
Child's role	*Materials & furniture*	
	Arrangement of physical environment	
	Characteristics of child-centeredness	

Table 5.3 Consistency between preschool teachers' beliefs and self-reported practices

Consistent	**Partially consistent**	**Inconsistent**
Developmental domains	Behavior management	*Teacher-child ratio*
Relationship	*Materials & Furniture*	*Movement area/class size*
Parent involvement	*Arrangement of classroom*	*Implementation of activities*
Learning areas	Assessment	*Time management*
Decoration of walls	Characteristics of child-centeredness	
Planning of activities		
Teacher's role		
Child's role		

As a summary, the findings of the study showed that preschool teachers' beliefs and self-reported practices about developmental domains, relationship, parent involvement, learning areas, decoration of walls, planning of activities, teacher's role, and child's role seemed consistent. Also, it could be stated that the teachers' beliefs and self-reported practices related to behavior management, materials/furniture, arrangement of classroom, assessment, characteristics of child-centeredness were partially consistent. However, preschool teachers' beliefs and self-reported practices about teacher-child ratio, movement area/class size, implementation of activities, and time management seemed inconsistent.

5.2 Consistency among five preschool teachers' beliefs, self-reported and actual practices

Five preschool teachers were observed in this study and their actual practices were reported. These teachers' beliefs, self-reported and actual practices were compared based on eight themes consisting of the developmental domains, physical environment, instructional activities, relationship, behavior management, assessment, parent involvement and child-centered education. Consistency among five preschool teachers' beliefs, self-reported and actual practices are summarized in Table 5.4.

Table 5.4 Consistency among five preschool teachers' beliefs, self-reported and actual practices

Consistent	**Partially consistent**	**Inconsistent**
Developmental domains	*Teacher-child ratio*	*Movement area/class size*
Learning areas	*Security & Shelter*	*Materials & Furniture*
Decoration of walls	*Planning of activities*	*Arrangement of classroom*
	Behavior management	*Implementation of activities*
		Teacher's role
		Child's role
		Time management
		Relationship
		Assessment
		Parent involvement
		Child-centered education

As can be seen there was a consistency among five preschool teachers' beliefs, self-reported and actual practices related to developmental domains. The

five teachers believe that social-emotional domain should be mostly supported and their self-reported and actual practices are parallel with their beliefs. This consistency can be explained by teachers' initiative in their classrooms since planning an activity to support any of the developmental domains is directly related to the teacher and their beliefs are reflected in their practices. Also, it is assumed that parents' expectation related to supporting social-emotional domain may be a reason for teachers' actual practices (Einarsdottir, 2010; Özen, 2008; Sevinç, 2006; Şahin, Sak & Şahin, 2013).

In relation to *physical environment* of the classroom, it may be said that teachers' beliefs, self-reported and actual practices about learning areas and decoration of walls are consistent. Consistency related to learning areas may result from novice preschool teachers becoming aware of the importance of these areas in the process of their education. However, it should be emphasized that not all the classrooms have well-designed learning areas containing a large variety of materials. Therefore, even if learning areas exist the children and teachers may not be able to use these areas effectively and gain full benefit from them. In terms of the decoration of walls, it appears that the idea of displaying children's work is accepted and put into practice by the preschool teachers in this study. Also, this finding is parallel with another study by Şahin, Tantekin-Erden and Akar (2011) in which preschool teachers mentioned that children's work were exhibited in their classrooms since it has a positive effect on children and motivates them. However, although it is important that materials should be at children's eye level on the wall (Ulutaş & Ersoy, 2004) it was observed that only in one of the five classrooms were the visuals at the eye level of the children

Teachers' beliefs, self-reported and actual practices about teacher-child ratio and, security and shelter seem to be partially consistent with each other. In relation to the teacher-child ratio, participant teachers believed that there should be lower teacher-child ratio in the preschool classroom but in their practice this ratio was high. However, the teacher-child ratio observed in their classrooms was lower than that reported by the five teachers. This inconsistency between teachers' self-reported and actual practices may be a result of the absence of some children since when asked

about the population of their classrooms, they gave the number of registered children. However, sometimes child could not attend to class because of their excuses. Therefore, fewer children might be reported in observations. In terms of security and shelter, there is a consistency between teachers' beliefs and their self-reported practices but the findings related to actual practices differ. Most teachers believed that a preschool classroom should be safe and also reported that their classrooms were. However, it was observed that according to accreditation criteria of NAEYC (2011) only two teachers' classrooms were safe. Although preschool teachers have awareness about safety of preschool classrooms, they may not assess conditions of their classrooms objectively. Since a teacher has been in the classroom for a long time and had become familiar with the classroom, she may not recognize some dangerous aspects such as sharp corners of tables and the television on the top of a high cupboard in the classroom.

There was no consistency between teachers' beliefs, self-reported and actual practices about the movement area/class size, materials and furniture, and arrangement of the physical environment of the classroom. In terms of the movement area/class size, although all teachers believed that movement area should be large enough for children to move easily, four of them stressed that there was not sufficient movement area in their classroom. Also, it was observed that two of participant teachers' classrooms had a wide movement area. Although teachers have awareness about the necessity of large movement area for young children, this inconsistency may result from external factors such as the conditions of the school rather than the teacher. Regarding the materials and furniture, teachers may be aware of that existence of sufficient materials and furniture is important for children's motivation and organization of the classroom is important in a child-centered classroom (Karaer & Kösterelioğlu, 2005). However, in parallel with studies in the literature, the materials and furniture in the five teacher's classrooms were in poor condition and not sufficient for the number of children in the classroom (Gol-Guven, 2009; Şahin, Tantekin-Erden & Akar, 2011). In terms of the arrangement of the physical environment, there was no consistency between teachers' beliefs and practices. It can be said that preschool teachers' beliefs were not reflected in their practices due to

factors related to teachers and classroom's conditions. In relation to teachers, they may not want to spend more time while arranging their classrooms with children thus they arranged environment themselves. Furthermore, the physical conditions of classrooms may prevent them from arranging with children because there are many fixed cupboards and other furniture in the classrooms.

In relation to the *instructional activities*, the beliefs and self-reported practices about the planning of activities generally seem parallel with each other. However, their actual practices were quite different. Regarding this inconsistency, one of the most important points was that four of the five teachers had not prepared a written (printed) plan for the daily activities of their class. This can be interpreted as their emphasis on considering individual differences in their activity plan contradicts their practice. Since they used ready plans copied on the internet, it may not be appropriate for differences and needs of all children and schools in Turkey. It seems that individual differences of children are ignored because there are some standardized activities in these plans. In relation to the implementation of the activities, preschool teachers' beliefs, self-reported and actual practices seem quite different from each other. This inconsistency can result from many factors such as teacher-child ratio, materials, flexibility and the priorities of teachers (Finn & Pannozzo, 2003; Şahin, Tantekin-Erden & Akar, 2011). Also, regarding the teacher's role, it is not possible to confirm that there is a consistency between preschool teachers' beliefs and practices. This finding is parallel with a study by Kwon (2004) in which although the most of participant teachers explained that the teacher's role was that of facilitator, it was observed that in practice they were the designer of children's activities and the instructor. In relation to child's role in instructional activities, there is a consistency between the teachers' beliefs and self-reported practices. Although the observed participant teachers emphasized children's active participation as their beliefs and self-reported practices, in only one of the classrooms was the children's active participation observed. It appears that although the preschool teachers believed and assumed that children were active in their classroom in fact they were not. For instance, it was observed that the teachers decided on the schedule and activities. Despite the children making some suggestions related to

activities, the teachers tried to complete all the activities in her plan. Furthermore, sometimes when the children wanted to use different materials or colors for their art activities the teachers directed them about the color or materials. Moreover, it may be emphasized that teachers seemed to be unaware of, or were unable to objectively assess their actual practices in relation to the active participation of children. In relation to the time management of activities, it can be stated that there was no consistency among the preschool teachers' beliefs, self-reported and actual practices. This inconsistency could result from the teacher's anxiety of the need to follow their daily schedule this may be connected to them feeling pressures from parents, principals and other teachers to complete the activities in their plans.

Regarding *relationship*, there was no consistency between their beliefs, self-reported and actual practices but all the teachers emphasized the mutual affection and respect in preschool classrooms. This may be related to that one of the most important characteristics of preschool teachers is to love children (Bayhan & Bencik, 2008; Koç, 2012; O'Connor & McCartney, 2007).

When preschool teachers' beliefs, self-reported and actual practices about *behavior management* were compared, it was found that five preschool teachers' beliefs and self-reported practices were consistent about establishment of rules with children at the beginning of the school year. However, since the observation of the teachers was carried during the school year the establishment of rules could not be observed, thus, it is not possible to compare the consistency of teachers' beliefs, self-reported and actual practices. In relation to discipline strategies to prevent or decrease misbehaviors in preschool classrooms, there was not a complete consistency. For instance, the five preschool teachers ignored children's misbehaviors in their actual practices but none gave it as their self-reported practices. This may result from teachers' lack of awareness of some of their behaviors. In terms of using rewards in the classroom, their beliefs, self-reported and actual practices were consistent. Therefore, it may be said that participant teachers usually use rewards to manage children's behaviors. However, in relation to use of punishment, it is not possible to confirm the existence of a consistency among teachers' beliefs, self-reported and actual practices. Although in their stated beliefs and self-reported

practices the teachers did not say that they used punishment in their classrooms, the classroom observations showed that all five teachers used punishment in their classrooms. The explanation could be that either teachers are not aware of their actual practices related to punishment or they do not want to reveal their use of punishment in their classrooms. Furthermore, the teachers may consider the term punishment to mean only corporal punishment thus they might not think of time out as punishment.

In relation to *assessment*, the preschool teachers' beliefs, self-reported and actual practices were not consistent. Although they stressed that they used observation notes, developmental reports and other forms to assess children in their classrooms, none expressed their beliefs related to these techniques. Also, it was observed that all teachers often provided children with feedback about their works but none of them used these techniques in their classrooms. This situation may be explained with the participant teachers' inadequate knowledge about child-centered assessment and Kandır, Özbey and İnal (2009) reported that preschool teachers experienced some difficulties while assessing children.

In relation to *parent involvement*, there was an inconsistency among teachers' beliefs, self-reported and actual practices. It may be due to parents' enthusiasm to participate in activities and/or teachers' attitudes to parents. On the one hand, teachers may want parents to be involved in the educational process in their classrooms but parents may not come to the classroom for many reasons such as work load, lack of time and the low self-esteem of parents (Michael, Wolhuter & Wyk, 2012; Turney & Kao, 2009). In the reverse situation, parents may want to undertake activities with the children and observe them in the classroom but the teachers do not want parents in their classrooms. Kaya and Güngör Aytar (2012) reported that although Turkish preschool teachers stress the importance of parent involvement in child-centered education, the researchers did not observe the active participation of parents in the observed preschool classrooms.

Lastly, preschool teachers' beliefs, self-reported and actual practices related to child-centered education were not consistent. Their beliefs, self-reported and actual practices were differed but it is difficult to explain reasons for this. There is

also a controversial point which is that it was assumed that novice teachers have more appropriate child-centered beliefs since they learn about the child-centeredness characteristics of Turkish preschool programs during their education, however, Isikoglu, Basturk and Karaca (2009) found that the less experienced teachers in their study had less child-centered beliefs than the most of the experienced teachers. Some studies also show that the actual practices of preschool teachers are different from their beliefs. For example; Korean preschool head teachers stated that child-centered education was the main aim of preschools; however, their implementation was not always child-centered (Kwon, 2004). Korean kindergarten teachers stated that the National Kindergarten Curriculum was too idealistic and did not consider the current situation in the kindergarten classroom. Therefore, it may not be possible to implement this ideal curriculum in crowded and inappropriate physical environment of the classroom (Kwon, 2004). There seems to be a similar situation in Turkey since the Turkish preschool program has a many ideal characteristics however, the actual teacher-child ratio and physical environment of classroom do not allow the full implementation of the curriculum.

5.3 The role of actual practices on the consistency

When the consistency of 20 preschool teachers' beliefs and self-reported practices compared with the consistency of the 5 observed preschool teachers' beliefs, self-reported and actual practices, there are some similarities and differences between them. When the consistent themes/sub-themes are compared, there is a similarity between the 20 preschool teachers' beliefs and self-reported practices, and the 5 preschool teachers' beliefs, self-reported and actual practices related to developmental domains, learning areas, and decoration of walls. Although the beliefs and self-reported practices about relationships, parent involvement, planning of activities, teacher's role and child's role are consistent, there is no consistency between the 5 preschool teachers' beliefs, self-reported and actual practices except developmental domains, learning areas, and decoration of walls. The comparison of consistent themes/sub-themes showed that the consistency rate of the 20 preschool teachers' beliefs and self-reported practices higher than the consistency rate of the 5

preschool teachers' beliefs, self-reported and actual practices. This may result from the actual practices. Actual practices of 5 preschool teachers differ from their beliefs and their self-reported practices about relationship, parent involvement, planning of activities, the teacher's role and the child's role. Therefore, the consistent themes/sub-themes of the 5 preschool teachers are less than those of the 20 preschool teachers.

When the partially consistent themes/sub-themes are compared, behavior management is only common theme between 20 preschool teachers' beliefs and self-reported practices and 5 preschool teachers' beliefs, self-reported and actual practices. Although there are partial consistency between the 20 preschool teachers' beliefs and self-reported practices about materials and furniture, arrangement of the classroom and the characteristics of child-centered education, the 5 preschool teachers' beliefs, self-reported and actual practices about teacher-child ratio, security and shelter, and planning activities seem to be partially consistent. It may be said that although only behavior management is a common theme, the number of partially consistent themes/sub-themes of both groups are very similar. Therefore, it can be said that there are partially consistent situations in both the 20 preschool teachers' beliefs and self-reported practices and the 5 preschool teachers' beliefs, self-reported and actual practices.

When the inconsistent themes/sub-themes are compared, there are similarities concerning the movement area/class size, implementation of activities and time management between the 20 preschool teachers' beliefs and self-reported practices and the 5 preschool teachers' beliefs, self-reported and actual practices. The reasons for the inconsistency may be similar for both groups. For example, the movement area/class size is not directly related to the teacher. Although there is an inconsistency between the 20 preschool teachers' beliefs and self-reported practices about teacher-child ratio, there is an inconsistency between the 5 preschool teachers' beliefs, self-reported and actual practices about materials and furniture, arrangement of classroom, teacher's role, child's role, relationship, assessment, parent involvement and child-centered education. It may be said that the number of inconsistent themes and sub-themes of the 5 preschool teachers (n=11) is higher than

the 20 preschool teachers' number (n=4) due to teachers' actual practices. The 5 preschool teachers may not put their beliefs into practice because of factors such as the conditions in the schools, the expectations of parents and the principal, and the fact that the teachers are unaware of the nature of some of their own practices.

Lastly, although the 20 preschool teachers emphasized some reasons which prevented them from being child-centered; this was not made clear by the 5 preschool teachers in terms of their beliefs, self-reported and actual practices. When preschool teachers' actual practices emerge, it can be seen that the rate of inconsistent themes/sub-themes increased.

5.4 Implications of the findings

This section presents the implications of the results of the research for teachers, teacher education programs and Ministry of National Education (MoNE). Although preschool teachers may have some misunderstandings related to child-centeredness, each teacher should be aware of their responsibility for the education of the children in their care therefore, where there are inappropriate practices within the institution which are not directly related to teachers the classroom teachers can act to change them. Furthermore, in their own classrooms teachers should be able to accurately self-assess and then modify their practices where necessary. By reading current research about preschool education, attending conferences and participating in in-service training programs teachers can expand their knowledge and find models to follow. Within their school, teachers can also meet and discuss ways in which to improve their practices and also to find ways of resolving problems related to the classroom environment and other issues.

In relation to the pre-service teacher education, it is accepted that teacher education programs have a major influence on how the prospective teachers gains content and pedagogic knowledge about their field, and how they formulate their beliefs and attitudes to their future practices in the classroom. Well-trained early childhood teachers have a vital role in providing children with quality early childhood education (Mbugua, 2009). Scott-little, La Paro and Weisner (2006) stated that teacher preparation program increases the child-centered perspective of the

prospective teacher candidate. Also, Trepanier-Street, Adler and Taylor, (2007) found that college students' beliefs became more child-centered at the end of a yearlong mentoring program. As reported in findings of the current study, one of the main reasons that prevented teachers from being child-centered was the teacher having a lack of training and knowledge related to child-centeredness and principles of child-centered education. However, the preparation of a teacher not only covers the theoretical aspect but also includes practical experience in the classroom. In courses such as curriculum and instruction, child-centered curriculum models should be presented to preschool teachers and opportunities should be provided them to practice their knowledge such as creating a curriculum model or syllabus based on an actual school context. Also, there should be ample opportunity for teacher candidates to discuss their practical experience in the classroom both formal and informally with their practicum supervisors and other faculty staff. Furthermore, the prospective teachers should be encouraged to discuss their classroom practice with other students. The current study has another implication which is related to child-centered teacher training. The appropriateness of teachers' beliefs and self-reported practices can be increased by training (Heisner & Lederberg, 2011) since people usually do what they see and experience. If preschool teachers' beliefs and practices should be child-centered, then, particularly during their undergraduate years should be based on the principles of child-centered education (Grove, 2012). For example, giving students the opportunity to discuss, explain and debate during class, encouraging them to take responsibility for their own learning and actively participating in the education program. It should be considered that a teacher-centered teacher education program cannot enhance teacher candidates' skills and attitudes in relation to child-centered education.

There are also implications for MoNE in that it is important to undertake research to determine the obstacles that prevented preschool teachers from being child-centered. These obstacles may include physical conditions of schools and classrooms, pressures places on teachers by principals or parents, the teachers' lack of knowledge and misunderstandings related to child-centered education. In terms of the physical conditions, there should be a code of practice to ensure that all new

schools are designed to be physically appropriate to child-centered education. Within the school child-sized, safe and durable materials and furniture should be chosen.

In order to create a child-centered educational environment not only the teachers but also the principals of preschools should attend in-service training about child-centeredness thus the school administration would be brought into line with the principles given in the MoNE preschool curriculum. Moreover, the characteristics of child-centeredness should be explained with examples in detail in Turkish preschool curriculum. Lastly, since some principals and education inspectors do not have sufficient knowledge and practices related to early childhood education in future MoNE should ensure that all new principals are assigned to preschools firmly based on their education and experience in preschool education.

As mentioned above teachers need in-service teachers' education about child-centered education. Both the experienced and novice teachers may have misunderstanding about child-centered education. For the older teacher although the Turkish preschool curriculum has been child-centered since 2002, there are many teachers with 20 plus years teaching experience who entered the profession before this new curriculum was implemented and their education may not have included a focus on child-centred education. Therefore, for both the experienced and novice teacher as Hindman and Wasik (2008) stress in-service training has important influence on teachers' knowledge and beliefs, thus MoNE should provide preschool teachers with in-service training programs about content, teaching strategies and instructional assessment in child-centered education (Isikoglu, Basturk & Karaca, 2009) and as suggested above the characteristics of child-centeredness together with classroom examples should be given in Turkish preschool curriculum document.

5.5 Limitations and recommendations

This study examined a group of preschool teachers' beliefs, self-reported and actual practices about child-centered education. The findings of this study have made some contributions to the literature in relation to preschool teachers' beliefs, self-reported and actual practices about child-centered education. However, there were some limitations of current study. Firstly, this study was conducted in Ankara, the

capital and the second largest city in Turkey, thus, the findings of this study might be specific to this city however, some results might apply to Turkey overall. Since it was not the aim of this study to make a generalization, further similar studies could be carried out in different cities and regions of Turkey. Then it could be possible to correlate the results of the studies to achieve Turkey wide picture of child-centred preschool education in Turkey.

In this study, researcher did not ask the teachers about reasons of their practices. Therefore, preschool teachers' practices were determined but the reasons of these practices were not defined. These reasons will provide a better understanding of teachers' practices. Therefore, a study could be undertaken to examine reasons of teachers' practices..

Another limitation of this study was that the study was only conducted in public schools. There are both public and private preschool institutions in Turkey and officially they use the same curriculum. However, private schools sometimes integrate different approaches into the prescribed Turkish preschool curriculum. Also, there are differences between public and private preschools in terms of physical environment, parents' profiles, and parents' and principals' expectations. A comparative study could be undertaken to examine the effects of these differences on preschool teachers' beliefs and practices and to compare the beliefs and practices of private and public school teachers.

The limited range of teaching experience of the participants is another limitation in this study. The teachers only had 0-5 years therefore; a replication of this study could be conducted to understand veteran teachers' beliefs and practices related to child-centered education. This would also allow the comparison of novice and veteran teachers' beliefs and practices. All the teachers in the current study were female but there are male preschool teachers in Turkey, a study involving male teachers' beliefs and practices in regard to child-centred education could add an additional perspective to the issue.

Lastly, teachers' educational level can be considered as another limitation. All participants of this study graduated from four year university programs however, there are preschool teachers who graduated from vocational high schools or have

graduate degrees. Further comparative studies could be implemented to discover whether the different educational experience has an impact on preschool teachers' beliefs and practices.

In addition to the above, diversity is one of the important issues in education nowadays. Respecting and accepting all children with their differences are important issues in child-centered education. Therefore, Turkish preschool teachers' beliefs and practices can be examined based on diversity issues in their classrooms. Also, it should be stressed that the existence of child-centered curricula are not evidence of child-centered practices. The role of teachers in child-centered implementation is crucial. Since teacher candidates' experiences during their education can be considered to foundations of the development of their beliefs and practice then the beliefs and instructional practices of the members of the education faculty can be examined in relation to child-centered education.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

A.1. Learner-centered principles

A.1.1. Cognitive and Metacognitive Factors

Principle 1: Nature of the learning process. The learning of complex subject matter is most effective when it is an intentional process of constructing meaning from information and experience.

Principle 2: Goals of the learning process. The successful learner, over time and with support and instructional guidance, can create meaningful, coherent representations of knowledge.

Principle 3: Construction of knowledge. The successful learner can link new information with existing knowledge in meaningful ways.

Principle 4: Strategic thinking. The successful learner can create and use a repertoire of thinking and reasoning strategies to achieve complex learning goals.

Principle 5: Thinking about thinking. Higher order strategies for selecting and monitoring mental operations facilitate creative and critical thinking.

Principle 6: Context of learning. Learning is influenced by environmental factors, including culture, technology, and instructional practices.

A.1.2. Motivational and Affective Factors

Principle 7: Motivational and emotional influences on learning. What and how much is learned is influenced by the learner's motivation. Motivation to learn, in turn, is influenced by the individual's emotional states, beliefs, interests and goals, and habits of thinking.

Principle 8: Intrinsic motivation to learn. The learner's creativity, higher order thinking, and natural curiosity all contribute to motivation to learn.

Intrinsic motivation is stimulated by tasks of optimal novelty and difficulty, relevant to personal interests, and providing for personal choice and control.

Principle 9: Effects of motivation on effort. Acquisition of complex knowledge and skills requires extended learner effort and guided practice. Without learners' motivation to learn, the willingness to exert this effort is unlikely without coercion.

A.1.3. Developmental and Social Factors

Principle 10: Developmental influence on learning. As individuals develop, they encounter different opportunities and experience different constraints for learning. Learning is most effective when differential development within and across physical, intellectual, emotional, and social domains is taken into account.

Principle 11: Social influences on learning. Learning is influenced by social interactions, interpersonal relations, and communication with others.

A.1.4. Individual Differences Factors

Principle 12: Individual differences in learning. Learners have different strategies, approaches, and capabilities for learning that are a function of prior experience and heredity.

Principle 13: Learning and diversity. Learning is most effective when differences in learners' linguistic, cultural, and social backgrounds are taken into account.

Principle 14: Standards and assessment. Setting appropriately high and challenging standards and assessing the learner and learning progress-including diagnostic, process, and outcome assessment-are integral parts of the learning process." (McCombs, 2000, p. 6).

APPENDIX B

B.1. Interview Questions

1. How long have you been working as a preschool teachers?
2. Which educational institution and department did you graduate from?
3. How many children are there in your school?
4. How many children are there in your classroom?
5. Which age group do you teach in the school?
6. There are some properties of current Turkish preschool curriculum. Which one(s) do you remember?
7. In Turkish preschool curriculum, it is emphasized that "Children's needs should be considered". What do you understand from this statement?
   - According to you, what can children's needs be?
8. According to you, which developmental domain should be supported mostly in child centered education? Why do you think so?
   - Which developmental domain do you support mostly in your classroom? Why?
9. According to you, how should physical environment of classroom be in child centered education? (Teacher-child ratio, Learning areas, Movement area, Temperature/lighting/safety, Decoration of walls, Materials/selection of materials)
   - How is physical environment of your classroom? Can you describe it?

   A. What criteria should be considered while arranging the classroom?
   - What did you consider while arranging your classroom?

10. A. What criteria should be considered while planning a child centered activity?
    - What do you consider while planning a child centered activity?

    B. What criteria should be considered while implementing a child centered activity?
    - What do you consider while implementing a child centered activity?

    C. How should time of the activity be managed in child-centered education?
    - How do you manage the time of the activity in your classroom?

D. What should the role of teacher be in child-centered activity?

- What is your role as a teacher in your classroom?

E. What should the role of children be in child-centered activity?

- What is the role of children in your classroom?

11. How should teacher-child relationship be in child-centered education?
    - How is your relationship with the children in your classroom?
12. How should classroom rules be established and communicated in child-centered education?
    - How did you establish and communicate classroom rules in your classroom?

A. What strategies should be used to prevent children's misbehaviors in child-centered education?

- What strategies do you establish and communicate classroom rules in your classroom?

B. What are the roles of reward and punishment in child-centered education?

- Do you use reward and punishment in your classroom? Can you explain how?

13. How should children be assessed in child-centered education?
    - How do you assess children in your classroom?

A. According to you, what is the importance of process in assessment?

- Do you consider the process while assessing children? How?

14. What should the role of parents be in child-centered education?
    - What is the role of parents in your classroom?
15. According to you, what is the child-centered education? Can you define it?
16. Are you teacher-centered or child-centered? Why or why not?
17. Do you have any other ideas on this subject?

APPENDIX C

C.1. Observation Protocol of the Study

Date:

Schools:

1. How many children are there in the classroom?
2. What is the age group of children in the classroom?
3. How is physical environment of the classroom?
   Adult-child ratio,
   Learning areas,
   Movement area,
   Temperature/lighting /safety,
   Walls, Materials
4. Which developmental domains were supported during the activities in the classroom?
5. Is there a printed daily plan in the classroom?
6. How is time of the activity managed in the classroom?
7. How is teacher-child relationship in the classroom?
8. What are the teacher's behavior management strategies in the classroom? (rewards, punishment, other strategies)
9. Which assessment techniques are used by teachers to assess children?
10. Are there parents in the classroom? Is there any parents' participation in the classroom?
11. Is there active participation of children to classroom activities?
12. Whether children's interests were considered by teachers during the application of daily plans?

APPENDIX D

D.1 Thematic codes of data

Demographic

OKUL ÖNCESİ PROGRAMININ ÖZELLİKLERİ

1) ÖZELLİKLER: a) çocuk merkezlidir (n=3) P4 S1, P5 S1, P15 S1
   b) Amaç kazanımlar önemlidir (n=2) P1 S1, P4 S1
   c) Aile katılımı esastır (n=2) P5 S1, P4 S1
   d) 36-72 aylık çocuklara yöneliktir (n=1) P2 S1
   e) Yaratıcılık ön plandadır (n=1) P15 S1
   f) Değerlendirme çok yönlüdür (n=1) P17 S1
2) ÖZELLİK OLMAYAN ama Çocuk merkezlilik ile ilgili
   a) Yaşlarına uygun (n=2) P1 S1, P17 S1
   b) Gelişime özelliklerine uygun (n=2) P18 S1, P20 S1
   c) ihtiyaçlarına uygun (n=2) P4 S1, P7 S1
   d) Aktif katılımı destekleyen (n=1) P11 S1
   e) İlgilerine uygun (n=1) P17 S1
   f) Farklı etkinlik türleri (n=1) P17 S1
3) HATIRLAMIYOR (n=8) P3 S1, P6 S1, P9 S1, P10 S1, P12 S1, P13 S1, P14 S1, P19 S1

Q1

Children needs	Gelişim alanlarının desteklenmesi (n=14)	P1 S1, P2 S1, P4 S1, P5 S1, P6 S1, P8 S1, P10 S1, P11 S1, P12 S1, P15 S1, P16 S1, P17 S1, P18 S1, P19 S1
	Yetersiz oldukları becerilerin desteklenmesi (n=5)	P1 S1, P2 S1, P7 S1, P9 S1, P19 S1
	Öz bakım (n=3)	P5 S1, P11 S1, P14 S1
	Oyun oynama (n=3)	P3 S2, P5 S1, P8 S1
	Bireysel farklılıklarının göz önünde bulundurulması (n=2)	P7 S1, P9 S1

Q2.

Developmental domains	Beliefs	Sosyal Duygusal Alan (n=14) P1 S1, **<u>P3 S2</u>**, **<u>P5 S1</u>**, P7 S1, P8 S1, P9 S1, P11 S1, P12 S1, P13 S1, P15 S2, **<u>P17 S1</u>**, **<u>P18 S1</u>**, P19 S1, P20 S1	Özgüven Eksikliği (n=6)	P1 S1, P8 S1, P11 S1, P13 S1, P15 S2, P18 S1
			Kendini ifade edebilme (n=5)	P1 S2, P7 S1, P13 S1, P17 S1, P20 S1
			Arkadaşlık kurma (n=2)	P7 S1, P8 S1
			Paylaşma (n=2)	P8 S1, P12 S1
			Veli beklentisi (n=1)	P8 S1
		Bilişsel Alan (n=8) P1 S2, P5 S2, P7 S1, P9 S1, P10 S1, P12 S1, P14 S1, P16 S1	Aile/Toplum beklentisi (n=2)	P5 S2, **<u>P9 S1</u>**
			Çocuğun ihtiyacı (n=1)	P10 S1
			Gelişim için temel alan (n=1)	P16 S1
		Özbakım (n=3) P1 S2, P12 S1, P14 S1		
		Psikomotor (n=3) P19 S2, P7 S1, P16 S1		
		Dil alanı (n=3) P4 S1		
		Hepsi (n=4) P12 S2, P2 S1, P11 S1, P16 S1		
	Practices	Sosyal/duygusal alan (n=14) P1 S2, P3 S2, P4 S1, P7 S2, P9 S1, P10 S1, P11 S1, P12 S1, P13 S1, P15 S1, P17 S1, P18 S1, P19 S1, P20 S1	Öykü/öykü kartlarıyla (n=3)	P19 S1, P18 S1, P4 S1
			Drama (n= 2)	P19 S2, P4 S1
			Oyun (n=1)	P18 S1
			Sorumluluk vererek	(n=1)
		Bilişsel Alan (n=3) P16 S1, P12 S1, P7 S2		
		Psikomotor alan (n=3) P8 S1, P2 S2, P19 S2	Sanat etkinlikleri (n=1)	P8 S1
		Özbakım alan (n=2) P1 S1, P12 S1		
		Dil Alanı (n=1) P4 S1		
		Hepsi (n=4) P16 S1, P13 S1, P6 S2, P5 S2	Yaratıcı oyun (n=1)	P6 S2

Q3

Physical environment

A) Characteristics of physical environment

	Codes	Beliefs	Practice
Adult child ratio	1/ Less than 10	P10 S2, P16 S1 (n=2)	
	1/10	P2 S2, P3 S3, P12 S2, P19 S2 (n=4)	
	1/15	**P12 S2-3**, P7 S2, P9 S2, P13 S2, P14 S2, P15 S3, P18 S2 (n=7)	
	1/16-19	P5 S3, P8 S2, **P17 S2 (**n=3)	P15 S1, P16 S1, P16 S1 (n=3)
	1/20	P20 S1 (n=1)	P1 S1, P2 S1, P3 S1, P12 S1, P13 S1, P19 S1 (n=6)
	1/21-25		P4 S1, P5 S1, P14 S1, P20 S1 P6 S1, P7 S2, P17 S1, P8 S1, P10 S2, P11 S2, P9 S2 (n=11)
Learning Areas	Olmalı / var	P2 S2, P5 S2, P7 S2, P8 S2, P9 P2, P11 S2, P14 S1, P16 S1, P17 S2, P18 S2, P19 S2 (n=11)	P18 S3, P19 S2, P20 S2 (n=3)
	Köşeler net ayrılmalı/ ayrılmamış	P13 S2, P15 S1 (n=2)	P13 S2, P15 S1 (n=2)
	Sınırlı sayıda/Belirli köşeler olmalı/var	**P10 S2**, P12 S2 (n=2)	P12 S2(n=1)
	Şart değil	**P3 S3,** P4 S2 (n=2)	
	Köşeler yeterli değil		P6 S2 (n=1)
	Değişken köşeler olmalı/ var	P5 S2, **P17 S3** (n=2)	**P10 S2**, P15 S3 (n=2)
	İlgi köşeleri YOK		P17 S2(n=1)
Movement area/ Class size	Geniş/ Yeterli hareket olmalı/var	P1 S2, P2 S2, P3 S3, P4 S2, P5 S3, P6 S2, P7 S2, P8 S2, P11 S2, P12 S2, P13 S2, P17 S2, P18 S2,P19 S2, P20 S1 (n=15)	P19 S2, P20 S2 (n=2)
	Hareket alanı yetersiz (kalabalık)		P1 S3, P2 S3, P3 S3,P4 S2, P5 S3,P7 S3, P9 S2, P11 S2,

				P12 S2, P13 S2, P17 S2, P18 S2, (n=12)
Security and Shelter	Güvenli olmalı		P20 S1, P4 S2, P7 S2, P12 S2 (n=4)	
	Aydınlatma uygun Olmalı		P1 S2, P12 S2 (n=2)	
	Isınma uygun Olmalı/uygun		P2 S2(n=1)	P20 S2 (n=1)
	Güvenlik uygun			P20 S2 (n=1)
	Karanlık			P20 S2 (n=1)
Decoration of walls	Çocukların çalışmaları sergilenmeli/Var		P5 S3, P9 S2, P10 S2, P11 S2, P12 S2, P17 S2 (n=6)	P9 S2, P10 S2, P12 S2, P19 S2 (n=4)
	Görsel materyaller olmalı		P7 S2, P8 S2, P13 S2, P15 S3 (n=4)	P20 S2 (n=1)
	Duvarlar dikkat dağıtmamalı		P4 S2, P15 S3, P16 S1 (n=3)	
	Açık renk duvarlar		P17 S2, P18 S2 (n=2)	
	İlgi çekici materyaller olmalı		P7 S2, P13 S2 (n=2)	
	Panolar çocuk boyunda olmalı/Değil		P12 S2 (n=1)	P12 S2 (n=1)
	Kullanmaya izin verilmiyor			P3 S3, **<u>P17 S2</u>** (n=2)
Materials and Furniture	Existing Materials and Furniture	Beliefs	Child sized olmalı(n=4)	P4 S2, P11 S2, P17 S2, P18 S2
			Yeterli sayıda olmalı (n=3)	P1 S2, P3 S3, P13 S2
			İlgi çekici olmalı(n=3)	P1 S2, P17 S2, P18 S2
			Çok amaçlı olmalı(n=2)	P11 S2, P17 S2
			Çocukların tek başına kullanabileceği şekilde olmalı(n=2)	P4 S2, P18 S2
			Yaş grubuna uygun olmalı(n=2)	P6 S2, P7 S2
			Minderler olmalı(n=2)	P4 S2, P17 S2
			Ahşap ve kaliteli olmalı(n=1)	P11 S2
			Zengin kütüphane(n=1)	P1 S3
			Bilgisayar ve projeksiyon(n=1)	P1 S3
		Practice	TV ve CD var, (n=1)	P1 S3
			Kütüphane zayıf(n=1)	P1 S3
			Materyaller yetersiz(n=1)	P3 S3
			Çok amaçlı materyal az (n=1)	P11 S2
			Ağır materyaller (n=1)	P12 S2

			Materyaller zengin (n=1)	P10 S2
	Selection of materials and Furniture	Beliefs	İlgi çekici olmasına (n=13)	P1 S3, P4 S2, P5 S3, P6 S2, P7 S3, P8 S2, P9 S2, P11 S2, P13 S2, P15 S3, P17 S3, P18 S3
			Ç. Yaş grubuna uygun olmasına (n=7)	P1 S3, P5 S3**, P6 S2**, P8 S2, P9 S2, P14 S2, P16 S1
			Çok amaçlı olmasına (n=7)	P2 S3, P3 S3, P11 S2, P15 S2, P17 S3, P18 S3, P19 S2,
			Güvenli olmasına (n=5)	P1 S3,P8 S2, p9 S2, P11 S2, P12 S2
			Yaratıcılığı desteklemesine (n=4)	P2 S3, P3 S3, P9 S2, P18 S3
			Çocuklar tarafından kolay/ tek başına kullanılabilmesine (n=4)	P6 S2, P10 S2, P17 S3, P20 S2
			Sağlıklı olmasına (n=3)	P1 S3, P11 S2, P17 S3
			Ahşap olmasına (n=2)	P1 S3, P17 S3
			Ç. İsteklerine göre (n=2)	P5 S3, P13 S2
			Ç. İhtiyaçlarına göre (n=2)	P3 S3, P7 S3
			Çocuklarla beraber seçilmeli (n=3)	P11 S2, P13 S2, **P17 S3**
			Dayanıklı olmasına (n=1)	P9 S2

B) Arrangment of physical envrionment

Beliefs	Çocuklarla birlikte (n=5)	P3 S4, P7 S3, P10 S2, P12 S3, P13 S3,
	Çocukların bireysel farklılıklarına göre (yaş, ilgi, yetenek, istek) (n=5)	P14 S2, P15 S3, P2 S3, P1 S3, P3 S4
	Köşelerin uygun ayrılmasına (Sesli-sessiz, Aydınlık) (n=3)	P6 S2, P11 S3, P17 S3,
	Esnek olmasına(n=3)	P1 S3, P17 S3, P18 S3,
	Çocukların kolay erişimine(n=3)	P3 S4, P7 S3, P9 S2,
	Geniş hareket alanı yaratmaya (n=1)	P18 S3,
	Kullanım sıklığına göre (n=1)	P7 S3,
	Bireysel ve grup etkinliklerine uygunluğuna (n=1)	P1 S3,
	Çocukların sayılarına (n=1)	P4 S2,
Practice	Çocukların rahat kullanımına/ulaşımına (n=6)	P4 S3, **P9 S2**, P11 S2, P14 S2, P20 S2, P1 S3
	İlgi çekici olmasına(n=3)	P1 S3, P9 S2, P10 S3,
	Esnek olmasına(n=3)	P10 S3, P12 S3, P19 S2,
	Köşelerin uygun ayrılmasına (Sesli-sessiz, aydınlık) (n=3)	P2 S3, **P5 S3**, P11 S2,
	Materyal/mobilya sayısına/çeşitliliğine (n=3)	P2 S3, P15 S3, P3 S4,
	Oyun/hareket alanını genişletmeye (n=2)	P4 S3, P5 S3,
	Günlük plana (n=2)	P5 S3, P18 S3,
	Öğretmen tarafından(n=2)	**P11 S2**, **P13 S3**,
	Çocuklarla birlikte düzenlemeye(n=1)	P20 S2,
	Çocukların güvenliğine(n=1)	**P4 S3**,
	Güneşten en iyi şekilde yararlanmaya	P4 S3,
	Kaynaştırma öğrencisine(n=1)	P5 S3,

Q 4

Activities	Plan	Belief	Çocukların ihtiyaçlarının göz önünde bulundurulmasına (n=15)	P1 S1, P2 S1, P3 S1, P4 S1, P5 S1, P7 S1, P9 S1, P11 S1, P12 S1, P13 S1, P16 S1, **P17 S1**, P18 S1, P19 S1, P20 S1
			Gelişim düzeyine/özelliklerine uygun olmasına (n=4)	P1 S4, P8 S2, P13 S3, P17 S3
			Çocuğun ilgi ve isteklerine uygun olmasına (n=3)	P3 S4, P7 S3, P13 S3
			Çocuğun yaşına (n=2)	P13 S3 , P17 S3
			İlgi çekici/eğlenceli olmasına (n=2)	P4 S3, P13 S3
			Çocuğun aktif katılımı(n=1)	P6 S3
			Grubun özelliklerine(n=1)	P17 S3
		Practice	Çocuğun aktif katılımı(n=4)	P6 S3, P10 S3, P11 S3, P17 S3
			Planın esnek olmasına(n=4)	P2 S3, P5 S4, P6 S3, P12 S3
			Bütün gelişim alanlarını desteklemesine (n=3)	P2 S3, P19 S3, P20 S2
			Eğlenceli/ilgi çekici olmasına (n=3)	P13 S3, P14 S2, **P4 S3**
			Open ended (n=2)	P5 S3, P11 S3
			Çocuğa farklı seçenekler sunulmasına (n=2)	P3 S5, P10 S3
			Scaffolding (n=2)	P11 S3, P17 S3
			Yaratıcılığı desteklemesine (n=2)	P11 S3, P20 S2
			Bireysel farklılıkları **P16 S2,** P17 S3 (n=2)	Çocuğun ilgi ve isteklerine **P3 S5-7**, P4 S3, P7 S3, P9 S3, P13 S3 (n=5)
				Çocuğun gelişim özelliklerine P8 S2, P13 S3, P18 S4 (n=3)
				Çocuğun ihtiyaçlarına/merakına göre P9 S2, P11 S3, P15 S4 (n=3)
				Çocuğun yaşına P3 S5, P13 S3 (n=2)
				Hazırbulunuşluğuna P18 S3 (n=1)
			Konuya(n=1)	P7 S3
			Sınıftaki materyallere (n=1)	P3 S5
	Implementation	Beliefs	Çocukların ihtiyaçlarının göz önünde bulundurulmasına (n=7)	P3 S1, P4 S1, **P5 S1**, P7 S1, P8 S1, P10 S1, P13 S1
			Çocuğun özgür olmasına (n=2)	P1 S4, P8 S2
			Open ended(n=1)	P5 S4
		Practice	Çocuğun aktif katılımı(n=5)	P6 S3, P10 S3, P11 S3, P17 S3, P20 S3
			Bireysel farklılıklara	Çocuğun ilgi/istekleri P7 S4, P8 S2, P12 S3 (n=3)
				Çocuğun gelişim özelliklerine P18 S4 (n=1)
				Hazırbulunuşluğuna P18 S3 (n=1)
			Çocuğun özgür olmasına (n=2)	P1 S4, P8 S2
			Öğretmenin açıklama yapmasına (n=2)	P1 S4, P17 S3

			Farklı grup etkinliklerine (bireysel, büyük, küçük) (n=2)		P2 S3, P15 S4
			İlgi çekici/eğlenceli (n=2)		P4 S3, P14 S2
			Yaratıcılığı desteklemesine (n=1)		P5 S4
			Çocuğun karar verme sürecine katılmasına (n=1)		P3 S5
			Farklı öğretim yöntemleri (n=1)		P16 S2
	Roles	Teacher's role	Beliefs	Rehber olmak (n=13)	P1 S4, P2 S4, P3 S5, P5 S4, P6 S3, **P8 S3, <u>P9 S3</u>**, P11 S3, P13 S3, P15 S4, P16 S2, P17 S3, P18 S4
				Çocuğu yönlendirmek (n=9) (sorularla, yönergeyle, ilgisine göre)	**<u>P3 S5</u>**,P5 S4, P8 S3, P9 S3, P11 S3, P14 S2, P15 S4, P18 S4, P19 S3,
				Scaffolding (destekleyici) (n=4)	P1 S4, P10 S3, P12 S3, P18 S4,
				Çocukları cesaretlendirmek (n=3)	P6 S3, P7 S4, P11 S3,
				Etkinliği planlamak/uygulamak (n=3)	P20 S3, P17 S3, P15 S4
				Çocuğa farklı seçenekler sunmak (n=2)	P1 S4, P17 S3
				Gözlem yapmak (n=2)	P15 S4, P17 S3,
				Öğretmek/ bilgi vermek (n=2)	P9 S3, P11 S3,
				Herkesin aktif katılımını sağlamak (n=1)	P4 S3
				Bazı şeyleri çocuğun yerine yapmak (n=1)	**<u>P1 S4,</u>**
			Practices	Çocuğu ödüllendirmek (n=6)	P1 S4, P4 S3, P10 S3, P12 S3, P13 S3, P17 S3,
				Çocukları motive etmek (n=4) P3 S5, P7 S4, P14 S2, P19 S3,	Çocukların ilgisini/dikkatini çekmek (n=4) P5 S4, P11 S3, P15 S4, P18 S4,
					Günlük hayatla bağlantı kurmak (n=2) P5 S4, P7 S4
					Etkinlikler arasında bağlantı kurmak (n=1) P17 S3,
				Çocukların ilgi/ihtiyaçlarına cevap vermek (n=3)	P2 S4, P3 S5, P15 S4
				Rehber olmak (n=4)	P2 S4, P8 S3, P8 S3, P18 S4
				Plan yapmak/uygulamak (n=2)	**<u>P5 S4</u>**, **<u>P20 S3</u>**
				Bilgiyi pekiştirmek (n=2)	P13 S3, P16 S2
				Aktif katılımı desteklemek	P3 S5, P5 S4

				(n=2)	
				Scaffolding (Desteklemek) (n=1)	P15 S4
				Çocukları cesaretlendirmek (n=1)	P15 S4
				Farklı yöntemler kullanmak (n=1)	P11 S3,
		Child's role	Beliefs	Aktif olmak (n=14)	P1 S4, P2 S4, P3 S5, P4 S3, P6 S3, P7 S4, P9 S3, P11 S3, P12 S3, P13 S3, P16 S2, **P17 S3**, P18 S4, P19 S3
				Etkinliğe karar vermek/ planlamak/yönlendirmek (n=5)	**P5 S4**, P6 S3, **P13 S3**-4, P18 S4, P20 S3
				Öğrenmek (n=4)	P1 S4, P7 S4, P9 S3, P10 S3
				Araştırmak/keşfetmek (n=3)	P3 S5, P11 S3, P16 S2
				Merak etmek/soru sormak (n=2)	P3 S5, P15 S4
				Eğlenmek (n=2)	P10 S3, P15 S4
				Özgür olmak (n=2)	P4 S3, P14 S2
			Practices	Aktif olmak (n=7)	P1 S4, P2 S4, P4 S3, P8 S3, P9 S3, P12 S3, P16 S2
				Özgür olmak (n=5)	P4 S3, P8 S3, P13 S3, P14 S2, P4 S3
				Etkinliğe karar vermek/ başlatmak/yönlendirmek (n=3)	P6 S4, **P15 S4-5**, P20 S3
				Araştırmak/gözlem yapmak (n=2)	P16 S2, P18 S4
				Merak etmek/soru sormak (n=1)	P3 S5
				Sorumluluk almak (n=1)	P20 S3
	Time management	Beliefs		Çocuğa bağlı olmalı (Dikkat ve istek, zevk alma, motivasyon, gelişim özellikleri ve düzeyleri) (n=11)	P2 S4, P3 S5, P4 S3, P5 S5, P6 S4, P7 S4, P11 S3, P12 S4, P13 S4, P17 S4, P18 S5
				Süre sınırlaması esnek olmalı (n=7)	P1 S5, P5 S5, P11 S3, P12 S4**, P13 S4**, P14 S2, **P17 S4**
				Makul/kısa süreli etkinlikler belirlenmeli (n=2)	P1 S5, P6 S4
				Öğretmen kontrolü olmalı (n=2)	P10 S4, P14 S2
				Süre sınırlı olmalı (n=1)	**P8 S3**
		Practices		Etkinliği sonra (sınıfta) tamamlama (n=10)	P2 S4, P3 S5, P4 S4, P6 S4, P10 S4, P11 S3, P12 S4, P13 S4, P18 S5, P19 S3
				Süreyi uzatma (n=9)	P2 S4, P3 S5, P10 S4, P11 S3, P12 S4, P14 S2, P16 S2, P17 S4, P18 S5
				Süre sınırlaması esnek (n=8)	P1 S5, P5 S5, P7 S5, P10 S4,P13 S4,P18 S5, P19 S3, P20 S3

			Çocuğa bağlı (n=8)	P6 S4, P7 S5, **P9 S3**, P10 S4, P11 S3, P12 S4, P18 S5
			Etkinliği evde tamamlama (n=4)	P4 S4, P5 S5, P6 S4, P13 S4
			Süreyle ilgili hatırlatmalar (n=3)	**P7 S5**, P13 S4, P20 S3
			Süre sınırlı (etk. devam etme yok) (n=1)	P8 S3

Q5

Relationship	Belief	Karşılıklı sevgi/saygı olmalı (n=8)	P1 S5, P4 S4, P5 S5, P7 S5, P10 S4, P11 S4, P13 S4-S5, P17 S4
		Arkadaşça bir ilişki olmalı (n=6)	P3 S6, P9 S4, P13 S4, P14 S2, P18 S5, P20 S4
		Öğretmen rehber olmalı (n=4)	P2 S5, P5 S5, P7 S5, P18 S5
		Öğretmen-çocuk kendini ifade edebilmeli (n=4)	P2 S5, P3 S6, P4 S4, P13 S5
		Öğretmen samimi olmalı (n=3)	P13 S5, **P15 S6**, P17 S4
		Öğretmen adil olmalı (n=2)	P3 S6, P15 S6
		Öğretmen rol model olmalı (n=2)	P7 S5, P15 S6
		Esnek olmalı (Çok katı değil) (n=2)	P7 S5, P8 S3,
		Öğretmen otorite olmalı (n=2)	**P5 S5**, **P17 S4**
	Practice	Öğretmen sağlıklı iletişim kurar (n=4)	P3 S6, P6 S5, P11 S4, P20 S4
		Öğretmen esnektir (Çok katı değil) (n=4)	P5 S5, P6 S5, P8 S3, P19 S3
		Çocuğun kendini özgürce ifade etmesi desteklenir (n=3)	P4 S4, P11 S4, P20 S4
		Arkadaşça/eğlenceli bir ilişki var (n=3)	P9 S4,P11 S4, P19 S3
		Öğretmen ve çocuklar birbirine saygı duyar (n=3)	P3 S6, P5 S5, P6 S5, P19 S3
		Öğretmen samimidir/ şefkatlidir (n=3)	P10 S4, P13 S5, P7 S5
		Öğretmen çocuklarla fiziksel kontak kurar (sarılam, opme, kucaklama)	P12 S4, P13 S5
		Çocuklar öğretmene güvenir (n=2)	P1 S5, P7 S5
		Öğretmen kurallıdır /Çocuk öğretmene sorarak hareket eder/yönlendirir (n=3)	**P2 S5**, P6 S5, P2 S5

Q6

Behavior management	Rules	Establishing	Beliefs	Çocuklarla birlikte oluşturulmalı (n=9)	P1 S6, P2 S5, P3 S7, P5 S6, P8 S4, P9 S4, P14 S3, P17 S5, P20 S4,
				Sene başında oluşturulmalı (n=3)	P1 S6, P14 S3, P17 S5,
				Problem/ihtiyaç durumunda oluşturulmalı(n=2)	P17 S5, P18 S6,
				Olumlu ve Kısa/net/anlaşılır cümlelerle(n=2)	P17 S5, P20 S4,
				Çocuğun yaşına uygun (n=1)	P18 S6,
				Esnek olarak(n=1)	P18 S6,
			Practices	Çocuklarla birlikte oluştururum (n=14)	P1 S6, P2 S5, P4 S4, P5 S6, P7 S5, P8 S4, P9 S4, P11 S4, P12 S4, P13 S5, P14 S3, P17 S5, P19 S4, P20 S4,
				Çocukların deneyiminden/ihtiyaçlarından/ rahatsızlıklarından yola çıkarak (n=8)	P1 S6, P2 S5, P4 S4, P7 S5, P10 S4, P11 S4, P15 S6, P17 S5,
				Sözleşme/anlaşma şeklinde (n=7)	P1 S6, P3 S7, P9 S4, P11 S4, P18 S6, P19 S4, P20 S4,
				Sene başında(n=6)	P4 S4, P6 S5, P11 S4, P13 S5, P14 S3, P18 S6,
				Çocukların yaşına uygun olarak (n=3)	**P11 S4**, P15 S6, P18 S6,
				Öğretmen tarafından (n=3)	**P6 S5**, **P16 S2**, P18 S6,
				Gerekçeleri, sonuçları/yaptırımları tartışılarak (n=5)	P4 S4, P10 S4, P13 S5, P11 S4,
		Communicating	Practices	Kural listesini/sözleşmeyi duvara/panoya asarak (n=7)	P1 S6, P3 S7, P4 S4, P5 S6, P9 S4, P10 S4, P19 S4,
				Kuralları sık sık hatırlatarak (n=5)	P3 S7, P12 S4, P18 S6, P19 S4, P20 S4
				Kurallara uyanı ödüllendirerek (Puan/çiçek/yıldız toplama/biriktirme) (n=4)	P1 S6, P2 S5, P14 S3, P16 S2,
				Resimlerle /hikayeyle(n=2)	P10 S4, **P11 S4**,
				Drama/oyun ile(n=2)	P4 S4, P5 S6
				Kurallar hakkında konuşarak (n=2)	P6 S5, P8 S4,
				Kurallara uymayanı cezalandırarak (n=2)	P1 S6, P8 S4,
	Strategies		Belief	Ödül-ceza verilmeli (n=2)	P2 S5, P19 S4,
				Çocukla/aile ile görüşmeli (n=1)	P4 S4,
				Görmezden gelme (n=1)	P20 S4,

			Davranışın nedenini bulma (n=1)			P20 S4
		Practices	Görüşmeler	Çocukla birebir görüşme (n=6)		P4 S4, P6 S5, P9 S4,P12 S5, P15 S6, P18 S6,
				Veli ile görüşme/ev ziyareti (n=4)		P4 S4, P11 S5, P12 S5, P15 S6,
				Uzmanla (n=1)		P11 S5,
			Ödüllendirme (yıldız, Tşk mektubu) (n=4)			P1 S6, P2 S5, P11 S5, P14 S3,
			Ceza (n=10)			P1 S6, P14 S3, P15 S6, P16 S3, P18 S6, P19 S4 P4 S4, P6 S6, P7 S6, P19 S4,
			Değişken		Çocuğa göre (n=2)	P6 S5, P11 S5,
					Davranışa göre (n=2)	P11 S5, P15 S6,
			Arkadaşlarına		Uyartma (n=3)	P10 S5, P11 S5, P20 S4,
					Dışlatma (n=1)	P1 S6
					Söz verdirme (n=1)	P9 S4,
					Karşı utandırma (n=1)	P3 S8,
			Görmezden gelme (n=3)			P3 S7, P16 S3, P20 S4,
			Empati kurdurma (n=3)			P6 S6, P15 S6, P20 S4,
			Davranışın nedenini araştırma (n=2)			P18 S6, P20 S4,
			Duruma uygun drama/öykü (n=1)			P13 S5,
	Rewards and punishment	Beliefs	Ödül olmalı (n=10)			P2 S6, P3 S8, P7 S6, P9 S4, P13 S5, **P14 S3**, P16 S3, P17 S5, P18 S6, P19 S4
			Olmamalı /gereksiz-faydasız (n=4)			P5 S6, **P11 S5**, P15 S6, P20 S4,
		Practices	Maddi ödüller (n=15)	Yıldız/sticker/madalya /gülen yüz alma/toplama (n=12)		P1 S7, P2 S6, P5 S6, P7 S6, P8 S4, P9 S4, P10 S5, P11 S5, P12 S5, P17 S5, P18 S7, P19 S4,
				Sınıf başkanı seçme (n=1)		P5 S6
				Aileye teşekkür mektubu (n=1)		P1 S7
				Extra oyun zamanı (n=1)		P11 S5,
			Duygusal/ sözel ödüller (n=11)	Teşekkür etme/tebrik etme/aferin (n=4)		P8 S4, P9 S4, P10 S5, P11 S5,
				Öpücük(n=2)		P3 S8, P6 S6,

					Sarılma(n=2)	P6 S6, P9 S4
					Alkış (n=2)	P10 S5, P11 S5,
					Gülümseme (n=1)	P3 S8
				Çok sık kullanıyorum(n=1)		P12 S5,
				Nadiren kullanıyorum(n=1)		P15 S6,
				Herkese dağıtıyorum (n=1)		**P18 S7**
		Punishment	Beliefs	Olmamalı /gereksiz-faydasız (n=8)		P3 S8, P5 S6, P6 S6, P7 S6, **P10 S5**, P11 S5, P15 S6, P20 S4,
				Kullanılmalı ama "ceza" denmemeli (n=3)		P2 S6, P14 S3, P16 S3,
				Çocuğa tercih gibi sunulmalı(n=1)		**P13 S6,**
			Practices	Ara ara kullanıyorum		P12 S5,
				Arkadaşlarına zarar verirlerse kullanıyorum		P12 S5,
				Etkinliğe isteksiz olduklarında kullanıyorum		P12 S5,
				Mahrum bırakma (n=10)		P1 S7, P2 S6, P3 S8, P4 S5, P6 S6, P7 S6, P9 S4, P11 S5, P16 S3, P17 S5, P18 S7,
				Sınıftan çıkarma		P1 S7, P3 S8,
				Çocuğa bağırma		**P11 S5**,
				Kullanıyorum ama farklı isimle (mola-düşünme)		P7 S6, P8 S4, P11 S5,

Q7

Assessment	Belief	Süreç odaklı değerlendirme önemlidir (n=10)	P3 S8, P6 S6, P8 S4, P9 S4, P11 S5, P13 S6, P16 S3, P18 S8, **P20 S5,** P4 S5,
		Bireysel/çocuğa göre değerlendirme olmalı (n=6)	P1 S7, **P4 S5**, P11 S5**, P13 S6**, P17 S5, P11 S6,
		Kazanım odaklı değerlendirme önemlidir (n=2)	P5 S6, P7 S6,
		Gözlemle değerlendirme yapılmalı (n=2)	P11 S6, P13 S6,
		Kazanım değerlendirme formları ve gelişim raporları gelişim sürecini değerlendirmek için yeterli değildir (n=3)	P9 S4, **P5 S7,** P7 S7,
		Değerlendirme konusunda yeterli değiliz (n=1)	**P11 S6**,
	Practice	Bireysel değerlendiriyorum/karşılaştırmıyorum (n=5)	P1 S7, P2 S6, P7 S6, P18 S8, P19 S4,
		Süreçle ilgili aileyi bilgilendiriyorum (n=3)	P1 S7, **P5 S6**, P17 S5,
		Çocuğu yaş özelliklerine göre değerlendiriyorum (n=1)	P18 S8,
		Sınıfların genel değerlendirilmesi yapılıyor (n=1)	P12 S6,
		Gözlem notları (n=15)	P1 S7, P3 S8, P4 S5, P5 S6-7, P6 S6, P8 S4, P11 S6, P12 S6, P13 S6, P15 S7, P16 S3, P17 S5, P18 S8, P19 S4, P20 S5
		Kazanım değerlendirme formu (n=14)	P2 S6, P3 S8, P6 S6, P7 S6, P8 S4, P9 S4, P11 S6, P12 S6, P13 S6, P14 S3, P15 S7, P17 S5, P18 S8, P19 S4,
		Gelişim raporu (n=10)	P2 S6, P3 S8, P4 S5, P5 S6, P8 S4, P11 S6, P12 S6, P13 S6, P18 S8, P19 S4,
		Portfolio/work samples (n=2)	P14 S3,P18 S8, P20 S5
		Ailelerin notları (ailelerle görüşme/ailelerin gözlem) n=2	P4 S5, P5 S6,

Q8

Role of parents	Beliefs	Eğitim sürecinde velinin rolü/aktif katılımı önemlidir (n=10)		P1 S7, P4 S5, **P7 S7**, P9 S5, P11 S6, P12 S6, P13 S6, P14 S3, P15 S8, P20 S5
		Veli desteği/işbirliği önemlidir (n=6)		P1 S7, P4 S5, P5 S7, P16 S3, P17 S5, P19 S4,
		Aile formlarla, ödev ve notlarla bilgilendirilmelidir (n=4)		P1 S7, P13 S6, P17 S5, P20 S5
		Okul ve ev arasında tutarlılık olmalıdır (n=3)		P1 S8, P4 S5, P11 S6,
		Çocuğun başarısı için aile katılımı önemlidir (n=2)		P15 S8, P18 S8,
		Çocuğun okulu benimsemesi/motivasyonu için aile katılımı gerekli (n=2)		P2 S7, P9 S5,
		Velinin öğretmenle empati kurması için aile katılımı önemli (n=2)		P3 S9, **P7 S7,**
		Ailenin aktif katılımı olmamalı(n=1)		**P17 S9,**
	Practices	Aile aktif olarak katılmaz/katılamaz (n=5)		P1 S8, P8 S5, P10 S6, P13 S6,P19 S4
		Velinin etkinlik dışında sınıfa çıkması yasak (n=3)		P3 S9, P6 S7,P7 S7,
		Veli istediğinde sınıfa gelebilir(n=2)		P12 S6, P15 S8,
		Okul aile tutarlılığı yok(n=1)		P6 S7,
		Aile katılımı var	Sanat etkinlikleri (n=13)	P2 S7, P3 S9, P4 S5, P5 S7, P6 S7, P7 S7, P10 S6, P11 S6, P12 S6, P16 S3, P17 S6, P18 S8, P20 S5
			Hikaye okuma (n=9)	P2 S7, P3 S9, P5 S7, P11 S6, P12 S6, P15 S8, P16 S3, P17 S6, P18 S8,
			Toplantılar/gorusmeler (n=4)	P4 S5, P8 S5, P13 S6, P19 S4,
			Mesleki bilgilendirme (n=4)	P9 S5, P17 S6, P18 S8, P20 S5
			Oyun etkinlikleri (n=3)	P6 S7, P7 S7, P15 S8,
			Deney (n=3)	P10 S6, P12 S6, P15 S8,
			Mutfak etk. (Ekmek/kek) (n=3)	P3 S9, P9 S5, P15 S8,
			Gözlem (n=2)	P7 S7, P15 S8,
			Etkinlik için malzeme sağlarlar(n=1)	P1 S8,

Q9-10

Child-centered education	Definition	Çocuğun bireysel farklılıklarına göre	İlgi ve becerisinin dikkate alındığı (n=6)	P1 S8, P7 S7, P8 S5, P9 S5, P16 S3-**S4**, P17 S6
			İhtiyaçlarının dikkate alındığı (n=6)	P4 S5, P9 S5, P11 S6, P13 S7, P16 S3, P19 S5
			İsteklerinin dikkate alındığı (n=4)	**P3 S9**, P4 S6, P17 S6, P19 S5,
			Gelişim öz. Dikkate alan (n=1)	P13 S7,
		Öğretmenin rehber olduğu (n=6)		P1 S8, P5 S7, P7 S7, P8 S5, P10 S7, P17 S6
		Çocuğun karar veren/yönlendiren olduğu (n=8)		**P5 S7**, P7 S7, P10 S7, P12 S7, P14 S4, P15 S8, P4 S5, P8 S5,
		Çocuk aktif öğretmen pasif (n=6)		P10 S7, P11 S6, P12 S7, **P15 S8**, P17 S6, P20 S5
		Çocuk merkezde/amaç/hitap eden(n=6)		P4 S5, P5 S7, P6 S8, P9 S5, P11 S6, P15 S8,
		Çocuğun her dilediğini yapması demek değil (n=5)		P2 S7, P3 S9, **P9 S5-6**, **P17 S3**, P18 S8,
		Çocuk özgür/sınır yok/plansız (n=3)		P8 S5**, P15 S8**, P19 S5,
	self-assessment	Çoğunlukla (mümkün olduğunca) CC (n=7)		P1 S8, P4 S6, P9 S5, P10 S7, P11 S7, P12 S7,P13 S7
		TC-CC dengede (n=5)		P5 S8, P7 S8, P8 S6, **P15 S9**, P17 S6
		Kesinlikle CC (n=3)	P2 S7, P19 S5, P20 S5	CC, TCdan daha başarılı P1 S8, P10 S7,
				TCda SY zor çünkü çocuğa hitap eden etkinlikler yok **P4 S6,** P12 S7,
				Çocuk daha zevk alıyor P10 S7
				Yaparak yaşayarak öğreniyor P10 S7
		Genellikle TC (n=4)	P3 S10, P14 S4, **P16 S3**, P18 S8,	CC, TC'dan daha çok emek/sabır ister P1 S10
				CC öğretmenin performansını düşürür P1 S11
				CC da Herşeyi çocuk yaparsa toparlamak zor **P12 S7**,
				CC da disiplini sağlamak zor P13 S7,
	self-practi	Planlarımı esnek tutarım (n=5)		P2 S8, P8 S6, P9 S5, P18 S8, P19 S5,
		Çocuğun bireysel farklılıklarını		P2 S7-8, P4 S6, P5 S8, P6 S8,

		(ilgi/ihtiyaç/ istek/yaş) dikkate alırım (n=4)		
		Çocukları bir etkinlik için motive ederim (n=3)		P1 S9, P4 S6, **P11 S6-7**,
		Rehberlik ederim(n=2)		P7 S8, P9 S5,
		Çocukların isteklerini ödül olarak kullanırım (n=2)		P1 S10, **P7 S8**,
		Oylama yapıyorum(n=2)		P12 S8, **P17 S6**
		Proje çalışmaları yaparım (n=1)		P5 S8,
		Çocuğa yaptırak öğretirim (n=1)		P9 S5,
		Herkese aynı etkinliği yaptırıyorum(n=1)		**P17 S6**
		Planı ben kendim yapıyorum (n=1)		P5 S8,
		Çocuğu bir etkinlik için zorlamam ikna ederim (n=1)		P1 S9,
		Yönlendiririm (n=1)		P11 S7,
		Okula hazırlık etkinliklerini mutlaka uygularım (n=1)		P18 S8,
	Factors that prevent teachers from being child-centered **P5 S8,**	Sınıf içi	Öğretmenin iş yükü/planları/schedule (n=6)	P1 S11, P5 S8, P7 S9, **P13 S3**, **P17 S6,** P18 S8,
			Sınıf mevcudu (n=4)	P2 S8, P4 S6, P5 S8, P7 S9, **P16 S3**,
			Öğretmenin eğitim/Bilgi eksiği (n=4)	**P8 S5**, P11 S7, **P15 S2**, P16 S4,
			Çocukların özellikleri (yaşı, backgroundu, motivasyonu) (n=3)	P7 S9, **P14 S4,** P12 S7,
		Sınıf dışı	Velinin beklentisi (n=8)	P2 S8, P3 S10, P5 S8, P7 S9, P12 S7, P15 S9, P17 S6, P19 S5,
			Okul idaresinin beklentileri/sınırlaması var (n=7)	P1 S10, **P3 S10**, P5 S8, P7 S9, P15 S9, **P17 S6,** P19 S5,
			Colleaguesların etkisi (n=3)	**P3 S10**, P7 S9, P17 S6,
			Okulun fiziksel koşulları (kamera) (n=2)	P3 S10, P5 S8,
			Amaç (çocukları ilkokula hazırlamak) ve Kazanımlar (n=2)	P18 S8, **P1 S10**,

APPENDIX E

CURRICULUM VITAE

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Surname, Name: Sak, Ramazan
Nationality: Turkish (TC)
Date and Place of Birth: 16 November 1978, Hakkari
Marital Status: Single
Phone: +90 312 210 36 58
Fax: +90 312 210 79 84
email: ramazansak06@gmail.com

EDUCATION

Degree	Institution	Year of Graduation
MS	Gazi University, Child Development and Education	2005
BS	Yüzüncü Yıl University, Early Childhood Education	2002
High School	Ticaret Vocational High School, Hakkari	1996

WORK EXPERIENCE

Year	Place	Enrollment
2007- present	Middle East Technical University, Ankara, Turkey Department of Elementary Education	Research Assistant
2006-2007	Gaziosmanpaşa University, Tokat, Turkey Department of Child Development and Education,	Lecturer
2002-2006	Ministry of National Education, Ankara, Turkey	Preschool Teacher

FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Advanced English, Kurdish

PUBLICATIONS

International

Articles

Sak, R., & Tezel-Şahin, F. (2012). Analysis of male preschool teachers' thoughts regarding their careers. *International Journal of Early Childhood Education, 18* (1), 73-93.

Sak, R., Şahin, İ. T., Tuncer, N., & Yerlikaya, İ. (2012). Pre-service preschool teachers' views related to qualitative and quantitative data collection based on their experience. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science, 2* (13), 158-165.

Conference Papers

Sak, R., Şahin, İ. T., & Şahin, B. K. (2012). Views of female preschool pre-service teachers about male teaching colleagues. *Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences, 47,* 586-593.

National

Articles

Sak, R. (2012). Erkekler ve okul öncesi öğretmenliği [Men and early childhood education]. *Eğitimci Öğretmen Dergisi, 10,* 50-53.

Books/Book Chapters

Tuncer, N., **Sak, R.,** & Şahin, İ. T. (2011). *Aile eğitimi [Parent education]*. Ankara: Vize yayıncılık.

HOBBIES

Movies, Hunting

APPENDIX F
TURKISH SUMMARY

TÜRK OKUL ÖNCESİ ÖĞRETMENLERİNİN ÇOCUK MERKEZLİ EĞİTİM HAKKINDAKİ İNANIŞ VE UYGULAMALARI

1 Giriş

Erken çocukluk eğitiminin çocuk merkezli olması gerektiği fikri yeni değildir (Moyer, 1987). Çocuk merkezli eğitim Jean-Jacques Rousseau'nun çalışmasına dayanmaktadır (Saracho & Spodek, 2009). Rousseau (1712-1778) çocukların eğitiminin doğal olması ve çocuğun ihtiyaçlarının göz önünde bulundurulması gerektiğine inanmaktadır (Rousseau, 1950; Rousseau, 2003). Geçmişten günümüze eğitimciler çocuk merkezli eğitimin önemini kabul etmelerine rağmen, çocuk merkezli eğitimin belirli bir tanımını yapmak güçtür. Çocuk merkezli eğitim farklı anlam ve kullanımlara sahiptir ve çocuk merkezli olarak kabul edilen bazı kavramlar (öğrenen merkezli, öğrenci merkezli, çocuk merkezli) birbirlerinin yerine kullanılmaktadır. Öğrenen merkezli kavramı bütün yaşlardaki öğrenenleri kapsarken, öğrenci merkezli kavramı öğrenenlerin öğrenci olduğu durumlarda kullanılmaktadır. Çocuk merkezlilik ise öğrenenlerin daha küçük çocuklar olduğu durumlarda kullanılmaktadır. (Ellis, 2004).

Chung ve Walsh (2000) erken çocukluk eğitimine ilişkin literatürü incelemiş ve çocuk merkezli eğitim kavramının 40'tan fazla tanımı bulunduğunu belirlemişlerdir. Bu tanımlardan bazıları çocukların kendi öğrenmelerine ilişkin kararlara katılmalarına odaklanırken, bazıları çocukların ilgileri, gelişim düzeyleri ve bireysel kapasitelerinin gelişimine odaklanmıştır. Moğol okul öncesi eğitimcileri çocuk merkezli eğitimi çocukların rahatça soru sorabildikleri, yeni şeyler keşfettikleri, düşüncelerini açıklayabildikleri, yaratıcı düşündükleri, kendi başlarına yeni şeyler denedikleri, risk aldıkları, bir şeyi nasıl yapacaklarına ilişkin etkin seçimler yaptıkları bir eğitim olarak tanımlamışlardır (Myagmar, 2010). Gürkan (2005) ise çocuk merkezliliği öğretmenlerin çocukların yaşını, bireysel özelliklerini, bireysel farklılıklarını, ilgilerini, ihtiyaçlarını ve yakın çevre özelliklerini göz önünde bulundurarak sağladıkları eğitim ortamı olarak tanımlamıştır. Griebling'e (2009)

göre çocukların nasıl öğrendikleri hakkındaki araştırma ve teorilere dayanan uygulamalar çocuk merkezli eğitimin odağını oluşturmaktadır. Çocukların bireysel ihtiyaçları, ilgileri ve çocuklar arasındaki bireysel farklılıklara saygı çocuk merkezli eğitimin temelidir (Kwon, 2004).

Çocuk merkezli programlar çocuğun olumlu sosyal davranışlar kazanmasına imkan sağlamalı ve beceri temelli programlardaki dışsal motivasyonun yerine daha çok içsel bir motivasyon sağlamalıdır (Reio, Maciolek & Weiss, 2002). Çocuk merkezli bir öğrenme çevresi demokratik bir atmosfere sahip olmalıdır. Bu atmosferde çocuğun bireysel özellikleri, kültürel özellikleri ve gelişimsel ihtiyaçları göz önünde bulundurulur (Dever & Falconer, 2007). Bunlara ek olarak, çocuğun milli değerlerinin yanında özel gereksinimli çocukların ihtiyaçları da çocuk merkezli sınıflarda önemlidir (Õun, Saar-ugaste & Niglas, 2008).

Okul öncesi öğretmenleri çocuk merkezli eğitimin uygulanmasında önemli bir faktördür çünkü çocuk merkezli bir programın uygulanmasında aktif role sahiptirler (Bulut, 2008). Öğretmenin çocuk merkezli eğitimde bir kolaylaştırıcı olarak merkezi ve önemli bir rolü vardır (Harmelen, 1998). Öğretmen gözlemlerine ve çocuklar ile olan etkileşimine dayanarak çocuklara gerekli olan araç-gereçleri sağlar ve etkinlikleri seçer (Niland, 2009). Bunun için öğretmen sınıfındaki çocukları iyi tanımalı ve bir etkinliği planlarken çocukların ihtiyaçlarını, tarzlarını ve tutumlarını göz önünde bulundurmalıdır (Kendrick & Labas, 2000). Öğretmen çocuklar ile işbirliğinde rehber ve destekleyici olmalıdır ki, çocuklar kendilerini öğrenme sürecinde güvende, mutlu ve başarılı hissetsinler (Pang & Richey, 2007).

Õun, Saar-ugaste and Niglas (2008) öğretmen merkezli eğitimden çocuk merkezli eğitime bir geçişin olmasına rağmen halen okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin birçok uygulamasının öğretmen merkezli olduğunu belirtmişlerdir. Örneğin, Kwon (2004) okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin inanışlarını, uygulamalarını ve Kore'nin çocuk merkezli milli programını gözlem, görüşme ve belge analizi yaparak incelemiş ve Kore'nin milli programının çocuk merkezli olmasına rağmen, öğretmenlerin inanışlarının ve uygulamalarının çocuk merkezli eğitim felsefesinden uzak olduğunu bulmuştur. İrlanda'da uygulanan program otuz yıldan fazla bir süredir çocuk merkezli olduğu halde, ülke genelinde yapılan araştırmalarda, öğretmenlerin

çoğunun sınıflarında geleneksel öğretmen merkezli uygulamalar uyguladıkları bulunmuştur (Murphy, 2004; 2006). Konu merkezli bir yaklaşımdan öğrenci merkezli bir yaklaşıma geçmek okul öncesi öğretmenleri için güç olabilir (Maynard & Chicken, 2010). Bu görüşler Lee ve Tseng'in (2008) "çocuğu eğitimin merkezine almak düşüncesi bütün öğretmenlerin söylemlerinde yer almasına rağmen, onların sınıflarında ne olduğunu görmek için gittiğinizde farklı bir resimle karşılaşacaksınız… Birçok sınıfta halen çocuklara Çince karakterler ve matematiksel ezberlerin yapıldığını göreceksiniz" (p.192) görüşleriyle desteklenmektedir.

Öğretmenler çocuk merkezli eğitim hakkındaki görüşlerini her zaman uygulamaya yansıtamamaktadırlar. Örneğin, Winsler ve Carlton (2003) çocuk merkezli olarak kendini tanımlayan öğretmenlerle görüşmeler yaptıktan sonra bu öğretmenlerin çocuklara ve diğer insanlara karşı davranış ve etkileşimlerini gözlemlemişlerdir. Yapılan araştırmanın sonunda, öğretmen uygulamalarının görüşmelerde öğretmenlerin belirttikleri çocuk merkezli eğitim prensiplerine uygun olmadığı bulunmuştur.

Bandura (1986) inanışların insanların hayatlarında aldıkları kararların en iyi göstergeleri olduğunu ve onların davranışlarını güçlü bir şekilde etkilediğini vurgulamıştır. Kagan (1992) inanışların öğretmenin kalbinde yer aldığını ve öğretmenlerin mesleki hayatlarında ve sınıf eğitiminin doğasında önemli bir role sahip olduğunu belirtmiştir. Bu yüzden öğretmen inanış ve uygulamaları öğretim sürecinin iki önemli boyutudur (Clark ve Peterson, 1986) ve öğretmenlerin sınıftaki uygulamaları onların inanışları tarafından etkilenir (Kowalski, Pretti-Frontczak & Johnson, 2001). Yani inanış ve uygulamalar arasında bir bağlantı bulunmaktadır (Hart, 2002). Bu yüzden öğretmenlerin inanış yapılarını anlamak öğretmenlerin mesleki hazırlanmalarını ve öğretim uygulamalarını geliştirmek için temeldir (Pajares, 1992).

En iyi ve uygun uygulamalara ilişkin güncel eğitim tartışmalarında, çocuk merkezlilik kaliteli eğitim programlarının ana özelliği olarak kabul edilmektedir (Lee ve Tseng, 2008). Günümüzde çocuk merkezlilik tüm dünyada birçok programın özelliklerindendir. Türk okul öncesi eğitim programında çocuk merkezlilik programın temel özelliklerinden biri olarak yer almaktadır (MEB, 2006).

2 Yöntem

Türk okul öncesi eğitim programında çocuk merkezlilik hem tanımlandığı hem de açıklanmaya çalışıldığı halde öğretmenler bu tanım ve açıklamaları farklı yorumlayabilir ve öğretmen uygulamaları arasında bir tutarsızlık söz konusu olabilir. Aynı program farklı sınıflarda öğretmenlerin belirli inanışlarına bağlı olarak farklı şekillerde uygulanabilir (Munby, 1983). Türk okul öncesi programının amaç ve kazanımlarına ortak bir çocuk merkezlilik algısı ve anlayışı ile ulaşılabilir. Okul öncesi eğitime katkıda bulunmak amacıyla bu çalışmada Türkiye'deki okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin çocuk merkezli eğitim hakkındaki inanış ve uygulamalarının belirlenmesi amaçlanmıştır. Bu çalışmada aşağıdaki araştırma sorularına cevap bulunmaya çalışılmıştır.

1. Türk okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin çocuk merkezli eğitim hakkındaki inanışları nelerdir?
2. Türk okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin çocuk merkezli eğitim hakkındaki kendi söylemlerine dayanan uygulamaları nelerdir?
3. Türk okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin çocuk merkezli eğitim hakkındaki gerçek uygulamaları nelerdir?
4. Türk okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin inanış ve uygulamaları arasında bir tutarlılık var mıdır?

    4.1. Türk okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin çocuk merkezli eğitim hakkındaki inanışları ve kendi söylemlerine dayanan uygulamaları arasında bir tutarlılık var mıdır?

    4.2. Türk okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin çocuk merkezli eğitim hakkındaki inanışları ve gerçek uygulamaları arasında bir tutarlılık var mıdır?

Bu çalışma nitel bir çalışma olup olgu bilimsel araştırma deseni ile Türk okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin çocuk merkezli eğitim hakkındaki inanış ve uygulamalarının belirlenmesine çalışılmıştır. Olgu bilimsel araştırmada katılımcıların dünya görüşlerini, onların yaşantılarını ve deneyimlerini nasıl anlamlandırdıklarını temel alarak ortaya koymaya çalışılır (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). Çalışmada Türk okul

öncesi öğretmenlerinin çocuk merkezli eğitim hakkındaki inanışları ve kendi söylemlerine dayanan uygulamalarını belirlemek için 20 okul öncesi öğretmeniyle görüşmeler yapılmıştır. Bu öğretmenlerin çocuk merkezli eğitime ilişkin gerçek uygulamalarını belirlemek için de aralarından beş öğretmeni sınıflarında gözlemlenmiş ve günlük planları ve çocukların yaptıkları çalışmalar incelenmiştir. Bu çalışmanın verileri Türk eğitim sisteminde yapılan zorunlu eğitime başlama yaşındaki değişikliklerden önce toplandığı için, bu çalışmada okul öncesi eğitim 3-6 yaş grubunu kapsamaktadır.

Çalışmanın verileri Ankara ilindeki Milli Eğitim Bakanlığına bağlı beş bağımsız anaokulundan toplanmıştır. 20 okul öncesi öğretmenin tamamı 1-5 yıl deneyime sahip öğretmenlerden seçilmiş olup mesleklerinin henüz ilk yıllarındaki öğretmenlerdir. Katılımcı öğretmenlerin sınıflarının mevcudu çoğunlukla 20 ve üzerindedir. Bu 20 öğretmen arasında gözlemlenmeyi gönüllük esasına dayalı olarak kabul eden beş öğretmenin hepsi lisans mezunu olup, hepsi de okul öncesi öğretmenliği bölümünden mezun olmuşlardır.

Bu çalışmada öğretmenlerin çocuk merkezli eğitime ilişkin inanış ve kendi söylemlerine dayanan uygulamalarını belirlemek için araştırmacı tarafından hazırlanan ve 17 sorudan oluşan bir soru formu kullanılmıştır. Ayrıca, öğretmenlerin gerçek uygulamalarını belirlemek amacıyla yine araştırmacı tarafından hazırlanan bir gözlem formu kullanılmış ve öğretmenlerin günlük planları ile çocukların yapmış oldukları çalışmalar incelenmiştir. Verilerin analizine başlanmadan önce ses kayıtları deşifre edilmiştir. Daha sonra, tüm görüşmeler iki araştırmacı tarafından ayrı ayrı birkaç kez okunmuştur. Verilerin analizi için, kelime tekrarı tekniği kullanılmıştır (Bernard ve Ryan, 2010). Bu teknikte, araştırmacılar, ayrı ayrı çalışarak görüşmelerdeki özgün ifadeleri listelemişlerdir. Özgün kavramlar listelenmiş ve ardından da ne kadar sıklıkla kullanıldıkları belirlenmiştir. Daha sonra çıkarılan kodlar ortak başlıklar altında toplanmıştır. En son aşamada da sekiz ana tema ve bunların bazılarına ait alt temalar belirlenmiştir.

Bir araştırmanın geçerlilik ve güvenirlik konuları çok önemlidir. Lincoln ve Guba (1985) güvenirlik kavramını nitel çalışmalar için kullanmayı tercih etmişlerdir. Bu çalışmada çalışmanın güvenirliği için farklı yöntemler kullanılmıştır. Veri

toplama sürecinden önce araştırmacı ve ikinci bir gözlemci sınıfın ortamını öğrenmek ve ortama uyum sağlamak için bir süre sınıfta bulunmuşlardır. Çalışmanın verisi üç farklı kaynaktan oluşmaktadır. Yani araştırmacı hem katılımcılar ile görüşmeler yapmış, hem onları sınıflarında gözlemlemiş, hem de belgelerini incelemiştir. Son olarak, araştırmacı görüşme kayıtlarını deşifre ettikten sonra katılımcıya tekrar göndererek cevapları hakkında bir daha düşünmesi, eklemek istediği bir şey olup olmadığını sormuştur. Bu çalışmada güvenirlik için veri analiz sürecinde ikinci bir araştırmacı bulunmuş ve çıkarılan kodlar karşılaştırılarak ne kadar uyumlu oldukları hesaplanmıştır.

Bu çalışmada bazı sınırlılıklar bulunmaktadır. Görüşme yapılan katılımcı sayısının 20 olması ve gözlem yapılan katılımcı sayısının beş olması çalışma için bir sınırlılık olarak kabul edilebilir. Verinin beş bağımsız anaokulundan toplanmış olması da bir diğer sınırlılık olarak görülebilir. Ayrıca, verinin tamamının devlet okullarından toplanmış, hiç özel okul barındırmaması da bir sınırlılık olarak görülebilir. Çalışmanın katılımcıları 1-5 yıl deneyime sahip öğretmenlerden oluştuğu için deneyimli öğretmenlerin çalışmada yer almaması da bir diğer sınırlılık olarak kabul edilebilir. Çalışmada sadece lisans mezunlarının yer alması, lise ve yüksek okul mezunlarının çalışmada yer almaması da bir sınırlılık olarak görülebilir. Son olarak bütün katılımcıların bayan olması da bir sınırlılık olarak düşünülebilir.

3 Bulgular ve Tartışma

Bu çalışmada okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin inanış ve uygulamaları, Amerika'daki *Küçük Çocukların Eğitimi Ulusal Derneği'nin* (National Association for the Education of Young Children-NAEYC) onay kriterleri göz önünde bulundurularak değerlendirilmeye çalışılmıştır. Yapılan veri analizleri sonucunda sekiz ana tema ve onlara ait alt temalar belirlenmiştir. Bunlar:

1. Çocukların ihtiyaçları ve gelişim alanları
    1.1. Çocukların ihtiyaçları
    1.2. Çocukların gelişim alanları
2. Sınıfın fiziksel çevresi

2.1. Sınıfın fiziksel özellikleri
    2.1.1. Öğretmen-çocuk oranı
    2.1.2. Öğrenme alanları
    2.1.3. Hareket alanı/sınıf büyüklüğü
    2.1.4. Güvenlik
    2.1.5. Duvarların düzenlenmesi
    2.1.6. Materyaller ve mobilya
2.2. Fiziksel çevrenin düzenlenmesi

3. Etkinlikler
    3.1. Etkinliklerin planlanması
    3.2. Etkinliklerin uygulanması
    3.3. Roller
        3.3.1. Öğretmenlerin rolleri
        3.3.2. Çocukların rolleri
    3.4. Zaman yönetimi
4. İlişkiler
5. Davranış yönetimi
    5.1. Kurallar
    5.2. Stratejiler
    5.3. Ödül
    5.4. Ceza
6. Değerlendirme
7. Anne-baba katılımı
8. Çocuk merkezli eğitim
    8.1. Çocuk merkezli eğitimin özellikleri
    8.2. Çocuk merkezli olmayı engelleyen faktörler

1.1 Türk okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin çocuk merkezli eğitim hakkındaki inanışları

Okul öncesi öğretmenleriyle çocuk merkezli eğitim hakkındaki inanışlarını belirlemek amacıyla yapılan görüşmeler sonucunda, okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin bazı

inanışlarının çocuk merkezli eğitime uygun, bazılarının kısmen uygun olduğu, bazılarının ise uygun olmadığı görülmüştür.

Okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin ilişkiler, anne-baba katılımı, etkinliklerin uygulanması, öğretmenin rolü, çocuğun rolü, zaman yönetimi, öğrenme alanları, duvarların ve fiziksel çevrenin düzenlenmesine ilişkin inanışları çocuk merkezli eğitime uygun olarak nitelendirilmiştir. Öğretmenlerin materyaller ve mobilya, davranış yönetimi, çocuk merkezliliğin özellikleri ve etkinliklerin planlanmasına ilişkin inanışları çocuk merkezli eğitime kısmen uygun olarak değerlendirilmiştir. Çalışmaya katılan okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin gelişim alanlarına ve öğretmen-çocuk oranına ilişkin inanışları ise çocuk merkezli eğitime uygun bulunmamıştır.

Literatürde çocuk merkezli eğitimde çocukların bütün gelişim alanlarının desteklenmesi gerektiği vurgulansa da, (Kochhar-Bryant & Heishman, 2010) bu çalışmaya katılan okul öncesi öğretmenleri genellikle bir gelişim alanına (sosyal-duygusal, bilişsel ya da psikomotor alan gibi) vurgu yapmışlardır. Bu bulgu, Kowalski, Pretti-Frontczak ve Johnson'ın (2001) ve Lee'nin (2006) çalışmaları ile tutarlılık göstermektedir. Ayrıca, bu çalışmadaki öğretmenler özellikle sosyal-duygusal alana odaklanmışlardır ki; bu durumun da veli beklentileriyle ilişkili olduğu düşünülmektedir (Şahin, Sak & Şahin, 2013).

Okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin öğrenme alanlarına ve duvarların düzenlenmesine ilişkin inanışlarının çocuk merkezli eğitime uygun olmasının, katılımcı öğretmenlerin mesleki kıdemleri ile ilişkili olduğu düşünülmektedir. Katılımcılar yeni mezun olmuş öğretmenlerdir ve mesleki deneyimleri 1-5 yıl arasında değişmektedir. Bu nedenle de, lisans eğitimleri süresince Türk okul öncesi eğitim programı ve bu programın özelliklerine uygun olarak çocuk merkezli eğitim konusunda bir farkındalık edinmiş olmaları mümkündür.

Okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin hareket alanı/sınıf büyüklüğüne ilişkin inanışları çocuk merkezli eğitime uygunluk açısından değerlendirilmek için yeterince açık ve anlaşılır görülmemiştir. Öğretmenler, sınıfın *geniş* ve *yeterli* alanının olması gerektiği gibi ifadeler kullanmışlardır. Bu ifadeler göreceli olabileceğinden bir değerlendirme yapmak için yeterli oldukları düşünülmemektedir.

Okul öncesi öğretmenleri, fiziksel çevrenin düzenlenmesine ilişkin, çocuk merkezli eğitime uygun inanışlar belirtmişlerdir. Örneğin öğretmenler, çocukların materyallere kolay ulaşmaları için uygun düzenleme yapılması, öğrenme alanlarının birbirinden uygun bir şekilde ayrılması, sınıfta, çocuklara ilginç gelen materyallerin bulunması ve materyal ve mobilyalarda çeşitliliğinin sağlanması gerektiğini belirtmişlerdir (NAEYC, 2011).

Katılımcı öğretmenlerin etkinlikler hakkındaki inanışları, çocuk merkezli görünmekle beraber, çocuk merkezli eğitimle ilgili bazı önemli noktaların vurgulanmadığı göz ardı edilmemelidir. Örneğin, NAEYC (2011), gün içerisinde hem sınıf hem de bahçe etkinliklerinin uygulanması gerektiğini vurgulamaktadır. Fakat katılımcı öğretmenlerden hiçbiri bahçe etkinliklerinin gerekliliğini vurgulamamıştır. Benzer bir sonuç olarak, Göl-Güven (2009) de çalışmasında, Türk okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin günlük planlarında bahçe etkinliklerinin yer almasına rağmen, gün içerisinde bu etkinliklerin uygulanmadığını belirlemiştir. Katılımcı öğretmenlerin mesleki kıdemlerinin 1-5 yıl aralığında olması ve üniversitelerden yeni mezun olmuş olmalarından dolayı çocuk merkezli eğitime ilişkin bilgi sahibi olmalarının etkinliklerde çocuğun rolüne ilişkin inanışlarının çocuk merkezli eğitime uygun olmasında etkili rol oynadığı düşünülmüştür.

Çalışmaya katılan okul öncesi öğretmenleri, öğretmen ve çocuklar arasında, güvenli bir atmosferde karşılıklı sevgi ve saygıya dayalı bir ilişkinin olması gerektiğini belirtmişlerdir. Öğretmenlerin bu konudaki inanışları, NAEYC'nin (2011) kriterleriyle de örtüşmektedir. Okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin küçük çocuklar ile çalışma isteklerini etkileyen en önemli faktörlerden birinin çocukları sevmeleri (Özsoy, Özsoy, Özkara ve Memiş, 2010) olduğu düşünüldüğünde de, öğretmenlerin bu konudaki inanışları anlaşılabilmektedir. Katılımcı öğretmenlerin, davranış yönetimiyle ilgili olarak, sınıf kurallarını çocuklar ile birlikte oluşturma konusundaki inanışları çocuk merkezli eğitime uygun iken, ödül ve ceza yöntemlerini kullanmalarının çocuk merkezli eğitime uygun olmadığı düşünülmektedir.

1.2 Okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin çocuk merkezli eğitim hakkındaki kendi söylemlerine dayanan uygulamaları

Okul öncesi öğretmenleriyle çocuk merkezli eğitim hakkındaki kendi söylemlerine dayanan uygulamalarını belirlemek amacıyla yapılan görüşmeler sonucunda, okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin kendi söylemlerine dayanan bazı uygulamalarının çocuk merkezli eğitime uygun, bazılarının kısmen uygun, bazılarının da uygun olmadığı görülmüştür. Okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin ilişkiler, öğrenme alanları, duvarlar, etkinliklerin planlanması, etkinliklerin uygulanması ve çocuğun rolüne ilişkin kendi söylemlerine dayanan uygulamalarının çocuk merkezli eğitime uygun olduğu bulunmuştur.

Okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin değerlendirme, anne-baba katılımı, öğretmenin rolü, zaman yönetimi, davranış yönetimi, materyal ve mobilyalar, fiziksel çevrenin düzenlenmesi, çocuk merkezliliğin özelliklerine ilişkin kendi söylemlerine dayanan uygulamaları kısmen çocuk merkezli eğitime uygun olarak değerlendirilmiştir. Okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin gelişim alanları, öğretmen-çocuk oranı ve hareket alanı/sınıf büyüklüğüne ilişkin kendi söylemlerine dayanan uygulamalarının ise çocuk merkezli eğitime uygun olmadığı görülmüştür.

Okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin öğretmen-çocuk oranına ilişkin kendi söylemlerine dayanan uygulamalarının çocuk merkezli eğitime uygun olmamasının Türkiye'deki sınıf mevcutlarıyla ilgili olduğu düşünülmektedir. Türkiye'deki devlet okullarında bir sınıfta iki öğretmen veya 25 çocuktan az sınıf mevcudu bulmak oldukça güçtür (Göl-Güven, 2009; Temel, Akın, Acar Vaizoğlu, Kara, Kara, Halas et al., 2006).

Okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin materyal ve mobilyalara ilişkin kendi söylemlerine dayanan uygulamaları kısmen çocuk merkezli eğitime uygun olarak kabul edilmektedir çünkü öğretmenler NAEYC'nin (2011) onay koşullarında belirtilenlerin bazılarını kendi uygulamalarıyla ilişkili olarak belirtmemişlerdir. Örneğin öğretmenler sınıflarında kum ve su bulunduğunu belirtmemişlerdir.

Okul öncesi öğretmenlerin büyük çoğunluğu katı ve sert olmadıklarını belirtmelerine rağmen bazı öğretmenler sınıflarında çocukların onlardan izin almaları gerektiğini belirtmişlerdir. Bu durum bazı katılımcı öğretmenlerin sınıflarında bir

otorite sahibi olmak istediklerinden (Şahin, Erden ve Sak, 2011) ve izin verme aslında onların otoritelerinin bir göstergesi olduğundan bu tür uygulamalara gittikleri düşünülmektedir.

Okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin büyük çoğunluğu sınıf kurallarını çocuklar ile birlikte belirlediklerini belirtmişlerdir. Bu bulgu Pala (2005) ve Akar, Tantekin-Erden, Tor ve Şahin (2010) tarafından yapılan çalışmalar ile benzerlik göstermektedir.

Katılımcı öğretmenlerin büyük çoğunluğu anne-babaların sınıflarında sanat, hikâye okuma, oyun, pişirme ve mesleğini tanıtma gibi bazı etkinliklere katıldıklarını belirtmelerine rağmen bazı öğretmenlerin sınıflarında da anne-babalar sadece aktivite için gelmekte ve yeterince ilgilenmemektedirler. NAEYC'nin (2011) kriterleri düşünüldüğünde anne-babanın sınıf içi etkinliklere katılımının önemi vurgulanırken, bazı öğretmenlerin sınırlı olarak katılmalarının çocuk merkezli eğitime uygun olmadığı düşünülmektedir.

Okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin bazıları kendilerini kesinlikle çocuk merkezli olarak görürken, bazıları genelde çocuk merkezli, bazıları hem öğretmen merkezli hem de çocuk merkezli, bazıları da öğretmen merkezli olarak tanımlamışlardır. Kendilerini kesinlikle çocuk merkezli olarak değerlendiren öğretmenlerin çocuk merkezli eğitimin belirli olumlu özelliklerinden dolayı kendilerini böyle değerlendirdikleri düşünülmektedir. Bu öğretmenler çocuk merkezli eğitimin öğretmen merkezli eğitimden daha başarılı olduğu ve çocukların çocuk merkezli eğitimde daha mutlu olduklarına inandıkları bulunmuştur. Öğretmenlerin bu inanışları Cougling'in (1996) çalışmasıyla da desteklenmektedir. Kendilerini genelde çocuk merkezli olarak tanımlayan öğretmenler planlarının esnek olmasından ve çocukların bireysel farklılıklarını ilgilerini, ihtiyaçlarını, yaşlarını, hazır bulunuşluklarını göz önünde bulundurmalarından ve de çocukların isteklerini oylama yoluyla etkinliklere karar vermelerinden dolayı kendilerini genelde çocuk merkezli olarak tanımladıkları belirlenmiştir. Kendilerini hem öğretmen merkezli hem de öğrenci merkezli olarak değerlendiren öğretmenlerin bu değerlendirmeleri Kaya ve Güngör Aytar (2012) tarafından yapılan araştırma ile benzerlik göstermektedir. Söz konusu araştırmanın katılımcılarından biri "Ben öğrenci merkezliyim ancak benim

öğretmen merkezli uygulamalarım da bulunmaktadır. Okul müdürünün beklentileri ve toplantılar gibi okula ait iş yükünün çokluğundan dolayı öğretmen merkezli uygulamalar da yapmaktayım" demiştir (Kaya ve Güngör Aytar, 2012, p.66). Kendilerini öğretmen merkezli olarak değerlendiren öğretmenler çocuk merkezli eğitimde öğretmenin daha sabırlı olması gerektiği, her çocuğun dikkatini çekmek için daha fazla çaba harcayacağı gibi nedenlerden dolayı öğretmen merkezli olduklarını belirtmişlerdir. Ayrıca bu öğretmenler, eğer sınıfta her çocuk istediğini yaparsa sınıfta bir karmaşa ve disiplin sorunu olacağını belirtmişlerdir.

Katılımcı öğretmenler yoğun iş yüklerinin olmasını, çocuk merkezli eğitim hakkındaki bilgi ve deneyim eksikliklerinin olmasını ve kalabalık sınıf mevcudunun olmasını onların çocuk merkezli olmaları önündeki engeller olarak belirtmişlerdir. Öğretmenlerin bu nedenleri başka araştırmacılar tarafından da desteklenmektedir. Güven (2008) kalabalık sınıf mevcudunun programı uygulamada önemli bir engel olduğunu belirtmiştir. Brading'in (2003) çalışmasındaki öğretmenler devlet okullarında çocuk merkezli bir programın uygulanmasının güç olduğunu belirtmişlerdir. Murphy'nin (2004) çalışmasındaki öğretmenler kalabalık sınıf mevcudunu, materyal eksikliğini ve yetersiz öğretmen eğitimini öğretmen merkezlilik için sebepler olarak belirtmişlerdir. Türk okul öncesi eğitim programı çocuk merkezli olduğu halde bazı okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin bazı uygulamaları halen öğretmen merkezlidir. Bu durum İrlanda'daki durumla benzerlik göstermektedir çünkü İrlanda'nın programı da çocuk merkezli olduğu halde Murphy (2004) öğretmenlerin öğretmen merkezli uygulamaları olduğunu bulmuştur.

1.3 Okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin inanış ve kendi söylemlerine dayanan uygulamaları arasındaki tutarlılık

Okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin gelişim alanları, ilişkiler, anne-baba katılımı, öğrenme alanları, duvarlar, etkinliklerin planlanması, öğretmenin rolü ve çocuğun rolüne ilişkin inanış ve kendi söylemlerine dayanan uygulamaları arasında tutarlılık olduğu görülmüştür. Okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin davranış yönetimi, materyal ve mobilya, sınıfın düzenlenmesi, değerlendirme ve çocuk merkezliliğin özelliklerine ilişkin inanış ve kendi söylemlerine dayanan uygulamaları arasında kısmen bir

tutarlılık olduğu bulunmuştur. Okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin öğretmen-çocuk oranı, hareket alanı/sınıf büyüklüğü, etkinliklerin uygulanması ve zaman yönetimine ilişkin inanış ve kendi söylemlerine dayanan uygulamaları arasında bir tutarsızlık olduğu görülmüştür. Çalışmadaki öğretmenlerin çoğunluğu sosyal-duygusal gelişim alanının desteklenmesi gerektiği ve kendi sınıflarında da bu gelişim alanını desteklediklerini belirtmeleri başlangıçta tutarlılık bağlamında olumlu bir durum gibi algılansa da aslında sadece bir gelişim alanın desteklenmesi çocuk merkezli eğitim felsefesiyle örtüşmemektedir.

Okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin öğretmen-çocuk oranına ilişkin inanış ve kendi söylemlerine dayanan uygulamalarının tutarsız olmasında öğretmenlerin sınıflarındaki çocuk sayısını belirlemede bir insiyatiflerinin olmamasının etkili olduğu düşünülmektedir. Özelliklede Türk hükümetinin okul öncesi dönemdeki okullaşma oranını arttırmaya yönelik çalışmaları sınıf mevcudunun yüksek olmasının bir diğer sebebi olabilir (Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Resmi Gazete, 2006).

Okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin etkinliklerin planlanmasına ilişkin inanış ve kendi söylemlerine dayanan uygulamalarının tutarlı olmasında planlama sürecinin doğrudan öğretmenin kendisiyle ilgili bir durum olmasının etkili olduğu düşünülmektedir. Okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin öğretmenin rolüne ilişkin inanış ve kendi söylemlerine dayanan uygulamaları çoğunlukla tutarlı olarak görülmüştür. Öğretmenlerin ödüllendirmeyi bir öğretmen görevi olarak görmeleri dışında, tutarlılık ile ilgili bir problem görülmemiştir.

Katılımcı öğretmenlerin günlük planlarında yer alan bütün etkinlikleri uygulama konusunda endişelenmelerinin zaman yönetimine ilişkin inanış ve kendi söylemlerine dayanan uygulamaları arasında tutarsızlığa sebep olduğu düşünülmüştür.

Okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin ilişkiler hakkındaki inanış ve kendi söylemlerine dayanan uygulamaları arasında bir tutarlılık bulunması öğretmenlerin genç öğretmenler olmalarına bağlı olarak kendi sınıflarında çocukları bir iş ortağı olarak görebildikleriyle açıklanabilir. Bu bulgu Lee ve Tseng (2008) tarafından yapılan çalışmadaki bir katılımcının söyledikleriyle de örtüşmektedir. Lee'nin çalışmasındaki en genç öğretmen " Ben kendimi çocuklarımla bir iş ortağı gibi görüyorum ancak

çalıştığım okuldaki bazı yaşlı öğretmenler bu şekilde kendilerini rahat hissetmiyorlar" demiştir (Lee ve Tseng, 2008; p.192).

Katılımcı öğretmenlerin kuralların oluşturulması ve ödül hakkındaki inanış ve kendi söylemlerine dayanan uygulamaları birbirleriyle tutarlı iken ceza konusunda tutarlı olmadıkları görülmüştür. Öğretmenlerin büyük çoğunluğu mola denilen çocuğu etkinlikten bir süreliğine çıkarmayı ceza olarak kullanmaktadır. Bu bulgu Akar, Tantekin-Erden, Tor ve Şahin (2010) tarafından yapılan çalışmayla benzerlik göstermektedir. Onların çalışmasında da katılımcı öğretmenlerin cezayı gereksiz olarak gördükleri halde mola vermeyi çok fazla kullandıkları bulunmuştur.

Okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin çocukları bireysel olarak değerlendirme ve gözlem tekniğini kullanmaya ilişkin inanış ve kendi söylemlerine dayanan uygulamaları tutarlılık göstermektedir. Ancak amaçlara ve gelişim raporlarına dayanan değerlendirme formları çocuğun gelişim sürecine odaklanmadığından dolayı, çocuk merkezli eğitime uygun görünmezken, öğretmenler genelde bu formları kullandıklarını belirtmişlerdir. Bu tutarsızlığın sebebi Milli Eğitim Bakanlığının (MEB, 2006) öğretmenlerden beklentileriyle ilişkili olduğu düşünülmektedir.

Okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin anne-baba katılımına ilişkin inanış ve kendi söylemlerine dayanan uygulamalarının tutarlı olması, Türk okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin kaliteli bir okul öncesi eğitimin sağlanmasında öğretmen ve anne-baba arasında güçlü bir ilişkinin bulunması gerektiği (Mbugua, 2009) konusunda farkındalık sahibi olmalarıyla ilişkili olduğu düşünülmektedir.

1.4 Beş okul öncesi öğretmeninin inanış, kendi söylemlerine dayanan uygulamaları ve gerçek uygulamaları arasındaki tutarlılık

Okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin gelişim alanları, öğrenme alanları ve duvarlar hakkındaki inanış, kendi söylemlerine dayanan uygulamaları ve gerçek uygulamaları arasında tutarlılık olduğu görülmüştür. Okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin öğretmen-çocuk oranı, güvenlik, etkinliklerin planlanması ve davranış yönetimine ilişkin inanış, kendi söylemlerine dayanan uygulamaları ve gerçek uygulamaları arasında kısmen tutarlılık olduğu bulunmuştur. Okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin hareket alanı/sınıf

büyüklüğü, materyal ve mobilyalar, sınıfın düzenlenmesi, etkinliklerin uygulanması, öğretmenin rolü, çocuğun rolü, zaman yönetimi, ilişkiler, değerlendirme, anne-baba katılımı ve çocuk merkezli eğitime ilişkin inanış, kendi söylemlerine dayanan uygulamaları ve gerçek uygulamaları arasında bir tutarsızlık olduğu bulunmuştur.

Okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin desteklenmesi gereken gelişim alanlarına ilişkin inanış, kendi söylemlerine dayanan uygulamaları ve gerçek uygulamaları arasında bir tutarlılık bulunmuştur. Beş katılımcı öğretmen çoğunlukla sosyal-duygusal alanı vurgulamışlardır. Bu tutarlılıkta öğretmenlerin etkinlikleri planlama aşamasında kendi insiyatiflerini kullanabilmelerinin yani kendi inanışlarına uygun etkinlikleri planlayabilmelerinin etkili olduğu düşünülmektedir. Ayrıca, anne-babaların öğretmenlerden çocuklarının sosyal-duygusal gelişimlerini desteklemeleri yönündeki beklentilerinin de öğretmenlerin gerçek uygulamaları üzerinde etkili olduğu düşünülmektedir (Einarsdottir, 2010; Özen, 2008, Sevinç, 2006; Şahin, Sak & Şahin, 2013).

Okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin öğrenme alanları ve duvarlar hakkındaki inanış, kendi söylemlerine dayanan uygulamaları ve gerçek uygulamaları arasında bir tutarlılık olduğu bulunmuştur. Öğrenme alanlarıyla ilgili tutarlılıkta öğretmenlerin mesleki kıdemlerinin az yani yeni öğretmenler olmalarına bağlı olarak öğrenme alanlarının önemini kavramış olmalarının etkili olduğu düşünülmektedir. Öğretmenlerin sınıflarında iyi düzenlenmiş ve materyal bakımından zengin öğrenme alanlarının var olması her zaman onlardan gerekli şekilde yararlandıkları anlamına gelmeyebilir. Çocukların çalışmaları katılımcı öğretmenlerin sınıflarında duvarlarda sergilenmektedir. Şahin, Tantekin-Erden ve Akar (2011) tarafından yapılan çalışmada da çocukların motivasyonunu arttırma ve olumlu etkilerinden dolayı çocukların çalışmalarının duvarlarda sergilendiği belirlenmiştir. Ancak Ulutaş ve Ersoy'un (2004) görsel materyallerin çocukların göz hizasında sergilenmesi gerektiğini vurgulamalarına rağmen sadece katılımcı bir sınıfta buna uyulduğu görülmüştür.

Okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin öğretmen-çocuk oranına ve güvenliğe ilişkin inanış, kendi söylemlerine dayanan uygulamaları ve gerçek uygulamaları arasında kısmen bir tutarlılık bulunmaktadır. Katılımcı öğretmenler bir öğretmene düşen

çocuk sayısını kendi sınıflarındaki çocuk sayısından daha az olarak belirtmişlerdir. Öğretmen-çocuk oranına ilişkin tutarsızlığın bir sebebi öğretmenlerin kendi sınıflarındaki çocuk sayısını söylerken kayıtlı öğrenci sayısını söylemeleri ancak sınıf gözlemlerinde ise sınıfta çeşitli sebepler ile gelmeyen çocukların var olmasına bağlı olarak öğretmenlerin belirttikleri sayıdan daha az çocuk olduğunun gözlemlenmiş olmasıdır. Öğretmenler sınıfın güvenli olması gerektiğini ve kendi sınıflarını da güvenli olarak nitelendirmelerine rağmen yapılan sınıf gözlemlerinde sadece iki sınıfın güvenli olduğuna karar verilmiştir. Bazı sınıflarda sivri, zarar verici köşeler, ile bir sınıfta düşme ihtimali olan bir televizyonun olması gibi durumlar gözlemlenmiştir. Bu konuda öğretmenlerin kendi sınıflarını nesnel olarak değerlendirmedikleri düşünülmektedir.

Okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin hareket alanı/sınıf büyüklüğü, materyal ve mobilyalar, sınıfın fiziksel çevresinin düzenlenmesi hakkındaki inanış, kendi söylemlerine dayanan uygulamaları ve gerçek uygulamaları arasında bir tutarsızlık olduğu bulunmuştur. Beş okul öncesi öğretmeni çocukların rahat hareket edebilmeleri için sınıfın geniş hareket alanına sahip olması gerektiğini belirtmelerine rağmen dört tanesi kendi sınıflarının yeterince geniş olmadığını belirtmiştir. Öğretmenlerin geniş hareket alanının olması konusunda bir farkındalıklarının olmasına rağmen kendi sınıflarının geniş olmaması doğrudan öğretmen ile ilgili olmayıp okulun koşullarıyla ilgili olduğu düşünülmektedir. Katılımcı öğretmenler yeterli materyal ve mobilyanın çocukların motivasyonunu arttırdığı ve sınıfın düzenlenmesinin çocuk merkezli eğitim için önemli olduğu (Karaer & Köstereliođlu, 2005) konusunda bir farkındalık sahibi olmalarına rağmen kendi sınıflarının materyal ve mobilya konusunda yetersiz olduğu gözlemlenmiştir. Bu bulgu Türkiye'de yapılmış diğer çalışmalar ile de benzerlik göstermektedir (Göl-Güven, 2009; Şahin, Tantekin-Erden & Akar, 2011). Okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin sınıfın düzenlenmesine ilişkin inanışları ile uygulamaları tutarsızdır. Bu tutarsızlıkta öğretmenlerin sınıflarını düzenlerken çocuklar ile birlikte düzenlemeyi çok fazla zaman kaybı olarak görmelerinden dolayı kendileri tarafından düzenlemeyi tercih etmelerinin etkili olduğun düşünülmektedir. Ayrıca bazı sınıflarda sabit mobilyaların yerleştirilmiş olmasının da öğretmenlerin sınıflarını düzenlemelerini engellediği düşünülmektedir.

Okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin etkinlikler hakkındaki inanış, kendi söylemlerine dayanan uygulamaları birbirine çok yakın olduğu halde gerçek uygulamalarında farklılıklar olduğu görülmüştür. Beş öğretmenden dört tanesinin yazılı bir günlük plana sahip olmadığı anlaşılmıştır. Öğretmenler günlük planlarda bireysel farklılıkların göz önünde bulundurulması gerektiğine inanmalarına rağmen hazır plan kullanıyorlar. Hazır planlar tüm Türkiye'de uygulanmak için hazırlandıklarından bölgesel ve bireysel farklılıkları göz önünde bulundurmaları mümkün gözükmemektedir. Öğretmenlerin etkinliklerin uygulanmasına ilişkin inanış, kendi söylemlerine dayanan uygulamaları ve gerçek uygulamalarının birbirinden çok farklı olması öğretmen-çocuk oranı, materyaller, esneklik ve öğretmenlerin önceliğiyle (Finn & Pannozzo, 2003; Şahin, Tantekin-Erden & Akar, 2011) ilişkili olduğu düşünülmektedir. Etkinlikler süresince öğretmenlerin rolüne ilişkin bir tutarlılıktan söz etmek oldukça güçtür. Bu bulgu Kwon (2004) tarafından yapılan çalışma ile benzerlik göstermektedir. Kwon'un çalışmasında öğretmenler kendi rollerini kolaylaştırıcı olarak belirttikleri halde uygulamalarında etkinlikleri tasarlayan ve eğitimci oldukları gözlemlenmiştir. Okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin etkinliklerde çocuğun rolüne ilişkin inanış, kendi söylemlerine dayanan uygulamaları birbirine çok yakın olduğu halde gerçek uygulamalarında farklılıklar olduğu görülmüştür. Öğretmenler inanış ve kendi söylemlerine dayanan uygulamalarında çocuğun aktif katılımını vurguladıkları halde sadece bir sınıfta çocukların aktif katılımı gözlemlenmiştir. Bu durum öğretmenlerin çocuğun aktif katılımına ilişkin bir farkındalık sahibi olmalarına rağmen kendi uygulamalarında her şeye kendilerinin karar verme isteğinde olmalarının, planındaki tüm etkinlikleri uygulamaya çalışmalarının ve çocuklara farklı seçenekler sunma ile uğraşmak istememelerinin etkili olduğu düşünülmektedir. Zaman yönetimi konusunda okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin inanış, kendi söylemlerine dayanan uygulamaları ve gerçek uygulamaları arasında bir tutarsızlık olduğu görülmüştür. Bu tutarsızlıkta öğretmenlerin günlük akış içerisinde günlük planlarındaki bütün etkinlikleri uygulamaları konusunda okul müdürü, anne-babalar ve diğer öğretmenler tarafından bir baskı altında tutulmalarının etkili olduğu düşünülmektedir.

Okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin ilişkiler hakkındaki inanış, kendi söylemlerine dayanan uygulamaları ve gerçek uygulamaları arasında bir tutarlılık belirlenmemiştir. Ancak bütün öğretmenler okul öncesi sınıflarında karşılıklı sevgi ve saygının olması gerektiğini vurgulamışlardır. Bu durum okul öncesi öğretmenliğinin temelinde çocukları sevmenin yattığı (Bayhan & Bencik, 2008; Koç, 2012; O'Connor & McCartney, 2007) ilkesiyle örtüşmektedir.

Okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin davranış yönetimi hakkındaki inanış, kendi söylemlerine dayanan uygulamaları ve gerçek uygulamaları karşılaştırıldığında, okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin sınıf kurallarını çocuklar ile birlikte eğitim öğretim yılının başında belirlemek konusundaki inanış ve kendi söylemlerine dayanan uygulamaları tutarlılık göstermektedir. Ancak öğretmenlerin gözlem süresi eğitim öğretim yılının başını kapsamadığından öğretmenlerin bu konudaki gerçek uygulamaları gözlemlenememiştir. Okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin istenmeyen davranışları önleme konusundaki inanış ve uygulamaları bir tutarlılık göstermemektedir. Örneğin beş okul öncesi öğretmeni çocuğun istenmeyen davranışını görmezden gelmek gerektiğini belirtmelerine rağmen kendi söylemlerine dayanan uygulamalarıyla ilgili olarak hiç biri bu yöntemden bahsetmemiştir. Bu durum öğretmenlerin aslında yaptıkları bazı uygulamalar hakkında farkındalık sahibi olamayabilecekleriyle ilişkili olduğu düşünülmüştür. Öğretmenlerin ödül vermek konusundaki inanışları, kendi söylemlerine dayanan uygulamaları ve gerçek uygulamaları arasında bir tutarlılık olduğu bulunmuştur. Bu bulgudan hareketle beş öğretmenin de sınıflarında davranışları yönetmek için ödüle başvurdukları söylenebilir. Okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin ceza kullanımına ilişkin inanışları, kendi söylemlerine dayanan uygulamaları ve gerçek uygulamaları arasında bir tutarlılık bulunmamıştır. Beş öğretmenin hepsi cezayı sınıflarında kullanmadıklarını inanışlarında ve kendi söylemlerine dayanan uygulamalarında vurgulamalarına rağmen gerçek uygulamalarında hepsinin de cezayı kullandıkları gözlemlenmiştir. Bu durumun ya öğretmenlerin yaptıkları bazı uygulamalar hakkında farkındalıklarının olmamasıyla ya da cezayı kullandıklarına dair bir ifadeyi kullanmak istememeleriyle ilgili olabileceği düşünülmüştür. Ayrıca öğretmenlerin ceza kavramıyla sadece bedensel

bir cezayı anlamış olabilecekleri, yani mola verme gibi bir uygulamayı ceza olarak görmemeleri de bu durumun bir sebebi olabilir.

Okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin değerlendirmeye ilişkin inanışları, kendi söylemlerine dayanan uygulamaları ve gerçek uygulamaları arasında bir tutarlılık bulunmamıştır. Öğretmenler, gözlem notları, gelişim raporları ve değerlendirmeye ilişkin diğer formları kullandıklarını belirtmiş olsalar da öğretmenlerin hiç biri bunları inanışlarını ifade ederken belirtmemişlerdir. Etkinler süresince çocuklara geri dönüt verdikleri gözlemlenmiş olduğu halde öğretmenlerin bahsedilen teknikleri kullandıkları görülmemiştir. Bu durum, Kandır, Özbey ve İnal (2009) tarafından da belirtildiği gibi, okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin değerlendirmeye ilişkin bazı güçlükler ile karşılaşmalarından kaynaklı olabilir.

Beş okul öncesi öğretmeninin anne-baba katılımına ilişkin inanışları, kendi söylemlerine dayanan uygulamaları ve gerçek uygulamaları arasında bir tutarlılık bulunmamıştır. Bu durumun öğretmenlerin anne-baba katılımına ilişkin tutumları veya anne-babaların katılım konusundaki istekleriyle ilişkili olduğu düşünülmektedir. Öğretmen anne-baba katılımına karşı olumlu bir tutum içinde olabilir ancak anne-babalar, iş yüklerinin çokluğundan, zaman eksikliğinden, öz-güvenlerinin eksikliğinden ve bilgi eksikliklerinden (Michael, Wolhuter & Wyk, 2012; Turney & Kao, 2009) kaynaklı sebeplerden dolayı sınıfa gelmek istemeyebilirler.

Okul öncesi öğretmeninin çocuk merkezli eğitime ilişkin inanışları, kendi söylemlerine dayanan uygulamaları ve gerçek uygulamaları arasında bir tutarlılık bulunmamıştır. Söz konusu tutarsızlığı bir sebebe dayandırmanın oldukça güç olacağı düşünülmüştür. Ancak, yeni mezun öğretmenlerin lisans eğitimleri süresince çocuk merkezli eğitim hakkında daha fazla bilgi sahibi olmalarından dolayı daha fazla çocuk merkezli eğitime uygun inanışlarının olacağı düşünülürken, Işıkoğlu, Baştürk ve Karaca (2009) deneyimli öğretmenlerin yeni öğretmenlerden daha fazla çocuk merkezli inanışa sahip olduklarını ortaya koymuşlardır. Yapılan bazı çalışmalar öğretmenlerin gerçek uygulamalarının onların inanışlarından farklı olduğunu göstermiştir. Örneğin, Kwon (2004) Koreli öğretmenlerin çocuk merkezli eğitimin, okul öncesinin temel amacı olduğunu belirtmelerine rağmen

uygulamalarının her zaman çocuk merkezli olmadığını bulmuştur. Koreli öğretmenler milli programlarının çok fazla ideal olduğu ve anaokullarındaki mevcut durumu göz önünde bulundurmadığını belirtmişlerdir (Kwon, 2004). Aynı durum Türkiye için de söylenebilir. Türk okul öncesi eğitim programı birçok ideal özelliğe sahip olduğu halde, uygulamadaki öğretmen-çocuk oranı ve sınıfların fiziksel özellikleri, bu programın tamamen uygulanmasını mümkün kılmamaktadır.

Son olarak 20 okul öncesi öğretmeninin çocuk merkezli eğitime ilişkin inanış ve kendi söylemlerine dayanan uygulamaları ile beş öğretmenin çocuk merkezli eğitime ilişkin inanış, kendi söylemlerine dayanan uygulamaları ve gerçek uygulamaları sekiz tema ve onların alt temalarına dayanarak karşılaştırıldığında gerçek uygulamaların yapılan karşılaştırmalara dahil olmasından dolayı tutarsız tema ve alt tema sayısında bir artış olduğu gözlenmiştir. Yani, okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin gerçek uygulamaları tutarsızlık ihtimalini artırabilmektedir.

4 Öneriler

Okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin çocuk merkezli eğitim hakkında bazı yanlış anlamaları olmasına rağmen, öğretmenlerin çocuk merkezli olmayan bazı uygulamaları doğrudan öğretmen ile ilgili değildir. Okul öncesi öğretmenleri okul öncesi eğitim ile ilgili güncel araştırmaları okuyarak, konferansları dinleyerek ve hizmet içi eğitimlere katılarak çocuk merkezli eğitim hakkında bilgilerini arttırabilir ve nasıl bir yol izlemeleri gerektiği konusunda kendilerini geliştirebilirler. Görev yaptıkları okuldaki diğer öğretmenler ile görüş alışverişinde bulunarak fiziksel çevre ve diğer konularla ilgili problem durumlara çözümler geliştirebilirler.

Öğretmenlerin çocuk merkezli olamamalarıyla ilgili belirttikleri sebeplerden bir tanesi de çocuk merkezli eğitim hakkında yeterince bilgi sahibi olamamaları ve bu konuda deneyimlerinin olmamasıdır. Okul öncesi öğretmeni yetiştiren lisans programlarının öğretmen adaylarını çocuk merkezli eğitim programları hakkında bilgilendirmeleri ve staj uygulamalarında çocuk merkezli uygulamalar yapma fırsatı bulmalarını sağlamasının yararlı olacağı düşünülmektedir. Ayrıca, öğretmen merkezli bir lisans eğitiminin çocuk merkezli öğretmenler yetiştirmesi çok gerçekçi gözükmemektedir.

Okul öncesi öğretmenleri çocuk merkezli olamamalarının bir diğer sebebi olarak da okulun fiziksel koşullarını belirtmişlerdir. Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı yeni yapılacak okul öncesi eğitim kurumlarının fiziksel özelliklerini çocuk merkezli eğitim felsefesine uygun düzenlemeli, sınıflarda ve okulda çocuk boyunda, güvenli ve dayanıklı materyal ve mobilyalar tercih edilmelidir. Bu çalışmadaki okul öncesi öğretmenleri okul müdürlerinin uyguladıkları baskının da onları çocuk merkezli olmaktan alıkoyduğunu belirtmişlerdir. Okul müdürleri okul öncesi eğitim alanı ve özellikle de çocuk merkezli eğitim konusunda yetersiz olduklarından, Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı'nın bundan sonra okul öncesi eğitim kurumlarına yapacağı müdür atamalarında okul öncesi eğitim alanından olma ve çocuk merkezli eğitim konusunda hizmet içi eğitim alma gibi koşulları öne çıkarmasının yararlı olacağı düşünülmektedir. Gerek okul müdürlerinin, gerekse deneyimli ve mesleğe yeni başlayan okul öncesi öğretmenlerinin çocuk merkezli eğitim ile ilgili hizmet içi eğitimlerden yararlandırılmasının oldukça gerekli ve yararlı olacağı düşünülmektedir.

Bu konuda yapılacak başka çalışmalar Türkiye'nin farklı şehir ve bölgelerinde yapılarak Türkiye'de çocuk merkezli eğitimin daha geniş bir resmi çizilebilir. Ayrıca hem devlet hem de özel okul öncesi eğitim kurumlarında benzer çalışmalar yapılabilir.

Kaynakça

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APPENDIX G

TEZ FOTOKOPİSİ İZİN FORMU

ENSTİTÜ

Fen Bilimleri Enstitüsü ☐

Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü ■

Uygulamalı Matematik Enstitüsü ☐

Enformatik Enstitüsü ☐

Deniz Bilimleri Enstitüsü ☐

YAZARIN

Soyadı : Sak
Adı : Ramazan
Bölümü : Okul Öncesi Öğretmenliği

TEZİN ADI : Turkish Preschool Teachers' Beliefs and Practices Related to Child-Centered Education

TEZİN TÜRÜ : Yüksek Lisans ☐ Doktora ■

2. Tezimin tamamından kaynak gösterilmek şartıyla fotokopi alınabilir. ☐
3. Tezimin içindekiler sayfası, özet, indeks sayfalarından ve/veya bir bölümünden kaynak gösterilmek şartıyla fotokopi alınabilir. ☐
4. Tezimden bir bir (1) yıl süreyle fotokopi alınamaz. ■

TEZİN KÜTÜPHANEYE TESLİM TARİHİ: